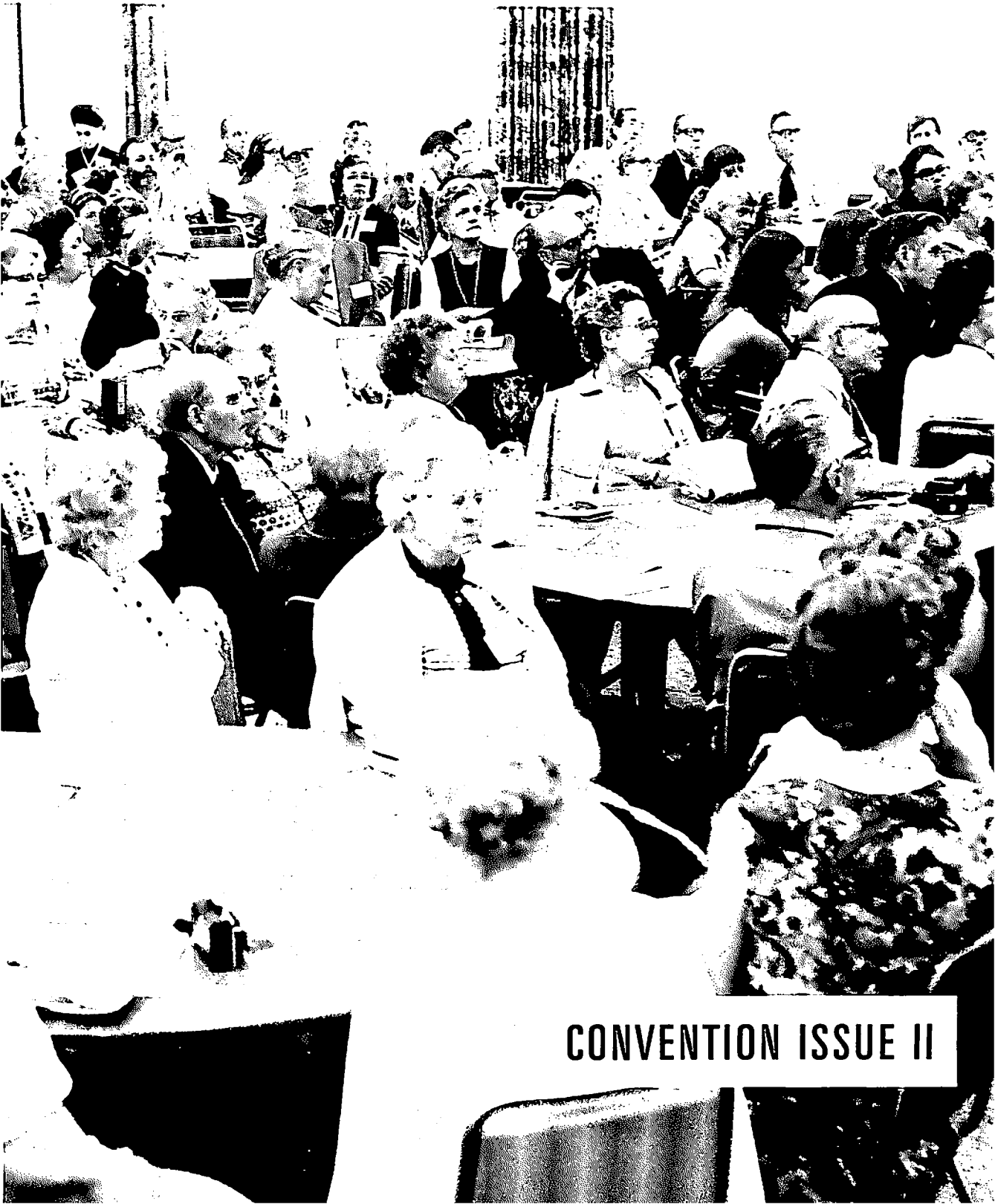


THE MESSENGER

Official Organ of the Swedenborgian Church

SEPTEMBER 1973



CONVENTION ISSUE II

CONVENTION: A TEST OF COMMITMENT

PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

The theme of our convention last year was "Search for Oneness," and that was the subject of my opening address. George Dole spoke eloquently on "The Price of Oneness." Ernest Frederick, our convention preacher, spoke of the basic or essential teachings that serve as the foundation of our church and give us ground for oneness. He also stressed the need for tolerance, understanding, and for givenness.

In our acceptance of the essential teachings of the church, set forth in the heavenly doctrines of the New Jerusalem, we have a basis for oneness that to my mind is greater than that of any other church. One would expect that Swedenborgians (or New Churchmen) would experience an unusual harmony in their relationships because of their commitment to a common faith.

But, alas, this harmony has never existed. Right from the beginnings of our church in England, there have been strong differences that threatened to tear the group apart. There were violent arguments as to whether adherents to the teachings of Swedenborg need separate from the established church. The Separatists, led by Robert Hindmarsh, granted the Non-Separatists, led by John Clowes, the right to act in freedom according to conscience, but warned their brethren that the immortal souls of their children and grandchildren would be in jeopardy if they retained their ties with "the Old Church."

When the church was established in the United States, other differences arose to divide us, such as the best form of church government-congregational or episcopal, the nature of the ministry, philosophy of education, and the interpretation of *Conjugial Love*. For a time the Boston church and its minister were ostracized by Convention members because of the "heretical" position taken in regard to the relation between a church and its minister.

In her history of the New Church in America, Marguerite Block devoted considerable attention to the liberal-conservative tension of the 1930's. We have never really resolved this tension, and it is doubtful that we can, although the issues vary somewhat from decade to decade.



Pres. Ernest Martin addresses the opening of Convention

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Officers of Convention: Rev. Ernest O. Martin, President, 48 Sargent St. Newton, Mass. 02158; Adolph T. Liebert, Vice President, 626 Park Place, Pittsburgh, Pa. 15237; Mrs. Wilfred Rice, Recording Secretary, 31 Poole St., Brockton, Mass. 02401; Chester T. Cook, Treasurer, P. O. Box 25, Deer Isle, Maine 04627

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Robert H. Kirven, Editor

Miss Margaret Kirven, Lay-out Assistant

Address all editorial correspondence and manuscripts to the Editor, The Messenger, P. O. Box E, Newton, Mass. 02158. The opinions of contributors do not necessarily reflect the views of the Editor or the Department of Publication, or represent the position of the church.

Battle lines have been drawn on the issue of our theological school ever since the establishment of the school. Elders in the church can recall the political struggles for control of the school in the 30's and 40's. In the late 40's the school closed for a year as a special committee sought to reorganize the school.

I can recall this very vividly, for I entered the school in September, 1948, in the midst of the reorganization. Some suggested that I go to England to get *real* training for the ministry at the British Conference seminary. Others said that would be a backward step and urged me to stick it out in Cambridge and take a full course of study at the Harvard Divinity School.

In the 1960's the controversy over the theological school centered on the relocation question. Should we sell our property to Harvard and move? If we moved, should it be to California, Urbana, Newton, or down the street in Cambridge?

Now, in the 70's, the attack on the school centers on whether the students are being given sufficient indoctrination in the teachings of Swedenborg, or whether students should be accepted who are not ready to take ordination vows. All sorts of side issues are raised, but the fundamental disagreement seems to be on how broadly or narrowly we define "Swedenborgian." In the report from the Council of Ministers and the Board of Managers of the school, you will hear more about this controversy and the ways it has been dealt with in the last months, and especially the last few days.

I have focused on the theological school as one example of issues that have threatened to split us, and to destroy the organization. We have survived the battles of the 30's, the 40's, the 50's, and the 60's, and hopefully we can make it into the 80's. (I don't know, though. On Tuesday of this week the Council of Ministers had on their agenda a panel discussion of the church in 1984. We became so embroiled over the church in 1973 that we had to scratch the 1984 question altogether.)

I could be philosophical about all this and say that the church has had squabbles all through its history and we still have a church. So,—what's there to worry about?

Yes, we still exist, but we are a shattered organization. Much of our energy is spent in attacking, defending, patching up, and commiserating with one

another. Ministers and laymen have spoken about their dread of this year's convention. I personally had fantasies of spending the week by a quiet lake in Maine, as a most attractive alternative to the hassles of a convention. Who knows how many people, over the years, have left the church, or have become inactive, because of the spirit of conflict and dissension?

In my address last year on unity and diversity, I asked: "What range of differences can we accept or tolerate in the church? How narrowly or broadly do we define the church? What ministries or programs are acceptable under the umbrella we call the church?"

If we cannot deal with these questions constructively, we face inevitable polarization, fragmentation, and disintegration as a church organization. The new Jerusalem may continue to descend, but there is no guarantee that the General Convention is necessary to the Lord's purpose or that it will survive.

The biggest religious news story of the last year has been the impending split in the 5 million member Missouri Synod Lutheran Church. The conservative wing of the church retained control by a narrow margin at their recent convention in New Orleans, and now they demand theological conformity. A markedly conservative board of control was elected for their theological school in St. Louis and the board's commission is to correct instances of teaching "false doctrine."

Do we have the commitment and the ability to work together as a church, in spite of our differences in attitudes, doctrinal positions, and personal loyalties? Our behavior at our annual conventions is a test of this commitment and ability. For guidance in our annual sessions, let us look to the words of our forebears. At the convention in New York in 1821, the following committee report was unanimously adopted:

"Periodical Conventions are very useful and pleasant. The occasional meeting of our brethren from different sections of the Union, for the purpose of interchanging sentiments on Church affairs and spiritual subjects generally, is known to be salutary in more than one point of view. It increases love and promotes truth. It strengthens the timid and consoles the dejected. It scatters flowers in the thorny path of regeneration, and causes us to remember that we have our dearest friends for fellow travellers. But, above all, it concentrates a number

of individual spheres in one grand orbit of usefulness; and we know that it is only in the harmonious arrangement of distinct parts that a perfect whole can be formed . . . Under these impressions, your committee are unanimously of opinion that a *General Convention* of the New Church in the United States should take place *Annually*."

You may not have thought of yourselves as "fellow travellers along the thorny path of regeneration," but it's an apt and challenging concept. If we are to move along the path together, we must develop a spirit of trust and openness. We must accept differences as healthy and inevitable, and learn to live with them, although we strive to expand our areas of agreement.

It is frustrating to find people outside the church unwilling to accept the reasonableness of our teachings. It is just as frustrating, and perhaps more so, to find fellow members unwilling or unable to accept our point of view. We somehow feel that all good, loyal Swedenborgians should be in basic agreement with one another.

Liberals, moderates, and conservatives all have a place in the church, and contributions to make. We should all push our ideas, plans, and dreams with all the enthusiasm and ability we can muster, but be ready to accept the right of others to hold their convictions and to act according to them. We must avoid win-lose situations in which the alternative to agreement is division and separation.

Individually and collectively may we prove faithful to the trust the Lord has placed in us so that we may be a church in the fullest sense. Swedenborg's definition of the church can thus inspire us: "The Church consists of those who from the heart acknowledge the Divine of the Lord, who learn truths from Him by the Word, and do them. . . Every one who lives in the good of charity and of faith is a Church and a Kingdom of the Lord."

Ernest O. Martin

NEW URBANA COLLEGE PRESIDENT

Mr. Roland Patzer has been named President of Urbana College, it was announced at Convention by President Ernest Martin, Chairman of the college's Board of Trustees. A former Dean of Students at the University of Vermont, presently on assignment in Washington with the Department of Health, Education and Welfare, Mr. Patzer assumes his duties in Urbana Sept. 1. More details will be announced later.

GRADUATE'S ADDRESS

by Matthew S.P. Glowe

*I wait for the Lord; my soul waits,
and in his word I hope*

These lines, taken from Psalm 130, express fittingly, I feel, my outlook for my coming ministry in the service of the Lord on behalf of His Church in the New Jerusalem. It seems that for most of my life I have been waiting for the Lord to guide and to direct me in the ways He would best want me to serve. I can well remember back some twenty-eight years ago, in 1945, when I first came upon the writings of Emanuel Swedenborg. I happened to discover a paperback copy of *Heaven and Its Wonders and Hell*, priced ten cents, in a little Army War Surplus store, that had, as part of its stock, a small collection of used books. The title immediately intrigued me for it seemed this was precisely what I was searching for these past, approximately two years. I had not been satisfied with any of the traditional Protestant beliefs, nor with the Roman Catholic faith, for none of them seemed to give any solid explanation of man's eventual destiny. This key question had always been uppermost in my mind, namely, "what happens to man after death?" Finally, it looked as though there might be some explanation of this age-long question of mankind available from this book, if the title, *Heaven and Its Wonders and Hell*, lived up to its true promise. I bought the book and read it and was most impressed. However, what captivated me most particularly was that each time I read it I found I got much more out of it. A clear, valid explanation was given to me as to the nature of man's real destiny in this life and in the hereafter. Everything was boiled down to a logical understanding of the basic issues of God's relationship with man and of man's relationship with God. I was most happy, too, in noticing the book's underlying emphasis on the oneness of God's personhood—a fact that certainly was not clear to me from the concept of the Trinity as expressed in the orthodox churches, and was one of the chief reasons why I wanted to leave traditional church dogma and to strike out on my own, if necessary. Having the tendency to be logically oriented in my thinking all of my life, and especially towards religion, the feeling that I would have to accept the so-called "mystery" of the Trinity on faith alone was not enough. I wanted to reason it out and now at last I was given great help in this matter through this book as revealed from the enlightened inspiration of its author. As I gradually came to read other books by Swedenborg, such as

Divine Providence, Divine Love and Wisdom and True Christian Religion, I became more and more convinced that, someday, I would want to devote my life to the New Church in a most direct, practical way. This opportunity never really presented itself until four years ago. During the intervening years I had become involved in teaching and, whereas I liked to work and found it rewarding, somehow, always at the back of my mind, I was determined to serve the church. I do thank the Lord that He provided me the opportunity, when He did, to serve, for I truly feel, that having waited for Him all these years and having hoped in his word that somehow, someday, He would find a place for me to serve Him, He never let me down but saw to it that the fitting opportunity became available.

During all these past four years of my theological training, my wife has stood by me to give me invaluable support and incentive to carry on to reach the point I already have attained. I have no doubt that she will continue her inspired work on my behalf in order to fulfil the purposes of my parish ministry that I have aspired towards. My mother has also stood by and given me valuable encouragement in the work that I have been committed to do. Also, in this connection, it would be remiss for me not to thank the Swedenborg School of Religion, its staff members, its boards, the Augmentation Board, and above all, YOU, the people of Convention, as a whole, for your constant support and financial help I have had during this time. I would also, like to personally thank the people of the Kitchener Church and their minister, the Reverend Paul Zacharias, for giving me such a valuable insight into the many ways and diverse workings of a parish church in a community setting. The experience I have gained this year in this respect I shall always treasure and hold most profitable.

In starting out to serve my first parish, my soul waits for the Lord and hopes in his word that I may exert some tiny influence in the overall shaping of our church body into a strong, cohesive unified force, working on behalf of the Lord's kingdom in this world, in order to help bring to man a renewed strength of purpose and a fuller realization of his true Christian ideals. We have so much to offer the world, desperately hungry as it is for any kind of spiritual insights, that it is a shame that the beautiful truths as put forth in the writings of Emanuel Swedenborg are not being utilized even

more than they are. I think that when we learn, as a body of co-workers, to put our differences away, and to recognize the full worth of each other, different in outlook though he may be, then we can go far to not only live harmoniously with one another but also to reach out to others in a true spirit of Christian love and charity. We can then set the example before these others, that seeing the true spirit of charity shining through in our lives, they may want to emulate us and to get to know us better. In such a way, a larger Christian brotherhood is formed, based on charity, which Swedenborg says, is the essence of all religion and the only possible unifying force for all peoples, regardless of nationality, race, color or creed.

Speaking earlier of reaching out to others, I wait for the Lord and hope in his word that I, too, can contribute something positive in this regard for the overall welfare of our church. I feel fortunate that I have had some training in hospital chaplaincy, a work that, to me, is most satisfying and represents a definite reaching out to others of whatever denomination they may be, or of no formal Christian church affiliation whatsoever. I feel that here, I have a wonderful opportunity of showing to others my Swedenborgian ideals in a most practical way. I pray that the Lord may continue to guide me in this work, done in conjunction with my regular duties as parish minister, so that I can better fulfill the spirit of his word in my life.

I came upon, in my reading recently, a poem, from an anonymous source, that speaks to me so clearly the way I have felt and do still feel about how I have been influenced to serve the Lord in the ways He sees fitting for me to do. It goes as follows:

*I sought the Lord, and afterward I knew
He moved my soul to seek Him, seeking me;
It was not I that found, O Saviour true,
No, I was found of Thee.*

*Thou didst reach forth Thy hand and mine
enfold;
I walked and sank not on the storm-vexed sea,—
'Twas not so much that I on Thee took hold,
As Thou, dear Lord, on me.*

*I find, I walk, I love, but, O the whole
Of love is but my answer, Lord, to Thee;
For Thou wert long before-hand with my soul,
Always Thou lovedst me.*

Exploring New Directions for New Church Education

SUNDAY SCHOOL ASSOCIATION

The American New Church Sunday School Association met Thursday morning (July 19), at 9:00 a.m. In two hours of business session, a number of issues were discussed and actions taken, which will be reported in a later issue of The Messenger. The following officers were elected for the coming year:

President: Marian J. Kirven

Vice-President: Horand K. Gutfeldt

Secretary: Ola-Mae Wheaton

Treasurer: Daniel Nielsen

Ch., Teacher Training Comm.: Margaret W. Briggs

Ch., A.V. Resources Comm.: Louise D. Woofenden

Ch., Extension Services Comm.: Naomi Walton

Ch., Lesson Comm.: Franklin H. Blackmer

Ch., Nominating Comm.: Ann Nielsen



New SSA officers Ola-Mae Wheaton, Horand Gutfeldt, Franklin Blackmer, Margaret Briggs, and Marian Kirven

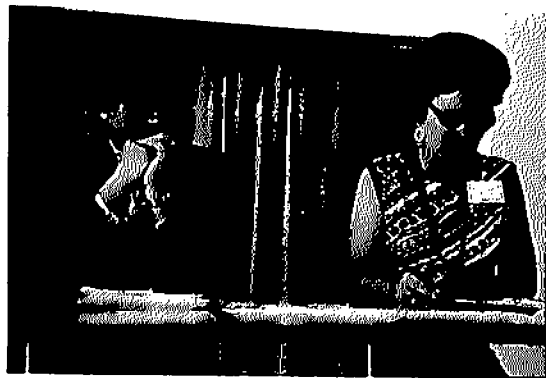
The following appeal by the retiring President of the Sunday School Association, the Rev. Dr. Horand Gutfeldt, is included here for information, and in search of response from all who are concerned with Sunday Schools, and religious education in general, in our church.

A REQUEST FOR YOUR HELP!

by Horand Gutfeldt

The Sunday School Association needs your help to reconsider our educational efforts and programs to adapt them to the needs of the future.

The Executive Committee of the Association has reviewed the situation in our church as a whole: our schools are in a difficult phase of transition, as we all know. We have been made the scapegoat and blamed for conditions beyond our control. The increasing mobility of families has turned stable congregations in many cases into fluent and transitory assemblies that make traditional Sunday schools difficult, if not impossible to maintain. *Should we consider phasing out the Association?* This was seriously discussed. However, we felt that there seem to be possibilities for basic changes. Why should we put Sunday schools into the foreground at all? Perhaps we are hung up on a specific name! Maybe this is the time to understand our reason for existence anew. What is the real basic concern for the Association? If we see it in its bare essentials, it boils down to this: We are people who are concerned with religious instruction of the young generation. A greater flexibility will also offer a broader basis of cooperation with the Board of Education, which has been strongly looking to the future as well. With new directions we could channel the dedicated and experienced personnel and our funds towards useful and valuable projects.



Pres. Horand Gutfeldt and Sec. Ola-Mae Wheaton preside over meeting of Sunday School Association.

We ask for your opinions and recommendations to the following points: More help for parents; tape programs, stories, visual aids. Would weekday education be more successful? How is the present material being used: Reading verbatim? Discussion? Creative application? Selections? What teachers help would be appreciated? Follow-up of current lessons—experiences. Any other comments?

Please return your replies to the President, Marian Kirven, c/o The General Convention, 48 Sargent St., Newton, Mass. 02158

GRADUATE'S ADDRESS

by Yuzo Noda

Whether positively or negatively viewed, it has been a universal cry as well as universal affirmation that we have entered into the new stage of human history. People who confess that "I am very concerned with what's going on right now" can not ignore this fact. We have to deal with something unknown underlying in this new stage of our history.

What is that something new happening right now on this earth? Is it an appearance of so-called new consciousness? Is it a dying of old Christendom? Or is it a new omen of the kingdom of God within us? Is it a new revolution promising our future? Or might it be only the impact of modern technology?

My main task in this short talk is to see what Swedenborg had to say about this "something new," which has been the biggest concern both spiritually and physically for our human history. Swedenborg wrote in his *Coronis* as follows:

That there were four Churches in this earth from the day of creation; the first, which is to be called the Adamic; the second, which was the Noahtic; the third, which was the Israelitic; the fourth, which is the Christian.

That each Church had its four periods, that is, its successive states, which in the Word are meant by morning, noon-day, evening, and night. . . .

That after those four Churches there will arise a New Church, which was foretold in Daniel and in the Book of Revelation, and also by the Lord Himself in the Gospels.

Accordingly, it was revealed to Swedenborg that humanity had entered into a great transitional period, crossing the threshold into a new era. The old cycle was coming to an end and being replaced by a new one—a new church. Well, it has long been controversial about what is really meant by a new church when Swedenborg speaks about a "new church." The following view is needless to say, my own view and I consider it is one of many possible approaches we can take for this particularly important subject in this modern predicament.

Will you please picture the following situation in

your mind. You are right now on a very hilly mountain and in your imagination please pretend you are a pine tree. You can be a small pine or large, very high, or very tiny; or you may be a very young pine tree, or old, and so on.

Looking around, you will see not only many fellow pine trees, but also other kinds of trees, various stones and rocks. You may be under the shadow of a large pine, or you may have less wind and less sunshine because you are surrounded by bushes and rocks. You may have difficulty in growing because there are such hard rocks around you. You may be too small to receive sunshine being surrounded by large pines. Your roots may be over the big rocks because there are so many hard rocks around you that you cannot grow into the earth.

It seems there are hundreds of pines on that hilly mountain, but none seems like another. Each pine has its own growth according to its own circumstances. All pines grow upward and downward, to the right and to the left, but all grow differently.

Where are you now? What kind of pine tree are you? What kind of surroundings do you have? Do you have sufficient sunshine? Do you receive comfortable winds? Is the soil beneath you soft or hard? What kind of rocks do you see around you? What kind of neighbors do you have? Does your root go deep enough so that you can have water for your life? Can your trunk grow straight upward or do you have to grow twisted because of too many obstacles? Anyway, each pine grows uniquely, creatively, joyously, painfully, interrelatedly, independently, and so on.

Before we go further, let us meditate upon our own birth. By birth, I mean the moment when each seed of a pine tree falls down upon the earth; the moment of falling down, the very moment when each seed touches on the soil, the birth of the pine tree.

As we know, the seed of each pine contains the whole future tree in a latent form. But while all seeds have the same potential, each grows differently. Each seed falls to the particular space and in its own particular time. However, this specific time and specific space define the situation of each pine's growth. For instance, circumstances involve the quality of the soil, the kind of rocks and neighboring trees, the slope of the mountain, or its exposure to sun and wind. The latent totality of the pine in the seed responds to these circumstances

in such a way that it avoids the stones, rocks and other obstacles and climbs instead toward the sun and nourishment; thus, each tree's growth is uniquely shaped.

As it is clear from this picture of the pine trees, we understand how each individual grows differently, although we have the same latent potential within us. I would like to relate this to my own particular experience while I was in Japan. When I was baptized in the Lutheran Church at the age of seventeen, there appeared a constant question in my belief. My question was a conflict between my new belief in Christianity and my old belief in Zen Buddhism.

It was because of the teaching, "For God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him should not be lost, but should have eternal life" (*John 3:16*), it was natural for me to think that since Christianity came to Japan in the late 16th century, what about the salvation of those who had had no access to Jesus' name? Nobody in Japan was able to know Jesus until the time when the reformation had occurred in Europe.

My question may be trifling; if not, still it can be well answered theologically. However, my main point arises here. It seems my question was answered through the story of the mountain pine tree. Let's go back to the hilly mountain. Each pine tree grows uniquely and differently according to its own circumstances, and each tree finds the sun in his own direction; he may find it sooner or later than someone else. But the important thing is each one's growth and its seeing the sun from its own circumstance. It is the reality of each individual's unique growth.

Can we extend this experience further? How about the appearance of the various world religions? Now we can understand very clearly the role and purpose of the many world religions. They were like the particular and unique discoveries of sunshine among many different individuals' growth. The appearance and growth of each religion was circumstantial and historical, but essentially they were all of Divine Providence. The growth of world religions can be well compared with the growth of pine trees. They were circumstantially essential and historically necessary and—most importantly—it was the Divine Providence at work.

In my opening discussion, I quoted from Swedenborg about the coming of a New Church, the emergence of a new church. To me the coming of

this new church is a coming of a new era. And for Swedenborg that era is a new spiritual dimension wherein a new state of human consciousness is emerging universally beyond space, beyond East and West. We live right now in this "Beyond."

The uniqueness of each individual growth and the uniqueness of each world religion are becoming more and more unique to the extent that uniqueness grows into the universal. While the universal character in each pine seed grows differently, still each pine finds sunshine from his own direction; that is to say, every pine discovers sunshine universally but from his particulars.

This is the age where we have arrived. This new age is characterized by this "Beyond" in terms of not only spacial distance but also of spiritual distance. We have arrived into a new stage where a new synthesis has emerged. The New Church is the new spiritual age, where the uniqueness of each individual and the uniqueness of each world religion are not only deeply understood and respected but also appreciated and shared. To me, this is one of the most important characteristics in this new era.

Continued on page 170

KLONDIKE DAYS were being celebrated in Edmonton simultaneously. Friday night reception for Convention (above r.), featuring local



Gertrude Tremblay, Irene Dzeryk



ously with Convention. This annual event, commemorating Edmonton's rip-roaring past, furnished the theme of Western Canada's church people as the entertainers. Local ladies joined in the spirit with period costumes (see below).



Jean Gilchrist, Peggy McIntosh, and Muriel Bennett.



Irene Serink, Doris Tabler

Needless to say, it has been very much argued that Swedenborgianism is relevant not only to the West but also to the East. Swedenborgianism is more than Hinduism. Swedenborgianism is more than Zen Buddhism. Swedenborgianism is more than Islamism. Swedenborgianism is more than Confucianism. Swedenborgianism is more than Taoism. As we have learned from Swedenborg's writings, Swedenborgianism is more than so-called Christianity. That night of old Christianity has gone and we are now at the dawn of a new church. Swedenborgianism moves with these other religions but also goes beyond them. Swedenborgianism is indeed Universalism. We are embracing this new eternal morning.

I am very happy to see this in our church. This is very important for me. My main task in Japan lies here in this new synthesis. I am ready to serve my life for this important and everlasting quest.

GRADUATE'S ADDRESS

by Walter E. Orthwein III

"Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in Him; and He shall bring it to pass." (*Ps. 37.5*) I can't think of a better motto for my work in the ministry or for our church than this.

The Lord has been very good to me, and I am most grateful unto Him. I see many things to be thankful for at this time. I would like to express my appreciation to the faculty of our theological school, to the Rev. George McCurdy and the people of the Boston Church for the fine intern year I spent with them, and to my family, my wife Kathy and my parents. As I reach the end of these four years of preparation I am especially mindful of all that these friends and my family have done to help me.

The teaching about Divine Providence—that it is possible to see its workings in retrospect—has special meaning for me. For as I look back over my life I can see that the Lord has been leading me, preserving me—despite myself—for the special task to which I am now called.

That task is to serve as a pastor in the New Church—to lead by truths to the good of life. From the Gospel of John we heard, "Feed my sheep." (*John 21.15-17*) To "feed," the Writings explain, signifies

to instruct, and this is my mission: to teach the doctrines of the New Church to all who desire to learn them and live by them. Regeneration is accomplished by means of truth—by the building up of a true conscience and the combatting of evils by the truth—and my desire is to serve as an instrument of the Lord in this work. It is to lead by truths to heaven, that is, to the Lord.

Am I, then, a "doctrinalist" as opposed to a "personalist"? Do I love truth rather than people? No. I do love people, and it is because I do that I love the truths of the New Church. These truths are for people, given by the Lord out of His love and mercy, for the happiness of His children. His words are the words of eternal life. (*John 6.68*) I pray that my communication of the truths of religion will always be *from love*; that love for the salvation of souls will always be the love that guides me in my ministry.

In the work on *Charity* we are told that a minister ". . . does the good of use, or the work of the ministry, sincerely, justly, and faithfully, when he is affected for the salvation of souls. And in proportion as he is thus affected truths affect him, because it is by means of them that he leads souls to heaven; and he leads souls by means of truths to heaven when he leads them to the Lord. His love then is to teach truths diligently from the Word; because when he teaches them from the Word he teaches them from the Lord."

I sincerely believe and strongly feel that I am affected with this love—love for the salvation of souls. To whatever degree this is true, I consider it a priceless gift from the Lord. I can never be worthy of it; I just hope to serve it well enough to be able to keep it. All I want in life is to serve the Lord's church and thus the people of His church.

My friends, our little church—the church I want to serve—is in a time of crisis, as deep as any crisis could be. No talk of "oneness" can hide the deep divisions that exist. No cries of "peace" can hide the fact that there is no peace. We have sown the wind, and we are reaping the whirlwind. And I wonder how many more storms we can weather. We are in a very tender state, and my heart is afraid for our dear church.

The time has come when, with the Lord's help, we must make basic decisions about our purpose and use. We desperately need clear thinking and a

recovery of our sense of mission. And we need more: the problem is deeper than differing viewpoints and opinions and misunderstandings. These are only symptoms, as are all our external problems (declining numbers, apathy, infighting, etc.) The problem is at the level of our essential *loves*. If we die as an organization, it will be because of sickness at this level. It is not the cracks in the bark that send a tree crashing down in a storm, but the rotten heart.

Love is the life of the church, as it is the life of an individual. We can't change our loves, but the Lord can—if we will mold the life of our church, and ourselves, on His truth, as best we can. Our understandings may differ, our perceptions may be faulty—but if we all really look to the Lord, we will be one at the deepest level, where it really counts. We often speak of the need for love and trust, but never forget that the source of all love, trust, loyalty, and affection among people is the Lord.

All our debates point to one essential question, and that is—are we to be a man-centered church or a God-centered church? Do we look to ourselves and the world for answers, or to the Lord? And when I say “the Lord,” I include, and in fact especially mean, the doctrines of the New Church which reveal the Lord in His Second Coming. Is our house to be built on the rock of Divine Revelation, or the shifting sands of human intelligence and worldly philosophy?

As I see it, the future will unfold along one of two paths. Either we will continue along the road we have been on—and we all know where that is leading; or we will “search and try our ways, and turn again to the Lord.” (*Lam.3.40*) Then we will find a common language and a solid foundation in the Lord's words. Right now, we stand at a crucial point, at the fork in the road.

I have the greatest hope for the future of Convention. Our very weaknesses can be turned into our greatest strength. *Can be.* The Lord came “not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.” (*Luke 5.32*) The first step to be made whole is to acknowledge our need of the Physician. I believe we are being led to do this by the very problems we lament. In the last couple of days I have seen

sincere re-evaluation and seeking for better paths by both “liberals” and “conservatives.” This is something we all need. I know I do.

As a regenerating person's evils are brought out and made apparent so he can see them and fight them, as a regenerating person experiences temptation, so also our church is going through this process. And as with the individual, the end in view is rebirth and newness of life. We must keep this end in view, despite all doubts.

As in temptation combats break out, so it has been within our church organization. Our arguments reflect the internal struggles present within individuals.

As in temptation the Lord seems distant, so our church seems now to be far removed from the Lord—when yet He is more present with us in this time of crisis than ever.

We are in the wilderness, wandering, lost, groping for answers. And a voice is coming to us in that wilderness, the Lord's voice, crying: Repent! Really—repent. The call to repentance is a call to cease our stiff-necked ways and turn again to the Lord. He is the only expert we need; His words are the only program we need; His Truth is the only perspective we need. The longer we wander, the clearer this becomes.

But how does an organization repent? Only as we as individuals, examine ourselves and repent. When each one of us is striving as best he can truly to be a New Church in miniature, then our organization can become a true and effective instrument of the New Jerusalem.

We certainly don't need to punish each other. Falsity and evil are their own punishment, and if someone seems to be in such a state, or seems to be your enemy, the best response is to pray for that person. And remember that there is no one in this church, from one extreme point of view to its opposite, that the Lord doesn't love and want to save—and can save. We need to remember that about one another and try to receive this love from the Lord for one another.

ADDRESS cont'd. from p. 171

We have our troubles, and our problems are deep indeed, but even in this there is the greatest hope. "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent." (Rev. 3.19)

It isn't easy; deep spiritual temptations aren't easy. But we can be victorious, and what a glorious victory it will be. Then, as in the case of a re-

generating person, we will emerge from temptation more closely conjoined to the Lord than before. And peace and wholeness will be ours. I pray that it may be so, as I know all of you do.

In this wilderness the Lord is speaking to us. He has set before us this day life and death, blessing and cursing. Therefore, choose life. Choose life.

AMERICAN NEW CHURCH LEAGUE

by Julie Rankin, Secretary

In the past, I guess the traditional thing to write for the Convention issue is a summary of events. If that's what you're looking for, grab a copy of our Convention Journal, the "Clear Blue Sky," which hopefully will be successful, and will be mailed directly to League members. It's an attempt to explain what Convention is all about—*please* read it!

I feel that that type of summary is not as suitable for *The Messenger* this year. The officers were worried about how things would go—who would come?—would our plans work out?—will there be complete apathy?—and so on. We had a small group of approximately 20, and we had the opportunity to become closer that way. (But I'm not knocking something larger!) This is my third Convention, and I must say that the atmosphere between the kids (and adults) was one of more affection, friendship, and more enthusiasm than in the past. The week was all too short! We found a lot of support from the adults this week, and also from *ourselves*—just what the doctor ordered.

Our new officers are:

President:	David Fekete
Vice President:	Trevor Woofenden
Secretary:	Julie Rankin
Treasurer:	Barbara Casper
Exec. Comm. Member:	Ted Gutfeldt

In closing, I would like to express my appreciation to Erik Allison for "facilitating" us, and pass the word to whoever appointed him that we'd like to have him back next year.

And thank you to everybody who was in Edmonton in 1973!



New League officers: Ted Gutfeldt, Julie Rankin, David Fekete, Barbara Casper, Trevor Woofenden



ANCL business session



Erik Allison, SSR student, appointed facilitator by Convention's Board of Education

EXHIBITS AT CONVENTION



Mrs. Alice Sechrist and the Rev. Paul Zacharias, authors of new books for sale at Convention, autographed copies for buyers.



Several boards and committees, and local societies had exhibits just outside Convention sessions. Here Mrs. Winifred Armstrong of Los Angeles discusses her exhibit with visitors.



The United Bookroom Exhibit, coordinated by the Department of Publication, and featuring books of the Massachusetts New Church Union, Swedenborg Book Center, Swedenborg Foundation and the Swedenborg Press, had the largest exhibit at the entrance to the Convention hall. Directed by Cecile Werben with assistance from representatives of the sponsoring bodies, the united book table sold \$987 worth of books, pending orders for several more. Miss Werben (above center) kept an alert eye for browsers on the verge of becoming customers.



One of the largest exhibits, appropriately, was provided by the Western Canada Conference. Here Mr. Dennis Redekopp (l.) who prepared the exhibit points out features to a visitor from the eastern U. S.



The Swedenborg Foundation, at their exhibit, gave a free book to every delegate and visitor (from the large pile on the table), and also auctioned off a complete set of Swedenborg's Theological Works to the highest bidder who could take them home (giving Western Canadians a decided advantage).

PAUL TREMBLAY CONSECRATED AS LAY MINISTER FOR EDMONTON



With Convention President Ernest Martin officiating, Paul Tremblay was consecrated to the Lay Ministry (above l.) before a congregation of Convention and Edmonton people in the Edmonton Church (middle l.) on Sunday afternoon (July 22). With John Jeffery, authorized Lay Minister for the Western Provinces, and Vincent Almond, authorized Lay Leader for Edmonton, Paul is part of the Lay Council which ministers to the Edmonton Church. After the service, he is congratulated by his wife (the former Gertrude Dole); and at a reception in his honor, he cuts a cake decorated "Congratulations on your consecration, Paul."



*MRS. ANITA STURGES DOLE
1889-1973*

She was born on March 18, 1889, in Chicago, Illinois, to James Dwight and Anna Gertrude Cary Sturges. She received her education in the Chicago public schools, and received the A.B. degree from the University of Chicago in 1908, having been elected to Phi Beta Kappa the previous year on the basis of her academic achievement. As a child she attended an Episcopal Sunday School, and was confirmed in that faith in 1902. On completing her education, she was employed first as a cataloguer in the University of Chicago Library (1908-1910), and subsequently as secretary to Professor William I. Thomas (1910-1912), as a Research Assistant in the Chicago School of Civics and Philanthropy (1912-1914), and as Assistant Manager of a small publishing company (1914-1917).

During this period she studied voice, and was in training under Herman De Vries of the Chicago

Opera Company, considering a career in music, when in February of 1917 she was persuaded by her sister Alice to accept a teaching position at Urbana, a New-Church high school and junior college in Ohio, to fill an unexpected vacancy. That summer, at the end of the term, she went with her sister to the New Church Assembly in Almont, Michigan. There she heard the Rev. Dr. Thomas King give a lecture in which he traced the correspondence of the ass in the Bible, illustrating its spiritual meaning with quotations throughout the Bible. She was fond of telling how, at the end of this talk, she was so convinced of the truth of the doctrine of the New Church concerning the Bible that she was ready to join the New Church. She was confirmed by Dr. King there at Almont, in August 1917. That fall she made her decision to give up her promising career in music and devote herself to the teaching of the New-Church doctrines, and to the work of the church. Her lovely soprano voice, though lost to the world at large, enriched the worship of her church to the end of her life.

She also loved to tell how, before she went to Almont, she had audited a course in philosophy being given at Urbana by its principal, Rev. Louis A. Dole, of how she had been most strongly attracted to him, and how Mr. Dole had apparently taken no notice of her at all. However, when she returned from Almont a confirmed and enthusiastic member of the New Church, Mr. Dole lost no time in becoming better acquainted with the new teacher on his staff. They were married on New Church Day—June 19, 1919.

In September of 1920 Mr. Dole accepted a call to serve the New-Church society in Fryeburg, Maine, on a six-month trial basis; they stayed there for 17 years. Almost immediately on taking up the Fryeburg pastorate, they discovered an interest among several Massachusetts New-Church members who summered in Fryeburg, in establishing a summer assembly similar to that at Almont. It was through the on-the-scene efforts of the Doles, coupled with the fund-raising activities of the Massachusetts group, that the Fryeburg New-Church Assembly became a reality in 1921, with Mr. Dole as its first president.

Time passed, and Mr. Dole was invested as General Pastor of the Maine Association of the New Church. In this capacity he became increasingly concerned at the decline of the Bath society where his father had once been minister, and where he himself had been confirmed. After several unsuccessful attempts to re-establish worship services in Bath by other means, he accepted a call to serve as its minister. The Doles moved to Bath in 1937.

In Bath, Mrs. Dole became active in the Parent-Teacher Association serving several terms as president of her local chapter and as chairman of the Constitution and By-Laws Committee of the state organization, in the Girl Scout movement serving as Commissioner for the Bath area for several years, in the Bath Council of Churches, in the Maine Council of Churches serving on its Constitution and By-Laws Committee, and in the Bath Council of Church Women which she helped to found. During World War II she was Production Chairman of the Red Cross chapter in Bath, supervising the preparation of war relief materials sent overseas from the Bath area. Through these and other activities people of all faiths came to

know and love her, and many found in her that rare combination of spiritual insight, practical advice and personal interest which brought them again and again to her door. Many were still corresponding with her at the time of her passing on.

She was one of the most active members of the New Church, not only at the local level, but on the national scene. She served from time to time on the various committees of the General Convention, and was elected to the Board of Managers of its theological school from which she resigned when her son became a student there. She was active in the National Alliance of New-Church Women, becoming one of its presidents and an ardent promoter of its Round Robin program—a system of circulating letters among particularly the isolated New-Church women. She was for some years its Mother Robin.

She was best known, and will likely be longest remembered, for what she herself considered her life's work: the preparation of a comprehensive four-year course of Sunday School lesson notes based on the interpretation of the Bible in the light of the New-Church teachings concerning its spiritual meaning. Although she did the research and writing for these lessons herself, she always sought her husband's opinion of her work, and would publish nothing which he had not read and approved. Working together, both in writing and in parish teaching, they passed on to their congregations and to their many church friends a rich heritage of Bible scholarship of a truly spiritual character, and they also achieved a degree of success rare in this century of widening generation gaps, in passing on to all three of their children not only their knowledge but also their deep and lasting love for the Word of the Lord and for the church based on it.

In 1966, two years after the passing of her husband into the spiritual world, Mrs. Dole retired from parish work and went to live first with her son in Massachusetts and finally with her daughter in Edmonton. She never did retire from active service to the church, continuing to teach in the Sunday School and to participate in study programs, and carrying on a remarkably extensive and varied correspondence to the end.

In her old age she looked forward with increasing anticipation and some impatience to her passing into the spiritual world to join her beloved husband. This became her dearest wish, and it was granted by our Lord's divine mercy on April 7, 1973, shortly after her 84th birthday.

We rejoice today in her release from the increasing burdens of old age, and look forward to joining her when in due course we are called into that world where she has just awakened and taken up her life's work in the health and vigor of her spirit.

She will always be held in loving memory by her three children, Rev. George F. Dole, Mrs. Louise Woofenden and Mrs. Gertrude Tremblay, by her sons-in-law and daughter-in-law, by her 13 grandchildren, and by her countless relatives and friends.

Edmonton, Alberta, April 13, 1973

THE MESSENGER
48 Sargent St., Box E
Newton, Mass. 02158

THE MESSENGER
SEPTEMBER 1973
TABLE OF CONTENTS

PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS	
<i>by the Rev. Ernest O. Martin</i>	162
NEW URBANA PRESIDENT	164
GRADUATE'S ADDRESS	
<i>by Matthew S. P. Glowe</i>	164
SUNDAY SCHOOL ASSOCIATION	166
A REQUEST FOR YOUR HELP!	
<i>by Dr. Horand Gutfeldt</i>	166
GRADUATE'S ADDRESS	
<i>by Yuzo Noda</i>	167
KLONDIKE DAYS (Photos)	168
GRADUATE'S ADDRESS	
<i>by Walter E. Orthwein III</i>	170
AMERICAN NEW CHURCH LEAGUE	
<i>by Julie Rankin</i>	172
EXHIBITS AT CONVENTION	173
PAUL TREMBLAY CONSECRATED	174
MRS. ANITA STURGES DOLE	174

Cover photo, Opening of Convention

Convention photos by Dr. Robert Kirven and Dr. William Woofenden.

Cover by Dr. Woofenden

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