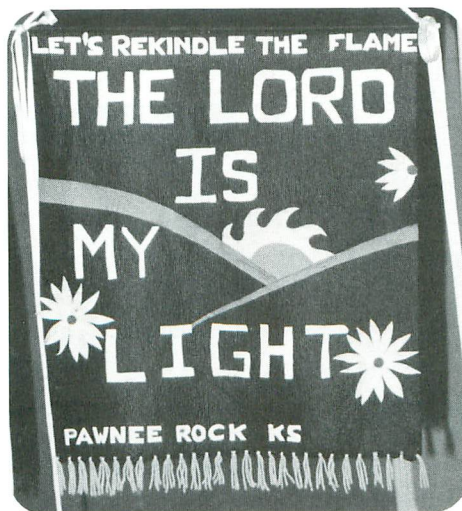
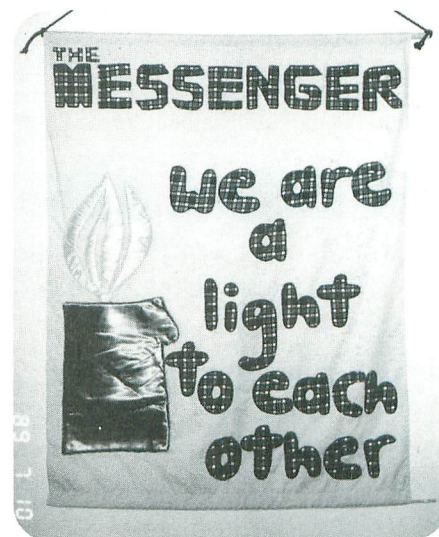
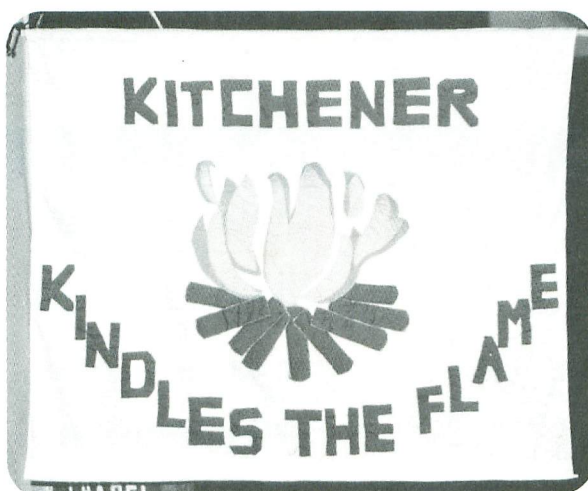


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The Messenger

July/August 1989

Convention '89 *A Banner Year!*



From the Editor

Moving Toward the Light

*"I saw the angel in the marble
and I just chiseled 'til I set him
free."* MICHELANGELO

The 165th session of convention officially began as we entered the Urbana University gymnasium, born along on the plaintive, rousing notes of Tom Scheidt's bagpipes.

The four beautiful purple banners made by the late Paul Giunta for the Cambridge church were carried at the head of the procession. Forty-some banners were hung around the gym, and the procession ended with many of us standing under them. "We Are a Light to Each Other" said *The Messenger* banner. Pat Zacharias made it, with the help of her craft club in Kitchener, Ontario. The letters are plaid flannel, cheerful, strong, humble, could have been somebody's work shirt. But the candle alongside the

message is glorious bright green and yellow satin. Hey, that's us. Each one of us. The shining light under our workaday flannel, or other outer disguise. But we have to see it, affirm it, in ourselves and each other.

The connecting, community part of convention had begun for some of us three days before in the ministers' spouses group. Many of these women have been meeting annually for 20 or 30 years. A newcomer sits in that circle and secretly wonders, am I *really* accepted, do they care about me? Facilitator Cynthia Shaw leads us in a meditation and comments on the quality of love in the room. We look into each other's faces and find the truth of that. It's there, a moving energy that empowers and builds over the ensuing hours. Changing and changeless, the miracle repeats itself. On the third day a healing

circle is formed, each of us who wishes steps inside to receive the loving energy of the group.

Three-month-old Jordan Pults has been with us for these past days. His mother, Kim, cradles him in the circle and requests our prayers for Jordan's safe journey through life. Our hands reach out to rest lightly on his small body as the silent prayers are breathed. I want to take a picture, but it's too holy an instant to be invaded by a camera.

Being a new part of this group that meets year after year to love and support each other undoubtedly alters my perception of the rest of convention. But this year, despite heated arguments over such matters as what to call ourselves and who can vote, there's an unmistakable will to heal, a quiet passion evidenced throughout this gathering: In Randy Laakko's heartfelt endorsement of Scott Peck's *The Different Drum, on Community Making and Peace*; in the many well-attended workshops on dysfunctional family systems, coming to grips with our co-dependence; in

hearing, really hearing, Joseph Campbell's and our own Dave Johnson's message to be a hero; in the uncommon integrity of Arie Brouwer, Convention keynote speaker and just-resigned General Secretary of the NCC; in our affirmations of each other's healing process.

Isolated member Margherita Faulkner came to convention from West Lafayette alone on a bus, concerned that her husband, confined with a long-term illness, might take a turn for the worse. But she wanted to see the opening of Convention and be with us for a little while. She had to return the next day. "Wasn't it beautiful," she said. And her poem summed it up:

These Sacraments

You gave me soap and grapes,
and wreathed me when I wept,
how ancient, these sacraments—
the cleansing and the fruit.
And the holding one another
when tears break through,
it is how the wine is made
and how the crown of thorns
is lovingly removed.

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President's Address

Called to Reach Out, Share and Grow

Randall E. Laakko

I would like to welcome you from your state of being . . . whatever that may be when you left your home, as you have experienced your life, your church, in the past year. This, my friends, is a fellowship and a communion of people that is one expression of the gathering of the church in our experience of it as the General Convention.

I have loved this gathering in all the years that I've been able to partake in it, and all the years I've been welcomed by you, and all the years I've had the opportunity as one human being and one member of this church, since 1961, to be a part of you. When have you experienced that you are part of a family, of a fellowship where you are found to be accepted, and cared for, and loved? So often times our families of origin or our experiences in the communities in which we grew up have not been that way for us. We have not found ourselves accepted; we have not found ourselves esteemed; we have not found ourselves loved. But as our lives go on, we have the opportunity of experiencing transforming moments and families and communities. More than that we have the opportunity to find transformation within ourselves. We can actually learn.

Imagine . . . we can learn to love ourselves. So often the church, throughout history, has wanted to put the self down. The self has often seemed to be that vehicle which is expressive of evil and wrong, and ignorance, and blind-

◆
*Imagine . . .
we can learn to
love
ourselves.*
◆

ness. But there lies deep within us in what Swedenborg calls the "innermost," a presence of the living God, a presence of the Divine. That "innermost" and that presence has with it an incredible power. The power that created this world and this universe that we experience. It is one and the same. It cannot be divided. If we take the understanding of Swedenborg in sort of a literal way, we know that as to the spirit world there is no such thing as time and space, but only the appearance of it based primarily on our affections and loves or what we might call our states of being. So that little spark of the "innermost," as we might perceive it to be, is really terrifically expanded in our understanding if only we can be open to it. And the self that contains that, can be transformed and changed from being the naughty, the evil, the sinful, the confused, the hurt, the strange person. We



can feel about ourselves that we have an incredible value and worth. Where? In the lives of other people. Certainly in the perception of the relationship of God to us, and finally, within our own being.

Now the self is not alone. The self lives in context of community. It lives with others, and by the very nature of the volume of other human beings, perhaps there is reason to feel greater love for them than we do for ourselves. Perhaps we may feel an identification with the societies of the world, the nations, and its peoples who we, from time to time, are able to feel and relate to

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through such marvels as television, the media, our travels.

How many of us here for example, feel the terrific possibilities occurring in the eastern block nations of Russia? How many of us feel or felt an awakening hope because of the developments in China? How many of us here know that the self of the world is to be esteemed because it is tremendously courageous and powerful, and real, and from our perspective, it has the Divine presence.

Each one. Each one. One song we sing, or is it in the psalm, "the stranger or the enemy is to be loved." Is it in the parable, told by Jesus, "When you did it unto one of these, the least of my brethren, you did it unto me." I don't think those words were simply an illustration—distant. I take them to be true when we do it unto anyone, ourselves included, we are doing it unto God.

Called to reach out, to share, to grow. One meaning those phrases had for me was the reality within the Christian faith, really within the power of God, to be evangelical in the sense of declaring the good news about human beings, the world and our existence. Who calls us, where from? I think it's yes from within, and it is from round about, in our world, our circumstances and our situations, we can hear, perceive and feel God calling us . . . to do what? To reach out. Reaching out to me means extending beyond, beyond the self that feels so small, worthless, unlovable, from the self that feels unloving, drawn in, hurting. Called to reach out. Beyond ourselves, individually, and certainly as a community. To share. What? To share the good news as we have come to experience it.

What is the most clearly felt good news in the experience of our faith that you know, that speaks to you most clearly? Is it the message that you are loved? Is it the message that you are given freedom? Is it the message that God in all God's power and wisdom and all his extensiveness and her extensiveness knows you by name? Is it that you have been healed? What most deeply touches you? Share it. Give it.

Express it. Not just in words, but with your living and, of course, your words too. Evangelism is proclaiming, declaring, articulating good news, the gospel.

Also when I think of sharing, I think of making contact. Contact with other people. If I am honest, there are a lot of times when it is very difficult for me

to make contact with other human beings, especially those I don't know. Is it like that ever for you? Are you ever shy, withdrawn, uncertain? Maybe angry or in a space that doesn't feel like sharing, making contact?

Well, we all have felt like that, I think.

That's O.K. We can be accepted with that in the fellowship and the community. How do I know it? I am accepted. How do I know it? I was once taken in. How do I know it? People told me that God loved me and they also pointed the way to learn more of it. It was the church long ago. Growing.

When our committee thought about the theme for this convention, I shared with them and they shared with me, we made contact. And one of the things I have come to believe is our highest priority as an organization, as a church; our highest need, if you will, is to grow numerically. I don't even like to say those words because there is immediately the side in me that says, "Randall, what we need is spiritual growth." I think they are connected. They are con-

nected because when we grow inwardly with power, with a sense of our valued worth and what we have to communicate, then we have indeed reason to share good news, good news that has spoken to us. As a minister in the church, I am often asked, what does your church believe? Swedenborgianism? Gee, I've never heard of that. We've all heard that many times. It's like telling a war story or a life story for us. All kinds of suggestions have been made. Richard Tafel has a response, "Gee! You've never heard of us?" Those aren't quite the words, but it's close to that. Another person said at the Wayfarer's Chapel, "Really, I'm surprised you haven't heard of us." I'm going to try some of those phrases. Often times I've had to say, "It's not surprising. We're small, we haven't gotten the word out. It's not surprising at all you haven't heard of us." I contribute to that. I am determined to change it. It's about time we tell the world and others who and what we are.

There are some of us who within the last year have had amazing experiences of finding out that we are welcomed in the world in ways we never have been before. People, in fact, are interested to know. We don't have to be afraid. We don't have to draw in, we don't have to be what Muff called "that collapsing black hole." * We can be rather a bright and shining star. Called to reach out, to share and to grow in size and to grow inwardly as to our spirit. Why? Because I think we are really called. Called by God, around us and within us, with every message that God can provide to us which says, "my

*Reaching out
to me means
extending beyond,
to share
the good news
as we have come to
experience it.*

The banner procession, Sunday worship service.



daughter, my son, my child, my infant, my sibling, my elderly friend. You are a person who is to be loved and you can love others."

◆
*You are a person who
is to be loved and you
can love others.*
◆

That's it. It's good to be here, folks. Let's really make contact, let's really share. Let's find ourselves here growing with one another inwardly and outwardly, and when we disperse, let us take it with us, to our corners of the world and our congregations. This church is not dying. This church is discovering its value, its strength and its power. We're not alone. God is making that move throughout the world.

* Worden, Eitelwyn. "Black Hole Syndrome Strikes Churches", The Messenger, March 1989.

Rev. Randall E. Laakko is pastor to the Church of the Holy City, Wilmington, Delaware.

The Revs. Skuli and Deborah Thorballsson of Florida, two of last year's graduates, reminisce with Rev. Dr. Ivan Franklin following graduation.



Communion service

Dorothy Farnham, Credentials Committee Chair, Deland, Florida and Muriel Bennett of Pawnee Rock, Kansas. There's an up side to this job ...

Ivan Franklin provided spontaneous interludes of music between business sessions.



Muriel Liddy, Central Office secretary, on one of her few trips sans passengers and baggage.



(Editor's Note: *The following is the abbreviated text of the Rev. Arie Brouwer's keynote speech delivered to convention June 28, two days after he had announced his intention to resign as General Secretary of the National Council of Churches. He chose to address our convention as his last official act. Rev. Brouwer is a former Deputy General of the World Council of Churches and formerly General Secretary of the Dutch Reformed Church of America.*)

Remarkable Vision . . .

Arie Brouwer

Time turned a corner in 1968, a period that has been referred to as a "rift" in time. It was one of the most watershed kind of years I ever lived through as I made my first trip overseas and moved from being a parish pastor

to a denominational executive, encountering things I didn't know how to do.

It was the year Martin Luther King, Jr., was assassinated. It was the year Bobby Kennedy was assassinated. It was a

terrible, yet fascinating time in many ways, but it was also a time in which the spirit was moving in a dramatic way.

The spirit was moving in the National Council of Churches during the late 1960s in ways the Governing Board and the rest of the community couldn't get their hands on. They didn't know what to do with what the spirit was doing, which sadly, is often true.

The turning point in my life, a request to become secretary of the World Council of Churches, came after 10 years service on the board and central committee of the World Council. This community and its incredible variety of different cultures, confessions, communities and languages is the closest I have come in my life toward the fulfillment of those wonderful closing chapters of the Book of Revelations where all the people and tribes come to gather around the throne of God to worship and praise. This happens in the World Council of Churches Assembly. It has put the ecumenical movement in my blood.

My own understanding of ecumenical vision is very much shaped by the World Council study on the unity and renewal of the church and of the human community. The church is the sign and

instrument by which the whole human community is renewed. From time to time the ecumenical movement gets into trouble because it is a grassroots movement. Ecumenical leaders are in

touch with the people for whom the official structures of society are not in place. Those leaders know what's going wrong in our own country and around the world before officials even notice.

Because of NCC connections we say things people wouldn't be saying for a long, long time and say them ahead of their time. Not because we are so wise, but because we have the connections with so many people in our own society and around the world.

Your church, the New Church, has been an affirming presence, not just for me but for one another. Your literature speaks well for what you are all about. It also means you have a gift to give to this society.

That is one of the reasons I asked to speak before your convention. During NCC board meetings this year I have been impressed by the directness and insight of Richard Tafel and Robert McCluskey, who represent the Swedish Church at NCC. They spoke to the issues of justice and reaching for spiritual dimensions during struggles in NCC meetings. After listening to these two, I knew I had to find out what makes these people tick.

I chose to make this my last official representation as General Secretary of the National Council of Churches after I realized my vocational fulfillment has to come in some other way than in the struggles that have gone on month after month, year after year.

*Ecumenical leaders
know what's
going wrong
around the world
before officials notice.*



"The central core of evangelism is not to go out to make somebody else think the same way that you think, but to be sufficiently full of the spirit and of the love of God so there is enough there to satisfy my needs and enough to over-

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Remarkable Man

Patte LeVan

The exceptionally tall and gentle man who says the ecumenical movement is in his blood, has carved out his own way since boyhood.

Arie Brouwer, the seventh of eight children, was the only one in his family who went beyond eighth grade.

Brouwer says he had

to do a lot of persuading when the little country school he attended closed after he finished seventh grade. His

mother, an immigrant from the Netherlands, and his father often spoke Dutch at home. He remembers his father walking across the farmyard muttering in Dutch, "What shall I do with this boy?" Simply because Arie wanted to continue his education.

Until he was about 12, Brouwer heard prayers recited only in Dutch by his lay-pastor father. "The deep-rootedness of my religious life comes from an Old Testament spirituality, read three times a day by my father."

Brouwer was startled the first time he heard his father pray in English, for it seemed to the boy Dutch was the language of heaven. "My father had closeted himself in the front room, which he only normally did at income tax time and we knew it wasn't income tax time, so we couldn't figure out what was going on." Brouwer's father was laboring over the prayer, translating it from Dutch into English.

"I loved singing the Dutch songs," Brouwer recalls. When he later visited the Netherlands, he found his mother's girlhood home and some friends of the grandmother he had never known. His mother was dying when he returned to tell her he'd visited her native home. "It meant so much to her. She cried. I didn't understand why she was crying and she said, 'I'm happy. I'm happy.'"

Early lessons from his parents inspired Brouwer, who recalls the remark his mother made after she and his father were finally persuaded to let him go to college. "You have to be one of three things, a doctor, lawyer or a preacher."

A grin creeps across his face, "I considered law for a long

time, but decided writing legal briefs was not what I wanted to do."

Brouwer worked his way through college sell-

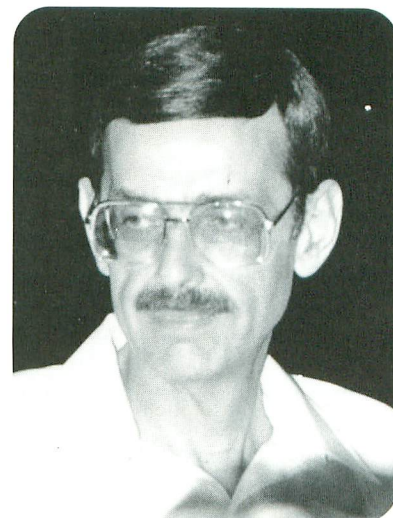
ing cookware and says his favorite activity at Hope College in Holland, Michigan, was editing the college newspaper.

Even though they live in very different worlds in many ways, Brouwer says he maintains a very close relationship with his brothers and sister. His parents have passed on "or are, as Swedenborgians would say, living on the other side. I'm closer to my parents on a day-to-day basis than I was when I could visit them," he says.

Throughout his career Brouwer has championed many causes and says his involvement with South African issues is life-long, for his denomination, the Dutch Reformed Church of America, is sister church to the Reformed Church of South Africa.

Desmond Tutu invited Brouwer to his installation as Archbishop of the South African Reformed Churches. Tutu also called him to testify before a South African committee considering a recommendation to deprive the South African Council of Churches of 80-90% of their support from overseas.

There is a bemused note in Brouwer's voice when he comments on his world travels. "I always had a love of learning about this whole world." He remembers the boy Arie hoping he might be lucky enough to get to Europe.



Arie Brouwer

"Well, I've been to all the continents many times," adding wistfully, "but never to Australia."

Brouwer reminisces about his first overseas trip of eight weeks, when he was working as vice-president of the Board of World Missions for the Reformed Church. His job was to visit locations where his group was working.

He had been observing the American military presence, the American empire and the role of the United States in the world—in Hawaii, Japan, Hong Kong, India, Kuwait, Oman, Israel, Ghana, Kenya, London, France, Rome—from the perspective of these other cultures.

"In the little country school I grew up in one could hardly distinguish the difference between the confession of faith and the pledge of allegiance," he says. "So I was dealing with all sorts of ambivalent feelings."

As the trip was ending, Brouwer, rushing from one plane to another in the Paris airport, grabbed a copy of the International Herald-Tribune. Deep black headlines declared the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King.

"It was as though I had been hit in the stomach," he recalls. "That whole trip was a life-changing experience for me; I could never have gotten into the ecumenical movement otherwise."

Brouwer's leadership in the ecumenical movement and social issues is far from passive. He has been arrested for joining non-violent civil disobedience protests and demonstrations against the South African apartheid sys-

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flow into the world too. Evangelism comes out of an overflowing life.

Paul's letter to the Philippians, the Kinosis passage we call the self-emptying passage, is what Jesus, or the Christ, did in becoming incarnate. That's what we need to do. But we can't possibly be emptying ourselves if we haven't first been filled to overflowing with the spirit of God and know ourselves loved by Jesus Christ. The Apostle John, the Apostle of Love, said we love because God first loved us. That's the way it works.

One of the problems with the ecumenical movement has to do with the 17th Chapter of John's Gospel, probably the most quoted in connection with Christian unity. It contains the prayer of our Lord that "they be as one as we are one that the world may believe." We tend to think of "that the world may believe" and make that a kind of rational creedal confession that Jesus is the Son of God.

If you read the whole text you find Jesus prayed that "they may believe you have sent me and that *you love them even as you have loved me.*" That's what the gospel and the prayer are all about.

By understanding and experiencing *ourselves* the love of God in Jesus Christ, we have an overflowing life and the world will take note. Look how those first Christians loved one another, it's what attracted people to the church in the first place. That's why it feels so very good to experience a community as an affirming presence.

The special challenge for small groups is deciding to reach out. You come from different cultures, but your church is family. Each family has a culture. We must learn how to open that culture and not lose it. We must open it up in such a way that other people will feel invited and not excluded.

Main line churches who make up the central core of the National Council of Churches have been in the opposite position of the culture. They have been so strong they can actually shape the culture. The church community is a re-

sult of the interaction of the gospel with the culture around us. If it is only gospel, it becomes sterile and hard, because people don't recognize their lives in what they're hearing and experiencing. If it's only life, it becomes bland and meaningless because people don't

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*The special challenge
for small groups is
deciding to reach out.*

◆

experience any transforming power within that message. To keep those two together is the heart of ministry.

We are experiencing a "culture of loss" in our time. When the middle class experiences as much difficulty as the poor, a kind of death wish creeps into the society. The crack-cocaine epidemic sweeping our country is a symptom of that death wish and it has the potential to destroy us. It is extremely urgent that a word of light be brought into our society. We must learn how to embody the gospel in today's culture so the world will be able to understand what we are trying to say and draw strength and life from our message.

That is the heart of the renewal movement for the Christian church. But in order to understand where we need to go, we need to know the history, we need to know where we have been. Looking at the history of the mission of the churches and their struggle with the relationship between gospel and culture in our country, we find the church has taken very needed reform.

The winds that swept across America in the 18th and 19th centuries carried many spirits, some of them very harsh. Native American populations, in early New England and the Middle Colonies, were among those devastated by some of those harsh winds. Now and then there was a gentle, refreshing, re-

newing breeze of grace and love, but mostly the winds were rapacious.

A great, mighty rushing wind of the spirit, speaking through the tongues of early theologians, swept away all forms of establishmentarianism. It helped the founders of our nation write into our constitutional Bill of Rights the guarantee for all Americans of their first liberty, freedom of religion.

The winds of social change in other parts of the world swept great multitudes of immigrants into an American melting pot while others came as captives. Churches were here to provide food, housing, education, health care and other forms of social services to shelter the people from the whirlwinds.

The winds of the Holy Spirit were unfettered and free, and the great awakening spread across the continent. When the winds had died away the peoples of America had reaped the whirlwind. The whirlwind is a mighty force, the social tornado that lays waste in this land we love.

In the 1930s, following the Great Depression, the voices of the churches were heard above the whirlwind. Some in church have not been content merely to build shelters for the people, some have wanted to wrestle with the whirlwind, to challenge the culture and cast out the demons.

The whirlwind that returned in the 60s and 70s rose and fell as people of color overcame the most blatant forms of prejudice against them and we all won a few battles in the war on poverty. The whirlwind is once again upon the land, but we do not see or hear it. It has learned to pass silently over the land, sweeping away family farms, driving tens of thousands from their homes, spreading the plagues of drugs and poverty, eroding the foundation of our communities and our culture, and dividing our churches.

Churches have long been divided over their mission. Nearly all agree the hungry should be fed, the naked clothed, the homeless sheltered, but there are disagreements over who should feed, clothe and shelter them.

The NCC and the whole ecumenical movement holds that all human beings are created in the image of God. Therefore, these are not only matters of love, they are also matters of justice.

Long ago, Reinhold Niebuhr noted that religion provides the energy for the American people, and freedom is the essence of American's lives. Niebuhr, a distinguished American theologian and ecumenist, wrote a parable of ecumenical learning and sharing, dwelling on the dangerous possibilities of freedom in the United States. The fact that the American ideal of freedom means the liberty to choose good and evil means that fine endeavor lives alongside vice, corruption and decadence.

Yes, there is hope for the world. There is hope for the world because the Gospel is that the love of God for the world is mutual.

We all know the words of the Woody Guthrie song, "This land is your land." It is the truth.

This land is your land. This land is our land. Our laws give all of us living here equal right to this land and its wealth. We must remember it belongs to all peoples who may claim it as their own. This land too, a part of God's creation, should be equally available to all of God's children. This is true not only in the ecumenical sense—we are all one in Christ and called to share our resources—it is also true in the economic sense.

In the larger global perspective, we who inhabit the powerful nations are always guests; and often uninvited guests, living at the expense of others even in our own homelands.

We must begin the mission of teaching and preaching the Gospel in a way that transforms the community we call churches, so we will transform the whole human community to know the redeeming power of the Spirit of God. Americans, who have been all too willing to do elsewhere what we are unwilling to do in our own country, must do it here, we must make changes here.

No other American in this century is equal to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. He

changed the nature of this country and resurrected its soul by weaving the stirring cadences of our Declaration of Independence, or some other text sacred to our national tradition, into his tapestry of Biblical teachings.

Fifty years before him, Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton followed a similar strategy and used those

same sacred texts to set free the women of this male-dominated republic.

The gifts of Sister Susan, Sister Elizabeth and Brother Martin are gifts of the spirit. They are buried within us all. We need urgently to release them for the glory of God and healing of our nation. Rekindle the flame. Do it in grace and faith.

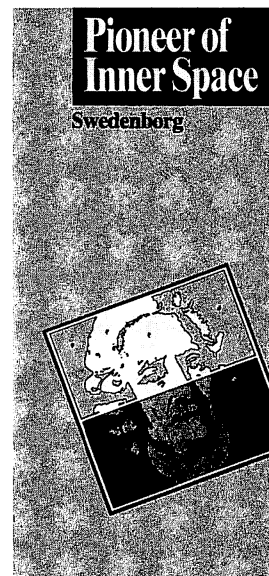
J. Appleseed & Co. Publishes Handsome Booklet

The first publication of J. Appleseed & Co. has rolled off the press and is ready for ordering. *Pioneer of Inner Space* is an exciting essay by Justin O'Brien presenting Swedenborg to new audiences. A Jesuit scholar who has distinguished himself in both Christian and Hindu studies, Dr. O'Brien has taught at Loyola University and the Himalayan Institute.

He came across Swedenborg a number of years ago and was struck by Swedenborg's ability to move with ease into inner realms of spirit. As is often the case, Dr. O'Brien as an outsider is able to make the case for Swedenborg to new audiences in a way that a long-time student often cannot. He sees with fresh eyes and communicates without the anxious tone of needing to convert. He simply tells the story of Swedenborg's life in a way that shows he understands the heart of Swedenborg's journey.

Before this essay was chosen to publish, many Swedenborgians had concurred that Dr. O'Brien's article, which originally appeared in *Dawn* magazine, is the finest writing on Swedenborg in several years.

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(continued from page 119)

tem and against the United States administration's Central American policies.

A visit to North and South Korea with the first official church delegation to that country since its division in 1945 was tremendously touching for Brouwer. He was near, but unable to visit, the site where his brother was killed during the Korean war.

In North Vietnam Brouwer became fascinated by the relationship of the Vietnamese with the Americans when he met an American who had been passing himself as a Swede for 15 years because of his shame over the role the United States had played in the war.

Brouwer has spent long years working with the World Council of Churches and the National Council of Churches on social and economic justice issues in the United States and other countries of the world. He has traveled all over the globe to participate in large and small meetings of religious and political leaders and has been a force in the policy formation for ecumenical actions of the WCC, NCC and various denominations.

"Lots of internal struggles came to a head at the May board meeting of the NCC as people expressed unhappiness over programs and discussions," Brouwer says. "The main issue is Church World Services. If they are to address justice issues, they will definitely alienate some of their constituents, meaning less money, meaning fewer relief and development programs."

Brouwer favors taking the risk, for if done well, "it's a whole lot better than doing a lot of things half well. Getting at the root causes is a whole lot better than sending out a fleet of ambulances. The people accustomed to handling large amounts of resources, large amounts of money, and having a successful operation find it hard to take those risks."

"There is no way to have an effective ministry in today's world if we do it piece by piece. The powers against us are just too overwhelming and they are all linked together. We have to bring our energies together," Brouwer maintains.

Frustration creeps in when Brouwer admits, "I tried everything I know how to do and some things I didn't know how to do, but I could see that nothing was going to change."

Brouwer, who says he couldn't live

without periods of reflection and introspection, will be spending the next two months doing just that. But he adds quickly, his commitment to the NCC and the ecumenical movement remains strong and enduring.

"I may be living in a fool's paradise," Brouwer says, "But I feel free, I feel much more freedom than anxiety." Although to some this may seem a time of brokenness for the NCC, Brouwer says it is also a time of healing and binding. "We are in some ways closer together, those who have dreamed the same ecumenical dreams and a few

who have not."

Brouwer, who would like to continue involvement with ecumenical issues, says he will be supporting the council in a different way, and following his dreams along a different road with many of the same companions and pilgrims of past years.

(Editor's Note: Arie Brouwer and his wife, Harriet, live in New Jersey. They are the parents of four grown children. Brouwer is the author of numerous articles and the book *Reformed Church Roots*, a popular history of his denomination.)



Ken Turley and daughter, Emily.



Images of Convention '89



*Betty Yenetchi and Linda Tafel
share a close moment.*



*President-elect, Dick Tafel,
shares a quiet moment with
cousin F. Bob Tafel.*



*Spouses Group leader,
Cynthia Shaw.*

Convention Sermon:

Take a Giant Step

Rev. David P. Johnson

One time I had a young man with me in pastoral counseling, and it seemed that after quite a while we were going over the same material again and again. Then I had a kind of inner feeling that he was ready to move so I said to him, "I think you're ready to take a giant step." Within a few weeks he moved on in an entirely different way and became one of the most satisfied people I've ever counseled. And I say for our church *that is you*. Each individual sitting here before me.

In the book of Genesis it says there were giants in the earth in those days, and also after that, when the sons of God came to the daughters of men and they bore children to them.

The same became mighty men which were of old, men of reknown. Though they probably literally believed in giants in those days, here is the image of human beings many thousands of years ago seen as *mighty* human beings . . . mighty men, men of reknown. Are not we the sons and daughters of God? Are we less His creation than these persons of Biblical times? We're the followers of two giants. The first, of course, is our Lord, Jesus Christ. Jesus was a giant of faith, a giant of love, a giant of compassion and one of immense integrity. Integrity to the extent that he was willing to face death in order to fulfill his own belief.

His impact on humanity, we know, was immeasurable. He did great deeds in his time, it is sure. But more specifically it was He who slayed the dragon of evil. He showed you and me an everlasting way of spiritual growth and life. A way that, if followed in the spirit of his love and passion and integrity, will

save humanity and the world.

The second giant we follow is Emanuel Swedenborg. Sometimes I wonder if we lost touch with the openness, the insight, the foresight, the integrity, the courage, and the adventuresomeness

of that man. He was an adventurer in the realm of the spirit. And

adventurers are giants

and heroes because to be so they must be willing to take great risks. They cannot open new vistas

of the spirit by clinging to the past. Are you aware that we would not be here

this morning if Swedenborg had not been an adventurer in the realm of the spirit, had he not been willing to *risk* the tremendous respect he had achieved in the realm of science and government in Sweden? And you know that tells us something about us. Everyone of us here this morning who espouses Swedenborg's formulation of Christian doctrine is a giant. You are visionaries, you are risk takers. Are you aware of this? It takes courage to espouse something that not too many people know about, and that strikes them sometimes as odd or very different. You are giants of faith. It takes loyalty, determination, and conviction to follow little-known concepts. However, no giant can rest on his or her convictions without facing the consequences. And the consequences of being a giant or taking a giant step mean the willingness to go through fire—to be purged—leaving behind the fears of rejection, loneliness, separateness, often



facing isolation and not infrequently being paragonized. Sometimes I wonder if we may huddle together to warm ourselves with our recital of familiar Swedenborgiana. Do we cling to our idioms for comfort? Do we point out how "Swedenborgian" this great

author or speaker is, trying in our minds to bring him or her into our fold? To reassure ourselves in some way or other that we are really on the right track—that we haven't gotten off on some spur line somehow or other?

In the book, *The Wisdom of Insecurity*, Alan Watts says, "Belief, as I use the word, is insistence that the truth is as one would 'lie' it to be. The believer will open his mind to the truth on condition that it fits with his preconceived ideas and wishes. Faith, on the other hand is an unreserved open mind to the truth, *whatever* it may turn out to be. Faith has no preconceptions; it is a plunge into the unknown. Belief clings, but faith lets go." Is it time to take a plunge further into the unknown? To follow the import as well as the letter of our teachings wherever that may lead us, trusting that the Lord Jesus Christ will be with us and guide us, whatever paths we endeavor sincerely to follow.

Where it leads may mean relinquishing some of our treasured habits, such as having only the warm, familiar faces and friends in church on Sunday. Perhaps it means altering the service so that visitors can feel more comfortable, at ease and at home with us. Perhaps we have to trust our own personal perception of what the teachings are telling us. Each of us as individuals can say them in our own words and in terms of what they really mean to us, here and now.

*The godly powers
have been within the
heart of the hero all
the time.*

Let Swedenborg or the other old New Church worthies turn over in their graves. They might enjoy a change of position. And yes, undoubtedly, sometimes you'll make some errors or you'll say it differently than that person who always "says it so well." But we have to learn to let go and trust ourselves to let it be known just what it means to every one of us.

I've been reading again the book *A Hero with a Thousand Faces* by Joseph Campbell. The message of this book is that the "hero," by whatever name or race, must follow the same path. Everywhere in the world, ancient Egypt, American Indians, Asian, whatever, the myths carry basically the same elements. He says "The cosmogonic cycle is presented with astonishing consistency in the sacred writings of all the continents and gives to the adventures of the hero a new and interesting turn. For now it appears that the perilous journey was not a labor for attainment, but for *re*-attainment. Not for discovery, but for *re*discovery. The godly powers sought and dangerously won are revealed to have been within the heart of the hero all the time. It is the king's son who has come to know who he is." God's son. Say it, God's son and God's daughter. "From this point of view," Campbell continues, "the hero is symbolical of that divine redemptive image *which is hidden within all of us*, only waiting to be known and rendered into life." Every single one of us—men, women, old and young are "God's sons and daughters." That divine redemptive image is within all of us. Therefore, you have whatever is needed. Each single individual. *You* have what is needed to reach out, share and grow and rekindle the flame. Yes, we don't need to light a *new* fire. I recall as a child going camping, my father was always the first one

out of the camp. And if I slipped out soon after I would find him leaning over the camp fire of the night before with a few sticks of new kindling, blowing on the embers until it sprang into life with a rekindled flame. The hot embers were there, as the basic doctrines and truth of our church are there and they are within you. The new kindling is there—fresh thoughts and ideas that spring up from within ourselves. The blowing, if you like, is there. We have the energy. Right here.

I've always loved the words of John. "In the Beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God. All things were made through him and without him was not anything made that was made. In him was life and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it." Our Lord is our light! He is our life! He is in your heart of hearts. Feel that, experience it.

If you can deeply feel that, if you can totally put your trust in him following wherever the finger of faith may point, out into the unknown, finding truth wherever it surfaces, *you* will rekindle the flame. How do we reach out when asked about our church? We don't need to justify it or even to define its theology. Just say how much your church means to you. What do you experience as being a part of it? How do you experience the presence of the Lord? How do you feel about the fact that we are really, in our theology, an ecumenical church that welcomes and respects all faiths, that sees all human beings as truly our neighbors? Do you feel good about the concept of *Uses*? Are you comfortable with the concept of moderation in the use of all the gifts that the Lord provides? Are you happy with your faith? To rekindle the flame

we must go deeply inside to discover in a vital, living, feeling way that indeed the Divine is within each single one of us. That we truly are the daughters and sons of God. That darkness cannot overcome the light, *that* is the light of each one of us. Cherish that light, gently at first until, rekindling, it begins to burst into flame. Let it shine forth in every way you can. Cherish it, love it, nurture it and it cannot help but grow.

I want to conclude with a poem by Edwin Markham who had his beginnings in the Swedenborgian Church.

**When in the dim beginning of the years
God mixed in man and woman the rapture
and the tears
And scattered through their brains the starry
stuff.*

*He said, "Behold, yet this is not enough
For I must test their spirit and make sure
That they can dare the spirit and endure.*

*I will withdraw my face.
Veil me in shadow for a certain space.
Leaving behind me only a broken clue—
A crevice where the glory glimmers through.*

*Some whisper from the sky—
Some footprint in the road to track me by.
I will leave men and women to make the
fateful guess
Will leave them torn between the No and
Yes.*

*Leave them unresting till they rest in me
Drawn upward by that choice that makes
them free—
Leave them in tragic loneliness to choose,
With all in life to win and all to lose."*

Be a hero—be a heroin. Take a giant step and share what you have. Rekindle the flame.

** Poem titled, "In the Beginning," by Edwin Markham.*

Rev. David Powell Johnson is Pastor Emeritus and Pastoral Counselor at the Seattle church.

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NCYL President Looks Ahead



Bill Baxter and parents Polly and Dick, with laid-back chauffeur Natban Laakko.

Bill Baxter, newly-elected president of New Church Youth League (NCYL), shared some comments during convention about what the league means to him, his new role, and what he would like to see happen in the league in the coming year.

"There's real friendship and fellowship in the league, and it does a lot to help each member to grow as an individual," he says. "For some isolated people, the league is the only church they have. Some of them live way out, in places where there is no local church. And the retreats are important. The retreats deepen our friendships, it's not like the friendliness is forced or false. It's very real, freely given by everyone. For myself, these retreats are almost like an island of sanity in a difficult world. They help me keep going. I think without them I would have more problems at home. At the Memorial Day retreat in 1988 we had a discussion about how the families of alcoholics are, and it was just generally helpful with family relationships, whether or not our families had that problem. We would like to do something to get isolated leaguers to convention and to the retreats. I can think of at least two or three who just didn't have the money to get here, and I would like to do more for them."

Being president, he says, entails mostly keeping the regions together, in contact, and taking over the jobs of the regional officers who are unable to at-

tend. "Our biggest goal for this upcoming year is communication between the officers. We've been getting by, but we need to work more like a unified league. And I'd also like to see us do more as part of the church this year. I want to get involved with the Social Action Concerns Committee. One of the biggest concerns presently is AIDS; that's popular, and it's important, but there are some social problems that aren't as popular, and I think all of them should be dealt with, all the time. I'd like to work toward helping the hungry and homeless."

There were 24 Leaguers at convention this year. The other newly elected regional officers are: Peter Little, East Coast; Ken Jacks, Midwest; Jon Pults, West Coast; Laurie Slough, Canadian officer. Rev. Carl Yenetchi is chaplain, Rev. Steve Pults is Youth Director.

Please send the names and addresses of any teens in your church to the officer in your region so your young people can be included in mailings of retreat dates, receive "Clear Blue Sky", the League newsletter, and get acquainted!

Name _____

Address _____

Bill Baxter, President
4720 Bel Pre Road
Rockville, MD 20853

Jonathan Pults
8740 Oxford Dr. S.E.
Olympia, WA 98503

Ken Jacks
539 E. Woodruff
Hazel Park, MI 48030

Laurie Slough
1409 Big Springs Way
Airdrie, Alberta
Canada T4A 1K3

Peter Little
73 West Street
East Bridgewater, MA 02333

(Editor's Note: *The mid-winter session report was not completed in time to make the Messenger deadline in January.*)

Report of General Council

January-July 1989

Dorothy deB. Young
Recording Secretary

Mid-winter Session

In January 1989 at Marathon, Florida, the General Council had a joint meeting with the Cabinet. The results of that meeting were so satisfactory it was decided to convene together during every mid-winter assembly.

General Council, as a long overdue show of appreciation, voted that the Executive Committee arrange suitable compensation to the Reverend F. Robert Tafel for ten years of devoted service on the Retirement Fund Committee.

There was a recommendation from General Council to the General Convention that the "One Member/One Vote" be adopted and to amend Article VII of the Constitution and Article XIX of the Bylaws of Convention. Recommended also to General Convention was the adoption of an informal name (dba) for The General Convention of the New Jerusalem in the United States of America, Inc.: "The General Convention of Swedenborgian Churches".

General Council voted that it is the policy of the General Convention that its ministers who become disabled be provided with adequate income, including using funds from General Convention as may be appropriate. It is recognized that each case will be unique with respect to the needs for income of the individual, the disability benefits available to meet those needs, and the degree of Convention's moral commitment to the individual. Therefore, each case will be treated on its own merits in a loving, caring way. The Retirement Committee is assigned responsibility to work with the individual to assess needs, to explore benefits available and to recommend to the Financial and

Physical Resources Support Unit the compensation for inclusion in the Budget.

Legacies received recently: \$582,000 from the Mrs. Dorothy Diephuis estate; \$23,284 from the Greta Wilkes estate. It was voted to invest both amounts in the Common Fund under the New Jerusalem account as unrestricted free funds.

Almont New Church Assembly Retreat & Conference Center invited the members of General Council to hold the 1990 mid-winter session in their facilities. The invitation was accepted. The Canada Association will host 1991 convention in Kitchener, Ontario.

General Council recommended to the General Convention that the position of chaplain at Urbana University be continued, without a term specified, and that Convention continue paying the salary and benefits.

The Board of Managers of Wayfarers Chapel presented architect's plans to remodel Wayfarers Center West, a building purchased and financed by Convention a year ago. Further indebtedness of \$125,000 is required for this project. General Council voted to grant this request subject to review by the Executive Committee on estimated costs and plans for paying the debt. A loan will be obtained from the Pacific Coast Association.

Pre-convention Session

At Urbana University in June 1989, the Reverend Harvey Tafel reported that the remodeling of Wayfarers Center West will begin on July 15 and the facilities will be ready for occupancy in October. The Reverend F. Gardiner Perry will begin an outreach ministry at the Wayfarers Chapel, dividing time with the Chapel, the Los Angeles Society and a Sports Ministry. President Laakko reported that an idea is being developed

to assemble a congregation on the Peninsula which may use the Wayfarers Chapel as its church.

The Reverend Ernest Martin reported that ongoing programs at Temenos are bringing recognition locally for Temenos. A financial agreement between the Board of managers of Temenos and the Philadelphia Society may activate plans for the proposed conference center building designed by architect Eric Wright.

Post-convention Session

Acting in accord with Convention's Bylaws (Art. VIII Sec. 4), General Council created the position of "Office Manager" in the Central Office. The Executive Committee had considered and approved this position a year ago. The Office Manager will assist the Director of the Central Office and will be in charge when the Director must be away from the office. The Executive Committee, in conference with the Director, will develop a job description. Compensation is approved by General Council.

Mr. Duane Beougher of the Church of the Open Word, St. Louis, presented an invitation for convention to be held in St. Louis in 1992.

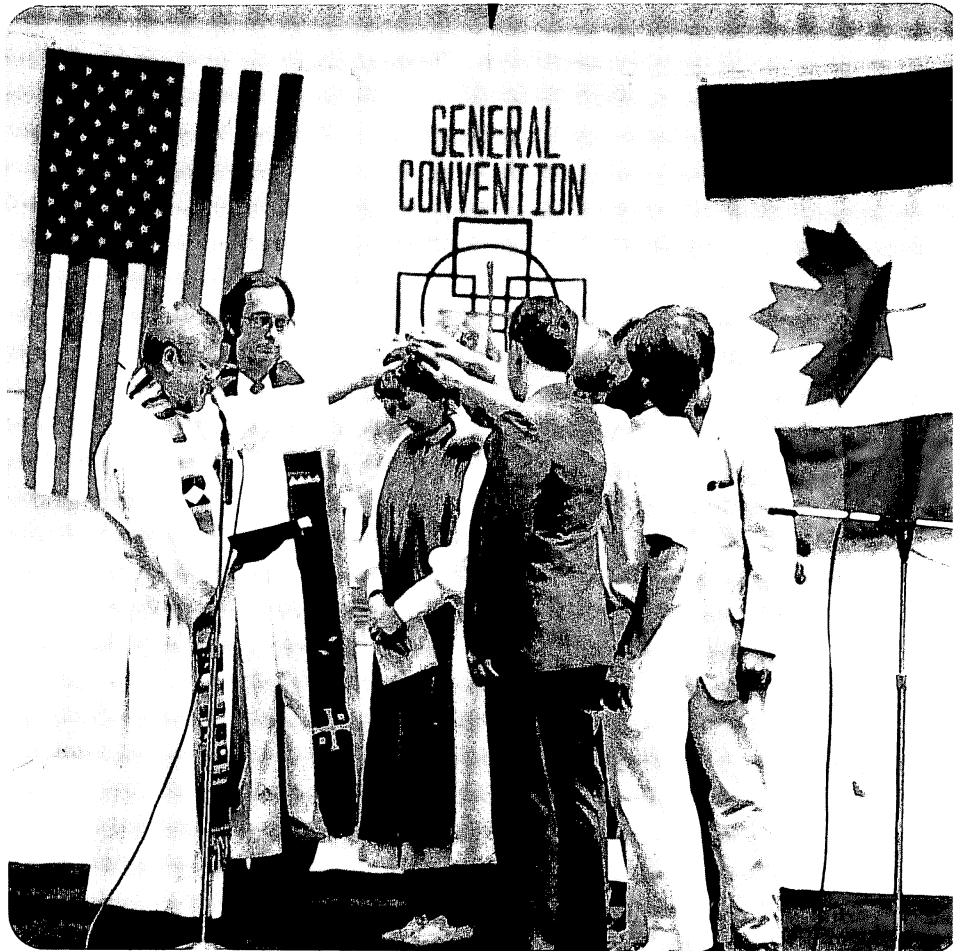
A major portion of the post-convention session was spent in reviewing and revising the 89/90 Budget.

To serve on the Board of Managers of Wayfarers Chapel for three years, President Laakko appointed the Reverends Edwin G. Capon and David P. Johnson.

There was much more action taken at both pre-convention and post-convention sessions, but in consideration of space in *The Messenger*, the Secretary has condensed this report.



Marty Mason, St. Lotus, Mary Crenshaw, Detroit hopping with the cloggers.



Kathleen Easton ordination, the laying on of hands.



Corinne Tafel flanked by sons Harvey and Dick, honored on the 60th anniversary of her graduation from Urbana College.



Convention Treasurer John Perry plugs SSR meeting.



The Pults—Steve, Jordan, Kim Kearns and Angie.

Messenger Editor, Patte LeVan—where are the golf carts when you need them?





Capturing Convention '89

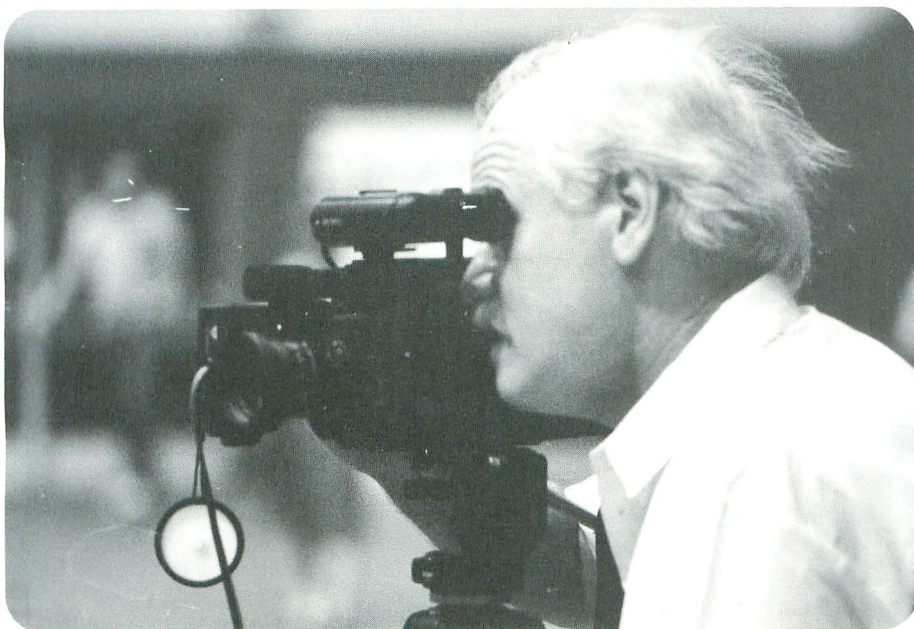
Betty Yenetchi, Ohio; Sharon Billings, Oregon; Pat Zacharias, Ontario; and Elizabeth Johnson, Washington discover a group backrub is a great stress reliever.



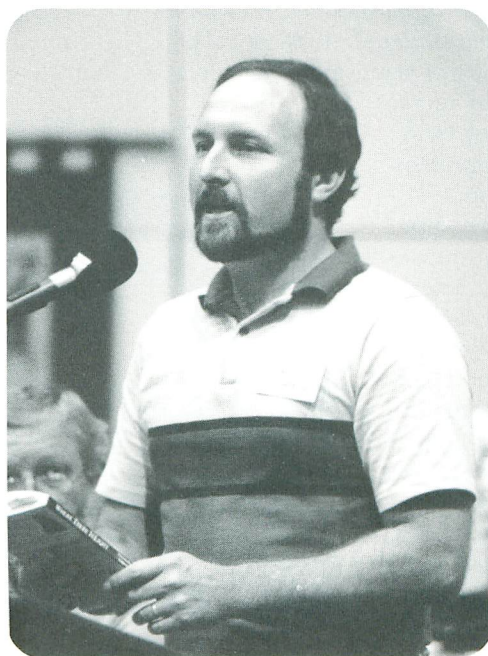
Rev. Dr. Dorothea Harvey, Gloucester, Massachusetts.



President Randy Laakko kidnapped by a clown.



The video man, Steve Koke.



Rev. James Lawrence, Fryeberg, Maine, director of J. Appleseed & Co.

SSR Commencement Address:

Small is Beautiful

Alice B. Skinner

This being the occasion of the smallest possible graduating class—a class of one—it seems an appropriate time to consider the implications of the saying, *small is beautiful*.

Big is better has become a comfortable term for us. Canadians and Americans who live in big countries have inherited a tradition of expansion and growth in the settlement of our nations and the development of our institutions. Businesses, universities, farms and even churches have grown on a large scale.

It's easy to fall into the trap of thinking that grand proportions indicate success and represent a public stamp of approval. We must remember the notion that *big is better*, seems to suggest that *small is not so good*.

Small units are more efficient and creative, said British economist E.F. Schumacher who wrote a book titled, *Small is Beautiful*, subtitled *Economics As If People Mattered*. He is critical of the "idolatry of giantism," and maintains people are freer to be themselves in small comprehensible groups.

Small comprehensible groups is an apt characterization of most New Church people's societies and gatherings. Often we talk as if something is wrong because there aren't more folks in the pews, more dollars in the coffers, and more students at SSR.

We can nurture seeds of growth by asking how our present size can best be utilized to further the Lord's Kingdom. Perhaps the best way the New Church can serve the Lord at this point in time is to *be* a small denomination.

Throughout the history of time small groups have served divine purposes. An analysis of the Biblical narrative in terms of group size of those involved in the work of the Lord is interesting.

Jesus drew multitudes. His working disciples numbered twelve. Moses led numerous Israelites out of Egypt. Survivors in the Promised Land were whittled down to a "saving remnant." Time after time, when all about turned to false gods, a little band of people remaining true to Jahweh were instrumental in rebuilding the community of believers. They had come to a more profound understanding of their religion and deeper conviction of closeness to God.

Valuable Potential

The valuable potential of a small church is to offer religion as if people mattered, according to Lyle E. Schaller, author of *The Small Church is Different*. Personal interaction is easier when fewer people are involved.

I talked with several people while preparing this speech and within a few days received a telephone call from a fellow church member, offering his collection of books on small churches. At the exact stage when I was simultaneously attracted by and scared of my topic, Dick Baxter offered both affirmation and resources. The swift

operation of a caring network is surely one of the benefits of a small church.

A strategy for the growth of small churches is outlined by Schaller, who suggests examining the strengths, resources and assets of a church. "Too

many small-membership churches spend excessive amounts of time lamenting their weaknesses, bemoaning their shortcomings and emphasizing their limitations," Schaller maintains.

Identifying, affirming and planning to build on strengths would be a more productive approach. Many unchurched persons would find the friendliness, spontaneity, caring, fellowship, intimacy and warmth of a small congregation exactly what they are seeking in a church.

Stretching Beyond Ourselves

Smallness is greater opportunity for each person to be involved in planning and making things happen in the church. Everyone gets to pitch in to carry out the program of the small church. This often requires stretching beyond what we already know how to do.

Buoyed by the feeling our work is truly needed and worth the effort, we learn as we go and emerge abler individuals, and are part of a church strengthened through our endeavors.

The fear that people will not take a small denomination seriously is one of the disadvantages of smallness. In his poem, "The Four Friends," A.A. Milne depicts the problem of little folks getting noticed in comparison to the big guys:

*Ernest was an elephant, a great big fellow,
Leonard was a lion with a six-foot tail,
George was a goat, and his beard was yellow,
And James was a very small snail.*

*Leonard had a stall, and a great big strong one,
Ernest had a manger, and its walls were thick,
George found a pen, but I think it was the wrong one,
And James sat down on a brick.*

*Ernest started trumpeting, and cracked his manger,
Leonard started roaring and shivered his*



stall,

*James gave the huffe of a snail in danger,
And nobody heard him at all.*

There is no need to huffe like James the snail because the New Church is small. As Milne's poem indicates, the large and powerful are equally vulnerable and may damage their surroundings by the sheer exercise of power.

Although small may be beautiful, it is not always so. Beauty transforms; its cosmic quality changes the small and insignificant to an entity infused with meaning and purpose, able to accomplish something which transcends the everyday and mundane.

Churches cannot avoid being beautiful. But a church can easily lose sight of its sense of purpose. Organizations dedicated to the service of God, churches, are sufficiently human to get mired in arguments over organization and doctrine; in struggles between power blocs; in hurtful treatment of individuals devoted to their welfare. When this happens, the church, whether small or large, is ugly, bereft of beauty and cut off from carrying out its mission to build the Lord's kingdom.

Beauty can be restored. Just as a tarnished cup can be polished to brightness, a church can recapture its simplicity by renewing an understanding of its mission. A congregation can determine to return to basics, once again consider who their church is meant to serve, and choose how best to do so. Its people can tap the healing powers of love and renew their sense of relatedness to each other and their community. They can heed Swedenborg's reminder that faith does not make the church and that doctrine is meaningless without expressing it through daily lives of charity. The essence of beauty in the small church is found in lives infused with the divinity of the heart of the earthly enterprise.

References;

- 1 E.F. Schumacher. *Small is Beautiful*. New York, Harper & Row, 1973.
- 2 Lyle E. Schaller. *The Small Church IS Different*. Nashville, Abigdon, 1982. P. 73.
- 3 A.A. Milne. *When We Were Very Young*. New York, E.P. Dutton & Co., pp. 10-11.

Dr. Alice B. Skinner is an independent research psychologist, vice-president of the Swedenborg Foundation, and a member of the SSR Board of Trustees. She lives in St. George, Maine with husband, Dr. Wickham Skinner.

Council of Ministers Highlights

Ron Brugler, Secretary

Forty-six people (forty-three clergy and four guests) attended the 1989 sessions of the Council of Ministers meetings held at Urbana University. Our time together was relaxed, informative, very productive, and most importantly opened within each of us new areas of spiritual growth and service to our church.

The greater part of our time together was spent in theological reflection and spiritual nourishment. Dr. Forster Freeman, a United Church of Christ Minister who specializes in leading discussion groups, was our "retreat" leader for four sessions in which we were challenged to rekindle the flame and spirit of our ministries, renew our individual calls to ministry, and creatively use our relationship with God in building our ministries. The Reverends George Dole and Paul Zacharias also led sessions on "The Far Side of Theology" and "Some Fuel for the Fire" respectively. This form of mutual sharing and in-depth reflection served to bring us closer together and enabled a special bond to exist within our Clergy which is invaluable to the church.

The highlights of business transacted are:

- Council Elections

David Rienstra, Chairman

Ron Brugler, Secretary

F. Robert Tafel, Executive Committee (joining Carl Yenetchi and Donna Keane)

Carl Yenetchi, Committee on Admission to the Ministry

Robert McCluskey, Convention Preacher, 1991

- Received reports from our committees and ministries, including:

Committee on Worship, Committee on Admission to the Ministry, the Swedenborg School of Religion, Children's Ministry, Youth Ministry, Placement Committee, Retirement Committee, Social Action and Concerns Committee, Convention's delegation to the National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.A., *The Messenger*, Committee on Translation, Johnny Appleseed and Co., Continuing Education Committee, Peer Supervision, and our own Executive Committee.

- Recommended to Convention the ordination of Kathleen Easton.
- Accepted the Vision of Ministry as submitted by SSR student, Wilma Wake.
- Moved the name of Llewellyn Fraser to the Role of Retired Ministers.
- Adopted a new series of Guidelines for Ministerial Work in the Swedenborgian Church, thus providing our Council and Convention with a clear statement of our ethical standards and practices within the clergy.

It was also with a deep sense of sadness that we learned of the death of the Reverend Harold Larson. Our love and sympathy were extended to his family.

A Giant Step:

Phase One Underway

*Peter Toot,
Steering Committee Member*

"Take a Giant Step!" Sound familiar? Dave Johnson's sermon title was acclaimed the new theme for the cooperative fund drive for SSR and Convention. The first part of this Giant Step was taken through a series of stewardship events during convention in Urbana.

On Wednesday, twenty-five attended a breakfast to get things started. Participants were given basic information and were also asked to be aware of convention-goers' questions, and sensitive to feelings of support or non-support for the campaign. On Thursday the steering committee made a presentation on the floor of convention, showing the first draft of the slide show being designed for use with groups throughout the church. A mini-course on Friday was led by Jerry Poole to explore a variety of fund-raising ideas for the denomination, SSR, and regional and local church groups.

The activities culminated in a one-and-a-half day workshop following convention to discuss and kick off the campaign. Far exceeding our expectations, forty-nine people from all across Canada and the U.S. attended the meeting, providing an excellent representation of all regions. It felt good to see that kind of turnout, especially since so many had just spent the previous week at convention and pre-convention meetings.

The workshop was designed to look at the nature of the campaign, to help people see it as just one element of a general renewal and the emergence of a strengthened sense of stewardship; to discover and deal with obstacles, pitfalls, and misconceptions; to delve further into planned giving concepts; and to take stock of personal commitments to help with the campaign. While the workshop did cover all of these areas, the design was modified on-the-fly to allow a more thorough airing of concerns and possible solutions. I won't try

to recreate the discussions in this article, but here are a few misconceptions we dealt with, to give a flavor of the meeting:

MYTH: This is a three-prong fund drive among Convention, SSR, and Temenos.

FACT: The fund drive partners are Convention and SSR. Temenos comes under Convention as a major denominational project, like Wayfarers Chapel.

MYTH: The fund drive pamphlets describe how gifts will be distributed to various projects.

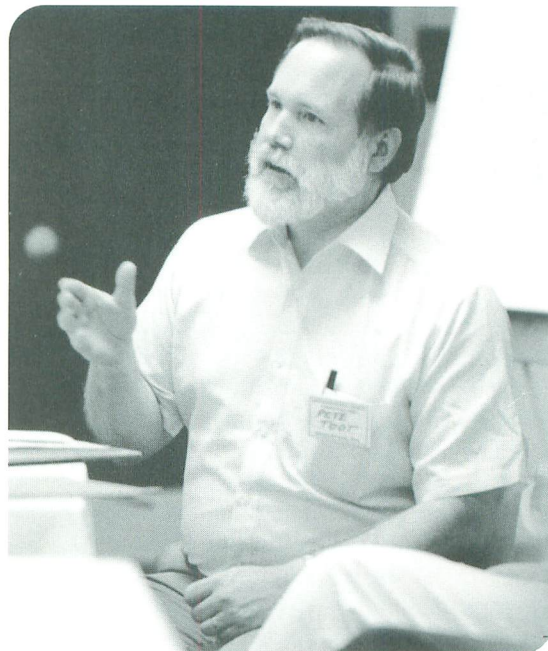
FACT: The pamphlets describe needs determined by the SSR five-year plan and by the Cabinet. The donors decide how each gift will actually be used.

MYTH: The fund drive will fail if it can't raise six million dollars in the next five years.

FACT: We are optimistic that the drive can raise three million dollars in the next five years, and that during the drive, arrangements can be made for another three million dollars of deferred gifts, which will be realized in future years. Success is not measured by hitting some dollar amount, but by providing the support our programs need, whether that be financial, personal, or moral support.

There was a great deal of discussion on Temenos, its role in the fund drive, and the parallels between Temenos today and Wayfarers Chapel forty years ago when it was going through its birthing pains. Areas which we have yet to fully explore, like the insecurities which individual campaign participants might encounter, and the discomfort and image problems associated with "asking for money," were surfaced and examined briefly in the time we had.

We were all asked to spend a half



Peter Toot, Cincinnati

hour in solitude to consider what personal commitments we could make to "Take a Giant Step." Almost everyone responded, with a range of commitment from modest involvement to total dedication. It was very moving to hear the love for the Swedenborgian Church and SSR expressed as people shared their readiness to help out or provide leadership for the tasks before us.

One last note on the workshop. As hard as everyone worked, there was still energy left at the end for zany skits and far-out fund-raising ideas during our last meal together. If you get a chance, ask Randy about tour dates for Swedenborg Asteroid. Ask Dick Tafel when the new SSR sets sail. (Perhaps that's SSSSR?) Or ask Lon Elmer how he's getting along with half his shoes!

There is still a lot to do. Our volunteers have to be organized, and there is training to be done once we all find the uses we'll perform. Over the next few months the slide presentation will be revised and tried out at upcoming association and camp meetings.

Thanks to everyone who participated; it's good to see this Giant Step beginning.

The General Convention '89 *Elections*

Urbana University, Ohio

Total Ballots cast: 153		Term	Number
Offices	Officers	(in years)	of votes
President-elect:	Rev. Richard H. Tafel, Jr.	1	148
Vice President:	Betsy Young	1	146
Recording Secretary:	Dorothy deB. Young	1	145
Treasurer:	John C. Perry	1	149
Communication Support Unit	Paul Maring	3	145
Education Support Unit	Dr. Patricia Basu	3	148
Financial & Physical Resources Support Unit	Rev. Harvey A. Tafel	3	143
Growth & Outreach Support Unit	Lon Elmer	3	144
	Nancy Perry (<i>unexpired term</i>)	1	139
Information Management Support Unit	Bill Etue	3	143
Pastoral Ministries Support Unit	Rev. Richard M. Baxter	3	148
Committee on Admission Into the Ministry	Rev. Paul B. Zacharias	1	145
	Elizabeth Johnson	1	145
Bd. of Trustees of Swedenborg School of Religion	Rev. Dr. Dorothea Harvey	3	145
	Dr. Edward Bohlander	3	137
General Council:	Rev. F. Robert Tafel	3	143
	Virginia Branston	3	111
	Betsy Ledingham (<i>from floor</i>)	3	136
Nominating Committee	Polly Baxter	5	93
Tellers:	Rev. Carl Yenetchi, Chief; Tina Burke, George Chapin, Kathleen Easton, Nancy Piorkowski, Rev. Stephen Pults, Rev. David Sonmor, Wilma Wake, Sue Weiss		
Alternates:	Paula Kraus, Rev. F. Gardiner Perry III, Shirley Sonmor, Alix Williams		

• • • Action Taken • • •

One Person—One Vote

After much heated debate on the floor of convention, the one member-one vote proposal was defeated because it failed to receive the two-thirds vote required by the by-laws. Final count, out of 143 votes: 81 affirmative, 55 negative, 7 abstentions.

What's in a Name?

General Council brought in the recommendation that we formally adopt "The General Convention of Swedenborgian Churches" as our dba (doing business as). After a great deal of discussion, Convention voted to adopt "The Swedenborgian Church" for this purpose. The legal name remains the same, "The General Convention of the New Jerusalem in the U.S.A."

Death Penalty

A resolution supporting the abolition of the death penalty was introduced with the intention that it be a matter of study by individuals, societies and associations during the coming year, to be voted on as a standing resolution at the next convention.

Convention Children's Program: *A Three-Year Success*



For the third consecutive year, the Children's Program at convention proved a delightful experience for the 28 week-long participants as well as the adult audience who watched their dramatization of the Johnny Appleseed legend accompanied by song. The children this year ranged in age from 4-1/2 to 17.

The trio of talented and dedicated young women who conduct the program are Yvonne Rittenhouse, Carol Noyse and Theresa Morgan, all teachers connected with the Children's Program at The Foundation for Inner Enlightenment and Spirituality.

Convention can get pretty awesome . . .

*Do you drive
it or fly it?*

*Kore Basu and Naomi
Cowen, Detroit and Urbana.*



Theresa Morgan leads the children in song during the Johnny Appleseed presentation.

tual Freedom in Issaquah, Washington. The Foundation is directed by the founder, Rev. Dr. Laura Cameron Fraser, a former Episcopal priest.* The program is a recently realized dream of Dr. Fraser to provide a non-denominational children's school that teaches universal precepts of spirituality.

Theresa Morgan, a vital young mother of three and folk musician who often performs with her husband and children in Seattle, took a few moments during convention to talk about the concept behind the program. "The idea is to give the children something non-denominational relative to love and nurturing their creative abilities. My part has been to teach music and help them become willing to perform in front of people. It has taken a lot of effort, especially with the boys—they have to learn to extend themselves more than any of them are accustomed to doing. From a spiritual viewpoint, what the children are learning is discipline, concentration, self-control and focus, which are all ways for each of them to find their own path. We don't tell them which way to go, we just try to lead them to find their own way. We're also teaching about American Indians and their beliefs, especially their high regard for nature."

Yvonne Rittenhouse has taught special education in public schools and is now working in a day care center, and Carol Noyse is planning to attend Waldorf training in Sacramento, California this fall. The three have done shared services with Rev. Paul Grumman and his wife Sandy at the Stone House Book Room in Redmond, Washington.

"Our work here is an outgrowth of working with their community and the children's program in conjunction with the Foundation," Theresa said. "We are honored to be here and to be asked as guests. It's something very special for all of us."

And for us, too. Thanks to you, Theresa, Yvonne and Carol.

* See "An Interview with Laura Cameron Fraser," *The Messenger*, August 1987.

Alliance of New Church Women:

Annual Luncheon Highlights

At the annual convention luncheon, former president Polly Baxter of Maryland turned over the gavel to Barbara Penabaker of Detroit, newly-elected president of Women's Alliance. Phyllis Bosley of San Francisco is the new vice-president, Jacqui Skinner Light of Boston, the new second vice-president, and Val Brugler is publications chair. Val will be coordinating Women's Alliance publishing efforts.

Sharon Billings of Brookings, Oregon, Mary Ebel of Washington, D.C. church, Carole Rienstra of St. Louis, and Muriel Bennett of Pawnee Rock, Kansas were reelected to the respective posts of chaplain, treasurer, mite box chair, and nominating committee chair.

In addition to the usual business reports we were privileged to hear inspiring speeches by keynote and guest speakers Susan Turley-Moore of the San Francisco church, * Dorothy Alexander of Urbana, and Urbana Society's president Linda Blosser. Mrs. Alexander spoke eloquently on "The Role of Women Today," and Ms. Blosser gave a brief but moving account of her journey of recovery from alcoholism that has ul-

timately led to her purchase of a large home in Urbana, which she will be opening soon as a halfway house for recovering alcoholic women.

"I named it Agape House," she said, "because Agape is the Greek word for unconditional love, and that's what the 12-Step programs are about, and that's what this church is about." Linda joined the Urbana church Easter Sunday, 1987.

Mite Box Chair Carole Rienstra reported that a total of \$1200 was collected and turned over to the Social Actions Concerns Committee for a resource library on child abuse.

** Regretfully, there isn't space in this issue to do justice to Rev. Turley-Moore's text, but readers will be seeing it in a future issue.*

Linda Blosser, President, Urbana Society, Founder Agape House



Rev. Susan Turley-Moore giving keynote speech at Women's Alliance luncheon.



SSR Graduate Address:

Journey of the Spirit— A Process of Becoming

Kathleen Easton

What a day! What a week! What a year! What a time in my life! Where have I been? Where am I going?

Believe me, these exclamations and questions are more than just openers or literary style. They truly are representative of my entire state in recent weeks and months.

My need this past week has been to just be led around. My standing orders to myself have been, "Self, no thinking. . . just try to experience the week. You have no class to prepare for, no papers to do, no texts to read. It's over! It's done!" I wonder if that has really sunk in yet?

To say I've been on a journey this past three years understates the matter and telescopes the experience into a few picture

frames, which could be described in one sentence. I left Delaware, came to Boston, studied two programs of education, graduated and now am moving on.

One aspect of this three-year journey that cannot be as easily described is the process I've experienced throughout that time. During last Sunday's trip, as the B737 jetted westward from Boston to Dayton, I reflected, once again, on this recurring theme of the past three years—that of process; that continuum between where I've been and where I'm going.

At 35,000 feet I watched the magnificence of a sunset on a pristinely

clear evening, travelling west. The excitement of regaining time and holding on to precious moments of light ("self, you're thinking about it—just experience it!"). Then as we came within 100 miles of the Dayton area, the cotton-ball pinkness and fluffiness of the wispy, high-flying cirrus clouds flitted past, and there loomed into view massive, billowing, darkening cumulus clouds. Was there a storm threat there? Or was it just the lessening daylight? Time and space move on, don't they, was my thought. At least we live in the illusion that they do. It certainly appears that way, doesn't it! (Uh, oh, self, sounds like you're beginning to think again" . . .)

Going back to process and connecting where I've been to where I'm going in this journey of the spirit we call life, a thought from Teilhard de Chardin has been frequently running through my mind during the

*... after we have
mastered the winds
and the wave, the
tides and gravity, we
will harness for God
the energies of love.*

past year. To paraphrase, he says that someday, after we have mastered the winds and the wave, the tides and gravity, we will harness for

God the energies of love. Then for the second time in history, mankind will have discovered fire.

The idea of process is implicit in the statement. Maybe that's why the thought has been a frequent companion as I have travelled the corridors of my mind and the rooms of my heart. It's saying that after we have done this . . . we'll get that; or, until we do this . . . we won't get that.

Swedenborg is one of several who say that process (or regeneration) happens in necessarily sequential stages and states. We can't have the Holy City, the



Leapin' lizards!
Congradulations from F. Bob Tafel
to ordinand Kathleen Easton.

New Jerusalem till we've received the promise, contracted the covenant, experienced the impostors of success and failure and acknowledged the need for the saving presence of the Lord God. And *this* is the process I have undertaken this past three years, much of the time unknowingly. (When I first came to the Swedenborg School of Religion, I had not committed myself to ministry. I was coming to study Swedenborg, and, being commitment-shy at that time, my position was one of, "Let's wait and see!")

De Chardin's statement is one which can apply equally to individual process and regeneration, and to the spiritual evolution of humankind. Because, as it is in the macrocosm, so it is in the microcosm. The world and people are whole and inter-connected. We share common human experiences in the jigsaw puzzles of our individual lives and the lives of our families, our communities, our countries and our world, even though we might express them differently. And it's this feeling of sharing, this inter-connectiveness that warms my heart.

Speaking of the connections, I'd like to acknowledge some of these now, by outlining a calendar of this past three years. I have been involved in two academic programs, education as well as theology, and have had a whole range of experiences, from the frustrating to the enlightening, to the fun and exciting. I have been privileged to study Swedenborg with three of the most knowledgeable people in the area of Swedenborg's writing and ideas—George Dole, Bob Kirven and Bill Woofenden. I have benefited much from the many years of pastoral experience of our out-going professor of Pastoral Care, Bob Bossdorf. With my faculty advisor, Mary Kay Klein, I have shared many hours of friendship and counsel.

My Field Education took me to our churches in Cambridge, San Francisco,

Kitchener and Elmwood, under the supervision of F. Bob Tafel, Rachel Lawrence, Eric Allison and Ken Turley. From their uniquely different styles, I have observed and learned about "life as a minister." I thank them with heartfelt gratitude. My camp experiences took me to Fryeburg and Paulhaven, being supervised by George Dole and David Sonmor. During all these experiences, I was happy and privileged to be among friendly congregations and groups who welcomed me warmly to their homes and their hearts. In these groups, I have made solid friendships.

Another two programs have been highly significant. Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE), required as part of my SSR training, is an event after which, some say, life is never quite the same—and so it was for me. Under excellent and caring supervision, I not only got the feel of life as a chaplain, I also received gentle insight and guidance in the area of my growing edges. Not required by either of my academic programs was the training I took as a direct service volunteer for Hospice. The impact on me of the training and the work I have done with the terminally ill is immeasurable. I also voluntarily took on two years of personal counseling which has helped shed light on my shadow side and my "inner child," bringing me to a deeper understanding of myself and therefore of others.

In between times, I have worked part time at an Irish restaurant in suburban Boston with people who have become my friends and who have provided much needed lightness and fun. The support of these and other friends, both inside and outside the church, has gone far in keeping me on track when times were difficult, helping me to keep my vision in sight.

Here I am at the gateway to new ventures. The waves and tides of

change await me. I hope, pray and earnestly ask for your prayers, that the winds of the Spirit, the Comforter, the Enlightener will blow gently, encouragingly, in my heart, the inspiration of love from God, love of God and service to others.

Editor's Note: Rev. Kathleen Easton has accepted the position of parish minister at the St. Paul Church and will be moving to Minnesota in September.

Convention Music Makers

Opening Night Improvisations, Steve Ledingham on piano and Barbara Mackey on cello. No kidding, they were making it up as they went along.

Llewellyn Fraser on the harmonica.



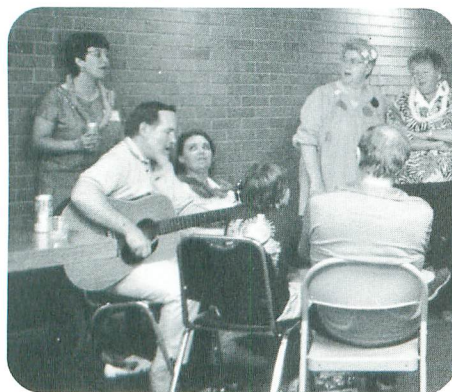
Ethelyn Worden and Laurie Turley performing a duet during the Sunday worship services.



Convention in full voice, Sunday worship service.



We all enjoyed a late-night song fest with Pete Toot on guitar.



Judy Hensen, Urbana, at organ practice. Judy very ably accompanied the choir on Sunday.



The choir, under the exciting direction of Ken Turley, came through nobly once again with little rehearsal.

We shuffle along with Urbana's Petticoat Cloggers.

We Thank You!

The Messenger and the Communications Support Unit wish to acknowledge and thank all of you who have sent in contributions and subscriptions to *The Messenger* during the past year. It is partially through your gifts that the church can offer this ministry of internal communication and outreach. Our heartfelt thanks to the following:

Alliance of New Church Women	Bethesda, Maryland
Bertha Berran	San Diego, California
Anna Buck	North Easton, Massachusetts
Albert Cantwell	Baltimore, Maryland
E.R. Carlson	Knoxville, Iowa
Chicago New Church	Chicago
Mona Conner	Brooklyn, New York
Sheila Cook	Fresno, California
Agnes Cowern	St. Paul, Minnesota
Josephine Cowern	St. Paul Minnesota
Georgio Ferrari	Venice, Italy
Herbert Fisher	Tucson, Arizona
Catherine Flynn	Chesterton, Indiana
Adrienne Frank	Westport, Connecticut
William Frost	Port Austin, Michigan
Fryeburg New Church	Fryeburg, Maine
The General Conference of New Church	London
Julia Gunther Haid	Clemson, South Carolina
Thomas Hall	Waterloo, Ontario
Margary Harper	Tullahoma, Tennessee
Betty Hill	Saginaw, Michigan
Maxine Jennings	Coupeville, Washington
George Kessler	Maywood, New Jersey
Mrs. L.J. Light	Abbotsford, British Columbia
Wayne Lovell	Bridgewater, Massachusetts
John McLevige	Rockford, Illinois
George McClure	Sonoma, California
Barbara Moorman	Fairfield, Virginia
Tatsuya Nagashima	Tokyo, Japan
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Anna Rich	Brooklyn, New York
Martha Richardson	Fryeburg, Maine
Dorothy Schmucker	Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania
Margaret Schreider	Cincinnati, Ohio
Hester Schwarting	Syracuse, New York
Donna Sekhon	Fort Royal, Virginia
Marilyn Thomas	Harmony, Maine
W.C.C. Church of the New Jerusalem	Waldheim, Saskatchewan
Thomas Wallace	Emmaus, Pennsylvania
L. Warkentine	Chilliwack, British Columbia
J.C. Webb	Amenia, New York
Martin Peter Wiebe	Grande Prairie, Alberta
Mrs. Thomas Williams	Pigeon Cove, Maine
Elizabeth Young	Palos Verdes Estates, California

World's Parliament of Religions

George Dole

The Parliament of the World's Religions of 1893, held during the Columbian Exposition in Chicago, shattered the common assumption that "the heathen" were backward and benighted. The Parliament originated in the Swedenborgian faith of Charles Bonney, and demonstrated that the Divine is present and effective in all religions.

A centennial Parliament is now being planned, and the Hindu who proposed it, Swami Sarveshananda, has worked to secure Swedenborgian involvement. One of his fondest hopes is that the 1993 event will be of benefit to us "because we owe you so much." Convention, SSR, and the Swedenborg Foundation have formally pledged their support; the Social Action Concerns Committee has affirmed its lively interest, and Gladys Wheaton and George Dole have become involved in the planning process. *The Messenger* will keep you informed of new developments.

Kudos to Tom Zehner

With the sounding of the gavel at the 1989 annual meeting of the Sunday School Association of The Swedenborgian Church, the tenure of Tom Zehner of Pittsburgh as treasurer came to a close. Mr. Zehner served competently and tirelessly for nine years behind the scenes to help keep our Sunday School programs strong. An effective advocate of the *Bible Study Notes* (also known as *The Dole Notes*), Mr. Zehner lent able support in getting the six-volume Sunday School curricula into a hard-bound edition. He committed himself to the treasurer's office until the project had fully recouped its investment, which it did last year. And so, with the acceptance of his final report at the Urbana convention this year, Mr. Zehner gave the reins over to the new treasurer, Mrs. Adrienne Frank of Connecticut. From all of us with the Sunday School Association: Thank you, Tom Zehner!

From Central Office

"Thanks for the Memory . . ."

Ethelwyn Worden

It's only July at this writing, so most of us still have vivid memories of certain parts of convention at Urbana, and of people there. My memories go back further, to the meeting of this year's Planning Committee at which time the theme was selected and the program schedule begun.

That was in January, and I'd like to thank Randy Laakko for pulling the meeting together, with John Titus, liaison for Urbana University; Bev Titus, local committee chair; Betsy Young representing EdSU (Education Support Unit), which was responsible for the Children's Program, mini-courses, Social Action Committee and banner procession; Steve Pults representing the NCYL; Paul Zacharias, chair of the Council of Ministers; and Ken Turley, member of the Committee on Worship. By phone, we also had input from Polly Baxter, President of the Women's Alliance and Dick Baxter of the Committee on Worship. These folks essentially shaped the process which formed this year's convention, and worked with Central Of-

fice all spring.

In mid-May, when the pace really picked up and the whole Central Office focus was on convention, our regular staff—Muriel Liddy, secretary, Craig White, graphic artist/typesetter, Martha Bauer, bookkeeper and her assistant, Judy Leonard, and I—was augmented by the arrival of Dave Lederman and Tina Burke from Ontario, and Paula Kraus from Kansas. (Tina and David will be married August 19 in Kitchener. Congratulations to both!)

With their arrival also began the "long days' journey into night" as copying, collating, sorting, boxing, checking of lists, adding to lists with each phone call, cleaning of robes, polishing of communion silver, and so on kept us working far into many an evening. As her school year ended, Karen Klein joined us the last week to take on her annual task of stuffing folders. Pam Shuttleworth, an SSR student, helped till late May when her Clinical Pastoral Experience program began.

The week before our June 21 de-

**Striking the set—
Muff Worden at the wheel
of Central Office West.**



parture one could find office lights on at any strange hour. Dave, who also found our computer virus and "killed" it, pulled registration and flight information lists from the computer; Paula checked and re-checked boxes and their contents against our huge "take" list; Tina fed arrival, registration and housing information into the new computer Rolodex system (which worked!); and Muriel and I double-checked everything while maintaining the "usual office procedures" as long as we could. Dorothy Young and Bob Bossdorf helped us, too.

We had the added task this year of clearing every bookcase and surface in Central Office in order to allow movers and carpet-layers to come in the day of our departure to re-carpet our third-floor area. Boxes were packed and stored in attic space, the mail room, the bathtub—anywhere!

We had to laugh when people phoned the last two days before we left—they could not possibly have envisioned our completely naked office (even the "rain forest" of plants had been moved), or how difficult it was to fill even minor requests due to boxes obstructing the way to our files!

The staff drove to Urbana in a heavily-laden rented van and in Dave's car and there we unloaded with the help of Frank, Vern and Dan of the University's maintenance crew. These men also came to our rescue quite a bit during convention week.

Urbana provided us with excellent liaison in John Titus and Carl Yenetchi, and especially in Joyce Neal, a member of their residence staff, who was "on loan" to us for our time there, and who graciously handled crises, needs and extremely long days on our behalf. Mike Carey, head of Buildings and Grounds (with travel mug in hand), was always nearby when needed, and became firmly convinced during the week that a golf cart was a fine way to move

personnel or to do light hauling in a hurry.

Urbana's President Paul Bunnell and his family were not only among the hosts for several suites, but I caught them weeding walkways and checking all the dorms as well.

We were especially helped by Danette Gioiello, the food service manager, her assistants Randy and Terry and their whole, wonderful crew who braved an infernally hot kitchen to provide us with ample and tasty meals and snacks, plus the Saturday luau; and by the three cleaning ladies and their "circus train" cages for linens, Warren Stevens, our chief lifeguard, and Bob Ronai and Cindy McKnight of the Athletic Department, who arranged for our extended (and welcome) use of the pool and of the university's vans. Great thanks also to Diana Korte and Theresa Miller who helped with copying, to Carolyn Circle and Joyce Griffin, who kept information and phone service flowing along, and to Lt. Robert Mooney and Officer Lorna Grant of Globe Security for their excellent nighttime help.

During convention, Dave Lederman easily won the mileage prize for his many trips to Dayton Airport, for taking care of the vans, and for working out the whole transportation schedule, with passengers and other drivers.

Local church folks outdid themselves on hospitality and services as well—blessings and thanks to Bev Titus, Laurie Turley and the babysitter crew who undertook the Toddler program so beautifully! And to Linda Blosser, Pat and Dick Sommer, John and Kristin Keller, Gary Stout, Betty Yenetchi, Barb Mackey, Al and Karen Cowen, Quint and Kit Billings and Renée and Tracy Morris, all of whom lent time, talent, work and gloriously cheerful smiles all week.

We were ably helped by Nancy Piorkowski of Wilmington, Delaware, who arrived early and filled in for

Loretta Kasehagen at the financial end of the registration desk; by Pat Dennis of Cleveland and Charlotte Lord of Fryeburg, who helped with registration and as the altar committee for the early morning and "big" services; by Steve Koke of California who handled video and photography; Bob Kirven and Bill Woofendon, SSR, who helped with photography, Lon Elmer of Seattle, who helped with driving. And Loretta—we *missed* you and we look forward to having you (she's Randy's secretary in Wilmington) with us next year at Olds College in Alberta. A special thanks to Jacqui Light of Boston who coordinated the mini-courses and banner processions so ably, and to everyone responsible for the wonderful array of exhibits and T-shirts.

Once again, kudos to Yvonne Rittenhouse, Carol Noyes and Theresa Morgan who worked with Ted Klein in providing another excellent Children's Program.

It's amazing, isn't it, how many folks it takes to make a convention happen? I've listed so many, and yet there are many others (like Mary Kay Klein of SSR, who handled all the details of Friday's Graduation and coordinated the fund-raising presentations as well) whose names are not here, but who played a part in putting the Urbana convention together. To everyone I say a big, warm "THANKS" for myself and for everyone who attended the convention—281 this year! It really did take everyone to make things go so well.

And thanks, Urbana, for having invited us!

“Quickie” Workshop Conducted by George Dole



Mary Crenshaw, Detroit Society and George Dole, SSR, share some food and laughs.

Ted LeVan

The LaPorte contingent invited all present at convention to join them in an informal post-convention workshop conducted by George Dole. Twelve people from New York, California, Canada, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, Ohio and Indiana gathered to hear George's new insights into three areas: Swedenborg's writing sequence, the holographic model, and the pilot of the inner meaning of Scripture. It was amazing how they all fit together!

The Rev. Dr. Dole showed that Swedenborg was writing specific books in response to specific challenges in his life, a case in point being *True Christian Religion*. Instead of thinking of TCR as a final summary, George points out that there is substantial evidence that this work should be seen as a kind of proposal for the reform of the Lutheran Church which at the time was attacking Swedenborg's theology. He went on to suggest that if we are looking for a basis for a universal religion, we might better look to *Divine Love and Wisdom*.

The holographic model helped

George explain Swedenborg's concept of oneness, that "a form is the more perfect as its constituents are distinguishably different and yet united." He explained further that the kind of oneness Swedenborg had in mind is enhanced rather than threatened by genuine individuality—that there is nothing blurry or conformist about it. Differences are not to be ignored or suppressed. It is not just accidental, but en-

tirely necessary that the Divine be differently received and differently presented by different individuals, and also by the same individual at different times.

The mainspring of the plot of the inner meaning of Scripture is the promise to Abram that his descendants will become a great nation. They succeed literally under King David, but the success collapses because it is only literal, only external. The trauma of the exile reflected in the prophets prepares the way for the Gospel announcement that the true kingdom is within, and the story closes with a vision of that kingdom descending to earth.

George compared this to the pattern of each individual life. We start in early childhood with dreams of glory, dreams of being one of those omnipotent beings known as adults. We achieve this, and ultimately discover that it is not the answer. No amount of outward achievement or recognition gives us the sense of meaning and worth that we expected. We must look within and find the presence of the

Divine there; and once we do, we find the kingdom "descending"—involving us in this world more fully rather than drawing us away from it. We find the same Divine everywhere.

Our Biblical model also helps us understand our changing concept of "oneness." That is, as the years pass, spiritual growth leads us to recognize our oneness with larger and larger groupings, from the infantile identification with the self alone, we move to identification with the family, then with the school (and through it with the community), with such bodies as the church and the business, with the nation, with the world, and with the Lord's kingdom. The person who sees the Divine in all religions is not less but differently loyal to his or her "own" church. George closed with this thought: "I hope that I have suggested to you that the phenomenon of holography illustrates a particular kind of oneness,

and that appreciation of that oneness changes the way

♦
*... the kind of
oneness Swedenborg
had in mind is
enhanced rather
than threatened
by genuine
individuality.*

we see things. I hope I've suggested that Swedenborg encountered that kind of oneness, and tried in various ways to communicate it in terms of the world he knew. And I hope I've suggested that we are designed to grow

into a realization of that

♦ oneness by the process imaged in the Biblical story."

The group left hungry for more.

Rev. Dr. George Dole is a professor at the Swedenborg School of Religion and a member of the Board of Directors of the Swedenborg Foundation. Rev. Ted LeVan is Minister of the LaPorte New Church, LaPorte, Indiana.

Commencements

Baptism

Cocksburn—Rebecca Elaine and Adam Douglas, daughter and son of Doug and Leanne Cocksburn were baptized into the Christian faith December 23, 1988, at the Church of the Holy City, Edmonton, the Rev. Henry Korsten officiating.

Hammarstrous and Staples—A. William Hammarstrous and Marie Staples were baptized into the Christian faith June 18, 1989, at Elmwood New Church, the Rev. Ken Turley officiating.

Schreiber—Kurtis Jacobus, son of Patti and Cam Schreiber and grandson of Jack and Doreen Van Rooijen was baptized into the Christian faith November 20, 1988, the Rev. Henry Korsten officiating.

Marriage

Escolas and Edson—Kenneth Escolas and Karla Edson were united in marriage, May 27, 1989, at the Elmwood New Church, the Rev. Ken Turley officiating.

Locke and McCarthy—Roland Locke Jr. and Dawn McCarthy were united in marriage, May 20, 1989 at St. Anne's Church, W. Bridgewater, the Rev. Ken Turley officiating with Father Mansfield.

Rabideau and Egan—Michael R. Rabideau and Lisa Jane Egan were united in marriage, June 10, 1989 at Elmwood New Church, the Rev. Ken Turley officiating.

Spencer and Burke—Mark Spencer and Darlene Burke were united in marriage, December 30, 1988 at the Church of the Holy City, Edmonton, the Rev. Henry Korsten officiating.

Change of Address

Rev. Steve Pults and Kim Kearns
3362 Prairie
Royal Oak, MI 48073
Phone: (313) 288-0555

Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor:

With respect to the resolution opposing the death penalty (to be voted on at the 1990 Convention), I would like to give a few thoughts to the victims, past and future.

To the victims—who have no future, who had no appeals, no furloughs, no lawyers, and no stays of execution. These victims are women and girls; they are young men and boys, elderly men, middle-aged women, and small children.

In the last 20 years in California, we have had many mass murders and serial killers. In Southern California there were the Hillside Strangler and the Freeway Killers, the MacDonald's Killer, and the Manson Family.

In Northern California, we had Juan Corona, who killed at least 25 itinerant farm workers and buried them in orchards. We had the Zodiac Killer, who slew men and women at random all over the Bay Area, taunted police and newspapers, and was never caught. We had the Zebra Killers, who chose random victims in San Francisco for racial motives. We had the Trailside Killer, David C., who killed seven in our own Marin County and rendered our beloved Mt. Tamalpais unusable by hikers for six years. (His conviction has just been set aside for technical reasons.)

We had the Gold Country killers, the number of whose victims may never be known. We had Dorothy P., referred to as the "Boardinghouse Killer," who allegedly poisoned her elderly tenants to collect their Social Security checks and buried them in her garden. And two months ago we had the wine country murder suspect who, after a night of drinking and cocaine, allegedly slew his wife, mother-in-law, two young sisters-in-law, two of his three baby daughters, and a co-worker.

Every three years Charles Manson comes up for parole, and Californians tremble lest some parole board decide to release him.

Californians have changed from opposing the death penalty to feeling that it is a fitting penalty for heinous crimes.

Does the death penalty deter? Professor Isaac Ehrlich and his colleagues, using statistical techniques, determined that each execution deters between 7 and 8 potential killings.

If we refuse to use the death penalty under any circumstances, aren't we saying to the victims that their lives have no value? And aren't we saying to the murderers, too, that their victims' lives have no value?

Sincerely,
Nan Paget
Mill Valley, California

Moving On in September

Rev. Kenneth Turley, wife Laurie and daughter Emily will be leaving Elmwood Church, Massachusetts, going to Portland New Church, Maine. Rev. Judith Dennis has accepted a call to Elmwood. Rev. Gardiner Perry will move from the Detroit area to allot one third of his time to the Los Angeles church, one third to Wayfarers Chapel, and one third to his sports ministry. Rev. Donna Sloan is Associate Pastor at the Boston church, and Rev. Susan Turley Moore is the new Associate Pastor at the San Francisco church. Rev. Eric Allison, formerly of Kitchener, Ontario, is now Pastoral Ministries Consultant. And newly ordained Rev. Kathleen Easton will begin her ministry in the St. Paul, Minnesota parish. Rev. Ivan Franklin has started a new spiritual growth and discussion group in Del Mar, California (San Diego area) and is no longer serving the Riverside church. More details about this group and other unfolding developments in a future issue!

The Many Faces of Convention '89

Dan Neilsen, 85, the oldest man at convention, and Meredith Elizabeth Catlett, 19 days old, youngest conventioneer.



Ministers Spouses Group, plus Baby Jordan Pulls, who proved he could sleep through anything.



(center) Laurie and Emily Turley.

Alan Thomsen, Rev. Susan Turley-Moore and son Keith Moore, San Francisco church, with Rev. Carl Yenetchi in Harvey Chapel, backed by AIDS Memorial Quilt. Each panel in the 12-foot-square banners memorialize the life of someone who has died of AIDS.



President-elect Dick Tafel and wife Linda.



Koko Thorballsson waits for frisbee partners.

General Convention of the New Jerusalem
The Messenger
 48 Sargent Street
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