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September 1991

Convention 1991
Kitchener, Ontario



Healing Ourselves



Healing the Earth

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Moving Toward the Light

Convention Highlights

This year's convention theme, Healing Ourselves, Healing the Earth, was underscored by Waterloo University's tranquil landscape—trees and flowers and ponds dotted with duck families paddling serenely about and mingling unafraid with campus strollers. Convention was also enhanced by the exceptionally smooth-running organization and planning that was evident in the results, but like any quality performance, the sweat didn't show.

It is traditional that three days before the actual convention begins, the Council of Ministers conducts meetings and the ministers' spouses meet to renew connections and work on personal growth. The two groups invited each other to special Vespers services on successive evenings. The men's service, led by Ken Turley and Eric Allison, included a recital of the Native North American "Prayer of the Six Directions," reprinted on p. 128.

The spouses' group was blessed once again with Jane Leifer, the facilitator who was with us in Boston in 1988. This year she was also the "Healing Ourselves" theme speaker for convention and was facilitating a joint evening session with the ministers and spouses. Jane has 22 years of workshop experience and several as associate director of the Canadian Institute of Psychosynthesis in Montreal. She had brought with her a friend and colleague, Eva Nagle, a storyteller who enchanted us all as she acted out mythic tales of ancient wisdom with grace and humor.

We were asked to become aware of what needs healing: the splits within ourselves and in our world. The major splits are spirit/matter, masculine/feminine, reason/emotions, body/mind. We've all been wounded and have gotten out of balance. We want to save the earth. But isn't this body part of the earth? Aren't we children of God? And the question that we daily stumble over, grapple with, that forces its way into our awareness whether we like it or not: How can we help out *there* when we haven't begun to care for the house of our own spirit? Do we deserve wholeness and connectedness with the divine? Do we have Christ compassion for ourselves? Jane has a spritely and loving way of challenging us that is empowering; we are called to embrace the shadow and get on with our real work of remembering who we are.

The joint evening session led by Jane centered on reaffirming our deepest values connected with our work and participating in intimate communication with our spouse—not an easy task to pull off with a group of 40 to 50 people, but after some initial awkwardness, it moved along well and was followed by some group dancing and much laughter. The theme was continued and built upon Thursday morning for convention at large, with more storytelling, dance, experiential exercises, with emphasis on moving out of denial,

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Convention Sermon

On The Fence

What is preventing us, the church, from becoming all we can be?

Robert McCluskey

Our denomination is dying. If we want to reverse the present trend, we might reexamine the description of the New Church given in Revelation. This image suggests a way we might forge a new vision of the church. We have heard for years that it is our packaging, not our product that needs help. (This very concern, in fact, was articulated in our president's opening address on Wednesday evening.) I suggest that part of our denomination's packaging problem is in the ecclesiastical forms that we have slowly adopted over the years: namely, the forms of the apostolic tradition. Until we acknowledge how we are presently involved with those forms, we will be unable to deal with the negative effects of that involvement. We will thus continue to be frustrated in our efforts to be a *new* church. We have the apostolic tradition on one hand and the vision of the new church on the other, so our present situation is one of being "on the fence": on the fence between unity and diversity, between order and spontaneity.

In the larger context of the Lord's church we recall that Swedenborg clearly describes five distinct stages of spiritual development: five churches. The first, or Most Ancient Church, represented by Adam, was characterized by an intuitive perception of the divine, a life of love and the heart. The Ancient Church, represented by Noah, was marked by the intellect, in which knowledge and understanding of the spiritual dimension of human experience was emphasized. The third or Jewish Church emphasized the law and commandments as its primary means of relating to the Divine. And finally, the fourth, or Christian Church, was distinguished by its emphasis on God's grace freely given and on an image of sacrifice and service to the neighbor; the revelation in Jesus Christ, of the Lord's Divine Human-



ty. Heart, head, the Word, and life.

The Apostolic Tradition refers to the tradition of the Christian church that is traced back to the apostles and how they structured the church after Christ's death. The tradition includes the early church fathers and church councils and refers largely to matters of ritual, theology, and church governance.

Christianity at first proclaimed *Agape*; their gatherings were festive banquets of food and fellowship, parties. With the Greek influence of Eros and rationality, truth, however, soon came to have first place over love; this in turn was the beginning of faith replacing charity as the chief element of religion and the rise of empty ritual and irrational theology. The political and philosophical influences of Greece and Rome eventually gave rise to the well-known but false division between what is sacred and what is secular, between our inner spiritual growth and our outer involvement with the world; between what is holy and what is real, between the mind and the body, faith and charity, worship and social action, and a division between our relationship to God and our relationship to our neighbors.

My upbringing has made it impossible for me to miss the strong Roman Catholic or "Apostolic" influences within our church; influences that came to us through the Episcopalian and Lutheran traditions.

Most Swedenborgians do not realize that, although our theology is quite distinct, the apostolic tradition accounts for majority of the external forms and activities of our denomination: its liturgy, polity, and even its sense of program.

And yet it seems clear to me (as it did to George Dole's grandfather in his book title, *The New Church*) that Swedenborg was describing a post-apostolic church. In the same way that Abraham was called to leave the idolatry of the Ancient Church, in the same way that the apostles were called to leave the legalism and abuses of the Jewish Church, so we have been called to move beyond the pretentious rituals and bad theology of the apostolic tradition. The Catholic and Protestant churches all go to great lengths to ensure their continued connection with the apostolic succession and traditions. *Our denomination is quite different; our theology actually prevents us from seeking or claiming such a connection; we must look elsewhere to validate our being.*

Many Swedenborgians share the feeling that, as one minister has said, you did not come into the church for what it was—but for what it can be. You were moved by a vision of something new, even though your experience was of something quite old and ordinary. In your heart was vision, newness, courage and excitement; but we are soon tamed by the status quo, the entrenched traditions of our societies, the pressing demands of our own culture and economy. It is not only difficult to stand and work for that which is truly new; it's downright scary. What is preventing us, the church, from becoming all we can be?

The on-the-fence image has both good and bad connotations. In general, I am using this image to describe a few of the ambiguities

(continued on page 119)

Expanding the Vision

SSR Commencement Address

Jonathan Tafel

I am pleased and honored to be the graduation speaker on this momentous occasion—the 125th anniversary of the Swedenborg School of Religion.

One of my most vivid memories of the school was visiting my brother Richard when the school was located on Quincy Street (across from Harvard). While the theological school was sound spiritually, its structure was lacking—it was quite a palace! I happened to walk out on his porch and fell through to my knees! I learned at an early age the real meaning of "... where angels fear to tread."

This has been an extremely eventful year for the school—not only are we celebrating its 125th anniversary, but also the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in February, as most of you know, authorized the Swedenborg School of Religion to award the degree of Master of Arts in Swedenborgian Studies. The authorization is the result of five years of hard work on the part of the faculty, students, president, and trustees. This is the first degree program in the history of the school and the only degree of its kind offered in the world. The two-year graduate program is open to anyone interested in studying Swedenborgian thought in the immediate context of Swedenborg's life and times, in the larger context of the history of ideas, and in relation to contemporary issues.

In the realm of higher education, Swedenborg's thought holds particular relevance for religious and social issues and is germane to the disciplines of psychology and philosophy. His ideas emphasize the relationship between science and



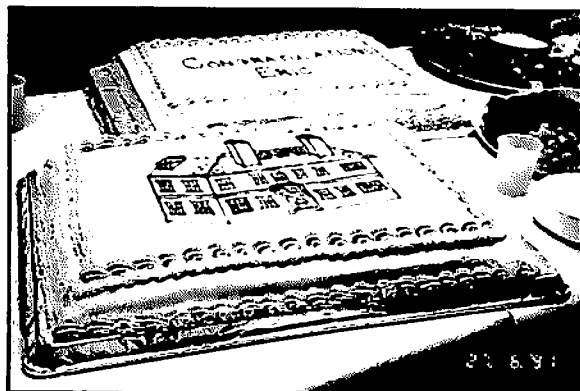
spirituality, intellect and feeling, and matter and spirit. The ordination track, representing two more years of study, builds easily upon the self-standing degree program.

I believe the graduate program represents a new beginning—for our school and church. It opens our school and teachings to our congregations and to the larger society—connecting us educationally with ourselves and others. It transforms the notion of theological education into a much broader enterprise, and it extends opportunities and curricular resources to a larger segment of our church. This, I believe, is a crucial point. As a church, we are often so preoccupied with our small size or focused inwardly on our wonderful uniqueness and identity that we often fail to recognize the larger social system to which we are irrevocably connected. We voluntarily put ourselves in a minority mentality, which has serious implications for the way in which we operate both as individuals and as a religious

organization.

Leon Pacala, the former executive director of the Association of Theological Schools, has noted that we are experiencing a shift in the focus of theological education—the paradigm of theological education nationwide is shifting from a primary focus on the preparation of clergy to that of the education of the entire "Community of Faith." With this perspective, theological schools have a broader mission than the preparation of church ministers—which is seen as necessary but not sufficient for renewing the spiritual and educational foundations of congregations. The concept of theological education, then, is broadened, and its role becomes more inclusive.

Many additional broad-based degree programs have been added in theological schools and seminaries over the past few decades. These institutions of higher learning are being transformed from single-purpose to multi-purpose institutions. Originally founded for the purpose of educating clergy for service in the church or religious order, the traditional degree program in Protestant religions was the Master of Divinity. Today, barely half of the individuals



in religious training are pursuing this degree path.

In Ohio, where I work with higher education institutions through the Ohio Board of Regents, we have experienced this proliferation of graduate religious degrees. In the last five years alone, at least nine theological schools or religious-affiliated colleges have added degree programs similar in intent to the master's degree at SSR. Such programs, we have found, have the positive impact of broadening coursework for students in the ordination track, providing access for scholars, accommodating the growing needs and interests of laity, and generally expanding the opportunity for religious study.

In concert with the shifting nature of theological institutions are the changing demographics of students who attend such schools. The enrollments, I believe, parallel changing enrollments in higher education generally. We find, for example:

- the average age of students is older, and they bring more life experience with them;
- increasingly, theological study represents a second career for students;
- as in other professional schools, women are increasingly being represented in enrollments in large numbers; and
- increasingly, students attend school part time.

Even to the casual observer, it is quite clear that SSR is, in this regard, already in harmony with mainstream theological education. There is no doubt that the new master's program will continue to increase the diversity of students and, thus, increase the richness of our Church. There is a synergism at work here that broadens our outreach, and in combination with other programs such as the correspondence courses and the lay-leadership program, provides ample educative resources to our congregations and others interested in Swedenborg and his teachings.

The keystone in this enterprise is

our profound belief in the importance of education and the centrality that it plays in the Swedenborgian faith. Education has been a vital concern of the Swedenborgian Church almost from its inception. Such high regard for education is exemplified by the founding of Urbana University in 1850, one of the earliest co-educational colleges in the nation, and the establishment of the theological school shortly thereafter, in 1866. The educational and theological perspectives evidenced at both institutions are unique to religious higher education. One need only recollect the quote from Swedenborg's *True Christian Religion* that is displayed prominently over the entrance to the library at Urbana

*Theological schools have
a broader mission than
the preparation of
church ministers.*

University, which represents the marriage of science with religion in inquiry:

"Now it is permitted to enter with understanding into the mysteries of faith." It is this belief that brings us here this evening. We are united in our celebration of the graduation of our first student, Eric Hoffman, with the Master of Arts in Swedenborgian Studies.

The culminating requirement for the Masters' degree is the submission of a thesis that represents an original piece of research. Eric's thesis addresses contemporary ideas concerning the moral and spiritual status of animals relative to humans and explores these ideas in light of the theological writings of Emanuel Swedenborg. Having received his Bachelor of Arts in zoology from Ohio State University, this has been a subject of long-standing interest for Eric. His work adds to the growing body of literature on this topic, but

from a unique perspective. Using concepts from Swedenborg, his work constructs a theological framework through which the status of animals may be approached.

I find his thesis title very provocative: *Those who Stayed in Eden: A Swedenborgian Approach to Animal Issues*. Those who have been attentive to the debate within universities and the medical profession over the use and treatment of laboratory animals understand the significance and complexity of these issues.

While the degree program provided Eric with a sound educational experience and the thesis work engaged him in a complete act of thought in the best tradition of graduate edu-

cation, I suggest the implications of this program are much broader. The resources of SSR have now been placed before our congregations, our church, and higher education generally. Opportunities are present to broaden our focus and engage new issues and new populations worldwide. We haven't altered our central mission, we have merely expanded the vision, and

in so doing, have entered the mainstream of theological education. I hope that our church seizes the opportunity.

To Eric Hoffman, the graduating class of 1991, congratulations and best wishes in your continued studies for ordination.

Dr. Jonathan A. Tafel is Director of Authorization for the Ohio Board of Regents, and is a member of the Philadelphia Swedenborgian Church.



Graduate Eric Hoffman

Knitting the Broken Spaces Back Together

Patricia Lyons Basu

One of my favorite humorists, Dave Barry, recently wrote a wonderful piece on "How to give a speech." He began with, "The United States is infested with clubs and organizations, constantly engaging in a variety of worthwhile activities such as (1) eating lunch; (2) eating dinner; (3) eating breakfast; and, of course, (4) holding banquets. So there is a constant demand for post-meal speakers, because otherwise all you'd hear would be the sounds of digestion."

He then moves on to the number one rule of public speaking: "*Nobody Really Wants to Hear Your Speech.* This is why short speeches are so popular. Historians agree that the greatest banquet speech was the one delivered by Socrates moments after he drank some hemlock. 'Gack,' he said, falling face-first into his chicken. The other Greeks applauded like crazy. 'Great speech!' they said."

I must confess I finished this speech only this week, although I knew months ago that I would be giving it. Barb Penabaker suggested I stick with the convention theme of healing, which seemed like a reasonable idea, but I found that every time I started to think seriously about the speech and that topic, I got sick. (No kidding—pneumonia, bronchitis, and other infections set in, requiring various antibiotics. I started joking about growing my own mold to save on the expense of commercial penicillin.)

But the kind of healing I really want to talk about is not promoted by penicillin. It involves knitting the broken spaces back together. The image that comes to mind is of a bird, smoothing each ruffled, wind-blown feather till it can once again fly easily, gracefully. In this sense,



healing refers to a "coming together, a closing of gaps, with the goal of strengthening for the next part of the journey." It is in this sense, and in preparation for the final half of my life's journey, that I have begun to engage consciously in acts of self-healing. We are familiar with three tools of healing common to all religions:

Cultural myths—by which I mean the inner spiritual sense of history—facts *plus* meaning.

Symbols—powerful and wordless, identifiers ripe with meaning; they produce effects even when they are not understood intellectually.

Ritual—actions done repeatedly in unison, recalling important events, making the implicit explicit.

This talk is about individualizing myth, symbol and ritual in our own lives, so it's going to be personal. But by sharing these small parts of my self with you, I hope you will be inspired to examine your own lives in a regular and conscious way so that the meaning and the structure begin to emerge.

It was not until November 1989, at a women's retreat held at Almont, that I realized the healing that could

come about through writing, or re-writing, one's own history, not in a factual (i.e., date-place-event) style, but in a more lyrical style, to get at the *meaning* behind those facts. Thanks to Betsy Ledingham and Deborah Winter, who designed and led the retreat, I've been moving more consciously into the "mystery of my story" as a method of developing spiritual awareness. In this exercise, we constructed our own myth based on a childhood experience, and written in the third person. This myth helped me to identify a broken space and locate a source of inspiration for the healing process.

The Healing Myth

When she was a little girl, she spent much time with her mother who told her of her own childhood and passed on the family legends. From these story-telling sessions, which often occurred as her mother ironed and she colored placidly at the kitchen table, the little girl learned that she came from strong and unusual women, apple-cheeked and virtuous, with roots in a mysterious place called the "old country." She loved the story of her grandmother who, at the age of 18, announced to her parents that she would not marry the ugly farmer's son, but would sail to America and create her own life. "Give me my dowry," she said. "I'm going to America."

Immortal words in the little girl's mind—words which rang through her family history in the same way that "Give me liberty or give me death" did in the history of her country. So, the girl's grandmother took her dowry and left her parents, their farm and the "old country" for

a new life in America where the streets are paved with gold.

The little girl did not like the next part of the story when her grandmother arrived in Boston, found cobblestones instead of gold, and was sent off to work—on a farm. Such an adventure she had had—refusing an arranged marriage, taking control of her own money, leaving her family and coming to a land where she could not speak the language, only to have it end like that. The little girl wondered what her grandmother, who had died before the girl had been born, had felt. And yet the decision to leave the "old country" did bear dramatic results, but not immediately, and more for the lives of her children and grandchildren than for herself.

When the little girl grew up, she did many wonderful things. She went to school, which her grandmother had never done, and earned many degrees; she taught and traveled and wrote. She did all those things her grandmother had dreamed of, but could not do beyond that initial act of rebellion.

But as time went on, she felt unsatisfied and trapped. Half her life had passed and she still felt she had not learned the point of it all. She was stuck and afraid to leave the safety of her family and her career to begin the next half of her life, on her own terms.

One day, as she was crying and feeling her stomach clenched with indecision, she remembered her grandmother, whom she had never met, and she heard the voice she had never really heard, saying, "Give me my dowry. I'm going to America."

And the girl, who was now a middle-aged woman, demanded her due and left for the new world.

And this time, the streets were paved with gold.

* * *

Sometimes the symbols are unexpected, coming inarticulate from a place beyond language. They too must be welcomed and consciously examined. The next episode I will share with you happened very recently, as I was meditating one night, with no focus at all. The strong image of a ferris wheel entered my

consciousness. Wordless . . . I saw myself and my father in one of the boxes. Wordless . . . I began to sob. The image was powerful, but unbidden, unfamiliar. Later, in search of the wound that provoked such sharp pain, I found the words, and a kind of healing.

The Healing Symbol

When I was a child, my parents and I would sometimes take the train to Revere Beach in the late afternoon on a Sunday, but not to swim. We would walk along the strand, several miles of carnival amusements and fast-food stands. I always looked forward to those excursions, but especially I looked forward to riding the ferris wheel with my father. I could not imagine ever going alone, or just with my mother.

I have begun to engage consciously in acts of self-healing.

My father and I would look far out to sea from the top of the wheel. I was not afraid. I watched him looking at the sea, which he loved and left when I was born. So where did the tears come from? Two sources—two scars so close together that it felt like one wound.

I never ride the ferris wheel anymore. Now I am afraid. Without my father, and without the sea in front of us, I can't do it anymore. Not a major failure, in anybody's view. Not even a fear likely to be noticed or even given its own Greek name (ferrisophobia?). But I have a daughter who has expressed the usual kid-type interest in challenging gravity on various carnival rides. When she grows up, she will have memories of Mom on the merry-go-round. And, as she recently noted in disgust to a friend, "She won't even sit on a horse. She just sits on those bench things."

I am now without my father, as he was without his for all but eight years of his life. When I look out at the ocean, I see his golden eyes, dis-

tant, longing for what was taken away and what he freely gave up. Only now, after his death, do I feel his losses—of his father and his free life as a merchant sailor. Isn't it odd that I never thought before how peculiar it was to go to the beach and never enter the water? It was as if, when he gave up the sea, he fore-swore all intimate contact with her from that point on.

My father showed me possibilities, yet saw not one come to fruition in his own life; he showed me the sea without teaching me how to swim or sail. When his father died, he lost part of his childhood. When his own child was born, he gave up his life on the sea and lost another important part of himself.

I understood his enduring sadness—so often expressed as anger—only after he left us, on Christmas Day 1984. And so I see us still, going round and round, on a high ferris wheel, looking out at the sea, silent.

* * *

Healing can be accomplished in a variety of ways, besides the obvious ones of prayer and medicine. Our own private rituals are often more meaningful and effective in assuaging grief than the traditional funeral liturgy. Part of my healing after losing my mother involved the establishment of a kind of eucharist, a communion, that links us still.

The Healing Ritual

When I was a little girl, life was, of necessity, simple. Money was scarce and we lived in a three-room "railroad" flat. Later, I would tell people the bathroom was the only room with a door to it. The only heat came from the kerosene burning stove in the kitchen.

When I was three or four years old, I remember some days in the winter, we would go to the Balkan bakery down the street, buy Lithuanian bread and crusty rolls and trudge home through the snow. We would be cold and wet. My mother would light the oven, open its door, and move two chairs in front. We'd stick our feet in the oven to defrost them, while eating the still-warm rolls. I thought it was the coziest

(continued on page 116)

Images of Convention '91



Top Row, left to right: Paul Zacharias as Emanuel Swedenborg takes questions from the audience during SSR 125th Anniversary festivities; Dynamic Duo Sue Frid and Grace Sudden, co-chairs of the convention

Bottom, left to right, Pete Toot (Cincinnati) and Dave Rienstra (St. Louis) share a reflective moment; Alice Skinner (Maine) polkas with friend at Oktoberfest.

Knitting the Broken Spaces Back Together

(from page 115)

and most wonderful way to spend a winter afternoon with my mother.

When she died last year, she left me a small amount of money. After I returned home from the funeral in Massachusetts, I went to the mall and bought a bread making machine. "It's from Grandma," I told my daughter. Some nights this past winter, we would drink hot chocolate and eat the warm fresh bread together.

"I like this," she said. "It's cozy."

Do this (I hear the words) in

memory of me.

Emily Dickinson, who could pour words like balm into all the broken places of her life, wrote: "Narcotics cannot still the Tooth . . . That nibbles at the soul." (From "This world is not conclusion.") No, that kind of healing takes conscious effort and must proceed from the spirit. In the end, the cultural myths, the symbols, and the old rituals are not enough. They are only examples. We need to reconstruct our lives to draw the meaning that gives sense to our existence. This is the ultimate healing. When all the broken spaces have been knitted together again, the last leg of our flight should be easy.

I leave you with a thought from *A Course in Miracles* which describes simply this ultimate healing in the spirit:

ALL OF YOUR PAST, EXCEPT FOR ITS BEAUTY, IS GONE—AND ALL THAT IS LEFT IS A BLESSING.

Keynote speech delivered at Alliance of New Church Women's luncheon, Convention '91, Kitchener, Ontario, Canada.

Patricia Basu is a member of the Detroit (Royal Oak) Swedenborgian Church, currently serving on the Education Support Unit. Dr. Basu is librarian at the Sacred Heart Seminary, Detroit, and former librarian of the Swedenborg School of Religion. Her SSR commencement address, "On Crystals, Rainbows and SSR Graduates" appeared in the August 1988 Messenger.

In My Father's House Are Many Rooms

John 12:2

Susanne Lorraine

Eighteen months ago, when I first joined the Swedenborgian Church, I took a small step beyond myself. I had for many years been a spiritual seeker, making my journey through books and conversations within safe walls of my own home. When I discovered the writings of Emanuel Swedenborg, I saw with greater clarity the truth and goodness in my path thus far; I was excited by the challenge of further investigation and integration of my inner and outer realities. I found the Portland Swedenborgian Church to be a place for exploration and discovery with others in my community. I opened the door and found a place to stretch and grow.

At the 167th Convention of the Swedenborgian Church, I took another step outside the "room" of the Portland church. I found that I did not live and worship in a small room but within a large and beautiful mansion. Meeting the larger

church organization, I found myself wandering around in awe of the beauty and vastness of this new-found abode. I looked into many other rooms and saw the challenges and triumphs of other church groups. As I walked through the days of convention, other rooms showed me the organizational structure, the focus of committees, the family ties and histories, and the caring and compassion of individuals.

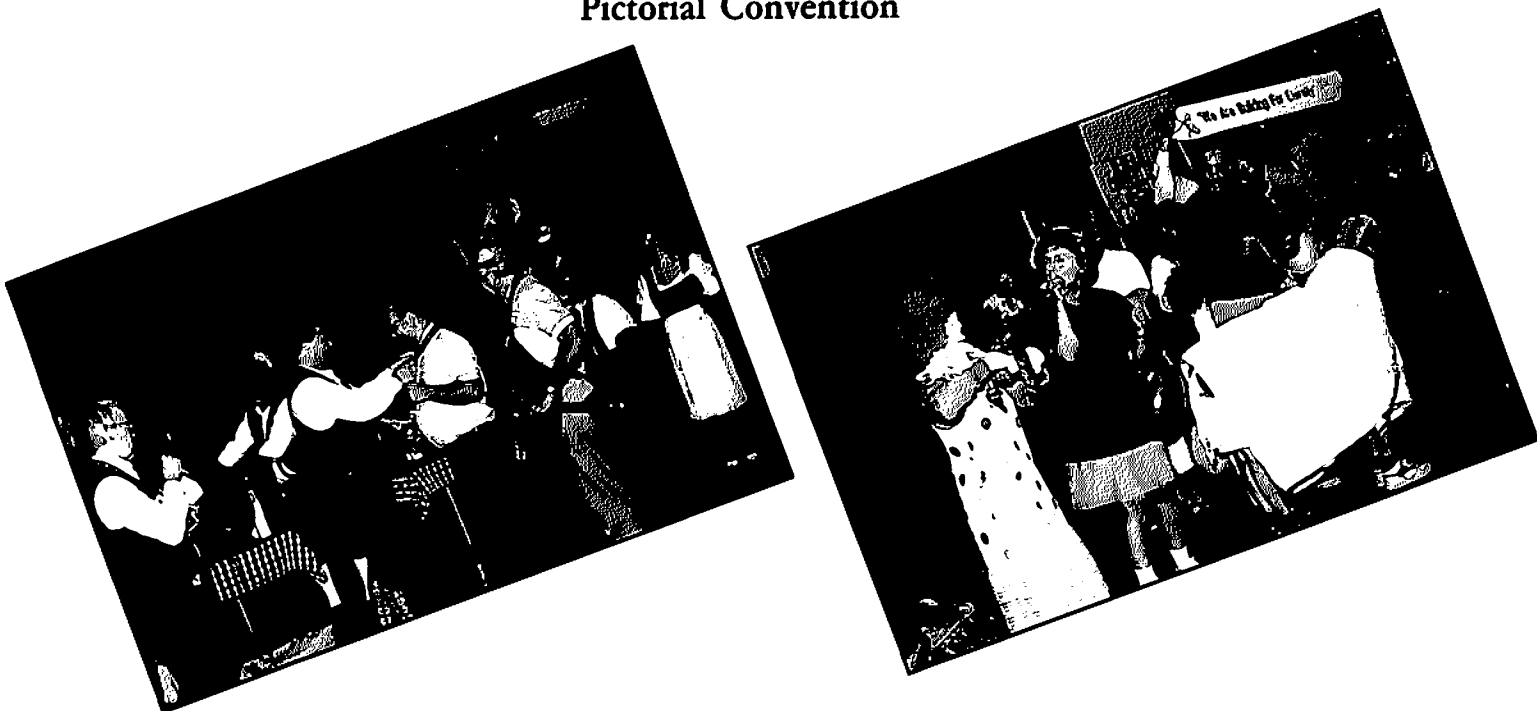
Now that I see the church as a whole, I realize that it is greater than the sum of its parts. At convention I saw the church functioning as a complete body; a healthy, happy body with each part working at its own task. I congratulate the members of The Church of the Good Shepherd on their ability to make their difficult task look easy. The logistics of making so many people feel at home must have been staggering. Having a small son, I was especially thankful for the excellent child care program which allowed me the time to explore the journey of self-discovery that opened up for me. I thank each individual who spoke with me and shared their journey. During meals, on the grounds and in informal gatherings, I felt guided to speak to people. Some I had heard speak in workshops, some I had never before

met, but everyone was warm and welcoming and usually said things I needed to hear at that moment. The time that people took to share, in workshops and in talks, opened me to a level of understanding that I have never felt before. The balance of depth and gaiety, work and fun, thinking and feeling was inspiring.

The influences of all ages was also important to me. The wisdom and guidance of older people balanced the enthusiasm and inquisitiveness of the younger people. I looked to my own, middle generation and found dedication and openness to learn from and appreciate each other. All of these qualities I will strive to blend in myself in my further workings in the church. I have returned to Portland with new energy to contribute my time and talents to my church. I feel blessed to have the opportunity to give of myself. My gifts come from the Lord and are not for me to hold but to share. I feel blessed to have seen what a great gift the Swedenborgian Church is to the world. I hope I will never underestimate what my part is in it, however small, for it is from God and it is good and true.

Susanne Lorraine is a member of the Portland, Maine Swedenborgian Church, and a first-time attendee at convention.

Pictorial Convention



Convention goes enjoy Oktoberfest dinner and family entertainment.

Swedenborgian Church Elections 1991

(Nominating Committee) (Floor) (N) (F)		Term in years	Ballots Cast: 131 Association	No. of Votes
Vice-President:	Betsy S. Young (N)	1	Pacific Coast	122
Recording Secretary:	Gloria Toot (N)	1	Ohio	125
Treasurer:	John C. Perry (N) Polly Baxter (write-in)	1	Massachusetts	118 1
Communications Support Unit:	Lorene Lederer (N) Rev. Dr. W.R. Crummin (write-in)	3	Pacific Coast	117 1
Financial & Physical Support Unit:	Susan Wood (N)		Southeast	121
Growth & Outreach Support Unit:	Christine Laitner (N)	3	Michigan	115
Information Management Support Unit:	Steve Koke (N)	3	Pacific Coast	118
Pastoral Ministries Support Unit:	Patricia Zacharias (N)	3	Canada	123
Board of Trustees SSR:	Margaret Kraus	3	Kansas	120
	Mary Crenshaw	3	Michigan	119
(of 131 ballots, 4 were invalid)				
General Council: (1 minister, 2 lay persons) 3-year term	Rev. Robert E. McCluskey (N)		New York	109
	Joseph Lederman (N)		Canada	81
	Phyllis Bosley (N)		Pacific Coast	96
	Lawrence C. Young (F)		Massachusetts	44
Education Support Unit:	Patricia Tukos (N)	3	Illinois	65
	Linda Blosser (F)	3	Ohio	54
Committee on Admission into the Ministry:	Rev. Paul Zacharias (N)		Canada	71
	Rev. Marlene Laughlin (F)		Massachusetts	53
	Elizabeth Johnson (N)		Pacific Coast	113
Nominating Committee:	George R. Chapin (N)	5	Massachusetts	34
	Sharon Slough (N)	5	Western Canada	85
(of 131 ballots, 10 were invalid)				

Hampton Schoch, Chief Teller



ABOVE: Gloria Toot, Cincinnati, incoming recording secretary.

*LEFT:
Outgoing denomination secretary
Dorothy deB. Young (center)
receives gift and heartfelt thanks for
her many years of work. (L) John
Perry, Dick Tafel, Betsy Young.*

On the Fence

(from page 111)

unique to our organization. Speaking in a positive way, we might describe our church as bridging or conjoining truth and love, tradition and meaning, life and doctrine. A high Christology and a broad ecumenism, two approaches to spirituality that are often seen as mutually exclusive, are quite compatible in our theology. At least that is how we define ourselves: a both/and church.

But we are often "on the fence" in ways that are not positive, in ways that keep us from entering into life more fully, with greater relevance. For some time the church has been on such a fence—a dividing line between existential individuality, freedom, and creativity on the one hand, and historical traditions, scriptural and philosophical grounding, and common consensus on the other hand. We are on the fence between affirming the externals of the old church and rejecting its authority and theology, as Swedenborg did; we are on dead center between affirming the call to universal justice among all people, and neglecting the actual work of justice and reconciliation. By being on the fence, we are becoming a neither/nor church.

For close to one hundred years, we have tried to make Lutheran and Episcopal forms of the 18th and 19th centuries meet the spiritual needs of Swedenborgians living in the 20th century. We have attempted to use the austere and solemn forms of another age to express the good news of a God of love, freedom, and innocence. We have tried to superimpose contemporary themes and issues onto liturgies that belong to another culture and time. The result has been less than fulfilling. To outsiders there is an uncomfortable and somewhat arbitrary mix of disparate traditions and forms. For members of the denomination it proves difficult to explain the contrast between doctrine and liturgy. This is what I mean by being on the fence.

We are a curious mix of hot and cold, a mix now rendering us more and more lukewarm and depleted. We seem to want to have a foot in both camps: tradition and reason,

freedom and commitment. But we do so in such a way as to keep us out of either camp.

Each of the four stages, or churches, mentioned before, was intended to include the one(s) before, and to lead to a fuller and more inclusive life, to eventually perceive and respond to the Divine in all things, and to do it freely and with rationality and awareness. What really happened, however, is that people limited themselves to this new but lower plane of spirituality. Each church contained the seeds of its own destruction. All churches begin boldly and with vision, with struggle and commitment, but soon become comfortable and fixed in their own successes.

The first church thus led to murder, the ultimate expression of self love and dominion over others; the second church led to magic and idolatry, the abuse of the knowledge of correspondences (the opposite of the spiritual); the Jewish tradition led to legalism and the externalization of spirituality, of empty ritual (the opposite of genuine usefulness); and the First Christian Church led to faith alone and bad theology, mystery and fear.

But the New Church will endure because it will incorporate *all four* previous forms into a harmony or balanced unity. New Church people are called to preserve, include, and build upon those stages that have gone before us. But more importantly, we are called to move beyond them in such a way that they are preserved in their essence. As New Church people, we are called to integrate all these previous forms of relating to God into a unified, human experience: a will and heart of love; an understanding of truth; the power of the Word and Scripture made fully available in the internal sense; and the ritual of worship transformed into the ultimate, concrete expression of our compassion, understanding and obedience to the Word; that is, a useful life: heart, head, the Word, and life.

We must examine closely our cultural roots, and strive to create a greater congruity between our new theology and the way we do church. Not to abandon history, but to be

free of it so that we might follow the Lord, just as Abraham was called to free himself.

So, it is not just doing what you feel, or doing what you decide is correct, or doing what you are told by someone else, or acting mechanically or superstitiously. Rather, in the Holy City, there is one temple. By this we mean that in the New Church, there will be no external that does not spring from a corresponding internal reality. In the New Church, everything we do or say will be rooted in and expressive of our actual relationship to the Divine realities of the Lord; love and truth, inner and outer, will be united.

We were invited by Jerry Poole last year to look with new eyes, to hear with new ears, to find the spirit of God which is already in our midst. We were encouraged by Dave Johnson the year before to take a giant step (not just another step) to move our church and ourselves to a life that does not yet exist. How can we do this? How can we reclaim Christ's message of regeneration, inner, personal transformation from the medieval distortions of vicarious atonement, obedience to human authority, and fear of damnation? By neither clinging to medieval forms nor by abandoning Christ! And we need to be able to give our own reasons for what we do.

Catholics, Methodists, Lutherans, and others, identify four essential elements to their religious life—Scripture, reason, experience, and tradition. Swedenborgians of the last century and Swedenborg himself were equally clear in their rejection of tradition as one of those essentials, scaling the list down to three: Scripture, reason, and experience (as we might say, throwing out the bath water but keeping the baby). This freedom from tradition enabled Swedenborg to challenge the 18th-century churches and withstand their opposition to his new ideas. We too must find a way, not to abandon, but to free ourselves from those ties to tradition that prevent us from moving forward.

Is it possible that we can be centered in Christ and yet *not* follow

(continued on page 120)

On the Fence

(from page 119)

the external path of the apostolic tradition with its white, European male heirarchy, its emphasis on exclusive receivers of the doctrine, its images of a militant, aggressive church? With its mysterious clothes, Caesar's Latin or Shakespeare's English, excessive piety, politeness and middle class morality? This *is* what most people experience when they come to our churches!

Do we care enough to make a difference? Do we really believe that Swedenborgianism is about making religion so bland, accessible, open, that it really doesn't matter if you give yourself to the church, or even if there *is* a church? Do we still fear that a clear and definite Christology is the mark only of an authoritarian, fundamentalist, "old church" perspective? Do we focus on the new

concept of freedom in Swedenborg's writings in such a way as to eclipse the equally new compelling idea of responsibility the concept involves? It truly is a new and marvelous thing to worship a God whose love is so great that he would allow us to choose hell rather than take away our freedom. But, if we allow ourselves to fully comprehend the implications, it is also a very frightening thought. It places a demand upon us that is nothing less than total. And so we read in our *Book of Worship* that the Lord wills a complete submission, not a divided mind; not a fence sitter. That is, not just to belong to a church, to be members, or even to simply support it; we must become a church!

Our mission is to forge a new church, to go where no church has gone before. This is why it is difficult to say what we should be doing; we are free, and responsible, to create forms that reflect our diversity and life. Apostolic forms are not "wrong" in and of themselves, but only as they obscure and mystify our experience of the Divine. Our alternative for guidance is the vision of the Holy City, the New Jerusalem, in which *there is no temple*. That is,

a state of being in which there are no empty externals distinct from our inner love and understanding. No division between heart, mind, Word, and the outer world of people and things.

This is what is new: the New Church, instead of receding more and more from the "real" world, abolishes that false distinction between inner and outer, between love of God and love of the neighbor. Unlike the politically neutral or politically biased church of the previous age, we must reconsider the prophetic role of the church, in which we are able to offer a new perspective, a different way to understand our experience together. This prophetic role will require us to remain independent of any particular political or social agenda, but only so that we can address and contribute to *all* agendas and issues.

I am not in this church to do social work. But because I have chosen to be part of the Lord's church, I find I must be active in the social arena. I am challenged to make a difference. How long can we as a church fail to respond to the continued presence of racism, violence, and corruption around us; to the empty, materialistic and self-centered values of our culture?

In the Holy City, there is no temple. In the Holy City, meaningless ritual and mere formality will have no place. Everything that is done will reflect the inner intentions and understanding of the people involved. Hence, we are called to transcend the difference between the sacred and the secular, and to affirm all of life as spiritual and holy.

When love and truth are truly united in a living way inside of us, then the outer distinctions of secular/sacred are reordered, obliterated, leaving only the clear difference between the sacred and the profane; peace with and from justice. In the New Church, there is no fence to get stuck on.

Robert McCluskey is minister to the New York Swedenborgian Church. His full sermon was too long for these pages, but is available for \$2.00 postpaid, after September 15. Write to: The Central Office, 48 Sargent St., Newton, Massachusetts 02158.

Pictorial Convention



SSR President Mary Kay Klein shares a moment with fellow Bostonian Marlene Laughlin (L), minister of the Bridgewater church.



Jane Leifer, "Healing Ourselves" theme speaker

Opinion

Dear Editor:

Our TV screens are nightly filled with horrific pictures of starving children, homeless people, and victims of natural disasters that are occurring with frightening frequency.

There seems no doubt that much of the human suffering in the third world countries is due to deforestation caused, in most instances, by the need for fuel.

As the population of our planet increases, what is the position of the New Church on family planning? Should we be urging our government to provide more help for this on an international level? How does one reconcile this with our belief in Divine Providence?

These questions are very perplexing to me, and I would greatly appreciate some thoughtful opinions, and hopefully, guidance from others "out there."

Ruth Robertson
Victoria, BC

(Editor's Note: Ms. Robertson's letter was forwarded to the Rev. Dr. George Dole to answer in this space. We encourage other readers' responses as well.)

Dear Editor:

In response to Ruth Robertson's letter, I am not aware of any direct statements in the theological works about the avoidance or prevention of pregnancy. This is perhaps understandable in view of the fact that survival was far more of a problem in the eighteenth century than overpopulation was. I am also not aware that any of the organized Swedenborgian churches have taken an official position on birth control.

There may be some indirect guidance in statements on two related subjects. The first is that sexual intercourse continues in the spiritual world, where it does not result in pregnancy and childbirth. This would undercut any argument that the sole purpose of intercourse is the propagation of the species. Intercourse is seen as an expression of marriage love, needing no further

justification.

The second is that the purpose of creation is identified not as the increase of the human race but as the increase of heaven. This would seem clearly to indicate that our focus should be on qualitatively better families, with numerical size as a secondary consideration.

In more general terms, charity is defined as "acting with prudence to the end that good may result (*The New Jerusalem and its Heavenly Doctrine* 100), and providence itself insists that we act in freedom according to reason (*Divine Providence* 71-99). Certainly this applies to decisions about marriage and parenting. It also applies to our decisions as consumers, and we seem reluctant to face the long-term consequences of our unprecedentedly wasteful lifestyles.

It need also be noted, though, that the overpopulation in third world countries is often promoted by indigenous cultural pressures toward large families as proof of virility and fertility. It is not simply a matter of ignorance or lack of means. What our government can do in any direct way may be more limited and ineffective than it would seem, since there is a justifiable wariness of American "cultural imperialism," a

questioning of our right to tell other nations how they should behave. I suspect the wisest—"most prudent"—course would be to work for a better understanding of the various pressures toward overpopulation in different countries, and as we come to understand, urge our government away from self-serving policies which tend to increase those pressures.

George F. Dole
Sharon, Massachusetts

To the Editor:

I am disappointed in the denomination's Social Action Concerns Committee (SACC). Last autumn SACC was urged by the Cabinet to help church members study all sides of the many difficult social issues facing society today: racism, capital punishment, violence, AIDS, etc. Members desperately want their church's assistance in coming to the individual decisions required as citizens.

What happened to SACC? Why isn't it helping us to study social issues within the Swedenborgian context?

Carol S. Lawson
Buckingham County, Virginia



Children's Program: The earth's creatures speak out for healing the planet.

Convention Highlights

(from page 110)

being willing to experience the pain of a situation and move through it. Unfortunately pain is often the motivator for change; people don't change easily. She invited us to imagine what it would be like if we don't heal the wound or the split in ourselves—5 years, 10 years, 20 years from now. Then imagine what it would be like if we did . . . 5, 10, 20 years. Change begins with one step . . . what was one thing we could do to begin to help this healing process?



Sweat Lodge survivors mop off and smile with workshop guide Carl Yenetchi and John Titus (back row, center).

Denomination President Dick Tafel opened his keynote speech with expressions of appreciation for convention hosts and hostesses, and to Vice-President Betsy Young, outgoing Secretary Dorothy deB. Young, Treasurer John Perry, Central Office Manager Martha Bauer, and wife Linda Tafel for all the hard work and support they'd given the denomination over the past year. He spoke of all he has learned on the job about the organizational workings of the church. In his reference to the state of the church as the "half-full cup," he recalled the tale of Baucis and Philemon from the Roman poet Ovid that inspired him deeply in elementary school. The story was about a poor old couple who opened the door of their humble hut to gods Jupiter and Mercury, who had taken on mortal flesh and disguised themselves as poor hungry wayfarers in order to find out how hospitable a certain town was. They had been rudely turned away from every door but that of Baucis and Philemon, who happily shared with the "wayfarers" their food, their poor hovel and some vinegary wine which was all they had. As they re-

plenished their guests' cups, the wine container remained miraculously and continually full, no matter how much they poured out. The gods revealed themselves and rewarded the old couple with a beautiful temple and anything else they wanted. They wanted simply to be priests attending the gods and to remain together.

Tying into the healing theme, essentially the Roman tale says "Be hospitable, welcome strangers, help where you can, share what you have"—in Swedenborgian terms, uses, and love to the neighbor . . . "and who is my neighbor?" He cited new ministries and efforts at



Ronno and Lambie



New Church Youth Leaguers' climb the walls.

outreach. Members Pat Basu, Detroit, Norm Bestor of the Cleveland church and Joyce Heck, Kitchener, stood up in the audience and told of successful growth and outreach activities—and increased membership in their churches.

Alice Skinner, member of the board of trustees of the Swedenborg School of Religion mentioned, in addition to SSR's "big" news (see "Expanding the Vision," p. 112), the presence of Pavel Heger and his family from Czechoslovakia. "For years people in Czechoslovakia were prohibited from religious practice, but that has not kept them from seeking spiritual insight. Pavel found

Swedenborg and cleared all the hurdles to get to the United States to prepare to become a Swedenborgian minister in his native land. His presence, and that of his wife and children, have enriched life at SSR and given us an opportunity to contribute to the revitalization of organized religion in Eastern Europe."

In concluding, Dick said, "We do not need to change our theology. We need to change how we package it . . . we need to find new ways to invite people into the fuller exploration of their own spiritual identity . . . we need to be open to the knock on our hut and the knock of the Lord on the door of our hearts . . . let each and every one of us be open to the Lord's healing process . . . let each and every one of us explore creative ways of healing ourselves."



Emanuel Swedenborg (Paul Zacharias) meets Helen Keller (Elsie Rogan).



Storyteller Eva Nagel dramatizes a myth for spellbound audience.

One of the delights of convention this year was Ronno, a young musician who for a magic hour brought alive the message of self-acceptance, love and healing through song and dialogue with puppets "Lambie" and "Lambo." Abandoning ourselves to simple, silly, uplifting fun is so healing . . . when I experience it I always wonder why most of us don't do it more often.

As part of SSR's 125th anniversary celebration, historical skits were presented by members of the Kitchener church, and a vividly amusing decade-by-decade recollection of student struggles and camaraderie at SSR was presented with slides by former graduates Robert Kirven, Robert McCluskey, Eric Allison, Wilma Wake, and present graduate Eric Hoffman.

The children's program, under the able and creative direction of Laura Tucker (Vermont), featured various representatives of the animal kingdom (including endangered species) asking a council of humans to hear their plea for better stewardship of the planet. This was followed by several engaging songs about recycling, dumping, and responsible consumption.

Dr. Frank Glew, "Healing the Earth" theme speaker and Director of Outdoor Education for the Waterloo County Board of Education, gave the most comprehensive presentations on environmental values that I have heard to date. (See *Environmental Ethic*, p. 125).

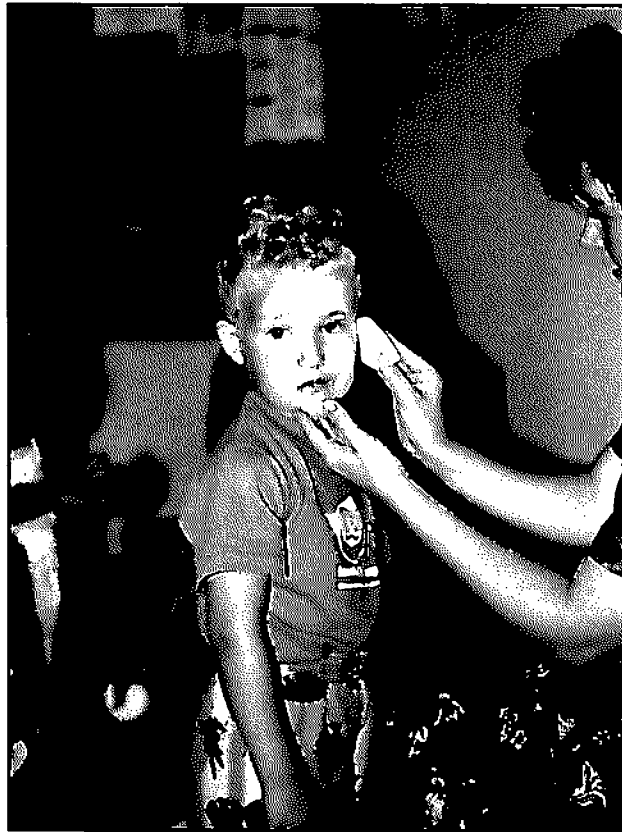
Healing ourselves *is* healing our environment. We are not separate. "C.G. Jung knew that plants, animals and the weather reflect the moods and rhythms of the human soul. Jung was aware of the continuous dialogue between the human and the earth. He felt that psyche and nature were reflections of the same reality and that a deep experience of one could be used to heal the other."*

When we change our consciousness, we change our world.

**A Passion for this Earth*, by Valerie Andrews.

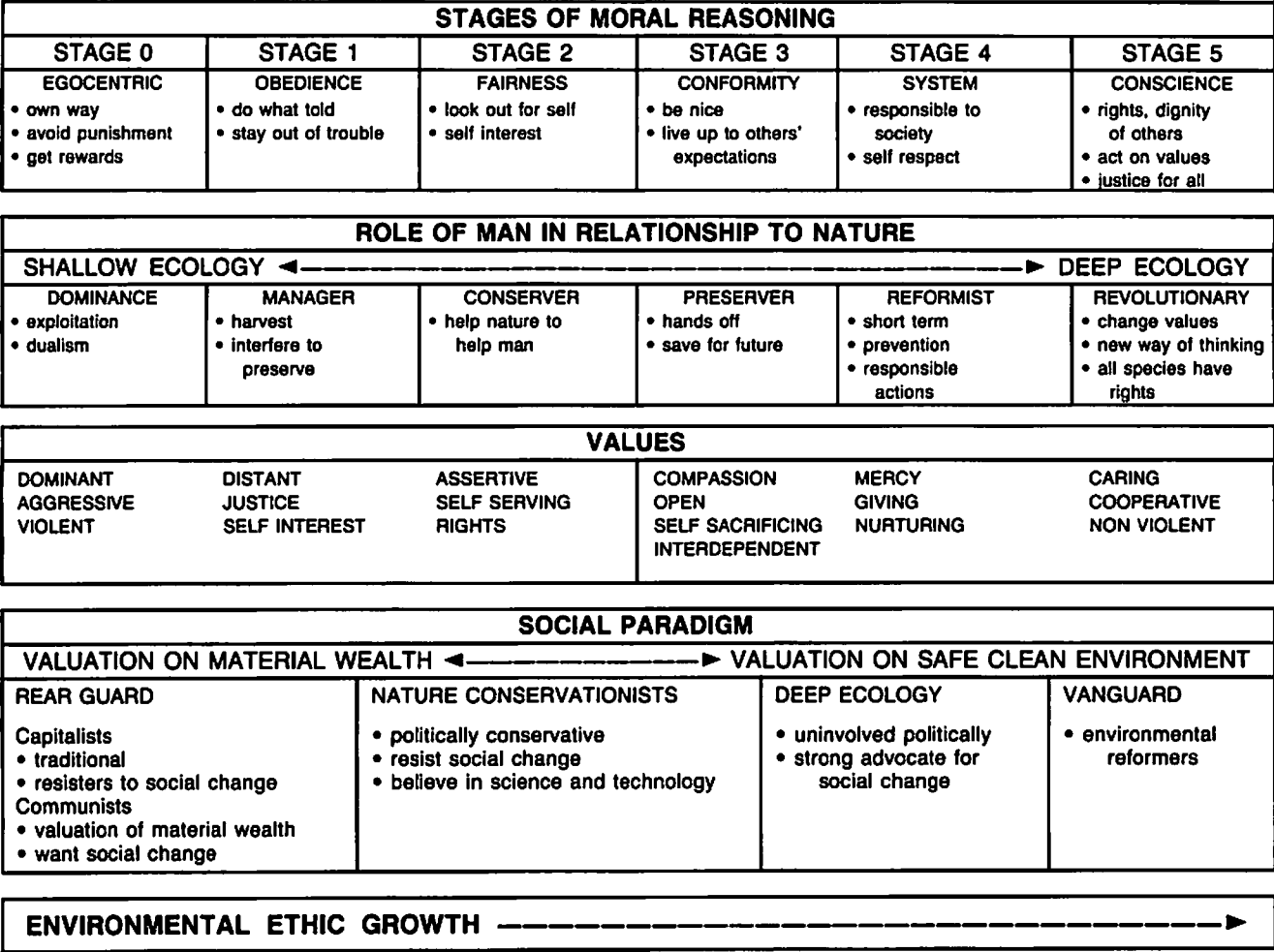
Convention 1991

*"Healing Ourselves,
Healing the Earth"*

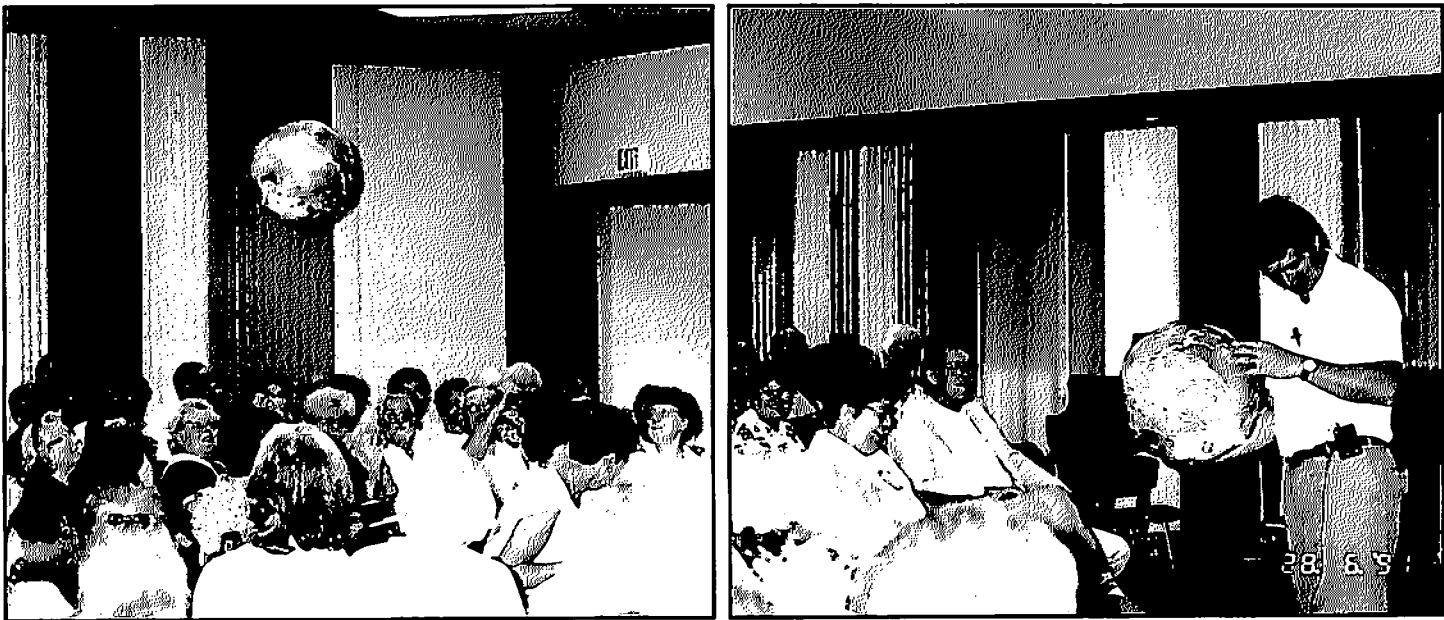


Sunday Communion, Church of the Good Shepherd, Kitchener.

ENVIRONMENTAL ETHIC



From: The 5-Rs Process, a Curriculum Model for the Teaching of Environmental Values by Dr. Frank Glew



"Healing the Earth" theme speaker Dr. Frank Glew demonstrates rough vs. gentle handling of planet earth.

Council of Ministers Report

*Submitted by Ron Brugler,
Secretary, COM*

Thirty-five clergy, guests Mary Kay Klein and Pat Bowen, and theological school students Eric Hoffman and Pamela Shuttleworth attended this year's sessions of the Council of Ministers.

Led by Church Growth Consultant Eric Allison, the council devoted Sunday and Monday morning to issues of church growth and healing. The focus was on developing new and effective outreach programs, creating small groups from those new people attending such programs in order to lead them into the life of our churches, and enhancing our worship services and other programs to be more attractive to new people. The council expresses our heartfelt thanks to Eric for the important work that he is doing, and commits itself to helping our churches grow.

The business sessions dealt with the following issues:

- Beginning a process to develop revisions to the procedure for those interested in entering the Lay Leader Training Program.

- Establishing a joint committee with the theological school to develop new ways of recruiting students into our theological school and new ministers to serve our denomination.

- Instituting a review of our guidelines for ministerial work within the Swedenborgian Church with the goal of outlining a clearer procedure for dealing with grievances between clergy and their churches. We amended these guidelines to clearly state that adequate notice for terminating employment with a church is now at least three months notice.

- A discussion of gender in ministry that brought before us the need for deepening our awareness of unconscious expressions of sexism, the need to value and affirm a variety of forms of ministry, and ways that we might educate ourselves and our churches to cherish the

blessedness of diversity.

ACTIONS TAKEN BY THE COUNCIL

- Acted on requests from several churches concerning admitting people into the Lay Leader Training Program. Those now approved to be authorized for admission by the ordaining minister are:

Jerry James from the Kemper Road church (Ohio)

Linda Blosser and Betsy Ledingham from the Urbana church (Ohio)

Steve Thomas from the Church of the Good Shepherd (Kitchener, Ontario)

John Bradley from the Cleveland Church

- Approved the visions of ministry presented by Eric Hoffman and Pamela Shuttleworth.

- Began the process to appoint a dream weaver to assist Ken Turley to study the need and viability for the Committee on Worship to establish a consulting position for Church Music and Worship.

- Adopted a policy clarifying our financial support for students of the theological school while they are attending convention sessions.

- Voted that in light of the current economic situation within the denomination, there will not be a 1993 Mid-Winter Ministers and Spouses Institute. Thus, the \$9,000 line item for travel to this program will be budgeted at -0- for our 1993 budget. We will, however, attempt to continue the Peer Supervision program of the council in the most economical way possible.

The results of our elections are as follows:

Chair - David Rienstra

Secretary - Ron Brugler

Executive Committee Member - Deborah Winter

CAM Representative - Rachel Rivers Lawrence

Convention Preacher for 1993 - George Dole

*Commercial for Convention '92:
St. Louis members sing, what else,
"Meet Me in St. Louis!"*



Three generations: Young Hilary Grumman with dad Paul Martin-Grumman (Washington) and grandpa Erni Martin (Pennsylvania).

Pre-convention General Council Report

At its pre-convention meeting, June 26, 1991, General Council approved the appointment of Polly Baxter as assistant to denomination treasurer John Perry. Capt. August A. Ebel has retired from that position. It was voted to receive the report of the treasurer, subject to audit. Mr. Perry announced that the audit had been completed.

President Richard Tafel announced the resignation of the Rev. Dr. Paul Bunnell, president of Urbana University, effective July 31, 1991. The Board of Trustees appointed Lawrence C. Young, Sr., to the Presidential Search Committee.

General Council authorized its executive committee to pursue diligently collection of interest on loans made to the university by General Convention. The University has been delinquent in paying regularly for more than a year. In the event that such efforts are non-productive, General Council will take legal steps. To cover such legal costs, \$5,000 was appropriated. During the past year, the denomination has retrieved \$105,000 in the form of a Certificate of Deposit which was pledged as collateral.

Legal advice was sought and received on the matter of using the surplus of certain restricted funds towards construction of the center building at Temenos Retreat and Conference Center. Convention's counselor advised against such usage.

General Council voted to appropriate \$4700 from the Pausch Fund to pay for roofing on the gate house at Temenos.

General Council voted acceptance of the invitation received from the Massachusetts Association to hold convention in 1993 in the New England area. The exact location will be announced at a later date.

Submitted by Dorothy deB. Young, Recording Secretary (retired)

Editors Note: A summary of Eric Allison's church growth report and brief reports of other convention business will appear in the October Messenger.



Commencements

Baptism

Potter—Carolyn Potter and son David were baptized into the Christian faith July 7, 1991, at the Swedenborgian Church, Fryeburg, Maine, the Rev. Gardiner Perry officiating.

Rienstra—John Crew Rienstra, son of John and Tamara Rienstra, was baptized into the Christian faith June 2, 1991, at the Church of the Open Word, St. Louis, Missouri, the Rev. David Rienstra officiating.

Rienstra—Michael Burton William Rienstra, son of Michael and Julia Midyett, was baptized into the Christian faith June 2, 1991, at the Church of the Open Word, the Rev. David Rienstra officiating.

Rienstra—Molly Margo Rienstra, daughter of Daniel and Linda Rienstra, was baptized into the Christian faith June 2, 1991, at the Church of the Open Word, the Rev. David Rienstra officiating.

Zaiss—son of John and Jennifer Zaiss, was baptized into the Christian faith July 4, 1991, at the Church of the Open Word, the Rev. David Rienstra officiating.

Confirmation

Cutting, Ellis, Hartley, Peebles—Jane Cutting, Rex Ellis, Stephen Hartley, Elaine and Jamie Peebles were confirmed into the life of the Boston Swedenborgian Church and received into full membership May 19, 1991, the Rev. Steven Ellis officiating.

Marriage

Stewart and Hollweger—Brenda Agar Stewart and David J. Hollweger were united in marriage June 15, 1991, at the Church of the Open Word, St. Louis, Missouri, the Rev. David Rienstra officiating.

Death

Boreham—Roger A. Boreham, 85 devoted member of the Boston Swedenborgian Church, entered the spiritual world May 10, 1991. A memorial service was conducted May 23, 1991, with burial at Mt. Auburn Cemetery in Cambridge, the Rev. Steven Ellis officiating.

Estep—Beryl Estep, longtime member of Kemper Road Swedenborgian Church, entered the spiritual world Easter Sunday, March 31, 1991. The Rev. Norm Haag officiated at the memorial service.

Owens—Hoyt Owens, longtime member of Kember Road Swedenborgian Church, entered the spiritual world May 30, 1991. A memorial service was conducted, the Rev. Norm Haag officiating.

Quimby—Bernice Lydia Quimby, 96, member of the Boston Swedenborgian Church, entered the spiritual world April 26, 1991, at the Braeburn Nursing Home, Newton, Massachusetts.

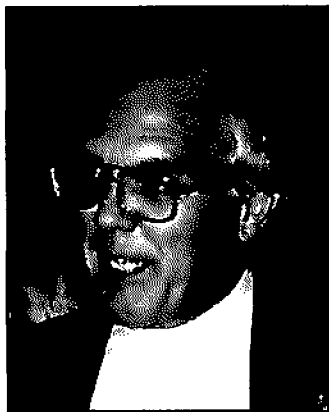
Bernice was confirmed in the Boston Church in 1942 by the Rev. Antony Regamey. Ms. Quimby was a former manager of the Swedenborg Book Store of the Massachusetts New Church Union. A memorial service is planned for the fall in Boston.

Perry—Frederick G. Perry, long-time member of the Boston church, and later the Newtonville, Mass. Swedenborgian Church, entered the spiritual world July 25, 1991, at his home in Jackson, New Hampshire, after a lengthy illness. Fred was vice-president of the national body of the Swedenborgian Church for 11 years before his retirement in 1989, and was vitally involved in the planning and restructuring of Convention that went on during his vice-presidency.

A resurrection service was conducted July 29 at the Fryeburg New Church, Maine, the Rev. Dr. George Dole officiating. Surviving family members include Fred's wife Nancy; sons Clark, Gardiner, Sheldon, and Steven; four grandchildren; a sister, Annie Haskell, and a brother, John Perry. In lieu of flowers, the family requested that donations be sent to Fryeburg New Church assembly, which was dear to Fred's heart throughout his life.

◀ *Fred and Nancy Perry, Urbana, Ohio, 1989.*

The President Reports



The 167th annual convention sessions are now a pleasant memory for those who attended. Once more I want to thank our Kitchener hosts for a wonderful convention. It was my first as president, and all those involved made my job easier. Thank you.

Now, a few notes on Swedenborgian growth and outreach projects:

- Temenos has hired a marketing person on a performance commission basis. This person has many contacts in the greater Philadelphia area for exactly the kinds of programs and services that Temenos can provide. I have every reason to believe that more and more groups will be using Temenos. For financial reasons, construction of the center building has been put on hold. In order to increase space for groups, Temenos is renovating one of the buildings that had been rented out.

- At the Swedenborgian Church of Puget Sound and Stone House Book Room, an increase in book sales, a newly formed congregation outgrowing its space, the building lease expiring, and financial realities of a growing group combine to produce uncertainty, stress, and even burnout. We are working with this group to define the areas of concern, and then to work on solutions one by one.

Some of our other churches are planning new growth and outreach projects for the fall. I'll be reporting on some of these in the coming months. In the meantime, if you have a question, idea, suggestion, or problem, please call or write me.

The cup is still half full!

Richard H. Tafel, Jr., President

Prayer to the Six Directions

To The Great Spirit,

*First in all things, Creator of all life,
Who was, and is, and will always be,
Who, within the Immensity of all creation,
is uniquely present here and now, in this moment;*

To the East,

*The quiet coming of the new dawn,
The joyous breaking forth of spring,
The place of birth and rebirth: the beginning of life;*

To the South,

*The high heat of noon day,
The flowing warmth of summer,
The place of fertility; the fullness of life;*

To the West,

*The quiet peace of evening,
The rich colors of fall,
The place of harvest: the gathering in of life;*

To the North,

*The clear darkness of night,
The deep cold of winter,
The place of death and purification:
the transformation of life;*

To the Mother Earth,

*The ever constant giver of life,
From whom all things draw sustenance,
Who, in the greatness of her family,
offers blessing and freedom to each of her children.*

To the Six Directions,

*Which together make the oneness of God and creation,
We offer our praise and thanksgiving,
We ask these things:*

*a heart open and made strong with love,
a mind clear and made wise with understanding,
a life lived with courage and compassion
in the fulfillment of divine purpose.*

Adapted by Ken Turley from the poetry of the Lakota Sioux

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