

THE MESSENGER

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An Interview With The President: *Stability and Change in Convention*

FROM THE EDITOR

You never know where interesting reading will turn up. Writing in the *Lindisfarne Letter*, volume 9, entitled "Poetry and Prophecy," the great English poet and scholar Kathleen Raine offers her perspective on "The New Age."

Noting that the term goes back to at least Plato, she points out that "New Age" has inherited a variety of meanings throughout history. Her favorite is a tradition promulgated largely through W.B. Yeats (1865-1939) — a spiritual poet maligned and misunderstood by this century of materialistic critics. His great spiritual vision was not fully original, she suggests, but was inspired by his early devotion to William Blake, who had also proclaimed a New Age: "...a rebirth of spirit... the age of the world, the coming of the kingdom of the Imagination." Blake called it, "The Divine Humanity."

Of course, Blake was working, in turn, from the inspiration of his early devotion to Swedenborg. Says Raine: "Yeats came to his knowledge first, not through Blake, but through Blake's own teacher Swedenborg; a name seldom mentioned in academic circles, but called by the great French philosopher and orientalist Henry Corbin, 'the Buddha of Western Europe'."

Yeats went on to widen his study of investigation as he became more and more convinced that the premises of materialism needed to give way for lifelong study of those religions, philosophies and psychical studies which took mind, and not matter, as the first principle of reality. Echoing

Blake and Swedenborg, Yeats spoke loudly of the primacy of the realm of the spirit. He brazenly declared that the "three provincial centuries" from Descartes to William Teller were in decline and that the rise of the soul over intellect had begun in the world. (And this in 1930.)

The telling criterion by which to discern the victory of the New Age, according to Raine, Yeats and co., is a reversal of the premises of civilization. The emergence of transcendental values, ethics and worldviews will throw over the bogus materialistic perspectives.

Yeats understood that a New Age is not just more and more of what we already have, of more and more discovery and development of the material sciences, as useful and valuable as they are. Rather, there must be that dramatic turning of a corner in the consciousness of humanity — something like the "omega point" of Teilhard de Chardin in which a fundamental burst forward in our beingness occurs on the order of the dawning of our self-reflective capacities.

This is a challenging thesis, for what soul will venture the thesis that the world is showing an increasing capacity for goodwill, for ethical morality, for effective spiritual vision? And yet, like Yeats and the teachings of the Swedenborgian faith, I believe it is true.

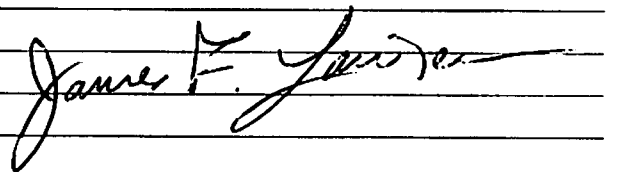


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Rev. James F. Lawrence, Editor
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An Interview with the President: Stability and Change in Convention

With the intent to communicate a mid-year report on the general life of the Swedenborgian Church, *The Messenger* asked former President of Convention, the Rev. Ernest O. Martin to interview the current president, the Rev. Randall E. Laakko. The following is an excerpt of the product of that request, a lengthy conversation held in Rev. Laakko's office at the Church of the Holy City, Wilmington, Delaware, on December 17, 1985.

We've just come from a meeting of the Ad Hoc Committee. What action do you see Convention being asked to take at the next convention based on the Ad Hoc Report?

This coming summer we likely will be taking action on the constitution and bylaws to try and vote it into place; it would become effective in June of 1987. It seems to me the Convention is ready to move on that. I've heard a lot of comments over the last couple of years about "Let's get on with this," so I'm sure that the Convention people are going to be wanting to vote this into place and get it moving.

This will set up a new structure, won't it?

It sets up a new structure, which means it will open the way to developing the organization around the concepts of roles, priorities and strategies that have been developed by the Ad Hoc Committee. Such things as the support units and creation of this new entity that we're calling "the cabinet" will be set into motion.

Could you say something more about the cabinet, Randy? This is something entirely new. We've talked about it over the years, I know when I was president, feeling that it would be good if you could have a group of people around the president who were central in their involvement and functions in the church. How do you see the cabinet functioning under the new system?

The cabinet is made up of the chairpersons of each of the support units, as well as

the president of Convention and the chair of the Council of Ministers. It's projected to be meeting something like four times a year, or at least to have the possibility of meeting that frequently. I see one of its major contributions to the whole structure as being a way that the support units can be in touch with one another, that there can be, in fact, real co-ordination of effort, so we don't have issues of duplication. Ultimately, it's going to mean the organization is going to run much more effectively and efficiently. At least that's how it looks to me on paper.

The cabinet will also help. won't it, in the budgeting process?

That's going to be one of the key jobs of the cabinet: to make sure that the budget items that are requested each year in fact can be supported by the programming that exists in the support units where the budget requests come from. And it's going to help in terms of the allocation of our financial resources. My guess is, down the road, it's also going to be very helpful in terms of allocating our personal resources, of personnel, talent, and skill. For example, it may be that the cabinet will be involved in helping determine which support unit will have charge of supervising particular activities, particular ministries that get developed within the Church. The cabinet will be able to draw upon, out of their own wisdom and their own awareness within the church, people who may exist in different parts of the country, to become involved in the various ministries that get going.

You've spoken before about a "proto-type cabinet." Can you clarify that?

The Ad Hoc Committee has established a time line flow chart for the effective implementation of the new organization, and one of the items on that flow chart and on that time line is the creation of a proto-type cabinet that will begin to do the kind of work that eventually the cabinet will do starting in '87. It will be as a proto-type cabinet, beginning to explore ways in which it can help develop coordination between our various departments and committees,

such as between the Board of Education and the Board of Missions, or the Department of Communications. These bodies will have representatives serving on the proto-type cabinet and will begin to do the coordination, speaking to one another. Hopefully, out of that they will become familiar with the kinds of things that will be necessary for the cabinet eventually to do. Now, we're hoping that the people who serve on the proto-type cabinet will also be people who may well be serving on the cabinet when it in fact comes into place once the support units do get established. Each support unit that is created will have three elected members, one of whom will serve as its chairperson. That chairperson will function as a representative on the cabinet.

Randy, this last Ad Hoc Committee meeting was up in the Boston area and I know I personally was glad that Mary Kay Klein could join us to speak about the seminary. I wonder if you might say something about the new developments at the school, including the new president and other actions that are being planned.

I feel that the school is one of the exciting areas within the church right now. Under the leadership of Mary Kay Klein, the new president, I think the school is going to move forward in very effective ways. It seems to me she's really done well in just a few months serving as president, in terms of developing new administrative policies, working closely with the boards and committees, working with the president of Convention, in terms of strengthening the life of the school, the experience of the students and certainly, I think, freeing up in many ways the energies and the strengths of our faculty there. I know Mary Kay is finding it stimulating, and at this point very satisfying and very busy.

We're planning to be down at the Appalachian State University in Boone, North Carolina for Convention '86. I've never been there, have you?

No, that'll be a new experience being there in the Blue Ridge Mountains.

Is there anything more you can say about convention plans? Is there a meeting being planned for that convention?

Maybe Convention membership isn't really aware of this, but each year along about January, we have a meeting of the planning committee to plan the actual schedule and the events, and to begin thinking about how all that will be coordinated with the particular site where Convention is being held. And plans are now for that meeting to be held in January of this year, prior to this ap-

pearing in *The Messenger*, at which time we will outline the entire schedule of the convention session this coming summer.

Dates for this year's Convention week are June 28 through July 6, with Convention itself opening Wednesday evening, July 2.

Will this committee go down to North Carolina for this meeting?

No, that usually is held in Boston at the Central Office, although Muff Worden, the director of the Central Office, has already seen the site down in Boone this past summer. Sometime during the year I'll be making a trip down there just to see the facilities, so I can have in mind the various places where meetings will be held. It gives me a sense of what I will be working with as I take the various parts I do in Convention as its president. And from what I hear, and I've seen some pictures of it that Muff took this past summer and also some PR literature that they put out, the convention site looks very attractive. Muff assures me that it's going to be a very plush kind of Convention setting.

Many people in planning to attend Convention think of it as vacation time. That location at that time of year could be a beautiful vacation spot.

Right; one of the things that concerned me when I heard about Boone being considered was the possibility of it being extremely hot down there that time of year. But I've been assured that it's at a high enough elevation that it in fact will be comfortably cool there, particularly in the evenings and at night.

You'll guarantee that?

Well, I don't guarantee, but I'm hoping!

Plans are also being made, aren't they, for the following year? Do we have a site yet for the '87 Convention?

The general area will be out in the Northwest, somewhere in the environs of Seattle, Washington. As far as I know, there is no specific site at this point. Sometime during the course of this year I plan to be out on the west coast, and part of my travel will take me up to the Washington area, and I hope at that time to be able to see the site or prospective sites that are being considered, and I will carry this information back to the Central Office. Let me say, by the way, that the director of the Central Office, Muff Worden in her various capacities of leadership, is invaluable and indispensable. Muff and her staff carry on daily, nitty-gritty business that is integral to the life of the church. It is the

place to make contact with the Swedenborgian Church week in and week out. For example, the Central Office is the communications clearinghouse for the entire denomination. They play a large part in the production of *The Messenger*; they produce the annual Journal, minutes of meetings, a newsletter; they keep and provide information of all kinds for the use of leaders and churches around the world. Also, without the support they give, the president and General Council would have a difficult time trying to accomplish their tasks.



What do you see as some of the more recent developments at Urbana University?

Well, of course, we have a new president at Urbana University now, Dr. Paul Bunnell. From every indication that I have, he's doing a very good job in terms of taking over the reins of that institution. He's being very effective and is closely watching all of the administrative policies and decisions that are being made there. I feel very encouraged by the work that he's demonstrated in these early months. The college is working hard at establishing a refinancing program for the school to help take care of their indebtedness, the largest portion of which is to General Convention. And under the new financing program that they are seeking to gain, they will be paying Convention back somewhere in the neighborhood of \$850,000, if they're able to secure the refinancing. That certainly will be seen, and I'm sure felt, by Convention as a very

positive move, as we get some of our investment in the school back that's gone there in the way of loans to the institution. And, of course, the church has, for many many decades, ever since Urbana's inception, been very instrumental in helping the university through financial crises, through the establishment of the library there, and often in the past the church has been involved in providing people who have been its presidents and some of its educators. I would imagine as long as the church has a relationship to the school, there will be the concern and effort to be supportive of that institution.

One of the things that we're currently working on as a church is the development of a chaplaincy program at the school, which would be led by one of our ordained ministers of Convention. That program, it is hoped, will get underway no later than September of 1987, possibly as early as September of 1986, if the person can be found who would be interested in working in a full-time capacity with the students, with the faculty and administration of the college, in providing chaplaincy services to the university. The person would actually be employed and paid by the church. But it would be the person's specific duty and a full-time position to work with the college at every level, primarily focusing on the students in terms of their religious and spiritual needs. I would see that person as being one of the people that students would come to for spiritual counsel, advice and guidance. It would be one way that the church might have an opportunity to let its understanding, its theology, its belief system be known to the university staff and students. Of course, from our position, we don't try to go out and proselytize people to become Swedenborgians, but we also have the responsibility of sharing what our faith is.

I know one thing during the last year that has meant a lot to me is meeting with the Council of Ministers' Committee on Goals and Priorities, which is concerned with more effective use of our ministerial resources. You've attended these meetings, too. What do you see as some of the most significant directions that this Council of Ministers' committee has been taking?

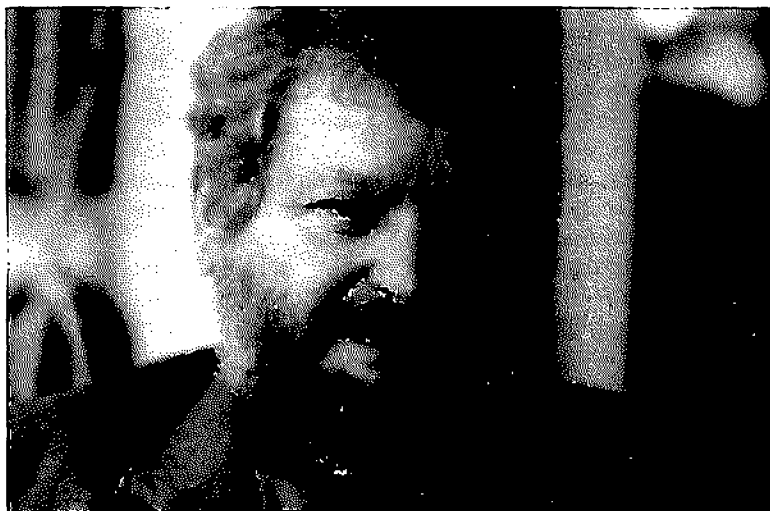
The Committee on Goals and Priorities within the Council of Ministers grew up sort of parallel to, perhaps in some sense in response to, the formation of the Ad Hoc

Committee of General Convention. And it began being concerned, as the General Council has been, with the use of our resources, both financial and personnel-wise. One of the things that the Council of Ministers' committee is concerned about is how to effectively use our resources of clergy. Where do we see the most effective and creative use of our people to be within the church? One of the things that they're asking is: How can we both strengthen the church as it is now, but also, how can we more creatively use the personnel that we have? One of the things that we were talking about at the recent meeting this fall was the development of multiple staff ministries in various locations within the church, particularly those locations that have what seems to be the best potential. That seems to us to be in our major cities, where we have congregations existing right now. Now this is not to say that our churches that aren't located in big cities, like some of our rural churches, aren't viable. But we do see a need to begin establishing our priorities. Where are the greatest potentials for **growth** for the church? That's one of the reasons we've focused on large cities, primarily because of the population and the fact that we have centers there now. The others will, I'm sure, continue to exist and continue to perform vital ministries to their communities. And there is potential for growth in those localities as well. I don't see the church withdrawing support from those locations, even though we may be thinking of utilizing our resources in the larger cities.

Randy, can you say something about the development of some of the new centers in the church taking place now?

One of the areas that this Goal and Priorities Committee of the Council of Ministers has been looking at is developing and increasing the development of our centers that have recently been getting underway. The Almont Center is now a year-round program that's going to be trying to serve the church and people in the Michigan community with various programs, utilizing the space there for conferences, both from within the church and outside. We have the work that's developing now in Massachusetts, with the Blairhaven camp, with the Rev. Ken Turley trying to establish an ongoing full-time center there, as he works concurrently at the Elmwood church. And I know the Massachusetts people are interested in trying to develop that Blairhaven facility into a more useful facility

for the church as well as for people outside of the church, and Ken has that as a dream. And then, of course, we have the work that your son Paul is doing out in the northwest, trying to work towards developing a conference/retreat center, a growth center out in that area through the work that he's doing with the Seattle church. He has begun the development of the Stone House Bookroom, wherein he will be trying to reach, of course, new people through the sale of books that are concerned about spiritual growth and spiritual issues, as well



as the sale of the books of Swedenborg and our own collaterals to reach people with our message. So I see all these centers as being new developments and new directions in which the church is moving. Then there is your work of conducting a study on the possibility of establishing a growth center here in the Mid-Atlantic states for our church. It seems to me that this is a very good direction that we need to move in and really explore, and in many cases experiment with in our church, to find out if it is an effective means of being able to reach new people.

I wonder if you could possibly say something about the potential use by Convention of some of the new technology of computers. I know you'll plug your own excitement of your Apple IIe in your office in Wilmington. But, isn't there also some study being made about ways that Convention can utilize computer technology?

Yes, there is, and again it's related very much to the restructuring of Convention, and particularly to the support unit called "information management" in that new structuring. I appointed a committee to study the use and utilization of computers within the church. This support unit will be dealing with data within the church, data regarding such things as budget items, programming, information about people's skills, a skills inventory. Those kinds of things will be managed and looked at and worked with by the information management support unit. And one of the terrific advantages of our particular age is the use of computers, and so we are going to begin, in fact have begun, developing and designing ways in which computers could be used more effectively and creatively. There may be a way that we can use that whole technology more effectively through communication with one another, through the use of modems, and the exchanging of diskettes, and all of that stuff that's made possible now with computerization. And we're studying ways in which we can be sure that our equipment is compatible and that we will be able to utilize both the programming and the information that's gained at the various centers.

You don't anticipate that these computers and robots are going to replace our ministers and layleaders, do you?

Well, at least not in the immediate future!

Randy, you are well into the second year of your presidency. Can you share with us something of what you find to be the most rewarding experiences of the year? You may want to say something too about the problems in the traveling and scheduling and trying to juggle the three ministries that you have in the time that is allotted.

Right. Being president, Ernie, as you know from your years of being president, is a very demanding position and one that is easily a full-time job if one wanted to develop it that way. For me, I find that the traveling to the various churches and meeting people that I've never met before is interesting, stimulating and exciting. I've been, in this last year and a half, to several of our loca-

tions, some of which I had never been to before. Most recently I was in LaPorte, Indiana and enjoyed meeting with the people there and meeting with Rev. Ted LeVan, and talking about their programming and their vision of the future of their church and their concerns. I've also had the opportunity to do four installation services in the first year and a half of ministry, starting first with the Rev. Richard Baxter, and then followed that with the installation for the Rev. Jim Lawrence in St. Louis, and then also now have done an installation service with Ken Turley in the Elmwood church, and most recently with Gladys Wheaton in the Chicago church. Those kinds of events are always fun, exciting celebrations for people, as they begin new ministries with those respective congregations. I certainly do enjoy meeting with the many boards and committees, and I've given a lot of time and effort in terms of those meetings, although the hours get long sometimes. We often meet late into the night and start fairly early in the morning. But I find them to be interesting, and I believe that it's important for the president to be involved in those as much as possible, for the sharing of information, for learning what programs and ministries are going on, through direct contact with those who give supervision to those ministries. So I find that, while it can be tiring, it's also stimulating and exciting. The president has a valuable role in sharing his overview of the church as it exists now. I certainly try to do that in my work. □

The Rev. Randall E. Laakko is also a counselor at the Tressler Center in Wilmington, as well as pastor to the Church of the Holy City, in addition to his duties as president of General Convention.

NCCC: Taking Care of Business

Robert E. McCluskey

Last year, in the January *Messenger*, I reported on the Nov., 1984 Governing Board sessions of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. In that report, I focused on the new image the Council is moving towards as a "Community of Communion," rather than the mere formal "Cooperative Agency"; I tried to highlight some of the similarities between the Council's new sense of purpose and methods and the findings of the Ad Hoc Committee in our own church; I also tried to relate some of the excitement I experienced at the meetings, the pervading sense of support, acceptance and commitment I felt from the other members.

Since then, I've attended two more Governing Board sessions as proxy for Rev. Randall Laakko (May 14-17, 1985: Chicago, Ill.; Nov 6-8, 1985: Fort Worth, Texas), and one Unit Committee meeting of the Division of Church and Society, as appointed representative of the Swedenborgian Church (Oct. 9-10, 1985: New York, N.Y.).

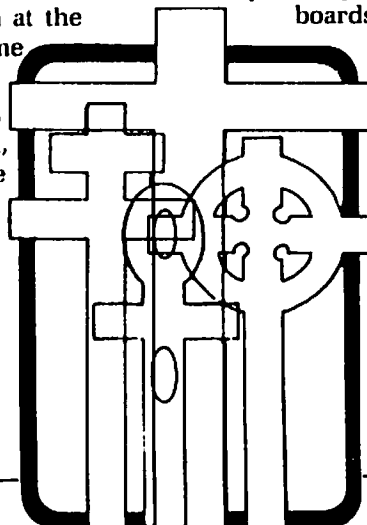
While the positive feelings I first experienced were still present at these meetings, I have also begun to get a better idea of the specific issues and methods of the Council. In this report, then, I would like to share with you some of the ways in which the Council operates, to give you a sense of what actually goes on at a Governing Board session. I will be using specific items of business that were dealt with at the Texas meetings to provide some substance.

Before getting into the nuts and bolts of the Board's work, let me point out that if there is one experience that delegates share in common, it is that of being practically overwhelmed by the quantity and variety of agenda items for each meeting. Almost all business items are contained in document form, each member/delegate receiving a

sizeable packet of information two or three weeks before the meeting. The basic function of the Governing Board, like our annual Convention, is to hear reports from the different program units, evaluate the efforts of the past six months, make suggestions and recommendations about the Council's direction and effectiveness, and determine by vote the specific policies and programs that will be supported by the Council. Parliamentary procedure (Roberts' Rules of Order) is adhered to, but flexibly, with plenty of room for sudden changes, last minute questions, and new developments.

The policies of the NCCC are made by the Governing Board, which meets twice a year. It is composed of about 260 official representatives chosen by the member communions themselves to represent all segments of their denomination. The size of the delegation is determined by the size of the denomination. The items that the Board considers are presented, I would say, in one of four basic forms: presentations, policy statements, resolutions, and reports. There is no particular order as to which type of business is dealt with; length of presentation, availability of personnel, and last minute schedule changes all contribute to the spontaneity of the agenda. The order presented in this report is not the order that was used at the meetings.

Most business items originate in the separate program units, which, like the boards and committees of Convention, work on specific issues and activities of the Council. The program units include three divisions (Overseas Ministries; Education and Ministry; Church and Society), five commissions (Communications; Stewardship; Faith and Order; Local and Regional Ecumenism; Justice and Liberation), four functional offices (Research Evaluation and Planning; Information; Finance and Services; Personnel), a Washington Office, and



When the smoke had finally cleared, the NCCC had retained its crucial role as mediator, and Campbell Soup Co. was made aware of the strong support for the boycott within the Council.

relationships with various related movements.

Presentations are meant to highlight the activities and accomplishments of on-going programs of the NCCC. No action or vote is involved in such presentations, although questions and comments are welcomed. Some of the presentations made at the meetings in Texas were: "A Decade of Women," which described the Council's involvement with women's rights and issues over the past ten years; "RSV's 40th Anniversary" gave us a preview of the different promotional and educational activities which are being planned for 1986 in order to further stimulate interest in and use of the Revised Standard Version of the Bible. Since its controversial publication by the NCC in 1946, the RSV has become one of the most preferred translations; Church World Service provided information about the problems and successes related to emergency relief efforts to those starving in Africa; the Faith and Order Commission gave an update on their work; and finally, the Communications Commission gave a report on the serious societal implications surrounding the increase of 'sexual violence' in the media (film and television). While not technically a presentation, I include it here because it required no action, and was presented for information purposes only. All presentations were accompanied by slides or films, and ample printed information.

A *Policy Statement* is an expression of the Council which states a basic conviction or position with respect to the application of Christian principles to today's society and world. Such statements are usually the result of careful study and preparation. They are intended to 1) provide guidance for the Council's programs; 2) inform the member communions; and 3) influence public opinion. Policy statements must be adopted by the Governing Board, with action taken only after the second presentation of the statement to the Board. Policy statements are important guides for the direction that any particular program of the NCCC may take.

By the time a policy statement is first presented to the Board, it has gained the approval and support of a majority of the delegates. The first presentation, or reading, is an opportunity for Board members to make specific suggestions for additions, deletions, or changes, either in form or substance, in the statement. All comments are then considered by the working group or committee from which the statement originated, and used to revise the statement for a second presentation at the next Governing

Board session. At the second presentation, comments and suggestions are again considered. If any significant substantive changes are seen as needed by the Board, the document can again be sent back for further revision, or amended by vote on the floor. If no significant changes are needed other than grammatical or editorial corrections, the policy statement is then put on the floor to be voted on.

Considered last November were policy statements on "Genetic Engineering: Genetic Science for Human Benefit," and "Elementary and Secondary Public Education in Society." Both of these were first presentations. Also considered was the Theological Basis of the policy statement on Racial Justice. It might be useful to look at this last item. The full policy statement on Racial Justice is a comprehensive 14 page document that seeks to set forth and clarify the complex nature of systemic or "institutional" racism, and to provide direction and information for the churches' response to this problem in society.

At the Chicago meeting in May, 1985, the entire statement was presented to the Board for its second reading. General approval was given for the statement as a whole, but several churches, especially the Lutheran Church in America, had significant problems with the section that described the theological basis for the statement. At that time it was voted to again refer that portion of the document back to the working group on Racial Justice for further revision. In addition a representative from the Lutheran Church was asked to provide direct input to the group on their particular concerns.

Since the Racial Justice working group is part of the Division of Church and Society, the revised theological statement was reviewed at their Unit Committee meeting in New York, last October, before going to the Governing Board sessions. Interestingly enough, several people at this meeting were still dissatisfied with the new statement, and it took three more hours of serious debate, and several revisions, before it was finally accepted by the Unit Committee. At its third reading last November, it was adopted with only three dissenting votes.

A *Resolution* is a statement growing out of a particular current situation or issue which is related to an existing policy of the Council. Resolutions on current moral, ethical, or religious situations confronting church and society need to be thoroughly grounded in Council policy. They usually call for specific action, either on the part of the Council itself, the member communions, or the general public. Since resolutions often deal

with situations that require quick or immediate action, they may be adopted at the same meeting at which they are first presented. Nonetheless, they too are subject to review and criticism by the Governing Board, and may be referred back to the originating body for revision, or amended by vote from the floor before being adopted. Only three resolutions were considered at the Texas meeting:

1) "Resolution on the Observance of Martin Luther King, Jr. National Holiday," to encourage member Communions to promote the observance of [this] Holiday by supporting the Federal Holiday Commission's request to participate in ecumenical memorial services and to ring church bells at noon on January 20, 1986.

2) "Resolution on Tax Equity and the Poor," to recommend to the administration and Congress specific steps to relieve the poor as Federal tax policies are changed.

3) "Resolution on the Exploitation of the Rural Crisis by Extremist Organizations," to alert the Council and member Communions to violent, anti-Semitic or racist actions being fomented within the farm crisis by extremist organizations.

The last type of business to be dealt with was reports from various committees and working groups. Several of them concerned more routine business matters within the Council itself. These kinds of reports are familiar to most of us: Reports of the Executive Committee, the Nominating Committee, the Reference Committee, the Constitution and By-Laws Committee, and of course, the 1986 Budget. Normally these reports are somewhat dry and unexciting. However, they were all a little more complicated than usual this time, reflecting the many changes that are just now taking place in the Council's structure. For this reason, there was more than the usual number of questions of clarification, as well as concerns over how the reorganization of the Council would have impact on particular programs and resources. After some discussion, all were adopted by vote.

The remaining three reports concerned specific program activities that have been in progress during the past six months or longer. These activities had been developed from policy statements and resolutions that speak to specific issues within the church and/or society. Unlike presentations, these reports contain recommendations for further action by the Council, and require a vote of adoption by the Board.

1) "An Ecumenical Agenda" represents the Council's effort to address the issue of the Ecumenical Movement in the U.S.: to clarify

what it means, to examine the needs and challenges it presents to us today, and to formulate specific program activities to achieve our shared goals. The document contained six separate agenda items related to Ecumenism: Christian Unity, Peace with Justice, Ecumenical Learning, Stewardship of Nature, Ecumenical Spirituality, and Cultural Renewal. Each item was supported by four statements: 1) Ecumenical Intention; 2) Biblical/Theological Affirmation; 3) Contextual Statement; and 4) Program Responses (i.e., specific action). There was considerable discussion on the item of Ecumenical Spirituality, which, somewhat ironically, deals with the different churches' relationship to one another. After a number of amendments from the floor, "An Ecumenical Agenda" was adopted.

The purpose of the Implementation Committee is to facilitate the Council's transition from a "Cooperative Agency" to a "Community of Communions," the new structure developed by the Presidential panel on the Future Mission of the Council. At the November meeting, the Implementation Committee's Report dealt with "Funding Proposals," which meant, who's going to get what money from where when the Council is finally re-organized.

Because the present structure is still unfamiliar to most delegates, the discussion of the "Funding Proposal" was lengthy and confusing. Most of the discussion again centered on questions of clarification and concerns from particular program units or working groups that were being re-categorized under the new structure. After a number of amendments from the floor, the "Funding Proposals" were adopted.

The last item of business I want to mention was, for me, the most exciting issue of the sessions. This was the report of the Special Committee on the Farm Labor Organizing Committee — Campbell Soup Controversy. This issue is rather complex, but a brief sketch of the situation seems in order. For over seven years now, farm workers in Ohio and Michigan have sought a collective bargaining agreement with the Campbell Soup Company. This issue also involves the growers of tomatoes and cucumbers in those states. While the growers are in support of the workers' demands, they are dependent upon Campbell, which sets prices and policy. Speaking on behalf of the workers was the Farm Labor Organizing Committee (FLOC). To date, over 100 religious and civil organizations, including the AFL-CIO and the Ohio Council of Churches, have endorsed a boycott of Campbell's products in support of the farm workers.

If there is one experience that delegates share in common, it is that of being practically overwhelmed by quantity and variety of agenda items for each meeting.

**Sometimes,
though, a
little pan-
demonium is
just what the
Holy Spirit
needs to get
things done!**

About two years ago, at the request of the FLOC, the NCCC appointed a Special Committee to mediate between FLOC and Campbell in an effort to resolve their differences. This Committee would also keep the delegates and member Communions informed of their work, and make recommendations for further action. Although pressure had been put on the Council, both from within and without, to endorse the boycott, their role as mediator prevented them from doing so.

In their report of May, 1985, presented in Chicago, the Committee noted that "the parties involved [FLOC and Campbell] have reached an agreement on the next steps to be taken in an orderly procedure that both parties believe will enable them to resolve their differences. There will be a public announcement *in the event* that these hopes, which the Committee shares, are realized." (emphasis mine)

They also recommended that no further action be taken, including the endorsement of the boycott, until their next report at the November meetings (in Texas). What the Committee was unable to report, due to previous agreement to confidentiality among all parties, was that a formal understanding had been entered into by FLOC and Campbell just days before.

This Understanding included an agreement by both parties to participate in a Special Commission, specifically formed to address the issues of the controversy. The Commission is being chaired by Harvard University Professor and former Secretary of Labor, Dr. John T. Dunlop. It was this Understanding that was to be kept confidential, presumably until it had become a little more well-defined (it was only three or four days old!).

However, the Committee's references to "next steps" and "these hopes" were for many delegates insufficient evidence that Campbell was cooperating fully with the Special Committee. Sensitive to the needs of the workers' plight, they strongly urged that the Council move to endorse the boycott in support of the workers. The Committee and others stressed the need to remain neutral in order to effectively continue their efforts at mediation; they also dropped several hints that more progress had been made than they were able to report. Nonetheless, debate continued, and a compromise motion was finally passed stating that if no suitable agreement had been reached by September,

1985, the Governing Board would take action to endorse the boycott at its November meeting.

At that meeting, the Special Committee was able to inform the Board that an Understanding had been reached by all parties in May. It also reported on the work of the "Dunlop Commission" from May to October, making nine recommendations for further action. One of them called for action to endorse the boycott, if no agreement had been reached by May, 1986. Once the report was presented, discussion began.

Despite their agreement to participate with the Commission, many delegates still did not feel that Campbell had shown a significant change of attitude towards the workers' demands, and again urged the Board to endorse the boycott without delay. Others countered that, since some progress had been made, it would be unwise to jeopardize the mediating position of the Special Committee, which was still directly involved with the negotiations. After about an hour of heated discussion, a motion was made from the floor to endorse the boycott.

Voting is done by raising cards (white for YES, red for NO), and having them counted by tellers. On the first ballot, the boycott was approved by one or two votes. Those opposing the boycott asked for a recount. This time, the boycott lost, again by one or two votes. This went on for four or five more separate ballots, with the balance shifting back and forth each time. Finally, amid a noticeable buzz and frequent gavel banging, a written ballot was taken, and the motion to endorse the boycott lost by one vote: 88-89. Another motion was passed, though, to amend the recommendation, moving the deadline for an agreement to February, 1986, instead of May, 1986.

Despite the strong emotional nature of the discussion, and the ensuing confusion, the results of this vote are very interesting. When the smoke had finally cleared, the NCCC had retained its crucial role as mediator, Campbell Soup Co. was made aware of the strong support for the boycott within the Council, and Board members had a chance to hear and speak to the specific and sometimes sensitive issues involved in the controversy.

This was an excellent example of the Council's level of concern and commitment to important issues in society. Incidentally, I would not want my reference to "confusion" to give the impression that the Council "doesn't know what it's doing." We need to keep in mind that the Council represents

thirty-one churches, each with its own concerns and ways of doing business. Everyone is heard openly and with the support of the other members, and this sometimes leads to rather "complex" discussions. Sometimes, though, a little pandemonium is just what the Holy Spirit needs to get things done!

Mixed in with all these business items were plenty of procedural formalities, worship services, cluster meetings, awards, and special events.

(All of this in two and a half days!) Time and space call for an end to this report, but one special event deserves at least a mention. On Wednesday evening, Rev. Patricia McClurg, First Vice President of the Council, welcomed Abdullah Omar Naseef, General Secretary of the World Muslim League, and Rabbi Arthur Hertzberg, Vice President of the World Jewish Congress, to an Interfaith Dialog with the Governing Board. This was the first such event in the Council's history that involved a direct interchange between prominent leaders of these three major religions (Christianity, Judaism, Islam).

They each spoke on and answered questions about their views on the purpose, status, and future of interfaith relations. Both guests were also present at an "Interfaith Breakfast" the next morning, where they again responded to questions from sleepy, but well-fed Board members. Both sessions were exciting and informative, addressing issues of stereotyping (on all sides), the need for mutual understanding, the acceptance of fundamental differences, and the need for cooperative, useful action in spite of these differences.

As I noted, my intention in this report was to give you an idea of what goes on at a Governing Board session. Specific items of business were not really discussed in any detail. Nonetheless, each item is important to the work of the Council, and many of them are quite complex on their own. If you would like more information on issues, policy statements, or program activities of the NCCC, there are a few things you can do:

1) Address specific questions or requests for information to either:

Rev. Robert McCluskey
The New Church (Swedenborgian)
302 Stevens Ave.
Portland, ME 04103

OR

Director of Central Office
General Convention
48 Sargent St.
Newton, MA 02158

The Official Member Communions of the Council:

African Methodist Episcopal Church
African Methodist Episcopal Zion
American Baptist Churches in the USA
The Antiochian Orthodox Christian
Archdiocese of North America
Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
Christian Methodist Episcopal Church
Church of the Brethren
Coptic Orthodox Church in North America
The Episcopal Church
Friends United Meeting
General Convention,
The Swedenborgian Church
Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of
North and South America
Hungarian Reformed Church in America
Lutheran Church in America
Moravian Church in America
Northern Province, Southern Province

National Baptist Convention of America
National Baptist Convention, USA, Inc.
National Council of Community Churches
Orthodox Church of America
Patriarchal Parishes of the Russian
Orthodox Church in USA
Philadelphia Yearly Meeting of the Religious
Society of Friends
Polish National Catholic Church of America
Presbyterian Church (USA)
Progressive National Baptist Convention, Inc.
Reformed Church in America
Serbian Eastern Orthodox
Syrian Orthodox Church of Antioch
Ukrainian Orthodox Church in America
United Church of Christ
The United Methodist Church

2) Write for a subscription to the NCCC *Chronicles*, the Council's newspaper published three or four times a year. Cost is \$1.00 per year, and the paper provides good coverage and analysis of all the issues facing the Council, including activities of the Governing Board sessions. The address is:

NCCC Information Office, Room 850
475 Riverside Drive
New York, N.Y. 10115

If you'd like a more in-depth look at any particular programs, you can order the "NCCC Resource Catalog" from the same address. It's free and offers a wide selection of brochures and books from the different Program Units about their activities. □

The Rev. Robert McCluskey is minister at the Swedenborgian Community Church, Portland, ME.

WOMEN COMMUNICATING



PHYLLIS BOSLEY, EDITOR

Mine Eyes Have Seen the Glory of the Coming of the Lord...

On February 12 that was the song sung in school classrooms and Lincoln's Gettysburg Address was recited with great fervor.

On February 22 excerpts from George Washington's speeches and letters were read. I treasure those memories from my childhood. The words "Liberty" and "Freedom" were heard in abundance on those two days. Liberty and Freedom have been concerns throughout history.

From Galatians 5:1, 13-14 (King James)

"Stand fast therefore in the Liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.

For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another.

For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."

In 1796 George Washington wrote these words: Observe good faith and justice toward all nations. Cultivate peace and harmony with all. Religion and morality enjoin this conduct. And can it be that good policy does not equally enjoin it? It will be worthy of a free, enlightened, and at no distant period, a great nation to give to humanity the magnanimous and too novel example of a people always guided by an exalted justice and benevolence..."

Martin Luther King, Jr., whose birthday was commemorated nationally on January 15, wrote in his letter from Birmingham Jail: "Just as Socrates felt that it was necessary to create a tension in the mind so that individuals could rise from the bondage of myths and half-truths to the unfettered

realm of creative analysis and objective appraisal, so must we see the need for non-violent gadflies to create the kind of tension in society that will help men rise from the dark depths of prejudice and racism to the majestic heights of understanding and brotherhood."

Pilgrim's Progress

Louise Childs

John Bunyan's story of Christian's long journey from the City of Destruction to the Celestial City gathers dust in most libraries today, but a long time ago in most homes *Pilgrim's Progress* was the second most cherished book — the first being the King James version of the *Holy Bible*.

It may be profitable to reflect on Bunyan's masterpiece. Are we not making the same journey, sometimes sinking into the Slough of Despond, trapped by the Giant Despair, lost in the Town of Vainglory?

Like Christian, we are burdened with private griefs and public worries. Unlike Christian we also enjoy the mixed blessings of a free press which spreads before us a daily chronicle of wrong-doing committed in high and low places — and the slaughter of the innocent. Our minds grow weary of contemplating the many crimes perpetuated by what amounts to a small percentage of the human race. Good news rarely hits one page.

So what is happening to the American ideal of honesty and fair play? Where are the American good Samaritans? We appear to be locking up not only our doors and windows, but our hearts as well. What can we as Christians do; what should we do to help heal the spiritual sickness around us and perhaps within us?

Well, we can begin by counting our blessings. Despite the current crop of bad news, this is a time to thank God for the wisdom and persistence of the men who first shaped our Republic. It's also a time to acknowledge our dependence on God Almighty for the strength to resist such Bunyan characters as Mr. Worldly-Wise, Mr. Hate-Light, Mrs. Diffidence, the Flatterer, and old Vain-Confidence as we struggle to get what's coming to us. If we don't summon the strength to resist these common enemies, we just might get what's coming to us!

The old-time religion either had us in the grip of hell-fire and damnation, or resting in the arms of the Good Shepherd. Somewhere between these two extremes, it seems to me,

is the clear and compelling message of Jesus the Christ.

He told his disciples to take no thought for tomorrow, what they would eat or wear, or where they would sleep. Instead, he said, they should seek those gifts of the spirit untouched by moth or rust or corruption, and all their physical needs would follow. This teaching is especially difficult for us to understand or accept, because we have a national, almost patriotic tradition that to be independent of others, to provide our living by our own wits, is the quintessence of success. The rugged individualist is the archetypal American and he's not much inclined to wait around for heavenly intervention. The American Dream is to make it on our own.

But that dream, despite our cleverness, has begun to sour. In large numbers our citizens are saying there is too much government, too much red tape, too many experts, too many advisors, and not least — the price of all this official bounty is too high.

Our body of law has expanded to the point that it is full of contradictions which frequently mete out injustice rather than justice. Medical research has added years to our lives, but has failed to help us make them a plus rather than a negative. Science has invented the machinery to save human labor, but it cannot find a meaningful alternative to work for leftover people. The corporate world, in some ways more powerful than government, too often erases personal relations with its workers for something called Personnel Relations.

Our individual independence is a frail shadow of its former self and our faith in a just and loving God is fraught with doubts. We tend to muddle along, like poor Christian, in a Slough of Despond. We know in our hearts it is not enough to be good, we have to be good for something. Yet our efforts seem diminished by the great size and power of the economic and social forces surrounding us. How can we continue the Christian journey with good cheer?

First we have to find the kernel of the faith, forgetting for a time the marvelous variety of trappings wrapped around it. The thought occurs to me that we have hogtied Jesus and his teachings with our manmade rituals and dogmas. Getting past the difficulty of obsolete language and faulty translation, the message I read in the New Testament is clear and simple: all people come from and are part of the universal spirit we call God. There is good and there is evil. We are forced to choose between them with

every breath we take. In every religious experience known to man, good and evil are quite clearly differentiated, and this suggests to me that the God we invoke cannot be shaped by denominational differences to fit our petty conceits, because he is the essence of our existence and all men partake of eternal life. The difference between the Christian and the non-believer is how we partake of it. We make the choice. We make our own heaven and hell by that choice.

Americans are a practical people, and so it will not do to just state the case; one must suggest a way to deal with the eternal battle between good and evil raging around us. We may resolve, as Christians, to clean up our act, to be honest and kind, forgiving and charitable. As citizens we can work for better laws and for better public servants to implement those laws. Such efforts are waymarks along the hard road to becoming a Christian. But we will never arrive at our destination in this life, nor understand the extent of our success or failure on this earth.

Paul, that eloquent emissary to the early church, said though we see through a glass darkly now, through faith we will see the light of God on that final bridge to the Celestial City. What an irony it is that a number of respected doctors, so long preoccupied with the physical miracle of the human body, today have begun gathering evidence of that dark tunnel of the soul which carries us to the light. These doctors are learning of it through the recorded experiences of those whom medicine has pulled back from the brink of death!

Thus we are all pilgrims. We find it difficult to measure any progress, but coming together to worship and pray, as the church invites us to do, and acting together as one body for a higher good, carries us further along our miraculous journey. With Bunyan's Christian, we reject the easy way out, try to love and care for our fellowmen everywhere and hope to leave a legacy of joyful certainty for the next wave of pilgrims.

Louise Childs majored in Music at Syracuse University. She was organist at the Swedenborgian Church in San Francisco and sang in our choir upon occasion. She is now fulltime organist for the Trinity Methodist Church in San Francisco, and once a year delivers a lay sermon in her church.



'85 Winter Retreat Explores Creation Story

Stephen James Pults

When asked during the closing session of Almont's 1985 winter retreat for a short phrase or word that best described the event, responses from the 41 participants ranged from "too close for comfort" to "snore or not to snore" to "sardines" to "amazing stories."

This year's theme for the group of Leaguers and Survivors was the creation story or "Who made this mess anyway?" Staffing the event were Rev. Ron Brugler, Rev. Robert McCluskey as the New Church Youth League's chaplain, Nancy Little as the N.C.Y.L. president, Swedenborg School of Religion students Judy Dennis, Donna Keane, Steve Pults and spouse Kim Kearns and Dave Lederman from Ontario, Canada, Steve Ledingham from Springfield, Ohio, and Karen Duffey from Urbana, Ohio.



NCYL Retreat photos
by Kim Kearns
and Nancy Little

Almont Christmas Retreat, hosted by the Almont Survivors.

Each S.S.R. student along with Chaplain Robert McCluskey and Rev. Ron Brugler headed a two-hour session examining different aspects of creation. Discussion centered on how we are created, how the Bible speaks of our spiritual creation, how we create our own worlds and how this

knowledge works in our day to day lives.

The retreat was far more than a time of theological discussions, however. Free time and evenings were used for games, making new friends and seeing old ones, making music with the many instruments brought to the retreat, listening to the latest tapes and watching movies on a v.c.r. system.

Compliments also ran high on the food prepared by Rev. Brugler. Teens and adults worked together in assisting Ron in both set-up and clean-up responsibilities. And on the last night of the retreat pizzas were served to provide plenty of energy for a dance.

The retreat closed with a communion service put together by teens and staff. And



SSR senior Donna Keane, Wendy Little, Craig Winston, Ashley Locke (Note clay creations on table.)

each morning also included a chapel designed by various members of the group. The result was a time of celebrating friendship, learning more about each other and God and joining together to worship and offer thanks for all God creates both without us and within us.

Here are some of the remarks made by the participants, written during the closing evaluation:

"I loved it! This is a very special place and I will always come back. My friends are here and I love them!"

"I had a great time and made new friends and met new people. It was very interesting."

"I enjoyed my stay at Almont. This was my first time at a winter retreat, but I have enjoyed summer camp. It gave me a good chance to relax and meet other people and learn about them. The lessons we learned at the morning and afternoon sessions were great. I really got a lot out of them. I would like to return in the summer to see everyone

because I feel there is a bond of closeness and love between me and the people at the retreat."

"Best — meeting new friends, our discussions, all those movies! Worst — the drive down here. Menu additives — filet mignon!"

"I really enjoyed this retreat. I met a lot of nice people whom I hope to consider friends. I like learning about music and the creation of life and love. This place has a lot of love to give!"

"I had a really great time! I was really glad to see everyone. I am going to remember it and come to the next retreat. I can't wait 'til next year."

"I felt I learned a lot about creation. I



Male staff (L.-R., Robert McCluskey, Steve Pults, Steve Ledingham) gleeful despite being "creamed" in indoor volleyball by Les Femmes.

thought it was really neat how we learn the 7 days of creation fit in our lives."

"I enjoyed the retreat because it's just a good time to relax from the pressure of school and parents and junk like that. The only thing I didn't like was the curfew on Saturday night."

"I can express my emotions at this retreat because I'm with friends that care for me and they'll understand and try to help me with my problems. In the city I can't do that." □

The Upper Room

Beyond the Veil

Leon C. LeVan

The uncertainty of what follows death lays a heavy burden on many minds. Most people have friends, relatives, or loved ones who have gone "beyond the veil." "How is it with them?" we ask ourselves. And that consideration leads to the further question, "how is it with all those millions who have gone before?" Where are they? What are they doing? What end, purpose or use do they serve or have in view?"

Jesus said, "In my Father's house are many mansions." Is the Father's "house" sufficient to accommodate so vast a multitude of human souls? Where is Heaven? Because physicists and astronomers find no sign of Heaven in boundless reaches of sidereal Space with telescopes or similar instruments, many doubt whether Heaven has real existence at all.

Emanuel Swedenborg, a giant of the mind (as well as Christian revelator), has reported voluminously on some of the mansions in the Father's House. Jesus spoke of the Eternal World as though He were a familiar occupant there; and he could have told us a great deal more than he did. You and I may not have seen Jerusalem, but we know it exists from the witness of others. In a parallel sense, we may believe in the existence of Heaven from the witness and testimony of the Lord Jesus Christ and from others whom the Lord has inspired.

From the descriptions in Swedenborg's writing we may think of the Universal Heaven as a vast system of "societies" (or smaller "heavens") formed from the good human beings of all inhabited worlds. Each such world or earth or planet has its own system of heavens, its own system of hells, and an intermediate world of spirits.

When your friends ask you, "Where is Heaven?" your answer could be that Heaven is found wherever the Lord and good human beings are found. Have you found the Lord during your life on earth? Then you have found Heaven to that extent. Have you found people of Heavenly character during your life and work in the world? Then you have found Heaven to that extent, also.

Heaven is where good is — where angels are — where love and wisdom and use are found in men and women. Heaven shows its presence in every loving purpose, effort, and deed. "Where is Heaven" is like asking

Where is knowledge, Where is love, Where is God? Heaven is not only somewhere beyond the stars. You are as near to Heaven and the Lord as the beating of your heart and the operation of your highest, most loving intentions and thoughts.

Let me now speak of little children in the Father's "house of many mansions." Little children who die in infancy wake up in Heaven in the care of angel "mothers." The infants are so delighted and happy with their new surroundings that they experience no sense of loss whatever. They are taught that the Lord is their Heavenly Father. They are surrounded by so much goodness and love that they begin to grow towards Heavenly character right from the beginning.

No child is ever "lost" in Heaven. Let no one suppose that any little child at death is ever put into an earthly grave. Only the material body is laid in the grave. Little children awake into the Eternal life even before their fleshly bodies are laid in the earth. Little children can never be found in cemeteries. They "wake up" (are resurrected) in Heaven. They live and are happy in Heaven. The Lord is their Father and the church their mother. They are far happier with the angel "mothers" who care for them than they could possibly have been on earth.

What is called "death" is a triumphant event for every faithful Christian soul. The goodness is then made manifest to them that love the Lord. How gently they awake in the Eternal World! How richly the mercies of the Lord surround them in the form of wise and loving angels, who tend to them and minister to them in their hospitable new surroundings. The miseries, fears, and worries of the difficult earthly world are replaced by the joys of Life Eternal in the radiant Kingdom of Heaven.

Let us rejoice for those whom the Lord has freed from the bonds of sin and death. They are happier now than they ever could be on earth. It would be wrong to wish them back. "O blessed country beyond the veil and beyond the tomb! How have we veiled thy light and shrouded thy joy with the dark habiliments of woe when yet thou art the blessed country of the Father's House."

Let us think of an entrance into the Eternal Life with joy. There is no death to them that love the Lord. They continue as our helpers, our loved ones, our guardians, our friends. How do we know? Because Jesus said, "I am the Resurrection and the Life. He that believeth on Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and he that liveth and believeth on Me shall never die." "In my Father's house are many mansions. If it were

not so, I would have told you."

An enlightened writer declares: "Self-luminous, independent of all star-shine and solar light is the heavenly land. Its shores are inherently radiant. Its streams and rivers and fountains glow and glitter with their own immortal light. Its unalterable mountains and undulating landscapes are forever green. We must sweeten and purify life at its fountain springs by habitually letting the spiritual in us dominate the natural, for it is only thus that the Divine Light which is above can effectually shine into our darkness. □

Wellness for a New Age

Health Issues Across the World

Dorothy Travers-Davies

Reading a *New York Times* editorial this morning that was reprinted in the Korean edition of *The Herald Tribune*, I was struck by the fact of world wide dissemination of New Age health material. Not only in English, but in other languages, the media is starting to report alternative modalities of health and lifestyles based on intelligent eating and body awareness and care.

"Soyez Mieux" (translation: "Become Better") occupied ten pages of a leading September French women's magazine. It discussed three "revolutionary" ideas in the battle against pounds or kilos. 1) A new technique of micro-aspiration (under a local anesthetic) to fight cellulite; 2) a dietary change to the 3 Ps — pates, pain and pommes de terre, (pates, bread, potatoes) or a complex carbohydrate diet; and 3) physical activity and aerobics.

The dietary change recommended was similar to that printed by the U.S. Government in 1977 in a pamphlet entitled "Dietary Goals for the United States" (March Edition). This booklet espoused less consumption of meat and dairy products high in cholesterol and more of fresh fruits, vegetables and complex carbohydrates such as rice, grains, potatoes and dark bread. (By the way, after the meat and dairy industries put pressure on the Senate Committee, the October edition of the same report was changed, and many paragraphs about the dangers of diets high in meat and milk and processed cheeses were either changed or deleted. I am fortunate to have copies of both editions in my

library.)

The French article also addressed itself to vitamins — discussing how to use fruits and cook vegetables in ways that conserve the vitamin and mineral contents. One page headlined that "Five cigarettes per day results in a 30% loss in vitamin C," and concluded that a heavy smoker had better supplement the diet with foods full of Vitamin C, as well as take additional C by crystals or tablets. Women were advised that Vitamin A is good for the skin.

Last week in Hong Kong I read of a new study on how cigarette smoking changes the contours of the face and wrinkles the skin with age lines and signs.

Getting back to the editorial reprint, let's look at the \$47 billion a year industry of the fast food outlets that supply an increasingly large part of the American diet and are infiltrating countries throughout the Globe. (McDonald's opened this week in Seoul, where Wendy's, Burger King, Kentucky Fried Chicken and Pizza Hut are already in operation.) A recent study by the Center for Science in the Public Interest reported that eight of the largest fast food chains cook french fries and other foods in beef tallow, high in saturated fats.

Fast food patrons, the reprint continued, are exposed to artificial preservatives and questionable food colorings. The fast food industry is not required to list ingredients because the Food and Drug Administration does not apply the federal ingredient law to fast food chains. The Center is now petitioning the FDA to change this stance, even though The National Restaurant Association contends that listing the ingredients on fast food wrappers or menus would cause "undue anxiety" among patrons. I wonder why!?

In order to make an intelligent selection, one needs good, factual information. During these past decades of increasing degenerative problems in aging, the media has been very slow to look in any direction other than toward the monopolistic American medical establishment, which is in collusion with the pharmaceutical industry. Gradually, however, material is seeping into articles and editorials, into magazines and periodicals looking at health from different directions. This is a new level of health consciousness and an important part of the ongoing spiritual revolution. Wonderful! I love it! □

Dorothy Travers-Davies has been on a worldwide trip for several months and has been sending in her columns from various exotic spots on the globe.

1986 Convention Staff Needed!!

Because Convention 1986 will be held in an area where there is no local church group, we will not have a "local committee" as such, and will need to fill in the gaps with volunteers as well as with a few people willing to be overworked in return for coverage of their expenses. (Expenses constitute room and board, and possibly some travel coverage.)

Jobs to be filled include drivers for shuttle vans (airport runs as well as on-campus shuttles), people to help set up the physical needs for worship services (like communion things, the altar, etc.), audio-visual specialist, people to help at the registration desk (these people need to have good basic arithmetic and verbal skills, unending energy, willingness to spend long hours at the desk, an ability to answer all sorts of questions patiently, strong responsibility, — and a good knowledge of Convention members would be a definite asset as well), and a few others, including a "go-fer."

Age? Go-fer applicants should be at least 12 (or a mature 11); drivers need licenses and adequate experience; there is no upper age limit.

If you are interested in any of the above specifically, or in other possibilities not listed, please write or phone Muff Worden at the **Central Office**,

48 Sargent St., Newton, MA 02158.

Phone Number is (617) 969-4240.

We will be filling the staff and volunteer positions as quickly as we can, so let us hear from you as soon as possible.

Thanks very much!

Muff

ECLECTICA



Swedenborgian Composer Departs this World

Composer Richard Yardumian, longtime member and Music Director of the Swedenborgian movement called Nova Hierosolyma



Mr. Richard
Yardumian.

(distinguished chiefly by its belief in an internal sense of Swedenborg's theological works) passed into the spiritual realm this past fall. His stature in the world of classical composition was international, and his renown to the general public was such that *Newsweek Magazine* carried a notice of his passing. His music may be of spiritual interest to Swedenborgians due to his practice of infusing his understanding of the New Church into his compositions.

He was born of Armenian ancestry in Philadelphia in 1917, the youngest of ten children. He was the only child not to receive formal music instruction. He began

his formal studies in music at the age of 21. The first presentation of any of Mr. Yardumian's works came in 1945, when "Desolate City" was performed by the Philadelphia Orchestra under the direction of Eugene Ormandy. Since that time, the Philadelphia Orchestra has given nearly 100 performances of Yardumian compositions, and his works have been performed all over the world by the great orchestras.

Of his own work, Mr. Yardumian once said: "To whom does the contemporary composer address himself when he goes to put down his notes on score paper? And, from out of what? Does he direct his mind out to the professional? to his peers? to the admirers? to critics? to prevailing traditions of his time? Or does he look up to something higher — inward — deeper, but in common with the audience; something worth singing about: community, country, Church, God, any high objective or aspiration that the composer has in common with the audience?"

"A higher objective helps put the ego in its proper place. I am not saying suffocate or kill the ego. Just don't let it dominate the scene! To put it another way: self-confidence, self-assurance comes from having things in their right order." Dr. Hans Moldenhauer writes: "The generating element in the music of Richard Yardumian is its ever-present spirituality. It is a quality equally apart from the cold logistics of an age of reason, or from the irrational emotionalism of the romantic era, or from the aesthetic experimentations born in a time of anxiety...it is the spiritual note which renders Yardumian's music universal and thereby unifying."

Mr. Yardumian is survived by his wife, Ruth, and ten children. His works can be obtained through special ordering at your local record store.

Chong On "Contemporary Theatre"

Ping Chong, creator and producer of the avant garde stage production, "Angels of Swedenborg," gave a lecture entitled "Aspects of Contemporary Theatre" at the St. Louis Art Museum on January 7th to a surprisingly large audience. "Angels of Swedenborg" will be playing in St. Louis in early March; Chong was in town to begin casting and promoting his highly acclaimed production centering around the life of Robert Swedenborg, Chong's 20th century

version of Emanuel Swedenborg.

Chong's style of theatre uses a pastiche of disciplines, all of which are rooted in his background. His parents were active in Southern Chinese Opera; his father was also an established scenic painter. Chong grew up in America watching "I Love Lucy" and then studied visual arts in college, before graduating as a filmmaker. He then spent eight years working with dancing great Meredith Monk. All these elements appear in Chong's highly celebrated theatre productions.

Chong stressed that he is attempting to discover a language that can speak to our rapidly evolving society, rather than relying on communication forms that are for another era. Most importantly, Chong asserts that "theatre should be a place for magic."



He describes "Angels of Swedenborg" as his most successful work — a magical journey of a scientist searching for the spiritual life. Digital computers, VCRs and all the latest electronic gadgetry conmingle with angels, French

rhumba, Russian punk rock and generic movie music, producing a tension that Chong sees as basic for the modern western person: hi-tech glitter versus the spiritual dimension of life.

TV Star Married at Wayfarers Chapel

Gary Burghoff, who played Radar on the classic TV series, "MASH," was married recently at the Swedenborgian Wayfarers Chapel in Palos Verdes, California by the Rev. Harvey Tafel. The ceremony was small and private, though pictures of the wedding with Rev. Tafel officiating appeared in the National Enquirer.

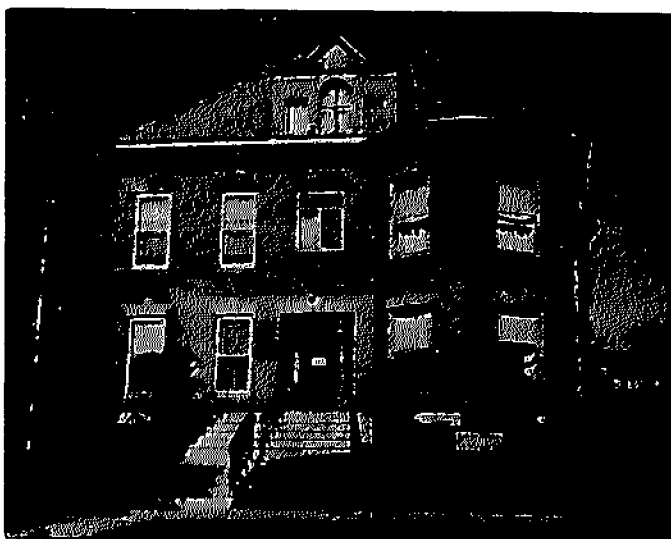
Complimentary Hymns

The Hymn Society of America offers free copies of hymn festival programs to all churches. These programs include formats of scripture and hymns with creative suggestions for singing. These festivals may be used at regular worship times or at special

events. For the variety packet of hymn festivals write: The Hymn Society of America, National Headquarters, Box 30854, Texas Christian University, Ft. Worth, Texas, 76129.

Chicago Society Installs New Pastor

The Chicago Society of the New Jerusalem has welcomed a new pastor this year, the Rev. Gladys A. Wheaton, formerly of the Swedenborgian Church of Greater Cleveland. In an installation service officiated at by the President of the General Convention, the Rev. Randall E. Laakko, on November 24, 1985, the Chicago group officially embarked on a new chapter in their journey of faith. The Chicago Church is



Church of the New Jerusalem, Chicago.

located in a large three-story house on a major street two blocks from the University of Chicago. Also within a few blocks are four seminaries, making the neighborhood most interesting and fertile. The Rev. Thornton Smallwood has recently retired from his lay ministry and leadership there. We wish the Chicago Society well in their new ministry.

Workable Solution

Dear Editor:

Just because words occasionally create problems is no reason to lapse into nonsense. I refer, of course, to the non-solution to inclusive language proposed in David Throop's letter in the January *Messenger*.

My first response was to laugh and set it aside. However, this is precisely why the problem of inclusive language usage persists. For all too long, the endeavor to address the issue and take the problem seriously has been greeted with ridicule and criticism. True, clumsy solutions were rightly pointed out as problematic. But it is also true that a workable solution has been around for some time.

The Bible is dominated by male language, as most serious readers have well been aware. So much so that a scholarly committee has been working at retranslating it into inclusive language for Lectionaries to be used on a voluntary basis. Eventually, I am sure, the entire Bible will be rendered in the inclusive language.

This committee chose to solve the problem of the third person singular pronoun by using 'they' 'them' and 'their' in the case of an indefinite third person singular antecedent. In so doing, the committee pointed out the solid history of this construction by careful writers and speakers: Shakespeare, Shaw, Lord Chesterfield, John F. Kennedy, and C.S. Lewis.

The committee also referred to a number of basic authorities: the 1973 *Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary* and the 1977 *Modern Language Association Handbook for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*. In addition, I am trying to find a book to which they referred; viz., Miller and Swift, *Words and Women: New Language in New Times* (1976).

The writer or speaker who wishes to be taken seriously will not persist in using 'he' and 'him' as a generic pronoun. A linguistic purist might wince at the use of they, them, their. But their voices will either diminish in influence or their minds will posit another solution to 'laughing and continuing to do business as usual.'

Rev. F. Robert Tafel
Boston

Prayer Fellowship

Dear Editor:

In the December *Messenger*, Eric Allison, in his excellent article on the nature and necessity of Prayer, says of me: "Jill had been the driving force behind the Prayer Fellowship among Swedenborgians..." There must be hundreds of people who feel this to be a totally inadequate statement. It was in fact Gwynne Mack who founded the Prayer Fellowship, with a large membership in America, and smaller numbers of New Church people in England, Norway, Australia, Nigeria, Sweden, South Africa. From her monthly Bulletins, issued with the Prayer-Request slips, she put together and published the book *"Talking with God"* which ran into several editions but is now unfortunately out of print. In my view, it should certainly be reprinted by the Spiritual Growth and Healing Committee as their first priority. It was only when Gwynne Mack's husband became seriously ill in 1963, that she asked me to take over the Directorship, which I carried on for ten years, until my husband and I retired to England in 1973. If this letter is read by any of the old members of the Prayer Fellowship, I appeal to you to write to Eric Allison and do all you can to stimulate and support the Committee in its endeavor "to revive the Fellowship."

Jill Kingslake
Bath, England

Source of Enthusiasm

Dear Editor,

Many people ask, "Why don't our children stay in the New Church?" (Church of the New Jerusalem), so I'll try to answer the question. I think we do not read and study enough, to become thoroughly convinced, and therefore to become enthusiastic teachers. We let the minister study. The one who studies, learns.

Here are three suggestions on how to read and study the Word of the Lord, using Swedenborg's books and New Church teachings.

Take your pick:

1) Wilson Van Dusen recommends marking your copy of any of the thirty volumes of Swedenborg, at anything good, or new, or challenging, or at anything you always wanted to believe, or at a subject you want

to follow up, or at something that hits you squarely, or at something you doubt. I would like to add that, to be more useful, you keep a simple reference on the last page of your book, and at your marked passages: a) = good, b) = new, c) = I always wanted to believe that, etc.

2) Chauncey Giles wrote: Read a whole paragraph of Swedenborg once, twice, etc. until you get an idea from it. Read a paragraph a day.

3) A suggested reading plan came out with *Heaven and Hell*: Read the "Table of Contents" and mark each heading that interests you. Then pick one marked passage and read the chapter or paragraph, and any references; and go back to the "Table of Contents" for more on the same or related subjects. This method can be used to advantage for any of the books of Swedenborg.

To make you think, I'll quote a Swedenborgian Scholar: "If you don't like how you are, change your guardian angel." Your guardian angel reads the Word every time you do, and can put ideas into your conscience. Your conscience is God talking with you. Neglect reading the Word, and your guardian will be changed. Start and continue reading the Word, and you'll invite a better

guardian angel. This works. I have experienced it.

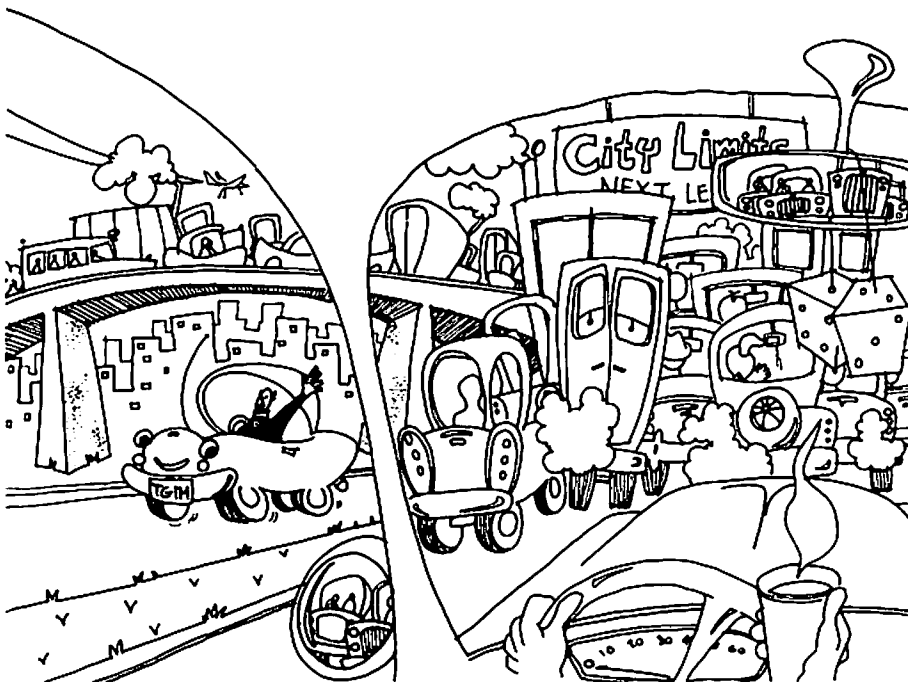
*Velma Bates Ramirez
Puerto Rico*

Foreign Friends

Dear Editor:

A little bit of information has made it into our group concerning the Swedenborgian Church. We are very interested in your faith and activities, but there is so little opportunity in our country for us to learn about different religions. We would appreciate any written materials — books, pamphlets, single sheets of paper — that you can send to us. Unfortunately, we cannot send money from our country. And to speak a truth, to buy one \$25.00 book in American money would take a whole month's salary. Poland needs help desperately in discovering possibilities for soul development! If you could send a note that materials are coming, it would facilitate our reception of them. Very gratefully,

*Andrzej Boryna
OS 30-Lecia PRL B4/C20
73-110 Stargard Szczecinski
Poland*



Concept by George Dole; artistic rendering by Paul Stridick

Partial Directory of Churches and Book Centers

SOUTHEAST

Swedenborg House

825 W. Mercer's Fernery Rd.
DeLand, FL 32720
Rev. Ernest L. Frederick
Home: 904-734-7378

SOUTH

Swedenborgian Memorial Church

35th at 12th Ave.
Gulfport, MS 39531
Secretary: Vera Hersey
Church: 601-864-1301

MIDWEST

Swedenborgian Church Church of the Holy City

5710 So. Woodlawn Ave.
Chicago, IL 60627
Rev. Gladys Wheaton
Church: 312-363-7141
Home: 312-324-4272

New Church (Swedenborgian)

812 Indiana Ave.
La Porte, IN 56350
Rev. Theodore LeVan
Home: 219-362-1959

Swedenborgian Church of Greater Cleveland

4815 Broadview Rd.
Cleveland, OH 44109
President: Jean Bestor
Church: 216-351-8093
Home: 216-871-5545

Church of the New Jerusalem

South Main & West Reynolds Sts.
Urbana, OH 43078
Rev. Dr. Dorothea W. Harvey
Home: 513-653-4857

Swedenborgian Church Church of the Open Word

1040 Dautel Rd.
St. Louis, MO 63146
Rev. James Lawrence
Church: 314-872-7124
Home: 314-647-1819

Church of the Holy City

4th & Pleasant Sts.
Royal Oak, MI 48067
Rev. F. Gardiner Perry
Home: 313-546-7583

Virginia Street Church

170 Virginia St.
St. Paul, MN 55102
President: Lewis Small
Church: 612-224-4553
Home: 612-927-6246

Church of the New Jerusalem (Swedenborgian)

Pawnee Rock, KS 67567
President: Keith Mull
Home: 316-285-2985

New Jerusalem Church

East Main St.
Pretty Prairie, KS 67570
Rev. Eric Zacharias
Church: 316-459-6893
Home: 316-459-6987

Church of the New Jerusalem

Norway, IA 52318
President: Sylvia Schulte
Home: 319-227-7389

SWEDENBORGIAN BOOK CENTERS

Swedenborg Foundation, Inc.

139 East 23rd St.
New York, NY 10010
Mr. Darrell Ruhl, Manager
212-673-4643

Swedenborg Book Center

2129 Chestnut St.
Philadelphia, PA 19103
215-563-4643

New Church Library

5710 So. Woodlawn Ave.
Chicago, IL 60637
Melinda Jester, Librarian
312-363-7141

Stone House Book Room

16244 Cleveland St.
Redmond, WA 98052
Rev. Paul Martin Grumman
206-883-7825

Swedenborg School of Religion Library

48 Sargent St.
Newton, MA 02158
Marian Kirven, Librarian
617-244-0504

Urbana University Library

College Way
Urbana, OH 43078
Lois Ward, Librarian
University: 513-652-1301, ext. 377

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COMMENCEMENTS

Baptisms

Henry — Isaac Robert Henry, son of Amy Henry, was baptized into the Christian faith on January 5, 1986, at the Church of the New Jerusalem, Urbana, Ohio, the Rev. Dr. Dorothea Harvey officiating.

Moelich — Ashley Noelle Moelich, newborn daughter of Kellen and Jane (Harper) Moelich, was baptized into the Christian faith on Dec. 29, 1985, at the La Porte New Church, the Rev. Theodore J. LeVan officiating.

Sparks — Michael L. Sparks (adult) was baptized into the Christian faith on Dec. 22, 1985 at the Church of the New Jerusalem, Fryeburg, Maine, the Rev. David L. Rienstra officiating.

Marriages

Bossdorf-Perry — Robert E. Bossdorf, Professor of Pastoral Care at the Swedenborg School of Religion, and Eleanor A. Perry were united in Christian marriage on Dec. 28, 1985, at the Central Congregational Church, North Quincy, Massachusetts, the Rev. Terry C. Thomason officiating.

Pelton-Charles — Jack David Pelton and Kimberly Ann Charles were united in Christian marriage on Dec. 27, 1985 at the Church of the New Jerusalem, Fryeburg, Maine, the Rev. David L. Rienstra officiating.

Deaths

Schewe — Waltraud Dorothea Schewe, 65, passed into the spiritual world on Dec. 11, 1985. Memorial services were held at First Memorial, Kelowna, B.C. on Dec. 16, 1985, the Rev. Erwin D. Reddekopp officiating.

Schneider — Carl Schneider, 67, life-long member of the Church of the Good Shepherd, Kitchener, Ontario, passed into the spiritual world on Nov. 27, 1985. Memorial services were held on Nov. 30, 1985 at the Ratz-Bechtel Funeral Home, the Rev. Eric Allison officiating.

Schneider — Norman Christophe Schneider, 96, life-long member of the Church of the Good Shepherd, Kitchener, Ontario, passed into the spiritual world on August 25, 1985. Memorial services were held at the Church of the Good Shepherd on Sept. 5, 1985, the Rev. Eric Allison officiating.

Goddard — Langdon Goddard, longtime member of the Cambridge Church of the New Jerusalem, passed into the spiritual world on January 12, 1985. A Memorial Service was held Sunday, January 20, 1985 at the Cambridge Church, the Rev. F. Robert Tafel officiating.

New Address

Rev. Robert E. McCluskey
80 Wilson St., Apt. 5
Portland, ME 04101
(207) 871-8281

General Convention of the New Jerusalem
in the United States of America
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St. Louis, MO 63146

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