

THE MESSENGER

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APRIL 1985



FROM THE EDITOR

This April issue concludes the three-month symposium on "What the New Church Might Be Doing In The New Age." The Revs. Eric Allison, Horand Gutfeldt and Yuzo Noda weigh-in their views on the state of the church today. All three minister to congregations on different continents.

The Rev. Allison, in Canada, has long been an advocate of innovation in ministry to meet the spiritual need of a new generation of seekers. Serving on a team ministry with the Rev. Paul Zacharias in the mid-sized metropolitan area of Kitchener-Waterloo in southern Ontario, Rev. Allison has helped devise one of our most assertive and progressive ministries anywhere in Convention. His somewhat painfully honest assessment of the Swedenborgian Church is a necessary first step to forging a significantly new direction in ministry. But the team in Kitchener does not just sit back on their criticisms—they do something about it!

The Rev. Yuzo Noda has put together a ministry program that is often pointed to by self-proclaimed adherents of the New Age as being one of the truly successful attempts in innovative spiritual development: one that is at once both modern and founded on essential Swedenborgian principles. To fully capture the flavor of Rev. Noda's ministry, however, you might need to travel to Tokyo and discover it for yourself!

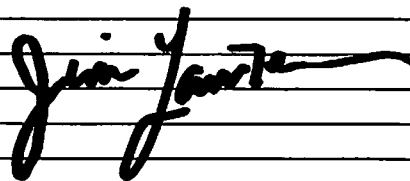
The Rev. Horand Gutfeldt presides over an alternative-style ministry in the Berkeley, California area that makes little pretense at being traditional. Combining a scholarly background with many years of creative struggle in parish ministry, Rev. Gutfeldt shares with us his vision of how the New Age and the "New Church" (the Swedenborgian Church) might overlap more fully. I thank all three of these

dedicated ministers for their contribution to our forum.

Interestingly, I received, unbidden, an article by the Rev. Ronald Brugler, who happens to be spearheading one of the boldest and most innovative programs in Convention. Yielding to cosmic serendipity, I add his piece relating their exciting experience in rural Michigan of creating a year-round growth and retreat center out of a summer camp, while retaining the summer camp as the very heart of the program.

I shall close by passing on a challenge put to me by one of our readers. She wonders why there isn't more in *The Messenger* on the salient social issues of the day, which she suggests are abortion, test-tube babies, Ethiopia, the Moral Majority movement, among others. I wonder, too. Any takers out there? What is your "Swedenborgian" perspective on some of these matters? ☐

Wishing you the most glorious of Easters,



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Jim Lawrence, Editor
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Paula Sonia Bairos, Typesetter

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A New Age Church?

Eric Allison

Although the term "New Age" is used by many different people to cover a large variety of ideas and life styles, it is, indeed, a special term for Swedenborgians. We like to believe that Swedenborg's writings are the original "New Age Doctrines." We somehow think that we have more of a claim to "New Age" than anyone else. Clearly, the reason we consider New Age to be uniquely Swedenborgian is because we are the only Christian Church which believes in a spiritual second coming of Jesus Christ. In a section of our Book of Worship entitled "Concerning the Faith and Aims of the New Church," we find the following statement: "The New Church regards as tokens of His (Jesus Christ's) second coming the burst of scientific development, the rise of the spirit of inquiry, the progress toward political and intellectual freedoms and the deepening sense of national and international responsibility which have characterized the last century and a half." The name "New Church" was chosen because there was a strong belief that by spreading the teachings of Swedenborg's writings we were helping to usher in "The New Age" and doing our part to fulfill the prophecy "I will make all things new." However, the fact is that the New Age is the Lord's—not ours. It will continue to happen whether or not the Swedenborgian Church exists.

The Lord's second coming is transforming all the world's religions and the secular world as well. We cannot be so bold as think that we have the responsibility of letting the world know that a New Age is unfolding. It will happen with us or without us. Our responsibility is to try to keep pace with it.

From my observations of the various brands of the New Church in Australia, Great Britain, New Zealand, and North America, I have concluded that, for the most part, we are not a "New Age" church. Obviously the doctrines are what makes us unique. It is encouraging that even after two hundred years the doctrines are still bold and provocative for much of the Christian world, and refreshing to many other religions that have been seeking to be accepted by Christianity. While these facts are the primary advantage we have for mak-

ing our church grow into something vital and alive, we remain virtually unknown, because we have taken on the very forms and structures of the churches we rebelled against. Not only our worship service, but nearly all aspects of the church programs imitate other churches. It is as if we have tried to become externally normal by the standards of the Old Church and have become so normal that we are sometimes boring and not NEW at all. The New Church, like the Old Church, has allowed itself to be compromised and seduced by the values and forms of the culture. We have become more an extension of the culture rather than a reflection of the doctrines.

My criticisms should not sound unfamiliar as most of these things have been said before many times by many people. We are all aware that there are people in Convention and in Conference who are endeavouring to transform themselves, their churches and the Church as a whole into a truly New Age Church. A few steps have been taken that are movement toward a New Age Church. Here, I will give some examples on the Convention level. The Ad Hoc Committee is working toward the establishment of a more flexible structure that will encourage creativity, special projects, and new styles of ministry by individuals and groups. The new Book of Worship has a freer style than the old and seems to make the worship service less rigid and old fashioned. The very spirit of the Annual Convention during the last several years has become more free, open, loving, and expressive. The Pre-Convention Conference offers people an opportunity to combine the knowledge and techniques of New Age personal growth movements with our New Church doctrines. This facilitates the regeneration process in a way that people simply cannot do on their own and usually do not do in their local churches. The S.N.A.P. program, workshops, retreats, and other similar activities are indications of the tiny steps we have taken toward becoming a New Age Church.

On local levels, progress is being made in some of our churches. Each year at Convention I hear of a variety of successful new achievements that are taking place. It is a

I have concluded that, for the most part, we are not a "New Age" church.

source of encouragement for us all to know that we are making some headway. At the Church of the Good Shepherd in Kitchener, Ontario, we have tried many different approaches; some have been successful.

So often I have heard people talking about how our church needs to grow, but they do little or nothing to make it happen. There is often no money budgeted for outreach and no meetings held to come up with ideas and strategies for action.

In Kitchener we formed an Outreach Committee and budgeted over one thousand dollars per year to spend on outreach. We have sponsored several lectures at the Church on New Age topics or current issues, so that we might build a reputation of being a progressive church. The speakers were always well known. Advertising includes notices on T.V., radio, newspaper, and

film "Swedenborg: the Man Who Had to Know," which was followed by a half hour live phone-in, where Paul and I responded to questions.

Getting new members is important, especially so for those churches which are facing the possibility of closing. What is infinitely more important however is having the people feel welcome. We must invite and encourage them to take part in the running of the church, and we must sponsor a program of enough diversity and quality that they will want to stay. If all that a church has is a traditional worship service and there is *resistance* to having anything else, then most inquiring new people will walk out the door after church and will never be seen again.

The program at the Church of the Good Shepherd includes a variety of groups for people of different ages which, for the most

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posters (professionally done).

One such project, "First Steps in Personal Transformation," was a four-part series in which Paul Zacharias and I were leaders. This experiential workshop was, in effect, a regeneration growth group.

We started a chapter of THEOS (They Help Each Other Spiritually), a self-help group for widows and widowers that meets monthly. A feature article on the religion page of the Kitchener newspaper helped the group to grow and served notice to the community that we were offering an emotional and spiritual support system for bereaved people.

Three years ago we were fortunate to have a large news story about our intention to begin a wedding ministry. In 1984 we had 82 weddings. We requested that all couples attend church at least once before their wedding. The result has been that several couples have joined the church each year. At our first annual marriage reaffirmation service the church was nearly filled.

We have used available free air time on cable T.V. as often as three times a year, giving us as much as nine hours on the air. One T.V. broadcast included a showing of the

part, determine their own structure and purpose, while the clergy may or may not participate. There are also, from time to time, groups for spiritual growth, prayer, Bible study, healing, etc. Church socials are held to build a greater sense of a joyous spiritual community and to help integrate new people. The Sunday worship service varies from traditional to modern, and members of the congregation are often included in the leadership of the service. Even though the sermons are based upon New Church doctrine, they tend to be personal and practical rather than intellectual. There has been a considerable increase in the size of the congregation during the last few years. Efforts toward outreach have slowed down and more energy is being applied toward consolidating the gains we have made so that a family feeling may be maintained.

Although I feel very happy and hopeful about the future of the Church of the Good Shepherd, I am not holding it up as a model, nor do I feel that it is a New Age Church. We have made only a few small steps toward becoming a truly New Age Church. Whether or not this will come to pass is not the decision of the minister. It must instead be the desire of the congregation. A congregation has to be New Age in thought and spirit; the minister is simply a facilitator who aids them in applying their faith in tangible ways.

To close I will share what I envision to be the spirit and program of a New Age Church. It is a group whose faith in God makes them more inclusive than exclusive.

They would feel set free, not only by what the church teaches, but by how those teachings and the church group itself make each person feel about her/himself. The members of the congregation are not afraid to share their deepest feelings with each other. The church would be everything that an ideal family should be—and even more. There is no hesitation in making the church the centre of their lives. It is their spiritual home. There is a willingness to let each other take positions of leadership and there is no effort made by individuals to hang onto power. Prayer and healing groups are an integral part of church life. Creativity and experimentation are encouraged in the wor-

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ship experience and in all parts of the program. There is a sensitive effort to conserve what is important for those who find meaning in traditional forms and a willingness (for those who appreciate tradition) to embrace what is new.

A central theme of the church program would be that Faith in God is felt and expressed spiritually, psychologically, and physically. The facilitating of harmony within and among these three aspects would be crucial. If I were starting from scratch, I would choose either a neighbourhood in a city, or a small city that I had learned from intuition and research was ripe for a New Age Church. Using the tried-and-true method of knocking on doors, I would meet the people and determine if there were enough people who genuinely wanted to work together in the building of a New Age Church.

This is it: buy, rent, or build a centrally located building with ample parking. Construct an attractive store front. Within the building would be a natural food store, a natural food cafe, a New Age bookstore that carried books not found in most stores, as well as the regular best sellers. In another section of the building would be a large

multi-purpose room that could be used for dinners, plays, films, lectures, and worship. The room should be comfortable, practical, and attractive. Also in the building would be a quiet room or meditation room, offices for counseling, homeopathic medicine, massage, acupuncture, a medical doctor, etc., and all would be committed to working together.

There are many ideas and models of what a New Age Church could be like. There is no ONE way for a New Age Church. I have shared with you some of my vision, and I know that you will have your own vision that will probably be much different from mine. What is most important is that what we want to build is built for service to the Lord. □



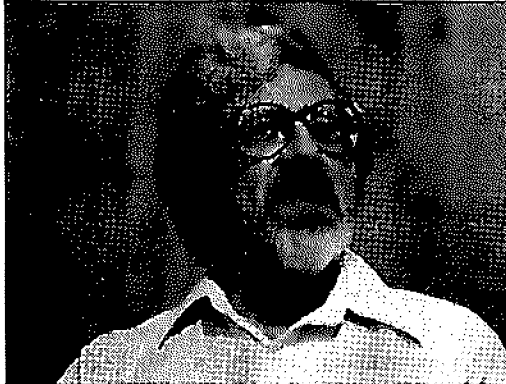
Rev. Eric Allison held a pastorate in LaPorte, Indiana before joining the staff of the Church of the Good Shepherd in Kitchener, Ontario.

A Vision Of The New Church

Horand K. Gutfeldt

This world is storming ahead with new movements and ideas that are unfolding all around us. Is our church falling behind, or are we among the leaders in one way or another? There must be new dimensions for us to discover; we may be in need of a radical

rethinking concerning the task, function and priorities of our church - a project that has been started in a courageous way by the Ad Hoc Committee. Reflecting about this, a vision appeared before my spiritual eye:



Rev. Horand K. Gutfeldt, Ph.D.

Can we foster islands of heaven among us now?

Where in our churches can we observe the insights and depth of love that we see shining from every page of Swedenborg? We have in our hands the tools for making a new world, a "new heaven and a new earth." The basic guidelines are before us, yet they are still in terms that render them hard to grasp in their full implications. All utopias of the past started with the premise that you have to create some special kind of setting. From the light uncovered by Swedenborg however, we know that the beginning has to be made with transformation of the individual. "The cry for a golden age is only a cry for golden men," recognized Thoreau, stimulated by the Nordic seer. Up to now, we have had only a selection of our church members, who truly have found the grace to become open to the Lord's spirit, and have recognized the practical path to beautiful maturity and capacities of love. Wherever such advancement can be realized in wider circles, it creates an environment of trust in the Lord and in each other, of understanding and reliability, of readiness to share and to give every imaginable help to each other.

Heaven is at our fingertips - we have to realize that this takes not only some comprehension in the mind, but a thorough transformation of values, attitudes and habits. What in old times once was called the "via mystica," the spiritual road of the soul to the ascent through the spheres, now

becomes accessible to every one who sincerely searches for it. Certainly, we need some introspection, along with much ex-

perimentation and study. Beginnings have been made in the "Split Mountain Camp," as well as by the Swedenborgian New Age Pioneers.

The tremendous efforts made through the centuries by the monks in various religions have resulted in observations that can now be evaluated in the new light. The unbelievable achievements of practitioners of the Yoga way are similarly evaluated. The true way of regeneration however is by far not as difficult as those; it can lead faster to much greater results, though a few features are in common.

All the words of our language at the present time are too pale to describe what Swedenborg is laying before us: an outline of a new humanity! We can dive into a real fountain of youth, regardless of physical age, emerging free of evils and weaknesses and finding spiritual energies of which nobody has ever dared to dream.

We all have traumas of the past to overcome; we all need healing of memories; and we all can enlist the help of the Lord to learn to forgive profoundly and to channel anger into useful energy instead of destruction. As in physical birth, rebirth needs the help of those with experience in this field, and there are countless methods and approaches surfacing in our new age that are only waiting to be included in a vision of great spiritual goals.

It has been demonstrated that it is possible to advance much further than most people believe. Alone, we many often be misled or go off in tangents, but we can learn interaction and communication in those fields that are hardly touched in traditional congregational settings. We need to be aware that the civilization around us shows increasing signs of corruption and rottenness, of deception and decline, and our churches have become infested with these phenomena as well: What emerges is a need to rethink, as well as to test, the real values and ethical and moral implications that need to be distilled from our teachings.

A New Ethics

It will be necessary to rethink and organize the guidelines that emerge for different stages of development from our heritage. A special opportunity is present now in the field of tension between the "New Morality," with its many flaws, and attitudes promoted by the "moral majority," equally full of superficial elements and deceptions. We can understand the Commandments of the Bible in their full potential, not as a set of impossible demands producing sterile guilt feelings. In their deeper meanings, they present a path of love and closeness to God, designed to promote true joy and lasting happiness. New dimensions of sensitivity, love and empathy can be tapped. We discover anew the essence of the Golden Rule, of putting ourselves into the shoes of others.

Deeper Knowledge of Ourselves

In order to truly love, we need a deeper understanding and view of ourselves, of the many unknown and "subconscious" elements in us. Such a self-examination is only reached by a few. This state of consciousness becomes increasingly free of the burdens of guilt, and pride. It increases in awareness of the flux and presence of the Lord. It is oversimplified to decry selfishness: self-assertion is often absolutely necessary. What our teachings direct us to is a wholeness, a set of patterns of behavior that give the self a proper place, in serving and searching for the greater goals of love and usefulness.

Blind Alleys of the Past

In the age behind us, it was willpower and duty that were extolled to heaven, and the way to reach them was and is taught as obedience and self-sacrifice. What is needed for the New Age is to go beyond the spiritual in discovering the celestial element of individual and collective creativity under the guidance of the Lord, looking to Him in

meditation and prayer - not tight-lipped acrobatics of anxious efforts.

Another sticky belief is often implied: it is mainly the work of our organizations, on constitutions and bylaws that will set up perfect patterns of growth for the church. Time has shown everywhere that this is a fallacy. There is need for more informal settings that can be promoted to increase mutual encouragement by profound sharing. Very easily, form is mistaken for substance as first priority. Almost any organizational form will work, if the prevailing feeling is sensitive and full of loving concern for the rights and needs of each other. Why waste too much time for the machinery - let us get open to the channels of the energy that empowers it all, which has its source in God.

It is also believed that better forms of worship, be it Sunday services, prayer, study etc. should be the central issue. This is a fallacy - our teachings give much more importance to regeneration than to worship, seeing the latter as the consequence of regeneration. Who has not observed individuals who have regularly attended worship services all their lives - maybe some pillars of the church - who in reality stand in the way of all real progress. It is of no use only to know our teachings inside out: it is these very teachings that warn of memory-knowledge! How easily knowledge becomes an instrument of influence-peddling. Our churches are full of individuals and cliques searching for power, believing themselves to be better or more enlightened. These tendencies have split our church-at-large, as well as driven wedges into many a small group. Unless we discover an awareness of the hidden traps of searching for power, we will disintegrate.

What can be done in Practical Ways?

As a church, we must accumulate experiences and practices for spiritual growth or regeneration. It is hoped that a central place to promote this can be established soon. It is wrong to believe that knowing Swedenborg presents us with all the answers. Our teachings show the way, but it is up to us to work out forms of implementation in concrete situations. Otherwise, all is in vain - more viciously, it leads to pride instead of humility.

We need diaries, journals and reports, which in themselves are excellent means of growth, if properly used. (Swedenborg himself used a spiritual diary.) An accumulation and evaluation of a wide range of individual experiences can become of great value. What is needed now is promoting per-

sonal communication of experiences, a powerful sharing of what it is like to work on becoming led by the Lord. Most present patterns of formal worship are seldom conducive to this. We need to create new forms, as has already been done in growth groups and retreats among our ministers. An atmosphere of sincerity and trust whenever we share needs a special protection.

We need reports about experiences with meditation, on Scripture in the light of the Internal Sense. The way of communication with heaven is through the Word. How can this be made fruitful individually? Great progress has been observed in those groups that made a holy vow to study the Bible regularly in prayer; healings have been reported as consequences of spiritual power unleashed.

Another area for research is preparation for the relationships that might lead to marriage. We have little help yet to create early a sensitivity for the joys of that real love, which is so extolled in our teachings. If one could devise ways to awaken a clearer recognition of growth potential, it would avoid much heartbreak and divorces.

We need training for a "spiritual elite," for all who want to make concrete progress in spiritual growth, a new level of the Leadership Training, as this was dreamt of by the originators of this program in our church. If

all these and many other paths can be brought together, a momentum will be generated, and the Lord will open the gates. Nothing will be able to stop the new living truths for which the world is thirsting.

To discover the will of God for every one at each moment deep in our hearts—this is the goal. Let true maturity begin with us; let us fight for substance, then the new wine will find the appropriate bottles. If we have nothing of our own experience to show, we will lose what little we have, but if we promote real maturity and growth in love and truth, the world will be changed.

The new age begins with us. We are called upon to open the gates of pearl—first in our own souls, and then the light will shine out into the world. Forms of church organizations will then evolve that promote growth, instead of standing in the way. The way to start is not with glittering generalities, but in finding concrete and simple ways to cooperate with the Lord, who is waiting at the door He may enter and give us a new heart—a heart powerful with love. □

Rev. Horand K. Gutfeldt, Ph.D., formerly professor of Psychology at Urbana University, Urbana, Ohio, ministers to the Swedenborgian community church in El Cerrito, California.

Japanese Ministry Sees New Horizon

Yuzo Noda

I chose to implement three concurrent tributaries of ministry, which would flow together into one river.

It was revealed to Emanuel Swedenborg 230 years ago that humanity was then entering a great transitional period, crossing the threshold into a new area. The present cycle was coming to an end and would be replaced by a new one—by the New Church.

Just before the Christmas of 1973, I returned to Tokyo after several years of study in Boston. At that time, an emerging wave of "new age" consciousness was rising in Japan, though it was not nearly so evident as in certain portions of the United States.

Though sent by the Board of Missions of the Swedenborgian Church and invited by the Tokyo New Church, both of which were representative of the more traditional approach to religion, I felt the call to respond to the new age trends and attempt a ministry somewhat different from the traditional.

After prolonged and careful consideration

of many factors, I chose to implement three concurrent tributaries of ministry, which would flow together into one river. To do this, I needed to begin the Horizon Counseling Center to function along with the Tokyo New Church. The three tributaries are: 1) a counseling ministry, focusing on individual and group counseling, theme-oriented group workshops, and seminars with renowned experts (including Dr. E. Reich, the daughter of Wilhelm Reich; Dr. F. English, an international leader in Transactional Analysis; and Dr. H. Freedman, well-known Gestalt therapist); 2) an educational ministry, which I perform through teaching at various colleges; and 3) a traditional parish ministry, offering the traditional Sunday morning worship service, Sunday School and Swedenborg study groups.

It is not only Swedenborgians who are

claiming that we are now in the very "Hinge of History." People in medicine, sociology, psychology, economics, education, industry and even religion are declaring the same awareness. Needless to say, the implications of this historical condition are dramatic for the Swedenborgian Church.

For instance, the questions of the function of the church in this time—the question of

The new view lifts up the image of the church residing inside people, much as Swedenborg suggested long ago. People involved in the life and death of their daily living comprise the new church.

ministry in the "Hinge of History"—has become prominent in recent discussions in the Swedenborgian Church concerning the nature of the church. What is the new age, anyway? How can we define it meaningfully

Fortunately or unfortunately, I see no authority for answering this question, for even if "the answer" lies in Swedenborg's revelation, or any other divinely-inspired revelator, it would still depend upon the individual person's capacity to perceive and interpret the message. We are still left with human receptivity and faith in our personal relationship with divine influx. That is to say, genuine authority lies within the people. Herein lies the grist for the spiritual crises of modern people: the more we can claim our freedom to discern truths for ourselves, the more responsibility we take on, which is inherently challenging. But in the end, we emerge as more truly spiritual beings.

Therefore, my ministry has focused on personal and spiritual growth (regeneration), undertaken chiefly through a recognition and claiming of freedom in responsibility—humanity as choice-maker. This raises the interesting question: where or what is the real church? For me, the fellowship which arises when people come together to undertake this holy purpose of becoming consciously free and responsible IS the basis for the external church.

If fellowship is the church, then what is the relationship between the fellowship and the groups? The answer is that fellowship arises from groups coming purposefully together, and then, secondly, the fellowship in turn shapes the nature of the groups.

Historically, the Church has been seen as the physical building, the sanctuary, the high-profile minister, and the congregation. These outward aspects, however, have become irrelevant in my ministry. The new

view lifts up the image of the church residing inside people, much as Swedenborg suggested long ago. People involved in the life and death of their daily living comprise the new church.

My trinitarian ministry has had both intense difficulties and remarkable successes. During the first five years, due to the poor condition of the church building and to the gulf in understanding between myself and the members of the church regarding ministry in a new age, the going was slow. At length, however, we overcame those initial difficulties.

Today we seem to have strong momentum; we feel we are entering a wholly new dimension of ministry for the Swedenborgian Church in Japan. Many new people are joining with us in our seminars and workshops, and the Horizon Counseling Center has built up a successful practice.

We are very appreciative of the continuing support from the Board of Missions in America and Canada. A broad diversity exists today within our small international General Convention of Swedenborgian Churches. Together, we make a stronger church—hopefully, a more real church. Let us pray that we aid in the dawning of the new age, the descent of the Holy City New Jerusalem. □

Rev. Yuzo Noda ministers at the Tokyo New Church and is the founder and director of the Horizon Counseling Center, also in Tokyo.



Rev. Yuzo Noda

Almont: Growing In The Right Direction

Ron Brugler

Highway M-53, or Van Dyke Road as it is known locally, is the primary route from Detroit into the farmlands of Michigan's "thumb" region. About thirty miles past the last of the automobile assembly plants, beyond the malls and suburban communities, into an area of apple orchards and cornfields, M-53 makes that incredible transformation from a six-lane highway to a country road.

As M-53 enters the village of Almont a small green sign off to the side of the road rather surprisingly proclaims, "Welcome to Almont: We're Growing In The Right Direction." I'm sure that many a city dweller has gotten a laugh or two from that sign, yet there it stands, unchanging, year after year. The trees behind it grow taller, the field that it stands in bears its harvest, and the trucks, tractors, cars and other machines pass by.

Continue north into town, turn right at the only stoplight and travel east for about four miles past small farms and a sprinkling of newer homes. Off in the distance a cluster of white frame buildings can be seen amid pines and maples. Head towards these buildings, and you will find yourself at another Almont. It is our New Church Assembly, and has been now for close to eighty-five years.

Like the nearby village, we humbly proclaim to be growing in the right direction. Although our growth might not be apparent in an external way, it is indeed present, just as a harvest exists in a growing field.

As evidence of our growth consider, for example that our camp session, the Summer School, up until the mid-1970s had an average daily attendance of approximately seventy campers. The last two years have seen us average almost one hundred and twenty people for the entire two-week session; this figure excludes the middle weekend when attendance often climbs above the one hundred and seventy mark! We have purchased bunk beds for some of our dormitory rooms, doubling their capacity. Our dining room facilities, built for one hundred people, have been expanded into a lounge room, so that we can accommodate more people. Storage rooms have been converted into additional classroom space. Our

situation is almost unheard of within Convention: we have almost reached the point of growing too much!

While growth in attendance is good for our center it presents us with many problems. For example, as Superintendent, how do I tell a child who is arriving unexpectedly for camp that there is simply no more room? (This is something that I have refused to do!) How does a teacher who planned her classes for ten children suddenly cope with twice that many? What is the best way to reorganize a staff and program in light of so many more people? (Our staff has almost doubled in size over a two year period.)

For the Executive Committee of the Assembly our current situation has presented a challenge. We have explored the idea of expanding our facilities, but question the wisdom of assuming such a large debt.

The last two years have seen us average almost one hundred and twenty people for the entire two week sessions; this figure excludes the middle weekend, when attendance often climbs above the one hundred and seventy mark. . . . Our situation is almost unheard of within Convention: we have almost reached the point of growing too much!

We have wrestled with the idea of drawing the line on attendance and posting "Full Camp" signs on our gates. The course we have chosen is to accept the challenge of growth by expanding our programs.

This expansion will include several new camping programs. In 1986 we will be establishing a new children's session. We may also establish a camping program designed for teenagers. We are also studying new camping formats. One idea is to utilize the fact that several of our buildings are now barrier-free and our campus relatively compact. This makes us an almost ideal location for a camping program for handicapped individuals. We are also seeking to develop new camping programs with other religious

groups and agencies. One idea in this category is to develop a camp session for families with a terminally ill member. Here we could combine forces with hospice, medical and social agencies to increase not only use of our facilities, but use of our religious teachings as well.

Yet Almont's growth is not all limited to our summer sessions. In the early 1970s we embarked upon a building and renovation program that enabled us to winterize Heritage Hall, the Chapel and our Dormitory building. This truly gives us the potential of becoming a year-round retreat center. We were also able to purchase a tract of land adjacent to our camp, sell gravel from it, use the money to repay the loan, and get a free lake in the process! Brandau Bay, as our lake is now known, has greatly improved our program. Both children and adults enjoy its



The Almont New Church Assembly decided they needed a lake to round out their recreational offerings.

cool waters on hot summer days, and our lakeside terraces provide an ideal location for outdoor evening worship services.

Almont's creativity does not end with the lake however. Last summer the north side of the lake was a vacant field. As the summer progressed, bulldozers cleared a driveway and site for our new administrator's residence. During a hot day in June a house, donated to the camp by Cynthia James of the Detroit Society, slowly made its way down Cameron Road as workmen carefully cleared away tree limbs over the road. The house was pulled into its proper position and then supported on beams, hoisted about ten feet in the air, and sat there for several weeks while the basement was constructed underneath it. The total project, made possible by a loan from Convention's Building Fund, cost less than one-half what new construction would have been.

Another residence is located to the west of the lake. This is our Caretaker's residence, and enables us to employ a part-time maintenance person in exchange for free

rent. Beyond the Caretaker's residence is a vacant field of eight or so acres. Our house-moving experience has taught us that we could easily move in two or three houses for conversion into a small retirement center. Realizing that other church centers are studying this idea, suffice it to say that it would not surprise me at all to see our retirement center moved in, paid for and occupied within the next five years.

We have several other buildings at Almont that I'll tell you about in order to complete the tour. Sitting in a row along Tubsprings Road are Big House, Little Rec, Craft Cottage and our Music Cabin. Big House and Little Rec, perhaps the oldest of our facilities, house about fifty people in what I'll describe as semi-private rooms. Both offer porches for enjoying summer evenings, and although they are not as modern as Heritage Hall, their open ceilings and antique furniture offer guests a taste of true country living. The Big House living room is in many ways the center of Almont. Its fifteen or so rocking chairs wait to be put in motion, and the wares of A-Mart lure the passersby.

If this is the center of camp, then across the road lies the heart of Almont, our small white chapel. I've often wished that Norman Rockwell had painted a baptism here, for indeed our chapel is an expression of heartland Americana. The simple altar and pipe organ remain pretty much the same as they did one hundred and twenty years ago when the chapel was built. Although pews and red carpeting now greet you as you enter the doors, and even though the chapel itself was moved to a new foundation a few years back, its beauty remains unchanged. To the left of the chapel grows the Franklin Blackmer Memorial Garden, which was designed to reflect an image of the New Jerusalem. It offers a welcome refuge from the noise of camp life. To the right of the chapel is the old foundation, which now serves us well as a fire-pit.

As the heart of camp, the chapel to Almonters is in a very real sense built upon holy ground. While one walks to services each morning and evening there is a bond with the past that leads to the future. Our traditional evening song, "Onward Christian Soldiers," is, to say the least, quite dated. Each year suggestions are offered for a new song, but each year these suggestions die for lack of interest. Traditions at Almont are like breathing. One doesn't stop doing it simply because it's been going on for years! Our services may happen like clockwork, but they are still oftentimes new and creative. If you are fortunate enough to have a year-round perspective of Almont, the varied and

creative use of the chapel would surprise you.

It is to a year-round perspective of Almont that I would now like to turn your attention. This will be of interest to many of you, since growth or retreat centers are being explored as a new form of ministry and outreach. Almont's transition into a year-round center is not a proposal: it is a reality.



The chapel of the Almont New Church Assembly.

It would be an answer to our prayers if we could rely upon thousands of dollars of denominational funding each year, but we know that this is not very realistic. We are looking at other ways for Convention to help foster this new ministry which are in agreement with our new "Statement of Purpose" in the Ad Hoc Committee's proposal.

As Reverend Ernest Martin observed in his recent article, a growth within Convention needs to rely upon denominational use of its facilities. I would take this statement a step further and say that Convention needs to have a *compelling interest* in doing this. Meeting expenses are a given part of our board and committee budgets; when we make use of our own facilities for this purpose, the church receives double benefits from the expenditure. We have provided such centers as the Espousal Center in Massachusetts with much income over the years, which in turn benefits their ministry. There is much to be gained for our own ministries by channeling these funds into our own centers.

Almont is grateful for the fact that Convention is doing this by holding a variety of meetings here this year. In January we hosted three meetings, including the General Council sessions. In March the Board of Education will be meeting here, and as you are aware, this summer we will be hosting the pre-convention sessions, convention outing, and post-convention Leadership

Education Institute and Writers Workshop.

In planning for our transition into a year-round center, however we are aware that this form of support is limited. It does not always benefit a given board to meet in the same location each year, nor do we expect for them to do so. We do hope, however, to get a fair share of this form of denominational support.

Likewise, we are looking to our denomination on a more local level for additional support. We have learned that we can look to members of the Michigan, Ohio and Illinois Associations as a source for participants in our retreats and workshops, but this only for a maximum of three or four times each year. To expect more is unrealistic. The reality is that no matter how much our membership loves the church and teachings, driving a distance to attend a retreat can become tiring, if done too often. Similarly, leadership resources are limited. We do not want our programming goals to become a drain on their time and energies.

In light of these limitations, we are still looking to improve and build upon the support of our membership and regional network. Almont is expanding its service to the Michigan Association in several ways. First, this spring we will be starting the re-establishment of the Almont Society. We will do this by beginning with monthly services. Known as Second Sundays, these services will be held on Sunday evenings, thus offering both the several Swedenborgians who have moved into the area and other interested individuals a second worship experience. Also, this year we sponsored the first annual Christmasfest, which attracted sixty-three people for a day of tree decorating, Christmas Trivial Pursuit, dinner and a beautiful candlelight service. We will host a similar weekend following the Easter Season when we'll sponsor a Passover Weekend, complete with study sessions on the Jewish holiday and traditions, preparation of Jewish foods for a Passover meal, and a Sunday service during which we will learn of the relationship between this holiday and our Christian observance of communion.

Another dimension of growth in service to our region's local churches and associations is with a group known as the Almont Survivors. This teen organization, founded three years ago, now boasts over forty members. The Survivors include members from our churches in Detroit, LaPorte, Urbana, Kitchener, St. Paul, and from throughout Michigan and the Great Lakes region. The Survivors are quite active, both at our summer camp and throughout the year. This year's post-Christmas retreat had

forty-eight people in attendance! Next year we will be opening up additional dormitory space in order to accommodate even more people. This is, indeed, a good situation because it reflects the growth that we are striving for in our new ministry. The Survivors are requesting that we sponsor a spring retreat, and if possible, this will be done.

In being this specific in detailing to you our plans for expanding into a year-round center, I am trying to convey to you one important point: Even though Almont has been in existence for over eighty years, even though our facilities are built and for the most part paid for, and even though we have a support network behind our ministry, the above programs are basically the limit in terms of our in-house programming potential. Even though within the next three years we will be developing new camping programs, and sponsoring up to five or six retreats each year, and be making our facilities available to Convention's boards and committees, this still only accounts for approximately forty percent of a given year! All of these programs combined will generate about an equal percentage of our operating budget.

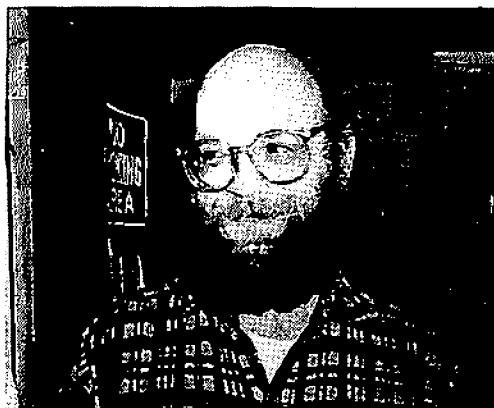
Therefore, in order to succeed in our transformation into a year-round retreat center, Almont will need to rely upon rentals from groups outside of the church for what in reality is a majority of the calendar year. This we intend to do by developing an advertising program that will make interested groups aware of our availability. Success in this area is essential to our venture.

I endorse the growth or retreat center concept. I would not have moved to Almont if this were not the case; however, I have been a part of an Executive Committee that is struggling with the given realities. I sense that Almont's vision has much in common with those who are working on the idea of establishing such a center in the Middle Atlantic area, but from what I have read of their work thus far, I must question the feasibility of a year-round center that intends to rely almost entirely upon Swedenborgian leadership, participation and funding. I know that our successful transformation depends heavily upon support of Convention's membership on its various levels, but I doubt that we could accomplish this were it not for the fact that our program is an outgrowth from a center that is already established. Realism must play a part as we in the church study and explore ways of utilizing our resources.

Realistically, Almont and other existing centers can make the transformation into

year-round Growth Centers. Fortunately, here at Almont, growth is not an issue. It's a reality. We can't help but feel we are growing in the right direction. □

Rev. Ronald Brugler has had pastorates in Cleveland and Pittsburgh, and in addition to being the new full time administrator of the



Almont New Church Assembly in rural Michigan, he is consultant to the Board of Education of the Swedenborgian Church for Sunday School curriculum. He holds an M.Ed. from Boston College.

Swedenborgian Wellness

Dorothy Travers-Davies

This morning I watched a commercial on TV about "simple halitosis." Naturally there was a product involved that would keep your breath clean, just as there are products involved in headache relief, teeth free of caries, upset stomachs, and underarm odors. Does anyone ever sit there and ask what really causes these symptoms? In this continuing series on "Wellness" and the body as a message center, let's look at how many ways the body signals loud and clear that it is toxic.

First, can you envision a body that has no odor? A body so clean that even when it is drenched with sweat it doesn't smell? When there is no need for an underarm deodorant because there is no odor under the arm? When the breath is always sweet naturally? And when the urine and stools are free of smell?

Many people who listen to their bodies, test their bodies, and abide by the information from their bodies enjoy this kind of cleanliness. Of course, if everyone got so "tuned into" their individual bio-chemistry that they didn't need these products, our entire economy would be affected and our health bill nationally would go down. This would be disastrous for many industries as well as for those professions devoted to illness.

The body gets rid of its waste materials through four standard means. The breath, the skin, the urine and the stools. Women of child-bearing years have a monthly cleansing, a biological need since they carry the ongoingness of the race within their systems and provide for the fetus during the gestation period. But all of us need, on a daily basis, to be aware that the body must rid itself of the wastes from the food we eat and from the anabolic and catabolic processes.

Pounds of gas, skin sloughing, and other materials are eliminated from the body daily. When the body doesn't rid itself adequately of these wastes they can accumulate, cause odors, and ultimately stop the glands, systems and avenues of evacuation.

My mother and my grandmother used enemas. As a little girl I was given enemas when I needed them. Care of the bowel was known to be important. The holistic practitioner of today is also aware that bowel management is important.

We eat three times a day. We should evacuate three times a day. But constipation has reached epidemic proportions in today's civilized world. Just read and watch the ads and think about what they represent. First, refined foods don't give enough fiber and roughage. Diets heavy in meats, dairy products and fats take more effort to digest and stay in the system longer.

Second, the attitude and emotional make-up of the individual affects the bowel and its performance. When we program the body to hold in the emotions, one of the first organs to get the message is the bowel. And when the bowel starts to "hold in," we all know the result.

Recent studies in England, reported in *The Lancet* last December, showed that hypnosis can be effective in treating people with bowel problems. And even the American medical establishment has concluded that both physical and mental factors are probably involved in most people who have bowel problems.

Frankly, I write this column with some reservations about whether people really

want to go this far in discussing the toxic system and how it affects daily performance. But I find that I live in a culture singularly preoccupied with labels of symptoms and very little knowledge of causes. Since we are not taught basic physiology and the rudiments of digestion and the metabolic process in our schools, and since we are told to take care of ourselves in a very limited way, (mostly by health rules), I feel that it is time to speak out on some basics that everyone needs to know. It is important because as we grow older and become more susceptible to the symptoms of toxicity, we tend to rely more and more on aids of both the medical and non-medical varieties instead of examining and changing our lifestyles.

A good place to start is to ask oneself, do I live to eat, or eat to live? Do I listen to and pay attention to my physical body? Or do I think that my mind will overcome all problems? Can I bring myself to make changes in my daily routines? Or am I caught in the security of a pattern of content or sameness?

Holistically we should question ourselves about what we eat and how we eat and how we get rid of the wastes. Do we care enough for our physical selves to stimulate the systems through activities? Do we control our thought processes and keep our body chemistries and mind chemistry in balance? And are we teaching our children and our children's children how to relate to their physical selves with joy and understanding? Are we getting the messages our bodies give us? And are we paying any attention to the early signs of toxicity?

Swedenborg wrote and taught about the body and mind interaction more than 260 years ago. He was one of the first truly "holistic" writers of our western civilized world. Shouldn't the church that bears his name and uses his teachings address itself to physical and psychological needs as well as spiritual needs?

I would like some feedback on this. I would appreciate letters or cards, and in future columns I will try to discuss some of the issues that you have on your minds.

Bless you, and good health. ☐

Ad Hoc Committee Report

George F. Dole

We are approaching a critical time for our church. At Geneva Point last year, Convention voted overwhelmingly to approve in substance the recommendations of the Ad Hoc Committee for clarification of priorities and for reorganization on the basis of those priorities. We are committed to a course of action which will be fruitless unless it is entered upon affirmatively and pursued energetically. No amount of careful theorizing, no amount of technical reorganization, will offset the deeper flaw of a lack of commitment. The refocusing of our present energies may help, but the real growth will occur only as those energies increase.

The step immediately before us centers in the substantial amendment of our Constitution and By-Laws to bring into being the system outlined in the last report of the Ad Hoc Committee. The necessary amendments will be presented for discussion at our 1985 session, with the assurance that they are not necessarily in final form. If, as we hope, they are approved in substance, they will be readied for formal presentation at our 1986 session, together with a detailed plan for the transition from our present system of operation.

It is a matter of some regret to the Ad Hoc Committee that the reorganization aspect of its work tends to monopolize the church's attention. It constitutes only one section of our report, and is almost inevitably misunderstood if it is divorced from its larger context. Quite simply, it is the best means we can devise for realizing the objectives that occupied most of the committee's time and that constitute the bulk of its report. Fewer people can handle the administrative tasks fairly only if they have clear criteria for evaluation; only if they operate under priorities which have the considered approval of the church at large. It is our conviction that the proposal as a whole can focus our energies and resources more effectively on the central task of the church, the growth of the Lord's kingdom within and around us, and that this will in turn call forth new energies and resources.

The Ad Hoc Committee submitted to General Council two sets of amendments, one retaining our present system of propor-

tional representation by Associations, and the other instituting direct individual membership in Convention and "universal suffrage"—every member attending a Convention session would be entitled to vote. General Council is recommending the latter option, which the committee saw as desirable but not essential.

We are quite close to "universal suffrage" now. The assignment of delegate quotas is so generous that delegations are rarely filled, and the spectre of "packed meetings" has not emerged. In fact, with the healing of past polarizations and the growth of a sense of unified mission, that spectre has faded noticeably. We would stress, however, that the issue of representation is separable from the rest of the plan, and expect to be guided by Convention's voice in this matter.

The Statement of Central Purpose has been amended, and changes made in the first objective, to respond to the desire for more explicit grounding for and recognition of one of our most common activities, regular corporate worship. The Committee is unanimous in the conviction that this activity is not an end in itself, but an excellent and respected means toward an end, namely our awareness of the Lord's presence and guidance in our daily lives. Accordingly, that awareness is given first place, in the statement of purpose, and the activity of worship, both corporate and private, is prominently placed in the objectives.

At this juncture, it seems as though the Ad Hoc Committee has produced a surfeit of reports and has occupied a good deal of Convention's time. We might have been able to accelerate the schedule, but preferred to try to be sure that Convention's membership was fully informed and had ample time to digest and respond to the proposals.

We are as a church sufficiently committed to this change that only weighty considerations of a quite unforeseen nature could reverse our course. We therefore ask you to read the proposed amendments with care, to review the Committee's previous reports, and to bring your clearest and most constructive thoughts to Windsor this June. It certainly looks as though we are going to adopt new priorities and a new structure. Let's do it as well and wisely as we can. □

WOMEN COMMUNICATING

ANNELLA SMITH, EDITOR

BERTHA BERRAN, CO-EDITOR



The Resurrection

The resurrection teaches us that the Lord is always with us. He is not far away in Heaven, indifferent to our struggles and needs. He is always at the door waiting to come in when we open it to Him. He is always ready to listen and willing and able to help us, if only we will trust Him and follow His teachings. "And Jesus came and spoke to them saying, 'All Power is given unto me in heaven and in earth'." He says this to us. And He tells us, as He told the apostles, to go out in the strength of this knowledge and spread the Gospel. Let us then go forth and proclaim it, not only with our lips, but with our lives. □

walk." Which is just what the man did. When asked about the incident later, he did not know that it was Jesus himself who had cured him.

Sometimes, if someone helps us to feel that we really can do what we need to, even if we don't know at the time it is God doing things for us, we can still make it. The five porticos represent our five senses that help us in our effort to learn. The water represents the Bible, through which the angel can influence us to take to heart the wonderful spiritual truths that help us in our weakness. Since this incident happened on a Sunday, we can feel this rest of the spirit is just what some of our problems need! □

The Five Baths of Bethesda

Sylvia Rankin, Hollywood, California

There were five porticos through which the sick entered to be healed in the baths visited periodically by the heavenly angel. When she appeared and stirred up the water, whoever made it into the water while it was still moving would be healed. Apparently, many were.

But there was one man who had lain there 38 years without success. When Jesus saw him he asked him why he had been there so long. The man said, "Every time I try, some one crowds in ahead of me. I have no man to help me." Jesus asked him "Do you really want to get well? Pick up your bed and

From The Alliance In Fryeburg

Over thirty people signed our guest book for the *Anne Cary Bradley Art Exhibit*. An activity class from the Snow School spent more than an hour reading the articles and discussing her paintings. There were over 20 paintings and several articles of memorabilia including a lovely set of Cary's own books which were lent out when she had The Cupboard as a lending library. These books were given to the Church as a gift by Doris Lewis. Our special thanks to her. Many thanks also to Eva Barbour who lent us Cary's smock, some ancestral photos and two lovely paintings of her own — one of Cary and one of her smock.

The BLOODMOBILE held at our church

January 21st donated 70 pints of blood to the American Red Cross. This is a very worthwhile service project and one way our church can be useful in our community.

The Women's Alliance enjoyed a nice evening at the home of the president, Renie Chaplin on Monday, January 28th. After a short business meeting they had a silent auction and earned \$35.00 for Celia Ballard to

use for Bingo prizes for the residents at Fryeburg Health Care Center.

Fun and friendship, along with service, are the constant priorities of this group.



People and Places

Ministers Appear on TV

The Revs. Paul Zacharias and Eric Allison, both of the Church of the Good Shepherd in Kitchener, Ontario, appeared on an hour-long television program broadcast over the cable network. Presenting the theme of "Life After Death," the two ministers showed the award-winning Swedenborg Foundation film, "Swedenborg: The Man Who Had To Know" for the first half hour. During the second half of the program, Revs. Allison and Zacharias fielded questions from the television audience through a telephone hotline.

"Spirituality and Business" Panel

The Church of the Open Word, St. Louis, in conjunction with the Miracles Contact Center of St. Louis, hosted a panel discussion on "Spirituality and Business," open to the general public. Approximately thirty people, all from outside the local Swedenborgian congregation, came to hear four established business people, including one regular worshipper at the Church of the Open Word, Mr. Allan Harbaugh, lead in a round-table discussion on applying spirituality in the business culture of America.

Bach and Swedenborg?

The Church of the New Jerusalem on Beacon Hill in Boston presented a Candlelight Concert in their sanctuary by

renowned pianist Mari-Elizabeth Morgen, in celebration of the 300th Anniversary of the birth of Johann Sebastian Bach. Of Mari-Elizabeth Morgen, *Time* magazine writes: "...at the piano, she was flawless—poised, professional and in full control..." A brief reception followed the concert.

New *Theos* Chapter

The Church of the Good Shepherd in Kitchener, Ontario has welcomed into its total ministry program a new chapter of the organization called *Theos*, a support and educational group for the bereaved. The Swedenborgian faith provides a most suitable environment for this vitally important area of ministry. Should your Society desire to investigate *Theos*, write to Rev. Eric Allison, Church of the Good Shepherd, Margaret Ave. and Queen St. N., Kitchener, Ontario, Canada N2H 2H7.

San Francisco Book Sales

Rev. Edwin Capon, minister of the Swedenborgian Church near downtown San Francisco, reports that their book store sold approximately 170 books by or about Swedenborg during the previous year. A few people, outside the congregation have become regular customers, and presumably many are sold to guests from the nearly two hundred weddings celebrated each year in their charming sanctuary. All this goes to demonstrate that a "ministry of the press" is still proving itself to be a viable means of spreading our teachings.

LETTERS

Principled Living

Dear Editor,

Mary Kay Klein's article (January) on her search for the feminine side of the Divine reminds us, among other things, of how important it is to distinguish between a natural definition of the sexes and a purely cultural one. As she points out, men and women have been historically associated with the opposites: men are active, women are passive; men are intellectual, women are emotional; men are independent, women are dependent; and so on. How much of this is cultural?

A man who is totally active, aggressive, intellectual, and independent is not going to be a very receptive and sensitive person to deal with, and his opposite would have obvious problems expressing herself. In fact, both of them would be stick figures, not real personalities. So it has become common in some psychological circles to improve on the narrowness of these descriptions by attributing them to the masculine and feminine *principles*, rather than to men and women themselves. Everyone possesses qualities from both sides of the traditional opposites, and we need them all to function well.

But the improvement requires us to adopt a bisexual theory of human nature: men are only more masculine than feminine, and women are only more feminine than masculine. It seems healthy to continue this way for now, but fact remains that we cannot find any intrinsic superiority on either side of any of the paired opposites. Consequently, some people have suggested that way down the road, as humanity develops a much more balanced and whole personality, each individual will become equally masculine and feminine. There may even be some corresponding biological changes that will allow people to reproduce by themselves.

Does the theory work? I have needed, as much as any man, to bring things in from my opposite "feminine" side, but the result is undoubtedly typical of the efforts of anyone who has done any work with himself: it seems that instead of becoming less sexually defined, a man feels more like a real man, and a woman feels more like a real woman. The opposite qualities do not act as though they were the qualities of the opposite sexuality. Instead, they reinforce and fill out the existing sexuality. I suspect that sexuality is not the creation of the opposites themselves, so much as it is the result of the way they are integrated

with each other by some overarching principle. By theory, we should achieve wholeness at the expense of sexual explicitness; but in reality, we achieve both simultaneously.

Steve Koke
Grass Valley, Calif.

Reading Rooms

Dear Editor

We enjoyed Erni Martin's fine article on Reading Rooms in the February Messenger. I want to bring to your readers' attention another library, reading room and bookstore which is active on the coast. It is the Swedenborg Library at the Los Angeles church. Two blocks from Wilshire and Vermont and listed in the Yellow Pages, it is regularly patronized. Book sales and books on loan are impressive in number, considering that we are open only Thursdays and Sundays.

There is a reference section where books may be read in the Study, a lending library, and a sales display. The librarian, Alice Spear, keeps in stock one copy of every book or pamphlet offered for sale by our various publishers and will order any requested by phone or mail. With a little more help, we will become more available for these services.

Though we are making an effort to sell our present location, we are still an active group, and perhaps more vigorous with the help of Rev. Susan Turley-Moore and the Southern California Cluster Ministry.

Margaret Ball
Ventura, Calif.

Ecumenism

Dear Editor,

I was much interested in Robert McCluskey's reports (Jan. Messenger) on the similarity in the purposes of the National Council of Churches and our own Ad Hoc plans. I was so glad to hear that our three representatives, as well as Robert, could attend the meetings. As a long time representative of our Church in Los Angeles to the Southern California Ecumenical Council and therefore of the National Council of Churches. I was glad to share his ideas and support them.

As our Pacific Coast delegate to the Faith and Order Commission I have been aware of several of the things Robert writes about. Most especially I like the phrase "Community of Commu-

nions" where we all share and appreciate our differences, but are all working together for the greater unity of the whole. This attitude is most especially evident in the work of Church Women United, where many "communions" to common goals.

I find myself continually stretching my horizons to reach out to other organizations. Whether it be for Peace, the homeless, or a clean earth, they are all working together in love and usefulness, putting doctrine or "truth" as secondary; as Robert puts it:

"Love unites, doctrine divides." Just for information our church in Los Angeles is hosting "World Day of Prayer" this year. The subject is "Peace in Prayer and Action."

Winifred Armstrong
Los Angeles

Quote

Dear Editor,

Your readers may like to read the following quote from *Guinness Book Of World Records*, 1981 Edition, page 312.

"The earliest 'rational design' for a flying machine (according to the British Royal Aeronautical Society) was published by Emanuel Swedenborg (1688-1772) in Sweden in 1717."

Gib Heddaeus,
Pittsburgh

Bruce Commentaries

Dear Editor:

I am wondering if your policy would permit running in the MESSENGER the following request for certain New Church books.

As an avid reader of Swedenborg and New Church writings I would like very much to secure copies of any of the commentaries by the Reverend William Bruce. Especially desired is his *Commentary on The Gospel According to St. John*; on *Matthew*, on *Revelations*, on *Kings*, or on any other books of the Word.

I will pay \$10 plus charges for each book. Only one copy of each is needed. It is not necessary that they be in excellent condition. Write to:

J.E. Martin
702 Martin Ave
Boaz, AL
35957

Church Records

Baptism

FORLER—Tara Caitlin, daughter of Brian and Wendy Forler, was baptized into the Christian faith on February 17, 1985, at the Church of the Good Shepherd, Kitchener, Ontario, the Rev. Paul Zacharias officiating.

Deaths

ANDERSON—Mildred Anderson, 83, longtime member of the Church of the Holy City, Detroit, passed into the spiritual realm on Feb. 4, 1985. Memorial services were held on Feb. 8, 1985 at the Detroit church, the Rev. F. Gardiner Perry officiating.

COLE—Dora Cole, 86, longtime member of the Church of the New Jerusalem in Pretty Prairie, Kansas, passed into the spiritual realm on Feb. 10, 1985. Memorial services were held on Feb. 13, 1985, the Rev. Eric Zacharias officiating.

KLEINE—Mary J. Kleine, formerly a member of the LaPorte, Indiana Swedenborgian Society, passed into the spiritual realm on Feb. 25, 1985. Memorial services were held on Feb. 28, 1985 at the Haverstock Funeral Home, the Revs. Ted J. LeVan and Don Travis officiating.

LASSO—Perlous Lasso, longtime member of the Church of the Good Shepherd in Kitchener, Ontario, passed into the spiritual realm on January 27, 1985. Memorial services were held on January 29, 1985, the Rev. Eric Allison officiating.

QUAISER—Josef Quaiser, 93, member and former caretaker of the Church of the Good Shepherd in Kitchener, Ontario, passed into the spiritual realm on January 25, 1985. Memorial services were held on January 28, 1985, the Rev. Eric Allison officiating.

CWS Committee Approves Aid for Afghanistan

Church World Service will seek to raise at least \$100,000 for material aid inside Afghanistan according to a plan approved by the Church World Service Committee. The aid will be in the form of food, medicine and blankets and will be designated for the civilian population.

"The need inside Afghanistan is very serious," the Rev. R. Lawrence Turnipseed, CWS's Southern Asia director, told the committee, made up of representatives of CWS's constituent bodies and which oversees CWS's work. "Because of the invasion of Afghanistan by Soviet troops and the prolonged fighting that has ensued, much of the normal civil life has been thoroughly disrupted."

Citing a June 1984 study, he described "a very real threat of famine and starvation" in Afghanistan, pointing to "decreased agricultural production,

high food prices, and inadequate nutrition in children as evidence. There is evidence of conscious disruption of the food supply system by the Soviets.

Church World Service is the relief and development arm of the National Council of Churches. Already at work among the more than three million Afghan refugees living in Pakistan, CWS will channel aid through Pakistan's InterAid Committee to people in territories not under control by the Soviet-supported Kabul government. The InterAid Committee is a local Christian organization funded by churches around the world. CWS also will seek to provide aid to people living in areas controlled by the Kabul government. □

NCCC Announces 1984 Film Award Winners

"Places in the Heart," "The Killing Fields" and "A Soldier's Story" are the winners of the 1984 Communication Commission Film Awards from the National Council of the Churches of Christ (NCCC).

The award recipients were announced by the Rev. Dr. William F. Fore, NCCC assistant general secretary for communication and a member of the film awards committee. Fore said the committee selects films "which, from a Christian perspective, illumine the human situation.

"One of the things we have discovered so far in the Communication Commission's hearings on problems of sex and violence in the media is the importance of encouraging creative production," he added. "For this reason we feel more strongly than ever that the film awards are a valuable contribution to improving the quality of films in American life."



LIVING COMMUNICATION

a pre-convention conference

Leaders:

Lorraine Sando M.A., psychotherapist and artist

Laura Lawson M.Ed., dance and movement therapist

June 22 at 6:00 p.m. to June 26, 1985

**Almont New Church Assembly
Almont, Michigan**

"I learned more about the Swedenborgians from the people in the workshop than I would from reading volumes."

"An opportunity for creativity without expectations of excellence or even skill."

"I feel comfort, new energy, creativity and love."

"I gained new insights into my own need for sharing with other people who care and discovered that other peoples' needs are very similar to my own."

Being seen, heard, touched and understood and doing the same for others is the theme of this years pre-convention Growth Conference. We'll learn to use all aspects of ourselves -- intellectual, emotional, physical and spiritual as we improve our communication with self, others and God. Our tools for growing will be prayer, movement, art, guided imagery, small group experiences, doctrinal wisdom, healing and more. Additives will be: stimulating input from Dr. Dorothea Harvey, exciting contributions from participants, possible sharing with the Music and Movement Workshop, larger

Pre-Convention community gatherings of worship, Campfire fellowship and Communion. Come, learn, share and grow!

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

Costs: Registration is \$30, \$25 if you register by May 15th, plus room and board (\$27, semi-private per day; \$19, dorm style per day). Please register by June 1. Travel instructions will be sent after receipt of registration form.

Send registration form to:
Rachel Martin
12553 Wissant Lane
St. Louis, MO 63146

Name: _____

Address: _____

Kind of room desired: (circle one) semi-private dorm style

Time of arrival: _____

ADVANCE CONVENTION REGISTRATION

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

General Convention, 1985, Almont and Windsor

June 26-30, 1985

NAME _____ PHONE: _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE/PROV _____ ZIP _____

ACCOMPANIED BY: _____

CHILDREN: NAME AND AGE:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

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

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

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

REGISTRATION FEE

_____ I have enclosed a check for \$25.00 (\$15.00 if BEFORE May 15, 1984) made out to GENERAL CONVENTION '85, to cover registration. Everyone 12 years of age and over must pay this fee. Registration is PER PERSON and covers some Convention costs and special events. Mail this form and your fee to Central Office, 48 Sargent St., Newton, MA 02158.

TRANSPORT

_____ I will arrive at Detroit Metro Airport on: Date & time _____
Airline & Flight _____

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

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

_____ I need directions to ALMONT from: _____

_____ I need directions to WINDSOR from: _____

_____ I will arrive at Windsor Airport on: Date & time _____
Airline & flight# _____

(NOTE: PICKUPS HERE ARE SCHEDULED ONLY JUNE 26 THROUGH 30)

_____ OTHER MODE OF TRANSPORT _____

Arrival date & time: _____

HOUSING

_____ I would like a single room.

_____ I would like a double room, sharing with _____

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

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

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

_____ (For Almont) I would like dormitory accommodations @\$20. per day, adult.

Please also complete the reverse side!

SPECIAL NEEDS

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

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

SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS FOR CHILDREN

(Children's programs will run during Pre-Convention days beginning Saturday and continuing through the week until after worship on June 30)

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

OTHER PROGRAMS

I wish to co-register for the following programs:

- ☐ Ministers' Study Committee (Almont, June 20-22; limited to Comm. Members.)
- ☐ *Pre-Convention Conference (Almont, June 22-26; open to all)
- ☐ *Music and Movement Workshop (Almont, June 23-26; open to all)
- ☐ New Church Youth League Officers (Almont, June 23-26; officers only)
- ☐ Council of Ministers (Almont, June 22-26; ministers & SSR students)
- ☐ Ministers' Spouses (Almont, June 22-26; ministers' spouses only)
- ☐ Women's Alliance Luncheon on Friday, June 28.
- ☐ *Proprioceptive Writing Workshop (Almont, June 30-July 3; open to all)
- ☐ *LEI (Leadership Education Institute) (Almont, June 30-July 7; open to all college-aged people)
- ☐ *R & R (Rest and Recreation) (Almont, June 30-July 3-ish; open to all, as space permits.)

(NOTE: ASTERISK (*) DENOTES ADDITIONAL FEE REQUIRED.

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

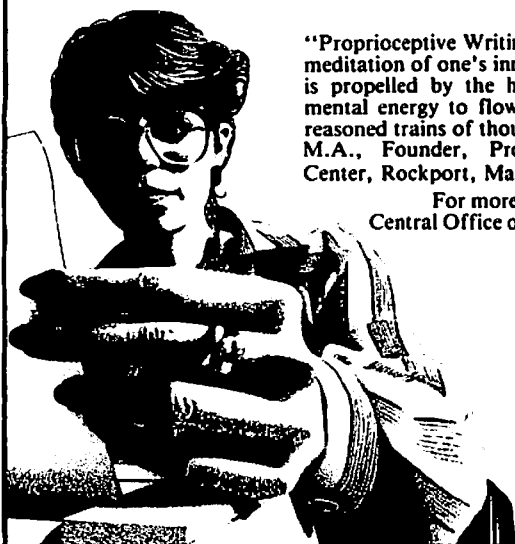
PROPRIOCEPTIVE WRITING WORKSHOP

Proprioception: The process of perceiving incoming information necessary for position and balance.

Almont New Church Assembly
Almont, Michigan
June 30 - July 3, 1985

"Proprioceptive Writing is an active written meditation of one's inner utterances . . . (it) is propelled by the healthful tendency of mental energy to flow purposefully and in reasoned trains of thought." Linda Metcalf, M.A., Founder, Proprioceptive Writing Center, Rockport, Maine.

For more information write to:
Central Office of General Convention
48 Sargent Street
Newton, Mass. 02158



MUSIC AND MOVEMENT WORKSHOP

Leaders:
Laurie Turley
Donna LaRue

June 23 - June 25, 1985

Almont New Church Assembly
Almont, Michigan



The 161th
General Convention
of Swedenborgian
Churches

Communication

The University of Windsor
Windsor, Ontario, Ca.



June 26-29, 1985

Experience interpersonal communication and worship through music and liturgical dance. Preparation for the opening worship service will only be a part of the scheduled events. Open to everyone's needs and abilities, the participants will share in the creative process.

For more information
and registration contact:
Laurie Turley
48 Sargent Street
Newton, Mass. 02158

General Convention of the New Jerusalem
in the United States of America
The Messenger
1040 Dautel Road
Creve Coeur, MO 63146

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