

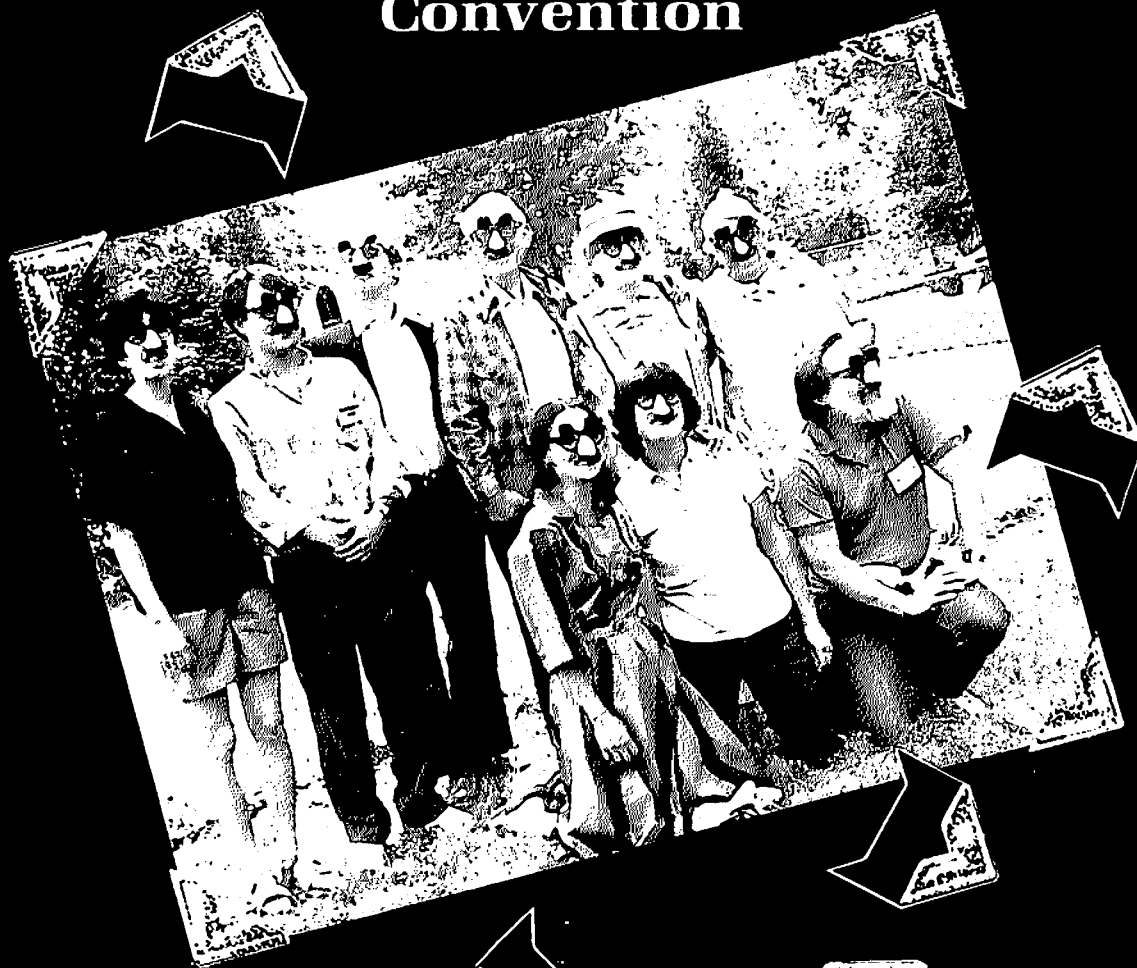
# THE MESSENGER

*Official Publication of the General Convention of Swedenborgian Churches*

**JULY/AUGUST 1985**



## **A Memorable Convention**



## FROM THE EDITOR

Countless were the signs that Bob Dylan's assessment of the Sixties, "The times, they are a'changin'," pertain to the Swedenborgian Church. At the 161st convention of the General Convention of Swedenborgian Church in Windsor, Ontario, much was in evidence of a major transformation occurring throughout our church. The key oral presentations (the presidential address, the convention sermon and the report from the Ad Hoc Committee) were all heavily imbued with the theme of the falling away of some of our established ways and the attempt of new ways to be born.

The Council of Ministers seems to be real seedbed of the new directions. Most prominent among recent developments within the Council is the youth movement—or perhaps I should say youth stampede. Eight years ago there were but a handful of ministers under the age of fifty. Now, well more than half of the active full time ministers are under fifty, and within a few years, the demographic turnover will be even more and as the new leadership faces dwindling congregations, the forms of ministry are under a pressure to change.

At the 161st convention, we experienced very graphic new forms of ministry. We saw, heard and experienced new musical compositions, liturgical dancing, and choral singing all produced by a young generation of artist-ministers who wish to bring their talents into the life of the Swedenborgian Church. In addition, we heard much from the half dozen retreat and spiritual growth centers that are already operating or are in serious planning stages. We have ministers involving themselves in assertive outreach programs that depart from traditional means of church outreach. Whether it's staging special events in Kitchener, Ontario, running workshops and providing alternative worship opportunities in Cincinnati, or planning an innovative memorial care ministry in St. Louis, members of the Council of Ministers are working hard to combine Swedenborgian theology and modern society.

At the same time, the classical forms of yesteryear continue to meet the needs of much of our church, and in many instances, the traditional and the innovative walk hand-in hand. The traditional forms have persisted because they have proven themselves to be useful vessels of service. With a careful attention to the needs of our total church, we will find the path the Lord would have us walk.

A delightful addition to convention this year were the special learning opportunities. Nearly two dozen mini-courses added depth to our annual coming together, and the people responded enthusiastically. Dorothea Harvey's two mini-courses on Indian religion and its relation to our own religion sparked a tremendous response, as did Ernest Martin's "The Mystic Quest." Many of the other twenty mini-courses also generated positive group experiences, and we can look forward to much more of this in the future.

For the past several years, the planners of convention have attempted to scale down the amount of business conducted, while increasing social and learning activities. As a result, we now have three major workshops (two before and one after convention.) With the mini-courses receiving such popular acclaim, the signal is loud and clear that Swedenborgians want to take advantage of learning opportunities with church programs leaders which they will not have the chance to experience during the normal course of year.

Those of you who shy away from attending the annual convention because you think it will be a string of endless and boring business meetings, hear this loudly clearly: Swedenborgian conventions of today are different! Come to learn more of your church, your faith, and yourself. We will be in the cool Blue Ridge Mountains next year as Central Office hosts the 162nd convention in Boone, North Carolina.

The photography in this issue is provided by the illustrious team of the Rev. Dr. Robert H. Kirven and William R. Woofenden and by yours truly. □

### The MESSENGER JULY-AUGUST, 1985

Vol.205, No.7

WHOLE NUMBER 5097

Rev. James F. Lawrence, Editor  
Paul Maring, Layout and Design  
Paula Sonia Bairos, Typesetter

Published monthly, except for the one double issue in July-August, by the Swedenborgian Church (founded 1871.

incorporated 1861 as the General Convention of the New Jerusalem in the United States of America.) Central Office: 48 Sargent St., Newton, MA 02158.

The opinions of contributors do not necessarily reflect the views of the Editor or the Department of Communication, or represent the position of the church.

Subscription free to members of the Swedenborgian Church; non-members,

\$8.00 a year; foreign \$15.00 a year; gift subscription from a member, \$5.00; single copies \$1.00.

EDITORIAL, BUSINESS & SUBSCRIPTION  
ADDRESS:

THE MESSENGER  
1040 Dautel Road  
Creve Coeur, MO 63146

Deadline for material:  
1st day of the Month.

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*Presidential Address:*

## **The Church: Between Two Images**

*Randall E. Laakko*

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In thinking about the state of the church, the church appears to me as two different images. More accurately, in my perception and experience of the church today, I see and feel two different realities. As I look out into the world and focus on the most external level of reality, represented in this instance by numbers, I see a dying church. As is often the case with death, I feel a great sadness and concern. At the same time another image is forcefully present, especially at such times as this convention. I feel a surge of life and strength in the church, especially as the people and our theology.

On the other hand, the church as it exists out there in the world seems to be in a very critical state. Now I'm talking about the church in its external form, known by us as those groups and congregations that make up the General Convention of Swedenborgian Churches. We are, by almost all external standards, weak and small. We have 47 groups or congregations in Canada and the United States listed in the 1984 Journal.

Of these, five have dissolved or are considering dissolving. Of the remaining 42, at least fifteen are very small in size, less than twenty active members according to my information. Six meet infrequently. That leaves the General Convention with something like 24 groups that have any numerical strength with active programs of worship, other events and service. We are selling or seeking to sell five church facilities that no longer fit the diminished size of that local group, or which cannot be maintained in good state, or where the societies are closing down.

The above figures are not absolute, but do reflect a reality that is factual. We have a membership in the United States and Canada that ranges somewhere between 2000 and 2500 people. Another area of concern for the future is the proportionally older age level of our membership. We can be assessed as having many areas of weakness. Could this be the image of a dying or mortally wounded church? Such an image is difficult to hold in view. Yet see it we must, if we are to work with the realities of our church. Even more alarming, these figures

are representative of our current state, which is but a single frame of a process that has been running for several decades.

From early in this century we have experienced a gradual decline. It appears we are on a downward spiral. It can feel out of control, hopeless. The reality we are presented with says loudly and clearly: the old ways of doing things have not and are not now working. New ways must be found, if we are to continue our existence with greater strength.

Date Line: February 16, 1985, The San Francisco Examiner

Feature Editorial: "Save The Landmark Churches"

Insisting that special care be given historic houses of worship isn't just a question of preserving religious roots, although Catholic, Protestant and Jewish congrega-

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**Is this what we exist for—to have historical status? I don't know about you, but my vision of our church is a church dynamically meeting the needs of people today and of the future.**

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tions have offered spiritual succor here since before the days of the Gold Rush. Also important are their political, ethnic and cultural links to the past . . .

No one questions that the Mission of St. Francis of Assisi-Mission Dolores—is the very heart of our history, nor doubts the value and beauty of Grace and St. Mary's cathedrals—but these edifices face no wrecking balls. The landmark preservation ordinance was designed to protect the less spectacular churches that link us to our roots, such as:

The Swedenborgian Church. It is one of the Bay Area's more popular weddings sites, attesting to its architectural merit; being one of the 33 remaining congregations in America of the once-thriving "Church of the New Jerusalem" gives it historical status. . .

Is this what we exist for—to have

historical status? I don't know about you, but my vision of our church is a church dynamically meeting the needs of people today and of the future!

While the external realities are of great concern, there are certain signs of hope and points of optimism. We must not lose sight of these so that we may learn from them and celebrate them. In many areas of the church we are undergoing a transition to new ways of being in the world. Being small, we have the potential for making changes rapidly. We have the financial resources to undertake many of the shifts we see as necessary and desirable.

As a church we have what I consider to be great fortitude and strength. Our church has struggled to survive time and again when some would have called it quits. Aside from these generalities, there are other signs

our church can be seen as dying, it can also be seen as coming alive.

I see and feel a living church. This church takes on form as it springs from our theology. Theology is the articulation of our understanding of God and of human existence. Our theology has its roots in the Word of God and our experience of God, as the Lord has revealed it to us. When I say "our" I am referring to whatever human beings have shared of their experience and knowledge of God—in the Bible and other holy books, in religious writings of history, in the myths and traditions of world cultures, and particularly as we find it in the theological works of Emanuel Swedenborg and most especially in our personal encounters with God.

We have much to share regarding God's love for the world and for the individual. We

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## **W**here are the new wine skins and baskets for serving the world?

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of hope in the church. We have congregations that are growing in membership, activity, and service.

Our church in Kitchener, Ontario, Canada, is reaching out in new ways to its community with positive results. There are new ventures taking place in Almont, Michigan with the development of a year round Conference—Retreat Center. The Kemper Road Center for Religious Development in Montgomery, Ohio, and its retreat and church camp center, "Beside the Point," carry on programs to reach and serve the greater Cincinnati area.

In Seattle, a new growth center is in process of being established. There, a new Book Room and meeting facility has promise to make contact with a public to and from which new ministries can be developed. There is a new spirit of hope and optimism in the Pacific Coast Association for the development of a center for outreach and ministry in the Greater Los Angeles Area. In the Northeast in Cambridge, Newtonville, Boston, Blairhaven and Portland, new programs of service and outreach are being developed and tried with good success.

Throughout our denomination several wedding ministries have begun in an effort to serve the community and to reach new people. Our Philadelphia Church is working toward the development of a new Worship Center, in conjunction with a conference, renewal and retirement center in the Middle Atlantic Region. This Center is being studied and proposed to the General Council. While

have insight to give concerning the nature of God and the meaning of our existence. We have reason to be stimulated and motivated to action, use and service. We have much that speaks of our potential human unity and community as children of the one God. Our thinking is not closed and rigid, or at least it need not be. We can be open to the truths and experience of others without having to feel threatened. We have new wine (truth) and freshly baked bread (love). Now where are the new wine skins and baskets for serving the world?

I have often felt that we have been given a gold mine of love and truth, which is so wanted and needed by the world. We must give it out! We need to share it communicate it! As in the miracle of the loaves and fishes, the disciples thought they had far too little to share with the 5,000, only to discover there was far more available than they realized. Furthermore, I suspect, when we have done all we can to serve every person, we would find like the disciples, that rather than being empty we would have more to give than with which we started.

One of the first principles a therapist learns in working with people is that the first stated problem or concern is frequently only a symptom. Often a couple, for example, will state they are having difficulty communicating. As they tell their story, the problem with communication is seen as an expression of a deeper, underlying problem. Perhaps one or the other has grown cold; or one is feeling hurt or anger and fear. This

deeper issue causes disruption in their relating. Understandably, it is felt by them as a problem with communication. The presenting problem is not the central issue. Instead, communication is the doorway to renewed contact and relationship as the inner reality is processed

This should not be surprising to Swedenborgians, who are accustomed to looking beyond the surface of things for deeper causes. We are theologically comfortable with the truth of an outer and inner level to human experience. I wonder what inner issues we as a church may have, which find expression in our ineffective and reluctant efforts at communicating. To be sure, there are skills we need to learn and methods we can employ to improve our communication. I do not dispute that. Could it also be that we do not feel good enough about ourselves, that we have a low sense of our own value and worth as persons, and as a church? If so, such low self esteem can prevent us from being bold enough to share who we are and what we stand for theologically.

I believe we need to work at improving our self image, both individually and collectively. I see this as ironic, for we have such ability and strength as persons and as groups of people. We have very real reasons to affirm ourselves. Any love and truth we have is from God. We love because God first loved us. I believe that the Lord was serious when the Word was spoken, "Greater things than these will you do, as you do it in my name."

Have we lost touch with the meaning and purpose of what we are about? We all are here on this earth in freedom to be and become fully ourselves. Hopefully, according to God's intent, this will include our own personal awareness of God's presence with us at all times. Ultimately we are dependent on God's love and truth. We are meant to be members of the kingdom of God on this earth and in the heavens of the spiritual world as well!

Human life is a process. We constantly undergo changes. As a church, we are undergoing major changes as to our organizational structure. The work of our Ad Hoc committee is refocusing attention to a single purpose, goal or end: the spiritual well being of people. Working toward the creation of a heaven from the human race, in conjunction with the Lord and one another, is a state of spiritual well being. To fulfill this goal, the Ad Hoc committee has placed before us specific objectives which work in concert with each other.

The spirit of God calls us to be responsible. We can be held accountable through the

accomplishment of the strategies that make the objectives attainable. We can measure our performance. Remember: the seventy whom Jesus sent out reported upon their return the mighty works they had performed in his name. Jesus reviewed their work. Results were anticipated, sought after and celebrated. As a church we are getting pointed in the right direction. Now let us make the necessary steps to continue our journey.

As a member of the church, and as your President, I proposed some specific actions:

1. I urge every congregation to deliberately and prayerfully consider making the stated purpose of the General Convention their own stated purpose. In our theological language you might think of it as working for the salvation of souls.
2. I urge every General Convention group toward understanding the objectives and strategies of the Ad Hoc committee to see how these will help formulate programs development and service to your community.
3. As part of that seeking of understanding, I suggest that good use be made of our skilled and trained people to assist in the process of discovering and fulfilling the vision and mission of the church.
4. I urge that we be as creative and courageous as the spirit of God wants us to be in our efforts and program development. When God said of the New Jerusalem, "Behold I make all things new," I suspect that means new ways of seeing, (knowing, manifesting, and living,) the presence of God in the church for the world.
5. I urge that we continue to develop our existing centers for growth and renewal and that new ones be established.
6. If we find it necessary to close ministries, let it be by conscious decision, rather than by default or attrition. If doors are to be closed, let it be of buildings or modes of service which do not permit us to move with the ever creative, sustaining, redemptive love of God.
7. Finally, let us pray for the church, that she be made whole and in that wholeness feel what has always been true: we are made in the image of God. Behold, that is very good.

May we know and feel God's spirit during these days. May we be open to receive God's love. Praise be to God, who is the Glorified Lord Jesus Christ. □

*Rev. Randall E. Laakko is the President of the General Convention of Swedenborgian Churches and the minister of the Church of the Holy City, Wilmington, Delaware.*

# Closer To The Heart

F. Gardiner Perry

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**"The inter human opens out what otherwise remains closed."**

There is a feeling of which I am becoming aware. I could not have anticipated it, even a couple of days ago. It is the sense that I am not alone. As I stand before you, something of each one of you is here with me. My hope and prayer is that my words may be, at some level, your words; and that they may be heard in the context of our Lord's Word.

In proclaiming, "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah; . . . I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it on their hearts. . .," the prophet Jeremiah assured the people of Israel and Judah that it was the Lord's intent to come closer to the heart of human experience. Today, that portion of the Word assures us that the Lord's continuing intent is to come closer to the heart of each one of us.

The Lord's intent is also to come closer to the heart of our General Convention. For we need but open our eyes and ears to see and hear the evidence of His leading and presence with us. He is here in our being with one another and in our good communication with one another.

What has our communication with one another been like over the past several days of being together? There have been moments of freedom from semblance; there has been a loss of self-concern. Barriers that are present in other settings have been broken down. Refreshing depths of mutual friendship have been revealed. There has been openness, as well as eagerness to learn to grow and to be challenged. In the words of Martin Buber, "the interhuman opens out what otherwise remains closed."

We have at various moments during the past several days passed by each other with no more than nod; have stopped for a brief

greeting; have taken time to really be with another person. Some of you have sought each other out to share in significant ways, something of the wonderful process of human growth.

Some of us have dialogued around controversial issues weighted with emotion. We miraculously found rich common ground upon which to build future mutual understanding. Some of us have engaged in agonizing decisions. To those decisions was brought genuine concern for the wellbeing of both the person and the church.

Our communication with one another has, indeed, involved more than just feeling good about ourselves and one another. For we are engaged in the life, not just of the General Convention, but of the Lord's New Church. There has been a searching for those good intentions which open our eyes to see beyond the present moment and beneath the surface of things.

The ground of that communication is the Lord in us. The Prophet Jeremiah proclaimed that the Lord was in the process of giving something of Himself to all people: of putting His law "on their inward parts" and writing it "on their hearts." This process continues. The Lord is present here and now, in our good communication with one another. How good it is to be here with one another and the Lord. "I was glad when they said, come let us go into house of the Lord."

It is good for us to be here. Yet even as I speak there is a scary awareness that a time of great change is at hand. There is sadness. It feels like there is something akin to loss, and even death, occurring.

Convention's external forms are changing despite of our will to preserve them. The need for Convention's ministry, in some of the forms we have known, is diminishing. We are in the midst of an apparent downward spiral. We have heard the data supporting this contention. There is at the same time evidence that it is the Lord's intent to come closer to the heart of Convention. There are the signs of an upward spiral of vitality and growth. Enrollment at our seminary is increasing. Some of our Convention centers, camps and retreat centers are thriving. Could it be that the Lord is allowing

us to participate in a loss of externals in order that He might be increasingly close to us?

Jeremiah proclaimed the Lord's promise to come closer to the heart during a period of turmoil of tragic dimension in the kingdoms of Israel and Judah. External forms of legitimacy and power were crumbling. Forces were moving in the kingdom of the East that would sweep away all that was familiar.

Jeremiah's prophetic stature arose from his discernment of the Lord's intent within the signs of those times. He gave a voice to the Lord's promise that the result of that loss would be His moving closer to the heart of human experience.

It feels like a fulfillment of that promise is continuing to occur for us in the Convention today. In the face of apparent loss of some of what has been familiar, there is an emergent vitality and vision for the future. A core element of the new vision is Convention's new Statement of Purpose:

The General Convention exists to help people be open to the Lord's presence and leading, especially by fostering personal and ordained ministries which facilitate the spiritual well being of people, and which have in common a working for the Lord in bringing in the New Age—the descent of the Holy City, New Jerusalem.

In the proposed Convention structure supporting this central purpose there is a freedom from what is outmoded, and a provision for what is new. We have heard the litany of hopeful trends that are surfacing at the Swedenborg School of Religion, in the work of the Growth Center committee, at our camps, and in new projects for outreach.

Parishes are asking honest questions about their unique contribution to the world around them. In so doing they are shifting into attunement with a new heaven and a new earth. In all of this, there is a moving toward what is essential: a being open to the Lord's presence and loving the neighbor. In a word, we are moving closer to the heart of what it is to be a church.

Not surprisingly, what is true for us as a group of persons is also true for the individual person, whose "church" resides within him/herself. The life of regeneration involves our discovering what is essential in life. The Lord teaches that He is essential life itself. There is, on our part, a letting-go of dependence on externals for bolstering a narrow self identity. The growing self identifies with broadening boundaries extended by the Lord Himself. We begin to love our

neighbor as ourselves. Paradoxically, to attend to that which is beyond the narrow self is to discover the heart of one's true self. To continue on the part of regeneration is to move closer to the heart.

Movement toward the heart of things is central to our collective experience in the church and to our experience as individuals because that's the way things are in heaven. The essential there is the marriage of the Lord's love and wisdom. The Lord's constant endeavor is to bring to birth that marriage within each angel. There needs to be a letting-go and a distancing-out of whatever does not flow from that marriage. There is pain and loss. Yet, it is out of the pain of loss of what is not essential that one moves to a closer bond with the Lord and with the neighbor. As that bond grows closer, the angel, is drawn closer to our heart and closer to the heart of heaven.

In all things of this world and the next, there is a movement toward the heart of things. We have seen and felt evidence of such heart-movement in our experience of living communication during this session of the General Convention. We have felt it in our effort to discern that which is essential in the life of the church. We have felt its tug in the withinness of our regeneration. We will continue to be drawn deeply toward the heart of life when we pass from consciousness of this world to that of the next.

In each of these spheres of life, we are being led by the Lord. Our task, though, is not just to build up or revitalize the General Convention, as worthy a goal as that might be. Our central task is to embody that which is of the Divine. We are called to so open our hearts and minds that our very being is in love with the living Lord in service to the neighbor. So shall we be "not far from the Kingdom of God."

The Lord's is calling us. He is calling us to live simultaneously closer to Him and closer to the heart. "... I will put my law on their inward parts and write it on their hearts..." Come, let us live in the Lord's Church, closer to the heart. Amen. □

*Rev. F. Gardiner Perry is the minister at the Church of the Holy City, Detroit, Michigan.*

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**"I will put  
my law in  
their inward  
parts and  
write it on  
their hearts."**

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# Navigating the Inner World: Writers' Workshop '85

Jim Lawrence

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Though early comments around the country expressed confusion and disgruntlement at a workshop being titled, "Proprioceptive Writing," and though wonderment abounded at who would enroll for such an abstruse-sounding experience, Writers' Workshop '85 was oversubscribed, marvellously facilitated, and deeply appreciated by most who attended.

Eighteen Swedenborgians, including seven ministers, gathered at the Almont New Church Assembly immediately following convention for a three-day post-convention



Linda Metcalf (left) and Mary Bok teamed up to lead a fascinating workshop.

sponsored by the Dept. of Communication. The leaders were Linda Metcalf, formerly of the Pratt Institute in Brooklyn, and Mary Bok; both currently live in Maine. Metcalf, the founder of Proprioceptive Writing, runs the Proprioceptive Writing Center in Rockport, Maine with her husband, Dr. Tobin Simon. Bok is one of the Center's teachers.

Proprioceptive Writing takes its name from the world of anatomy: a proprioceptor is a sensory receptor which takes its stimuli from muscles, tendons, and joints in such a way that necessary position and balance is attained. Metaphorically, Proprioceptive

Writing is a method of navigating the onslaught of information from both the outer and inner worlds. Metcalf says, "Proprioceptive Writing is an active meditation upon one's inner utterances... Writing is propelled by the healthful tendency of mental energy to flow purposefully and in reasoned trains of thought."

Indeed, though professional writers may use the system to great effect, it became clear early on that this workshop was to have more to do with processing one's total world than with tips for composition writing. Proprioceptive Writing is a rather simple, yet richly subtle, method that any person can begin to use immediately for developing greater self knowledge and understanding. Metcalf continues: "Through the stimulation of Proprioceptive Writing, intellect, imagination, and intuition become balanced operations."

In the method there is a somewhat ritualized set of conditions created, involving music and candles, which facilitate the hearing of inner thoughts and feelings.

A sort of stream-of-consciousness style of writing is encouraged, and when the writer's flow comes to a halt, the "pro-propriceptive question" is asked. This question (which Metcalf describes as a "mantra question") allows the writer to get back on track, frequently a deeper track.

At one point, Metcalf insisted that we must permit our inner world to pursue its own agenda, without allowing our surface egoistic agenda to suppress it. Driving home this point, she described Proprioceptive Writing as purposeless writing. One participant followed this thought in a writing session, which gets at part of the heart of Proprioceptive Writing:

What purpose could there be in purposeless writing? What is meant by "having a purpose?" It is like having the rudder of my boat set in a specific direction, ignoring other directions as "distractions." It means a self-imposed limitation of possible choices. Instead of trusting the currents of the water around my boat, I usually fix my eyes upon a landmark on the horizon that I want to use as a point of focus... What I hear now in

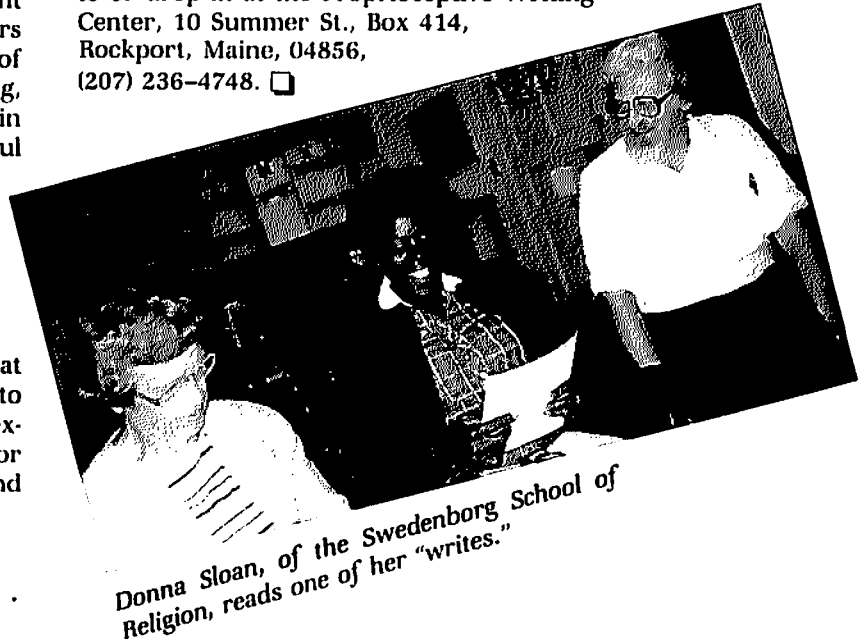


this course makes me aware that a conscious purpose also can bring too much limitation."

During the three days a pleasant camaraderie developed among the leaders and the participants. Through cycles of theory presentation, writing, and reading, many of us experienced breakthroughs in how to listen to our inner wisdom. Powerful discoveries were evident; rich honesty emerged; connections with each other seemed to migrate to levels more interesting than in our more conventional relations. To top it off, we had Almont all to ourselves.

Proprioceptive Writing is a system that is more natural to introverted types than to extroverts, though for that very reason extroverted types may want to look into it. For seasoned journal writers, new insights and

techniques will deepen your practice. And for anyone interested in a fresh and original perspective on living the spiritual life, write to or drop in at the Proprioceptive Writing Center, 10 Summer St., Box 414, Rockport, Maine, 04856, (207) 236-4748. □



Donna Sloan, of the Swedenborg School of Religion, reads one of her "writes."

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## Highlights of Convention '85

*Dorothy deB. Young*

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Most positively, the very best weather blessed us every single day at Windsor, Ontario. Sunshine, blue skies with a few fluffy, lazy, white clouds and twenty-four hour temperatures in a comfortable range were a heaven-sent gift. On Saturday, at Almont, Mother Nature displayed a brief tantrum of lightning, thunder and sudden downpour. Then, she made a turn-about to her sunny side in time to shine approval on the ordination of the Reverend Kenneth O. Turley.

Our temporary living quarters at the University of Windsor were a reflection of the admirable hospitality of our Canadian hosts and proved the positive results of cooperative planning by "Muff" Worden, her capable staff and our hostess, Roxie Deniston and her well-trained staff. The meals served in the cafeteria were prepared with care, served with smiles and the food was attractive, tasty and nourishing.

Since the duties of the Secretary of Con-

vention are, for the most part, concerned with the business of Convention, pursuit of frivolity and entertainment are minimal. For this reason, the Secretary suggests that a "roving reporter" be appointed each year to gather personalia, non-business data, and newsy items at Convention for *The Messenger*.

Convention sessions are always enhanced by superb displays of talent in the world of Art: inspired musical compositions rendered by instruments and voice; graceful interpretive dancing and wisdom-filled sermons. The talent this year was exceptionally good.

One unscheduled event during the Sunday worship service was the "unseating" of the President of Convention and the Convention Preacher. Fortunately, the only injury was to the the dignity of the occasion. □



*The Revs. Randall E. Laakko and Susan Turley-Moore lay on hands as Kenneth O. Turley is ordained.*



*Toby Brugler and Bow Grumman teamed up for a lot of fun this year.*



*The incomparable Ethelwyn "Muff" Worden, Director of the Central Office, keeps right on singing through it all.*

*The Almont "Flag Send-off" is a time-honored tradition.*



*The business sessions were relatively quiet ones this year.*



*Chris Laitner (center) enchants convention along with the rest of her group, The Last Chants.*



*Pat and Paul Zacharias signalling that Canada is number 1!*



*Pat Shelley of the Michigan Association takes his turn on the tennis courts at Almont.*



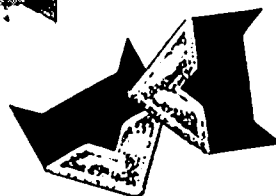
*The porch at Almont is always a popular spot: The Revs. Eric Zacharias (l), David Johnson (c) and Erwin Reddekopp (r) swap stories.*



*Aylmer Kempton of Boston receives her award for "Most Persistent Photographer" by—you guessed it—taking a picture of the presenters of the award!*



*East Coast ministers met outside to discuss their various programs and ministries.*



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# Report of the General Council

Dorothy deB. Young

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Members of the General Council assembled for three sessions during 1985. The mid-winter meeting was held at Almont New Church Assembly in January, the pre-convention and post-convention meetings were held at University of Windsor, Ontario, Canada in June.

The Reverend Randall E. Laakko, President, reported on meetings attended on eighteen trips made from June to December of 1984. He established an office at the Church of the Holy City in Wilmington, Delaware, and furnished it with necessary business equipment. He hired and trained a part-time secretary, Loretta Kasehagen. The President hopes to work effectively for all the Convention churches and will accept suggestions on areas to visit which would benefit from presidential assistance or advice.

Vice President Frederick G. Perry has been occupied with the Evaluation Committee concerning the Central Office business, correspondence, participation in various committees, administration of Funds, i.e. the Building Fund. His advice and leadership has been most valuable to new members of Convention administrative offices.

Capt. August Ebel has been instructing and working with John C. Perry, who was appointed by President Laakko and the Executive Committee to serve as Assistant to the Treasurer. This position was authorized by General Council at its February 1984 meetings. Capt. Ebel reported that the auditor's report was completed and on file in the Central Office. Due to many extenuating and unforeseen circumstances, there was a slight over-spending on the budget. Some of this entailed relocation of *The Messenger* operations from Canada to St. Louis, Missouri. In accord with a recommendation from the Board of Managers of the Swedenborg School of Religion, General Council established a Restricted Purpose Fund to assist in financing S.S.R. advanced students acquiring advanced degree from external schools. This Fund will be administered by the Committee on Admission to the Ministry (CAM). The Treasurer was authorized to set up this Fund and to generate appeals for contributions, both within and outside Convention.

The Recording Secretary has developed all the minutes of the meetings of the General Council and of the Executive Committee, attended to required correspondence, assisted with proofreading and assembling the Convention Journal. Although the major part of the secretarial work was carried out at the home/office, the Secretary has spent one day each week at the Central Office in order to become familiar with the various facets of Convention business.

General Council adopted the provisions of a list, prepared by the Evaluation Committee, of the role, function and responsibilities of the Director of the Central Office. The Director is accountable first, to the Executive Committee; then to General Council. Miss Ethelwyn Worden has worked closely with the Executive Committee, General Council and many of Convention's committees.

Upon request from the Managers of Wayfarers Chapel, General Council authorized a loan to the Wayfarers Chapel Operating Fund of \$15,000 for a period of three years at the same rate of interest which the General Convention Common Fund received during the past year.

The Council voted to invite the Reverend Jerome Poole and Mr. Steven Rosen, actuarial consultant, to meet with General Council to more fully explain proposed retirement fund plans for ministers and employees of Convention and to answer any questions from the audience. Members of the Council of Ministers attended this meeting.

The Reverend Ernest O. Martin presented to the Council copies of a feasibility study for a Swedenborgian Growth Center as visualized by F. Kennedy Company of Washington, D.C. A possibility of a Growth Center would be to present the Swedenborgian message in a new format. The Growth Centers will be multi-purpose facilities for use by a paying general public as well as by supportive Swedenborgians.

Inasmuch as the Reverend Dr. Dorothea Harvey may be retiring in a few years (thus leaving no Swedenborgian representation on the faculty at Urbana University), General Council authorized the Church Relations

Committee at Urbana to raise funds to pay the salary of a Swedenborgian chaplain at the University.

In response to a letter of concern from L.C. Young, president of Bostonview Corporation (Boston Society), in regard to Convention churches selling their real estate in lieu of development their assets, General Council is willing to make counselling available to any church desirous of developing their property. The directors of Bostonview are ready to share their experiences in feasibility studies and the ultimate project.

General Council ratified appointments by President Laakko:

1. Committee on Library & Documents: Marian Kirven, Rev. Dr. Robert Kirven, Rev. Dr. William Woofenden

2. Research Committee: Adolph Liebert, Rev. Dr. George Dole, Rev. Jerome Poole, Louise Woofenden

3. Representatives to N.C.C.C. Governing Board: Nancy Little, Rev. F. Robert Tafel, Rev. Theodore LeVan

Christian Life & Ministry: Rev. Robert McCluskey

Faith & Order Commission: Rev. Dr. Robert Kirven

Church Women United: Doris Tafel

Press Representative: Rev. James Lawrence  
Committee on World Peace: Rev. Paul Martin Grumman

4. Saturday's Children's Fund: Rev. Ronald Brugler

5. 1988 Swedenborg 300th Year Celebration: Ethelwyn Worden, Lawrence C. Young, Sr., Rev. Dr. William Woofenden

6. Assistant to the Treasurer: John C. Perry

7. Retirement Fund: Rev. Robert Tafel, Harvey Johnson, Capt. August Eble

8. Youth & the Military: Rev. Jerome Poole, Loring M. Young

9. Wayfarers Chapel Board of Managers: Annella Smith, Stanley Conger

General Council endorsed the Statement of Purpose of General Convention as stated in the Ad Hoc draft (Nov. '84) of the Constitution, Article I, Section 2 and commended the Ad Hoc's openness to consider and to evaluate feedback from various sections of the Church.

It was voted by the Council to accept the invitation of the Massachusetts Association to hold convention in 1988 in the Boston area. Appointed to a committee to search and secure facilities were: Ethelwyn Worden and Lawrence C. Young, Sr. □

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## Swedenborgians In The Mainstream

*Charles (Pat) Shelley*

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Can you imagine yourself in the role of any of the following characters?

You were brought up, at least for some years, alternating Sundays between a Swedenborgian church and a Methodist church, but in the end you came to accept the doctrines of the New Church as the most meaningful for you. Now, however, you are not close to an established New Church Society. You occasionally attend other churches only to discover an irony in how your beliefs apparently overlap with the professions of those in the church you are visiting.

You have always been a Swedenborgian, and you attend a Swedenborgian church every Sunday. You would like, however, to have experiences within the church in addition to traditional worship. Few, if any, other members of the congregation seem interested. You would like to be an active, not

just a passive, participant in your own spiritual growth and share in the spiritual growth of others. You see discussion, music, other art forms and acts of usefulness and caring as avenues for bringing new life into the church. "So what's new about the New Church," you ask yourself, "if it appears mostly to emulate the tradition of the mainstream?"

You are a convert to the teachings of Swedenborg. Probably your attraction to the faith was due more to the people you met than because of doctrine. Nonetheless, you feel that the openness, friendliness and understanding of the people with whom you have chosen to affiliate is an outgrowth of their faith and beliefs. Recently, however, you've moved to another area of the country where there are no Swedenborgian societies. You are considering looking for

another church, but you just know it won't be the same as what you left behind.

You are active with your spouse and children in another Protestant church, but you have maintained your membership and connections to the Swedenborgian association in your state. You wonder about the appropriateness of what your children are learning in Sunday school, and you are undecided about what guidance to give your children when they will be faced with the opportunity to join one church or the other.

You have opportunities when you could bring your religion into conversation with other persons who have never heard of Swedenborg and his writings. Before you broach the topic of your special beliefs as you learned them, you hesitate and consider the potential consequences.

If you can identify with any of the above personal descriptions, you already have some insight into the motivations that brought a small group of us together for a minicourse at convention entitled, "Swedenborgians in Mainstream Churches." Which one are you?

After sharing our backgrounds and experiences, our minicourse group proceeded to reiterate and summarize our concerns. On the chalkboard we listed the following three primary problems as examples of dilemmas we face:

1. How is one to be a Swedenborgian when surrounded by non-Swedenborgians?
2. How do we deal with doctrine? One example is the concept of the Trinity within the Apostles Creed which directly conflicts with our own beliefs?
3. What will the children learn in another church's Sunday school or confirmation class?

Then, with only a little time left for discussion, we were able to use the remaining minutes for brainstorming alternative solutions to the first question only. These solutions include:

1. Blend in. You have special treasure, a source of spiritual inspiration. Let your light shine before the men and women without revealing the fuel that feeds it.
2. Get involved in another church. Sing in the choir. Teach Sunday school. Attend special functions. Look to the advantages of the mainstream church. It may be close to home. It may offer a large circle of fellowship and active programs. It provides you the opportunity of corporate worship which includes the singing of hymns and the hearing of scripture. Also consider what you can offer the church, if you do share your talents as a singer or your insights as a

teacher.

3. Stay away from mainstream churches and involve yourself in Swedenborgian activities as an alternative. This option could involve you in family worship or individual study using the Dole notes, the Sunday School Association paper "Five Smooth Stones," and the abundance of other publications available. Of course, these activities could also be ongoing concurrently with attendance at another church.

4. Witness to Swedenborgianism in or out of the mainstream church. Wherever you are, you may sometimes have the occasions to mention or explain your religious beliefs. Perhaps in a Bible study session you feel that your insights would be helpful to the group. Or the conversation may evolve in the following manner:

"So, what are you doing during summer vacation?"

"I'm going to family church camp."

"Sounds good! What church is it?"

"Swedenborgian."

"Never heard of it."

Here is your chance. Don't be shy. Tell what you want to share.

5. Keep an awareness of God wherever you are. Why view your encounters with non-Swedenborgians as a problem? There is no need for theological arguments to be a stumbling block. Follow the Lord's commandments and those basic rules of life derived from the Word and the writings which appear to be universal. We can ourselves be devout followers of our Lord and students of his servant Emmanuel Swedenborg and still believe, as Swedenborg did, that God has placed the means of salvation in every world faith.

We are not suggesting that any one of these possible solutions is the best answer. Given that we have freedom of choice, we only recommend that you look over these options and add to the list with some brainstorming of your own. □

*Dr. Pat Shelley is an elementary school principal with a Ph.D. in Education. Along with his wife, Marjory, and three children, Becky, Danny and Katie, the Shelleys are active at the Almont New Church Assembly. Pat is a member, while Marjory holds her membership at the Church of the Holy City in Detroit.*

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# Council of Ministers Meetings

*Ernest O. Martin*

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The Council of Ministers and their spouses held pre-convention meetings at the Almont New Church Assembly in Almont, Michigan, from Saturday, June 22 through Wednesday June 26.

The surroundings were ideal and the hospitality superb. People sat beneath the stately trees and in groups on the lawn. Between meetings there were opportunities to swim, play tennis, jog along the country roads, or relax in chairs on the porches.

Ministers and spouses gathered on Saturday evening in the Almont Chapel for worship. Ron and Val Brugler were then host to a reception at their home across the lake.

On Sunday morning the ministers divided into groups of five to share their personal concerns, their hopes and dreams, their fears and frustrations. On Monday afternoon members divided into three regional groups: East Coast, West Coast, and the Great Lakes/Central area. The groups engaged in a realistic appraisal of ministry in their areas, using as criteria the observations made by John Douglass Hall in his book, "Has the Church a Future?"

Among the official acts of the Council was the recommendation of the ordination of Kenneth Owen Turley and the recognition of the Rev. Dr. Robert Bossdorf, faculty member of the Swedenborg School of Religion, as a minister acting under the rules of Convention.

The Council recommended to Convention that David Sonmor, Henry Korsten, and John Bennett, Lay Ministers from the Western Canada Conference, be granted status as Authorized Candidates for Ministry for the coming year, with prescribed work to be carried out under the direction of the Swedenborg School of Religion faculty, and with the hope and expectation of their ordination in 1986.

Officers elected for the coming year included Chair, Richard H. Tafel, Jr.; Secretary, F. Gardiner Perry, III; Executive Committee member, Paul Martin Grumman; CAM member, Richard Baxter; and Convention Preacher for 1987, Jaikoo Lee.

In a resolution sent by telegram, the

Council of Ministers expressed its appreciation to the Rev. Richard H. Tafel for thirty-six years of excellent, sensitive service to the Church in his editorship of **Our Daily Bread**. The new editor is the Rev. Richard H. Tafel, Jr.

The ministerial team of the Western Canadian Conference presented a position paper on homosexuality and discussion followed. As a continuing step in the educational process, it was voted to appoint a committee to engage in further study of the whole subject of human sexuality. Previous studies and papers will be made available to the committee as resource material.

The Committee on Goals and Priorities made a progress report and offered recommendations to the Council as to where emphasis should be placed in the allocation of human and financial resources. One recommendation was that the church should give continued support to the development of growth centers. A panel on Tuesday evening described seven centers now in existence or in the planning/dreaming stage.

Following the panel presentation and discussion period, the ministers divided into four interest groups: wedding ministries, counseling ministries, parish issues and growth/renewal centers.

We were privileged to enjoy the participation of five students from the Swedenborg School of Religion. Donna Keane, Donna Sloan and Marlene Laughlin, as advanced students, presented Plans of Ministry for review and consideration by the Council. □



Laurie Turley, Carole Rienstra, Marge Ball, Kim Kearns and Julie Egger provided celebratory dance for this year's ordination service.

The Children had a program to present to the business session.



Gib Heddaeus (right) of Pittsburgh wins out over Fred Burdett of Boston for the distinction of "Oldest Members At Convention."



The Revs. Susan Turley-Moore (left) and Gladys Wheaton find time to share laughs and hugs.



New Urbana University President, the Rev. Paul Bunnell, addresses the convention.



Many people were able to experience Almont's new "lake" for the first time.





*The Rev. Ron, Val and Toby Brugler: Ron overhears someone suggesting that the Michigan Association host next year's convention, too.*



*Kim Kearns and Steve Pults of Boston catch a rare spare moment.*



*We were entertained by the delightful Gaelic Tradition.*



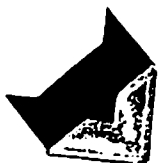
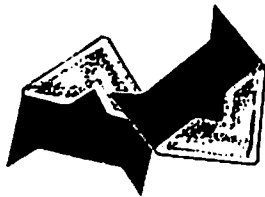
*Dorie Litchfield and son, Benjamin: Benjamin was the youngest at convention this year.*



*Rev. Richard Tafel of Cincinnati prepares to score a big one for his side.*



*Convention-goers arrive for their day at the Almont New Church Assembly.*



# Music&Movement: Growth in Many Dimensions

Donna LaRue

As we explored the ways in which art may enhance and express worship in the **Music and Movement Workshop** at Almont, we grew technically, personally, and spiritually. Our goals were to cover music for the Convention and Pre-Convention Conference; to present history, practical information, and technical work that could undergird our participation in danced worship during the Opening Service; and to explore the realms of artwork, poetry, music, drumming, and dance for personal enjoyment, and their usefulness in reaching out to others. We sought to do these things in a context of prayer, nurturance, and playfulness; to develop our own strengths in areas of previous competence; and to seek new expressions for our creativity and love of God.

We dared to expect a lot. But we felt as though—in the 8 sessions from Sunday through Wednesday—most of those goals were achieved! The group grew in depth of commitment to and in caring for each of its members. Both leaders (Laurie Turley and Donna LaRue) sensed close connections between themselves, and with each participant. And the participants expressed their sense of individual growth as well:

"...An intense experience. As one who loves to dance, I was challenged, shown, helped, encouraged, expected to perform, pushed to create, and worked. It was a fine and exciting experience. There **is** prayer in dance and regeneration in the doing of it..."

"...I found a sense of order, focus, spirituality, fun, growth, (both individual and group), inspiration, and practical use..."

"...It seems to me that the most important part of liturgical dance is the Spirit working through the dancers to help the congregation feel the prayer in dance. I was allowed to have fun, let loose, and create. It was a safe place to be... what a great group! There are too many people sitting lifeless in the pews. I hope they can rejoice with us when we dance. It was fun to relate with people in the workshop in new ways rather than the old relationships."

"...In daily life I use mainly my head, hands, and heart, and discovered in this dance workshop

that my feet had turned to clay! Learning to re-use my body, I regained the wholeness of my childhood when everything rejoiced together.

This workshop was a rare luxury."

"...This workshop has been a marvellous introduction to liturgical dance. Donna and Laurie led us

to know some of the mechanics of movement and helped us choreograph our own performance. Now I'll enter with more understanding into the experience of watching dance performances... I'll be much more aware of what the dancers are trying to express." □



Music and Movement Workshop session in progress.

## Pre-Convention Conference Workshop

Ron Davies

'Seeing is believing' they say. So spending four tightly-packed days at Almont turned out to be a lot more than just seeing the Church camp there in a full flush of activity.

Those of us who went to Almont, Michigan, for the P.C.C. workshop were there to participate, and that meant sharing—if only for a few days—in much of what went on. The activity at camp showed us an important part of the Church's work and that is a world removed from just being told or reading about it. It meant close interaction with most of the leaders and many of the Church members from across the country and from Canada. And that has to be a very meaningful experience to those who consider their Church to be an important part of their lives.

The workshop itself was once again the highly successful event that we have come to expect. This year this was all the more so because Lorraine Sando—who was missed so much last year—returned as moderator so that together with Laura Lawson Tucker the team was back again working in its always totally professional way. The Convention theme of "Communication" was just what a discipline like that of the P.C.C. workshop is all about. The emphasis was on an exploration into our abilities to communicate with ourselves, with our Creator, with the rest of the world; the thrust of the whole seminar being devoted to an in-depth exercise from which we all gained new insights. A particularly effective example of this was an analysis of the change process that demonstrated a step by step progres-

sion to attaining higher levels of awareness. This was clearly a useful tool that could be used in virtually any area and we certainly learned a lot right there. We received a most valuable contribution from Dr. Dorothea Harvey, who talked about Swedenborgian Communication, and from Rev. Horand Gutfeldt, who addressed himself to Spiritual Experience. He led the group through techniques on the subject. Both were highly appreciated.

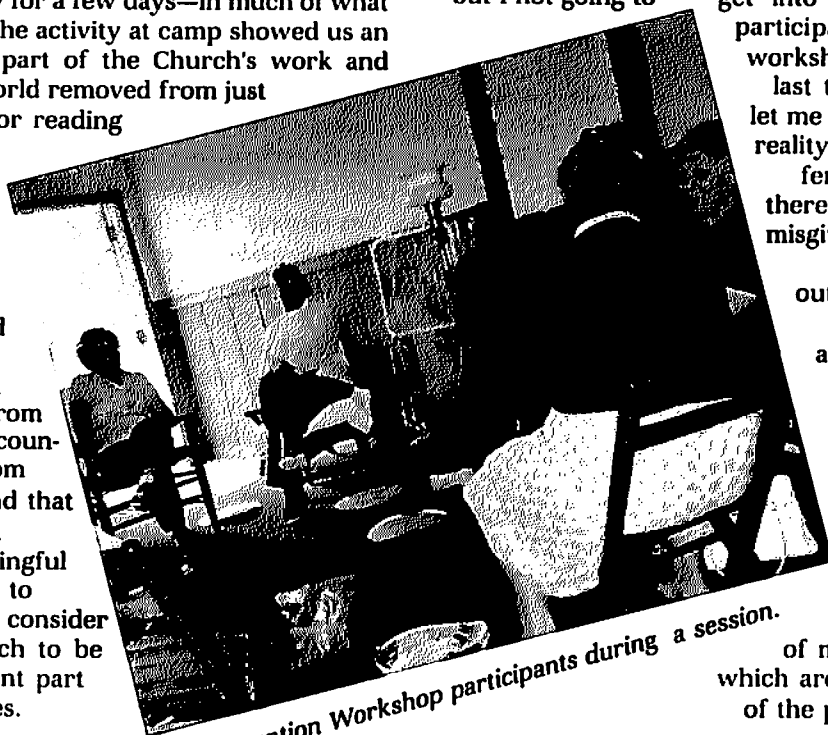
To some readers, all this might sound like a terribly serious business, with possibly high levels of personal risk for those involved. Such persons would probably think, yes, it would be great for others, but not for themselves; by responding, in short, "O.K. but I not going to

get into that." As a participant at these workshops for the last three years, let me say that the reality is quite different. Where there were initial misgivings, these were soon outweighed by the sense of achievement, often the sheer joy, of the shared experience.

To go further, let me share some of my thoughts which are also those of the participants.

Our church has, in these workshops, a valuable and superbly moderated forum open to all its members. The expense is little more than nominal. Surprisingly, it is not getting the attendance that it merits. While the recollection of this year's P.C.C. is fresh it is a good time to state very clearly that those persons who were fortunate enough to have participated concluded unanimously that they had a most meaningful experience, that they wish to make this known to *The Messenger's* readership. We enthusiastically invite people to sign up for it next summer. It really has to be experienced to be believed.

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Pre-Convention Workshop participants during a session.

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# People and Places

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## **"Angels of Swedenborg" Touring Country**

Believe it or not, a modern play, produced by a professional Manhattan theater group and entitled "Angels of Swedenborg," is currently travelling the country and may be coming to your city soon. Ping Chong, artistic director of the adventurous Fiji Theater Company, has taken his fifth play on the road. "Angels of Swedenborg" was inspired by the life of Emanuel Swedenborg, according to Chong, whom he sees as a metaphor for the modern person: the scientifically oriented mind which studies everything from the material perspective, yet always asking, "Where is the soul?" "And the realization, of course, was that science wasn't going to tell him. What it comes down to is that man will never know all that he wants to know because he's only part of the grand scheme, part of the universe."

Chong, 38, is a recognized and well-established artist. A winner of numerous awards and grants, an author, director, designer and filmmaker, he has produced several plays that have toured the country with considerable success. "Angels of Swedenborg" uses video, computer-driven light and sound system, along with some extraordinary design elements, to achieve an effect that one Chicago drama critic described as "an ethereal fable... juxtaposing the timeless heavens of the angels with the transitory world of men."

The work reflects Chong's interest in the modern world, with its emphasis upon scientific truth and its underlying desperate quest for metaphysical truth. For Chong, technology and myth overlap—and frequently clash. Swedenborg's own life and quest for truth epitomize this marriage of a seeming duality.

"Angels of Swedenborg" has played in the Twin Cities and Chicago. During the course of the upcoming season, it will tour in Cincinnati, St. Louis and other major cities. For more information, you may write to: Fiji Theater Company, 260 Elizabeth St., New York, NY 10012.

## **California Swedenborgian Published in "Guideposts"**

Betsy Young, member of the Board of Managers of the Swedenborg School of Religion and of the Board of Directors of Wayfarers' Chapel, has published a short piece in Norman Vincent Peale's monthly magazine, "Guideposts," which has subscriptions in the millions. In the July, 1985 issue on page 19 under the section, "His Mysterious Ways," Betsy Young relates a thought-provoking day she and her husband, Bob, a Swedenborgian Minister, experienced a few days his death.

## **Fryeburg Junior Choir Performs Swedenborgian Play**

The Junior Choir of the Church of the New Jerusalem, Fryeburg, Maine, performed the play, "The Worm That Flew," at the annual meeting of the Massachusetts Association in Boston. The play was adopted from an article by the staff of the New Jerusalem Productions Company of the St. Louis Swedenborgian Church, with consultation from Dr. H. Kirven of the Swedenborg School of Religion. The play follows the adventurous journey of a worm which experiences the spiritual quality of each of the seven churches of Asia Minor related in the Book of Revelation.

## **San Francisco Church Recognized**

In a feature editorial last February, the San Francisco Examiner drew particular attention to the Church of the New Jerusalem, near downtown San Francisco, for its historical and architectural merit. On March 24, the Examiner reviewed a recent book entitled, *Places of Worship In And Around San Francisco*. One sentence read, "The famous cathedrals, missions, chapels, temples and synagogues are included, of course, but Munroe also takes us to lesser known gems such as San Francisco's Church of the New Jerusalem, Swedenborgian, founded in 1867, Mediterranean-styled and with designs by A. Page Brown, the Ferry Building architect, and his early draftsman, Bernard Maybeck."

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### **Pawnee Rock Organist Retires After 65 Years**

She has outlasted six ministers and provided piano and organ music for services of all kinds since 1920, when she began as the church pianist at the age of 14. Edna Welch is turning in the organ keys after these many years of excellent service to the Church of the New Jerusalem, Pawnee Rock, Kansas. A reception, honoring her long service to the church, was held on Sunday, May 19th, in Pawnee Rock.

### **Kitchener Church Offers Innovative Workshop**

"Evoking the Hidden Mask" was the title of a workshop by Connie Gallotti at the Church of the Good Shepherd in Kitchener, Ontario on May 25th. Designed for people with both a playful spirit and a desire to explore their inner world, the workshop looked at the masks of society as well as the Hidden Mask of the "deeper self." Each person created their face as a statement of their living reality. Drawing upon the tools of humor, music and metaphor, the adventurous group of participants treated themselves to a fun and depthful day.

### **Swedenborgian Artist Featured**

George Inness, a renowned Swedenborgian American artist, was treated in the June 14th issue of the official journal of the American Medical Association. Inness' rendering of Niagara Falls is featured on the cover of the color glossy magazine. The inside notes discuss the development of his art and philosophy: "In 1864, Inness met William Page, an American painter, who introduced him to the writing of Emanuel Swedenborg. Inness' religious background was dissenting Protestantism, but like other American romantics, he found Swedenborg's concept of divine imminence most attractive and came to believe that in painting landscape, he was displaying the mind of God."

### **New Literature Available**

Three new pamphlets are now available from the Central Office. As part of the series entitled *Swedenborgians See It This Way*, "Ethics in Business and the Professions" by Gustave J. Bischof and "Through the Valley of Death" by Marilyn Turley have been recently issued and are free. The Massachusetts New Church Union generously underwrote Mrs. Turley's pamphlet, and the Swedenborg Press in Newton, Massachusetts underwrote Mr. Bischof's piece. The third pamphlet is a very attractive 30 page short biography of Swedenborg, published by the Swedenborg Foundation and written by the late Sig Synnestvedt. The

cost is \$1.00 each. Write to: Central Office, 48 Sargent St., Newton, Mass. 02158.

### **Almont New Church Assembly Achieves Distinction**

The Michigan Historical Commission has recognized Almont New Church Assembly as an official Historic Site. The stately Swedenborgian family camp and retreat center will receive an official state identification marker noting the name of the site and the year of its listing. In a letter to the camp, the Director of the Bureau of History, Martha M. Bigelow writes: "The Commission has judged (the Almont New Church Assembly) to be historically and architecturally significant."

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## **Posthumous Recognition of Rev. Dr. C.E. Turley**

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The Board of Elders wants to take this opportunity to express our gratitude for the life of Dr. Calvin Turley.

We want to honor him in the presence of those he loved most: His wife, Mrs. Marilyn Turley, and children Kenneth, Cindy, Susan and Matthew; and you, the members and clergy of the Church of the New Jerusalem.

Dr. Turley will long be remembered by us for his work in helping to found the Homophile Community Health Service of Boston; for his years of pastoral care and supervision of many gay men and lesbians; for his encouragement and support for clergy and lay leaders of the Universal Fellowship Metropolitan Community Churches; and for his efforts within their families and friends.

We give thanks to God for Dr. Turley's positive and caring ministry.

In Christ,

Rev. Troy D. Perry

Moderator, Board of Elders

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**General Convention—1985****Elections**

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Entitled to Vote: 152		Ballots cast: 143	VOTES
Vice President:	Frederick G. Perry (NH)	1 year	138
Recording Secretary:	Dorothy deB. Young (MA)	1 year	139
Treasurer:	August A. Ebel (MD)	1 year	142
General Council Minister:	Reverend F. Robert Tafel (MA)	4 years	135
Laypersons:	Virginia Branston (NY)	4 years	128
Board of Education	Laura H. Lawson Tucker (VT)	3 years	131
Board of Communication	Carol Lawson (VA)	4 years	134
Augmentation Fund	Marilyn Turley (MA)	3 years	137
CAM (Committee on Admission into the Ministry)	Reverend Gladys Wheaton (OH)	1 year	125
	Elizabeth Johnson (WA)	1 year	131
Board of Missions Minister:	Reverend Eric Allison (CAN)	3 years	72
Layperson:	Lisa Reddekopp (CAN)	3 years	132
Board of Managers—Swedenborg School of Religion	Reverend Jaikoo Lee (CA)	3 years	107
	Margaret Kraus (KS)	3 years	103
	Mary Crenshaw (MI)	3 years	99
Nominating Committee	Arthur James (NY)	5 years	69

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**It's Your Move!**

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A "challenge pledge" of up to \$25,000 has been most generously offered by the Boston Society to generate contributions to the newly established Advanced Degree Education Fund.

This Fund was established by General Council to grant financial assistance to Swedenborg School of Religion students studying for advanced degrees (Masters and Doctorates) at other seminaries while en-

rolled at S.S.R. prior to ordination. This is a dollar-for-dollar matching pledge.

Please send pledges or checks to Capt. August. Ebel, Treasurer, 48 Sargent Street, Newton, MA 02158. Please make checks payable to General Convention and indicate on check that the contribution is for the advanced degree education fund. All contributions received by October 31, 1985, will qualify for matching funds.

## CHURCH RECORDS

### Confirmations

**Greene**—Geraldine Greene was confirmed into the life of the General Convention of Swedenborgian Churches at the Church of the New Jerusalem, Fryeburg, Maine, on May 26, 1985, the Rev. David L. Rienstra officiating.

**Macdonald**—Tracy Macdonald, daughter of Penny Macdonald and granddaughter of Gwynne Dresser Mack, was confirmed into the life of the General Convention of Swedenborgian Churches at the Church of the New Jerusalem, Fryeburg, Maine, on April 21, 1985, the David L. Rienstra officiating.

### Deaths

**Bell**—Merton L. Bell entered the spiritual world on April 6, 1985. Resurrection services were held on April 9, 1985 at the Church of the New Jerusalem, Fryeburg, Maine, The Rev. David L. Rienstra officiating.

**Hargrave**—Louise Hall Hargrave, aunt of Carol (Hargrave) Lawson, Perry Martin and Wickham Skinner, associated for many years with the Cincinnati Swedenborgian Church, entered into the spiritual world on July 4, 1985. Memorial services were held in her home in Cincinnati on July 7, 1985, the Rev. Rachel VR Martin officiating.

**Sawatzky**—Jake H. Sawatzky, 89, of the Western Canada Conference, entered into the spiritual world on April 26, 1985. Resurrection services were held at Pentacostal Lighthouse Church, Meadow Lake, Saskatchewan on April 29, 1985, the Rev. David L. Sonmore officiating.

**Spiers**—The Rev. John W. Spiers, 93, entered into the spiritual world on May 8, 1985 in Loma Linda, California. At his request, no memorial services were held, though the Riverside Swedenborgian Church had a time of silent meditation and prayer the following Sunday, led by the Rev. Susan Turley-Moore. Rev. Spiers served several Convention Swedenborgian Churches, including the Los Angeles, San Diego, Chicago and Riverside, California churches.

**Spiers**—Tomas H. Spiers, 90, Executive Secretary Emeritus of the Swedenborg Foundation and brother of the late John W. Spiers, entered into the spiritual world on July 11, 1985, as this *Messenger* was going to press. Memorial services not yet scheduled.

**Unger**—Jacob Unger, 82, lifelong member of the General Convention, entered into the spiritual world on Feb. 6, 1985 in Laird, Saskatchewan. Resurrection services were

held on February 9, 1985, the Rev. David L. Sonmore officiating.

**Very**—Marjorie Very, daughter of the Swedenborgian scholar Dr. Frank Very, and longtime member of the Boston Church of the New Jerusalem, entered into the spiritual world on January 23, 1985. Resurrection services were held on January 26, 1985 at the Boston Church, the Rev. G. Steven Ellis officiating and Dr. Perry Martin delivering the eulogy.

## LETTERS

### On Evil

Dear Editor,

I have just read your editorial on the problem of evil in the May *Messenger*. It put me in mind of a story I once read on the book, "The Song of the Bird," by Anthony de Mello, S.J.:

"A girl in the fishing village became an unwed mother and, after several beatings, finally revealed who the father of her child was: the Zen Master who meditated all day in the temple outside the village.

The parents of the girl and a large group of villagers marched upon the temple, rudely disturbed the Master's meditation, abused him for his hypocrisy and told him that, since he was the father of the child, he should now bear the burden of bringing it up. All the Masters said in reply was, 'Very well. Very well.' "

He picked the baby up from the floor, when the crowd had left, and made arrangements for a woman from the village to feed and clothe and look after it at his expense.

The Master's name was ruined. No one came to him for instruction any more.

When this had gone on for a whole year, the girl who had borne the child could stand it no longer and finally confessed that she had lied. The father of the child was the boy next door.

The parents and all the villagers were most contrite. They prostrated themselves at the feet of the Master to beg his pardon and to ask for the child back. The Master returned the child. And all he said was, 'Very well. Very well.' "

I thought this was a comment on the problem of evil.

Ruth Seekamp Ference  
Burlington, Calif

### Church Architecture

Dear Editor,

I would like to issue a request to all readers of **The Messenger**: I am working on a book that examines architecture from the Swedenborgian perspective. Pictures, line drawings, snapshots and information of any kind will be greatly appreciated. All responses should be sent to:

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### TABLE OF CONTENTS

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#### Articles

- 
- |     |                                                 |                              |
|-----|-------------------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 139 | The Church: Between Two Images                  | <i>Randall E. Laakko</i>     |
| 142 | Closer to the Heart                             | <i>F. Gardiner Perry III</i> |
| 144 | Navigating the Inner World                      | <i>James F. Lawrence</i>     |
| 145 | Highlights of Convention                        | <i>Dorothy deB. Young</i>    |
| 148 | General Council Report                          | <i>Dorothy deB. Young</i>    |
| 149 | Swedenborgians in the Mainstream                | <i>Charles "Pat" Shelley</i> |
| 151 | Council of Ministers Report                     | <i>Ernest O. Martin</i>      |
| 154 | Music and Movement                              | <i>Donna LaRue</i>           |
| 155 | Pre-Convention Workshop                         | <i>Ron Davies</i>            |
| 157 | Posthumous Recognition of Rev. Dr. C. E. Turley | <i>Rev. Troy Perry</i>       |
| 158 | Elections                                       |                              |
| 158 | It's Your Move                                  | <i>Boston Society</i>        |
- 

#### Departments

- 
- |     |                   |                          |
|-----|-------------------|--------------------------|
| 138 | Editorial         | <i>James F. Lawrence</i> |
| 156 | People and Places |                          |
| 159 | Records           |                          |
| 159 | Letters           |                          |
- 
-