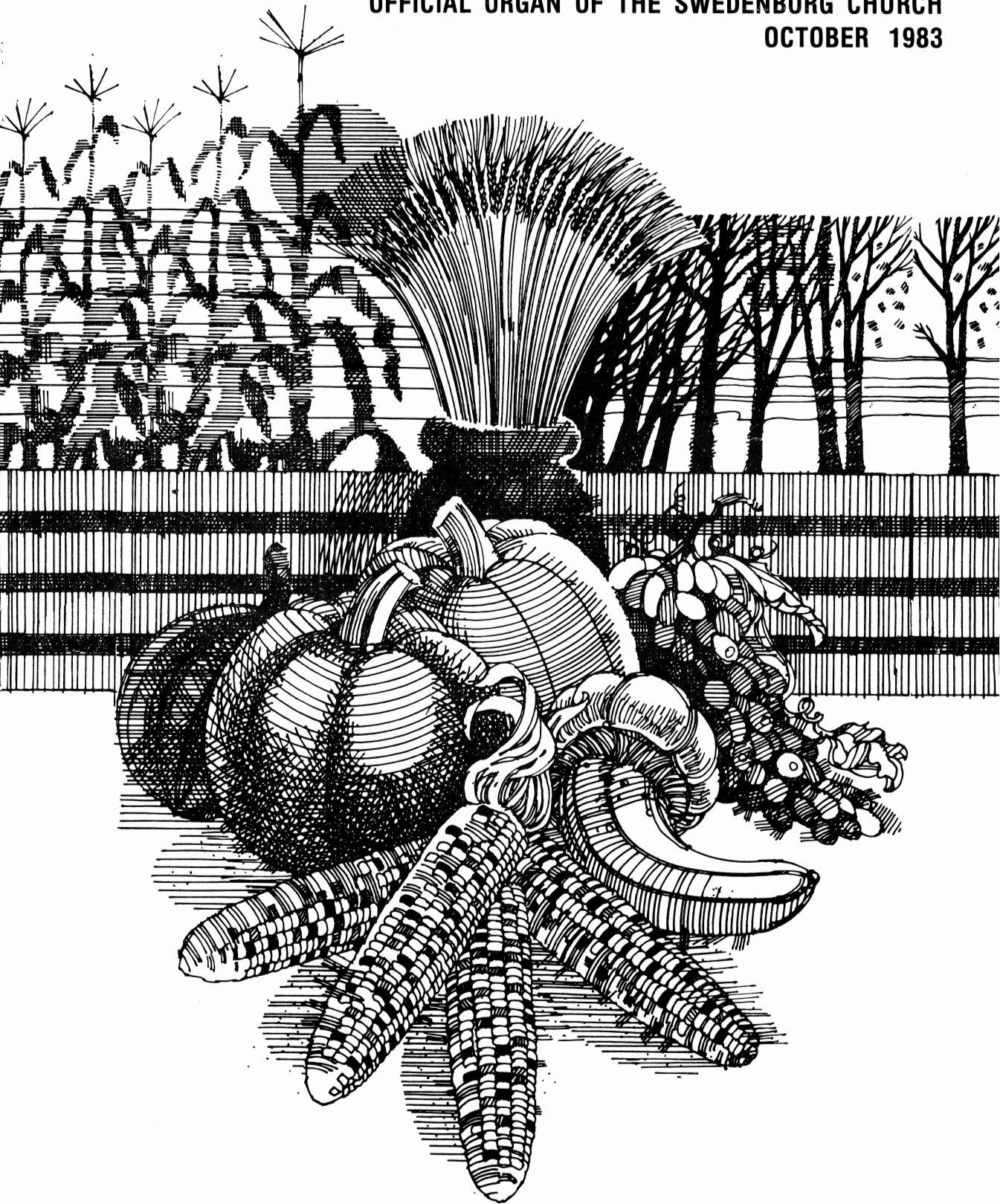


The Messenger

OFFICIAL ORGAN OF THE SWEDENBORG CHURCH

OCTOBER 1983



AN APPEAL

This issue of the *Messenger* is smaller than usual, for the simple reason that this is all the material that came in over the summer months. The period from June through August is traditionally a quiet time for most of us in Convention, both locally and nationally, so this is to be expected.

At the same time I can't help but wonder why more readers don't write in to the *Messenger*. (Even Swedenborg once wrote, early on, that he enjoyed seeing his name in print!) There must be a lot of concerned people throughout Convention who have something important to share with their fellow Swedenborgians.

Perhaps there are special events and activities in your local Society that you would like to tell us about. There are people in Convention who write poetry and meditative pieces; wouldn't it be grand to have an inspirational page in every issue of the *Messenger*!

During convention sessions we talked a great deal about many things: the work of the Ad Hoc Committee . . . the make-up of the new Book of Worship . . . our Summer Camp programs . . . the worrisome gradual decline in our membership . . . some of the new projects that are being tested in several of the local churches . . . whether political/social issues should appear in the pages of the *Messenger* . . . the list goes on and on. I would like to see lively discussions on these and related subjects in the *Messenger*. Here is an opportunity for you to start a trend!

More importantly, there is a sad dearth of solid articles on basic religious and spiritual themes as they relate to life. Here again, the sky is the limit. It is relatively easy to paraphrase Swedenborg's writings, but we need to go so much further than that. What are the implications of Swedenborg's teachings for living today: for the young parents raising children, for the couple considering divorce, for the terminally ill person (and doctors) who have contemplated euthanasia, for the person who is waging a losing battle against temptations, for the young adult who has some very serious reservations about the usefulness of organized religion, for the legions who are bored stiff with their daily round of activities. What do you wonder about? Think about? We would like to hear from you.

P. Z.

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EFFECTIVE IMMEDIATELY, ALL
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THE MESSENGER OCTOBER 1983

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A New Beginning For Our Church

*by Horand Gutfeldt
Berkeley, Calif.*

With great joy I welcome the fact that finally our church is in the process of rethinking its purposes and goals. I see a new, clearer focus upon what we want to be and what we are meant to accomplish. In the report of the Ad Hoc Committee I find a more conscious and committed awareness of what the Lord may expect from us. Much too long there seemed to be a feeling "We are members of the New Church," but with a very vague notion of the far-reaching implications that are involved. Thanks to the work of this committee, we are given a challenge to center our thoughts upon the great goals of usefulness and responsibility toward the world which are contained in the new revelation. I appreciate the fact that the new formulation is radically different from previous expressions, avoiding shopworn wordings chosen by the earlier translators of Swedenborg.

It may well be that the words employed are not complete or perfect. To this one can answer that human words must always remain imperfect by necessity. They are finite expressions, which can point in a direction and lead us to action—but only the Word of God is perfect. Even there, perfection is brought out through the levels of inner meaning.

It is easily overlooked that the higher levels and degrees can be fully grasped only through regeneration—through a mature love and devotion, ultimately by conjunction with the Lord. It appears to me that the Ad Hoc Committee has emphasized that a commitment is necessary, a working with ourselves and others to find the true meaning of the New Age. We now have a call to a new life that has been desperately needed by our organization. As time changes, so our interpretation and our guidelines have to change with growing insight. Let's have a closer look at the new concepts in contrast to the old ones.

In the new statement of purpose we read: "Convention exists to foster clerical and lay ministries that facilitate the spiritual well-being of people, and which have in common a working for the Lord in bringing the New Age, the descent of the Holy City, New Jerusalem." When this is compared with the old

formulation in the Convention yearbook (Article 1 of the Constitution), we find "... Convention . . . shall consist of all who acknowledge the doctrines of the New Church . . . performing the general uses of a church." Which of these statements touches us as being more dynamic and full of commitment? Is acknowledgement alone enough? Furthermore, are not the words "general uses of a church" insufficient, since they have been conceived in the past as arranging mainly for Sunday services! Almost with a touch of shame, we have to admit that worship services have constituted the center of activities for most congregations; perhaps there is also teaching, counseling, social events and business meetings, but an honest tallying of time and energy spent will confirm that ritual activities are more prominent than most others. This appears to me in contradiction to the very teachings of our church, which emphasize that worship should not be the primary concern, but regeneration or spiritual transformation and resulting usefulness. Nothing that we can do is good, so we are taught, unless there has been self-examination, repentance, prayer and a beginning of a new life (TCR 520; D. Life 24 etc.). Only then does worship become valuable, enabling us to direct our energies beyond ourselves in a ministry toward the world.

It is sad that we have been lagging behind many others outside of our church who have often dashed ahead to implement partial aspects of the New Age: there is an abundance of courses promoting personal transformation and change of attitudes—and some of them are quite expensive and demanding, like the est-training of W. Erhard and many others.

Here, at this turning point in the history of Convention, it can be hoped that we will take advantage of the opportunity to begin a new stage in the life of our church. The museum-like observance of old organizational forms, the static attitudes that still prevail in many areas can and should be re-examined objectively, and new energies unleashed towards more widely useful creativity.

This is not an easy task, and few organi-

zations have ever succeeded in rejuvenating themselves. But we can look to the Lord to give us the light and the strength to bring about the external changes that are called for to pave the way for the more important inner changes that make regeneration and spiritual growth a joyful part of reality in us and around us.

We are called upon to become pillars of the New Age, of new Love and Truth, preparing the Coming of the Lord into our hearts, and thence into the world around us. I hope and pray that we may find the commitment of the new direction a road sign to greater and higher usefulness of our beloved church.

AD HOC UPDATE

*Charles McCormick
Riverside, Calif.*

The Ad Hoc Committee made its report at Convention as promised. This presentation was followed by group discussions at which members of the Ad Hoc Committee served as discussion and question resource persons. Everyone was asked to complete a questionnaire and turn it in to the committee. Forty-eight responded.

An analysis of the questionnaires revealed that the respondents were generally satisfied with the purpose and all objectives except number four, which committed Convention to an annually determined growth rate. Many felt that numerical growth should not be a goal, that we should not be concerned with growth for growth's sake, that growth would be a by-product of the achievement of the other objectives. Also, in Objective six, many were concerned about using the term "New Age" because it covers so many activities, some of which were considered unsuitable for Convention participation. It was suggested that a clear definition of the New Age manifestations worthy of support be included or another term be used.

With respect to the distribution of responsibility and authority in the proposed organizational structure, the majority of those who commented indicated that there was not enough information on the concept for them to adequately respond. The committee recognized that such a response was likely since work on the organizational concept had not progressed very far by the time Convention was held, and, unfortunately, the information presented was not available in the handout. In addition, several got the impression that the proposed concept would result in a greater centralization of power, whereas the committee's intent is to provide greater decentralization of power in an organizational form which, among other things, greatly improves our ability to achieve our purpose and objectives and provides accountability, consolidation of similar functions and well-defined, quick-

access paths to the sources of responsibility.

In light of the failure in communication concerning the organizational concept it was not surprising that the comments on flexibility and responsiveness were mixed with as many "maybe's" as "yes's" and a few "no's". Again, people hesitated to comment based on the information provided.

Concerning the comments on liabilities, many considered the fear of change as the most serious threat to adoption and implementation of the plan. Others cautioned that we must take care to prevent the organizational form from becoming the end, not the means; that the caliber of the people manning the organization is more important than the form itself.

The most recurrent single criticism of the plan dealt with the language used. Many stated that it was difficult to understand the purpose, objectives, and strategies because the language was too intellectual, too technical. There was a strong plea for rewriting the plan in plain, everyday, "shirt sleeve" English.

It should be emphasized that the Ad Hoc Committee received several thought provoking, relevant comments which are not covered in this brief summary, and is diligently addressing all concerns expressed. For instance, the search is on for a competent writer to determine the changes necessary to make the plan understandable to all members of Convention. In later presentations to be held through the U.S. and Canada, the organizational concept will be clarified and expanded, a comprehensive effort will be made to use examples and other presentation techniques to make absolutely clear the meaning of the purpose, objectives and strategies, and additional grass roots feedback will be carefully gathered and assessed.

DISCONTENT IN THE CHURCH

In a recent editorial the *Messenger* declared that there is a spirit of discontent in the church, and invited a frank discussion of it. It is not our purpose to enter into this discussion, which has followed freely, but briefly to review it.

The *Messenger* editorial stated the points of discontent, without attempting to solve them, as follows:

1. It is not doubted that "the Lord has revealed a system of spiritual truth which it is the duty and honor of the church to embody in life and carry to the world." But there is discontent with the way in which this is being done, a distrust of methods, a feeling that the church is in some way being held back.
2. Discontent with the numerical growth of the organization. A gradual, steady increase is desired.
3. Discontent with the ability of its teachers to bring the truths of the Word and the church in such freshness of expression and application, with such force and evidence of sincerity and insight, as to rouse the intelligence and stir the heart.
4. Discontent with the lack of progressiveness and a strange fear of departing from any usage which was once obtained.

We need to remind ourselves of the difference between the kind of discontent which is healthy and helpful and opens the doors of progress, and the kind which is morbid and degenerates into mere faultfinding and grumbling. It seems to us that any attitude which separates a man from his brethren in such a way as to lead him to put a burden or blame upon any person or class, in which he himself does not feel a full share and sympathy, is a dangerous one to himself and not likely to help others. The fact is that the church organization is, or should be, a unit, of which we are all parts and members mutually sharing its burdens and responsibilities. So we must look for deeper, spiritual reasons for the discontent. Far too often, the vital things, the truth itself, the principles of life, and the living of them, are not sufficiently questioned nor discussed. And yet these are essential and fundamental. Perhaps when the consideration has been carried far enough and deep enough we shall find a need, and a way, of living nearer to the Lord in His Glorified Human, which will make our little organization a greater power for spiritual good in the world.

H. C. Hay

(from the *New Church Review*,
Oct. 1901)

WORTH WATCHING ON TV

CBS "*For Our Times*" Network feed:
10:30 - 11:00 a.m. EST.

Oct. 30—Martin Luther and the Jews

Nov. 13—Genetic Frontiers, Part III

Nov. 27—Religion and Child Abuse

Dec. 18—The Koinonia Community
in Georgia

PBS *Update*—The PBS Documentary series, *VIETNAM: A TELEVISION HISTORY*, will begin with a two-day premiere on October 4th and 5th, at 9 p.m. EST. Subsequent programs in this 13-week series will be shown on Tuesdays, 9 p.m.

THE NEW CHURCH LEAGUE AT CONVENTION

This year we had a good group of twenty-two Leaguers at Convention, equaling last year's record. There was representation from coast to coast, but we became a very close group.

The Leaguers were involved in several projects and activities during Convention.

A Banner with the quote: "My peace I give to you", was made and presented to Patty Holt and Margaret Kraus for all the help and support they gave us during Convention.

We also had a good discussion with theological student, David Fekete, on the subject of "Peace and Success".

Our main project was to make peace bookmarks for everyone at Convention. Each had several stamps from different countries of the world, and were stamped, "N.C.Y.L. Youth For Peace 1983". This was a top-secret project; the first anyone knew of it was when they found the bookmarks at their places at the Saturday evening banquet!

This year we drew up a set of rules for the Leaguers to observe at Convention. They will be printed in "Clear Blue Sky" and the *Messenger* well in advance of next year's Convention.

If I tried to write everything the League did at Convention, it would fill this issue of the *Messenger*. In fact, there is a whole issue of "Clear Blue Sky", the official League publication, devoted to our doings at Convention. So, if you'd like to read more, just look for the copy which is sent to your church.

We have a fine group of new and re-elected officers this year:

President and Northeast Regional Officer: Nancy Little, Elmwood, MA.

Midwest Regional Officer (Ohio and Pittsburgh): Rick Smith, Urbana, OH.

Central States Regional Officer: Tami Mounce, LaPorte, IN.

Western States Regional Officer: David Tafel, Lomita, CA.

Western Canada Regional Officer: Lynda Korsten, Edmonton, Alta.

Chaplain: Rev. Wm. "Pop" Woofenden.

Our new Editor for "Clear Blue Sky" will be Todd Woofenden.

Lee Woofenden,
N.C.Y.L. President, 1982 - 83

WOMEN COMMUNICATING

Sponsored by the Alliance of New Church Women

Annella Smith, Editor

Bertha Berran, Co-editor

CONTRASTS

The Lamb

Little Lamb, who made thee?
Dost thou know who made thee?
Gave thee life, and bid thee feed,
By the stream and o'er the mead;
Gave thee clothing of delight,
Softest clothing, woolly, bright;
Gave thee such a tender voice,
Making all the vales rejoice?
Little Lamb, who made thee?
Dost thou know who made thee?

Little Lamb, I'll tell thee,
Little Lamb, I'll tell thee:
He is called by thy name,
For He calls Himself a Lamb.
He is meek, and He is mild;
He became a little child.
I a child, and thou a lamb,
We are called by His name.
Little Lamb, God bless thee!
Little Lamb, God bless thee!

William Blake

Excerpts from the *Encyclopedia Britannica*— William Blake 1757 - 1827

In William Blake's double collection of Songs of Innocence and Songs of Experience, the subtitles in his own words, read: "Shewing the Two Contrary States of the Human Soul." The two contrary states are "Innocence," when the child's imagination has simply the function of completing its own growth, and "Experience," when it is faced with the world of mortality and repression. The key symbol of Innocence is the Lamb; the corresponding image in Experience is the Tyger, the subject of the famous poem that stands at the peak of Blake's lyrical achievement.

THE TYGER—1st stanza

Tyger! Tyger! burning bright
In the forest of the night,
What immortal hand or eye
Could frame thy fearful symmetry?

The Tyger in this poem is the incarnation of energy, strength, lust and cruelty, and the tragic dilemma of mankind is poignantly summarized in the final question, "Did he who made the Lamb make thee?"

Some of Blake's contemporaries thought he was mad: actually he was one of the sanest of men. The best description of his character is that of his friend and disciple, Samuel Palmer:

"He was a man without a mask; his aim single, his path straight forwards, and his wants few; so he was free, noble, happy." For long he was regarded as a brilliant eccentric on the fringe of English literature and art.

In the 20th century his reputation has grown steadily and he is now recognized as one of the major English poets, one of the most original and inspired of English painters, and a prophetic thinker whose insights anticipate and, in some ways transcend, those of such later prophets as Nietzsche, Freud, and D. H. Lawrence.

* * * * *

OUR NEW OFFICERS

Ola-Mae Wheaton, Treasurer

Ola-Mae lives at the foothills of the White Mountains in the beautiful hamlet of North Chatham, New Hampshire, which is 18 miles north of Fryeburg, Maine.

A member of the Fryeburg New Church, she has been active for 35 years in church related activities, including being current co-manager of that church's Food Booth at Fryeburg Fair and co-author with Margaret Briggs of "O Jerusalem" (a history of the Fryeburg Church). For several years she served as Secretary of the American New Church Sunday School Association. As Genealogical Chairperson for her local D.A.R. she enjoys copying cemetery inscriptions for preservation in the National Archives and the Maine State Library.

Ola-Mae resides in Bonita Springs, Florida for six winter months due to her husband's health. While there, she works part time as a registered nurse and is treasurer of the Bonita

Springs Art League where she enjoys oil and water painting. She has varied interests, but especially enjoys needle work and sewing.

The Wheatons were married by Rev. Wilfred Rice 36 years ago. They are the parents of 3 daughters and 1 son. Their 2 grandchildren live in Naples, Florida.

Annella Smith—Publications Chairperson

I grew up in the midwest, and was a member of the Society in Pawnee Rock, Kansas for many years. After moving to Southern California in 1950, I have been a member of the San Diego Society where I have been active in Sunday School, choir and in the Ladies Alliance. I was also privileged to be the Business Manager of the Wayfarers' Chapel in Rancho Palos Verdes for 11½ years.

At the present time I am secretary to the Pacific Coast Alliance.

I have asked Bertha Berran to serve with me on the Publications Committee since she resides in San Diego now and has been so familiar with the Alliance and its activities for many years.

I now reside in North Shore, California, which is approximately 100 miles from the Riverside Society, and 180 miles from the San Diego Church as well as an equal distance from the Los Angeles church. However, we manage to be active in the San Diego church and appear at Riverside, Los Angeles and the Wayfarers' Chapel on occasion. I consider us very lucky to have this choice in keeping touch with our church friends.

Betty Jean Neuenfeldt— Nominating Committee

I am one of those "born into the Church" Swedenborgians which I consider my good fortune. I grew up in Detroit, attending that church until I went away to college at Central Michigan University. I received my degree in teaching the Emotionally Impaired and also met my husband, Tom, at CMU.

I taught for several years and then retired to raise a family. I have a 7-year old daughter, Amy, and a 2-year old daughter, Heidi. I keep pretty busy in our community as Brownie leader, PTA president and Sunday School teacher at the local church we attend.

We live on a small farm with some animals to tend and an old house we are renovating and restoring. My husband is a principal for a school of handicapped children.

I'm looking forward to working with the Alliance as a way to keep active in the Church.

CHURCH WOMEN UNITED ASSEMBLY

"Come! Build a New Earth: Pieces to Peace." This is Church Women United's challenge to all women of faith across the nation and around the world. It is a call to the 1984 Ecumenical Assembly, July 19 through 23, 1984, at Purdue University in West Lafayette, Indiana.

Be there! Address today's critical issues. Work to seek solutions that will restore wholeness to a world torn apart by injustice, pollution, exploitation and economic inequities.

Church Women United envisions that this assembly will generate the creative energy to equip and empower women of faith to take action steps for global change. It will be a time and place for women to accept personal responsibility for building a new earth—from pieces to peace.

Plan to be a part of this history-making event. Register now for the CWU 1984 Ecumenical Assembly. For information, write the **CHURCH WOMEN UNITED ASSEMBLY OFFICE**, 475 Riverside Drive, Room 827, New York, NY 10115.



**Church Women United
1984 ECUMENICAL ASSEMBLY
July 19-23, 1984**

**Purdue University
West Lafayette, Indiana**

FOR REGISTRATION INFORMATION WRITE:
Church Women United Assembly Office
475 Riverside Dr., Room 827
New York, NY 10115

MUSIC WORKSHOP AT CONVENTION

by Muff Worden

When something as abstract as a music workshop is scheduled for the first time, one is never sure how response will be, and who—if anyone—will show up!! We need not have worried. A dozen people from across the country, Canada and Guyana gathered for the pre-Convention period, bringing a wealth of backgrounds in interest, playing instruments, singing around the house, and even some training in music. Each had his or her own idea of what would be involved in the workshop, and each contributed to the things covered.

The program included presentation of brand new music—Convention-goers heard some of this during the opening service with most of the music (at least all of the arrangements) by Ken Turley; learning basics of theory and of how to improvise on a tune and come up with a harmony; singing through established music—such as that used in the Communion and Sunday services; learning a variety of graces in several languages, most of which the workshopers used and taught at mealtimes; discussing the music situation in as wide a variety of church or worship settings as we had participants; and exchanging ideas.

A special evening was centered on the presentation by Judy Dennis, of the Cleveland Church, on response to "Spiritual Messages in Rock Music." For this session our group was enlarged by several Leaguers and several ten-year-olds, all of whom made valuable contributions to discussion and understanding of a genre of music usually glossed over by today's adults. One exciting spate of discussion elicited a warm response from Hyacinth Jordan of Guyana, who marveled at young people speaking so freely with adults, and vice versa. Judy's presentation was the first in a continuing development of her idea, and we look forward to hearing more from her as she enlarges on it and tries it elsewhere.

Workshoppers also presented needs—such as finding music appropriate for work with children; more variety of music to use with junior or limited adult choirs; ideas to use with a tiny, elderly congregation; how to sing better; how to vitalize a flagging music program; and so on. These were discussed, and at least sympathy or empathy were given . . . but some of the issues can be helped directly, such as my being able to find music to suggest, since I live in an area full of music stores and publishers,

or by putting workshopers' names on a publishers' mailing list.

Out of the workshop has also come a firmly-established Music Network which includes all workshopers, many others who were at Convention who expressed interest in the music program, and others of whose interest we had known. A newsletter will be the main factor to tie us together, and the first issue of same has already been sent. (Others who are interested in being a part of the Network are welcome to send names and addresses to either Muff Worden or Ken Turley at 48 Sargent St., Newton, MA 02158.)

Suggestions for areas to be covered in next year's Workshop include sacred dance, or worship in movement; more new music; more theory; a tableful of music samples to be looked at; further exchange of ideas. Yes, there will be another workshop next year in conjunction with convention—not sure yet if it will be pre- or post-Convention. You might let us hear your preference, and further suggestions for topics to be covered too.

THE LAST CHANTS OFFER MUSIC FOR HOME OR SMALL GROUP USE

Many of you have heard, or heard of, *The Last Chants*, a five-voice women's group founded by Detroit Society's Chris Laitner several years ago. They do a wondrous variety of programs for performance—eg. weddings, Convention services, small group programs, sing-alongs, etc.—and readily build programs around a theme or series of readings.

The Last Chants now offer cassette recordings made for musical devotional services (which might include songs, prayers, familiar hymns, readings from the Bible, religious materials, poetry, etc.); services designed according to a particular theme suggested by you; song selections (theirs or yours); and two new services of words and music based on two chapters of Brian Kingslake's "For Heaven's Sake!" The tapes will have program sheets to be followed by their users.

The five women, who accompany themselves on guitars and banjo, look forward to sharing their talents with those who can use and enjoy

(cont'd on pg. 192)

THE PEACE PAGE

My War WITHIN

by Ann Proescholdt-Shaw

One of the bright spots in my life in the past three years has been my daughter, Eva. As far as I was concerned, she was God's gift to earth. I thought she was perfect. Just sitting and watching her could turn an ordinary day into something special. Although at times I felt minor irritation with her wilfulness, I couldn't imagine ever being really angry with her. When I was with her, it was my joy to give of myself—my time, my attention, and my love.

With what excitement, then, I anticipated the birth of our second child. Emma Grace was born in February of this year. Eva was three and it seemed to me it should be wonderful. I was totally unprepared for all of the conflicting feelings that arose within me. Others had mentioned it, but I had not understood. Sure I was tired of the middle of the night feedings. Sure there was a new baby for whom to care. But I had assumed that my relationship with Eva, my first, would go on relatively undisturbed.

It did not happen the way I had "planned." I was shocked at the intense anger I could feel toward this small three-year-old. At first I did not want to recognize it as anger. But as time passed, I needed to face that I was angry and that my anger was not righteous anger, but sin. I was angry that she made noise when the baby was sleeping. I was angry that she needed attention when I was nursing the baby. I was angry that she did not adjust to the baby as perfectly as I had "planned." As I looked at my anger toward Eva, I also needed to look at my love for her. My love for her had not been as pure as I had wanted to believe. Part of me had loved her as an extension of myself. **I had loved her as long as she was fitting into my "plans."**

I began to understand a little better the violence that one sees acted out so much in the world. **If I could feel so much anger, and even at times, so much hatred toward one I held so dear, then others' overt violence was much more easily understood. We all want things to go our way.** When our "plans" are disrupted by a child, a spouse, a boss, an ethnic group, a

President, or another country, this sinful side of ourselves cries out, "This is unfair. I'm going to make this beautiful vision I've had a reality." And we work at the realization of the vision, even at the cost of anger, hatred, and violence. **The seeds of war are within each of us. God certainly allowed me to see the seeds of war within myself.** If I could feel hatred toward my own child, how much more could I hate those "outside."

I thank God for this experience that I am still working through. He has shown me a side of myself that I had not recognized. **With recognition comes the chance for healing. But first the recognition, the confession, needs to come. We need to look deep within ourselves and be willing to face the darkness with Jesus beside us.** Then, knowing where we need to be forgiven, we can ask for forgiveness and healing—healing of our own hurts that create a place for the hatred to grow, healing of our sinful nature, and healing of the hurt that we have caused with our hatred. I did not experience instant healing, but I did experience an instant beginning of the healing. Immediately after confession and asking for forgiveness and healing, my feelings became less intense. They did not go away. I have needed to continually lift them up and turn them over to God, but the intensity has abated, and healing is occurring.

I recognize how important it is that I do not regard this as an isolated incident in my life. This experience teaches me something not just about my relationship with Eva and my family life, but about my compassion and my relationship with all my brothers and sisters. **It is only by desiring and asking daily to live in the Presence of God, that I, or I believe any of us, can hope to live with the compassion and love that takes away the occasion for war.**

Ann Proescholdt-Shaw is a member of the pastoral team at Xenia Friends in Xenia, Ohio. Among her concerns are world peace, world hunger and family life. She and her husband, Curtis Lee Shaw, are the parents of two daughters, Eva, three, and Emma, born last February.

NOTICE TO ALL MINISTERS

If interested in receiving information or materials from the upcoming Autumn meetings of the National Council of Churches, please contact: Rev. Susan Turley-Moore, 302 Stevens Ave., Corner Montrose Ave., Portland, Me. 04103.

Commentary on Mark

We have just received a copy of the *Exposition of the Gospel According to Mark* by John Clowes, published in London in 1858. This work originally appeared in 1826, and the Australian publication is a photocopy reproduction of the 1858 second edition.

Mr. Sheppard and colleagues faced a difficult decision: whether to bring the contents and appearance of the old book up to date with a brand new version, which would have been time-consuming and costly, or to simply reprint the original book with a saving both in money and in time. Obviously they chose the latter course and there will be New Church readers around the world who will welcome the availability of Clowes commentary on Mark, long out of print.

However we can't help but feel that this new release will have a rather limited audience. The cover of the book is bright blue and yellow, but the substance, the style and the appearance of the 348 pages between the covers goes back to 1858, and this may discourage many modern day readers. Clowes' comments on Mark are still valid and helpful, but the usefulness of the book would have been greatly increased had it been revised into modern England language. At the same time we appreciate the considerable effort that went into this publication and we can't help but admire the zeal of our New Church friends in Australia.

P. Z.

WE GET LETTERS

ONE TRUE RELIGION

To the Editor:

In response to your invitation to comment on the article, "Universal Religion and The New Church" by George McClure, I write to say that my husband and I, as members of the New Church in Pawnee Rock, Kansas, heartily agree with every word and every proposition that Mr. McClure has expressed so well. We hope and pray that all of these changes, and many more, can be made for the benefit and the betterment of all sincere Truth Seekers, everywhere. However, most of these same suggestions have been made, in the past, by a FEW ministers and several lay people, but to no avail—all such suggestions were completely ignored. And, I dare say, that it is surely the ministers who will have to make the changes, IF any changes are EVER made, because the members surely do NOT have this privilege.

Mr. McClure says, and I quote: "The only true religion is one that is INclusive not EXclusive, one that is God centered not PERSONALITY or REVELATION centered; one that stresses LOVE, devotion and service, not dogma, scholarship or occult phenomena, however interesting." End of Quote. In order to meet these qualifications, it would be necessary to completely abandon the Swedenborgian Writings and the name of Swedenborg from "The Messenger" publication, the New Churches, schools and college, and I do not believe this will ever be accomplished. We are already too late with too little, and there's a great lack of enthusiasm for any changes whatsoever among most of the lay people, evidently.

We need more than just a new beginning; we cannot build a new structure or establishment on the same OLD foundation. We need a whole new form of worship, without dogmas, creeds, recitals and rituals. We need to meet together, not as a denominated group, but just as a people of the Living God who love God enough to meet and worship Him in Songs of Praise and thanksgiving, and with readings and/or sermonettes by many people, instead of having only one person, in the pulpit, propounding ONLY his or her ideas, constantly.

God's people are "called out" of the Babylon of religious confusion"—NOT IN. Rev. 18:3 - 4

We are surely too late to make any effective changes, GRADUALLY, and who in the New Church is brave enough to really begin anew, with REAL New Age Christian Teachings? Most devout Swedenborgians don't even know that thousands of real New Age groups are already established in most parts of the world. And according to what we read in The Messenger, it seems that many Swedenborgians are not aware of the fact that ALL New Agers have as much, and even more knowledge than they have gleaned from the Writings.

However, all other religious sects will ALSO cling to what they have, until the necessary changes are made FOR them, and not BY them. Groups never change, as groups; only individuals change, one by one, and of a necessity, they come out of organized religion, in order to be FREE, and to HEED THE CALL OF GOD, THE FATHER. It will, indeed, be a miracle, if the Swedenborgian group is able to change as a group, but miracles do happen, so let us fervently pray for this one!

Mrs. W. K. Behrendt
Great Bend, Kansas
67503

A QUESTIONABLE LUXURY

Dear Messenger Readers:

It was most refreshing to read the two thought-provoking letters in the July-August issue of the *Messenger*. I am referring to the letters by Lucretia W. Green of Scottsbluff, Nebraska, and Gordon Vallandigham of San Jose, California.

It is so true that a strong defense of America is most necessary—from within as well as from without. It still holds true that pacifists prosper because patriots fought.

The letter by Gordon Vallandigham suggests that the *Messenger* should not be a forum for problems outside of the New Church. That is so right! Swedenborgians cannot afford the luxury of in-fighting and bickering. Perhaps that is why we are not growing as a church.

Bernhard Althin Toombs
Wilmington, MA

FROM CHURCH RECORDS

BIRTH

CROWELL—A daughter born to Gary and Ruth (Martin) Crowell of East Stoneham, Maine, on Sunday, August 28, 1983.

CONFIRMATIONS

BRYCE, BUSH—George Bryce and Charles Bush were confirmed into the New Church in Portland, Oregon on July 17, 1983, the Rev. Paul Martin Grumman officiating.

MARRIAGE

GRABER—KNAPP—Ronald Graber and Debbie Knapp were united in marriage in El Reno, Oklahoma on August 13, 1983, the Rev. Eric Zacharias officiating.

DEATHS

UNRUH—Lydia M. Unruh, 96, died in Garland, Texas on March 8, 1983. Burial in the Lone Star cemetery in Pretty Prairie, Kansas, the Rev. Eric Zacharias officiating.

KRAUS—Jonathan “Joe” Kraus, 92, died in Pretty Prairie, Kansas on July 15, 1983. The resurrection service was held in the Pretty Prairie New Church, the Rev. Eric Zacharias officiating.

WESTBY—The resurrection service for Rang Westby, 84, was held on August 1, 1983, the Rev. Paul Martin Grumman officiating. Mr. Rang had been a long time member of the Seattle Fellowship and leaves behind many family members and friends.

FORRESTER—Rachel Broomell Forrester, daughter of the late Rev. and Mrs. Clyde Broomell, died on May 17, 1983, at Oxnard, Calif. Memorial services were conducted by the Rev. Ernest O. Martin on May 27th, 1983.

“OUR CHILD”

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Verse

As a seed contains a tree
you are a child still yet to be,
a gift to us, from God above,
filling our lives with love;
and as the tree grows through the years,
strong and tall with constant care,
so you our child, our love will know,
as the seasons come and go.

Chorus

Our child, now you are here
the hand of God has touched our lives,
through joy and pain, laughter and tears,
our love will forever shine.

Verse

Oh the sea, in deepest blue,
reflects in truth our love for you,
and while the storm may cross the breadth,
it won't disturb the inner depth;
as the shore will always be
the shifting line 'tween land and sea,
the way we show our care for you
will always change yet ever be.

Chorus

So dear child, be like the sea,
as your life flows ever on,
reflecting truth to those you meet
and find your strength through an
inner calm.

Verse

The mountain stream, so clear and bright,
flows ever on both day and night,
finding the way down mountain wall,
around the rocks and over falls;
as it grows, in size and power,
bringing life to field and flower,
providing use in many ways,
and finds the sea it's resting place.

Chorus

So dear child, be like the stream,
as your life flows ever on,
bringing good to those you meet,
and find your rest in God's sea of love.

A cassette with “Our Child” and other songs by Ken Turley will shortly be available.

THE LAST CHANTS (cont'd from pg. 188)

such tapes; and they're flexible enough to be able to build a tape's contents to your needs! Don't be shy about getting in touch to get your "custom-made" tape—they're looking forward to hearing from you.

For information, and to order the cassette

tapes, please write to: Miss Christine Laitner, 10 Hannah Court, Midland, MI 48640, or phone Chris at (517) 636-7674. (Central Time Zone). A donation of about \$5.00 to help defray the cost of the tape(s) would certainly be a help.

Muff Worden

The Singing of Angels

*There must always be remaining
in everyone's life
some place for the singing of angels—
some place for that which in itself is breathlessly beautiful
and by an inherent prerogative
throwing all the rest of life
into new and created relatedness.
Something that gathers up in itself
all the freshets of experience
from drab and commonplace areas of living
and glows in one bright white light of penetrating beauty and
meaning — then passes.
The commonplace is shot through now with new glory—
old burdens become lighter,
deep and ancient wounds lose much of their old, old hurting.
A crown is placed over our heads
that for the rest of our lives
we are trying to grow tall enough to wear.
Despite all the crassness of life,
despite all the hardness of life,
despite all the harsh discords of life,
life is saved by the singing of angels.*

—Howard Thurman