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Swedenborg

The Angels

Ping Chong's of



FROM THE EDITOR

Ping Chong may not be very familiar with the religious writings of Emanuel Swedenborg, but he has put his finger rather elegantly on a crucial dynamic of the Swedenborgian faith: the confluence of science and spirit. The feature interview in this month's Messenger clearly illuminates Mr. Chong's fascination with Swedenborg as a scientist seeking his soul. According to Chong, Swedenborg is a metaphor for all of modern civilization — hence, his new play, "The Angels of Swedenborg."

I hope you enjoy reading the interview with this leading force in Contemporary Theater as much as I have enjoyed conducting it, for it left me more than a little reflective on the relationship between Swedenborg the Scientist and Swedenborg the Visionary.

Lovers of Swedenborg's theological writings who delve into his scientific works may be surprised at their high degree of similarity. Of course, those who study Swedenborg's life as a whole piece (see, among others, Alfred Acton's Swedenborg's Preparation) know that the Swedish scientist and seer presents a religious view fully consonant with his scientific one. But Swedenborg never discusses scientific corollaries in his religious works, so a student of only his revelatory material will not be necessarily privy to their scientific basis.

Yet, it was this rational aspect of his theology that made Swedenborg so attractive to learned Christians in the late 19th and 20th centuries, when Darwin, Marx, Freud and others began shaking the foundations of the traditional Christian faith. By offering an enlightened third alternative to skepticism and blind faith, a new age of scientific spirituality, if you will, dawned.

Though that era gave way to others, religion

and science are again courting each other. Dozens of writers are now triumphantly proclaiming that the New Physics are describing the same reality spoken of by the great mystics, though they work from different vantage points. Amazingly, Swedenborg's voice is again useful and helpful as science and spirit attempt co-habitation in the human mind.

I have written in these pages recently on Swedenborg's relationship to the movement called New Thought. Most of these movements use the word "science" in their name: Divine Science, Religious Science, Science of Mind, and distantly, Christian Science. Swedenborg is appreciated in many of these circles precisely because he pursued his motto, "Now it is permitted to enter intellectually into the mysteries of faith."

Today, this confluence of science and spirit is inspiring the emergence of the New Age spiritual seeker, who is equally at home behind a computer or in a state of meditation.

Hopefully, we will not hesitate to use what is illuminating and helpful from either side of this prospective marriage. This requires a healthy dose of courage, for most people proceed with definite biases one way or the other. Many spiritual seekers need the kind of grounding and critical skepticism that science can lend. And those with a scientific bent can often benefit from the open, spontaneous and heartfelt wonder that comes with a spiritualized understanding of reality.

All of which is to say: It's great to be alive in the 1980s!

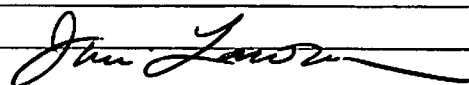


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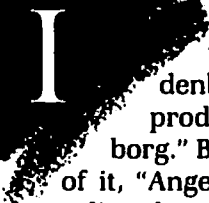
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An Interview with Ping Chong — Wholeness and Magic: The Angels of Swedenborg

James F. Lawrence



It was with a sense of genuine surprise that the word was heard throughout some Swedenborgian circles that a major New York theatre production was entitled, "The Angels of Swedenborg." By the time most of the church became aware of it, "Angels" had already played in Chicago and Minneapolis, where it received very good reviews, both from the critics and from the few Swedenborgians who attended showings. As many of us began looking into it, we discovered that the creator, director and producer happened to be a rather renowned New York force in contemporary theatre: Ping Chong.

Mr. Chong, it seems, is a two-time recipient of a Creative Artist Public Service Fellowship, an Obie Award Winner, a two-time National Endowment for the Arts Fellow, and a Guggenheim Fellowship recipient. He is also the founder and ongoing creative center of the Fiji Theatre Company, which "is dedicated to new concepts in theater, the synthesis of live performances with media, and the exploration of new narrative ideas." His theatre productions have been presented in the major cities in this country and throughout Europe with much acclaim.

My interest thoroughly aroused, I waited patiently for "The Angels of Swedenborg" to make its way to St. Louis, where it was commissioned by the St. Louis Art Museum to kick off a very ambitious program of bringing contemporary theatre to St. Louis. Finally, Mr. Chong arrived in St. Louis several weeks in advance of the performances to conduct auditions and to deliver a public lecture on "Aspects of Contemporary Theatre."

A good number of us from the local church attended the lecture, and our suspicions that this was no ordinary play were confirmed. Our other suspicion, that Mr. Chong knew perilously little about the chief character in his "play," also proved true. Yet, for myself I detected an exciting thesis in the air — namely, that the life of Swedenborg, which I have always found to be of tremendous inspiration, provides an uncannily useful metaphor for the modern Westerner.

And so I waited impatiently for Mr. Chong to come to St. Louis for two weeks of rehearsal before the three showings of "The Angels of Swedenborg" right at the cusp February and March. I wanted to explore both matters: the depth of his knowledge and use of Swedenborg in this play, and his open-ended and creative use of Swedenborg as a metaphor for us modern seekers, who are up to our necks in a seemingly sterile technological environment, but who are nonetheless craving a connection with spirit.

I was not disappointed with either the interview or the play.

I found Ping Chong to be an available, unpretentious, fun and stimulating artist. His main concern seems to be the use of the theatre for helping the audience achieve a greater wholeness in their modern lifestyles. His admittedly limited knowledge of Swedenborg does not get in the way of his objective, because he is more interested in using Swedenborg as a sort of Zeitgeist for the modern era than he is with perpetrating the content of Swedenborg's revelations.

Though I heartily recommend experiencing a live performance of the enchanting "Angels," let theatre-goers beware: contemporary theatre is not a close kin to traditional theatre. The theatre critic for the St.



Well, I think my first question is a trite one, so I know you answer this all the time . . . why Swedenborg?

Chong: For this project?

For this project.

Chong: Well, basically I can just tell you the genesis of the project, which is that I was commissioned by the Museum of Contemporary Art in Chicago to do a new work. And they were having their 10th anniversary. And I'm very fond of an Argentinian writer named Jorge Luis Borges. And he wrote two chapters on Swedenborg. (I have the book that Borges wrote, *Book of Imaginary Beings*), and I read those two chapters and I thought, this is intriguing. I'd never heard of Swedenborg before that. And those chapters fascinated me, so I went ahead and picked up an abridged version of Sweden-

Louis Post-Dispatch wrote the first truly negative review of "Angels"; I suspect it is no coincidence this was written in a city it played that is truly unacquainted with contemporary theatre.

A Professor of Art at a local university wrote in to vigorously defend Mr. Chong's creation, pointing out that the reviewer obviously applied traditional theatre criteria to a theatre production that is intentionally NOT traditional. She goes on to explain that Mr. Chong is an established master of "performance art" as a *visual art* form — not a dance form or a playwright's form.

For those Swedenborgians who wish to receive any benefit from "Angels of Swedenborg," you need to leave a couple of expectations at the door. One, it will not be an instructive play of either Swedenborg's theology, neither will it present his life biographically. Two, there will be no plot, as we normally experience one, and there will be no speaking lines. If by shedding these expectations you still wish to experience this theatre production, you can then enter into Mr. Chong's chamber of magic and participate in an ethereal world where you may find wholeness, along with the angels of Swedenborg.

borg's writings, and started to read about him for this project.

And already you were connecting your ideas or visions out of those two chapters with this new project that you were trying to get together?

Chong: Yes, and before that, however, my previous work opened with two angels battling in heaven. That's the way that angels were already alive for me, and I had already said that I wanted to do more with angels. And then I read Borges within a month's time, actually within the month I had opened that show. And so it seemed like . . .

Synchronicity.

Chong: Yeah, synchronicity, exactly. Plus the fact, this might not directly involve Swedenborg, that I'm very sympathetic with Carl Jung. The Jungian aspects are also in this

What I saw was that Swedenborg represented the prototype of the dilemma of 20th century man at this time.

work, very much present in this work. Not in any kind of didactic manner, you know.

No, more the general spirit and vision. Jung is certainly one of the most popular modern philosophers among Swedenborgians.

Chong: I wouldn't be surprised.

So there is a kindred spirit undergirding it all. Could you say a little bit of something about Swedenborg's total self as having some kind of message for today?

Chong: What happened was that once I had started to read about him, I had to deal with a dilemma, which was, do I illustrate what he saw, or do I do something more in the spirit of what connected me with the man? I decided against doing a literal transcription of his vision. What really interested me about Swedenborg was the fact that here was a man of science at the beginning of the Age of Reason — essentially the beginning of the loss of faith, the beginning of the loss of spirit — who is the son of an Archbishop. To me, the connections were all very interesting. Very rich. And then at 55, he had what we would call today a nervous breakdown.

Now you use that term in an interview with the Clayton newspaper, and it could be easily misunderstood.

Chong: No, I said that at that time it was called 'having a vision', and at our time it's called 'a nervous breakdown.' So I'm also diluting nervous breakdown, too, because in a sense, that's also kind of a mythology of our own time. It's like the mythology of psychiatry. And it was irrelevant to me anyway, whether it's a nervous breakdown or not. Essentially, it was a man coming up against a wall, the wall being science and the wall being that you cannot find the spirit through science, or through reason, because reason is not ultimately the deepest part of the human consciousness.

How do you connect that with our time now?

Chong: That's why I wanted to do this piece, because here is the prototype western man. Prototype, typical western man of the new world, of the New Age, starting with the Renaissance essentially. That's where it really began, from the Middle Ages to the Renaissance, and then that logically progressed further. Of course, you can go further back and say it started with the Greeks,

with Aristotle, so it was all there waiting. What I saw was that Swedenborg represented the prototype of the dilemma of 20th century man at this time. Which is the schism between spirit and materialism, if you want, or spirit and rationalism. Whatever that breakdown was, whether he was trying to find something consciously or not isn't important; it's immaterial to me. But he was trying to find instinctively — the science fiction word is "groc" — what was missing from his existence. And I find a lot of poignancy in the fact that he was trying to find the soul in the material world for so long. I find that very poignant, especially in a time when anatomy was completely outlawed in Europe, except in Paris. So, I thought that here was a man trying to find, not even necessarily consciously, how to become whole again. How does man become whole again? And that's to me, very largely, the western dilemma at the present time. The schism between spirit and science.

You live in Manhattan, which is probably the most extreme example of modern culture, and in many people's minds an area that especially manifests some of the negative aspects of modern culture. I can see a message saying that when you run as hard into materialism as we're doing, or maybe as Swedenborg did in the first path of his life, something happens. Are you saying modern society's on the verge of a nervous breakdown, or on the verge of a spiritual renaissance, or both?

Chong: Or either. I think those are all potential possibilities. I think we're definitely in an age of false prophets, an age of, do you want to call it the age of the anti-Christ? But it's really a time where man is at some kind of crossroads. And whether the crossroads means to have to cross by fire before he comes through to a reconciliation with his spirit, or whether we can get through that without the fire, is something that I can't answer. My deep sense of it is that we are at a crossroads. Now how much time this crossroads involves, again, is a big question I can't answer. All I know is that all this materialism, all this paganism, the pagan of the machine — I call it the New Paganism — this sort of fetish of the mind, the Cartesian split, is a major wrong turn.

I should have clipped from this morning's *Post Dispatch* an article on the editorial page by a man who is studying modern technology. It's about



At the end, he's in his world, his hard-edged world, which is inorganic, essentially, and then he enters into the spiritual world. And the implication is that he enters into a world that is more whole.

robots, and most of the leading scientists in Japan and this country who are working on robots believe that in 20 years robots will have emotions. That's what this guy was saying! Which is just mind blowing, but in terms of our relationship with technology, who knows what lies in store for us?

Chong: However, as I always reiterate when I do interviews about this particular piece, I'm not against technology, because technology itself isn't a dehumanizing factor.

You even use high-technology to enhance your message!

Chong: Right, exactly. So it's not that I'm against technology in itself. I'm against the idea of these technological systems being grafted onto human existence. And also the distancing from one's spiritual being by this materialism. That's a product of a society that produces endless things you don't need. 85 brands of toilet paper, perfumed and different colors. Do you really need this? It's also true, of course, that New York is an extreme example of 20th century at its peak in a sense, but at the same time, what happens in New York eventually happens in the rest of the country. And you can see it here, too; you know it's here. Maybe it's not here in the kind of intense level that it is in New York, but it's here. People know what's happening in the rest of the world; we all are conditioned by the same propaganda and all this kind of stuff. There are certainly regional differences, but in terms of material existence, there's not. You have as big a supermarket out here as we do in New York. And this place (St. Louis) is a lot more like Los Angeles, for instance, which I hate. When you're in Los Angeles, walking down a street is practically a crime — to walk! And it isn't so extreme here, but it's a car culture. Your sense of time, our sense of time is very much determined by the speed of the media, the speed that we travel at. All these things affect our inner being in a way too. And that's not necessarily wrong, but there's no way in the present culture where you feel that there's just *being*. Where you can just settle and be. The society doesn't have that built into it.

Is it fair to say that you value the technological and material realm, but your very emphatic statement here is that it is insufficient, it is not a total reality?

Chong: And it's given too much value. It's so important as a value.

It's given center stage.

Chong: Right. That's not really going to bring inner peace. It's not going to make human beings in the 20th century feel less anxious. I think 20th century man is very anxious, and I feel that anxiousness is a product of this buzz, this electronic buzz that's around them all the time. At one time man was more central to his own existence. And now we become smaller and smaller, and the technology becomes bigger and bigger. And man is dehumanized. That's really what it is: we're being dehumanized. Community as an idea is even starting to fall by the wayside.

Oh, I hope not.

Chong: Human community, you know. It's much harder, I think, to maintain those human values; it is very much a product of a technological consciousness. Nazi Germany couldn't have happened, except in the 20th century. It's the first *bureaucratically* organized genocide. Technologically organized.

What is your sense of Swedenborg's own experience with his spiritual crisis? Was what happened to him healthy? Is what happens to Robert Swedenborg in this play a healthy development? Or are you being prescriptive in any way, or are you trying to be descriptive of some . . .

Chong: Well, in terms of the piece, it's not a didactic piece really, except for the opening. You can take it as satirical, because the opening monolog by Swedenborg is that he pronounces who he is, what he's done, but it's a mixture of the old Swedenborg and the new. There's sort of a deliberate absurdist cross-over, so that he's not Robert Swedenborg and his ancestor Emanuel Swedenborg; he's sort of both. And then he goes on to tell you all the technological gadgetry that he owns, so you introduce the man as a man of his age, and to me we're not just products of 1980, the 20th century. We're products that go back in time. Those people are still with us, that energy, that legacy is a continuous thing. We're not just something that sprung out of Zeus' head. So that's why it's totally acceptable to me for him to say, "I discovered this before Pierre LaPlace" and then

go on to say that "I own a PC computer." Because it's totally one line of development. The end of the piece is not didactic, but the audience feels what the point of the piece is without it being didactic. At the end, what happens is that he's in his world, his hard-edged world, which is inorganic, essentially, and then he enters into the spiritual realm. And the implication is that he enters into a world that is more whole. And it's not implied through any kind of intellectual point made, but more through a sense of it. When the audience sees it, they feel what that ending is. But at the same time, the piece does not imply that the angelic realm is that to be complete you have to accept the dark side, to see that in the angelic realm the dark side exists too.

Well, there's your Jungian influence.

Chong: Possibly.

Which is an ongoing dialog within us, actually. There's the reality of the negative force, but . . .

Chong. But also simultaneously the negative force is also a positive force. It's a tricky thing. So that at the end of the piece, you're accepting, well again, it's that Jungian thing of you're not projecting on the outside your enemies. No, rather you're recognizing the enemy in yourself as well. That you are one whole thing, and that you are both light and darkness. But aside from the Jungian influence, it's also my own Eastern background. It may be called Jungian, but I could easily refer to American Indian culture, I could refer to certainly my own culture, and we wouldn't call it "the unconscious." We would call it the inner being or the inner spirit. Jung calls it the "collective unconscious," which I don't really care for as a term. Because I find "unconscious" unacceptable. It's more like the primal mind, or the primal essence, or the primal spirit. As my American Indian friend said, and he objected to the "collective unconscious," he

called it the primal being or the primal inner being.

I know in your public lecture here you spoke about your parents and their involvement in Chinese opera. Did you have a connection at one time in your life, or still, with Chinese philosophy, Taoism, with those perspectives?

Chong: Sure. Essentially my perspective is, I don't want to say Eastern, but in a way it is Eastern. When I read my American Indian friend's book, I sat there and I went, "I know all this already and I agree with you."

I've looked at reviews, I think, from all of the places that "Angels" has played in so far, and it seems to be very, very exciting and interesting to the critics. Is that true, has the recep-



***Angels of
Swedenborg***

tion been nearly totally positive?

Chong: Yeah. I would say we got one bad review, but that one was just one out of everything else. It was not really a negative review.

What are your plans for "Angels"?

Chong: Well, we're going to Cincinnati right after this.

And then Pittsburgh . . .

Chong: Well, there may be others in between that. Yeah, we might be going to Europe with it, but that's still in the works right now. And then we were supposed to do it in New York, at the Brooklyn Academy of Music, but we're negotiating with them, so we don't know if that's going to happen in the fall. And then we're supposed to go to San Francisco with it in February and do a tour off in the northwest with it. So, there's plans to keep it going for a while.

Has "Angels" evolved from production to production? Are you making changes as you go along?

Chong: Not major changes. Some minor changes. It was pretty much finished when we finished it. So there aren't that many changes to be made in it. Except for adjustments for a different space in each place.

Do you call this *avante garde* theater?

Chong: I don't call it that. It's not my choice to call it anything.

I know, but there is a categorization that when people want to be able to communicate something of differences in theater styles, your work would more generally fall into . . .

Chong: I would call it a contemporary art theatre.

What do you try to accomplish in that form in terms of rectifying theatre from what it has become?

Chong: Basically, what I am doing is I'm saying that the theatre in the last — I don't know where to put the limit, but at least the last 60 years — is essentially a 19th century form. That's one thing. It's a 19th century form, it's a playwright's form, and therefore a literary form, whereas theatre is a visual experience. And I feel that it's a little bit lopsided. I'm not completely against that, but I think it's basically misguided. Because the stage is a place where you can't compete with cinema, you can't compete with TV for the kind of naturalism that's possible in those areas. A theater should be a place where myth and mystery exists. So I'm feeling and saying that we have to find ways to

speaking in the 20th century for the 20th century. We should speak as contemporary artists creating a living form with theatre. Not maintaining a form that's already outmoded. Which I think theatre has been. In the same way that we can enjoy ballet, we can enjoy the symphony orchestra, but all of those are not 20th century forms. And to create this sense of snobbery about the symphony orchestra and the ballet is basically dishonest on one level, because it's an ethnocentric idea. It's an ethnocentric form for one thing, so you're basically making a racist statement when you say this is superior to that. So that's what it really is, it's not to say that the work is not good or anything like that, it's just to recognize that you cannot compare a giraffe with a rabbit, or a turnip with a tree. They're not the same thing. And that's one of the points that I think, something, if human beings are to evolve we have to really come to terms with. Which is to recognize the other as an equal. That doesn't even mean that you have to agree with them. But the fact is that they have a right to exist in the same way that you have a right to exist. So, I think that's a very serious problem with existence.

This is a very short play. Is that typical of your work?

Chong: My work usually runs from an hour to an hour and a half. Borges writes short stories, too!

Never written a novel.

Chong: That's right. He always said, "I don't understand why anybody would want to write a novel." And I feel the same way. The fashion these days in new experimental work is to do 12 hour pieces and 5 hour pieces, and I never could see the point of it. I'm much more a compact kind of thinker.

I remember in writing classes, if you were verbose, that was the mark of an amateur. If you can get it concise and precise, then you've said it.

Chong: Right, right. □

Seminary Inaugurates New President

Dr. Mary Kay Klein, formerly professor of Philosophy at Urbana University, was officially inaugurated into the presidency of the Swedenborg School of Religion on March 15, 1986 at a gala event that included many luminaries from the General Convention and from other theological institutions in the greater Boston area.

Held at the seminary in Newton, Massachusetts, the ceremony opened with a prelude by the New England Conservatory of Music Brass Quartet. The program included "Greetings to the President" from the Rev. Randall E. Laakko, President of General Convention, from Rev. Richard H. Tafel, Chair of the Council of Ministers of the Swedenborgian Church, and Dr. Paul G. Bunnell, President of Urbana University. Following the induction ceremony, conducted by Mr. Harvey Johnson, President of the New Church Theological School Corporation, the new president gave the following inaugural address.

Inaugural Address

Dr. Mary Kay Klein

Delegates and Representatives of the academic and church community; Members of the Board of Managers and Board of Directors; Convention Officers; faculty, students, and staff of the Swedenborg School of Religion, family and friends:

Emanuel Swedenborg holds a special place in the intellectual history of the Western world. From the Greek philosophers to the present, most great thinkers have, in their accounts of the human condition, emphasized persons as knowers, not doers, persons as intellect, not as human beings capable of giving and receiving affection. Swedenborg, however, takes as his model for the nature of God Divine Love and Wisdom. This basic model has enormous significance for his concept of person and his theories about education, which in turn can be translated into a unique view of theological education.

In the first paragraph of *Divine Love and Wisdom*, Swedenborg states that "Man knows that there is such a thing as love, but he does not know what love is . . . he is whol-

ly unaware that love is his very life"; and that this love is of God. (n.1). Later he states that "love together with wisdom in its very essence is in God" (n.28), and further, "it is because the divine essence itself is love and wisdom that man has two capacities for life: from one of these he has understanding, from the other will. The capacity from which he has understanding derives everything it has from the influx of wisdom from God, and the capacity from which he has will derives everything it has from the influx of the love from God." (n.30). Thus each of us, according to Swedenborg, is a recipient of the essence of God, of Divine Love and Wisdom. (n.33). The end of Divine Love and Wisdom is use: love tends toward use, and achieves it through the means of wisdom; human beings are, therefore, responsible for living a life of use, guided by love and wisdom.

Because we are free, Swedenborg says, we can choose to be open to Divine Love and Wisdom, or to reject it. Regeneration is the process by which we become progressively more open to the Love and Wisdom of the Lord. The purpose of the General Convention of Swedenborgian Churches is essentially "to help people to be open to the Lord's presence and leading, especially by fostering personal and ordained ministries which facilitate the spiritual well-being of people." Each person is unique, and needs to learn to experience his or her own integrity and meaning as an individual.

The facilitation of spiritual well-being is essentially an educational goal. The Board of Education of the Church has adopted a position paper which spells out some of the assumptions on which education in a Swedenborgian context is based. Swedenborgian education "is based on the assumption that each person is created with a never-ending potential for growth, self-actualization and discovery of meaning in life, and that the experience of this growth gives insight permitting participation in the growth process of others . . . this education of whole persons as feeling, caring individuals; learning through experiencing intellectual and spiritual growth, de-emphasizes the mere memorization of facts and information. Truth is not

taught by the simple telling; learning is through struggle, engagement, and an involvement that links knowledge to feelings to create a sense of meaning. The goal becomes the development of persons who do not passively reflect the values and ideas of their culture but who actively seek to understand and transform that culture. This process involves freeing minds from prejudice and arbitrarily-imposed authority, allowing them to think for themselves and make their choices freely and rationally." (See "A Vision of Education" this issue)

Having explained these basic assumptions about education, the next question is how theological education fits into this model. Our students, as future ministers in a twenty-first century Christian denomination, must be educated to be facilitators of the process of regeneration, and to be those



**Dr. Mary
Kay Klein**

whose inspiration leads others to receiving the Love and Wisdom of the Lord. In order to do this, these ministers must be educated in many areas. They may be called upon, in the course of their service to the Lord, to be everything from pastoral counselors to executive managers, from bare-footed gurus to the people in charge of leaf-raking.

The curriculum at SSR, divided into four broad areas, provides a foundation for ministers to accomplish these many and varied kinds of tasks. Our curriculum contains the

following major elements:

1. An understanding of Swedenborg's key concepts and ideas, their historical and philosophical contexts, and the development of an ability to apply these ideas in life situations.
2. The development of skills necessary for pastoral effectiveness, including the understanding of the birth to death process of spiritual growth, and the development of the ability to be a constructive presence during this growth process.
3. The study of traditional academic disciplines, including Church History, Scripture, Theology, Philosophy, and Languages.

4. The development of professional ministerial skills, including the areas of Writing, Speech, Worship, Religious Education, Church Administration, Church Polity and Community Relations.

Undergirding all is the spiritual growth and development of our students in the course of their studies.

As an aid in all four of these areas, our curriculum includes, in addition to coursework at SSR, field education experiences, which include two local field education experiences, two experiences at Swedenborgian Church centers outside New England and a summer of Clinical Pastoral Education.

During the first seven months of my administration at SSR, the basic thrust has been towards the administrative organization of the institution. A clear and coherent organization will, I believe, help the functioning of the institution at all levels, freeing up the energies of faculty for teaching and creative research, and students for their intellectual and spiritual growth. We have produced in these seven months, three manuals — A Faculty Handbook, a Student Handbook, and a Field Education Handbook — each setting forth policies and procedures in a clear and coherent way. Many situations which had been dealt with on an ad hoc basis can now be resolved in a more orderly manner. We have also developed a number of new policies relating to academic administration, administrative structure, and our admissions process. We have undertaken active fundraising efforts for the first time in many years, and have begun in a number of ways to try to make our institution better known, and to strengthen our contacts within the academic and church communities.

Much more remains to be done. In program development, we need to work towards well-structured programs for the training of lay leaders and for special students who are not interested in pursuing the ministry, and for continuing education for ordained ministers and lay persons. Recruiting students, as well as future faculty members, is a major priority. More development and public relations efforts are clearly needed. Our system of governance needs more work.

And, above all, as we have for the past 120 years, we need to work towards defining and refining our educational program in ways that make us as an institution more receptive to the Love and Wisdom of the Lord, and better able to educate ministers to lead the Church in the future. □

Nominations from the Nominating Committee

Vice President

Frederick G. Perry, Jr.,
New Hampshire

The several years I have held the office of Vice President have been very stimulating during a period of substantial changes in the church's programs and operations. As a result of these, General Council saw fit to form the Ad Hoc Committee to determine how best to set Goals and Priorities for Convention during the "eighties" and beyond. The result is a replacement version of our Constitution and Bylaws to be presented for vote at this convention.

I would like to continue with the duties of this office, especially through participation in implementing the transition phases that would occur if the replacement Constitution and Bylaws are adopted.

Recording Secretary

Dorothy deB. Young, Massachusetts

Having accepted the nomination for Recording Secretary of General Convention, it is required that some personal information about each nominee be published in *The Messenger* prior to convention in June. I have served as Recording Secretary for the past two years. The work, the responsibilities and education have all been enjoyable. I appreciate the compatible interaction between officers and Convention personnel at all levels.

In the area of church related work, this is my twelfth year as secretary and clerk of the Boston Church. This encompasses duties with many of the committees and the Bostonview Corporation. I am involved in serving the Massachusetts Association and the Swedenborg School of Religion on the nominating committee of each. In the past, I have served on the Board of Directors of the School and on the Executive Board of the Association.

Since church work is my primary hobby, collecting plate blocks of U.S. stamps takes second place. I am also part-time mother, grandmother and great-grandmother to twenty-one family members. Much of my work is accomplished with the willing and patient cooperation of Larry my husband.

Treasurer

John Perry, Maine (Mass. Assoc.)

As a recently retired Research and Development Engineer for the U.S. Government, I am enjoying life being on the Maine Coast.

Having been a life-long member of the Boston Society, I am presently serving that group as its President and have served in the past as its Treasurer. I have also served the Mass. Association as a Director of its New Church Union.

I am presently serving Convention as its Assistant To The Treasurer, and the Swedenborg School of Religion as a Director and Assistant Treasurer.

I look forward with enthusiasm to being given the opportunity of serving the Convention as Treasurer.

General Council

(4 year terms)

Paul B. Zacharias, Minister
Ontario

Paul B. Zacharias, long active on Convention boards and committees, most recently chaired the Dept. of Communication. He has ministered to the Kitchener, Ontario, Society for over 21 years, during which time he edited the *New Church Messenger* for 8 years. Paul and Pat are just returning to Canada after almost a year's "sabbatical" as interim pastor to the New Church Society in Birmingham, England. They have three children and four grandchildren.

Carl C. Dick, Layperson, Alberta

Carl Dick was born into the New Church, and though he has had extensive contacts in his life with the United Church of Canada and the Mennonite Church, he is still very active in the Swedenborgian Church. Currently he is president of the Calgary New Church Society. He is Vice-President and teacher at an elementary school, as well as the president of the local Teachers' Association. He is married with three children, and is active locally as a musician and in implementing continuing education programs for adults.

Eldon Smith, Layperson, California

I am 59 years of age and have been a Swedenborgian all my life. My mother was a Swedenborgian and her father, the Rev. Jacob Schroeder, was a Swedenborgian Missionary Minister.

I make my living in the carpentry trade and am at present on the Board of Trustees of our local union and am a delegate to the District Council of Carpenters.

At the present time I am serving on the Board of Directors of the Pacific Coast Association and am the Probationary Lay Leader of the San Diego Society. I conduct worship services at least three times a month, with one Sunday off, as my home is 160 miles from San Diego, and my wife Annella, and I need this time for catching up on our home responsibilities. During the past 2½ years, our church attendance has gone from 10 to as high as 30 on a Sunday, and averages 20.

From 1963 to 1975 I was employed at the Wayfarers Chapel in Rancho Palos Verdes. My duties were many and varied from maintenance work to conducting Worship Services on the Sundays that the late Rev. Robert L. Young was out of town.

I am honored to have been asked to serve as a nominee for General Council and promise to do the very best I am capable of doing if elected to serve.

Frances R. McIntosh, Layperson, Ontario

(to complete Betty Schneider's term)

In February 1986 I retired from a two year term as President of the Board of the Church of the Good Shepherd, Kitchener. I have held many other offices in the church, everything from junior chef and chief dishwasher to Chairman of our 150th anniversary celebrations in 1983. Many happy years were spent in the Sunday School as teacher and superintendent. Recent community interests include the adult disabled, children in public schools in need of befriending, and the preservation of local heritage buildings. For the past three years I have chaired the Homer Watson House Foundation, developing an art gallery and workshop programmes, as well as generating funds for preservation. My four children are all grown, and I have two small grandsons. Some of you will remember me as editor of the League Journal some 35 years ago.

Board of Education

(3 year term)

Millie Laakko, Delaware

Millie Laakko approaches the work of the Board of Education from a broad background. For many years an elementary school teacher, she is now a full time mother and minister's wife. Besides many years of leadership in the Sunday School program at the Church of the Holy City in Wilmington, Millie was on staff for several LEI workshops. Today she is primarily involved with a clown ministry, which is part of her larger interest in the healing effects of humor. She also draws upon a background of music and involvement in two national interfaith workshops on the performing arts in her diverse interests in religious education. In addition, Millie is interested in Parent Education, and she has been both counselor and group leader with a Nursing Mothers center.

Board of Communication

(4 year term)

Corinne B. Tafel, Pennsylvania

As former Secretary of the Swedenborg Publishing Association, a member of the Board of the Tract Society and a sometime assistant to the Editor of "Our Daily Bread," I feel qualified to serve as an elected member on the Board of Communication.

I am interested in all aspects of writing, editing, publishing and communication. I also have a good knowledge of the collateral literature of the Church and know some of its present needs. I feel excited and encouraged about the expansion of the Department of Publication to the Department of Communication, which opens up many more possibilities.

I am a member of Philadelphia Church. My hobbies are Shakespeare and gardening.

Board of Missions

(3 year terms)

Horand K. Gutfeldt, California

Doris Tafel, Pennsylvania

Nominating Committee

(5 year terms; two people nominated for one position)

Ron Brugler, Michigan

I perceive the nominating committee as one of the most important functions within Convention, as the selection of qualified persons for various elected positions is the first step towards an effective and growing church. Having visited most of our churches

and knowing a broad segment of our members, I believe that I can bring to this committee the ability to select people with the skills and qualifications needed.

Robert McCluskey, Maine

As a candidate for the Nominating Committee, I bring the following background: I was ordained in the Swedenborg Church in July, 1984. Since then I have served as minister to the New Church in Portland, Maine. In addition, I serve as representative to the Division of Church and Society, a program unit of the National Council of Churches of Christ, and have been attending the Governing Board sessions of the NCCC as proxy for our president, Rev. Randall Laakko. For the past year, I have served as Chaplain of the New Church Youth League.

Over the past nine years of my involvement with the church, I have become familiar with both the people and procedures of Convention, and I am excited about the new directions we are now moving in. I would very much enjoy the challenge and opportunity to serve the church through this committee.

**Augmentation Fund
(5 year terms)**

Marian Mull, Kansas

I am a homemaker and a lifelong participant member of the New Jerusalem Church at Pawnee Rock, Kansas. I have served on the Board of Trustees of the Kansas Association. My husband, Keith Mull, and I have farm and ranch interests in the central part of the Sunflower State. I have learned something of the functioning of Convention by attending its annual meetings nine times since 1976, the past three as member of the Augmentation Fund Committee. If re-elected, I would try to fulfill my responsibilities to the best of my ability.

**Committee on Admission into
the Ministry
(1 year term)**

Gladys A. Wheaton, Illinois

Among my qualifications for serving on CAM are a knowledge of the Church from having served on committees, taught in Sunday School and at camps, as well as family influences; a knowledge of the process of becoming a professional minister from having experienced that process myself; a knowledge of people and experience with helping them process life issues from my work as a counselor both inside and outside of the church.

Elizabeth Johnson, Washington

I am currently finishing my third year on the Committee on Admission to the Ministry. During this time I have been involved with the process of evaluation of the needs of the church and the qualifications of the students as they relate to the future welfare of our church. I believe my forty two years as a minister's wife, in both traditional and innovative settings, and my observance of many ministers and their work, have served to foster my ability to make a worthwhile contribution to the deliberations of CAM. I especially wish to continue with CAM because of the solid teamwork which has developed during these three years. It takes some time to learn, as a layperson, the inner workings of the seminary. Our effectiveness on CAM is directly related to how well we know each other. For all of the above, I wish to continue on the Committee on Admission to the Ministry.

**Board of Managers of the
Swedenborg School of Religion
(3 year terms)**

Dorothea Harvey, Ohio

I have worked in higher education for all my teaching career and understand the problems of gaining accreditation for an academic institution. I received my theological education outside of the Swedenborgian church, and have done my ministry in the church, and so have a certain perspective on the needs of the Swedenborg School of Religion at this time. I believe I can help, and I would very much like to try.

Nancy Perry, New Hampshire

I am running for a second three year term on the Board of Managers of SSR. Several of our valuable members are going off the board as their terms expire, and I look forward to new members who will be coming on the board for the first time. However, because of the nature of the tasks facing the board, working in conjunction with the Board of Directors, and under the capable leadership of our new President, Dr. Mary Kay Klein, it is important to have continuity in the midst of many changes. I have a deep interest in the school and some experience in the field of education. Therefore, I would like to serve another term. □

Report of the General Council

*Dorothy deB. Young,
Recording Secretary*

The General Council has completed three sessions since May 1985. Pre-convention and post-convention '85 meetings were held at the University of Windsor in Canada and the mid-winter 1986 meeting was held at Highroad Program Center, a United Methodist Church Conference Center in Middleburg, Virginia.

In 1957, The Paterson Society Fund was established and in 1960 was given to Convention to be held in trust for fifteen years. The income from this Fund, in accordance with its provisions, had been given to the Orange Society in New Jersey for its use. Circumstances of the Orange Society have recently changed, and the Trust expired in 1975; therefore, General Council voted to now use the income for general purposes of Convention.

Funds given to the General Conference in 1970 were not entirely used for expenses and the remainder (amounting to approximately 2,000 pounds sterling) General Council authorized General Conference (at their request) to use for program in the 1988 Swedenborg Tricentenary celebration being planned in England.

A large group in Tema, Ghana, West Africa expressed a sincere desire to become affiliated with Convention and has applied to the Swedenborg School of Religion to admit students. Additional information has been requested from the applicants.

The Council of Ministers and General Council is affirming and supporting the Vision and Marks of Commitment as stated in the re-organization of the National Council of Christian Churches, in the U.S.A. Our representatives to NCCC meetings have advanced valuable input at all meetings which they have attended.

At the post-convention meeting, General Council studied and questioned the second Growth Center Feasibility Report submitted

by the Reverend Ernest Martin. The Feasibility Study Committee was given \$10,000 to further develop its project and to report its progress at the 1986 mid-winter meeting of the General Council.

The Reverend Mr. Martin met with General Council in January 1986 and presented color photos and commercial brochures on a desirable property an hour's drive from Philadelphia. Council also reviewed the Feasibility Committee progress report. Two actions were taken by the Council. The first "that General Council approves the development of a spiritual renewal center in the Mid-Atlantic area . . . but that appropriation of any funds for acquisition of a Center be handled by separate action." Second: "that General Council authorizes the Executive Committee, including the Assistant to the Treasurer, to commit and expend a sum not to exceed \$750,000 toward the purchase of property for a spiritual growth/retreat center in the Middle Atlantic area provided that suitable supportive group funds are also available."

The Treasurer reported that the total amount received as of December 31, 1985 to the Advanced Degree Education Fund was \$27,740. Of this amount \$14,000 was contributed by the Bostonview Corporation of the Boston Church.

General Council observed a time of silent prayers in memory of the Reverends Richard H. Tafel and John W. Spiers. Announcement was made of the retirement of the Reverends Eric J. Zacharias and Clayton S. Priestnal. The Reverend Dr. William R. Woofenden is retiring from the Bridgewater Church.

A proposal from the Reverend James Lawrence, editor of *The Messenger*, concerning reducing costs via new format was referred to the Department of Communication for consideration.

The Reverend F. Robert Tafel explained new policies introduced by the Pension Fund Committee on retirement benefits for ministers.

Dr. Mary Kay Klein, President of the Swedenborg School of Religion, continues to inform General Council of new developments in the conduct of the School business.

President Laakko appointed four new trustees to the Board of Trustees of the National Church: John C. Perry, Robert Abbott, Christine Laitner and the Reverend F. Robert Tafel. Capt. August Ebel told of needed

repairs on the National Church building, inside and outside, and that when estimates are obtained, a request for funds will be forthcoming.

General Convention reports the sale of the St. Petersburg church and its contents to Bible Holiness Church of God in Christ. Convention holds a first mortgage of \$101,000 at 10% to be fully paid within five years from date of sale.

A considerable amount of time was spent in reviewing and some revising of a new Constitution and Bylaws prepared by the Ad Hoc Committee on Goals and Priorities for the 80s. Convention will vote on these in June at Boone.

Mrs. Betty Schneider of Kitchener resigned as a member of General Council due to personal commitments and Mrs. Frances McIntosh of Kitchener was appointed to

serve in that vacancy.

General Council voted to assent to the court appointment of Dr. Alice B. Skinner as a trustee of the Rotch Fund.

Convention Treasurer Capt. August Ebel will be conducting a mini-course for the benefit of Convention church treasurers, or any person interested in this type of work connected with churches. It was recommended that societies consider sending their treasurers to convention for the specific purpose of attending this course. □

General Convention Statistics as of December 31, 1985

ASSOCIATIONS	SOCIETIES		MINISTERS		MEMBERS		TOTAL	DELEGATES
	Active	Inactive	Ordained	Lay	Active	Inactive		
Canada	1	0	2	0	120	20	140	14
Connecticut	1	0		0	11		11	3
Illinois	6	0	4	1	123	46	169	14
Kansas	3	0	2	0	163	32	195	18
Maine	2	0	2	0	141	100	241	16
Massachusetts	7	0	11	0	200	146	346	22
Michigan	1	0	2	0	66	8	74	8
Middle Atlantic	3	0	4	0	166	71	237	18
New York	2	0	1	1	55	37	92	7
Ohio	5	0	2	1	109		109	12
Pacific Coast	7	0	6		255	37	292	27
Southeast	1	1	2	0	81	31	112	10
Western Canada Conference	6	1	4	4	227		227	24
	45	2	42	7	1717	528	2245	193
SOCIETIES								
Gulfport	1	0	0	0	20		20	4
Guyana	1	0	1	0	58	19	77	7
TOTALS	47	2	43	7	1795	547	2342	204

An Invitation

Eric Zacharias

Last summer, Betty and I had the high privilege of attending the British Conference meetings. This gathering took place at Clacton-on-Sea, a sea-side resort city some seventy miles to the east and north of London. Here a gracious and warm welcome opened the way for us to participate comfortably in the program and to observe the activities of our English colleagues. So enjoyable and useful was this experience that I proposed to the Rev. Norman Ryder, president of the Conference, that an invitation be issued to travelling Convention people to consider the possibility of attending the 1986 Conference meetings,

The format of the Conference meetings follows closely that of our Convention — with business sessions, interest groups, worship and fellowship all contributing to a full schedule. There was time for good conversation. This, I enjoyed. We were present for the installation of the new president, the Rev. Norman Ryder, and for the ordination of the Rev. Bruce Jarvis.

The British New Church is now engaged in a number of innovative building and outreach programs. The Church is struggling. These folks are trying hard to meet the

needs of the contemporary, changing world. In the time we had together, we learned to appreciate their sincerity, their warmth and good humor and their dedication to the mission of the Church. Debate on the conference floor, at times, became quite lively, indeed.

The 1986 conference will be held from Friday, July 18th, through Tuesday, July 22nd at the Hays Conference Center, Swanwick, Derbyshire. The Rev. Ryder suggests that this site is well situated for touring England after the meetings. It is within easy reach of the Shakespeare country, York and Chester. The cost for attending the conference is 42 pounds sterling.

Here you have it. An invitation to attend the 1986 meetings of the British Conference. And if this falls within the scope of your planning, write for your reservation before June 16th to:

Miss Isabel Morely
7A Kensington Rd.
Southend-on-Sea, SS1 2SX
England

Miss Morely will also provide you with directions for reaching the Conference Center.

During the course of our stay at Clacton-on-Sea last summer, Brian Kingslake, on one of our conversations, expressed the hope that Jill and he may attend the 1986 Convention meetings in Boone, North Carolina. I hope they do. There is much to be gained from the exchange and sharing of ideas and from the support we can give to one another as we work to build a stronger and more effective church. Think about it! □

“

**When you see a good person,
emulate his ways; when you see
a bad person, search yourself for
his faults.**

Confucius

**I will act as if what I do
makes a difference.**

William James

”



Dole Notes Loan Completely Repaid

At the 1975 meeting of the American New Church Sunday School Association the main item of business was the printing and binding into hardback volumes of the Anita Dole Sunday School Bible Study Lessons — known affectionately among Swedenborgians around the world simply as "*The Dole Notes*."

A discussion took place in this meeting, during which some objections were raised that the lessons were too outdated and/or too tied to orthodox Swedenborgian doctrine. The desire to preserve the popular Bible Study lessons was strong, however, and the majority of the members voted in favor of rendering the lessons into hardbacked volumes.

It was decided that the lessons would be printed in six volumes following Biblical sequence. The Rev. Dr. William Woofenden, who was once a journeyman printer, was assigned the task of arranging for the printing and binding. (He was also the editor of the *Dole Bible Study Notes*.) Tom Zehner was given the task of financing, through gifts and sales, the \$40,000 project.

The campaign was started immediately, and by the end of two years enough capital had been received to bring the first two volumes into existence. From Maine to California, from individuals and organizations, the gifts kept coming in. After the third volume was completed, a request was made to General Council for a loan of up to \$20,000 to complete expeditiously the rest of the project. The loan was granted, over some objections, but only \$16,047.02 was needed.

The sales agent for the books is the Swedenborg Library and Book Store in Back Bay Boston. The average yearly sales range from \$1,500 to \$2,000. This money has been applied to the debt of Convention. And now, as of March 1986, the obligation to Convention has been completely satisfied!

Since the publication of the *Bible Study Notes* in hardback volumes, Louise (Dole) Woofenden, with help from Betty Hill, has

prepared Activity Booklets, chock-full of crafts and hands-on projects to be used in conjunction with the verbal teaching lessons. These, also, are available through the Swedenborg Library, 79 Newbury St., Boston, Mass., 02116.

Trial Run For Ad Hoc Prototype Cabinet Meets

The first concrete meeting, though purely unofficial, involving church leaders outside of the Ad Hoc committee met recently to begin experiencing how the new structure will work with real people. Meeting at the Swedenborg School of Religion in Newton, Massachusetts, a group of ten Swedenborgians, representing various ministries and committees, spent a couple of days discussing issues of process and definition. Wearing hats to keep their respective roles clearly in view, this trial-run cabinet meeting was deemed by all to be an exciting foretaste of the new streamlined structure of General Convention.

Los Angeles Church Concludes an Era

The Los Angeles Society will be holding its last worship service in their charming Spanish Mission style church on June 15, 1986. Their church no longer meets code regulations for earthquake stress, and the cost for bringing the building up to code is prohibitive. Swedenborgians from all over southern California will be joining them for worship on June 15. But this does not spell the end for the Los Angeles Society by any means! They and their pastor, the Rev. Susan Turley-Moore, will be exploring new possibilities for their ministry. The church facilities will be sold.

In the July 1, 1931 *Messenger*, there appears an article by William Hamilton Cline entitled, "A Notable Achievement: The Los Angeles Church." Mr. Cline, a next door neighbor to the Rev. John R. Hunter, writes that he watched, somewhat from afar, the amazing feat of Rev. Hunter gathering a conflict-ridden small group of Swedenborgians and inspiring a teamwork effort that not only increased the membership, but also built a \$75,000 gem in one of the choicest neighborhoods of Los Angeles at that time.

On May 31st, 1931, the new church was opened and dedicated, and now nearly 55 years to the week later, the church closes its doors. In those five and a half decades, a tremendous ministry has emanated from that Spanish Mission church at 509 S. Westmoreland Avenue. All of Convention rejoices in what has been, and, with the Los Angeles

Society, looks eagerly to the possibilities of the future.

Lecture on Swedenborg and Balzac

Michel Berta, a French Professor at Queens University in Ontario, gave a lecture entitled "On the Presence of Emanuel Swedenborg in *Seraphita* by Balzac," at the Swedenborg Library in Boston on April 21, 1986. Honore de Balzac, 1799-1850, was a major French novelist, who is often quoted as saying that, after a study of all the world's great religions, he returned to Swedenborg as the one who most nearly encompasses all the great truths. In Balzac's novel *Seraphita*, Swedenborg is a principal character. *Seraphita* is considered to be one novel in a trilogy of works that attempts to put forth Balzac's cosmic synthesis of truth (see also *Louis Lambert* and *The Alkahest*). Michel Berta is currently working on his doctoral dissertation, which is a study of Balzac.

Lecture on Swedenborg As An Achiever

The Rev. Jim Lawrence delivered a public lecture at the First Unitarian Church in St. Louis on March 6, 1986 which covered the overall flow of Swedenborg's biography and which emphasized the amazing range and quantity of Swedenborg's achievements. Scheduled to follow by four days the completion of "Angels of Swedenborg" in St. Louis, the current contemporary theatre production travelling the country, the lecture drew an attendance of about 35 people. The award-winning film, "Images of Knowing" was shown during the lecture as a window into Swedenborg's insights into the connection between the spiritual and natural realms. The response was good, and many books were sold.

Proprioceptive Writing Workshop Still Popular

The team of Linda Metcalf, founder of the proprioceptive writing technique, and Mary Bok has now given three enormously popular workshops in Swedenborgian settings. The Church of the Good Shepherd in Kitchener had such a good response from the first workshop that they brought the two east coast facilitators back to the Great Lakes area again for a workshop that was held April 11-13. The other Proprioceptive Writing Workshop was held at Almont as a post-convention workshop last summer.

Mid Atlantic Spring Retreat Set

"Opening to the Light" is the theme of the Mid-Atlantic renewal retreat to be held at Drayton Manor, Worton, Maryland, from Friday evening, May 16 to Sunday afternoon, May 18. Meditation and spirituality will be the focus for this year's program. The cost is \$75, which includes registration, room and board.

OPINION

Dear Editor,

Shouldn't our church be doing something to remonstrate against the play "Angels of Swedenborg"? I am concerned with at least two highly mistaken impressions of Swedenborg that Mr. Chong, the creator and producer of this play, makes in his public comments, and perhaps in his play, which unfortunately I was unable to see when it was in our city recently. The first is Mr. Chong's statement in the local paper that Swedenborg had a "nervous breakdown" (See interview this issue — Ed.). In a very matter-of-fact way, Mr. Chong says Swedenborg suffered a mental breakdown and was irrational for the rest of his life. This, of course, is not the first time the church has had to contend with this charge. I feel we should counter Mr. Chong's statements. If there is one enduring tribute to Swedenborg's religion made by many great minds, it is that his religion is so thoroughly rational!

The second impression of Swedenborg created by Mr. Chong is that Swedenborg's religious philosophy is more eastern than western. Insofar as Swedenborg was emphatically and explicitly Christian in his theology and Biblical in his proofs, it is obvious that he offered essentially Judeo-Christian ideas of religion. I am not even sure whether Swedenborg was *familiar* with eastern ideas in the 18th century.

Ruth Abaecherli
Cincinnati

Dear Editor,

I wish to take this opportunity to make three comments pertaining to the work of the Swedenborg Library and Book Store. In a recent article by Jill Kingslake, there appears the statement that Gwynne Dresser

Mack's enormously popular *Talking With God* is out of print. This is not true! We have many copies in stock of the last edition of her classic on prayer. While we are on the subject of available books, the Swedenborg Library is offering at half-price a limited supply of *The Dole Notes*, various volumes, slightly damaged or imperfect. This means that each volume is selling for \$3.50 each, plus 86 cents each volume for postage. There is a limited supply, which will be distributed on a first-come, first-served basis. Thirdly, in the February *Messenger*, a Mr. Andrzej Boryna of Poland requested written material on the Swedenborgian faith for his countrymen in Poland. The Swedenborg Library has sent such a shipment. I thought readers would like to know that this plea for information has not gone unheard. (At least one other group also responded — the LaPorte New Church. — Ed.)

Rafael Guiu, Manager
The Swedenborg Library
Boston

COMMENCEMENTS

Baptism

Wilson—Jenny Lee Wilson, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Randy Wilson, was baptized into the Christian faith in Pawnee Rock, Kansas, on March 23, 1986, the Rev. Eric J. Zacharias officiating.

Patterson—Kayla Rayna Patterson, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Greg Patterson, was baptized into the Christian faith in Pawnee Rock, Kansas, on March 23, 1986, the Rev. Eric Zacharias officiating.

Confirmation

Stafford—Miss Kathy Stafford was confirmed into the life of the General Convention of Swedenborgian Churches on Easter Day, March 30, 1986, at the Church of the New Jerusalem, San Francisco, the Rev. Edwin G. Capon officiating.

Deaths

Barr—Dorothy M. Barr, 92, longtime member of the Boston Church, passed into the spiritual world on Feb. 11, 1986 in Boston.

Resurrection services were held March 23, 1986 at the Church of the New Jerusalem, Boston, with the Rev. G. Steven Ellis officiating and Mr. Rafael Guiu, manager of the Swedenborg Library and General Secretary of the Massachusetts Association of Swedenborgian Churches, giving the eulogy.

Bell—Bruce K. Bell passed into the spiritual world on February 23, 1986. Resurrection services were held on March 1, 1986 at the Fryeburg New Church, the Rev. David L. Rienstra officiating.

Bell—Vida French Bell, 100, passed into the spiritual world on February 15, 1986 in Yucaipa, California. She was the daughter of the late Rev. Dr. Thomas French, who was the longtime pastor of the San Francisco Society and President of the California Association. She was a member of the New Church Society in Riverside, California. As a centurion, the local Yucaipa newspaper had recently published an article chronicling her life as a businesswoman "long before it was fashionable to be one." For fifty years, she owned and operated a ranch in Yucaipa that, at various times, specialized as an apple orchard, a dairy farm, a chicken ranch and a dog-breeding farm. Final services were arranged by the County authorities at a local mortuary in Yucaipa.

Brackin—Beryl Blair Brackin, member of the Virginia Street Church, St. Paul, Minnesota, passed into the spiritual world on March 4, 1986. Service and burial were in Winnebago, Minnesota. Lay-inspired and lay-conducted memorial services were also held in the St. Paul Church on March 16, 1986.

Dehmke—Dora Dehmke, 72, lifelong member of the Rosthern Society, Church of the New Jerusalem, passed into the spiritual world on March 25, 1986. Memorial services were held on March 29, 1986, the Rev. David Sonmor officiating.

Hammond—Lester W. Hammond passed into the spiritual world on February 10, 1986. Resurrection services were held on February 13, 1986, the Rev. David L. Rienstra officiating.

Announcing the 1986 Convention Mini Courses!

The Board of Education invites all convention attenders to join in the 1986 mini courses. There are eighteen different courses being offered which cover a wide variety of areas of interest, all related to our church and all related to this year's convention theme: Learning to Live. Almost every course idea offered this year comes from YOUR suggestions (those one hundred of you that filled out the Response Questionnaire to the 1985 mini course offerings at convention, the Board of Education thanks you!)

We know that you will find these courses enticing — look them over, read the course descriptions — and be ready to sign up for your favorites as soon as you arrive at convention. Notice that some of the courses are only one session, others two, and others run the full three sessions. If you sign up for a one or two-session, you are free to attend another one that meets at a different time. Refer to the chart so that you will know when the courses are being offered. Note that there will be three sessions: one on Thursday, and two on Friday.

In order that you can read Dr. Kirven's three lectures before you arrive at convention (and thus gain the most from his mini-course) we ask that those of you who wish to attend this course pre-register by June 15th. Drop a note to the Central Office, ear-marked *Dr. Kirven's The Swedenborgian Tradition and Process Theology* (by June 15, at the latest) and you will be sent copies of the lectures. The address is *Central Office, 48 Sargent Street, Newton, Mass, 02158*. To attend this mini course you must pre-register. For all other mini courses, you will register at convention. There will be sign-up sheets in the main registration hall when you arrive.

1986 Mini Course Descriptions

1. Making Sunday Morning Worship Come Alive

— **Rev. Dick Tafel**

By use of drama and audio visuals, etc., bring Bible stories and doctrines of our church to life and to the 1980s. (Bring a Bible with you to the mini-course)

(Three sessions)

2. The Swedenborgian Tradition and Process Theology

— **Rev. Dr. Robert Kirven**

A discussion of the topic in the light of three published lectures (which will be sent in advance to all who pre-register). The focus is on a possible new way of presenting Swedenborgian ideas to the world.

(Three sessions)

3. Responding to Loss

— **Rev. Dr. Ted Klein**

This mini course will approach loss as a part of living. Among what will be explored is how to confront and move through the pain that naturally comes with loss, and how healing and regrouping can come in our response to loss.

(Three sessions)

4. Everything You Ever Wanted to Know About Church Treasurers' Records

— **Gus Ebel**

In this mini-course you will learn what should be in your church financial records. This course is for church treasurers and for anyone in the church society who wants to know what your church treasurer should be doing!

(One session)

5. What a Computer can do for your Church

— **Gus Ebel & John Perry**

This mini-course covers what a computer can do for your church, including how the computer can help you with your church record-keeping. It is for anyone who is interested in computers.

(One session)

6. Computer Seminar

— **Gus Ebel & John Perry and others**

This seminar will be a time for people to trade ideas. It is for those who are already familiar with computers.

(One Session)

7. Living and Working in England

— **Rev. Paul & Pat Zacharias**

This will be an illustrated (slides) presentation depicting our 8-month experience of living and working in the United Kingdom — with special focus on our pastorate with the Birmingham New Church Society — and our impressions of the British New Church Conference. There will be ample opportunity for discussion.

(One session)

8. Contemplative Prayer

— **Rev. Rachel Martin**

This course will be geared toward the practical application of contemplative prayer. Theory will be combined with down-to-earth suggestions and exercises that can be fruitfully applied in daily life. The focus will be on prayer as an avenue toward greater peace, clarity in decision-making, and toward deepening one's relationship with God.

(Two sessions)

9. The New Church Youth League Today

— **Nancy Little & David Tafel**

Geared toward anyone who wants to know how they can help a league: how to plan a retreat, how to start a local league, how to work with the league. The session will also include an introduction to the structure of the New Church Youth League. It is intended for adults who are interested in working with the League and for those teenagers who might be interested in getting involved.

(One session)

10. A Mini-Course for Teenagers

— Steve Pults & Rev. Ron Brugler

A time for the youth of our church to look at their relationships and decision-making, peer-pressure and other issues that they have on their minds. This mini-course is for teens only.

(Two sessions)

11. The Church and Social Concerns . . . Love in Action

— Rev. Susan Turley-Moore & Rev. Robert McCluskey

This will be a three-part mini-course. You are welcome to sign up for all three sessions, or for any individual sessions.

Session a will be a scriptural presentation of Jesus' call to love the neighbor as Christian witness to social concerns, led by Rev. Sue Turley-Moore.

(12.) Session b will be a presentation on the National Council of Churches and the New Church in the '80s. This will be led by Rev. Robert McCluskey and for your added benefit you are encouraged to read his article on the NCC in the February issue of *The Messenger*. A twenty-five minute film on the NCC will be shown as a part of the session.

(13.) Session c will be co-led by Robert and Sue. With our distinct, forward-looking theology we have special opportunities to reach out to a larger community. This will be a working, brainstorming session: a time to explore and share together creative ideas on how our parishes and General Convention can serve the neighbor from an ecumenical Christian social concerns perspective.

14. The Inner Game of Sports and Exercise

— Rev. Gardiner Perry

This session will provide a way for participants to explore their experience of sport and exercise in depth and to reflect on that experience in light of the process of regeneration. The goal of the course is to discover ways in which sports and ex-

ercise can be vehicles for spiritual growth. See cover story in April *Messenger*. (this session will not include movement and exercise.)

(One session)

15. Living Learning

— Perry Martin & Lorraine Sando

Exploring new ways of teaching and learning, using all of our senses and faculties to make learning memorable and enjoyable.

(Two sessions)

16. Patterns and Cycles of Nature

— Anne Perry

Using examples from the local area we will heighten awareness of nature's patterns and cycles and learn some reasons behind them. Focus will be on botany, with occasional diversions into the animal kingdom. Outdoor walk included, weather permitting. (Dress for weather, walking shoes.) See Anne's article on nature in the March *Messenger*.

(One session)

17. Music Resources for Children

— Carole Rienstra

A review of choral music and musical plays that have worked! Special attention given to words and ideas that don't contradict New Church doctrine.

(One session)

18. Relating Swedenborgian Theology to Our Daily Life

— Rev. Eric Zacharias

A time and place for people both new to and familiar with Swedenborgian concepts to explore them in relation to their daily lives. Stress management, strengthening family relationships, and setting goals are examples of areas of interest that will be looked at in light of our New Church teachings.

(Two sessions)

THURSDAY, JULY 3, 1986 3:00 — 5:00 PM	FRIDAY, JULY 4, 1986 2:00 - 3:30 PM (tentative time)	FRIDAY, JULY 4, 1986 4:00 - 5:30 PM (tentative time)
1. Making Sunday Morning Worship Come Alive — Rev. Dick Tafel (bring a Bible for this mini-course)		
2. The Swedenborgian Tradition and Process Theology — Rev. Robert Kirven (pre-register for this course)		
3. Responding to Loss — Rev. Ted Klein		
4. Everything You Ever Wanted to Know About Church Treasurers' Records — Gus Ebel	5. What A Computer Can Do For Your Church — Gus Ebel & John Perry	6. Computer Seminar — Gus Ebel, John Perry & others
7. Living and Working in England — Rev. Paul & Pat Zacharias	8. Contemplative Prayer — Rev. Rachel Martin	
9. The New Church Youth League Today — Nancy Little & David Tafel	10. A Mini Course for Teen-agers — Rev. Ron Brugler & Steve Pults	
11. The Church and Social Concerns . . . Love in Action (a) "When you visited me . . ." Social Concerns and the Bible — Rev. Sue Turley-Moore	12. The Church and Social Concerns . . . Love in Action (b) The National Council of Churches and the New Church in the '80s — Rev. Robert McCluskey	13. The Church and Social Concerns . . . Love in Action (c) A Working Session — Rev. Sue Turley-Moore — Rev. Robert McCluskey
14. The Inner Game of Sports and Exercise — Rev. Gard Perry	15. Living Learning — Lorraine Sando & Perry Martin	
16. Patterns and Cycles of Nature — Anne Perry (dress for the weather & wear your walking shoes!)	17. Music Resources For Children — Carole Rienstra	
18. Relating Swedenborgian Theology to Our Daily Lives — Rev. Eric Zacharias		



Convention Notes, '86

Travel: If you plan on driving to Boone, see directions, below. If you come by air, you may use Convention's travel agent, UNIGLOBE, at 1-800-367-3587 and talk with Ken or Andrea. You need to fly in to Hickory, North Carolina (or, if it makes a big difference in either fare or time, to Tri-Cities Airport in Johnson City, Tennessee). We will need to know your arrival time in order to arrange pickups for you.

Both of these airports are approximately an hour from campus, and Hickory Airport does have limousine service to Boone, in a pinch.

Clothing: It will be a lovely Carolina summer, therefore warm. But don't forget you will be at 3500 feet in the Blue Ridge Mountains, so prepare for chilliness and possible rain too.

Air Conditioning: Yes, we will have air conditioning!

Food: The meals will be good, and will cover omnivores and vegetarians. If you have special dietary requirements, please make sure to include them on your registration form, and we will try to accommodate you. Macrobiotics — there will be a kitchen available, if you bring your own goodies.

Housing: About half of us will be housed in the Broyhill Center, which is equivalent to a fine motel. All of our meetings will be held in the Center as well. This is on top of the hill. The other half will be housed in a 10-story dorm just down the hill toward the main campus. Both are air conditioned, in excellent condition and comfortable, though the dorm is of lower cost because of fewer amenities (like no maid service).

Child Care: Once again there will be child care beginning on Saturday, June 28 for those who attend the early conferences. The Children's Program will begin either that evening or on Sunday morning, June 29. Ron Brugler has information on these.

Sports: The University pool will be open to us at various times; Tennis courts (some lit) are available, and game fields and

other locations and equipment by arrangement. There is a nature trail near the Center, and lots of good areas to hike in. If you are in the area earlier or later, there are even such lovelies as ½ day or longer canoe and raft trips (with white water too), or llama treks in the mountains (with the llamas carrying the goods and you doing the walking.)

Directions: Boone is in the northwestern corner of North Carolina, very close to the Tennessee and Virginia borders. To get there, you may come in from U.S. Rtes. 321 and 421 from north, south, east or west. From the Blue Ridge Parkway at the Blowing Rock/Rte. 321 exit, then Rte. 321 north to Boone; or also from U.S. Rte 221 from the Galax, VA area in the north. It is north of Hickory, northeast of Asheville, west of Winston-Salem and east of Johnson City/Kingsport, Tenn.

Please Do NOT Plan To Arrive Earlier Than July 28th Or Stay Later Than Midday On The 6th Of July — Except For The Special Meetings Already Scheduled.



Notice

The Annual Meeting of the Corporation of the New Church Theological School will be held at the Broyhill Center, Appalachian State University, Boone, North Carolina, on Thursday, July 3, 1986 at 1:30 PM to elect officers and to transact such other business as may properly come before it.

Virginia Branston, Clerk
Corporation of the
New Church Theological School

ADVANCE CONVENTION REGISTRATION

(We hope you'll join us in a wonderful week. The theme is Learning to Live!)

General Convention, 1986, Boone, N.C.

June 28 - July 6, 1986

NAME _____ PHONE: _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE/PROV _____ ZIP _____

ACCOMPANIED BY: _____

CHILDREN: NAME AND AGE:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

NCYL MEMBERS BETWEEN AGES 13 AND 18 PLEASE FILL THIS IN:

_____ My parent/s will be at Convention. They are _____

_____ My guardian at Convention (if no parents present) is _____

REGISTRATION FEE

_____ I have enclosed a check for \$25.00 (\$20.00 if BEFORE May 15, 1986) made out to GENERAL CONVENTION '86, to cover registration. Everyone 12 years of age and over must pay this fee. Registration is PER PERSON and covers some Convention costs and special events. **Mail this form and your fee to Central Office, 48 Sargent St., Newton, MA 02158.**

TRANSPORT

_____ I will arrive at **Hickory, N.C.** Airport on: Date & time _____
Airline & Flight _____

_____ I am driving to Convention on: Date _____
My first meal will be _____ breakfast _____ lunch _____ dinner on: _____

_____ I am a passenger in the car of: _____
Arriving at Convention on: date _____ time: _____

_____ I need directions to **BOONE** from: _____

_____ I will arrive at **Tri-Cities, Tenn.** Airport on: Date & time _____
Airline & flight # _____
(NOTE: PICKUPS HERE ARE SCHEDULED ONLY IF NECESSARY)

_____ OTHER MODE OF TRANSPORT _____
Arrival date & time _____

HOUSING

_____ I would like a single room.

_____ I would like a double room, sharing with _____

(If you don't have a roommate yet, be sure to answer the following:)

_____ I would like to have a roommate assigned to share my room.

_____ I/We would like (if possible) to have a room near _____

Please also complete the reverse side!

SPECIAL NEEDS

- ☐ I am a vegetarian, with no other restrictions.
- ☐ I have these dietary restrictions: _____
- ☐ I am not able to climb stairs or hills
- ☐ I am not able to walk very far without discomfort
- ☐ I have these medical requirements: _____
- ☐ I am _____ diabetic; _____ a heart patient; _____ other: _____
- ☐ Other physical/special/dietary needs _____

(If you don't let us know, we may not be aware of your needs!)

SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS FOR CHILDREN

(Children's programs will run during Pre-Convention days beginning Saturday and continuing through the week until after worship on July 6)

- ☐ My child/children will be participating in the Children's Program for ages 4 to 12 beginning on: date _____
- ☐ My child/children will need the Child Care program for age 3 and under beginning on: date _____
- ☐ My child's/children's special needs are: _____
- ☐ My child has _____ has not _____ attended a pre-school program

OTHER PROGRAMS

I wish to co-register for the following programs:

- ☐ Ministers' Study Committee (June 26-28; limited to Comm. Members.)
- ☐ *Pre-Convention Conference (June 28-July 2; open to all)
- ☐ *Music and Movement Workshop (June 28-July 2; open to all)
- ☐ New Church Youth League Officers (June 29-July 2; officers only)
- ☐ Council of Ministers (June 28-July 2; ministers & SSR students)
- ☐ Ministers' Spouses (June 28-July 2; ministers' spouses only)
- ☐ Women's Alliance Luncheon on Friday, July 4.
- ☐ From Dream to Reality Leaders Workshop (July 6-8; open to all)

NOTE: ASTERISK (*) DENOTES ADDITIONAL FEE REQUIRED.

(We will be in touch with you to give you more information on your choice.)

**Rates for 1986 Convention
Room and Board**

Broyhill Center (posh accommodations)

Single: \$63. — daily: \$504. — 8 days: \$252. — 4 days.

Double: \$50.25 daily: \$402. — 8 days: \$201. — 4 days

Additional Occupants: \$30. — per day per person.

Dormitory

Adult Single: \$39. — daily: \$312. — 8 days: \$156. — 4 days.

Double: \$37. — daily: \$296. — 8 days: \$148. — 4 days.

Teen (11 - 19 years): Single: \$25. — daily: \$200. — 8 days: \$100. — 4 days.

Double: \$20. — daily: \$160. — 8 days: \$80. — 4 days.

Youth (4 - 10 years): Double: \$15. — daily: \$120. — 8 days: \$60. — 4 days.

Child (3 and under): No charge if occupying same room as parents, and no charge for food when fed from parent's plate.

For financial assistance for Convention attendance for young people and children please write to: Rev. Ron Brugler, 1513 Cameron Rd., Almont, MI 48003
For financial assistance for Convention attendance for adults please write to: Central Office, 48 Sargent St., Newton, MA 02158.

LIMITED FUNDS ARE AVAILABLE TO HELP OUT, ON FIRST COME — FIRST SERVED BASIS.

Pre-Convention Sessions 1986

Appalachian State University
Boone, North Carolina

Personal Growth Workshop - a time for sharing and support

**Dates: Saturday, June 28, at 6:00 p.m.
to Wednesday, July 2, 1986**

Have you ever wondered what a personal growth workshop is about or considered attending one? Have you wanted to experience another Pre-Convention Conference?

This year - 1986 - celebrate yourself; give yourself a present; pamper yourself, and become reacquainted with yourself.

The Personal Growth Workshop will stretch and revitalize your mind, body and spirit. We will share and express our feelings and experiences in group discussions, explore and play with art materials, dance to music, and learn skills in relaxation and improving relationships.

The leadership will be Lorraine Sando M.A., marriage and family therapist and artist, and Laura Lawson Tucker M.Ed., dance and movement therapist. Selected ministers will lead discussions on the theme of "Learning to Love".

If you are intrigued or interested in attending the 1986 Personal Growth Workshop please contact Rachel Martin for further information.

Children's Programs for 1986

This year's program will consist of two segments, both of which will begin with the pre-convention sessions and run throughout Convention.

For children under the age of five, a supervised center, similar to many day care programs, will be in operation from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. Toys, mats for naps, refreshments, stories and games will all be part of the activity schedule.

For older children, ages 5-12 years, activities will include a regional storyteller, Appalachian music and dance, a visit to a local nature center, and a trot to the top of a nearby mountain, and other daily events.

In both segments of the Children's Program, parents are encouraged to participate with their children as time allows. Also, unlike previous years, we are implementing a sign-in and out procedure to ensure that children are not left roaming the campus unsupervised.

There are a limited amount of funds available to help defray the room and board costs for children attending Convention. Application for such assistance should be made by May 15, 1986. Write to Ronald

Brugler, 1611 Cameron Road, Almont, MI 48003 or call (313) 798-3575. Please, if you have used such assistance for the same child twice in previous years, we ask that you not apply so that others may have needed help.

Cost for both segments of the Children's Program is \$2.50 per day, payable upon registration at Boone.

Music and Movement Workshop

**Dates: Sunday, June 29th, at 7:30 p.m.
to Wednesday, July 2, 1986**

Do you enjoy music, dance, poetry and art; and wish you could do more with these things in your life? Are you seeking ways to share your gifts with others; perhaps through worship or work with children?

Amidst the wooded foothills of the Smokies, we will explore our gifts -- and our limits -- as we move, sing, draw, write and read together the expressions of our inmost spirits. In high hilarity and deep humility for our humanness, we will seek to trust in each other, share a commitment to praying and open ourselves to God. We will consider each others' needs and our own call "to give as we are given to be given", as we prepare to participate in Convention's Opening Worship Service on Wednesday.

Older teens and young adults (up to age 85!) are encouraged to journey with us! Carol Rienstra, musician and teacher from Fryeburg, Maine; and Donna LaRue, liturgical dance specialist and arts enthusiast from Boston, Massachusetts, will co-lead the workshop.

Please bring at least three changes of "easy clothes" (sweats, wrap skirts, leotards or T-shirts -- no jeans, please), socks, and a towel, sweater, or shawl for keeping warm during "stop-n-start" discussion classes.

For more information, call Donna at (617) 625-3739 and leave a message so your call can be returned.

Costs: Registration fee is \$30, \$25 if post-marked by May 15th, plus room and board. Please register by June 1. Travel instructions will be sent after receipt of registration form.

Notice: Because of the importance of building a trusting climate for sharing in our workshops, we are asking that all participants be present for the first session. Only under special circumstances, with the permission of leaders, can people be admitted after that time.

See registration form in the Convention material in this issue or for more information write to:

Rachel Martin
Executive Secretary of the Board of Education
1022A Commodore
St. Louis, MO 63117

General Convention of the New Jerusalem
in the United States of America
The Messenger
1040 Dautel Road
St. Louis, MO 63146

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New Pamphlet:

<i>"Words in Swedenborg & Their Meanings in Modern English"</i> — Rose	\$2.50
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