

Official  
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Swedenborgian Church

# The Messenger

August 1990



## Convention '90 Olds, Alberta





## Guest Editorial

### *A New Heaven and New Earth*

Randall E. Laakko

We Swedenborgians hold it to be true that a dramatic change has occurred at the deepest and most real dimension of existence. That change involves the spiritual depths of the universe and especially the environment of the human soul. We accept as fact the existence of a spiritual universe, a spiritual world home. This home is not only future destination of our spirits, our souls, it is a present inner reality, the inner social and expansive landscape of our own spirit.

The transformation that has happened is the realization of the promised new Jerusalem, the new heaven and new earth. Not just an image of some future event, this change is reformation that has occurred on the spiritual level of existence. We can read the prophecy of this change in the word of the Old and New Testaments. We can take it to be a future promise, or, in the revelations coming through Swedenborg, we can hear the Lord's declaration that descent of the new heaven and earth has begun and is even now in process. The new heaven is the spiritual world home for those who live by love and truth as it has been given them to know. The new earth represents the new understanding, the new insight of doctrinal truth which actually forms in the soul of our humanness a temple and residence of the inflowing spark and presence of the divine.

The world in the last two centuries has been experiencing the ongoing influence of the spiritual world's events. The rise of democracy, the establishment of human rights and freedoms, the process of humanization of the world societies, the advancement of knowledge, technology, and world body politics are results of the spiritual world transformations.

The changes occurring in our world are phenomenal. I find them exciting and moving. The possibility of global nuclear war we feared and prepared for is now becoming less likely. There are greater reasons for hope than I have ever known. No, we are not yet beyond the possibility of such a tragic war.

## The Messenger

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Nevertheless, we are making strides forward as a world community, moving toward peace and cooperation.

As a church we are moving into the light of what is revealed to us. We have a theological understanding to learn and share. We have truth and love to heal and spiritually form us.

We have a world view which says the very divine is everywhere working to have love and truth felt, known and lived. We need not be afraid that others have truth and love from God, for their creator is ours as well. In others we again meet God. We can be sure of finding God's love and truth everywhere in the world and in the lives and experiences of all peoples.

One problem we have is the reluctance to take fully into our membership, without fear, new persons. Moving toward the light implies process and presupposes a shadow or darkness. Light stands for truth with its heat energy, love. To see the light means that it is reaching you. It gives insight and direction. The church is moving toward the light of truth and love as it becomes an open, inclusive, accepting institution. May we move toward the light so that we are never overcome by our own darkness or any evil that would seek to destroy us or close us in upon ourselves.

*The Rev. Randall Laakko is outgoing president of the Swedenborgian Church and is a minister to the Wilmington, Delaware church.*

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## The State of the Church



Randall E. Laakko  
Outgoing President

Friends and beloved members of the Swedenborgian Church, it falls to the president to make a State of the Church address at the annual convention meetings. This convention is also the final session of my second term of office.

In 1987 our denomination began operating under a newly designed organizational structure made up of various management groups we call Support Units and Cabinet. The only group remaining from the old system is the General Council, which we have maintained as the executive body of the Swedenborgian Church.

The new organization has now been operating three years. I have had the privilege of helping guide it into place. During my first term final touches were completed and trial runs were made of the working structure. In the second term, we have begun to operate according to design. The church is still learning how best to use the new structure, but we seem to be functioning effectively as the church deals with its six areas of interest: Education, Communication, Financial and Physical Resources, Growth and Outreach, Information Management and Pastoral Ministries. The church is still learning how best to fully use the new structure.

A committee to review the organizational structure and function has been established. Further modification and correction may yet be made, a review built into the design from the start.

We continue to look for ways to control costs. That does not mean spending less money but making more effective use of our resources.

The primary improvements over our former structure are in the new statement of purpose with specific goals and strategies geared to achieve that purpose. The new structure created

*Continued on Page 107*

## The President Reports:

### The Cup is Half Full



Richard H. Tafel, Jr.  
Incoming President

Our motto for this 1990-91 church year is, *the cup is half full*. It is so easy to see a half-empty cup, to find fault and find reasons to be discouraged. It is so easy, because then we do not have to do anything.

Time and again, however, I am hearing about exciting new programs in our local groups, new members, new visions for the church, financial commitments for the fund drive, and new proposals for ministry. I am excited about our potential. I am excited because, although much of what we have to offer the world is intangible, there are some results which can be measured: number of new members joining our churches, number of people attending our programs, dollars raised in local stewardship drives, and dollars committed to the fund drive.

I am not blind to the problems we face as a church. But they are problems that can be solved. Some have already been solved. Others are being solved. The remainder, we will work together to solve.

In visiting and working with our churches and groups in the coming year, I pledge my help and commit the resources of our denomination to bringing to the grass roots ways of making our church viable and operational in the lives of people. I challenge us all to rise up and be counted, and to make this beloved church of ours the embodiment of a new heaven and a new earth.

*Until moving to Florida, Rev. Richard Tafel has been minister to the Kemper Road Center for Religious Development, Cincinnati. His new address is on Page 105.*



## Convention Sermon

# New Eyes and New Ears

Jerome A. Poole

I believe a new heaven and a new earth is what we see with new eyes and ears. I would like to share a few moments and highlights of this past week, feelings and happenings that had, and will continue to have an impact on me.

A photo of the late Harvey Johnson as a young high school graduate struck me strongly. I don't know if anyone else saw this, but when I looked into that image, I saw the beginning of genuine commitment to a life of service.

The brass ensemble's music reminded me of heaven here on earth. Probably one of the most powerful experiences of the week was in the museum. Hanging over us were skeletons of animals who lived a hundred million years ago and holding my hand was a four-month-old baby, Hilary.

As we were singing last night, I became aware that I have known Steve Pults and Bob McCluskey and Lon Elmer for years, but never have we joined together as we did that evening. Our gift to the group was nothing like their gift to me. Our spouses singing to us following the Council of Minister's meeting. To come from a meeting of business into the candlelit rotunda for their song shared was a special privilege. Included in that memory is the beauty of my wife's face as she looked at me from the turning circle. I believe a new heaven and a new earth is what is seen and heard with new eyes and new ears.

How do we get these new eyes and new ears? My own became apparent as I wrote four letters last night. I wrote one letter for myself as a 12-year-old, the second as a 15-year-old, the third as a 23-year-old, and the fourth as a 50-year-old.

My first letter to my father and mother, and my Sunday school teachers:

*Dear Dad and Mom, Cousin Alice, Hilda Kramer and others. Thank you for having shared with me the stories of the Bible. I want to thank you for sharing with me what means so much to you in life. Thank you for having given and implanted within me the authority of a religious life. I want to say I have forgiven you for all the "extra" you gave me and thank you for taking it back and freeing me.*

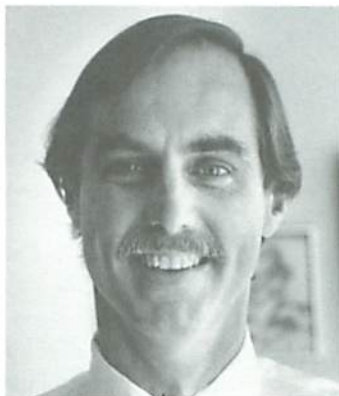
My second letter, to people such as camp counselors, Ernie Martin, Dave Johnson, Othmar Tobisch, and the people I worked with:

*Thank you for having challenged me and implanted within me new possibilities so I might think more broadly, more fully, that I might worship beyond the limitations given me by my parents, my cousin, and other people who loved me dearly. Thank you for inviting me into the ministry.*

My third letter as a 23-year-old was to Randy Laakko, Bob Kirven, and a number of other teachers.

*Thank you for inviting me into dialogue, for telling me that Swedenborg isn't the only authority in my life. Thank you for introducing me to other people, other thinkers, thank you for telling me I'm wrong. Thank you for forgiveness when our arguments became deep. But especially I want to thank you for dialogue, for encouraging theological reflection in all aspects of my life.*

My fourth letter went to many people: to Susan Turley-Moore for helping me to know that God is so real, that God is a woman, too.



To Victor Frankl, author of *From Death Camp to Existentialism*, who took me into the heart and life of other people. To George Dole, Mary Kay Klein and Paul Zacharias, who challenged me with their thinking. I thank Matthew Fox for becoming my friend and helping to deepen my relationship with Emanuel Swedenborg.

As I read through these four letters containing within them more than I have time to share this morning, I see myself moving from the authority figure, to picking up data, to learning to dialogue with this data, to becoming my own person.

This is the process of helping me develop my new eyes and my new ears so that I can see the new heaven and the new earth. The new heaven and the new earth is no different from the heaven and earth that has always been with us, that has always been the Lord's. It is simply that my eyes have changed, my ears have changed.

Hear this passage from Isaiah:

*We shall allow joy and be led forth in peace.  
The mountains and the hills before you shall  
break forth in singing and all the trees in the  
fields shall clap their hands.*

Do your eyes see the hills breaking forth into singing? Do your ears hear the trees clapping their hands? Do we see this as a church? Do we tremble with this kind of experience? I believe we do in part and I believe we can do more. The kinds of things we have been enjoying and sharing and doing this past week will continue to increase our willingness to admit we are seeing within.

Can we be the new church? This is very much an individual question. Can we collectively see and hear with our own new eyes?

## PRAYER

*Oh, Lord, We want our church to be real. We want our church to be vital. We want our church to be prophetic. We want our church to have soul. We want our church to grow both in numbers and members, and its effectiveness in directing and urging humankind to maturity. We want our church to give value to each person's own individual experiences of God and his or her relationship to the universe. We pray that our church might be compassionate, to unite all of us with God, and all she has birthed for us to enjoy. We want our church to nurture connectiveness with all creation. We want our church to cry when we cry, to laugh when we laugh, to share moments of joy. We want our church to run its hands through our hair and ease the pain when we hurt or are filled with fever.*

*We want our church to be with us at death. We want our church to listen, to be with us in silence, to pray with us, to sing with us, to embrace us, to teach us, and to go hand in hand with us as we feed the hungry, visit those in prison, comfort the lonely and heal the sick. We want our church to be loved and love us back, knowing it has a right to be and a purpose to fulfill.*

The Rev. Jerome Poole is a minister of the Wilmington church, and member of the board of directors, Swedenborg School of Religion.



## Convention Scenes



Sue Turley-Moore, Carl Yenetchi and Gladys Wheaton celebrate their 10th SSR graduation anniversary.



Katherine Swiger, Swedenborgian's since birth, 84, eldest conventioner, and youngest conventioner, Hilary Grumman, four months, get acquainted..



Bob McClusky and Jim Lawrence off for a run.



New Church Youth League reports to convention.



Ministers' spouses, Corinne Tafel, Elizabeth Johnson, Mareta Tafel and Val Brugler, practice massage techniques.



Eric Allison lets his shirt "do the talking."



Susan Poole and Paul Martin in "hands-on" t-shirts.



Convention choir under the direction of Ken Turley.

## Opinion

Dear Editor:

I am writing in regard to the way General Council planned its agenda for the 1990 convention. I was appalled at the way Eric Allison's report to the Convention was fit into the schedule.

Eric is employed by us, the people of Convention, as a consultant for Growth and Outreach. He spent his year doing this job, then spent four days preparing an informative report that was very important to Convention as a whole. His presentation was put at the end of the business session with insufficient time to fully inform us about his program.

I was also angry to learn that funds are not available for programs that the societies he has worked with would like to implement. I can't understand it.

Shirley Sonmor  
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan



## Central Office Director Says Farewell

# Thanks Western Canada!

*Ethelwyn Worden*

Two hundred sixty-two Swedenborgians, ages ranging from four months to 84 years, attended a friendly convention at Olds College, Olds, Alberta, Canada, June 23 - July 1.

This was my last convention as director. I hope there will be many others I may attend as "just me," able at last to sit through an entire meeting or service without the constant litany in my head of what has to be done next and by whom. Won't that be fun?

I was able to do that as a teenager at the 1958 convention, but since 1964 I've been somehow involved in our annual meetings, dealing with registration, housing, program, or, in the past six years, looking after the development and production of the whole meeting.

I have had such good help; and now I leave the Central Office in capable, friendly hands, while at the same time Randy Laakko has passed the president's gavel to Richard Tafel, Jr., Convention's first full-time president. I wish the entire church a clear concept of that light we are all walking towards - and the breadth of mind to continue to build the Swedenborgian Church according to the ever-changing needs of the world.

With the 1990 Convention now behind us, I would like to acknowledge everyone who helped, beginning with Martha Bauer, who has served as bookkeeper and is now making the transition to manager of the Central Office.

And thanks to:

- Marian Kirven, who single-handedly completed the Advance Reports, took on the tasks of handling the banner procession and minicourses when Jacqui Light was unable to attend, and who also made Wilma Wake's ordination robe.
- Bob Kirven, who lettered graduation and ordination certificates in his fine calligraphy.
- Mary Kay Klein who amassed all of the SSR and fund raising materials and saw they were packed and ready for shipment.

- Pam Shuttleworth, who located and packed the Central Office's huge amount of equipment, materials and papers, and then carried all 22 boxes downstairs for shipping.
- Eric Hoffman, who created a lovely exhibit for SSR, and helped pack up their materials as well.
- Donna Keane, who daily updated, on the computer, the registration and arrival information. Our office and SSR staffs, for all of their support.
- Convention Planning Committee 1990: Randy Laakko, Dick Tafel, Ken Turley, Barb Penabaker, Peter Little, Steve Pults, Dave Sonmor, Sharon Slough, Martha Richardson, Hart and Lorrie Lipski and many others for hours of dedication, time, labor, phone calls, FAXes, gathering of materials, transportation details, children's programs and child care.
- Sharon Slough, who coordinated so many people's efforts over the past months and kept communication flowing within and without the church.
- Gladys Critchlow, head of Olds College Conference Services, and her secretary, Darcia Johnson - both took our many needs and requests and saw they were accomplished.
- Wendy and Christina, resident assistants in the dormitory who doled out keys, answered telephones and questions, and did many other things for us during our stay in Canada.
- The friendly and accommodating staffs of maintenance, housekeeping, Beaver Foods and the commissionaires.



'Muff' Worden

Martha Bauer

- The Calgary folks who helped me with materials, planning and transportation; Loretta and Brent Clements, Carl and Doreen Dick, Garry and Pat Loewen, Don and Alta Loewen, Eric and Betty Osborne and Amy Mitchell; Marge Pardue of Red Deer, a charming and helpful presence; Erwin and Lisa Reddekop for friendly presence, support and maps; Laurie Slough for helping coordinate the NCYL (Youth League activities).
- Hank and Maria Korsten and other Edmonton church folk for work on program as well as materials needed for worship.
- Stella Podmore for long volunteer hours at the desk and folder stuffing with Jean Gilchrist, Dave and Shirley Sonmor of Saskatoon for help in getting communion and worship materials together, setting up the altar and banners in the auditorium and other worship details.
- Elaine Sonmor, for your cheerful presence and help at the registration desk (and that goes for Paula Krause of Pretty Prairie, too.)
- Polly Baxter, for spending nearly all of your time at the desk, dealing with the finances of the convention and helping Martha.

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Western Canada Convention



1990 Convention Local Planning Committee

## Thanks, Western Canada! (Continued from Page 100)

- Linda Tafel for your help at the desk, and finances too.
- All of you NCYL members who responded to my requests for help in moving or carrying things, or in running messages to this or that meeting, or in carrying luggage, and who were understanding about helping to keep noise levels down late at night. We have a terrific, talented group of teens, and I am so glad that so many were able to join us this year. Congratulations to your new officers, and keep up the good work!
- Sue Turley-Moore, Ken Turley and so many other volunteers who saw the need for, and developed a strong, wonderful program for the Junior League, the ten-to-twelve-year-olds.
- The excellent teachers in the Children's Program, Laura Lawson-Tucker, Wilma Koersen and Bernie Friesen, their assistants and crew who ended the week with a delightful "Noah's Ark."
- Bridget and many babysitters of all ages, who spent their time with our toddlers and younger children so parents could relax and enjoy meetings.
- Kerry of the Royal Bank, who helped set up our local account and, as vice presi-

dent of the Olds Chamber of Commerce, saw that the town was aware of our visit.

- Al and Tom, who drove the Olds College and Olds Community busses, respectively, and to the driver of the Didsbury Community bus, who eased our Saturday excursions and the "big" trips to and from Calgary Airport. All those folks from Associations, conventions, groups, who planned ahead enough that annual reports reached Dorothy Young in time to appear in the Advance Reports. And Dorothy, for seeing that Central Office received them in time for typesetting and copying.

## *Thank you one and all!*

There are, I am sure, people whose names I have not included. It is unintentional, please understand, and you are certainly included in my great feeling of thankfulness to all of you for everything!

Thanks too, to the convention attendees this year, representing our church in the United States and Canada. It takes all of you to make a good convention.

It is fun to look forward to seeing you each summer - and to meeting new friends each time. This year I have had so many good laughs and chuckles at the passing scene: the ongoing UNO game in the area behind the registration desk, which may become a legend in its own time; Kathleen Eastman's "ordination boots" from last year; Manon Washburn's amazing sketches; the hats of

Charles Humphries, Pat Bowen, Sarah Devoe and Doris Shaw; Jono Pults' TV show; Wilma Wake's gleeful grin; Eldon Smith's jaunty tassel; that beautiful focal banner created by Randy Laakko; Inna Reinhold and Eugenia Rowe of Wilmington; the landscaping at the college; the immense sky over that lush greenery; and the tremendous variety of cloudforms. Hope you had as good a time as I did.

Sometime in August I will move to Maine, to someplace about two hours north of Boston. I will be turning back to my real profession and field of music, will continue the research and development of my Celtic project\* and the performance of my one-woman show.

I will be joining a professional vocal quartet this fall as a part of the Maine Touring Artists Program, while continuing to work with the Handel and Haydn Society of Boston, also a professional choral and orchestral ensemble directed by Christopher Hogwood.

The Central Office will have my address and telephone number handy after the first of August - please write, phone or visit when you are in the area.

God Bless You!

*\*The Celtic Project will be explored in a future issue of The Messenger. Watch for it.*





## Love and Wisdom Revisited

*Dorothea Harvey*

We have come together to celebrate the graduation from study at the Swedenborg School of Religion. And so we think together about what that kind of study means. A theological education. Clearly, it has to do with truth, with respect for the understanding of reality, of religion, of the natural world as an example of God's love and wisdom, of human life pervaded by God's providence, of our own individual, outer and inner, lives - understanding in a way that does not offend our rational use of our minds, our intellects, our academic integrity.

But theological education is more than this. It has to do with relating to ourselves and to our neighbor in love. While I was preparing for this graduation, I was also preparing to take part in a memorial service for my next-door neighbor who died on the night before his wife was to rejoin him after two weeks in the hospital.

For this situation it is not theory that is needed, not the intellectual, but a willingness to be present with that woman and her family, to listen in love, in a faith that does not understand all the answers.

I believe our Swedenborgian theology is one which relates directly to preparation for this kind of situation. Swedenborg had a sense of the oneness of experience, finding God's love and God's wisdom in all. As we read him we can get tired of the repetition of "Love and Wisdom," unless we feel his excitement in realizing: There it is again, in minerals, in astronomy, in child development, in the nature of the human body, in every moment of the thinking and feeling happening in our bodies.

Love and wisdom happen only in life, in the process of creation as it is, moving now in your life, in mine.

I believe our theology relates to loving

our neighbor in another important way. It is the only theology I know which specifically and consciously begins not with truth but with love. In his intellectually explosive eighteenth century, Swedenborg commented that "one individual can believe that human life is feeling and acting," that is, physical sensations and actions only, a belief that only the materialist faces life honestly and realistically, and all else is sentimentality. Another individual can believe that life is thinking reason is the glory, the use of reason the determiner of what it means to be human. "But actually," says Swedenborg, "Thinking is a first result of life, and acting is a second result."

Life itself is love (Divine Love and Wisdom 2). Love, for Swedenborg, is the ultimate reality - the prior, the energy which is the essence and the beginning of all. So our living and our thinking begin with our caring. Our theology has its beginning in our caring, and our theology has its continuing power in our relating that caring to action, to usefulness for what is good, as Love and Wisdom and Use make one.

And I believe there is one other important aspect of our theology in all of this. I don't see Swedenborg's wonderful bringing together of our caring and our thinking, of our physical, intellectual, and spiritual life as a finished system of thought, a finished thing at all.

I see it as a part of a process of a living theology, real because it deals with the realities of life, and living because it is happening, enlarging, deepening, in all honest encounters with truth and with persons. I see teaching or studying in our theological school as a challenge to take part consciously in God's on-going, present Creation, one that involves all of life, all

# SSR



**Dorothea Harvey**



**SSR Staff and Graduates**

relationship with ourselves and with our neighbor.

Tonight we recognize three graduates of our theological school. One is seeking ordination in the Swedenborgian Church.

Of the others, Nancy Daniels is using her study of Swedenborg in her own thinking and approach to work in her African Methodist Episcopal denomination, and Eldon Smith is using his in very practical ways to improve his usefulness as a lay leader to help his fellow members in his San Diego church. Study at SSR is not for ordination only, and rightly so if theology has to do with all of life.

Wilma Wake is seeking ordination. She has told you something about herself and her plan for ordained ministry in our church. What led her to our church was her sense of the relationship of body, mind, and spirit, and her desire to enlarge her counseling and healing work, not only by connection with the spiritual, but also by connection with a community of life and thought and prayer as support for relating to the social and relational needs of persons. Without ever meeting Cal Turley physically in this world, Wilma is seeking to carry out his dream in pastoral ministry, reaching out to the needs of whole human beings, bringing them the presence of a church, an expression of God's own divine

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# GRADUATION



Wilma Wake,  
Robert Kirven



Congratulatory hug

## *A Wholistic Journey*

*Wilma Wake*

The question I have been asked most often since coming to study at the Swedenborg School of Religion is how I learned about Swedenborg and became interested in the church.

Since I was not raised as a Swedenborgian, the story is rather intriguing. I was a high school teacher, a very logical and analytical person. An automobile accident left me with an injured back. Doctors failed to relieve the chronic pain, I became discouraged and decided I had to look for something more than my doctors were offering.

My journey to find relief from the pain led me to explore many forms of healing. I learned about meditation, nutrition, exercise, herbs, massage, and laying on of hands.

As my back began to improve, I achieved better overall physical health while growing emotionally and spiritually. At some point, I realized I had discovered a wholistic approach to my life, and to my healing, that included many aspects of mind, body, and spirit.

I didn't understand why it worked so well, but I began to feel I was finding God. I even began to feel a call to ordained ministry. This was confusing, since at that time I wasn't attending church and wasn't even a member of a church. It seemed that going to seminary might be a good way to understand more about wholistic growth. So I joined one of the mainline Protestant denominations and went off to a seminary in Boston.

My studies kept me so busy I hardly noticed I wasn't finding the answers to my questions. My first semester, I met a woman preparing for ministry in the Unitarian-Universalist Church who advised me to

read Emanuel Swedenborg. "He writes about the kinds of things that interest you."

I admitted Swedenborg sounded interesting and agreed that perhaps I would read him someday but announced I was busy going to seminary and "just don't have the time." I took the pamphlet she gave me about Swedenborg, filed it away and forgot about him.

A randomly assigned project group at seminary where several of us met weekly to support each other in our school assignments put me in touch with two women, Judy and Anne, who opened an exciting wholistic center called Healthsigns, near Newton. They invited me to be on the board of directors. I was thrilled.

The supervisor for their work was a Swedenborgian minister, Cal Turley, who loved the wholistic concept and also shared their concerns for social justice issues.

I was too busy with seminary to meet Turley, but when Anne later phoned with the news of his sudden death, I was touched by the deep grief she felt.

I began to see that we can't put off too long those things we really want to do - or we may lose our chance to do them. That was on my mind the following summer when Anne, Judy and I spent a country weekend in New Hampshire. I told them sadly I would probably have to forget ordination for my church would not ordain a ministry focused on wholistic healing, even though the wholistic concept was a vital part of my life.

As we sat gazing at the mountains, Anne asked, "Why not look into the Swedenborgian Church?" I didn't understand, although I had heard of Swedenborg, I'd never gotten around to reading the pamphlet about him and knew nothing about a church.

(Continued on Page 108)



*Sketches by Manon Washburn.*



## Swedenborgian Church

## Elections

1990

Eligible to vote: 159

Offices:

Ballots cast: 153

Officers:

Treasurer:

John C. Perry, ME

General Council:

Rev. Randall E. Laakko, DE

Carl C. Dick, CAN

Peter D. Toot, OH

Communication Support Unit:

Carol Lawson, VA

Education Support Unit:

Rev. Kathleen Easton, MN

Financial &amp; Physical Resource Support Unit:

August A. Ebel, MD

Growth &amp; Outreach Support Unit:

Rev. Stephen Pults, MI

Information Management Support Unit:

Rev. Dr. Robert Kirven, MA

Pastoral Ministries Support Unit:

Rev. Ronald Brugler, OH

Fay Roberts-Frechette, MA

Committee on Admission into Ministry:

Rev. Paul Zacharias, CAN

Board of Trustees Swedenborg

School of Religion:

Rev. Jerome Poole, DE

Vice President:

Betsy Young, CA

Nominating Committee:

Rev. Skuli Thorallsson, FL

## Action Taken

## Death Penalty

Members voted that the motion on the death penalty be taken off the table and referred back to the Social Action Concerns Committee.

Purpose: to add a preamble to be published in *The Messenger* three months before the 1991 convention.

## Good News

Totals reported for the combined Swedenborg School of Religion and Convention Fundraising Drive stand at \$992,331.73.

## Membership Approved

The Korean Church of the Little Grain, pastored by the Rev. Chungsun Lee, in New York, approached the New York Society for membership and expressed interest in holding services in the New York Church of the New Jerusalem.

The request was turned down by the New York Church whose congregation feared the present membership would be a numerical minority to the Korean Church. The Rev. Randall Laakko met with them, ascertained they are indeed committed Swedenborgians, and recommended that the members of the Korean Church of the Little Grain be taken into direct membership in the Swedenborgian Church, (General Convention). They were voted into that membership at this session.



## Love and Wisdom Revisited

(Continued from Page 102)

love for them, as the reality within the healing process of skilled and caring therapy.

SSR has been working hard to gain authorization to grant a master's degree in Swedenborgian studies. The degree would be available for our ordination candidates, and also for others who do not seek ordained ministry in our church.

Wilma gave me her response to the new program - she sees the school doing what our church should do. That is, going out into the world and finding a way to be with people, not going with definitions or words only, but to be with people. I think Wilma is right. I think the graduate level program will be a way of going out into the world in a manner right for our church.

But I see another way for our church to be going out into the world now before any new degree program - in Wilma's ministry, in Nancy and Eldon's work as they take the experience they have gained and go to meet the needs of people, inside and outside of this church. And so I come to what I see as the most important part of my job at this graduation: to make the connection between us, as the Swedenborgian Church in the United States and Canada, and these three graduates of our school.

You heard Wilma speak tonight. As you meet and talk with her and with Nancy and with Eldon during the rest of the convention, please say to them as I say to you, "We are glad you are here. We are proud of your graduating. We appreciate the time and work you have put in as you have completed your studies at the New Church Theological School. We see your use of your study and thought and growth as an essential part of the continued life and growth of our church and its work in the lives of persons, the same life and growth we share, and so we go with you with our prayers and our support and our concern. We ask the Lord's blessing to be with you and with all that you will be doing."

*The Rev. Dr. Dorothea Harvey is former chaplain and professor of religion at Urbana University, currently living in Gloucester, Mass.*

# General Council Report

## Pre-Convention Session, June 27, 1990

During sessions the Council:

Appointed Ronald Davies, Wilmington, Delaware, as second assistant treasurer of Convention. August Ebel, Washington, D.C., is also an assistant.

Voted to forgive the unpaid balance of \$253,005.75, for a mortgage given by General Convention to the Church of the Open Word, St. Louis, Missouri. Council approved removing the forgiven amount from unpaid accounts with the funds to be added as an asset to the Convention real estate account, reducing the deficit by the same amount. (Last year General Convention received a substantial legacy from the Dorothy Diephus estate. Her husband served as pastor of the St. Louis church.)

Accepted property deeded to General Convention by The Riverside California, Society. When this intent is carried out, the Executive Committee of General Council shall be empowered to dispose of the property as is deemed appropriate following an appraisal. Churches considering turning over property to General Convention should consult Financial and Physical Resources Support Unit (FRPSU) for advice on proper procedure.

Approved a recommendation by the Council of Ministers to General Convention, for an amendment to Convention Bylaws, Article XIII, Sec. 1-f Lay Leadership. A waiver of proper notice was required.

## Post Convention Session - June 30, 1990

Received an appraisal of the Santa Cruz, California, property, for \$165,000 for 162+ acres, vacant land comprised of two parcels needing access road improvements. Best use suggested was for one custom building site or a private institutional camp.

Accepted the St. Louis, Missouri Society's invitation to host convention in 1992, dates to be announced. Convention dates for 1991 are June 23-30, Kitchener-Waterloo, Canada.

Received a report from the Central Office Development Committee on a new mission statement for the Central Office, and a job description for Central Office Manager. A flow chart showing chain of responsibility was also presented. Local churches, committees, or "outsiders" requesting services of the Central Office staff will be billed for work completed.

Agreed to grant the LaPorte Society's request that \$1,985, interest from the Kent Andrew trust, be given to the Society.

Reviewed and revised an employment agreement between General Council and the incoming General Convention president.

Gratefully accepted a \$750,000 equity investment from the Philadelphia Church for use in Temenos Church Building construction, estimated at a cost of \$2.2 million, including the building, fixtures and equipment, general site  
(Continued on Page 108)

## Mission Statement

### Central Office of the Swedenborgian Church

The Central Office exists to further the purpose and objectives of the Swedenborgian Church by providing the day-to-day support required for the effective and efficient operation of denominational functions. Among the ways the Central Office accomplishes this:

- By providing general office and financial office support for the offices and support units of the church.
- By providing assistance with the preparation of material for publication.
- By assisting with the planning of the various meetings associated with the operation and leadership of the church as well as other functions and duties designated as appropriate to the Central Office.

The Central Office also serves as a contact point for national and international church relations, Swedenborgian and ecumenical.

#### Central Office:

48 Sargent St., Newton, MA 02158  
Telephone: (617) 969-4240  
Office Manager: Martha M. Bauer  
Office hours: 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

#### President's office:

Rev. Richard H. Tafel, Jr.  
8065 Lagoon Road  
Ft. Myers Beach, FL 33931  
Telephone: (813) 563-5030



# For God's Sake Enjoy Yourself

Patte LeVan

Most of us have experienced three a.m. transformational experiences that evaporate with the light of day. I began feeling my habitual anxiety and grim sense of responsibility when invited to speak to the Women's Alliance at convention. (Anxiety is only a polite word for fear.) I lay awake counting shoulds. Then my "thought adjuster" cut through the compulsive nonsense and said, "You're forgetting that you deserve to enjoy doing this." It wasn't that I didn't know that before, but it hadn't really gotten integrated. I could feel a consciousness shift - I was able to feel what it is like for anxiety to be absent, and finally I wanted that state of consciousness more than I wanted the anxiety. And it seemed that when I fully acknowledged before God that this pain was no longer needed, it left me. I decided to title the talk, "For God's Sake, Enjoy Yourself."

The "letting go and letting God" process continued the next morning when I realized the heart of what I wanted to say had already been written in my answer to Reuben Bell, whose letter criticizing *The Messenger* appeared in the April issue.

When I phoned Dr. Bell last March about printing his letter, we had a delightful conversation that centered on struggling with the old attitudes that we're all raised with. Some of you read his letter, but even if you didn't, I think my reply to him has relevance for us here, and I quote it in part:

"When you state that *The Messenger* is feminist, I would be interested in understanding more about what the word or idea of feminism means to you. The pervading theme of the new *Messenger* is healing, with emphases on "uses" and practical tools for spiritual growth, ways to inner and global peace. What seems to emerge as a byproduct of the larger themes is what might be called a new feminism, since the balance and integration of feminine and masculine is necessary for wholeness and healing, and emotionally and spiritually maturing persons of both genders are recognizing that this equal blend is necessary for wholeness, as did Swedenborg. Those who are seeing the urgent need for this wholeness and healing are also seeing the need to empower men and women to cultivate both the feminine and masculine energies, to develop spiritual muscle, bloom, become all we're intended to be. Men such as Matthew Fox, Scott Peck, Bernie Siegel, Gerald Jampolsky, Joseph Campbell, Robert Bly, Hugh Prather, John Bradshaw and many others are in the vanguard of this move toward the healing of our planet, and as I see it, they are carrying forth Swedenborgian concepts of spiritual growth, whether or not they know anything about Swedenborg. In this they are aided by the New Physics, which in Dr. Michael Stanley's words, "is helping to destroy the previous materialistic view of the world, to reveal a holistic world consonant with the deepest insights of the mystics and visionaries of the past."

"You call *A Course in Miracles* a theological goosechase, and yet Michael Stanley, the principal of the New Church College in England, feels very strongly otherwise, based on several years' experience working with the Course. I am interested in knowing why you think it is incompatible, and I'm sure other *Messenger* readers would be interested as well. If you think Marilyn Baldauf's article displays ignorance of Swedenborg's teachings, take it on with a reasoned discourse. When you label something and trash it without discussing it, we all lose the opportunity to understand someone else's viewpoint, and perhaps see our own more broadly, or in a different light. We are all teachers and learners, and we can all help keep each other in balance, if we're willing to enter into dialogue."

I find some irony in being labeled a feminist, having flunked my first effort. When I joined a Los Angeles chapter of the National Organization of Women in the early seventies, we immediately took to the streets to protest sexism at the Academy Awards ceremony. At the crucial moment, I got rattled and dropped my sign. Though in sympathy with their goals, I decided I'd be better off back home working on myself, if only to improve my coordination.

I was researching and writing about child abuse back then, and the writer of a book called *A Child Is Being Beaten* referred to the family as a "cradle of violence." That was 1975. Family violence has not abated. Home is still the most dangerous place for women and children, so much so that the National Council of Churches has made the family violence issue a priority. And what about the daily "soul murder" of men, women and children living together in quiet desperation? The Willie Lomans of both genders going to their graves never knowing who they are, doing violence to their God-given human potential?

These men - Bly, Fox, Bradshaw, Prather, Jampolsky, Peck, Campbell, Siegel - are healers who have been through their own emotional death and rebirth, who are bringing the necessity of feeling feelings, of recognizing and valuing their feminine energies, to the so-called common man. The 12-Step programs, in fact the whole self-help movement that has gained such momentum in the past dozen years, has had a great deal to do with bringing this about. At all different levels, men are beginning to realize that they must get in touch with the feeling side and express that part of them, or die. They're starving for the kind of message men like Bradshaw and Bly and Peck are bringing to light. They long for community without knowing what they long for.

In Robert Bly's two-hour taped interview with Bill Moyers, "A Gathering of Men" - part of which showed Bly with  
(Continued on Page 109)



# Council of Ministers

Thirty-seven ministers and five guests attended the 1990 sessions of the Council of Ministers at Olds College, Alberta Canada. The opening began with the traditional sharing time, our opportunity to learn of each other's ministries - significant events in each other's lives during the past year - and renew the bond holding us together.

Two sessions were conducted with Rev. Doug Dombrowski, Lutheran Chaplain at the University of Saskatchewan in Saskatoon. The sessions focused on our ability to understand and minister to families confronted with a member's drug or alcohol abuse, dysfunctional family systems, and means of identifying areas of growth within our own lives. Adult Children of Alcoholics materials helped us understand the roles assumed by members of dysfunctional families, and, to better comprehend the issues that must be faced before growth and change is possible.

Rev. Eric Allison, Church Growth consultant for the Pastoral Ministries Sup-

## Council Elections:

Chairman: Rev. David Rienstra  
Secretary: Rev. Ronald Brugler  
Executive Committee: Rev. Henry Korsten  
CAM member: Rev. Carl Yenatchi  
Convention preacher 1992:  
Rev. Steve Pults

port Unit, who has visited many of our churches, led a session to demonstrate our commitment to increasing church membership. We also decided to recommend growth as a theme for next year's convention and will be scheduling a two-day workshop designed to provide us with the tools necessary to accomplish this goal.

Dr. Pat Bowen, SSR faculty member, led a third workshop on the many issues relating

to developing a successful supervision program for students and clergy.

Council members also: Approved and recommended to Convention that Wilma Wake be ordained into ministry of the Swedenborgian Church.

Approved requests from the Edmonton and Calgary Churches that Carl Dick, Brent Clements, and Sharon Slough be authorized to serve as probationary lay leaders.

Established a committee on ethics, discussed the establishment of a mentor program for new ministers and ministers in transition, and considered provisions for the governance of lay leaders for the congregations.

*Submitted by Ron Brugler,  
Secretary Council of Ministers*

## Women's Alliance

President Barb Penabaker conducted the meeting. Barbara and Jacqui Skinner Light presented an excellent Annual Meeting Handbook. Alliance sisters absent from convention were remembered. Mary Ebel gave an easy-to-follow financial report. A stimulating keynote address was presented by Messenger editor, Patte LeVan.

## Election Results:

Barbara Penabaker - President  
Elizabeth Guin - First vice-president  
Phyllis Bosley - Second vice president  
Jacqui Skinner Light - Secretary  
Nancy Perry - Treasurer  
Elizabeth Gutfeldt - Religious Chair  
Pat Sommers - Mite Box Chair

Phyllis Bosley, Publications Chair  
Nominating Committee:

1991 - Adrienne Frank  
1992 - Carole Rienstra  
1993 - Annella Smith  
1993 - Leone (Lee) Dyer  
1996 - Josephine Cowern

*Submitted by Phyllis Bosley, Publications Chair*

## The State of the Church (Continued from Page 97)

an increased opportunity for communication at the various management levels, especially between Cabinet and General Council, as well as between Support Units and with the church body in general. When we first heard about the new organizational structure I was impressed with its four new contributions: responsiveness of the denomination to dreams, wants and needs; accountability to a built-in process of supportive supervision and consultation; flexibility to address emerging concerns; efficient use of resources, including more cost-effective management. It felt like the church was opening up and getting on the move.

The Cabinet, chaired by the president, is made up of Support Unit chairpersons, General Council Representative, and the Council of Ministers chairperson. The Cabinet's own meetings and its joint meetings with General Council have brought about mutual

understanding and concerted efforts on behalf of the church.

Several programs have gone through the dream-weaving process and come into functioning existence during these early years. This design was meant to allow the church to develop its ministries from the local level, from the ideas and visions of individuals, local groups and congregations and almost secondarily from the national level. The denomination, in adopting the new organization, thus made a decision to look to all its members for inspiration and organized energy to carry out its purpose. The Ad Hoc Committee, designer of the new organization, can be very proud of its work. The church now has a solid foundation of organizational design.



## General Council

(Continued from Page 105)

development and 20% contingency. General Council approval included a \$50,000 appropriations from sources to be identified by FPRSU to initiate the building design. The Temenos board members, in consultation with the Philadelphia Church and FPRSU, will present the financing plan and a five-year plan at the General Council midwinter meeting. Progress of the five-year plan is to be under the direction of the Executive Committee of General Council, with FPRSU to inform Council of the impact of such plans on the

overall financial and budgetary position of General Convention.

Changed the church fiscal year of General Convention from April 1 through March 31, to January 1 through December 31.

Set January 31 through February 3, 1991 for the next General Council meeting at Ft. Myers Beach, Florida.

*Submitted by Dorothy deB. Young  
Recording Secretary, General Council*

## Changes

Our heartfelt thanks to Lorene Lederer, (dba Design and Illustration), artist and Communication Support Unit member, for her excellent work as *The Messenger* designer/layout person these past 18 months. Beginning with this issue, Marcia C. Porter, award-winning journalist and designer, has taken over this important task. The elimination of cross-continent production costs will help to keep *The Messenger* within budget.

## A Wholistic Journey

(Continued from Page 103)

Anne explained that Cal Turley, the wonderful supervisor of their wholistic center, had been a minister and faculty member of the Swedenborgian School. I was incredulous. "This church has a school, too?"

Even though Anne reminded me she'd surely told me of Turley and his church, I guess I just wasn't ready to hear it before. But now I had heard it, I couldn't learn fast enough. My mind buzzed with

*I always knew I'd take this path  
someday  
but I didn't know  
yesterday  
that it would be today.*

questions. I went back to my file, read and re-read the single pamphlet about Swedenborg and thought about a quotation I'd heard recently: I always knew I'd take this path someday, but I didn't know yesterday that it would be today. That Sunday after Swedenborgian services at the Cambridge Church, I left with an armful of pamphlets and books, read all Sunday afternoon and evening, called the school the next morning and was invited for a visit. My life has not been the same since.

It has been difficult to find the time, money, and energy to undertake studies there. But I found the school to be a flexible and supportive place, where I was helped to find creative solutions to the obstacles in my path.

I finally came to understand, through the reading of Swedenborg, why the wholistic made sense. I was eager to share my new knowledge with people in New Hampshire.

As I shared with them my excitement about Swedenborg, I realized that a new ministry was taking shape. The school helped me put together a field project in New Hampshire to begin an on-going group for spiritual growth, study, and worship.

We now have eight people meeting regularly. Our hope is to expand this community and in the next few years put together a center for spiritual growth where people can come to worship as well as attend classes or receive counseling.

It will be a place where people can explore all dimensions of the wholistic: body, mind, and spirit, as well as life within the context of the community - so that we can address the spiritual issues involved with the environment as well as learning to live in community with people from all walks of life - all races, classes, ages, religions, and people who are differently challenged.

As excited as I am about this ministry, saying goodbye to SSR means sadness. My life has been touched forever by all of you who form the SSR community: Mary Kay Klein, Bob Kirven, George Dole, Bill Woofenden, and Pat Bowen. Mary Bryant and Dick Byrne, who really keep things running smoothly, and our librarian, Jean Hilliard. And of course, the students - those graduating with me, as well as Erik Hoffman, his wife, Norma, and Pamela Shuttleworth.

I couldn't have completed my studies without the help of each of you and the wonderful support I received from the church - tuition help from the augmentation fund and gifts from the Swedenborg Foundation and the Gray Fund. Two Support Units have provided emotional and financial help to get the New Hampshire ministry off the ground. I must mention the great emotional support and financial help my family provided on this journey - especially my parents.

A very special thanks to the entire church body, who have provided prayers and encouragement. Although leaving SSR is sorrowful, I realize I am expanding my horizons to the community of the entire Swedenborgian Church.

I look forward to coming to know all of you much better in the coming years as we worship and share in that community.



## Commencements

### Baptism

**Britten** - Candice "Britt" Britten was baptized and confirmed into the Christian faith at the Church of the Open Word, April 8, 1990, the Rev. David L. Rienstra officiating.

**Ferguson** - Ainsley Ann Marie Ferguson, daughter of Robert and Heidi Ferguson, was baptized into the Christian faith at the Church of the Holy City, Edmonton, March 11, 1990, the Rev. Henry Korsten officiating.

**Reid** - Jessica Mary-Ann Reid, daughter of Terri and Scott Reid, and granddaughter of Jack and Doreen Van Rootjen, was baptized into the Christian faith at the Church of the Holy City, Edmonton, April 29, 1990, the Rev. Henry Korsten officiating.

**Tafel** - David Erik Tafel, son of David and Diane Tafel, born November 13, 1989, was baptized into the Christian faith, June 11, 1990, at the Wayfarers Chapel, the Rev. Harvey A. Tafel, officiating.

### Death

**Orthwein** - Walter E. Orthwein, Jr., St. Louis, Missouri, entered the spiritual world on April 13, 1990. A memorial service was conducted on April 18, 1990, by the Rev. David L. Rienstra.

**Roback** - Mrs. Anna Roback, St. Alberta, Alberta, Canada, entered the spirit world April 11, 1990. Mrs. Roback was one of the original members of the church in western Canada. A memorial service was conducted by Rev. Henry Kosten at the Church of the Holy City.

**Pierce** - Mary Evelyn (Pratt) Pierce, Augusta, Georgia, long-time member of the Swedenborgian Church, entered the spiritual world April 22, 1990. She was born February 2, 1895, and was active when the Mansfield church was functioning. Memorial services were conducted July 1, 1990, in Mattapoisett, MA, the Rev. Raymond D. Patch officiating.

**Gomez** - Alice Marjorie Gomez, 83, long-time active member of the Los Angeles church, entered the spiritual world April 12, 1990. She helped maintain the Los Angeles church through dedicated work with New Church educational and study groups.

**Gillespie** - Emma Mac Gillespie, 88, long-time active member of the Los Angeles church, sister of Alice M. Gomez, entered the spiritual world February 17, 1990. Separate memorial services were conducted for Mrs. Gomez and Mrs. Gillespie by their nephew, Lt. Cmdr. Robert Garrett.

### For God's Sake Enjoy Yourself

(Continued from Page 106)

an actual gathering of men from all walks of life - Bly speaks of men's mode of feeling that is through unexpressed grief, whereas women's mode is through the pain of being devalued. When we at the LaPorte Church showed the 10-tape Bradshaw series this spring, one of the couples attended every week, but disappeared when we began the discussions. At one point, the woman told me quietly that it was all she could do to get her husband to come to the series, let alone join in the discussions. When we showed the Bly tape the eleventh week, this man sat with us afterward with tear-filled eyes as he talked about his relationship with his father. "I don't know where to begin telling him how I feel, but I know I want to."

Watching the Bly tape, I felt more real compassion for men than I've ever felt in my life. One of the things that seemed to emerge for me is that men are leading men into this wholeness - and I feel strongly that our first priority as women is to put our own spiritual growth first and foremost. I believe that when we take risks that strengthen our faith, when we truly value ourselves and are true to our course, following our bliss, we can begin to glimpse joy as a state of being, as our human birthright and that will

radiate outward. We are a light to each other, only so far as we value the tending of that light above all else. We must not bury ourselves in "uses" to the extent that we miss our own healing.

When the mystic is empowered in each of us, feminine and masculine energies are balanced and synergistic. One of Matthew Fox's 21 working definitions of mystic is, "The mystic is keen on direct experience of the divine and will not settle for theory or knowing about it."<sup>3</sup> It is a right brain experience. And this from Hugh Prather's *There is A Place Where You Are Not Alone*: "Sight is a literal extension of one's self. Vision reaches out a hand as real as its object and transforms it into its own nature. In my presence you become what I have made of myself. Insofar as I experience anything, my attitude toward it is all there is to it. I have my attitude.

"My attitude is my gift to myself given in the form of my experience. What my attention is focused on is what I have. And what I have is what I think I am. And what I think I am is all that I can give to another. And what I give to another is what I teach myself I am made of. For having, giving, and being are all the same.

"May the ancient memory of who and

what we are rise in our hearts until all the world's pain be gone."<sup>4</sup>

1. Stanley Michael. "What is the New Age?" *Lifeline*, February, 1990.

2. "Happy Birthday, Eve," *The Messenger*, February, 1990.

3. Fox, Matthew, *The Coming of the Cosmic Christ*, Santa Fe, NM, Bear & Co.

4. Jampolsky, Gerald G., M.D. *Love is Letting Go of Fear*, New York, NY: Bantam Books, 1983.

Keynote speech delivered at Alliance of New Church Women's dinner, Convention '90, Olds College, Olds Alberta, Canada.





Convention theme:

*A New Heaven A New Earth  
Walking Towards the Light*



General Convention of the New Jerusalem

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