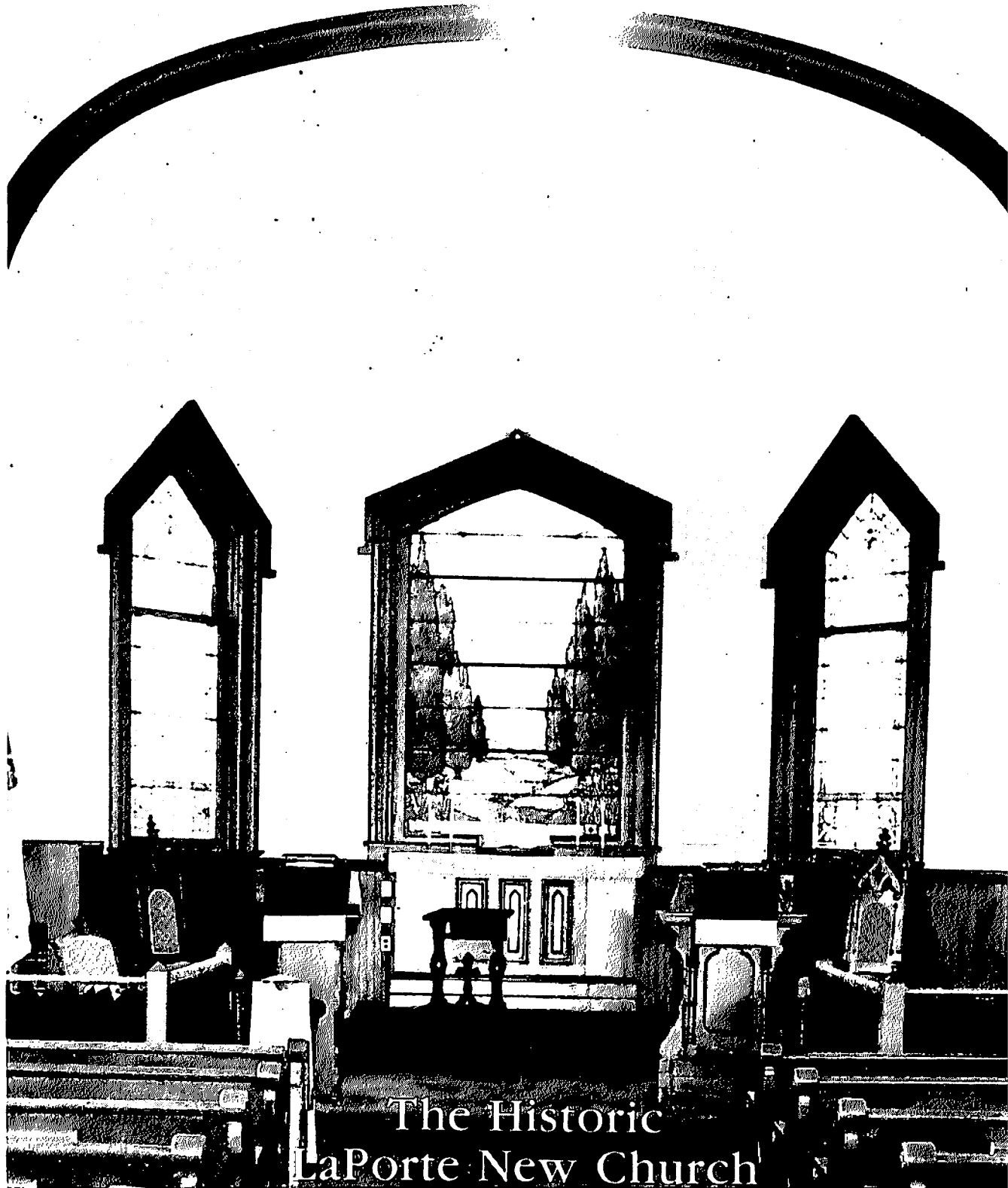


The Messenger

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE
GENERAL CONVENTION OF SWEDENBORGIAN CHURCHES

September 1984



The Historic
LaPorte New Church

Happy Birthday, LaPorte

I am happy to present the new *Messenger* to our readers, this being the first issue from St. Louis, Missouri, our new home. This does not mean, however, that 48 Sargent St., Newton, Mass., the previous home of *The Messenger*, is out of the picture—not by any means. The Central Office in Newton has typeset, designed and produced this issue of *The Messenger*, and we hope to be able to maintain a working relationship for a long time.

Our lead story for this month concerns a sister congregation of the St. Louis New Church in the Illinois Association, the LaPorte, Indiana New Church society. The LaPorte Society is one hundred and twenty five years old as of June. Elizabeth Munger, an amateur historian and longtime member of the LaPorte New Church, is the perfect writer to use this opportunity to provide us with a focused perspective of their journey across these many years of service to the community. Rev. Ted LeVan, now beginning his second year of ministry in the small city (or large town) on Lake Michigan, adds his own comments regarding the cover photo of their warm and inviting chancel and sanctuary.

Also in this issue is the first installment of an occasional column by Dorothy Clayton Travers on Swedenborgian Wellness. Mrs. Travers is one of many Swedenborgian enthusiasts who see great possibilities for the Swedenborgian perspective to add substantively to the holistic movement in this country. Usually, we see ourselves as having much to add through an articulation of a practical view of spirituality, and, in fact, this is the contribution most of our ministers and churches seek to make.

But Mrs. Travers is quite convinced that our spiritual founder, Emanuel Swedenborg, had insights into some other areas of holism normally reserved for twentieth century theorists and practitioners. In this column she examines a little known work of Swedenborg's written well before his theological writings. It's called *Tremulations*, and Mrs. Travers avers that in it one will find a lucid presentation of motion and vibrations—themes just now becoming accepted and popular in spiritual movements.

She isn't satisfied to leave this understanding of reality as mere head knowledge, though she seeks to bring this scientific discussion into a practical vein of knowledge.

Certified as a nutritional or clinical therapist in 1978, Mrs. Travers has had a private practice, taught college courses on "Achieving Health" (both nutrition and mental patterns), and worked for a year as a lay therapist and nutritional consultant at a psychiatric center in Wilmington. She has incorporated many New Age ideas in her teaching, as well as in her nutrition and health columns published in a weekly Delaware paper over a period of three years. We hope you find her offerings stimulating, and we invite sharings, opinions and dialog in the area of Swedenborgian Wellness.



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LaPorte Society of the New Church Celebrates 125th Anniversary

by Elizabeth Munger



LaPorte New Church Sunday School, April 1984
Front: Alan Lofton, Arianne Halle, Missy Glanders,
Brent Weigel, Katy Galloway. *Middle:* Tina Glanders,
Matthew Weigel, Anna Galloway, Rena Holmes, Sarah
Tukos. *Back:* Rachel Tukos, Brian Holmes, Tami
Mounce. *Not shown:* Alison and Gillian Carpentier

Seeds Are Planted

There has been a New Church presence in LaPorte, Indiana, practically ever since the town was founded. The town was ten years old, with about 1000 inhabitants, when in March, 1842, the Rev. George Field, on his missionary visits in Michigan and Indiana, gave two lectures in the courthouse, doubtless the first New Church services ever held in LaPorte.

Shortly afterwards Sarah Ross, one of the daughters of Ogden Ross, a New Church member of the Cincinnati neighborhood, came to LaPorte as the wife of James Andrew, one of the town's founders. She was the first believer in the doctrines of the New Church to settle in LaPorte.

In the few years succeeding the visit of the Rev. George Field the town was visited by the Revs. Jabez Fox, J.B. Hibbard, B.F. Bartlett, and Abiel Silvers. But it was not only in this way that the New Church reached the frontier community. Pioneer judges and lawyers, who "rode the circuit," going in groups on horseback from one courthouse to another, became acquainted with the lawyer-preacher Abiel Silver of Edwardsville, Michigan, and with Judge Chamberlain of Goshen. It was in this way that Judge John B. Niles and Judge William Hannah, long prominent in the LaPorte Church, became acquainted with the doctrines.

The missionaries had found LaPorte a fertile field for their labors for the reason

that the village had an unusual population for a pioneer community of its size. The town had been plotted in 1832, just south of a chain of beautiful little lakes and on the edge of a richly fertile prairie. The town and county were given the name 'LaPorte' by French Canadian fur traders who had traversed it for generations. The name attracted settlers from the seaboard states from New England to Virginia, as well as from the Ohio River Region, who often passed over a hundred miles or more of uninhabited territory to get to the prairie paradise which had neither river, canal, nor any connection with the outside world other than Indian trails. Among them were many settlers with superior education. The federal census of 1840, taken eight years after the founding of LaPorte, placed the county second only to Indianapolis in the number of professional men among its settlers.

In 1841 a university was founded at LaPorte, and, shortly afterwards, a medical college was founded in connection with the university. Though neither institution was able in succeeding years to compete with stronger colleges in Chicago and Michigan, the men who founded them included several who espoused the doctrines of the New Church. To mention only two, John B. Niles became professor of chemistry in the university, and Dr. Eleazer Deming was a professor in the medical college.

Shoots Begin to Sprout

So much interest in the writings of Swedenborg had been aroused that on November 17, 1849, fifteen citizens of LaPorte met and were incorporated under the name of the "LaPorte Swedenborg Library Association," for the purpose of buying the writings of Swedenborg and kindred works and establishing a lending library.

In January, 1850, Rev. Henry Weller, pastor of a church recently organized at Grand Rapids, Michigan delivered a series of lectures on the doctrines of the New Jerusalem in the Christian church at LaPorte, of which Judge William Andrew, afterwards a lifelong New Church member, was the pastor. Mr. Weller repeated his visits and on April 25, 1852, issued at

LaPorte the first number of the New Church semi-monthly paper, *The Crisis*, later *The Independent*, which continued to be published in LaPorte and later in Chicago for many years.

In 1855 Mr. Weller settled permanently in LaPorte, purchasing a beautifully wooded tract of fourteen acres on the shore of Stone Lake, just outside LaPorte, which as Weller's Grove many years later, in the time of his son William Weller, became famous among the New Church people of the country as the summer assembly grounds of the New Church. It was the first such assembly of the Church in the world. It flourished from the mid-1880s until about 1905.

Rev. Henry Weller, on settling here, continued to minister to the growing number of adherents to the doctrines, though as yet there was no formal organization. Among the several families of Virginians of cultivation in the community were the Holcombes, who lived a few miles south of LaPorte. They had freed their slaves and come north to rear their family away from the influence of slavery. Notable among the sons was Dr. William Henry Holcombe of Natchez and later New Orleans, whose writings on New Church subjects used to be in the libraries of most Swedenborgians. A monument to the memory of John W. Holcombe, who died while on a visit to his brother in Natchez, was erected in Patton cemetery in LaPorte in 1855, in the period before the organization of the LaPorte church. It recites in true New Church phraseology that young Holcombe's "natural body is here deposited," while he himself has "ascended at the command of our Lord, to the society of angels." Nearby is the tomb of another Virginian, Mrs. Cobbs, a niece of Patrick Henry, whose granddaughters, Mrs. Barry and Mrs. Boyesen, will be remembered by the older members of the LaPorte and Chicago societies. The latter was a sister-in-law of the Norwegian novelist, Hjalmar H. Boyesen, who in his early years in America taught at Urbana University (Swedenborgian).

Coming of Age

The LaPorte Society was formally organized 14 June, 1859, by the adoption of Ar-

ticles of Association. Under the first trustees, John B. Niles, Dr. Abraham Teegarden, and Sutton Van Pelt, the project of building a church was pushed forward rapidly. James and Sarah Andrew deeded the lot at the corner of Indiana Avenue and Maple Street in July. Others furnished money, labor and materials, and two months later, on 11 September, 1859, the Rev. Henry Weller, the first regular pastor, delivered the dedicatory sermon to a full house.

The large stained glass window in the chancel was given in 1916 by Emmett Scott and Mrs. Fanny Scott Rumley in memory of their mother, Mary Relief Niles Scott.

Following Rev. Henry Weller, who died in 1868, these ministers served the LaPorte Society: Rev. Woodbury M. Fernald (1869-1870), Rev. Cyrus Scammon, (brother of J.Y. Scammon, a founder of the Chicago Society) (1870-1884), Rev. Henry H. Grant (1886-1888), Rev. Thomas F. Houts (1889-1893), Rev. Eugene D. Daniels (1893-1907), Rev. Frank Gustafson (1908-1911), Rev. Warren Goddard (1911-1916), Rev. Charles S. Mack (under whom many present members joined the Society) (1916-1930), Rev. Donald C. Gustafson (1930-1931), Rev. Rollo K. Billings (1937-1940), Rev. Carl Peters (1943-1945), Rev. Donald C. Gustafson again (1946-1949), and Rev. John W. Spiers (1954-1958), who was resident minister when Convention was held in LaPorte.

There have been several periods in the years following the ministry of the Rev. Dr. Charles Mack when LaPorte Church had no resident minister. Beginning in 1959, the Rev. Franklin Blackmer made the trip from Urbana, Ohio 24 times a year to serve the LaPorte Society. But as support money was cut back, he eventually made only 17 trips and, finally, 15 trips in 1968.

With the aid of the Augmentation Fund Committee and the Illinois Association, the Society secured the ministry of the Rev. Jaikoo E. Lee (1968-1970). During the years from September 1970-June 1973 the team ministry of the Revs. Dick Tafel and F. Robert Tafel of the Kemper Road Church made monthly trips to LaPorte.

The Rev. Matthew Glowe was minister from September 1973 to June 1976. After

another hiatus, the Rev. Eric Allison was the pastor from September 1977-June 1980. In July of 1983 the Society was able to call the Rev. Ted LeVan, who has helped in planning the celebration for the 125th anniversary of this persistent church. The last four ministers came to LaPorte immediately after graduating from seminary.

The Joys of a Full Time Minister

In addition to serving the LaPorte Society, Rev. LeVan is President of the Illinois Association and was a lecturer on the staff of Almont Summer School. In August he was asked to conduct the dedication service when the Lenox Church of the New Jerusalem near Norway, Iowa placed in its cemetery a marker honoring the Founders of the Jasper Colony, and he preached the sermon at the annual reunion of descendants of the colony which was held in the beautiful old church on the hill.

In October Mr. LeVan attended the meeting of the Kansas Association to help strengthen the ties among churches of the Mid-West, and he went to Los Angeles in February to attend the meeting of ministers and spouses. In March he attended the two-day Peer Supervision Retreat at Almont.

In the community our minister belongs to the Ministerial Association, serves on the chaplaincy staff of LaPorte Hospital, visits the Rehabilitation Center and the Swanson Senior Center, and took part in the Jerry Lewis Telethon. We heard many fine comments after he led the devotions at the Prayer Breakfast on World Day of Prayer. He has held many counseling sessions with members and non-members in many varying situations, and he has paid visits to other churches and ministers. He has spoken to the Kiwanis Club and has been made a member of that organization.

The Rev. Mr. LeVan leads a Bible Study group twice a month for some of our members, who are studying *Allegories of Genesis*, and is forming a confirmation class at the request of several other people.

The Sunday School has fifteen students who attend regularly. Supt. Patricia Tukos (Mrs. Steve) teaches the beginners, Tammy

Menkes (Mrs. Randy) teaches the intermediates, Gail Holmes (Mrs. Robert) the juniors, and the Rev. Mr. LeVan teaches the teens. They use the *Dole Notes* and materials from the Board of Education. Teachers meet for planning sessions, and they also met with the Rev. Ronald Brugler who was visiting minister when Mr. LeVan preached at Norway, Iowa.

The Women's Alliance arranges all the social and fellowship activities, raises funds with bake sales, rummage sales, Johnny Appleseed Bazaar, and other projects; supports such ecumenical organizations in the community as Church Women United, LaPorte Migrant Mission, Salvation Army, etc., and does much to beautify and maintain the physical property of the church.

We seek to have the courage to make adjustments and persevere as our predecessors did. Indeed, it is evident to us that one reason the LaPorte Society can now celebrate this anniversary is that we have received so much financial, material and spiritual support from the National Church, the Illinois Association and our sister churches as we struggle to survive and grow in these times of rising costs and social change. May God's blessing rest upon everyone who has had a part in this history!

Elizabeth Mack Munger is the Secretary of the LaPorte Society, and she resides in neighboring Michigan City, Indiana. Portions of this article have been adapted from an article by the late Ruth Andrew Coffeen.

About the Cover Photo

The sanctuary of the LaPorte New Church is the most beautiful I have ever seen. Gold stained-glass windows alternate with green ones to produce a splendor that is awe-inspiring. Behind the altar is a two-layered stained glass window giving a truly three-dimensional effect to the beautiful pastoral scene. Depicted is a stream (of living water) which, hopefully, one can picture as flowing from the open Word on the altar, and flowing down a juniper and grass covered hillside to a meadow below. Foothills rise beyond the meadow as if to

subdue the majesty of the purple mountains in the distance. White clouds in the blue sky set off the mountains.

A gold stripe frames the windows and doors of the sanctuary which are trimmed in rich brown. The walls are a light green, the pews a golden oak, and the carpet a luxuriant maroon. Old-fashioned decorated globes provide the light when needed, hanging from the high-vaulted ceiling.

We are looking forward to sharing this beautiful sanctuary with many people: through our 125th anniversary celebrations, our film and lectures, community activities, and our wedding ministry. We are only 15 minutes south of Interstates 80-90. Won't you stop by sometime soon?

Rev. Ted LeVan



Rev. Ted LeVan

Sarah and "My Religion"

by Karen O'Hare

I have a friend. Her name is Sarah. She is considered legally blind. She is a useful citizen, has completed her education with her handicap. That education is now in service to other blind-handicapped persons. Sarah is partially-sighted, light and shadow aware. She proudly walks from place to place, without assistance, by light of day. But, when the sun goes down, she needs to be shown a step up, a step down and then continue on her way. She also needs assistance with finer light and shadow problems after the lights are burning. When in a hallway, leading to rooms that are not as familiar as the one in which she has been sitting, I always offer a soft assistance. Sometimes she resists. Sarah is a proud and accomplished woman. As a matter of fact, Sarah is a vocational rehabilitation counselor for the blind and sight impaired.

Sarah was introduced to my husband and me by a long time friend, Benton Asbury, who had proudly presented her as his wife-to-be. Benton and Sarah came to our Los Angeles church for betrothal counseling with Rev. Andre Diaconoff. When Sarah met Rev. Andre and talked with him about our beautiful New Church truths, her heart and soul were set aglow.

Andre introduced Sarah to the book *My Religion* by Helen Keller. "I cannot understand why our Institute for the Blind and the Braille Institute have not included this marvelous book in their libraries," Sarah said. Through this book, Sarah had found a religion that spoke to her and her needs. Church, as she had known it, was dead. This new-found truth was alive and she was eager to know more.

Sarah and Benton were married by Rev. Andre in a garden ceremony at Benton's mother's home. The garden looked over a vast panorama of meadows and out to sea. With the ocean breezes blowing through her hair, Benton by her side, they took their wedding vows.

Sarah has said that our New Church friendship is the only church truth that

makes any sense to her. I warm inside every time we have the opportunity to communicate, face to face, and continue in growth.

Recently, Sarah asked me if I would be interested in reading aloud for the blind. Her specific request was to read *My Religion*. I told her that the Swedenborg Foundation had recordings available and that we just happened to have them. (When my husband and I were serving as librarians for the L.A. New Church library, we decided an audio "My Religion" should be available.) Sarah took them home with her to take to work the following week.

I await Sarah's report on the reactions of others, who are non-sighted, when they "read" the beautiful and inspired writing of Helen Keller. If Sarah is an example, with her enthusiasm, then we can expect to see more and hear more from her caseload. She is working with many patients every week. Her caseload of people in need is overwhelming. Sarah is a concerned professional.

Sometime ago she spoke to me of the tensions involved in her occupation. I sent her a copy of an article written by Betty Lundberg that appeared in *The Messenger* concerning professional burn-out. Betty had remarked that she was reading several pages of the "Arcana" on a daily basis, prior to going to work, to fortify and enlighten her. Sarah said that Betty's article helped her to shape a new attitude of thought. Thank you *Messenger*; thank you, Betty.

Footnote: In this time of re-shaping our thoughts and actions, shouldn't we put more emphasis on the promotion of our treasure-trove of truths? It needs to reach a greater audience, as Sarah has demonstrated.

Karen O'Hare is a member of the Los Angeles Society, and she resides in Woodland Hills, Cal.

Six Years at The Swedenborg School of Religion: Reflections and Visions of a Ministry

By Robert McCluskey

The wind blows where it wills, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know whence it comes or whither it goes; so it is with every one who is born of the Spirit.

John 3:8

My experience at the Swedenborg School of Religion was like life anywhere else: exciting, dull; profound, absurd; peppered with surprises, misfortune and joy. It was like life anywhere else also in that it was a process guided providentially by the Lord; a process of being continually led into new things, almost mysteriously.

Emerson describes this experience of being led in his essay entitled, appropriately, "Experience." He writes:

Where do we find ourselves? In a series, of which we do not know the extremes, and believe that it has none. We wake, and find ourselves on a stair: there are stairs below us, which we seem to have ascended; there are stairs above us, many a one, which go upward and out of sight. Ghost-like we glide through nature, and should not know our place again. . . . If any of us knew what we were doing, or where we are going, then when we think we best know! All our days are so unprofitable while they pass, that 'tis wonderful where or when we ever got anything of this which we call wisdom, poetry, virtue. We never got it on any dated calendar day. Some heavenly days must have been intercalated somewhere; . . . a good deal of buzz, and somewhere a result slipped magically in.

We all know this feeling, this experience of the intangible hand of God in our lives.

However, the unique nature of SSR, the specific and at times intense focus on the life of the spirit, has, for me, revealed in a new way both the difficulty and the joy of "being led by the Lord." It has refined and even changed my understanding of humility, the need to acknowledge that my ways are not always the Lord's ways. It has strengthened in me the need to remain open to discern the Lord's will. Finally, it has caused me to define and seek a new understanding of the word FREEDOM.

The purpose of SSR has been described as that of training people for ministry in the New Church. The Ad Hoc Committee has recently defined the central purpose of the church as the promotion of the process of regeneration. Now, before we become so familiar with the term "regeneration" that we lose sight of its deeper significance, let us remember that it means just that state of being led by the Lord, as opposed to the natural self within us. It is a state of spiritual, internal freedom. We might also use the phrase "spiritual maturity" to describe this state; i.e., the goal of spiritual growth. This spiritual freedom or maturity which Swedenborg describes is an important term. Understood properly, it shows the real and extreme difficulty of entering into the spiritual life. It is, very simply, freedom from ourselves: a transformation of the individual from a natural to a spiritual state or perspective.

Most of us believe that the life that leads to heaven is not so difficult. There is, in fact, a chapter in the writings of our church specifically dealing with this topic. However, that

which *prevents* us from leading the heavenly life *is* difficult to overcome, to get beyond. It is ultimately we ourselves, not some other person or organization, which prevents us from turning to receive God's love and wisdom. Until we are free internally, free of the contradictions, patterns, and mis-directed emotions that push us from behind, until the Lord dwells within us, we remain divided, fragmented. We are neither whole nor free.

Krishnamurti addresses this point when he writes:

If we are to change radically our present human relationship, which has brought untold misery to the world, our only and immediate task is to transform ourselves through self-knowledge. So we come back to the central point, which is oneself; but we dodge that point and shift the responsibility onto governments, religions and ideologies. The government is what *we* are, religions and ideologies are but a projection of ourselves; and until *we* change fundamentally there can be neither right education nor a peaceful world.

Freedom of choice, as defined by Swedenborg and others, is not a matter of being able to "do your thing" or the freedom and exercise of "looking out for number one." It involves the maturity of seeing and acknowledging the Lord's will, and the freedom to confirm it in our lives. It is not a freedom from external circumstances at all, but from the devious oppression of our inner, natural self. And our sometimes constrained relations and conflicts with others are essential to the tempering of this natural self. It is just such a transformation of the individual through interaction with the community that I feel called to.

Ministry, then, like regeneration, is a process of entering into a new relationship with the Lord; one of perception, attentiveness, and obedience; a state of being led by the Lord. They are both difficult because no one really wants to enter into such a process. It is always so much easier to find the source of our anger, fear, and despair outside ourselves, in other-people and circumstances.

And so, ministry for me is a challenge. A challenge to begin with the inner person, both in myself and others; a challenge to be unswayed by external appearances, though not insensitive to them, a challenge to trust in the Lord, to be led by a way unknown and perhaps undesired by me. At SSR, I experienced the first stages of this challenge as I sought to conjoin the doctrines with my life, my understanding of the Word with my immediate experience. By letting my experience with real people inform my theology, and vice-versa, I have found that ministry, and freedom, is a simple matter of "both / and;" not finding the right answer, but asking the right question.

The wind blows where it wills, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know whence it comes or whither it goes; so it is with every one who is born of the Spirit.

John 3:8

Rev. Robert McCluskey is the minister of the Swedenborgian New Church, Portland, Maine.

SWEDENBORGIAN WELLNESS

by Dorothy Clayton Travers

If we think pure, prayerful and holy thoughts and if we eat only those cooked and raw foods that our own particular body needed, we might live to be as old as Methuselah. In fact, to be really Swedenborgian, we would have to go back to the moment of conception and ask if the sperm of the father and the egg of the mother were genetically perfect and if the proper nutrients were provided in utero. In addition, we could ask whether the psychological environment of that "in-the-womb" period was balanced, harmonious and perfect.

Then we might add that if we were able to grow up where the air was fresh and pure, where the water was without harmful chemicals and minerals, and where the soil was balanced and organic, we might be able to achieve what is now considered the maximum achievable age for a human being: 140 years.

This may not make you an expert on anyone else, however, because no one knows what or how another person thinks, even though we might observe what is eaten. All any wellness expert can do is spread out a smorgasbord of ideas and plant seeds - be a Johnny Appleseed in other words, and let the desire of the other take what it will, when it will, from the feast of ideas.

Swedenborg was the first, to my knowledge, to write precisely on how the mind affects the body. In Swedish, for the Swedish Royal Medical Society, he published a book little known in The Swedenborgian Church titled, *Tremulations*. Written in 1719 and less than 100 pages, it describes how the mind physically affects the body by the level of conscious thought.

On the lowest level he termed the vibrations generated while the mind is in a state of fear, gross "undulations." He taught that while these negative thoughts were operative, the body was not only inefficient, but could actually shut down. Ever hear the expression "paralyzed with fear?" These lower energies, Swedenborg explained, cause the body fluids, meninges, organs and even bones to react with constraint according to the level of the influencing mind.

When a person thinks positively, body energies from all parts are raised and the body increases in efficiency. This level Swedenborg termed "tremulations," and he equated positive thinking with thoughts that are courageous. Today we have untold thousands of volumes telling us to be positive thinkers, but rarely, if ever, are insights included that our church has in its dossier (written more than 260 years ago by Swedenborg) on how thoughts are important for healthy activity in the body.

When in a state of prayer (and I think we can add meditation) the body is at its most efficient level. The vibrations during this condition are called contremiscences. I have looked for the root meanings of this word in dictionaries, but I can't find it. (Perhaps a reader can trace the precise Latin meaning and write this column so that it can be shared.) At any rate, this is the condition where the body's load is lightest as the arteries and capillaries unclutch, and where the heat of healing is experienced.

In other words, this is when the heat and light is allowed a release from the soul to come into the mind and course through the physical body. This is the optimum state of mind for wellness. (Mystics from the East have known, taught and practiced this for thousands of years.)

Let me suggest an exercise based upon this knowledge Swedenborg gave to the world in his first little book. Get a message from your own body by relaxing completely and going into a meditative state while holding a little thermometer between the thumb and forefinger. Note the temperature before you commence the relaxation process and then again after you have achieved a condition of contremiscence. You have allowed your own body to open up to God's energies of heat and light. Picture yourself surrounded and filled with white light. Feel safe in God's protective arms and give yourself a healing.

God bless you.

Dorothy Clayton Travers, member of the Wilmington, Delaware New Church, resides in New Castle, Delaware.

Spiritual Vision

by Margaret Schwarm

When we talk about vision, naturally we are talking about eyes. However, the eyes do not function alone. They have a double function. They are organs of vision as well as organs of contact. Eye contact between two people can be a strong and intimate form of contact, feeling on a deeper level than verbal communication. It is a non-physical form of touching and can be very pleasurable, as when we fall in love "at first sight." Since the eyes are connected to our entire nervous and internal organ systems, we see with our whole body, even though we are not usually aware of the total involvement.

As an awareness of our true selves grows, we lift the veil, so to speak, and are truly seen and understood by others. . . we can surrender in the complete faith and trust that what God wants of us is right for our sojourn on this earth.

So if there is a total physical involvement, what does it mean to have *spiritual* vision? Webster's definition of spirit is "the soul". The suffix "al" means pertaining to. If physical vision is the act of seeing, the sense of sight, touching on a feeling level, let us then accept the premise that spiritual vision means the capacity to see and understand the inner view of the soul.

The key word here is "understand." Through understanding we connect our own soul to the other person's soul. The eye of the spirit is an inner seeing of the soul, the total involvement and understanding of our own spiritual core and our ability to see and connect with another person's spiritual core.

However, there is something that we must not overlook. In Matthew 7:3-5, Jesus admonished us that "before you can take the speck out of your neighbor's eye, you must first take the beam out of your own eye. Then you will be able to see clearly the speck in your neighbor's eye." (Notice that what we have in our own eye is much larger than what the neighbor has in his eye!) Jesus says this many times in many different ways. "Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful;" "Do not judge others and God will not judge you;" "Do not condemn others and God will not condemn you;" "Forgive others and God will

forgive you." There are many more, always the basic message being that we should not be judgmental of others until we have examined our own motives and intent. Let's clean our own spiritual house before we try to clean somebody else's house.

How do we clean our own spiritual house? Inner searching for truth is one very important way. Real seeing and genuine understanding of the other person begins when we see and understand ourselves with all our imperfections, allowing the truth that resides in our soul to come forth and embrace the clarity of God's love. As this awareness of our true self grows, we lift the

veil, so to speak, and are truly seen and understood by others. When the demand of "my way, not yours" is given up, we can then find a state of unity, not separation; we can surrender to the will of God in the complete faith and trust that what God wants of us is right for our sojourn on this earth. There is no longer a conflict of wills, and we can truly say that "I and my Father are one."

To the degree we reveal this oneness, to that measure will others "see" and understand us. The more others respond to us in this manner, the more we can open our spiritual eyes and see and connect with the other person's true self, their core, with love and understanding. And so it goes on, and on, and on. What a wonderful benign circle we can create!

Can we discover another interpretation of the famous quote from Matthew 5:38, "an eye for an eye?" Could it be that on another level of consciousness, a soul is reaching out to another soul in a process of inner seeing?

When we close up and hide our true self behind barriers (defenses), we can almost hear Matthew again speaking: "You will look and look but not see."

Margaret Schwarm, member of the New York New Church, resides in Woodside, NY.

Moving In

by Gwynne Dresser Mack

One of the darker, least understood mysteries in human existence is that which from Biblical times has surfaced to astonish and frighten humanity. The name of this phenomenon is "possession."

A riotous demonstration was raging in the street along the buildings of a large factory. People were screaming, shoving, waving placards to express anger at their employer's refusal to accept unreasonable demands. This was being shown on television. A reporter pushed his way through the crowd, and suddenly thrust his microphone close to the bearded face of a large disheveled man standing in the midst of the uproar.

Said the reporter: "What do you think of all this?" The man was silent at first, then declared: "The left hand don't know what the right hand doeth."

Whether or not these words applied to the strike in progress, they certainly do to an aspect of human behavior. That well-known statement from the Bible explains many situations which cause confusion, misunderstanding, and even tragedy.

The fictional book about Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde has never failed to fascinate people, which suggests that subconsciously we can recognize the possibility of what appears to be a "split personality." Schizophrenia has long been regarded as a form of insanity, and one of its peculiarities has been called "split personality." This disturbance has been studied for a century, with shifting interpretations. Now a new, very interesting statement has been made: schizophrenia is actually due to chemical brain-damage, and there is no such thing as a "split" personality.

Personality is the individual, and whatever behavior shows itself is simply

part of a quantity of tendencies which each one of us has. We all are familiar with "mood swings," more apparent in some of us than in others, and supposedly caused by body chemistry or emotional experiences. If the same person has repeated mood-swings from exuberance to despair, psychiatry calls it the manic-depressive syndrome - and it does seem as if the personality has split into two different people. But now we are told that this does not happen. What, then, does?

If repetitious behavior forms a definite pattern, as with Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, it is a dual (not split) personality. It reveals itself in various ways, from vague occasional attitudes to definite characteristics which are not like the individual as known. And there has been evidence of one or another of them knowing about it.

This brings us to a possibility which has seldom been discussed (if even considered). One of the darker, least understood mysteries in human existence is that which from Biblical times has surfaced to astonish and frighten humanity. The name of this phenomenon is "possession."

Jesus "cast out devils." In recent years a movie, based upon a true situation, presented a terrifying representation of an evil spirit moving into the body of a human being and fully controlling it. Similar programs then appeared on television, and books on the subject became best-sellers. The big question was: can a person really be possessed by an entity who has died?

What has happened under hypnosis in the direction of receiving orders which are acted upon *after* the trance is over (and not remembered), indicates quite clearly that a person can thus be controlled. We are continually influenced by what we see on television or read in newspapers; and we can be severely affected by invisible poisons in food, water, or air. We respond to wind which we can not see, and to sunlight from a source we can not look at. Likewise we can be in contact with unfelt vibrations from our fellow humans - both good and bad - on earth and beyond in the spiritual world. Evidently, we can and do react to stimuli which no one can see or touch physically.

The noisy demonstration, with which this article begins, is an example of how easily emotions and thoughts can be grabbed hold of and directed. The rock-band excitement, the ear-splitting yells on New Year's Eve in Times Square, the riots that break out anywhere, anytime, are very real occurrences which prove how quickly and strongly many human beings can be led into attitudes and actions not their own, by a few who ignite them.

It is this weakness which makes some persons vulnerable to the cravings of individuals who, having left earth existence but developed no further, seize any chance to move in and function again at a familiar level. The victim's mind is manipulated and, through this, the body. Once again the frustrated spirit is active! This is "possession," increasingly evident in our century, although its appearance is seldom recognized as such. Not every "move in" which creates a dual or multiple personality is deliberately evil; but it is likely so self-absorbed that efforts for expression may produce evil results. Selves that are intensely domineering get their sense of power from criminal activity.

Presumably *good* people do not dominate, but rather, enjoy being friendly and helpful. *Bad* people care only about what they want for themselves. To accomplish this, it is necessary to use others - to enslave and control them - and only spiritually undeveloped individuals can be thus commanded. Such persons may go into a trance and have no memory of what happens.

The news these days is full of crimes committed by persons who do not know why, or who do not recall what they have done. They have become temporarily *possessed*, their physical bodies used for carrying out some action which gratifies an evil spirit. Robberies, setting fires, kidnapping, rape, murder - all can be achieved in this way, sometimes by someone described by neighbors as "quiet, orderly, and nice."

There have also been crime epidemics which spread through an area for a long time, without revealing the perpetrator: for instance, consecutive disappearances of a number of young boys in a location where later their bodies were discovered, one by one; the deaths, on a large farm, of each hired man replacing a previous one; the murders of several young women in the same town. These happenings had certain features in common: they were repeated according to a pattern, and their origin remained undiscovered for months.

Dreadful as all this is, and unwilling as most people are to think about it, we *must* realize its meaning. Newborn babies are not born evil; every one of them is intended by our Creator to build goodness into human life. Evil can not destroy goodness; goodness can overcome evil. In our population today are multitudes of un-taught, undeveloped children growing up to become ignorant adults who are easy victims of either evil persons still here or evil persons who, having died, are now spirits continuing their effort to control others. In the spiritual world they can not dominate any who are good, and to try to control those like themselves means continual conflict.

The obvious outcome is for an evil spirit to take possession of a vulnerable individual on earth who doesn't know what it's all about. The evil one *moves into* the victim's life, and may stay briefly or continuously. Depending on the skillfulness of control, the victim will simply behave strangely - as observed by others - or will turn toward criminal activity.

It is of utmost importance that churches meet their crucial responsibility for teaching and training human beings *from infancy onward* to want and to feel a personal closeness to God. This is a church's foremost reason for existence, and it should

especially apply to every new human life, which, of course, involves *the parents*. It is a big mistake to assume that children are "too young to understand." At the start of active life they have spiritual perception which enables them to absorb, into the subconscious mind, knowledges they will need in the future. Whatever young children are lovingly and carefully taught will influence their entire development. If they know God from their beginning, they will stay with Him always. If they are firmly aware of God in their environment, evil spirits can not come near.

Babies must be taught. Children must be taught. If it has been well done, there would be few teen-age problems. In a lecture, Jesse Jackson said: "You tell me that you can not manage your sixteen-year olds. Probably you can't. But you had your option at age six."

The most tragic situation in this disordered half-century is that quantities of babies are being produced without homes or family backgrounds. Countless mothers are teen-agers without husbands and without sufficient knowledge or ability for child-care. Their children are neglected, uneducated, corrupted, physically abused and injured. Could there be any bigger evidence of "possession" than in the frequent and vicious maltreatment of children by adults?

How many churches actually teach definite ideas - with emphasis and organized continuity - about our personal relationship with God and the Divine Laws governing it? The increase of "possession" these days, *greatly assisted by alcohol and drugs*, intensifies a decrease of leadership and influence from religion.

What is a church for? Worship is usually the focusing point. But it is meaningless unless it gives priority to helping individuals to realize and feel the presence of God *in daily living* and guides them in the spiritual care and education of new human lives continually coming into our world. The church represents the most urgent responsibility given to the human race on this earth.

Gwynne Dresser Mack, member of the Fryeburg New Church, resides in Fryeburg, Maine.

Fall Schedule Takes Shape At the Central Office

The Fall schedule of committee and board meetings is already rather full at this pre-Labor Day writing. Use of the Central Office facilities begins on Thursday, September 6 with the Executive Committee of the General Council and the Ad Hoc Committee's Central Office Evaluation team sharing time during that day and the next. The Executive Committee of the Wayfarers' Chapel meets Sept. 17-19 in Philadelphia at the home of Richard and Corinne Tafel, and the Department of Communication (formerly Dept. of Publication) meets Sept. 27-29, also at the Tafel home in Philadelphia. Classes at the Swedenborg School, meanwhile, begin on Sept. 25 after two full weeks of a first year "intensive" for incoming students, faculty meetings, and the all-school retreat.

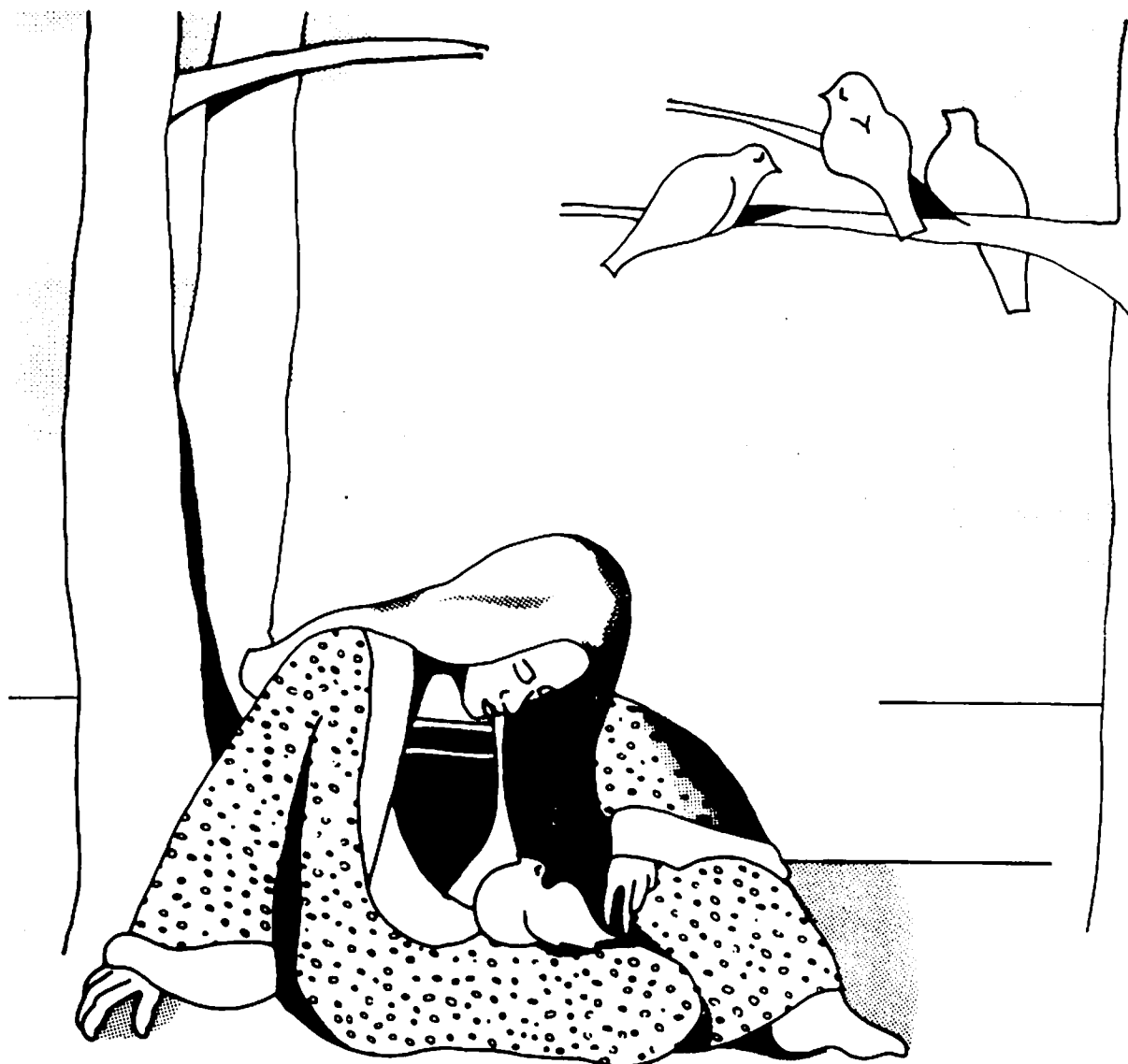
In October, a time of many church association meetings, the Board of Missions will meet at the Swedenborg School from the 4th through 6th. The Trustees of Urbana College will meet at the College from the 25th to 27th.

Looking ahead to November, the Central Office and the SSR will host the SSR's Board of Managers from the 8th through 12th, and the Board of Directors on the 12th. CAM (Committee on Admission to the Ministry) makes its Fall visit from the 7th through 9th, and the Ad Hoc Committee will meet the 8th through 11th at the Craigville Conference Center on Cape Cod.

Although several meetings may not yet be scheduled (or may not have been communicated to the Central Office), it seems the last gathering in 1984 will be the Executive Committee meeting (of General Council) at SSR on Thursday, December 13.

The first, easiest and most obvious assistance toward an individual's private efforts is the simple association with others making the same attempt.

—Anonymous



A Time for Birth

Spiritual Images for Parents-to-be

Created by Rev. Ron and Val Brugler
and Ken Turley

Unit 1 of the Board of Education's Parenting Program, A TIME FOR BIRTH includes a cassette tape of eleven songs and a booklet with corresponding images to aid in the spiritual preparation for birth. The tape and booklet combine to offer resources for guided imagery, and enhance the bonding process between parent and child. While especially designed for parents-to-be, the tape and booklet are enjoyable and inspirational listening and reading for all. Make check payable to General Convention and send to: Rev. Rachel Martin, 12553 Wissant Lane, St. Louis, MO 63146.

Name & Address _____

Number of copies: _____ at \$10. each = _____ plus \$2. postage and handling = Total: _____ Thank you!

The Role of Girls in the Church in South Africa

by Rev. Obed Mooki



Marching into church with their Mite.

Having read with very great interest the article in your pages about Women in the Church here, from the able pen of Jill Kingslake, who spoke with authority, as for more than twelve years she led and guided them, I wonder whether I could follow up that wonderful letter with a brief description of what our girls do in the church.

In every society here there is an association of girls called the Junior League. It is open to every girl from the age of 12 up to about 20 or when they married. At 21 or at marriage they give up membership of the Junior League and join the Women's League, about which Mrs. Kingslake told you.

Before the age of 12 there is yet another movement, called the Swedenborg Stars. Membership of this is open to all girls from the age of 3, although I have seen some two year olds among them!

Where convenient, meetings are held weekly, or bi-weekly, after the morning service. It is presided over by a captain, appointed by the minister's wife. A hymn is followed by the chanting of the Lord's Prayer, after which a short lesson follows. The talk is usually given by the "leader," also appointed by the minister's wife herself. Sometimes the minister is invited to give the talk or to tell a story. Thereafter any of the members who wishes may "say" something, or ask a question on the passage read.

I should explain that for purposes of these meetings both the Swedenborg Stars and Junior Leagues meet jointly.

The climax of these meetings comes at Easter time, when as many as can, assemble at a central place, decided upon at the previous annual assembly. Last year they assembled at Pietermaritzburg in Natal, and this year they gathered at our largest church building in the Western Transvaal, at Leeudoringstad, along the Johannesburg—Kimberly line. Leeudoringstad itself is a small town, with a total population of about 5,300, White and Black. The many farms around, however, make it very important, adding to the total district population which is in the neighborhood of about 7,500.

Delegates to this Junior League convention came from as far as Pietermaritzburg in Natal, from Bloemfontein, Kroonstad and other towns in the Orange Free State, from Mafeking and Kimberley in the Cape, and from other centers in the Northern and Southern Transvaal, such as Pretoria, Krugersdorp and Johannesburg and many others. The total number was less than that attending last year, possibly because there was no "sea" at Leeudoringstad, as at Pietermaritzburg, which is not far from Durban. But 219 girls signed the Roll.

Due to the congestion on the trains, most of the delegates arrived on Good Friday in the afternoon in motor cars, vans, lorries, kombis, tractors, and Mrs. Eulalia

Mooki and about 70 of her girls came in a Coach. The little location was swarming with girls on Easter Saturday, wearing white hats, white blouses and blue collars, the Junior Leagues with a red brooch bearing the name "New Church Junior League," and the younger ones with a green brooch on which appears three stars and the name "Swedenborg Stars."

The singing was beautiful and the marching and processions through the location very glorious!

The business consisted of branch reports by leaders and captains, and the officers, Irene Mokhosi from Petrusburg, President, and Mysteria Mooki from Orlando, Secretary, also presented their reports. The 'Mother' of the whole convention was Mrs. Eulalia Mooki, and she steered the machinery very smoothly indeed. The climax of these conventions is usually the presentation of the money which the girls raise at their home towns and bring forward, and their 'instructions' are, that these monies should be used for the training of ministers! I don't know what I would do if it was not for them!

But I was to see something I had never seen before. Mrs. Mooki had brought along a big ice cream box, on the outside of which was written, in bold letters, "GOD HELP US!" There was no ice cream inside this time. At a given time, the box was put in front of the altar, and a long queue started, led by Mrs. Mooki, and followed by the delegates. Each had a R2 note in her hand, and they were singing a beautiful tune. When they reached the box they dropped the R2 note inside, and passed on! It was a moving scene. I shall not forget a three-year old who, instead of a R2 note, put in a R5 note! She came from Bloemfontein. At the end of it all Mrs. Mooki and the ministers' wives took up the box and brought it to me. "*This is our Mite towards the College building Fund!*" It was staggering! I counted it up. No less than R396!!! "*And a little child shall lead them.*"

Rev. Obed Mooki is the General Superintendent of the New Church of Southern Africa, headquartered at Mooki Memorial College in Orlando, near Johannesburg, South Africa.

Upcoming Religious Programming

The following are a partial listing of programs which may be of interest to people involved in the development of their religious faith. Please note that many affiliates delay these programs and carry them on a different day and time. You always want to check your affiliate for their plans on the programs. If you would like your local affiliate to run more religious programs of a stimulating nature, you might want to call or write to them letting them know your preferences.

September 16, A Holy Alliance, Part II: Devotion and Diversity.

How students of Graduate Theological Union reach out of their ecumenical learning situation to cope with working and living in the inner city is the focal question of Part II of **Seminary Training**. Dr. Robert McAfee Brown of the Network Center for the Study of Christian Ministries and teacher at the Pacific School of Religion, and Rev. Glenda Hope, Director of San Francisco Network Ministries, examine student field work in San Francisco.

September 30, Television and the Churches

Whether or not religious television ministries lure members and money away from local churches was one key question to be answered by a Gallup and Annenberg research project now completed. An unprecedented mix of 39 mainline Protestant and Catholic and evangelical groups sponsored the study to get the facts.

Reviewing the main findings and debating implications for the churches are:

- Dr. M.G. (Pat) Robertson, president of the Christian Broadcasting Network and host of the "700 Club."
 - Dr. William Fore, head of communication for the National Council of Churches.
 - William Thorn, journalism professor at Marquette University and the executive director of the Institute for Catholic Press.
 - Marjorie Hyer, religion reporter for the "Washington Post."
 - Dr. George Gerbner, dean of the Annenberg School of Communication of the University of Pennsylvania.
- NBC News Correspondent Edwin Newman will be moderator of the show.
- a National Council of Churches program

WOMEN COMMUNICATING

The Ribbon

For those of you who did not get your "ribbons" completed for the 1984 Convention, but still wish to participate, we are told you may contact the Church Women United representative in your community to see where you should send your completed ribbon.

As published last spring, ribbon segments are to be made of muslin or other sturdy fabric, double thickness, 18" x 36" after hemming. Stick 2" borders on all sides. Embroider, quilt, applique, draw or paint your own personal Peace message in the center. Put your name, town and state on one of the 36" hems.

Visit of the Christian Leaders of the Soviet Union

Thursday, May 10th, was our only opportunity, and that for only two hours, to meet with the Exchnage Delegation of the Christian Leaders of the Soviet Union, hosted by the Southern California Ecumenical Council, and held at the First American Methodist Episcopal Church on South Harvard in Los Angeles.

Our visitors were part of a twenty-member delegation sponsored by the National Council of Churches, through its U.S. - USSR Church Relations Office. This is the first of a five-part exchange program to include a visit by nearly 300 U.S. Christians to the Soviet Union in June, another in October, and return visits in 1985.

The four who came to us were leaders of Christian Baptist, Russian Orthodox and Armenian Churches and the editor of the Moscow Journal of the Russian Orthodox Church. There was also a visitor from East Germany. Each delegate was allotted five minutes to speak to us, one of whom, who spoke no English, gave us a Russian rendition of the Lord's Prayer.

Alexi Bickov told us how sorry they were about the breakdown over the Olympics, and the failure in peace negotiations. He told us that they had been "guaranteed freedom of conscience." Religion is tolerated, but no more than that. The only way the Good News spreads at all is quietly, by word of mouth on a person-to-person basis.

Peter Zimmerman from East Berlin spoke about the recent influx of outside influences into their area and the effects this might have in the future.

One thing that impressed me was that due to the State's provision of people's basic needs - jobs, hospital, and health services, life-long education, etc., - there is no necessity to help to provide for these things, no social work or funding by the churches. Therefore, the Church's only reason for existence is to be a place for worship - not for social action. In fact, they compared the differences in the Soviet and United States churches as the difference between Mary and Martha in the Bible. I thought this a very apt description. Mary worships at Jesus' feet and Martha is much harrassed with "busyness." Maybe a combination of the two attitudes is the solution.

We were glad to hear that the churches, and many of the people, were very active in peace movements, in freezing armaments, and banning nuclear weapons. Some of you may remember learning about this last November in the reports given us by our Ecumenical Action Leader, Lois Hamer, in telling us of her visit to the Soviet Union.

This short report will let you know a little about our visitors.

Winifred Armstrong,
Denominational Representative
New Jerusalem Church, Los Angeles
Member of C.W.U. Los Angeles Unit

Alliance Worship Service, Convention 1984

Celebrating the Life of Regeneration

Reader:

LET US CELEBRATE LIFE!
LET US CELEBRATE THE LIFE OF REGENERATION!
CELEBRATE OUR NEW STATE OF LIFE
OUR NEW IDEAS

OUR ABILITY TO CAPTURE PRECIOUS MOMENTS

to discover "bright crystals of delight hidden in somber circumstances and irksome tasks" (Helen Keller) . . . to treasure remains in our hearts . . . to nourish tender young sprouts . . . to think on these things.

All:

LET US CELEBRATE THE CHURCH . . . for the times when we can be together . . . for the opportunity to study and worship . . . to sing and dance . . . to have parties and balloons and little children . . . for ice cream . . . and lemonade . . . for music and laughter . . . and for our doctrine that allows us to let go of the idea that God is somber and stern and always says "Sh-h-h."

Reader:

LET'S CELEBRATE LOVE . . . ALL KINDS OF LOVE . . . LOVE FOR LIFE . . . for blazing sun and drenching rain . . . for roaring waves and crashing thunder . . . for moonlit nights and violins . . . LOVE FOR EACH OTHER . . . for moments when we looked into the heart of a friend, shared a smile or a tear . . . moments when a kind word was honestly spoken . . . when the YOU in life was more important than the I . . . the moment a child said "Mommy, I love you" . . . the special love that lets a dog wag its tail or a cat purr as it snoozes on the couch. And let's CELEBRATE THE LOVE THAT GIVES TIME . . . time to the church . . . to the committee that makes us give of ourselves even more than we want to. And let's CELEBRATE THE SPECIAL, CONJUGIAL LOVE . . . the ideal that gives us "innocence, peace, tranquility, inmost friendship, full confidence and mutual desire of heart and mind to do each other every good." (Swedenborg, *Marital Love*, 180

Reader:

LET'S CELEBRATE WISDOM . . . that perfect order of mind and heart to experience life . . . to be humble and simple . . . pure and happy and innocent . . . to grasp the reality and wonder of life . . . to enjoy the homely and unspectacular . . . to make things fresh and new . . . that precious gift from heaven to look beyond the frustrations to the joys . . . find ways to receive heaven while here in this world . . . ways to nourish the soul, not just the body . . . ways to escape boredom. Let's celebrate the people who are wise and break up the meaningless routine, who aren't afraid to feel, who refuse to "play the game" . . . who don't have time for hangups . . . who LIVE WHAT IS TRUE AND GOOD!

All:

LET'S CELEBRATE USE . . . the ability to work with patient hands to make dreams come true . . . to want to serve . . . to *want* to help . . . to find true happiness by doing . . . to desire to accomplish what *another* wants, not necessarily what *we* want. LET'S CELEBRATE WILLING HEARTS AND HANDS for the life of the church depends on them.

All:

LET'S CELEBRATE . . . LET'S CELEBRATE REGENERATION . . . GOD IS ALIVE AND WELL AND HIS SPIRIT IS WITH US ALL! FOREVER!!!

Carole Rienstra
Religious Chairwoman



Elizabeth Gutfeldt providing music for the Alliance "Happy Hour."



Our Treasurer, Ola-Mae Wheaton and our Secretary Nina Tafel sharing a joke.

Alliance Pins and Tie Tacks

For those of you who are interested in purchasing Alliance Pins or Tie Tacks, you may order them from our Alliance Treasurer, Ola-Mae Wheaton, H.G.R. Box 227, Ctr. Conway, N.H. 03813. The pins are \$5.00 and the tie tacks are \$4.00 plus .75 for handling and postage.

Officers of the Alliance of New Church Women

President:	Margaret Ball
Vice President:	Mary Ebel
2nd Vice President	Betty Jean Neuenfeldt
Secretary	Nina Tafel
Treasurer	Ola-Mae Wheaton
Mite Box	Mindy Jester
Round Robin	Katherine Swiger
Publication	Annella Smith
	Bertha Berran
	Carole Rienstra

Religious Inspiration
Nominating

Committee:

Martha Mason (1985), Polly Baxter (1986)
Marian Mull (1987), Betty Jean Neuenfeldt (1988),
Muriel Bennett (1989).

Total U.S. Church Membership Up

U.S. church membership continued to grow in 1982, with the Roman Catholic Church, Southern Baptist Convention and Assemblies of God among groups showing the greatest gains and mainline churches suffering only small, if any, losses, according to statistics in the newly published Yearbook of American and Canadian Churches 1984.

The Episcopal Church reported a nearly 1 percent gain in new members, with a number of smaller conservative churches also showing consistent gains. The Lutheran Church in America also showed a gain in its membership total.

This overall slowing of membership losses in mainline churches—which have lost literally millions of members since the mid-1960s—offers “some signs that we may be approaching a turning point, but it hasn’t come yet,” said Yearbook editor Constant H. Jacquet, staff associate in the Office of Research, Evaluation and Planning of the National Council of Churches.

The 1982 membership figures, the most recent ones available from the participating

churches, show that the churches’ collective membership increased by 0.83 percent in 1982, with a net 1,150,445 new members added for a total collective membership of 139,603,059. The national population growth was estimated at 1 percent in 1982. Church membership as a percentage of the U.S. population declined from 59.7 percent in 1981 to 59.6 percent in 1982.

Jacquet said he believes that higher birth-rates and evangelization account for most of the larger gains and that in the Roman Catholic Church, immigration plays a part. He noted further that while theologically conservative churches are among the fastest growing, “there are some signs their growth rate is slowing.”

The 1984 Yearbook also includes special articles on “Religion in Canada: Findings from the 1981 Census,” “What Hath the 1970s Wrought?: Religion in America,” and on clergy salaries.

The paperbound Yearbook of American and Canadian Churches 1984 is available for \$17.95 at local bookstores or from Abingdon Press, 201 Eighth Ave., S., Nashville, TN 37202.

THANK YOU

The Messenger receives contributions from time to time from people who wish to support the work of our church through these pages. Our heartfelt thanks go to the following: Ruth Abaecherli, Cincinnati; Emma and Philip Alden, Lititz, Pa.; Jean L. Allan, Stamford, Ct.; Eleanor S. Allen, Yucaipa, Calif.; Mildred Berger, San Pedro, Calif.; Ralph Bishop, San Francisco; Eunice M. Blackmer, Santa Monica, Calif.; Jo Cowern, St. Paul, Minn.; Detroit Society; Marlene Early, Oak Harbor, Wash.; Margherita Faulkner, West Lafayette, Ind.; Giorgio E. Ferrari, Italy; Lucile Flagg, Elmwood, Mass.; Richard A. Foster, West Germany; Fryeburg New Church; Janet Hewlett, London; Aylmer S. Kempton, Melrose, Mass.; Olive H. Larson,

Gwynedd, Pa.; Pauline Lawrence, Lisbon Falls, Maine; Loie Marchant, Lakeland, Fla.; Alice Memmott, Wilmette, Ill.; Therese (Donna) Mumm, Belgium; Elizabeth M. Munger, Michigan City, Ind.; Mr. and Mrs. Ronald Strath, Oyster Bay, N.Y.; Margaret Van Boven, Berkeley, Calif.; Alice Vigerstad, Orange, N.J.; Cornelius Zacharias, Victoria, British Columbia.

NOTICE

Please send all future business, subscription, opinion and article correspondence to: The Messenger, 1040 Dautel Rd., Creve Coeur, MO 63146.

CHURCH RECORDS

BAPTISMS

MASON—Ellen Madara Mason, Deborah Alexis Mason and Meryl-Leigh Mason, daughters of Jeff and Carla Mason, were baptized into the Christian faith on July 22, 1984, at the Swedenborg House, Deland, Fla., the Rev. Ernest L. Frederick officiating.

CONFIRMATION

MASON—Carla A. Mason was confirmed into the Christian life and faith on July 22, 1984, at the Swedenborg House, Deland, Fla., the Rev. Ernest L. Frederick officiating.

DEATHS

CONTI—Ruth E. Conti, longtime member of the Elmwood New Church, died on May 18, 1984. Memorial services were held June 10, 1984 at the Elmwood New Church, Elmwood, Mass., the Rev. Arvid Anderson officiating.

FRIEDRICH—Robert A. Friedrich, charter member and former treasurer of the Deland Society, died on June 5, 1984. Memorial services were held in Warner-Robbins, Ga., the Rev. Ernest L. Frederick officiating.

STRATH—Ronald H. Strath, a long time member of the New Jerusalem Churches in Toronto, Can., New Jersey, Boston and New York City died on August 16, 1984 at

the age of 88. He is survived by his wife Winifred, a son, R. Barrie, a daughter, Carol Volpe and two grandchildren, Christopher and Karen Volpe. A memorial service will be held at The New Church in New York City, the Rev. Clayton Priestral officiating.

ADDRESSES

REV. ERNEST O. MARTIN AND DR. PERRY MARTIN have moved to Wilmington, Del., where Rev. Martin will be beginning a one-year interim ministry at the Church of the New Jerusalem in downtown Philadelphia and Dr. Martin will be counseling at the Tressler Center in Wilmington. Their new address is: 714 Ashford Rd., Wilmington, Del. 19803.

THE REVS. SUSAN TURLEY-MOORE AND JAIKOO LEE have left their parishes in Portland, Maine and Philadelphia, respectively, and have joined the ministerial team at Wayfarers' Chapel, effective August 1st. The Turley-Moores' new address is: 3636 S. Meyler, San Pedro, Calif. 90731. The Lees will be residing at: 3627 S. Cabrillo Ave., San Pedro, Calif. 90731.

General Convention's new Recording Secretary, **MRS. DOROTHY deB. YOUNG** will receive all necessary correspondence at 88 Turnpike St., So. Easton, Mass. 02375. Tel: 617-238-6564

LETTERS

Beat Goes On

Dear Editor,

One of the highlights of Convention this summer was the Regenerative Spirit of music and dance, provided most aptly by those multi-talented seminarians at the Swedenborg School of Religion. It was an inspiration to behold the kinetic energy and spirit of the Lord of the Dance as we all sang and danced our way through and out of Convention's opening worship service.

I especially appreciated the dynamic musical energy and talents of the one-and-only Muff Worden, who, as choir director, soloist and *molto humeroso*, greatly generated the atmosphere of Convention this year.

And it was a particular treat to finally hear and purchase the long-awaited musical tape and devotional booklet created for The Infant Program—*A Time for Birth*. The results demonstrate the high quality of talent and love which went into its own creation and birth. I have found, in listening to the tape over and over, that it is not only well-suited for expectant mothers and their unborn child, but as inspirational music for our family's weekly devotion it is quite excellent.

Taro Bilbo Starbuck
Olympia, Wash.

Position Open

Dear Editor,

We at the Almont New Church Assembly would like it to be known that we are looking for a retired or semi-retired Caretaker for our year-round retreat center and summer camp. We are located in a lovely rural setting one hour from Detroit. General maintenance and lawn and grounds care skills are necessary for employment at this Swedenborgian facility.

Housing is provided, and there is additional compensation available for camp and retreat housekeeping duties. Let us know if you're interested.

Marjory Shelley, President
125 Reynick
Saginaw, Mich. 48602

Service

Dear Editor,

I have just received and read the 1983 Annual Report of Church World Service, and wish to quote a few lines from the Introduction, by Paul F. McCleary: "Taking on life in its wholeness... God affirmed humanity and enhanced its value... Our own life and service to life take on an incarnational dimension because God was clothed in human form... The global network of Church World Service draws its vision, its strength and its courage from the Christian gospel."

All of our efforts to relieve human suffering and to reduce the complex cause of human distress are based on our belief in the incarnation. The Word became flesh and lived among us... God was in Christ reconciling the world and entrusting to us a ministry of reconciliation. We believe that in Jesus God affirmed humanity and enhanced the value of every person."

Then on page 9: "Like the work of Church World Service around the globe, this operational style reflects the agency's theological conviction that God entered human history in Christ"... Such statements show the progress being made by the Lord in the Christian churches of today.

Alice Van Boven
Redlands, Calif.

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in the United States of America
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