

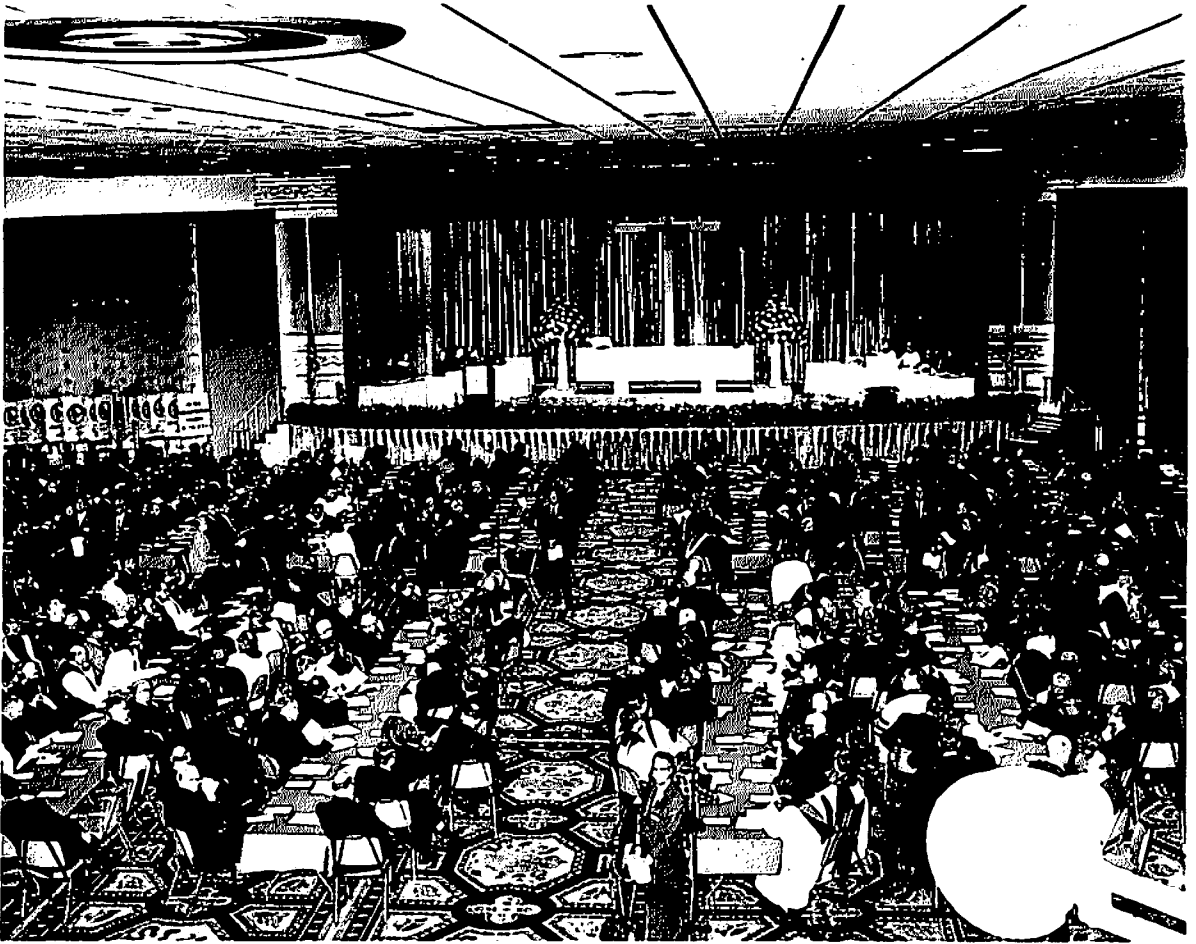
# ***THE MESSENGER***

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January, 1967

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NATIONAL COUNCIL OF CHURCHES ISSUE



Seventh Triennial General Assembly of the National Council of Churches

Miami Beach, Florida, December 4-9, 1966

GENERAL CONVENTION OF THE NEW JERUSALEM

ELECTED TO MEMBERSHIP

IN THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

## A VIEW OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

This month's cover picture shows about one-third of the hall in which plenary sessions and worship services were held in the meeting of the General Assembly of the National Council of Churches.

The tables in the center seated about half of the Voting Representatives, Fraternal Delegates, Accredited Visitors and other participants. The others were seated at similar tables out of sight below the picture margin. Another third of the room was set with rows of chairs for other visitors.

The picture was taken on opening night. After the membership elections, the Swedenborgian delegation had a designated section at the second table from the left, closest to the stage. Pres. Tafel is seen studying documents, while Revs. Capon and Martin watch the speaker.



## A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF CONVENTION

You will rejoice, I know, to hear that our Church was admitted to membership in the National Council of Churches at its Assembly in Miami Beach on Dec. 6.

This marked the culmination of many years' work by a number of our ministers, yet it could not have come about except for the interested concern of certain leaders in other communions. The National Council, for instance, had to set aside one of its requirements which we could not fulfil, that a church must have at least 20,000 members to qualify for membership. We are very grateful for the many kindnesses extended to us, and for the graciousness with which we have been received.

We are most deeply conscious of the leading of our Lord throughout. Surely this was of Divine Providence! By the same token, he must want us to take full advantage of the many possibilities for service which membership in the National Council opens to us. May we keep this vision of service to our Lord and the NEW CHURCH ever before us!

Richard H. Tafel

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

## One of Four New Members

### SWEDENBORGIAN CHURCH ELECTED TO NATIONAL COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

On Dec. 6, 1966, four communions were admitted to membership in the National Council of Churches.

They are the Church of the New Jerusalem; the Antiochian Orthodox Catholic Archdiocese of Toledo, Ohio, and Dependencies; Progressive National Baptist Convention, Inc., and the Exarchate of the Russian Orthodox Church in North and South America.

Membership for Convention was recommended by Bishop Lord of the Methodist Church, Chairman of the General Constituent Membership Committee. Bishop Lord told the General Assembly:

"Conversations with the leaders of this church date back to early 1956. These discussions have dealt with the theological position of the church, its structure and size. While the membership is small, studies have revealed that the percentage of its churches demonstrating an ecumenical spirit by participating in local Council of churches is very high. It appeared to the General Constituent Membership Committee that because of the interest of this church in becoming a member of the National Council of Churches its size should not be a determining factor."

The new By-Laws of the National Council state five criteria for membership qualifications, he pointed out, including one of size -- "at least 20,000 persons and at least fifty local churches, unless special circumstances warrant exceptions" -- and he reported that the Membership Committee and the General Board considered Convention's situation to warrant such an exception.

"In its meeting on February 21, 1966," Bishop Lord continued, "the General Constituent Membership Committee voted to recommend acceptance of this application for membership to the General Assembly."

"I therefore recommend:

That the General Assembly of the Na-

tional Council of Churches elect the Church of the New Jerusalem to membership in the National Council of Churches."

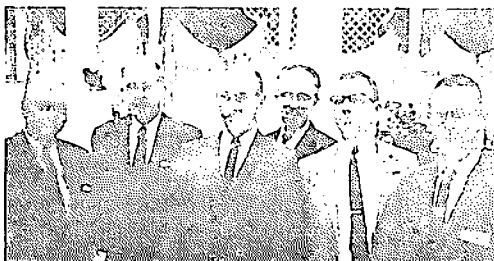
Approval to all four applications for membership was given by the General Assembly so that the national cooperative body is now composed of 34 Protestant, Anglican and Orthodox communions. They have a combined membership of 41.5 million.

Two votes were taken on the new member denominations. The first was by the General Assembly voting delegates. The vote was:

New Jerusalem Church -- 383 for, 27 against, seven abstentions, Antiochian Orthodox of Toledo -- 411 for, one against, five abstentions. Progressive Baptist -- 425 for, none against, five abstentions. Russian Exarchate -- 395 for, four against, eight abstentions.

The second vote, by denominations, went:

New Jerusalem -- 26 for, one against. Antiochian Orthodox -- 27 for, none against. Progressive Baptist -- 27 for, none against. Russian Exarchate -- 24 for, none against, three abstentions.



BISHOP JOHN WESLEY LORD (l.) Chmn. of NCC Constituent Membership Comm., welcomes the first delegation of Voting Representatives from the Swedenborgian Church, after the membership elections. Headed by President Tafel, the delegation included the Revs. Ernest Frederick of Miami, Robert Kirven and Edwin Capon of the Swedenborg School of Religion, and Ernest Martin of Washington, D.C.

### HEARD AT THE NCC

"The essence of my religious conviction is this: the way you treat people is the way you treat God." Vice President Hubert Humphrey.

## Letter from the Editor

### REFLECTIONS ON THE NATIONAL COUNCIL

One of the first responses I heard on returning from the National Council meeting was a question -- asked as a serious inquiry -- as to why we were in the National Council of Churches. It was a good, simple question, but simple answers are not adequate to simple questions if the questions are any good.

I could answer, "Because it's there," without being wholly facetious. I could go into a long essay in ecumenical theology. I could cite some authorities' reference to statements appearing in this issue. But the only answer I can think of that might be better than that first one, is a story: a tale of my own experience.

A major step forward in the theological aspect of the ecumenical movement was taken in June of 1966 with the first annual National Faith and Order Colloquium. This meeting, sponsored by the Faith and Order Department of the National Council of Churches, but not limited to NCC members, brought together approximately 100 theologians from communions as diverse as Roman Catholics, Methodists, Southern Baptists, Missouri Centered Lutherans, Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Disciples, Members of the United Church of Christ and a Swedenborgian.

I was there as a guest, not a member, because we were not at that time members of the Council (though our application had been approved by the General Board just a few days before the colloquium) and the full roster of non-member communions had not been set. I arrived at the meeting at Chicago's Edgewater Beach Hotel just for the five days just before our Council of Ministers met in Urbana, with a strong feeling of honor and privilege. It seemed to be a big league, and I was happy to be there, though I did not expect to do much except to sit on the bench and watch the others play.

I still regard it as an honor and a privilege to have been there, but in a different way and for different reasons than when I arrived. The experience that changed my attitude illustrates something important about the National Council of Churches.

I've had many experiences with theologians and churchmen of different backgrounds, but nothing that quite prepared me for the kind of acceptance that I received. The interest that was shown in my church, and in the theological tradition I could contribute to discussions was so much more than the polite queries and casual curiosity that I had met in other situations that I was quite unprepared. Time and again I gave a casual summary kind of answer to a question about my church -- thinking that no more was expected -- only to be pressed for details and explanations and implications. More important, but harder to describe was the attitude behind such questions: I could call it openness, concern, personal friendship, but none of these seem adequate. There is a phrase that is in great danger of becoming a cliché, "unity of the Spirit," but I don't know of anything equally appropriate.

The acceptance that was part of this unity -- acceptance of me as a person and as a representative of a small and little known communion -- was stimulating and pleasant at first, but then rather suddenly humbling. I was listening to speakers from a wide theological spectrum and thinking, with great delight, how many of them were saying things I could agree with, that were compatible with the unity I had been enjoying. The essential quality of the attitude which others maintained toward me was the uncritical acceptance which listened for what I believed without judgment. It was not that everyone tried to agree, but everyone listened with serious respect for each other. The moment in which I realized that such respect for others precludes initial judgment on my part as to whether I agree or disagree with what they say -- at least until I have heard and seriously tried to understand the whole of it -- was a moment in which I reached a new appreciation of the importance of our church's participation in the National Council.

## THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

On the night of December 4, just before the service that opened the General Assembly of the National Council of Churches in Miami, I talked with a Disciple of Christ, an Episcopalian, a Presbyterian, an Orthodox Priest and his Bishop, and a Minister of the Reformed Church. The sphere of welcome and "at-homeness" was as evident as it had been in Chicago. I walked into the service beside the Orthodox Priest.

I don't really know, but my guess is there were two thousand people, or more. The start was late, the procession was long, the opening was cumbersome. It seemed too big a body to do one thing together, and I wondered if they needed me.

Then we sang. "Hail the glorious, golden City, pictured by the seers of old." The surge of sound and spirit, exciting even in recollection, was transforming. There were not two thousand people, there was one congregation; the crowd became a host, and its size became its power. The question of the group's need for me disappeared, for I was part of the group -- singing for all we were worth.

The next day we got down to earth and down to business -- the incredibly complex, cumbersome and chair-wearing business of getting any business done in a group that large and that diverse. To a heart that leaps at the sight of a rainbow, it remains a thing of wonder that anything can be done at all, and a harbinger of peace among nations that 34 churches can agree on actions and principles. But the protracted labor of the business would seem hardly worth the consequences, were it not that that business -- like the Christmas "busy-ness" I commented on last month -- was transparent (if only faintly, and only at times) to a spiritual unity whose power I felt most clearly in the singing of that opening hymn.

Most of the concrete results of the Assembly are described individually in this issue of The Messenger. I hope you read about them, and find in them some basis for an answer of your own as to why we're "in" the National Council. But there are more "reasons why" than you can find in any description of concrete results.

One "reason why" is to be found in the experience that some of us have had, and more of us will be having, of meeting and talking with the other churchmen who attend. The corridors, the lobbies, the meal tables, are the scenes of literally thousands of unreported, almost unnoticed interactions of churchmen at the level that moved me so strongly and deeply that week in Chicago. In a complex "mixer" that could never be scheduled, and could never work if it were, individuals meet and change in the meeting. The labels that divide us into 34 different communions are never hidden, nor does anyone pretend they do not exist. But in a week of meeting, chatting, meeting again, the labels -- like the formal and cumbersome business -- become transparent. The experience of seeing, and being seen, through transparent labels, is self-validating as a "reason why."

Another "reason why" finds an analog in my experience of that hymn. It was a good hymn, and because I sang, it was stronger. The ideal and the purpose expressed in the National Council's Preamble are good, but they sound somewhat tinny coming from a small coterie of professional ecumenists. They need the depth and the power of all the voices that will unite in them. We who like to say that "doctrine divides, but charity unites" should lend our voices to the chorus, and our name to the roster of witnesses to the vision of unity.

One reason we are in the National Council is that they accepted us: it feels good to be accepted. One of the reasons we are in the National Council is that the support to the cause of unity which is given by our name on the roster is reciprocated by the distinction which that roster gives our name.

But, you know, I met literally hundreds of people, and no one said, "Congratulations on getting in." They said, in a variety of words, "Welcome." I felt welcome, but in Miami as before in Chicago, I felt humbled. It is a good feeling, and I hope some is shared by this issue of The Messenger.

## Heard at the NCC:

### A PROBLEM OF THE CHURCH IN THE WORLD

"The churches through the Council are wrestling constantly with the paradoxical commitment to both the changeless and the changing as realms of the revelation of the will of God. We have no more difficult nor more essential task than to keep these realms in a redemptive interrelationship. The matter was put unforgettably in the letter to religious and scientific leaders of twenty countries to Pope Paul VI on the subject of birth control, released just ten days ago. One of its sentences was the following:

'It is the work of great religions and the obligation of great leaders to recognize that changing conditions demand changing applications of unchanging moral values.'

This is the delicate equation that must be the constant concern of the church if we are serious 'that the world may know.'

"The second paradox is closely related. Essentially it is the classic issue: 'in the world, but not of the world.' How can the church identify without losing its own unique identity?

"Here we face the subtle dilemma that the good can be the enemy of the best. It is fairly easy for the church to know its grosser enemies. Such evils as war, racial prejudice, family infidelity, economic injustice are there for every sensitive Christian to see. They fly in our faces. In at least a fumbling way we try as a church to do something about them.

"Not so obvious are the lesser evils and even the proximate goods with which the church can become confused. It is all very well, for example, to embrace the positive elements of human emancipation. The church clearly must acknowledge and welcome every evidence of the working of God in the secular order, which is a part of His realm. Christian secularity itself, properly understood, is a virtue, indeed a mandate.

But secularism is quite a different thing, and no friend of the Gospel.

"Our problem here is in the realm of values. Of all the changes we are facing, perhaps the most momentous is that of a revolutionary revaluation of values. People are separated from their roots and have not been able to put down new ones. They are not at home with inherited mores, with their fellow men, nor even with themselves. They are the victims of the age of alienation.

"This is a realm where the church has both a stake and a mission. A problem for the church is that many asserted values have great merit and appeal, but should not be absolutized. Take, the widely affirmed value of excellence. Excellence is excellent but as an end in itself it may be barren or even dangerous. It must be subject to a higher moral obedience.

"The achievement of excellence, often identified with the achievement of effectiveness has become in many circles the chief end of life. In the struggle to attain it, the appearance is often mistaken for the reality. Even in the critical field of education, for example, the end is sometimes allowed to justify the means, and the virtue of integrity is yielded to the virtue of success. The competition for attainment can lead to dissembling and dishonesty. The very desideratum of excellence is sullied by the absence of a higher realm of value which is absolute and controlling. The strivers after excellence are often frustrated and insecure in their lot. The great increase in suicides among college students in the past decade has been an American tragedy. Lacking a more ultimate goal and standard than excellence, they feel unfulfilled, and are not certain why.

"The paradox here is that the very pressure for excellence, in the absence of ultimate values, if the pursuit fails or the pace is too demanding, or the ultimate goal is too relative and ephemeral, can lead to defeat -- even to suicide. At the root of many of these tragedies is the loss of old value systems and the failure to develop new ones.

"We have focused on the example of

excellence. Other examples of values that are good but not absolute are freedom, peace, reconciliation, justice, social tranquility, knowledge, leisure, health, beauty. All of these must be subject to the highest values we know from our Christian faith. Values often seem to be in conflict with one another. The very excellence of many human value systems tends to increase our confusion and our strife. Thus leisure may be grossly abused. Peace and justice may sometimes be in conflict with one another, domestically or internationally. Our Christian witness must be on the side of everything that is good.

"Who is not against us is for us." "I have become all things to all men, that I might by all means save some."

But the good may not be good enough. It may be the enemy of the best. The best and the ultimate for the Christian is the fulness of life in Christ, with its claim of radical obedience to all its demands for our relations with our fellow men. Strength of inward Christian character, with its outward manifestations of God's grace and love -- this is our deepest aim. Dr. R.H. Edwin Espy, General Secretary, National Council of Churches.

#### THE MESSENGER GOES TO BREAKFAST

More than 120 correspondents of the Nation's secular and church press from all over the U.S. attended the Press Breakfast, sponsored by the NCC Department of Information, in the Fontainebleau's GIGI Club on Monday, actually making the 7:30 a.m. deadline. The press was addressed by Bishop Mueller, Dr. Espy and Dr. J. Quinter Miller, retiring associate general secretary for special services. Chairman was Dr. Marvin Burton, NCC associate general secretary for communications.

A second press breakfast, on Thursday, was followed by a press conference with Vice-President Hubert Humphrey, who addressed the General Assembly the night before. The Editor of The Messenger was invited to participate in these and other activities and services for the nation's press.

#### NCC BROADENS ECUMENICAL HORIZON

A highlight of the two-day meeting of the General Board, December 2 and 3, which preceded the General Assembly, was action taken to make possible active participation of Roman Catholics on committees and in units of the UCC. The action culminated more than two years of consultations between representatives of the National Council and the Roman Catholic Church looking toward closer cooperation in the many areas of mutual Christian concern.

Prior to this action, Roman Catholics have held only observer status. They may now become eligible for elective staff if they accept the Council's invitation.

Speakers described the move as being similar to initiatives taken by the National Council in approaching the Evangelicals, the Southern Baptist Convention and other non-NCC members, and pointed out that individuals in some of these communions are serving on NCC committees and in other capacities.

Dr. Arthur S. Fleming, first vice-president of the NCC, said he was "delighted" with the almost unanimous vote on the recommendation which declared: "that the Roman Catholic Church be recognized as being in agreement with the Preamble of the constitution of the National Council of Churches and that the Roman Catholic Church be added to the list of communions in such agreement."

#### HEARD AT THE NCC

"We need more understanding on the part of the more conservative people among us so that we can recognize the importance of the experimentation. At the same time, such experimentation needs to be balanced by the continued use of the tested values of proven experience. During my years as a supervisor of preachers, I found that many of the young men who rebelled against ancient methods and timeworn ideas and who pleaded for fairness toward themselves were often narrow-minded toward those who differed from them. I spent many hours pleading for understanding in both directions." Bishop Reuben Mueller

This organizational chart may help you visualize the structure, and the range of activities of the National Council of Churches. Even this is a very broad summary, for there are more than 80 major programs being actively pursued by units of the Council.

## NATIONAL COUNCIL OF THE CHURCHES OF CHRIST IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

... a cooperative agency of the following Protestant and Orthodox Churches:

African Methodist Episcopal Church • African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church • American Baptist Convention • Armenian Church of America, Diocese (including the Diocese of California) • Christian Churches (Disciples of Christ) International Convention • Christian Methodist Episcopal Church • Church of the Brethren • Evangelical United Brethren Church • Five Years Meeting of Friends • Greek Archdiocese of North and South America • Hungarian Reformed Church in America • Lutheran Church in America • The Methodist Church • Moravian Church in America • National Baptist Conventions, U.S.A., Inc. • National Baptist Convention of America • Philadelphia Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends • Polish National Catholic Church of America • Presbyterian Church in the U.S. • Protestant Episcopal Church • Reformed Church in America • Romanian Orthodox Episcopate of America • Russian Orthodox Greek Catholic Church of America • Serbian Eastern Orthodox Church • Seventh Day Baptist General Conference • Syrian Antiochian Orthodox Church • Syrian (Orthodox) Church of Antioch • Ukrainian Orthodox Church of America • United Church of Christ • United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A.

Antiochian Orthodox Catholic Archdiocese of Toledo, Ohio; Progressive National Baptist Convention, Inc.; Exarchate of the Russian Orthodox Church in North and South America; Church of the New Jerusalem.

The national synods, assemblies, conventions, and councils of these member communions elect representatives to sit as the

The member communions nominate approximately 1/4 of their General Assembly representatives to serve as the

Administrative direction is the responsibility of the

Program is formulated and carried forward through divisional boards, departmental committees, and program commissions and committees composed of representatives of the member communions and of other approved Christian organizations. Council staff under the direction of the General Secretary serves as a secretariat for these bodies which include a

### GENERAL ASSEMBLY

which has 800 members and which meets once every three years to chart broad policy, review program, and give Christian witness.

### GENERAL BOARD

with 250 members, which meets three times each year to decide on Council policy, program, organization and administration. The General Board elects and works through four divisional program boards and the following standing committees: Executive; Constituent Membership; Constitution & Bylaws; Nominating; Planning & Program; Communication & Interpretation; Administration & Finance; and Personnel.

### OFFICE OF THE GENERAL SECRETARY (Includes a Washington Office)

Three staff offices assist the General Secretary in his executive responsibilities. These are the ...

#### DIVISION OF CHRISTIAN LIFE & MISSION

**CHURCH & SOCIETY DEPARTMENT**  
Christian Ministry with People in Leisure-Recreation  
(Includes National Parks and other ministries)  
Christian Ministry with Special Groups  
(Includes Migrant, Indian, and other ministries)  
Church & Economic Life  
International Affairs  
(Includes The Church Center for the U.N.)  
Racial & Cultural Relations  
Religious Liberty  
Social Welfare

**PARISH & COMMUNITY LIFE DEPARTMENT**  
(Includes church extension and regional planning)  
Church Building & Architecture  
Church in Town & Country  
Community Development  
Evangelism  
Stewardship & Benevolence  
Urban Life  
Worship & the Arts

**Other Divisional programs:**  
Delta Ministry  
Religion & Race  
Division Field Staff

#### DIVISION OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

**EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT**  
Adult Education  
Youth Education  
Children's Education  
Church & Public Education  
Educational Media  
Leadership Development  
Marriage & Family Life

**EDUCATION FOR MISSION DEPARTMENT**  
(Includes Friendship Press publications and summer mission conferences)  
Education of Adults for Mission  
Education of Youth for Mission  
Education of Children for Mission

**HIGHER EDUCATION DEPARTMENT**  
(Includes campus ministry and faculty work)  
Council of Protestant Colleges & Universities  
(a related movement)  
National Student Christian Federation  
(a related movement)

**MINISTRY, VOCATION & PASTORAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT**  
Church Ministries  
Pastoral Services  
Vocation, Counseling & Enlistment  
(Includes Service Opportunities Information Center)

**Other Divisional programs:**  
Camps & Conference Properties  
Newspaper Lesson Syndication  
Revised Standard Bible Program

#### DIVISION OF OVERSEAS MINISTRIES

**AFRICA DEPARTMENT**

**ASIA DEPARTMENT**

**LATIN AMERICA DEPARTMENT**

**MIDDLE EAST & EUROPE DEPARTMENT**

**CHURCH WORLD SERVICE DEPARTMENT**  
Creative Service Programming  
(and Disaster Relief)  
Immigration & Refugee Program  
Material Resources Program  
(Includes the Christian Rural Overseas Program — CROP)

**SPECIALIZED MINISTRIES DEPARTMENT**  
Agriculture & Rural Life  
Associated Mission Medical Office (AMMO)  
Christian Medical Council for Overseas Work  
Churchmen Overseas  
(Includes the Overseas Union Churches, American Laymen Overseas, and Ministries to Service Personnel in the Far East programs)  
Ecumenical Exchange & Scholarship Program  
Radio, Visual Education & Mass Communication-RAVEMCCO  
World Literacy & Christian Literature

**Other Divisional programs:**  
Overseas Personnel Services  
Missionary Research Library  
Interpretation & Promotion  
(Includes One Great Hour of Sharing)

#### DIVISION OF CHRISTIAN UNITY

**COUNCILS OF CHURCHES DEPARTMENT**  
(Includes a Southern Office)

**FAITH & ORDER DEPARTMENT**

**UNITED CHURCH MEN DEPARTMENT**

**UNITED CHURCH WOMEN DEPARTMENT**  
Christian Social Relations  
Christian World Missions  
Christian World Relations  
Leadership Education

**YOUTH MINISTRY DEPARTMENT**  
Ecumenical Voluntary Service  
United Christian Youth Movement  
(a related movement)

**Other Divisional programs:**  
Ecumenical Affairs  
Local Ecumenical Development  
Liaity & Cooperation of Men & Women  
British-American Preachers' Exchange

#### OFFICE OF PLANNING & PROGRAM

Program Coordination  
LONG RANGE PLANNING DEPARTMENT  
RESEARCH DEPARTMENT

#### OFFICE OF COMMUNICATION

Program Interpretation  
BROADCASTING & FILM DEPARTMENT (BFC)  
(Includes a West Coast Office)  
INFORMATION DEPARTMENT

#### OFFICE OF ADMINISTRATION

Audit & Legal Services  
BUSINESS SERVICES DEPARTMENT  
FINANCIAL DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT  
FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT DEPARTMENT  
ORGANIZATION & MANAGEMENT DEPARTMENT  
PERSONNEL DEPARTMENT  
PUBLICATION SERVICES DEPARTMENT

Several thousand representative Christian lay persons and clergy, working through more than 80 program units, comprise the assemblies, boards, and committees of the Council.



The best answers to many questions about the nature and purpose of the NCC are found in the following

EXCERPTS FROM THE CONSTITUTION  
AND BYLAWS OF THE NATIONAL  
COUNCIL OF CHURCHES OF CHRIST

PREAMBLE

Under the Providence of God communions which confess Jesus Christ as Divine Lord and Savior, in order more fully to manifest oneness in Him, do now create an inclusive cooperative agency of Christian churches of the United States of America to show forth their unity and mission in specific ways and to bring the churches into living contact with one another for fellowship, study, and cooperative action.

Article II - Purposes

The Council is established by its members for the following purposes:

1. To manifest more fully the oneness to the Church of Christ according to the Scriptures and to further the efforts of the member churches in proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the end that all men may believe in Him.
2. To continue, combine, and extend the interests and functions of the following general agencies and cooperative services of the churches:

Church World Service, Inc.

Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America

Foreign Missions Conference of North America

Home Missions Council of North America

International Council of Religious Education

Interseminary Movement

Missionary Education Movement of the United States and Canada

National Protestant Council on Higher Education

Protestant Film Commission

Protestant Radio Commission

Student Volunteer Movement  
United Council of Church Women  
United Stewardship Council  
United Student Christian Council

3. To encourage the study and use of the Bible.
4. To carry on programs for and with the churches by which the life of the Church may be renewed and the mission of the Church may be fulfilled.
5. To foster and encourage cooperation, fellowship, and mutual counsel among the churches for the purposes set forth in this Constitution.
6. To assist the churches in self-examination of their life and witness in accordance with their understanding of the will of God and of the Lordship of Jesus Christ as Divine Head of the Church.
7. To further works of Christian love and service throughout the nation and the world.
8. To study and to speak and act on conditions and issues in the nation and the world which involve moral, ethical, and spiritual principles inherent in the Christian Gospel.
9. To encourage cooperation among local churches and to further the development of councils and other organizations in agreement with the Preamble of this Constitution, and to maintain cooperative relationships with such bodies.
10. To establish and maintain consultative and cooperative relationships with the World Council of Churches; other international, regional, and national ecumenical organizations; and with agencies related to the churches in the United States.
11. To establish specific objectives and to carry forward programs and activities for achieving the purposes herein stated.

Article III - Constituent Membership

Section 1-Eligibility. Acceptance by a communion of the nature and purposes of the

Council, as set forth in the Preamble and body of this Constitution, is pre-requisite to eligibility for election to membership in the Council.

EXCERPT FROM NCC  
BY-LAWS

Part I  
Constituent Membership

Paragraph 1-Identification of a Communion. A church body may be identified as a Christian communion for consideration of election to constituent membership in the Council upon satisfaction of the following criteria:

a. It shall have a basis of association on which the communion exists as a Christian body. Such a basis of association may be in the form of a creed, statement of faith, covenant, or other form of confession.

b. It shall have identity as an autonomous and stable church body with corporate existence within the United States.

c. It shall have demonstrated a spirit of cooperation with, and respect for, the convictions of other communions.

d. It shall have a definite form of church government including a responsible central body and a general agency or agencies for the furtherance of its work and for the training of its ordained ministry.

e. It should have a communicant membership of at least 20,000 persons and at least 50 local churches, unless special circumstances warrant exceptions.

Section 2-Method of Election. Eligible communions may become members of the Council upon their request and upon approval by

a two-thirds vote of the member communions present and voting at any meeting of the General Assembly, the delegations of communions voting separately; and a two-thirds vote of the representatives present and voting.

Section 3-Obligations. Communions in assuming membership in the Council thereby accept responsibility for assisting in the furtherance of its purposes and work, for sharing in its financial support, and for reporting and interpreting the purposes and work of the Council to their constituencies.

Article V - Corporate Powers

Section 2-Limitations. The Council shall have no authority or administrative control over the churches which constitute its membership. It shall have no authority to prescribe a common creed, form of church government, or form of worship, or to limit the autonomy of the churches cooperating in it.

HEARD AT THE NCC

"An organization the size of our Council, with its varied member organizations, would not expect uniformity in all positions and actions. A bit of reflection would cause one to say that that would be deadening; but people who are accustomed to membership in an organization small enough to have everyone in agreement will have difficulty in understanding a voluntary organization like ours which must seek to be representative of varied viewpoints. We do not want uniformity or conformity but unity; 'the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace'. It is a sign of maturity when we can respect each others viewpoints, when we can be charitable toward positions we cannot fully approve and when we can also be concerned about our oneness in Jesus Christ." Bishop Reuben H. Mueller, Retiring President, National Council of Churches.

"We will lament no more at what the world has come to, but rejoice at what has come to the world." Dr. Leonidas Contos, Dean, Holy Cross Seminary (Greek Orthodox).

# THE SIXTEEN-YEAR PRELUDE TO MEMBERSHIP

Swedenborgians have always been known for their breadth of vision regarding the church and for their concern for the co-operative church movement. Swedenborg wrote 200 years ago, "The Church of the Lord is spread over all the globe, thus is universal, and all those are in it who have lived in the good of charity according to their religion."

Our church has been active in city and state Councils of Churches, and we have followed with interest the development of National and World Councils. We were discouraged from joining the Federal Council of Churches, the predecessor of the National Council, and the opposition seemed to stem primarily from the Lutherans. Our overtures to the World Council of Churches were opposed by the Swedish Lutheran Church for they evidently still considered Emanuel Swedenborg as a heretic.

When the National Council of Churches was organized in 1950, we naturally were interested in supporting the movement and becoming a member. A committee in the NCC was set up under the direction of the Council of Ministers and the Rev. Wm. F. Wunsch was named Chairman. Upon recommendation of this committee, and approval of the Council of Ministers, the General Convention voted unanimously at its 1953 session to make application to the NCC.

Representatives from Swedenborgian Church met with the Constituent Membership Committee of the National Council on Mar. 15, 1957. This committee was the committee of the Council which passes on applications. On August 1, 1957, this committee wrote to our President David Johnson that "it is the judgment of this committee that it would be advisable not to make application at this time." The principal reason, the letter continued, was that "it appeared to the committee that the position of the Church of the New Jerusalem would elevate Jesus above God, or make Jesus Christ God."

On May 13, 1960, two delegates from Convention met with Dr. Franklin Fry, then chairman of the Constituent Membership Committee. Dr. Fry indicated at that time he was not in favor of our admission. He expressed willingness to cooperate in steps toward removing misunderstandings by making our position more clear, but nothing was done at that time.

The Rev. Ernest Martin succeeded the Rev. Mr. Wunsch as chairman of the committee about the time that Bishop John Wesley Lord succeeded Dr. Fry as chairman of the Membership Committee. A renewal of negotiations led to a meeting in New York on Oct. 11, 1955. Mr. Martin and Dr. Robert Kirven met with members of the Faith and Order Committee and spent more than five hours discussing our Church's history, policies, and theological position. Copies of this discussion were made after the meeting and circulated to the Constituent Membership Committee. They clarified our position, and we were invited to make application.

(See page 3)



The Rev. Ernest O. Martin, Chairman of the Council of Ministers' Committee of the National Council of Churches, sits in the section assigned to Swedenborgian Representatives to the National Council. With the work of his committee completed, he is seen in his new role as Voting Representative to the General Assembly and (with Pres. Tafel) Member of the General Board.

## Report from Miami

### IMPRESSIONS OF THE ASSEMBLY

by Ernest L. Frederick

The first impression was one of bigness. On arriving at the Fontainebleau Hotel, I found the Monday morning session was in full swing. There were crowds everywhere. Half of the area of the Grand Ballroom where the Assembly was meeting was filled with long tables at which sat well over 1,000 representatives, delegates, observers, and special guests. The rest of the ballroom was taken up with theatre type seats for the general public. As I moved from table to table, looking for the seats reserved for the New Jerusalem Church, the thought came to me that this was larger than ten of our conventions put together. And the Assembly should be larger because it represented 41 million members.

The next impression was one of order and dignity. Although people were coming and going constantly there was no commotion. Reports were being received and voted on and the work of the Assembly went on smoothly and every spoken word could be heard clearly. The items on the agenda were discussed and acted on with a calm precision that bespoke of excellent coordination and planning in the committee stages.

Another impression was that of sincerity. Here were people devoted to the work at hand, the work of doing together the tasks that could not be done by the churches separately. Here was Christian teamwork.

The program theme, taken from the Gospel of John, was "That the World May Know." I think it was more than by chance that this 17th chapter of John was chosen. It is a long-range view of Christianity particularly suited to the needs of the world. Also, rather than dealing with human weakness and struggle as does Mark, we find that John brings out the power and majesty of the "Word made flesh," the power that our Lord made available to all who would follow him. That this was the Assembly

theme indicates a broadness of vision and a depth of insight today that has been lacking in the past among many churches.

The idea that we are here 'that the world may know' of the Lord's glory and love is something every Christian can subscribe to. If all the churches will rally around this theme, we shall indeed have a better world. Many of the barriers that separated churches are now falling down. Old doctrines and dogmas are being forgotten, and there is a new desire to work together to let all men know that Jesus Christ is Lord and Saviour. This fits in with our idea of one great spiritual church.

In the area of joint study and group discussion there were seven sections dealing with church involvement with the needs and problems of people. There were sections on Evangelism; Problems of the growing cities; Science and the Humanization of Life; Sex, Marriage, and the Family; Civil Rights; World Problems; and Poverty and Affluence.

Many have accused the Church, including ours, of being remote and distant from human needs, of being 'out of this world.' Today the churches are trying to come back into this world. They are heeding our Lord who said, "I do not pray that thou shouldest take them out of the world. . . . They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. As thou didst send me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. That the world may know that thou hast sent me and hast loved them." We as the Lord's followers ought not to forget that we are in the world although not of it. We are here to let the world know the Lord's love and to help others whoever and wherever they may be, keeping in mind our Lord's words, "I do not pray for these only, but also for those who are to believe in me through their word, that they may all be one."

These are some of my impressions and thoughts after attending the Seventh General Assembly of the National Council of Churches in Christ. For those who like footnotes T.C.R. 784 might be interesting.

Words of Explanation:  
WHO'S WHO  
in The Messenger

Two two-part articles in The Messenger (Nov. and Dec.) were written by authors unknown to many readers. Identifying information which was thoughtlessly omitted is furnished herewith on:

Dr. Robert Calatrello, author of "Swedenborgian Education," Chairman of the Department of Education, University of California at Irvine, a featured speaker and panel member in the theme presentation at Convention in Urbana (it was his address to Convention that was reprinted in abridged form in The Messenger);

Steve Koke, a layman in the El Cerrito, California, Swedenborgian Church, who has contributed carefully researched and thoughtfully provocative material to The Messenger before.

WHAT'S WHERE  
in The Messenger

The January Issue of The Messenger traditionally carries an index to the issues of the preceding year. It seems to be a good tradition, but it was recalled too late by a new editor still learning the ropes. The 1966 Index will be compiled as soon as possible, and carried as a removeable insert in a later issue for transfer to the end of your 1966 file (if you keep a file).

NCC LEXICON: "Communion"

Each new adventure has its own vocabulary, and the National Council is no exception. One word recurs so frequently, a note on definition might be helpful.

A "Communion" is a separately organized worshipping body of the Christian Church, distinguishable from other communions by differences in theology, polity, liturgy, or traditions. "Communion" is the universal designation that covers churches, denominations, synods, exarchates, and conventions. Each of the 34 member bodies of the National Council is called a "communion."

STATISTICS

The following were confirmed by Rev. LeVan on Nov. 22 in the New Jerusalem Church, Pittsburgh, Pa.: Richard David Arnold, Patricia Jane Arnold, Jean Arlette Kindig, Doris Coy Robinette, Portia Mae Gallagher.

Pamela Jean Arnold, age 11, was baptized on Nov. 22 by the Rev. LeVan at the Pittsburgh Church.

Miss Amelia Cutler passed away in sleep at her home in St. Paul, on Sunday morning, December 4, 1966, in the 92nd years of her life. Miss Cutler was born in St. Paul and was the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Edward Hutchins Cutler, pioneer New Church people in this city. Miss Cutler was a life long member of the Virginia Street Church. In her life and through her church Miss Amelia Cutler helped to open the abundance and meaning of heavenly life to many people on earth.

The Rev. Harold R. Gustafson, Pastor of the Bridgewater, Mass., New Church, passed into the full consciousness of spiritual life on Dec. 10. A Resurrection Service was held in the Bridgewater Church, led by the Rev. Wilfred Rice. At Mr. Gustafson's request, memorial gifts are being donated to the corporation of the New Church Theological School (Swedenborg School of Religion). A Memorial to this long-serving, highly-respected and deeply-loved minister will be published in a later issue of The Messenger.

CORRECTION: Through oversight, the location was omitted from seven birth notices in The Messenger for November. (page 175) Douglas William Jones, David Perley Richardson, Matthew Frederick Baker, Alice Barbara Gushee, Mark Norman Bulley, Lynn Marie Gaudette, and Jeffrey Pete McLellan were born in Fryeburg, Maine.

A MESSAGE TO THE CHURCHES  
WRITTEN AND ADOPTED BY THE NCC GENERAL ASSEMBLY

We greet you who are fellow believers in Jesus Christ.

We, the delegates from the member communions, have been studying the Bible, praying together, listening to reports and taking action upon issues. Our focus has been upon the theme "That the World May Know."

We speak in this message of basic convictions which we hold in common. These underlie the actions which the Assembly takes upon specific issues.

This should be an exciting and challenging time for human beings to be alive. This is an Age of Promise. It can be an Age of Disaster. Advance in industry and communications is making it technically possible that all hungry people may be fed, that many suffering people may be healed and that mankind may achieve unity as never before in history. Yet the same technical advance threatens mankind. In such a technical society depersonalization may well increase not only for people employed, but for the unemployed. New tools may help or harm. We now have the capacity to bless or burn the world. We Christians bear, along with others, responsibility for these dangers and for the sufferings men inflict on one another. In spite of the gift of God's grace we are selfish and insensitive. The shocking inhumanity of war shouts at us from every newspaper, magazine and T.V. screen. In a world technically united we continue to strain after narrowly national goals. We denounce racial discrimination, but panic over minority neighbors and continue segregation in our churches.

In the United States we live in an economy that gives the average American an annual increase in income that is greater than the total annual income of the average human being in Asia, Africa, or Latin America. The gulf between rich and poor, even at home deepens and is more disturbingly apparent. Yet we show little sign of being really disturbed to the point of action, and continue to center on individual material accumulation even after we have far more than we need. God calls us instead to a true demonstration of compassionate social concern, the responsible use and sharing of

God's abundance, in the name of Christ.

This should be an exciting and challenging time for Christians to be alive. We know this world is both the arena of God's activity and the object of His Love. We are part of the household of God in Christ which is of every race and nation and of every Christian community: Roman Catholic, Orthodox and Protestant in all their diversities. We are grateful we can now share our understanding of what God is saying to us through all His people. We see opportunity as never before to join hands with all men in the struggle for sustenance, justice and peace. We are challenged to demonstrate the Christian faith in fresh ways. The world is largely indifferent to patreligious answers. Yet the people of this same world grope for meaning in life. This is true of both the poor and the rich, those who suffer from injustice or war, and those who do not. They long to know who they are, the source and purpose of their lives, and the ways they should relate to one another.

Christians are too seldom helpfully involved in the spiritual needs of other people. We know Jesus Christ is the answer to our own deepest spiritual longings. We do feed some people. But many of us hesitate to share our Christian faith. We believe Jesus Christ is in the midst of life and will have the last word in history. Therefore we must not hesitate to proclaim the gracious God and live as the gracious neighbor.

Out of these basic Christian convictions we in this Assembly call upon the constituents of this Council to concern themselves actively with the great responsibilities that have confronted this Assembly, including the basic need of men to know the living Christ and, under His Lordship, seek the elimination of racial injustice, poverty, hunger, war, and the disunity in the household of Christ.

Individually and together we are involved in the sin that continues to threaten mankind. Let us repent and ask forgiveness of God and of our fellow men. Let us rejoice in the gains that have been made and commit ourselves afresh to further study and action. Let us profess together our faith by word THAT THE WORLD MAY KNOW.

The Messenger

January, 1967

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