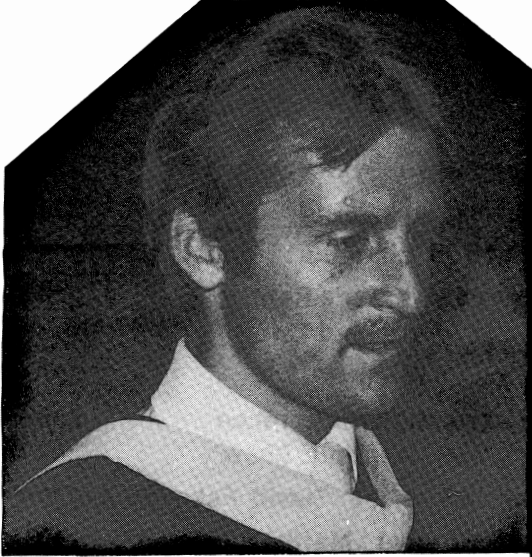


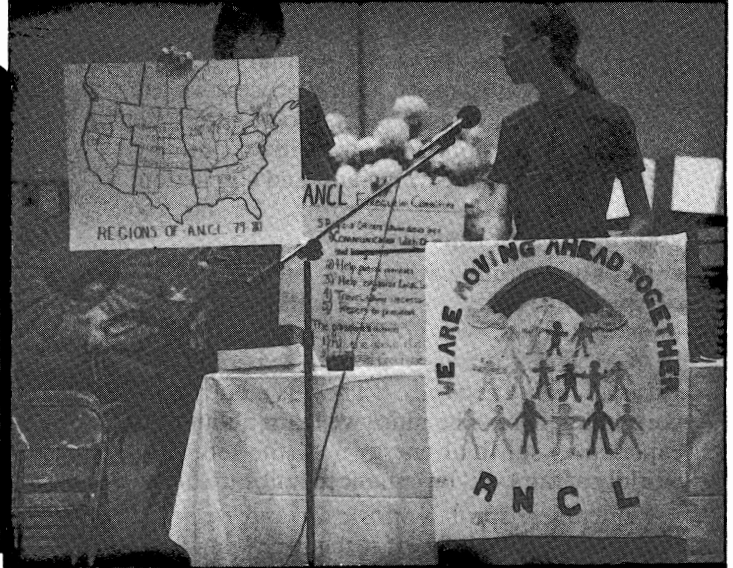
The Messenger

OFFICIAL ORGAN OF THE SWEDENBORGIAN CHURCH
SEPTEMBER 1979

Jon Tafel (l.) and Lee Woofenden explain
the new A.N.C.L. regional plan.



S.S.R. graduate Gardiner Perry



CONVENTION INSIGHTS...



A study in concentration.
(l. to r.) Andre Diaconoff, Gard Perry, Ron
and Val Brugler, Perry Martin, Betty
Zacharias and Dorothea Harvey.



Tom and Henrietta Zehner proudly
bring in Pittsburgh's "banner".

A Task for the New Church

This was the title of an excellent lecture given by Bob Kirven at Almont this summer. His basic ideas deserve wider circulation.

Swedenborgians believe in the reality of the spiritual world; that it surrounds and penetrates and activates all created things. We believe in personal immortality; that when our physical body is cast off, which process we call dying, our true, eternal personhood enters the spiritual dimension and our life continues forever. We have this firm faith and conviction, which robs death of its sting. So far, so good — no problem here.

But are we fully capitalizing on this concept of spiritual reality . . . here and now? Bob's underlying theme was: "*The scope of our living in this world expands as our experience of spiritual reality expands.*" There is a one to one correlation here. The more we learn about, and experience, spiritual energy . . . the more our worldly affairs will be enhanced and enriched.

Remember, spirit is *substance* and *reality* in the spiritual world. Spirit is the life giving force for everything on all levels. We speak of "a spirited performance" or "he has a lot of spirit." We recognize and admire spiritual qualities in life; in other persons and in ourselves. The compatibility between friends has a spiritual basis. Everything that is *real*, *worthwhile* and *lasting* is essentially spiritual in nature. We can easily test and confirm this theory in our own experience.

The question — or task — before us: "Are we making the best possible use of this concept?" It has tremendous implications, which up to now we have barely begun to appreciate. The spiritual world forces from both heaven and hell impinge upon us daily and they affect: 1) Our physical and mental health; 2) the unfolding events in humanity's history; 3) our states of temptation; 4) the climate in world religions; 5) the choices we make each day. This is just the beginning. Everything we do, and everything that happens, has spiritual implications. Bob sees this as a task for the New Church — he is challenging the Church to take this spiritual relationship seriously. More on this later.

P. Z.

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Paul B. Zacharias, Editor

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The General Convention and the General Church

by Robert H. Kirven

The two major Swedenborgian church organizations in America share common historical origins in the Swedenborg reading circles which formed in England and the United States in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The reading circles became church congregations, the congregations joined into a national group in England, and into regional groups in this country. Under leadership from Boston, the American regional groups (many of which were called "conventions") joined into a national body, the General Convention.

The last group to join, about 1860, was a group called the Central Convention, headquartered in Philadelphia. The leaders of the Central Convention had been engaged in disputes for a long time with leaders of the General Convention, especially those from Boston. The disputes centered in three issues: (1) the view that should be taken of Swedenborg's writings, (2) the organizational structure (polity) that should govern the church, and (3) the relationship of the church to education. It should be noted that these issues had been debated by interpreters of Swedenborg's works since the 1790's. Organizational merger did not resolve the issues or settle the disputes.

After some thirty years, the former members of the Central Convention led a group that split from the General Convention and incorporated as the General Church. The reasons most commonly cited as causing the split were those same three issues: perspective on Swedenborg, church polity, and education.

This brief historical summary is presented for three reasons. First, it identifies three long-standing areas of difference between the two bodies. It demonstrates that both "sides" of all three issues have as long a tradition as the other, reinforcing freedom of choice in the matter. And finally it illuminates the depth and significance of the issues. The following comments on the substance of those issues should be considered in the light of their history.

SWEDENBORG'S WORKS

Regarding Swedenborg's theological writings, the Convention position may be summarized in this way. As part of the Lord's Second Coming among people, He chose Swedenborg to receive a revelation of essential teachings that would be necessary for a new age, and commanded him to communicate them to the world. Swedenborg was prepared for this experience and this mission by a superb development of his powerful mind: in the course of that development he mastered most of the fields of knowledge in that dawn of the scientific era. In addition, he went through deep and extensive spiritual re-formation and development. Thus prepared intellectually and spiritually, he entered into years of spiritual experiences in which he shared the life of angels and spirits, entering into their angelic understanding of the Word of the Lord, and learning from first-hand experience the nature of the spiritual world and the essence of human life.

While reading the Word, he says, he was given essential teachings for the new age, the New Church: understandings which came to him with the authority that the Lord alone can give. These experiences of heaven and hell, of angelic and spiritual life, and of learning from the Lord while reading the Word, constituted a direct and unmediated revelation to him from the Lord.

The second part of his task was to formulate these experiences, and the knowledge and understandings gained from them, into teachings that would "prepare the way of the Lord" through the wilderness of materialistic prejudices and other falsities. Utilizing all the abilities developed during his years of preparation for this task, he wrote the volumes of what we call his Theological Works — leaving behind in his first-draft manuscripts a record of repeated revising and re-writing in a laborious and continuing search for the right word, a clearer phrase, a better explanation. His remarkable success at this monumental task inspires our awe. A

human product drawn from divinely - provided revelatory experiences, it is ideally suited to our best human effort and understanding, interpretation, and application.

The General Church position differs from this statement of the General Convention's position most directly in that last paragraph about the second part of Swedenborg's task. From their perspective, Convention's emphasis on the part played in the revelatory process by Swedenborg, his mind, his learning, and his historical context, seems to weaken the revelatory status and authority of what he wrote. From our perspective, it appears that they give Swedenborg's writing the authority that we give to the divine revelation which he received. The issue has become focused and symbolized in their designation of his published works as "The Word" — a title that Convention's usage confines to the meaning that Swedenborg gives it in AC 10325.

POLITY

Both the General Convention and the General Church balance the authority of the central organization and the authority of the local congregations in ways that avoid traditional categories of congregational and episcopal government. But the General Convention is more congregational in polity, and the General Church more episcopal. This means, for instance, that in most situations an individual must be a member of a local congregation that belongs to an Association which belongs to the General Convention, in order to be eligible for a vote at a convention; and on the other hand, an individual must be a member of the international General Church in order to be eligible for membership in a local congregation of that body. Similarly in ordination, ministers' assignments and salaries, and many other issues, congregations have more power and the Convention less, as compared to the General Church and its congregations.

Most visibly, the General Convention has a President who serves for either three or six years, with virtually no vested authority except the power to preside over meetings of the General Convention and General Council, and to ordain at the direction of the Convention. By contrast, the General Church is led by a Bishop who is elevated for life, and who presides from his installation until his voluntary retirement with authority and powers that have no counterpart in the General Convention.

This issue of church polity offers one illustration of the consequences of the difference in perspective on Swedenborg's writings which divide the two bodies. Many of Swedenborg's terms and statements which form the basis for details of General Church polity are regarded from Convention's point of view as having been drawn from Swedenborg's experience in the Church of Sweden as illustrations of spiritual principles and relationships — never intended as literal ecclesiastical instructions. Convention's polity is developed according to our best application of Swedenborg's teachings regarding freedom of choice, community structures, and interpersonal relationships.

EDUCATION

The education issue exists as an issue partly because both groups see it in different contexts. In the General Convention, teaching is one of the important tools for leading people to the good of life; but the amendment of lives for the better — whether conceived in terms of salvation or regeneration — is regarded more intensely than the means of accomplishing it. For the General Church, New Church Education is either the central task of the church, or an essential and integral part of that mission.

Again, this difference reflects the differing perspectives on the Lord's revelation *to* Swedenborg (as Convention sees it) or *through* Swedenborg (as in the General Church). The General Convention's position tends to promote greater involvement with the world around the church — including secular education, and communication and cooperation with other Christian churches — while that of the General Church leads more toward internal education as a kind of protection from secular and other - church influences.

CONCLUSION

Both church bodies, and their traditional theological positions, are based on the Lord's teachings for the New Church *as different readers perceive, interpret, and apply them* in what Swedenborg wrote. Sometimes by regarding different passages as basic or determinative, and at other times by finding different emphases or meanings in the very same words, different people have come to



THE TWIN DEMONS

*Gustave Bischof
Garden City, New York*

The twin demons are fear and anger. Fear leads to anxiety and sustained anger hardens into hatred. They are twins because fear and anger are closely related; they interact and one gives rise to the other. They are demons since they possess the inner man to the exclusion of the two great commandments. Fear destroys our trust in the Lord, subordinating His wisdom to our own, "Wise in their own eyes and prudent in their own sight". Hate destroys charity and love to the neighbor. The byproducts of fear and hatred are distrust, suspicion, captious criticism, recrimination, resignation, rage and impotence, thinly disguised by bravado. The result is spiritual blindness to good and truth.

Since fear and hatred possess the inner man their presence may be hidden even at times from the host. To the world the possessed may appear to be a law abiding model citizen, even virtuous and worthy of peer approval. No civic statutes prohibit harboring fear and hatred, yet they poison affections, motives and thinking. The demons manifest themselves at an early age, yet take a lifetime to subdue.

Fear and anger, though hidden, affect our physical as well as mental health. Physicians have long recognized the cause - effect relation between the emotions and bodily health in the area of psycho - somatic ailment. In a less restricted way these demonic possessions affect family relations and perpetuate the sins of the parents. The children of child abusers become child abusers themselves and familial violence becomes an inherited way of life.

Since fear and anger are manifested at an early age as part of the proprium, can they conceivably play a constructive role? Here it is necessary to differentiate between the spiritual and the natural plane. Fear, if not paralyzing, can heighten the acuity and prepare the body to perceive and avoid or meet a present danger. Anger in the form of revulsion against evil but

not against the person, energizes to detect and resist temptation and strive for justice and reform. When anger leads to stereotyping and hatred of people, it no longer is a servant but a master.

Another use for fear on the material plane — for those who harbor fear and hatred on the spiritual plane — is its restraining influence. Fear of punishment, reputation and peer disapproval is the deterrent in no small sector of the population.

* * * * *

The demons affect relations far beyond relatives and friends. Swedenborgians are fond of quoting, "All religion has relation to life . . .". Life in its broadest inclusive sense, not only embraces the primary concern of regenerating one's self but also the myriad points which touch humanity and where one, in some small way, contributes to the ongoing decision making processes. Our neighbors, social contacts, the church, political, cultural and educational organizations offer opportunities for positive influence by combating fear and anger.

Fear of change or loss of unique identity may affect historically significant institutions so that they become incapable of responding to contemporary needs. Such institutions, fearful of change, retreat to byways remote from the current of life, where they repeat stale slogans but lose the spirit; inveigh against obsolete falsities while missing the opportunity to present fundamental truths in varying light to satisfy the hunger of the day. Such institutions, though well endowed, wither away.

* * * * *

The present is a time of rapid and accelerating change; of burgeoning population and diminishing natural resources. We are told science and technology have advanced more in one generation than in the previous sum total of recorded history. Application of knowledge has greatly increased the capability of producing goods, food and fibers; the generation and use of energy; advances in health care; the proliferation of mass communication and mass travel.

These changes have in turn brought about far reaching socio - economic adjustments in the industrial nations, reflected in the rise of capital intensive compared to labor intensive employment; the shift from production labor to professional and service employment;

conglomerates; diminution of family owned business; the rise of the managerial class; wage earning wives; urbanization. It has also left a pool of unskilled, under educated and unemployable labor; increased the disparity between the very rich and very poor. Power has become more centralized and the unorganized middle class less of a political factor.

These changes have profoundly affected our attitudes and mores. Wider educational opportunities are demanded (not necessarily more effective) to satisfy expectations of upward mobility. Basic human rights are reexamined and extended to minorities, women and children. Sexuality is more freely and overtly discussed. The integrity of the family is threatened by many factors among them the high divorce rate and the growing entrance of wives into the job market.

As in all periods of rapid change, ferment and upheaval, the old guide lines no longer guide. Disorientation brings fear and anger in its wake. In the contemporary society that so largely measures its values in terms of money and the things money can buy, only men and women rooted in strong faith, charity and a sense of use can resist the fear of material failure and envy induced hatred. Others, lacking such roots are prey to life long anxieties, futile excoriation, despair or drug escapism.

* * * * *

Currently some disturbing societal and political trends have surfaced. While the rights of minorities are reinforced by law, the tendency to stereotype and categorize with undertones of fear and anger persists. This in turn affects our system of justice. So long as minorities, the poor and uneducated suffer a higher rate of conviction and stiffer penalties, compared to others guilty of similar crimes, the

AN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE (Con't from page 196)

different conclusions from the same body of doctrine. From Convention's point of view, such differences are to be expected and respected, except when they lead to one person's denial of another's valid and conscientious right to differ. This toleration and even encouragement of differences may lead to inefficiencies, inconveniences, and inconsistencies; but although it can limit an individual's right to do what he or she wants within the structure of Convention, it can never infringe on an individual's right to believe and to fight for what he or she wants — either

noble phrase, "With liberty and justice for all", sounds somewhat hollow.

The incidence of particularly brutal and senseless violence, especially against the aged and helpless, has revived demand for reinstituting death penalty laws, consonant with Supreme Court decision. Proponents advance two main arguments — deterrence and economy. The latter is irrefutable. There is however little evidence to support the deterrent theory. Many homicides result from passionate quarrels between friends and relatives, aided by the ready availability of lethal weapons. There is room for suspicion that fear, anger and a spirit of vengeance play an important part in the agitation to return the death penalty.

* * * * *

Two disturbing political trends may affect the future — one issue voting and the growing power of special interests. Both thrive on voter apathy. Three "As" anxiety, anger and apathy encourage single issue voting.

Seekers of public office are sensitive to the demands of well financed, well organized, and vociferous groups. The issues (i.g. pro life and tax dollars for private schools) are highly emotional, expressive of strong group conviction and morality. Repeated attempts to impose them on the public at large, if not by legislation or judicial decision, then by constitutional amendment. Recently it appears that an incumbent with a long record of constructive public service was defeated by the balance of one issue voting.

Special interest lobbies exert unrelenting pressure and offer tempting favors to representatives once elected, pressing them to push legislation, not always in the public interest.

(to be continued)

before or after a formal decision has been reached. It is consistent with the freedom of choice which the Lord has made essential in the nature of every human being.

A CORRECTION

Psychologist Tom Keiser spoke to the Convention assembly on the topic of Cultism. We regret the incorrect spelling and professional status given in the July - August *Messenger*.

Breaking Out . . .

The Prison of Ignorance

Joe LaLumia
Urbana, Ohio

I started teaching college in 1951 and since that time I have often wished I might be invited to give a commencement address. Never, however, did I really imagine my wish would come true, as it has now, in this pioneering fashion, in this place, and before this unusual audience. I am tempted to think that something like this might be true also for the students in the audience this evening and are candidates for graduation from Urbana College. You — that is, these graduates — are pioneers also, for college programs in correctional institutions are not yet common and you probably never imagined when you came here that you would be going to college and graduating at this time.

Commencement speeches are noted for triteness and for non-controversial and comforting assertions about the great wide world of opportunity that the graduate is about to enter. I will not bore you with assertions so forgetful of your special circumstances and the special odds you face. In fact, I have no intention of talking about any world that education enables anyone to enter, but about the kind of world from which education enables a person to escape. Perhaps, by doing this, I may encourage all of you who have undertaken some program of education, college or otherwise, to continue, and perhaps the rest who have not yet undertaken any program of education, may be encouraged to make a beginning. The world I want to talk about is the world of human beings who live in ignorance, especially human beings who do not need to live in ignorance.

Ignorance is bad. Being ignorant is like a bird that ought to fly but can't because it has only one wing. Ignorance is like feeling thirst and having no water to drink, it is like being hungry and having nothing or too little to eat or nothing fit to eat, nothing that is nourishing. It is, as Plato suggested, like living in a cave with little or no light, with terror filling one's heart every time there is a noise or a shadow which is not understood.

This is already dramatic, but let me make it more dramatic. You all know something about incarceration and that it is a bad thing which

hurts. Think a moment, however, about a different kind of incarceration. Think of how you would feel if you could not talk or express your needs to anyone, or if you could not read a letter from a friend or from your attorney. Suppose, for example, you were in a foreign country where no one around you spoke, wrote, or understood English and there were no newspapers, signs, and books in English. Right away, if English is the only language you know, you might understand what others in your own country might have told you before about the disadvantages of provinciality because you would be feeling those disadvantages first-hand. You see, provinciality is one form of ignorance.

Being ignorant, in brief, is like being crippled, and the greatest pity is when the means for avoiding this are available to us but we choose not to use them. Then it is as if we had chosen to cripple ourselves. Ignorance, in other words, is like bars. When we are ignorant, or to the extent that we are ignorant, it is as if we were in a prison — only there are no guards and physical bars because there is no one and there are no walls that keep us in ignorance except ourselves and the fact that we have let ourselves get used to ignorance and used to living in ignorance.

Of course, you have already noticed that I have really been talking about education and how it is a *liberating* thing, an escape from ignorance, the way out of living in a cave. There is education for a job at which one can make a living. But I have been talking about a more important kind of education. I have been talking about education that is dependable for one's self - containment and freedom of mind even in circumstances where there is no freedom of the body and when there are no jobs to be had. This is what I consider a liberal education to be. This is education that prepares a person for dealing with some understanding but, more importantly, with psychological integrity, with the major experiences a lifetime might have in store for a person: success, disaster, imprisonment, war, peace, living alone or with others, work, marriage, divorce,

raising one's children, leisure, politics, disappointment, disease, and dying.

This kind of education stands by you if you are a political prisoner in Siberia or a quadriplegic in a basket or a bereaved father or husband, or a David who needs to ventilate his joy with suitable words for singing a Psalm in praise to God. It is the kind of education that enables you to perceive with compassion your fellowship with other human beings, whether they be human beings who have lived and died, or other human beings now living, or human beings who will take our place whenever or wherever that place may be.

It is education that raises our awareness of life itself, whatever we do or must do merely to make a living. As Aristotle realized, that kind of education is not education for making a living. It does not bake bread, but it is education for living with awareness and with ability to express irony, humor, social feeling, and ethical craving which distinguishes a human being from other living things, plant or animal. We are not artichokes, after all, nor beasts of the field or in the sea or in the air. Thinking is the dignity that we have in comparison to other living things and thinking is our distinction, no matter how much more frail and less long-lived from other living things we may be otherwise.

So, what I am saying, gentlemen, is this: Education is the key to our personal fulfillment and the most precious kind of freedom we can have. We should not fail to avail ourselves of it. Intellectually, spiritually, and ethically, it is in our power to enjoy knowledge and no one's power can take it away. There are splendid

books that other human beings have written that contain a treasure if only we will take advantage of education that will open these books up to us. If our imagination is limited, there are other human beings who have offered to us in their books, their art, their inventions, and their philosophical and religious ideas the fruits of their more expanded imagination, and we ought to remember the power of one imagination to enkindle another imagination which may be our own. Newton understood this when he wrote: "If I have seen farther than other men, it is because I have stood on the shoulders of giants." He meant by this the shoulders of Galileo and Christian Huyghens whose works he had studied.

I started by talking about ignorance, then I went on to talk about education, and, as you can see, I have really ended with talking about a freedom that no one can ever take away once you have it. I hope I have done something to make you start to grow in this kind of freedom if you have not already started and I hope that others graduating this evening who have already started will not stop. The beauty of knowledge is that the freedom and power it offers is limitless and its capacity to give us pleasure is inexhaustible. I hope I have encouraged you. Let your knowledge grow and let yourselves enjoy the precious freedom knowledge gives. May the force be with you. Thank you for listening.

(Joe LaLumia, until this summer, was Dean of students at Urbana College. This Commencement Address was given at an Ohio correctional institute near Urbana in June, 1979.)

WE CAN HAVE BETTER MARRIAGES

by

Vera and David Mace

"I am deeply grateful for this experience. A whole new understanding of our marriage has come alive for us. We have renewed our dedication together to the full achievement of a truly Christian marriage."

"This has been a very meaningful experience for us. We have gained new insights about our marriage, and clearly identified areas of growth that we are now committed to work on. We only wish that we had this opportunity many years ago."

"I always believed we had a good marriage, and I still believe it. But I just never imagined how much better still it could become. Now I know, and we are both eagerly looking forward to a new depth and richness in our relationship."

These are typical tokens of gratitude from married couples who have been reasonably satisfied with their relationship, and certainly were not considering seeking marriage counseling.

But they were aware that, just as you can improve your golf or tennis, or take up jogging or swimming to achieve a higher level of physical fitness, so a couple can get more out of marriage by learning some new skills that will raise their "interpersonal competence" to a higher level.

This represents a very new idea, but it is spreading quickly. Only about 17 years old, the Marriage Enrichment Movement was slow in getting going at first. But as more and more husbands and wives became involved, and told their friends what a worthwhile experience they had enjoyed, the number of couples who have been into Marriage Enrichment grew steadily and is now estimated to be something like a million. And, as far as we can discover, all of them are "satisfied customers." How did all this get started?

In January, 1962, in Barcelona, Spain, thirty - two married couples came together for a weekend. Their retreat was led by a young Catholic priest. Father Gabriel Carvo, a warm, friendly, saintly man, who had been sent to work with youth in a city slum. He found his work disappointing and went back to his superiors. "I can't do much with the boys and girls," he said, "because their parents have done a poor job. The best way to help young people is to improve the quality of their family life."

His assignment was changed and he went back to work with families. But, again, after a time, he was back with a new complaint, "I can't do much for families," he said, "because the quality of the family depends upon the quality of the marriage. So, I want to work with marriages." Again, his assignment was changed and he was sent to work specifically with marriages.

Father Carvo had no further complaints. He later said, "I began to realize that I would have to go to the heart of the family — the couple. They are the key to the love - revolution the world needs." Out of that conviction has come one of the most remarkable movements of our time.

Meanwhile, we ourselves were increasingly convinced that the message of marriage enrichment was vitally important not only for religious groups, but for people everywhere. At a time when marriages and families have been breaking down on a disturbing scale, some kind of positive answer is desperately needed: and marriage enrichment seems to be the answer. So, in 1973, on our 40th wedding anniversary, we felt led to start the "Association of Couples for Marriage Enrichment (ACME)" which is now an international organization with members in some twenty countries.

Professionals in the family field at first took little interest in marriage enrichment. But attitudes are now rapidly changing, and it is being recognized that this movement may spearhead exciting new possibilities for the

development of preventive services to families. No one will question the value and importance of marriage and family counseling and the great need for it at the present time. However, we are realizing more and more clearly that to wait until families get into serious trouble, and then offer them help, is not a very sensible approach. How much better it would be if we could offer families the resources to keep them out of trouble, through programs that emphasize growth and potential, rather than problems!

Those who are not familiar as yet with marriage enrichment will want to know just what happens on a couples weekend. The various programs differ in detail, but the basic purpose is the same in all of them. What we say to couples is — "if your marriage is in serious trouble, marriage enrichment is not for you, and you should seek professional counseling. But if you have a stable and reasonably satisfying marriage, we invite you to join us in an educational program which could enable your relationship to grow and develop so that it is even better than before. Just as you may be reasonably healthy, but not in vigorous and glowing physical condition, so in your marriage you may be falling short of your full potential. Why not join with the many other couples who are committing themselves to ongoing growth?"

In ACME our slogan is — "To work for marriages, beginning with our own." To Christians today, this surely should be a special challenge. Never was there a time when the witness of radiant and loving Christian marriages was more sorely needed. Never was there a time when the Christian family was called more urgently to let its light shine before men, that the world might recognize that the source of all deep and tender human love is the divine love which is God's gift to those who respond to the Gospel message.

Marriage enrichment, therefore, is not just a new form of self - help for couples. It is that, and a very powerful one. But it goes beyond self - help, and has demonstrated very convincingly that married couples have a great deal to offer to each other. They can model for each other, learn from each other, encourage each other in ongoing growth, and lovingly support each other in times of sorrow and struggle.

How does all of this happen? What the weekend provides is an opportunity for a couple to get away from the pressures and demands of daily life, for a time of reflection

(Con't on page 213)

MESSANGER SURVEY RESULTS

152 *Messenger* readers responded to our survey, which we feel is an amazingly high return. We especially appreciate the many comments written in the margins; a number of people wrote notes and letters, elaborating on their answers. This poll gives us a good idea of how our "grass roots" members feel about many critical social and religious issues facing us today — several people mentioned that this survey "made them think" about these crucial areas. If it has done this, the survey has served a use. Again, we thank the many *Messenger* readers for sharing their opinions and feelings with us.

1. Do you basically agree with the liberalized approach to abortion?

44% said "yes", 48% said "no", and 8% gave no opinion. In every category, male and female, young and old, rural and city, the 44% - 48% division was strikingly similar.

2. Is abortion justifiable in cases of rape or incest?

83% said "yes", 14% said "no" and 3% were undecided.

3. Is abortion under any circumstance a sin?

21% answered "yes", 74% wrote "no", and 5% were unsure. Looking at #2 and #3 together reveals an all too common situation — where we might consider a certain action to be sinful, but in the harsh realities of life there are times when we must choose between the lesser of two evils.

4. Should capital punishment be reinstated for first degree murder?

45% said "yes", 49% said "no" and 6% were undecided. Both clergy and laity were evenly divided on this question. There were no significant trends in any of the categories, although the percentage voting "no" was considerably higher for women than for men. Among the laity, 64 voted "yes" and 63 voted "no". It was that close.

5. Should homosexuals be ordained into the ministry?

33% said "yes", 64% said "no", and 3% gave no answer. Again, this same ratio carried through all of the categories, except that the people in the 30 - 50 age range voted substantially in favor of this question. Those under 30 and those over 50 voted heavily in the "no" column. The clergy response was also approximately 2 to 1 in the negative.

6. Do you think of homosexuality as a sin?

44% said "yes", 50% said "no", and 6% were undecided. This question evoked a number of comments, both pro and con. Those voting "yes" gave scriptural and doctrinal reasons to support their view, those voting in the negative felt that homosexuality could be a legitimate life style and should be respected as such; that judgment is outside of human purview.

7. In cases where a homosexual states that the condition is "disorderly", and where the individual makes an honest effort to correct it, and acts in good faith, would you feel more open to the idea of allowing ordination?

56% voted "yes", 40% said "no" and 4% were not sure. The biggest shift in voting from #5 came in the over - 50 age bracket.

8. Would you favor a "special ministry" for ordained homosexuals . . . ministering to groups who are predominantly homosexual?

18% said "yes", 73% said "no" and 9% were undecided. There was a marked shift to the negative column in every category on this question.

9. Do you favor further research in the area of "cloning"?

11% said "yes", 79% said "no", and 10% — several of these asking, "What is cloning?" — were undecided. These same percentages held true for all categories. Several people observed that "we shouldn't meddle with the natural process of life."

10. Should the practice of bringing "Test Tube" babies into the world be encouraged?

27% said "yes", 62% said "no", and 11% were not sure.

11. Should the practice of building more nuclear plants be encouraged?

34% of our respondents are in favor, and 61% are opposed, with 5% not voting on this question. Several said they were in favor only if the waste material could be properly disposed of. Others said it was probably a "necessary evil." Again, there were no striking trends in any of the categories of people replying to the survey.

12. *Would you be willing to allow storage of atomic wastes in your state or province?*

27% said "yes", 64% said "no", with 9% undecided. Several people from Pennsylvania shifted columns on this question, joined by a few readers from New England.

13. *Would you like to see stricter gun control laws?*

72% said "yes", 22% said "no" and 6% didn't answer this one. Two readers asked: "What has this got to do with religion?" I should think that when one is confronted by an armed mugger on a dark street, a number of religious issues rise to the surface very quickly. We might not call them religious, but they are. People over 50 voted "yes" very strongly on this question. The 72 - 22% ratio held up for both rural and city readers.

14. *Should we have stricter controls on the new chemicals coming out today?*

84% said "yes", 11% said "no" and 5% were not sure. This reflects the growing public awareness that so many chemicals and artificial additives are being added to virtually all foodstuffs today, some of which may have adverse effects on us in the long run.

15. *Is there an effect between mankind's spiritual condition and natural events in the world?*

80% said "yes", 12% said "no" and 8% left this one blank. One person wrote, "As a Swedenborgian, how can you even ask this question?" I felt the same way, but apparently 12% of our members think differently.

16. *Should a terminally ill patient be allowed to pull the plug?*

86% said "yes", 9% said "no" and 5% didn't answer. Virtually all those who voted "no" are urban lay members. Several wrote in "conditional" comments, but all agreed that they *personally* would like to have this choice if this situation arose.

17. *Are you in favor of United States signing the SALT 2 agreement?*

56% said "yes", 22% said "no" and 22% were undecided. This is by far the largest undecided percentage in the survey, (except for #19) which probably accurately reflects the uncertain mood in the American public today regarding this matter. Many people added comments on this question, perhaps best summed up by a Kansan who wrote: "Simply don't know whether we can trust the Russians. But if we don't, how will we ever get anywhere in human relationships. Should answer 'yes' but still feel uncomfortable with it, because I really Do Not Trust The Russians! Oh hell! Why not take a chance — and sign the thing."

18. *Do you feel the world will be a better, safer place in which to live by the year 2000?*

39% said "yes", 45% said "no" and 16% didn't know how to answer this one. It is a difficult question to think about, and respond to. The people over 50 gave this a strong "yes" vote; about 2 to 1 voted "yes". But those between 30 and 50 years of age voted "no" by a 2 to 1 margin. The clergy were heavily affirmative here. Males and females voted "yes" and "no" in almost equal numbers. City folk were definitely more optimistic than their rural friends. Those under 30 voted "no" by a 2 to 1 margin. Perhaps as we get older we mellow and see things in a more hopeful light.

19. *On balance, do you feel that the present policies and programs of Convention adequately meet the needs of its members?*

45% said "yes", 32% said "no", and 23% abstained. People between age 30 and 50 voted "yes" overwhelmingly, but in the over 50 category, 35 people voted "yes", and 35 people voted "no". City people registered a higher percentage of "yes" votes, while rural members tended to vote in the negative. The 45 - 32 ratio holds true for both males and females.

20. *How would you rate the Messenger?* (On a scale of 1 to 10.)

The final tabulation came out to 7.8, which is somewhat higher than the editor's evaluation. Many thanks for this vote of confidence, and the numerous supportive comments enclosed. Following are a few quotes: "Interesting, in - formative, a bit 'far - out' at times, valuable." "Would like more sermons." "It's a good way to keep in touch." "Some good ideas emerge in each issue — in my eyes, that's high commendation." "It's catching up with the New Age." "The Messenger is improving — keep up the good work." "Articles suggesting ways our doctrine of use can be applied to social problems are most helpful." "I look forward to it each month." "Look forward to receiving it. Please correct some spelling mistakes." (Rest assured, dear friend, we do the best we can in the spelling department, as in all other departments. We do regret the few errors that do slip in.) "Deal more with problems of today." "It is too liberal — too many political articles." "Color pages — or cover — would help." (A good suggestion, but budget limitations make this impossible.) "I value its timely articles and outlook." "Too open to secular innovations." "Not very New Church." (It all depends on how we define and understand the New Church, doesn't it?) "I find highly interesting articles in every issue."

WINDOWS ON THE WORLD

SCIENCE — RELIGION MEET TO URGE NUCLEAR BAN

CAMBRIDGE, Mass. (AP) — An international meeting of scientists and theologians urged the world's governments to "immediately introduce a moratorium on the construction of all new nuclear plants for a period of five years."

The purpose of the moratorium would be "to encourage and enable wide participation in a public debate on the risks, costs, and benefits of nuclear energy," the resolution added.

It was approved after a prolonged debate in a late - night session of a World Conference on Faith, Science and the Future.

The resolution was an amended version of a much - disputed energy report calling for an indefinite moratorium on nuclear power plant construction.

The disputed energy report said a moratorium of new nuclear power plants is needed until risks can be determined.

But a minority report declared: "The production of nuclear - generated electricity is to date the safest energy industry throughout the world."

Russian Orthodox Archbishop Kirill of Leningrad said a moratorium would transform the Soviet Union from an exporter of oil to an importer with "enormously grave implications for the whole world."

Opponents of nuclear power are abandoning hope of meeting the world's energy crisis, said nuclear physicist David Rose.

He said halting expansion of nuclear power would so heighten international rivalry over oil that "finally we bring ourselves to the ultimate idiocy — a nuclear holocaust over the scraps of oil because we would not turn to alternatives."

Supporters of the moratorium urged concentration on conserving energy, renewable solar energy sources, a limited growth in coal usage and continued use of present nuclear plants until better alternatives are found.

SALT: AN ALTERNATIVE?

Question: Why is Strategic Arms Limitation in the interests of the United States?

Answer: One answer to this question was recently provided by General Richard H. Ellis, Commander - in - Chief of the Strategic Air Command:

"The price of providing a comprehensive deterrent force capable of responding at all levels of conflict is high. Because there are a limited number of defense dollars available, I suggest to you that the best hope for the future is through SALT — a negotiated arms limitation agreement and a subsequent mutual reduction of forces. To me, the alternatives to a SALT agreement are unacceptable: appease - ment, economic exhaustion resulting from an arms race, or a nuclear holocaust."

THREAT SEEN IN GENETIC ENGINEERING

An international team of scientists and theologians has condemned forms of genetic engineering that seek to modify the human line to produce more "desired" or "superior" people.

It is ethically objectionable because it presumes the "power to decide what kind of human beings are desired and what are not," says a report for the World Conference of Faith, Science and the Future.

Terming genetic engineering "one of the most powerful tools of biological research ever developed" and a potential "determinant of what life may be," the report says the hazards of recombining genetic codes must be recognized "before it is too late."

"Otherwise, we may be confronted with a genetic holocaust."

The report by a 40 - member group headed by biologist Charles Birch of Sydney, Australia, and Christian theologian Robert Nelson of Boston, was received by the full conference without opposition. But 27 of the 315 official delegates abstained from the vote.

Congressman Seiberling Urges Opposition To Resumption Of The Military Draft

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Congressman John F. Seiberling (D - Ohio) has sent a letter to President Carter urging the President to oppose the resumption of the draft. (Draft proponents are mounting a strenuous campaign to begin draft registration. This is the first step toward the return of conscription. Proposals for compulsory national service are also being pushed.)

Seiberling joined with thirty - eight other Congressional co - signers of the letter in

detailing his opposition to proposals to resume the draft, require universal registration with the Selective Service System, or to develop some form of compulsory non - military national service. In the letter, Seiberling and his fellow signers challenged proposals to resume the draft in peacetime on the grounds that they raise "serious questions of propriety, and, indeed legality in the light of the constitutional prohibition against involuntary servitude." The

signers also questioned the constitutionality of proposals to develop some form of compulsory non - military national service, and stated that they "cannot believe that forcing our young men and women to perform some type of national service would be in this country's best interests, and we doubt that such an action would have a beneficial impact on national morale."

GENERAL COUNCIL REPORT

Council's post - convention session was held in Room 7 of the College Community Center on Saturday, June 30th, and was called to order at 1:46 P.M. Newly elected members of Council were welcomed by the President, and the Secretary was instructed to send letters of thanks and appreciation to those whose term had expired at this convention.

In response to recommendations from the Council of Ministers, the subject of ministers' salaries and the inequities within our Church structure was discussed at great length; it was the consensus that a long - term study of the subject needed to be made, and the President offered to prepare a form letter to be sent to all our ministers, asking for such specific information as salary, source of salary, housing costs, etc., as a means of initiating such a study.

Acting upon a suggestion that General Council request that a pamphlet be prepared on how to read Swedenborg, it was voted that this recommendation be referred to the Board of Education, with the suggestion that the Board of Publication be consulted on the project.

It was voted to approve the re - appointment of Merle Lundberg for a five year term on the Board of Managers of the Wayfarers' Chapel, and to approve the President's appointment of Betsy Young to the Chapel Board to fill an unexpired term. Further, at the request of the Chapel's Board, Council voted that there be an increase from five to seven members of the Board, in addition to the ex - officio members. The President's appointment of Charles McCormick and Cassius Ball to these posts was approved.

Two proposals for General Council's program of matching funds for new and innovative ideas for Church growth were approved: (1) a grant of up to \$500 to the Cambridge Society to finance a series of Vesper Services to be held at 4 P.M. each Sunday during July and August, with the goal of

attracting new visitors to the Church; and (2) a grant of \$3,000 to the Kemper Road Center for furnishings for the day camp / retreat center the Center has built. Two or three members of Council had seen the building and were impressed with its size and scope.

Council voted to approve a request made by the Board of Missions that an appropriation of \$1400 be made for repairs to the Georgetown, Guyana church building, with the understanding that the congregation there will raise \$700 toward the work.

The Treasurer requested authorization to transfer some \$16,000 — pension fund deficit — to the general operating funds surplus. So voted.

Council heard a request from the Board of Publication that the budgeted appropriation for the publication of *Studia Swedenborgiana* be increased from \$1200 to \$2,000. Consensus was that this should be done.

Since the Ministers' and Wives' Institute is to be held February 14 - 20 in 1980, it was decided to hold General Council's mid - winter meetings immediately afterward. The location for meetings of both groups is still undecided.

General Council adjourned at 6:05 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,
Ethel V. Rice, Rec. Sec'ty.

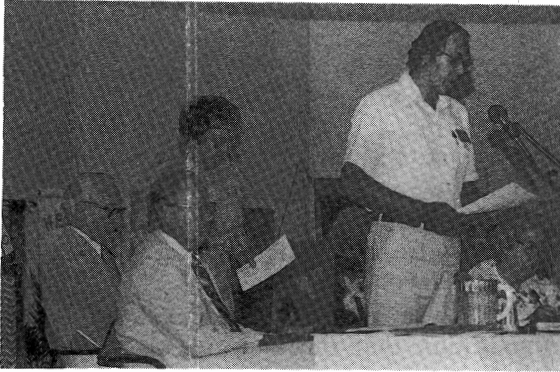
CONVENTION CALENDAR

Oct. 4 — 6	Dept. of Publications Washington, D.C.
Oct. 5 — 7	Ohio Association Kemper Road
Oct. 19 — 20	Board Meeting Wayfarers' Chapel
Oct. 25 — 27	Board of Trustees Urbana College

COUNCIL OF MINISTERS REPORT

A number of C.O.M. recommendations and program activities were reported in the July - August *Messenger*. In addition, the following items are worthy of note:

The Council of Ministers requested an additional \$3000 from the General Council for regional clergy meetings during the coming year. These meetings, drawing clergy from four regional areas in North America, would provide ongoing training opportunities, peer supervision for recently ordained ministers, and a built-in support system for isolated ministers. It is envisioned that two day meetings in each region will be held within two weeks following Easter Sunday, 1980.



C.O.M. Secretary Dick Tafel Jr. reporting to the assembled Convention.

The C.O.M. recommended to the General Council that a professionally guided public relations and outreach effort be funded and implemented for 1980 that would tie into the 100th anniversary of Helen Keller's birth. Television and radio spot announcements might be used. It was suggested that this effort be coordinated with the Department of Publications, the Swedenborg Foundation and the Board of Missions.

The Council of Ministers, aware of salary inequities and the financial needs of some of its members, requested that the General Council determine and enact measures to bring ministerial salaries up to its recommended levels.

The C.O.M. recommended to Convention that Gertrude Tremblay be accepted as an Authorized Candidate for the Ministry; and that Convention authorize David Sonmor for one year as an Authorized Candidate for the Lay Ministry.

The C.O.M. accepted the paper by the Rev. Calvin Turley entitled "The Conjugal Principle and Human Sexuality" and recommended that it be used as a study paper in our church.

The C.O.M. decided that its bi-annual mid-winter meeting would be held from February 14 to February 20, 1980, at some southern site still to be selected.

Eric Allison was nominated as Convention preacher for 1981, with Edwin Capon enjoying that privilege in 1980.

Three excellent Workshops were held during our C.O.M. sessions. These included: *Marriage Ministry*, led by Ernest Martin and Dick Tafel Jr.; *Preaching from the Word in the Church*, led by George Dole and Richard Tafel Sr.; and *Worship as a Means of Outreach*, with Bob Kirven and Randy Laakko as facilitators.

The new loose leaf Book of Worship received a great deal of attention, and as mentioned in the last *Messenger*, was endorsed by the Council of Ministers for use in Convention societies. More information on the new Book of Worship will be published in upcoming *Messengers*. The General Council has agreed that the regular price for the new hymnal will be \$15.00 per copy, but that a special incentive price of \$12.00 per copy is in effect for orders placed prior to May 31, 1980.



Eric Allison, LaPorte, Indiana, will be our Convention preacher in 1981.

MINI COURSE REPORTS

THE PHILOSOPHY OF NEW CHURCH EDUCATION

Leaders: Rev. Dr. Dorothea Harvey and Dr. Ted Klein

The feelings in this discussion group were good and the topic was important to all of us. First we discussed education and some of its methods and philosophy. Education, for example, is a balance of learning *and* experience. Also, "memory knowledges" are useful as a tool in learning but involvement and "the application of truths to one's own affections" are the real goals of an experienced educator. Giving a student that love to learn is the start in bringing forth his talents, and this love of knowledge can inspire the student to both study and seek for more truths. Usually a student does best in his favorite subject. One goal in education at all levels should be to inspire students to see many subjects as their "favorites". We remember things best when we have an affection for them.

What kind of system most effectively gives students affections for learning? Each person is unique. For each person certain truths are more relevant than others. Each person will find truths which are special to them and the teacher should recognize these affections and teach accordingly.

Do not indoctrinate or use propaganda to "win the students over." This permits little or no free thought and is a common practice in most "cults" and absolutist systems. "You must fit into our mold and become a Xerox copy of our leader", — such an idea contradicts the doctrine of the Grand Man because all parts of a society are different. Student's views and opinions must be considered. Involve New Church doctrine and their philosophies according to the student's affections, don't force them into instant belief and acceptance and don't use falsely conceived, man - made dogma.

Finally we discussed how New Church Education can be useful in the curriculum of Urbana College. Religion and Philosophy courses were the main concern. What kinds of courses? "Comparative Religions", or a course in the doctrines concerning the Lord, or Swedenborg's *The Four Doctrines*, or *Divine Love and Wisdom*, *Divine Providence*, or *Heaven and Hell*; all these and more were

suggested. Also courses in "Communication" and the "Philosophy of Science" were mentioned. Should some religion or philosophy courses be required at Urbana College? The general feeling was "Yes, it is after all a New Church affiliated college." A Swedenborgian club with open doors to all was also encouraged.

The motto of the College translates from the Latin as "Now it is permitted to enter, intellectually, into the secrets of faith." The participants of this mini course hope the students will both discover themselves and wish to enter into these secrets.

Nat Pendleton

VIEWS OF REVEALED TRUTH

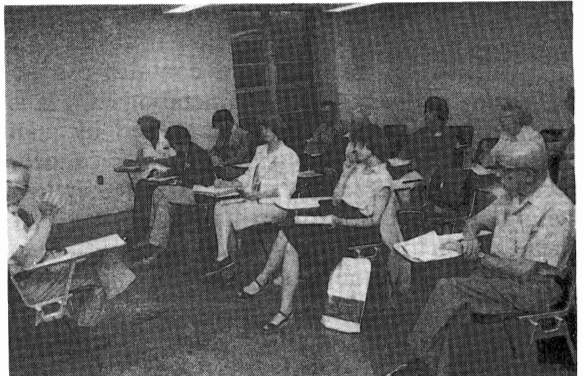
led by William Woofenden

For three meetings of one and a half hours each the Rev. Dr. William Woofenden was mentor for about twenty men and women. The subject of the mini course was revelation. What is revelation? What is its use or purpose? What sorts of knowledges need to be revealed? What requirements or prerequisites must be fulfilled in order to receive revelation?

Class discussion was lively as Dr. Woofenden presented two basic views of revelation, the propositional view and the historical salvation view (Heilsgeschichtlich).

After a philosophical base had been established, our minds were turned to the revelation for the New Church.

Dr. Woofenden said, "We know that God is Divine Love, but in order to communicate with us He disguises Himself as Divine Truth."



... how do we perceive truth?

"The Word acts as a conjunction between God and man, the Divine sphere of Life issuing from the Divine to man." "The Word is the essential means to salvation only as our grasp of its contents deepens."

During part of the third class we discussed the differing views regarding revelation between the General Convention of the Swedenborgian Church and the General Church of the New Jerusalem. The Convention view is that the Old and New Testaments contain the Word of God and that the writings of Emanuel Swedenborg throw light on the Word, but they are not the Word itself. The writings are Divine revelation but a different type than the Old and New Testaments.

In contrast, the General Church believes that the theological writings of Emanuel Swedenborg are Divine revelation throughout.

Two members of the General Church attending the course represented the latter view enhancing an open exchange of ideas and beliefs among all members of the class. We had a good time!

The course ended with regrets that lack of time prevented further discussion. Members of the class thanked Dr. Woofenden for an interesting and delightful mini course.

Marcia H. Pendleton

HOLISTIC HEALTH AND HEALING

Betty Drummond, Gardiner Perry, and Mary Kay Klein teamed up to offer us insights on how to "take charge of the quality of our lives."

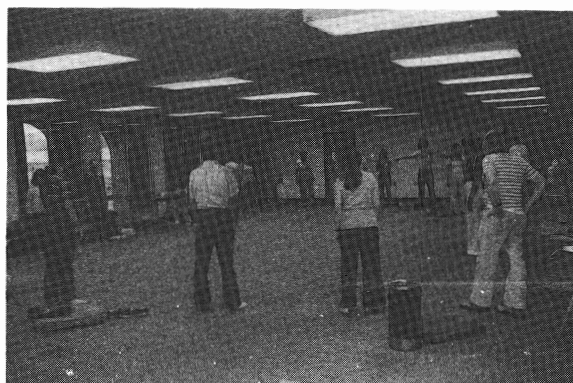
Betty's presentation focused on the importance of proper nutrition. She reminded us that we live in a world governed by natural and spiritual laws which — if adhered to — allow the healing energy of the Lord to flow into us. When we recognize this, we learn to have a high regard for the way God created our food and consequently alter it as little as possible. Every natural food contains all the necessary nutrients for its metabolism. It is only when natural foods are altered by man (cooked, fractured, preserved, frozen, canned, dried and processed or packed) that they lose vital nutrients and gain toxins which can affect health for a long time. We should begin to tune into our bodies more, so that we can feel the effects of certain foods. And remember . . . if you can't pronounce it, don't eat it!

In the second presentation, Gardiner helped us understand how the physical self reflects our

inner world. Our inner experience affects our body in specific ways. As we become more aware of our bodies, we learn to interpret the "cues" that our bodies give us about our relationships with other people. In this way the body becomes "a guide to spiritual unfolding." Through a series of "mind/body exercises" Gardiner helped us become aware of our most basic physical habits. We began to understand why each of us stands the way we do, and why we walk the way we do. We imagined ourselves walking with various people and saw how we changed our pace depending upon the person we were walking with. We walked with a former school teacher, a loved one, our father, our mother, and with God. Through understanding our bodies and the way they respond to various situations, we begin to understand our inner world.

Mary Kay Klein led the third session with a presentation on healing through prayer. She told us how the Urbana Society Prayer Group had allowed themselves to become channels of God's love, and in so doing helped heal an extremely weak and sickly child. The child herself always seemed to know when a prayer meeting was in session. She would feel "warm, prickly" feelings around her heart. The basic concept taught in this session is that we can all become vessels for God's healing love. Through prayer we open ourselves to His Love, allowing it to flow through us and into the person in need of healing. This was demonstrated by forming a circle around one of our group members, and all praying for the healing of a painful shoulder condition. The member reported a most pleasant warm sensation in the area of the pain, and a marked lessening of the discomfort. It reminded us all, once again, that the Lord loves us and wants us to be whole.

Ray and Star Silverman



Gard Perry leading in mind/body exercises.

POST CONVENTION CONFERENCE '79

*by Virginia Shaw
Wilmington, Del.*

This year we who stayed for Post Convention Conference remained on campus at Urbana, with use of the dormitories, a lounge, the dining hall, the swimming pool, and, of course, the grounds. There was an unusual age range — from teens to eighties — and a surprisingly even distribution among us of men and women, and of the young, the midsters, and the seniors, even joined now and then by a few very small folk during our relaxed moments.

We pursued the theme of tapping greater energy to meet the needs of our very different lives from many angles and through varied media. We explored the sources of strength in the Word, in the special insights of our church, in prayer, in meditation, in art, in music, in intimate sharing of personal burdens, frustrations and aspirations, and in carefree fellowship. Several times each day we gathered in a session emphasizing one of the basic approaches, so that in the week each of us had contact with all. Another portion of our time we spent in one of four smaller groups (same participants throughout), led respectively by Dorothea Harvey, Perry Martin, Ron Brugler and Lorraine Sando, for more intense work in one area. There was also time to be alone to digest the ideas, responses and emotions of the group relationships. And there was plenty left for plain fun: swimming, relaxing, evening get-togethers; the casual friendship of meals together; on the fourth, fireworks at the airfield.

Each of us must have personal highlights. I had several, each different: Two of the community meetings, one opening deep resources through the more conventional religious approaches, the other a uniquely satisfying gathering at the edge of a pine grove; some of the informal "spiritual breakfasts" offered our earlier risers while awaiting the more mundane variety; and, very high on my list, a showing of superb slides taken in the area, season by season, many of them exquisite details of a snowbound brook, silhouetted trees, a handsome bird, a breathtaking sunset, a first blossom. The whole, shown against the background of just the right music was as prayerful a half hour as I have ever experienced.

Then there was the final Communion, shared by twenty-four of us on our last evening together. We prepared the bread as the ancients did before departing on a great journey seeking fulfillment of the Lord's will for his people. We served it as wayfarers did, from a cloth hastily unrolled on the ground beneath our "tent", not spread formally on a table in a house as the comfortably settled can do. This sharing in the Love and Wisdom of the Lord, as travellers met at the resting spot on a long and daring journey, was to me most memorable.

And possibly best of all was the sharing of friendship and concerns at all levels during the five days in the oasis; renewed, deep, casual, awakening — but of whatever kind, warming the heart.

Try to join us next year.

ALMONT RETREAT

Memorial weekend a Church Retreat was held at Almont. People came from as far away as Pennsylvania to meet with fellow Swedenborgians in a learning experience.

There were two lectures: one by the Rev. Edwin Capon on the 21st chapter of Revelation, and the other by the Rev. Ron Brugler on the subject of the Holy Spirit. Rev. Capon's lecture dealt with the nature of the book of Revelation. In the past many Christians have had trouble understanding it as to its internal sense, but now modern Biblical scholarship is recognizing the symbolic nature of the book. In the Pfister lounge, Rev. Brugler opened with some brief remarks about the Holy Spirit as explained in *True Christian Religion* and then, because the Holy Spirit is a working manifestation of the Lord's Love and Wisdom, led an experiential prayer - meditation session.

After the prayer session, a general discussion brought out many people's feelings about their life and faith, and for some of the new joy found in the application from recent discovery of the New Church writings.

In the evening an informal question period focused on doctrinal issues, some quite critical such as the nature of the Divine Human, and others about practical forms of worship and the new movements of spiritual awareness.

Sunday morning a Communion service in the Almont Chapel heightened our dependence on the Lord. Our lunch together after the service brought the weekend to a close.

David Fekete

LEARNING TO GIVE

by Matthew Zacharias

I looked at the man with the sea - wrinkled face who had spent a lifetime on a west coast Scottish island and wondered what it was that he could teach me. His manner spoke of the endless tides and the rocky coastline and his eyes sparkled like the sun flashing on the water. This is what he taught, not in words, but in movement and in manner. He taught something that we all must learn, and this is — to give.

Who would walk a straight line down a sandy shore without stopping to experience the miracles shouting all around? To give means to go this way and that. A boat is constantly giving to the waves.

Many of us want something; we have a desire for some unknown thing and we are so haunted by this lack that we haven't even stopped to think what it is that we *do* want. We accept the way we are without question and say to ourselves, "Well, I guess I'll just have to learn to live with it." Before we can start to learn we have to admit to ourselves openly and honestly that there is something that we have to learn.

Learning is more than just wanting to know. Learning must involve our total selves; only then can the spirit of learning come alive. In true learning we feel the moment as it comes to us and we look to it as a lesson that has something to teach. We might feel like a school child again who looks to the teacher and tries to understand what is being said. Everything speaks if we have but ears to listen. The world is movement and it is alive and we must be open to its message.

During the day many things happen to us, all around us, and we cannot possibly understand all of the teaching that has come to us. We should set aside time each day for reflection on what has passed and what it is that the Lord is trying to teach.

At first we are primarily concerned with our own lessons, but if we come to genuine conclusions we should share what we know with others when we see them in need. We also know when to leave things in the Lord's hands. During the day situations will arise when we can help others if we are but *aware*. Also if we can learn to *listen* we will hear the answers we ourselves seek in the words of others. This happens when we love others as ourself.

The Lord works through us and through others as it serves His purpose; that purpose is common to all mankind. We must never think

ourselves so bold as to interrupt the flow of Divine Providence and try to direct things our way. When we do this, we know it by the way we feel. Not so good.

For true learning we have to see the world again through the eyes of a child. There is something to learn from everything that happens.

"Learning for what?" we may ask, for learning in itself is quite worthless. I would say . . . we learn to give. All learning enables us to give. First we learn, and then, because we know — we give (a celebration). We can't give without learning something, and we can't learn anything new unless we are willing to give away what we have.

To give is the highest use we can perform. It is the reason for our being. To have the opportunity to give is a blessing. We all pass up dozens of such opportunities every day.

Instead of giving we stubbornly hold on to what we have and call it ours. I'm now talking about possessions, as well as our highest dreams and our most trivial ideas. People are mostly afraid to give for fear of losing what they already have.

Nothing can be stored indefinitely; nothing can be weighed and measured; nothing can be locked away for future use. Yet this is what most of us do, at least in part. (Perhaps we inherited this idea from the old church idea of storing up treasures in heaven.) We now have the painful and smelly job of rooting through the decaying rubbish and throwing out what has gone bad. Some may have to throw out their whole bag of provisions stored up over many years.

But never should we be concerned over how much or how little is in our bag for always the Lord provides us with what we need, when we need it. All that He expects of us is that we *give*. This is the only job we have — to give freely of ourselves. When we learn to give with a willing heart, then everything else that we really need will be ours.

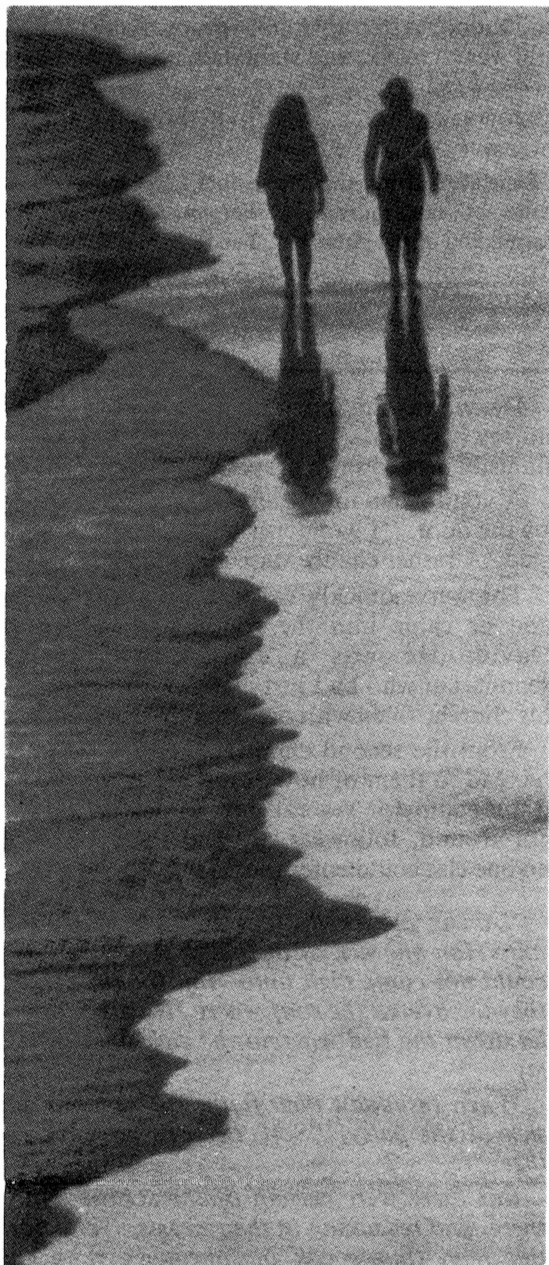
There may be some who doubt that we have anything to give. I say: Only start! and the discovery of giving will burst open before us, and we will see more ways to give than we ever thought possible.

Each chance to give becomes an opportunity to thank the Lord for His creation of happiness in another person. To see another's happiness

as our own — this is seeing the miraculous flowing of life in action. This then is the gift of life in which we all share as common receivers of the Divine Life.

Giving comes from no other person, but from an openness to the Lord; learning is the same. When we recognize this in each other, then we laugh and sing, shout and sing praises, because then we are glorifying the most Holy Name. The music of the spheres rings loud in our ears when we learn to give!

This is what a lobster fisherman taught me one day while collecting winkles among the seaweed.



AN OK FANTASY

by Robert Barr

Ever reflect why when you meet somebody on the street you ask him how he is without even meaning it as a question, or you say how the weather - today is when you don't care and you don't even wonder if he cares? (Actually you know he doesn't.) Of course it's just something to say — but why precisely do you say something meaningless? Not a chance. You've got something on your mind, and he's got something on his mind, and it wouldn't be any work at all to say it. The reason is, the wall. Anybody'd rather get kicked in the wall, or the weather, instead of in the teeth or somewhere else. Can you imagine what would happen if "How are you?" ever got replaced with "Will you love me for myself?" Ninety - nine percent of us would be in asylums the same day from rejections of our personhoods, and the rest soon. God forbid people should ever open themselves up in this way, and me too, on for instance first meeting, as long as I'm around. It may come about in a couple of hundred years, and maybe we'll be ready for it then if the world doesn't blow up first or suffocate from overcrowding starting from the bottom layer. But I'll be glad not to be around.

WE NEED THE WALL. We built it for self - defense before we were five, and the love - love - people are wrong to knock it. It's a good thing, in that it's necessary.

OH IF I FELT 100% AN OK PERSON I WOULDN'T NEED IT. BUT I'M NOT, GOD KNOWS, AND NEITHER ARE YOU.

But God said,

OK, drop the mask. You're OK.

I remember how and why you built the wall.

I remember all the things that ever happened to you.

I remember not only everything you went through, but the feelings you had when you went through it.

I remembered them as if they were happening before me this very instant. I remember what happened to you before you were born. The fright you had when Mother slipped a little on the stair, and the scary "Not OK!" you felt then, because you didn't know it was she who slipped.

I remember how you tried to wonder what was wrong when you were pushed out into the world one day and you breathed in such a surprise of cold stinging air!

I remember the horror and the "Not OK!" you felt inside when you dropped the pitcher and the pieces skidded under the stove. Right after being told not to touch it even.

But I remember your first surehold on Mother's nipple, too. And the first time you drank warm rubbery water from the garden hose mixed with the sent of just cut grass.

And the first time you touched a soft wiggly kitten!

And the first time the lights went on because you flicked the switch.

And the first underwater chase for the soap.

And the glorious repetition of all these things again and again and again . . .

How you tried to climb out of the crib and couldn't and tried to wonder what was wrong with you.

Dad's hugs and Mother's rhythmic rocking, the sensuous softness of your favorite blanket — the first butterfly you chase in the sun! — and the glorious repetition of all these things again and again and again . . .

And all the Nos and Don'ts and sour looks you couldn't fathom for the life of you.

And they were ten feet tall, OK?

I remember every OK and Not OK you ever felt.

And I know the bad feelings were more important for the rest of your life than the good feelings. Because you were little.

I know you remember too, down inside you, even though you don't recall. I know you feel not OK still.

But I think you're OK.

And I'm more likely to be right than you are!

I heard and sighed. I felt a wave of relief, and of something almost like gladness. But there were tears in my sigh, and wistfulness for a lost childhood. After a while I forgot. And today I still wear a mask, and stand behind the wall.

Robert Barr
"Religious Education"

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Softly, Softly, As He Left Her

by Betty G. Snyder,
The Washington Star

Something was different about Sunday morning and Helen knew it. She had been unable to sleep so she arose early. She left her home in North Bethesda early in the morning for the ride to the Washington Home in the District to see Waldo, her husband of 42 years.

As she traveled the route she had taken almost every day for the last seven months she wondered what the day held for her. She thought of how she had cared for Waldo at home for 2½ years after the stroke during surgery for cancer that left him nearly helpless and unable to express himself.

He had been mercifully accepted at the home just as her strength was reaching the breaking point. Yet, her feelings of relief collided with regret that she couldn't continue to care for him at home, and added to her anguish.

When she arrived in Waldo's room, the nurses were quietly going about their duties except that they seemed especially kind. She felt the room was filled with love and compassion. She could see in Waldo's eyes that he was aware of this also, and he smiled a little.

Helen was so moved that she said to the nurses, "Wouldn't it be wonderful if we had a minister here to say a prayer with us!"

A young man in a black coat had just walked by the door. "I wonder if he's a minister," she said. A rather chance statement ordinarily.

The nurse quickly called to the young man and he came into the room. His name was David. He was a smiling, first-year seminarian who had just come from services at his church, filled with the Good News.

From the second chapter of Mark's gospel, he read to them of how Jesus was preaching at Capernaum for several days and as the word got around, followers so filled the house that no one else could enter the door.

"As he preached, four men came bearing unto Him one sick of the palsy. And when they could not come nigh unto Him for the crowd, they uncovered the roof where He was and they let down the bed wherein the sick of the palsy lay.

When Jesus saw their faith, He said unto the sick of the palsy, "Son, thy sins are forgiven thee."

But there were certain of the scribes sitting there, and reasoning in their hearts, 'Why doth this man thus speak blasphemies? Who can forgive sins but God?'

And immediately when Jesus perceived in His spirit that they so reasoned within themselves, He said unto them, 'Why reason ye these things in your hearts? Whether it is easier to say to the sick of the palsy, 'Thy sins are forgiven thee or to say, Arise, and take up thy bed and walk?'

But that ye may know that the Son of Man hath power on Earth to forgive sins, (He saith to the sick of the palsy,) 'I say unto thee arise, and take up thy bed and go thy way into thine house.' And immediately he arose, and took up the bed and went forth before them all insomuch that they were all amazed and glorified God.'

After the young man had read the Scripture and led them in prayer, he looked up and smiled at Helen, "I feel that Jesus is right here with us," he said, "There is so much love in this room!" He spoke the feelings of each one of them.

Within the hour Waldo went quietly to sleep. Helen's prayer that she might be with him in his final hours had been answered. But, she thought within herself, she could never have anticipated the beautiful way that God would allow her to share the presence of Jesus that was truly with Waldo in the end.

Dying grace passed by so gently that morning.

(Helen Gleason is a member of the Washington, D.C. New Church.)

We Can Have Better Marriages (Con't from pg. 213)

and mutual sharing. They hear from leader couples how to overcome difficulties and learn to grow in love and companionship. They are given opportunities to look at their own marriage, recognize all the good things they already have going for them, and also recognize their hopes and dreams for other good things which they have not yet claimed. By writing down their thoughts privately, and then sharing them with their partners, they can clear away misunderstandings, redefine their goals, and reaffirm their love and devotion to each other. Most of this is done privately by the couple; but the fact that other couples are doing it at the same time, and that help and support are available if needed, makes it much easier to make new commitments to each other than they could at home, where dull routines and long established habits make new initiatives almost impossible. What makes the weekend so vital to most couples is that they come out of it with a clear and strong commitment to change and

(Con't on page 214)

WE GET LETTERS

To the Editor:

Many thanks to Edith S. Capon and *The Messenger* (June, 1979) for her interesting and informative article "*Progress and Poverty* and the New Churchmen's Single Tax League". One of the excerpts from Dr. Robert V. Andelson's splendid speech, i.e. "our duty to do everything we can to build an order without victims", reminds me of something Tolstoi said about a wealthy, landowning benefactor of the poor — "He'll do everything for his neighbor except get off his back."

Our "commons", as David Hapgood calls the unearned increment of land in a fine article in May 12th's *New Republic* entitled *Progress and Poverty Continued*, belongs to all of us for the just source of public revenue. If we don't collect it but instead allow it to go into private pockets we have to confiscate part of the product of labor and capital which does not belong to us. "Legalized pocket - picking!" someone called it.

How can we "love one another as He hath loved us" and support a system that inflicts such harm on our neighbor?

The most grievous denial of freedom is the denial of access to the earth itself (without paying tribute to a select few). We've named this "The Year of the Child" with one of the ideals "the right to be a useful member of society". Some will achieve it; many more will not unless we change our system of taxation because the many are disinherited at the moment of birth. Our New Church doctrines of charity and freedom urge us to lose no more time in establishing an open, free society where the talents of each one may develop and flower.

"Charity is doing what is good and profitable to our neighbor".

Elizabeth Lee Saul
Lopez Island, WA.

Dear Sir:

Margaret Anderson is quoted as saying: "In real love you want the other person's good, in romantic love you want the other person."

No doubt Swedenborg might have added: "In the true marriage romantic love will become real love as the years pass."

Thank you for your attention.

Irion Shields
Sacramento, California

WE CAN HAVE BETTER MARRIAGES (Con't from page 201)

growth for which they have often secretly yearned for years, but have just never been able to put it into action.

And as one husband expressed it — “Yes, we’ve learned some new things. But what has really happened is that we’ve been able to face up to a lot of things that we have known all along we ought to clear up, but somehow we just never got around to it. Now that we have done this at long last, it feels wonderful — just like getting the garage cleared up and all the accumulated junk thrown away!”

The weekend, however, is only the beginning. As another couple put it — “some people give you the idea that some kind of miracle happens in the marriage enrichment retreat. That isn’t really true. What happened to us was that we saw clearly where we wanted to go, and we made a commitment to each other, and together to God, that we were really serious about it. We have stayed with it. But we have had to work hard. Our daily sharing time was a way of keeping us on track. Our willingness to work at every crisis in our relationship, every major decision, every

conflict that developed between us — this enabled us to do the growing and the changing we needed. But perhaps most important of all, the fact that we were in a support group that met every other week, and that we had made ourselves accountable to them — that gave us a secure anchorage so that we couldn’t drift.

Marriage enrichment comes about through growth and change. This means effort — but it brings great rewards. Too many marriages are just drifting, stuck in ruts, or settled down on a plateau. The vast potential for love, for trust, for warmth and tenderness, which God has planted in all of us, is too precious to waste. Let us eagerly grasp the new opportunity that is ours to appropriate all the richness that is offered to every Christian couple!

For forty - two of their forty - six years together, Vera and David Mace have worked to develop marriage counseling around the globe. On their fortieth wedding anniversary they founded ACME (Association of Couples for Marriage Enrichment). ACME's activities have influenced the lives of thousands of couples across America. The Maces, who reside in Winston - Salem, N.C., are prolific writers. Their membership with Friends is through New York Yearly Meeting.

HAIKU FOR FAMILIES

The love of truth
without the truth of love
is often cold and cruel.

People with a sense of humor
have a greater
chance of survival.

You will be missed,
not for your criticism,
but for the praise you gave.

Unity does not mean
conformity, and oneness
is not sameness.

What age we are
does not determine how much
we enjoy a sunset.

If you give back
love for hate, you bring
a judgment against unkindness.

Criticism makes a child
feel inferior.
Praise gives confidence.

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— Catharine M. Schramm
Portland, Indiana

Messenger Survey Results (Con't from page 203)

A FEW OBSERVATIONS:

94 females and 51 males answered the survey. (We assume the other 7 people forgot to check this one off.) What was disappointing was the low return of people under the age of 30, and the poor response of clergy and spouses. Only

11 ministers and/or wives returned the survey. However we still feel the survey was a worthwhile study; it has been an enlightening and fascinating experience for the editor. Again, we express our gratitude to the many *Messenger* readers who participated in the survey.

P. Z.

THE UPPER ROOM

"ALONE"

Dorothy Carter
Cambridge, Mass.

"I WANT TO BE ALONE"

If I am not mistaken, this remark was attributed to Greta Garbo the talented Swedish actress, who evidently was swamped with attentions by her admirers.

Admiral Richard Bird chose to be alone when he flew to the South Pole and stayed there in the tremendous expanse of solitude and beauty — and later wrote his book *Alone*.

Colonel Charles A. Lindberg chose to fly alone to Europe, afterwards writing his book, *Me*. His wife, later on, went to a little cottage on the cape, to stay alone with the sea and there she wrote her charming book about the different sea shells she found, called *Gift From The Sea*.

Sloan Wilson evidently was pressured by daily harassments, and chose to sail on the sea with his wife — there on the ocean he found a sense of peace, because for a time he was inaccessible, and free to write his interesting book, *Away From It All*.

But there are those of us who have to stay in the middle of activities, telephone calls, requests for money, duties to transport people here or there. It would be a great relaxing pleasure to "get out from under" and be alone. But that can't always happen — we seem to be "caught in the stream of things" and we must carry on.

To be alone, sometimes, is selfish — we want to get away from responsibilities and feel free. Yet there are many older persons who live alone — they are really lonely — they want companionship — their lives have not been filled to overflowing — their "alone" moments are not precious.

Sometimes disabled veterans are forgotten by their relatives, but with the turn of a knob on the television they can bring persons right into their living rooms. Radio conversations and concerts, also, are close at hand. These people are talking and playing to you. This is one of the miracles of our age, and television is available to almost everyone.

However, aloneness for these persons referred to, was productive, and we find much pleasure in reading the books they have given us.

So life goes on, and we *should* be a part of it, as long as we are able, and yet there is always a time when we can "Be still, and know that I am God."

So finally, here are the thoughts of a lone flyer:

"High Flight"

*"Oh, I have slipped the surly bonds of earth,
and danced the skies on laughter — silvered
wings.*

*Sunward, I've climbed, and joined the
tumbling mirth,
of sun lit clouds and done a hundred things
you have not dreamed of — wheeled and
soared and swung,*

*High in the sunlit silence — Hov'ring there,
I've chased the shouting wind along and flung
My eager craft thro' footless halls of air,
up, up the long delirious, burning blue,
I've topped the wind swept heights with easy
grace,*

*where never lark, nor even eagle flew,
And, while with silent lifting mind I've trod,
The high untrespassed sanctity of space,
Put out my hand and touched the face of
God."*

The flyer who wrote this was John Gillespie Magee, Jr., of the U.S. Air Force.

So you see, really, no one is ever alone. God never leaves us. We should all know that!



THE MESSENGER

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**Winsome "aliens" invaded the College
Community Center during Convention '79.**