

NEW CHURCH *Life*

A bimonthly magazine devoted to the teachings revealed through Emanuel Swedenborg, as they apply to life.

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2014



Does Anything Last Forever?

The stone in the Bryn Athyn Cathedral eventually will crumble, but the Lord's covenant with us is forever – that He makes “all things new.” In his Charter Day Cathedral Address, the Rev. Dr. Thane Glenn considers the implications for New Church education and the way we take it into our lives. (Page 526)

Note: There is no extra cost for the use of color on the front page.

NEW CHURCH LIFE (USPS 378-180)

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New Church Life

A bimonthly magazine devoted to the teachings revealed through Emanuel Swedenborg, as they relate to life.

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In This Issue

A great many people in the Church already have read the *Statement About Gender and Clergy* by the Rt. Rev. Brian W. Keith, which came out of a long process and study by the General Church Clergy on ordination. The decision, supported by a strong majority of the clergy, is to continue the policy of male-only ordination. We are publishing the statement on page 504 for anyone who has not seen it, and also as an important part of the historic record of the Church. It includes a brief preface and addendum from the Bishop, not previously published. See also an editorial – *Gender and the Church* – on what this decision means to the Church and to each of us as we seek to be led by the Lord. (Page 497)

There has been a great deal of response to the Bishop's Statement in the social media. We include two letters to Bishop Keith and Bishop Peter M. Buss Jr., from Michelle Chapin and Kristin Coffin Daum, which express the feelings of many women and young people. (Page 514) We will be happy to publish additional responses as part of the historic record of the Church, and ask only that they be as charitable in tone as these two, and as brief as possible.

The Thanksgiving celebration occurred in Canada on October 13, and is observed in the United States on November 27, but the Word commands all people to be thankful to the Lord for the harvest of blessings in our lives. The Rt. Rev. Peter M. Buss Jr. offers a perspective based on the continual flow of the Lord's mercy into our lives: *His Mercy Endures Forever*. (Page 519)

In the New Church we are more inclined to use the name "Lord" than "Jesus," but in a Christmas sermon the Rt. Rev. Brian W. Keith talks about the importance of *The Name 'Jesus'*. "Even as we rightly say 'Lord,'" he writes, "we should not forget to also use 'Jesus.' It directs our thoughts to the Divine nature of Jesus Christ, our Lord. It reminds us that He was not born as others, but of a virgin and with a Divine Soul." (Page 521)

Does anything last forever? That is the question the Rev. Dr. Thane P. Glenn asked in his Charter Day Cathedral address, *His Covenant Forever: All Things New*. He noted that the stone in the pillars of the cathedral eventually will crumble but that what is forever – especially in our own lives and to eternity – is the Lord always making all things new. And New Church education offers us

the opportunity to take its ideas as new gifts into the world. (Page 526)

Introducing Our Ministers focuses on the Rev. Göran R. Appelgren, our most senior pastor in Europe, who was well launched on a promising lay career when he felt called to a higher use. The seed was planted, he remembers, during a Christmas service at his father's farm in Sweden when he was just 8 years old. (Page 531) In a sermon the Rev. Appelgren offers a gift from the Writings: *Seeing Life on Three Levels*. (Page 535)

In the first of two book reviews, Kathy Grant Schrock, a primary grades teacher in the Kempton (Pennsylvania) New Church School, conveys her delight with a new book by the Rev. Robert S. Jungé: *Feeding His Flock: Parenting Preschoolers*. Karin A. Childs of Fountain Publishing in Rochester, Michigan, offers a review of a book by Dr. Soni S. Werner, which is based on a course she teaches in Bryn Athyn College of the New Church: *Altruism: Many Kinds of Kindness*. (Page 541)

What do Dr. Werner's students learn in her course on Altruism? More importantly, what do they do with what they learn? Her current students describe all of the various ways they are experiencing and applying service to the neighbor in an article: *Helping Hands*. (Page 544)

Church News includes: the good news that Theta Alpha is continuing and that the *Theta Alpha Journal* will be revived with a new editor; a report by the Rt. Rev. Peter M. Buss Jr. on a retreat held by General Church school administrators in Glenview, Illinois, in September; a report on this year's Charter Day celebration, including Distinguished Alumni of the Secondary Schools and Bryn Athyn College, reunion class gifts, and elections to the Academy Corporation; an upbeat report from President Kristin King on the new academic year at Bryn Athyn College, including the dedication of a new athletic field and the planting of a symbolic cedar tree; news from the General Church Board of Directors, including a new Membership Committee and a projected balanced budget after several years of deficits; a decision in Kempton, Pennsylvania, to add 11th and 12th grades to its school; and two new books – *The Joy of Spiritual Living* by the Rev. Frank S. Rose and Bob Maginel, and *Spiritual Law: The Essence of Swedenborg's Divine Providence*, by Joanna Hill. (Page 552)

This year-end issue also includes: the Annual Report of the Secretary of the General Church, page 580; the Directory of the General Church Clergy, page 585, and the Index for 2014, page 604. Cover: The two students pictured on the cover are Ashley Walsh and Asher Odhner.

Editorials

GENDER AND THE CHURCH

Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it. (Psalm 127:1)

The General Church process in the past year to examine and redefine its policy about ordination – specifically whether to ordain women into the priesthood – had one clear goal: to be guided by what the Lord teaches.

The Word and the Writings are not explicit on the subject, so such questions are left to human study of the doctrines, deliberation, interpretation and prayer. And so the conclusions are imperfect. A good many people in the Church – including some ministers – sincerely feel there is support in the Writings for women in the priesthood. At least they find nothing specifically prohibiting women from the ministry, which, they feel, argues for equality. A strong majority of General Church priests continue to believe that the preponderance of teachings uphold male-only ordination. In our episcopal form of church government the clergy are charged with determining such policy. Therefore it has been announced that the General Church will continue with a male-only priesthood. But this is not the end of the controversy.

A statement from Executive Bishop Brian W. Keith – explaining the process, the decision, and what to expect going forward – was made public throughout the Church in late September. Many people already have read it but we are publishing it on page 504, for anyone who has not seen it, and as part of the official record on the Church. This statement includes a brief preface and an addendum from the Bishop, not previously published.

The statement describes the process the clergy committed themselves to in reaching this decision. This included intensive study, papers presented on both sides of the issue at the Council of the Clergy meetings last June, considerable input from the laity, and personal statements submitted to the Bishop by 73 ministers – mostly in North America, where this is an issue. (It is not possible to publish these papers, but the Rev. Brian Smith has put together an impressive collection of them and many others, going back several years. You can read them at: www.newchurchperspective.com/possible-ordination-of-women/. It is a most useful repository of a wide range of doctrinal studies and opinions.)

The response to the Bishop's statement was immediate and heartfelt, particularly from those who were disappointed, angry, upset or discouraged by the decision. Their feelings are palpable, and it is sad to see such genuine hurt within the Church. Many of these people had invested great hope in change, saw it happening elsewhere, and felt supported by their reading of the Writings. The social media – particularly Facebook – have been filled with questions, doubts, alienation and passion. One of the uses of Facebook is that it provides an immediate community and forum for such expression. This is one important public way for the Church to work through such an issue, but not the only way. We welcome responses in *New Church Life* as well, which also become part of the historic record. Two letters are included in this issue.

Bishop Keith acknowledges that this decision brings pain and anguish for those who longed for a different outcome. We must all respect those feelings. In a church with charity at its core, we must also be led by a presumption of good will for everyone involved in the process, on both sides of the issue. For the ministers charged with determining the policy, as well as those favoring women in the ministry, this surely was a serious and humbling endeavor. It is easy to doubt motives but far better to assume that these are all good men and women, trying their best to understand what the Lord is teaching and to have the Church be led by Him.

All of them have searched their hearts, searched the doctrines, consulted with lay men and women, but primarily have looked to the Lord – as people always have done throughout the Church. That some have come away with diametrically opposed conclusions speaks to our freedom as a church and as individuals. It also speaks to the fact that we all look to the Lord to lead His Church, and to build the Church within our own minds and souls as we strive to understand and apply what He is teaching. What all of us see in His teachings is not always the same, but it is the common search that is important, along with the challenge to seek healing, unity and charity in following the Lord.

Bishop Keith offers the hope that the Church will explore and enhance ways for people to be more involved and honored – particularly in expanding roles for women. The Writings clearly speak to the equality and completely complementary nature of men and women. The ministers holding to male-only ordination insist that this decision should not be interpreted as seeing men as superior; it is just their human interpretation from careful study that men are better suited to this role. But we have to accept, also, that this does not satisfy those who still see women being discriminated against in this use.

We certainly have been making progress in opening opportunities to women, but still not enough in the eyes of many. Thirty years ago there were no women on church, society and Academy boards. Now we would not have

a board or committee without women. Many women have become active in the Stephen Ministry, which provides opportunities to assist in pastoral work by ministering to people in need. Some women are very involved with teams helping pastors plan sermons and services.

Throughout New Church schools women are active at every level – leading worship in primary grades and bringing the doctrines to bear on their subject matter – and they are an inspiration. Women teach directly from the Writings in the Secondary Schools, College and Theological School. Many women have graduated from the Master of Arts in Religious Studies (MARS) program and taken that training into the world. Women are writing books with impressive theological insights. They are helping to lead the Church in many creative, loving and unique ways. But for a growing number of people in the Church – men and women – it will not be enough until women are allowed to be ordained also.

So where do we go from here? The issue of women in the ministry is a symptom of a growing divide in the Church, which must concern us all. There are conflicting visions about what the Church should be in the world. Increasingly, this is spilling into other issues, from same-sex marriage and homosexuality to whether the Church, as an organization, should be directly involved in services to the neighbor.

Beyond the pulpit and the classroom we are asked to elevate our thinking to a more spiritual perspective with all such issues confronting the Church – especially those that may put it at odds with popular culture and evolving standards. We need to be asking ourselves: How does the Lord view the General Church as part of the New Church coming down from heaven? How does He see us as people who are trying to be a part of His Church by the way we live our lives? Where is He trying to lead us – as a church and in our own lives? As men and women, we are created equally, loved equally, and led equally by His Love and Providence. And we all have a role in building the Church we love to be a part of the Lord's Church – on earth and in heaven.

We have clarity now on where the General Church stands with ordination – at least for the time being – and everyone is free to agree or disagree with the decision. Freedom is fundamental in the Church. We must always be free in how we interpret and apply doctrine to our lives, and to act from informed conscience. All sincere opinions must be respected and accommodated as best we can. We know that the General Church is a human organization and will never be perfect, but it will be what we choose to make it – beginning with the way we live our lives.

The decision about ordination reaffirms policy but does not end the controversy. The Church, and all of us who carry it in our hearts and minds, are challenged going forward to respect freedom, to be guided by charity, and

always to look to the Lord. What and when to change, what to hold onto and what to let go of, are challenges for any organization. For a Church we all love, the challenge is particularly acute. It is a challenge to the Church leadership, but a personal challenge for each of us as well.

We trust that the Church – as is true for each of us – is led by the Lord’s love and providence, but we also know that we cannot just let things happen with our hands at our sides. We must be involved in the process. We have to let doubt and questioning be a part of that process, as it is with forming our own faith. And as we look to build trust and charity within the Church, we need to model it ourselves.

Ultimately, we all help to define our Church, not by what divides us but by what unites us. And that Church will grow – in the world and in our hearts – only as we let “the Lord build the house.”

(BMH)

THE BEAUTIFUL STORY OF THE LORD’S ADVENT

The ancient prophecies. Visions of angels. The Holy Child lying in a manger. Shepherds keeping watch over their sheep by night. The wondrous star, and the wise men from the east who followed it and presented their gifts. The wicked king who sought to kill the infant Lord.

The stories of the Lord’s birth in the *Gospels of Matthew and Luke* are told in a form so pure and simple they remind us of children’s tales, and in a way that is what they are. They appeal to the childlike innocence which the Lord preserves in every person, no matter how covered over by worldliness it may become. Innocence itself speaks through these stories to the innocence in us, awakening and renewing it, and adding to our treasure in heaven.

Worldly skepticism and the pride of self-intelligence will never see the celestial beauty of these nativity stories; only faith from love can open our eyes to behold it.

All truth is the form of good, and the deeper the truth the more closely it conforms to the good it represents. This is why the deepest truths are also the simplest and most beautiful. “God is love,” for example. This is a truth that can be understood and expounded upon intellectually, but the essence of it is the love itself that it expresses. *Essential* truths are simple – but, like seeds, they are full of life and potential to bring forth an abundance of good.

The Lord is Love itself, the source and essence of all goodness, truth and beauty. Innocence is a willingness to follow and obey Him. It has in it an implicit trust in the Lord’s leading. This is why the heart of all beauty is innocence, and why those simple stories of the Lord’s birth have such an aura of beauty around them.

The Lord, in the Human nature He took upon Himself and glorified during His life in the world, was, and forever is, the very embodiment of Innocence: “The Lamb of God.” Throughout His life He continually submitted His Human nature – even, finally, His body itself – to the Divinity from which it was begotten, until in the end the Human and the Divine had become entirely One in Him.

The Divine was thus made accessible to us in our natural lives more fully and with more power to touch our feelings and influence our thoughts than ever before. “How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of Him who brings good tidings, who proclaims peace....who proclaims salvation, who says unto Zion, Thy God reigns!” (*Isaiah 52:7*)

May each of us, as we pick up the sacred volume and once again read the stories of the Lord’s birth, be inspired anew by the eternal truth and timeless beauty of them. When we are affected by the warmth of love, the gentle light of truth, the sphere of peace, and the simple beauty of these ancient tales, they then testify, not just to the Lord’s birth long ago, but to His eternal presence with us. The stories of His advent thus become the means for a renewal of it in our lives today.

“Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise....”

(WEO)

NEW CHURCH VIRTUES: TRUST IN PROVIDENCE

The teachings of the New Church tell us many things about Divine providence – what it seeks to accomplish and how it works – which are not to be found elsewhere, and this knowledge is a great help in learning to trust in it, and in cooperating with it.

The full title of the volume about providence in the Writings – *Angelic Wisdom Concerning Divine Providence* – reminds us of how unique and wonderful the truths revealed in this book are: they let us in on the wisdom of the angels!

First of all, we are told what providence *is* exactly. And a *realistic* expectation of providence keeps us from having our faith in it shaken every time something goes badly for us, or some disaster is reported in the news.

Providence is the operation of Divine love by means of Divine wisdom to prepare us for a life of eternal happiness in heaven. This is the goal of providence, not just for us to have an easy time in this world. Providence looks to what is infinite and eternal because it comes from the Divine and thus has the infinite and the eternal in it. (*Arcana Coelestia 5264*)

The Lord in His providence does not just bring us to heaven *eventually*, but seeks to bring heaven to us, incrementally, every day, in each event and

state of life we go through. The best indications of providence, therefore, are not in what happens to us outwardly, but in how we respond inwardly to the things that befall us.

Whether the things we experience are happy or sad in themselves, their significance as far as providence is concerned is whether we come away from them having made some progress along the path toward heaven. This is not something we can judge for ourselves, though; for one thing, the good that comes out of an experience may not be realized until years later, upon further reflection.

It is not that the Lord doesn't care about the things that happen to us in this world; of course He does. Not even the fall of a sparrow is outside the Lord's providence. "Fear not therefore, you are of more value than many sparrows." (*Matthew 10.31*)

And He certainly never *wills* that anyone should suffer any harm. Worldly setbacks and painful experiences are permitted only because the spiritual consequences of *not* permitting them would be even more harmful. The doctrine of "permissions," an aspect of providence, explains this.

It is usually very difficult to see why some particular disaster had to be permitted, but if we think about the general rule we can see the necessity of it. If the Lord prevented every bad thing from happening, what need would there be for human prudence, self-discipline, and charity toward those who suffer misfortune? If there were no bad consequences of human evil and folly, what incentive would we have to repent and learn from our mistakes? If our hard hearts were not softened by sorrow and despair would we ever really surrender our lives to the Lord and find the inner peace of trusting absolutely in Him?

The Writings compare the working of providence to a hidden current in the ocean, or a "favoring tide" that carries a boat along without those in the boat even being aware of it. (*Divine Providence 186*)

We are told, though, that some perception of providence is possible to those who think spiritually, especially as they look back over the circumstances and events of their lives and how they unfolded. But the minds of those who "have confirmed themselves in favor of nature and human prudence" as the causes of everything that happens are closed to the light of heaven that makes any perception of providence possible. (*Ibid. 187*)

It might seem that if we could see Divine Providence in action then we would certainly acknowledge it, and God – but the truth is just the opposite. It would enrage us and we would resist the leading of providence. This is because the loves that predominate in us in our natural state (the loves of self and the world) seek to take us in a direction exactly *opposite* to the one the Lord wants for us.

"Man, because of his hereditary evil, is always panting for the lowest hell;

but the Lord by His providence is continually leading and drawing him away from it, first to a milder hell, then out of hell, and finally to Himself in heaven.” (*Ibid.* 183)

“Panting for the lowest hell!” We *think* we’d like to go to heaven, but we really don’t. At least not at first, not wholeheartedly. The quality of life in heaven is appealing – the beauty and serenity of it – but the order of life that makes the delights of heaven possible does not come naturally to us. If it did, life on earth would be a lot more heavenly than it is.

So there are actually two “hidden currents” influencing us: one flows from the will of God and is the stream of providence that carries us along toward heaven; the other flows from our own will and draws us *away* from heaven. (See *Arcana Coelestia* 8855, *True Christian Religion* 399.3, 652.3 and 735.6)

When we can say from our hearts, and really mean it, “*Thy* will be done,” then we are in the stream of providence, and will know inwardly that we “are being carried along constantly toward everything that is happy, whatever may be the appearance of the means.” (*Arcana Coelestia* 8478.4)

It is to help bring us into that inner knowledge, and the inner peace it engenders, that the Lord has revealed the Heavenly Doctrines of the New Church.

(WEO)

OUR NEW CHURCH VOCABULARY

Part of a continuing series developed by the Rev. W. Cairns Henderson, 1961-1966.

CIVIL

This term is used for that part of man’s life which comes under regulation by the laws of the state, as distinct from moral and spiritual life, which are subject to higher laws. It occurs also in a few compound forms.

Civil good is the good of life in accordance with the laws of the state, which makes man a citizen of the world; civil things are those which belong to the state and are conjoined with the world – those statutes, laws and regulations which bind men together so that a settled and well-organized society may be formed; and civil truths are those truths which relate to the things of government and of judgment in the state, and in general to justice and equity. (See *Arcana Coelestia* 8257; *Doctrine of Life* 12; *Conjugal Love* 130; *Heaven and Hell* 468)

Statement about Gender and Clergy

The Rt. Rev. Brian W. Keith
Executive Bishop of the General Church

Preface: This article has been available electronically prior to publication in *New Church Life* and has generated a high degree of interest and feedback. It is published here to ensure its availability to all who wish to read it. It is published in its original form, without changes based on feedback.

Dear Members and Friends of the General Church:

Many of you will know that the subject of gender and the clergy has been under review by the General Church priesthood. This review has incorporated a great deal of counsel from laity, in addition to extensive study by lay people and priests.

The reason we have taken up the subject at this time is that questions have been raised concerning the General Church's position regarding the priesthood as a masculine use. As can be imagined, there is a range of perspectives on this position, with some taking it as a matter of course, others not being much concerned, and still others being in disagreement with it. This topic raises powerful emotions, too: painful emotions for some, and frustrations for others.

It is not useful for the Church to remain unsettled regarding this issue. The purpose of this communication is to share with you the process of review that we went through, the outcome, and some of the leading themes that bear on the subject.

In this, as in all things of the Church, we seek the Lord's guidance in His Word. We are taught that "all the doctrine of the church must be from the Word, and that the doctrine from any other source than the Word is not doctrine in which there is anything of the church, still less anything of heaven." (*Arcana Coelestia* 9424:2; see also *Arcana Coelestia* 3445, 10603; *Apocalypse Revealed* 576, 602; *Heaven and Hell* 455e, et al) Other considerations, such as cultural sensitivities and individual perceptions are important to be aware of, but must be secondary to what the Word says.

The General Church's policy on ordination is an application of doctrine from the Word. While the Threefold Word gives us many important indicators, it was not written to give any definitive statement on exactly what to do regarding ordination and gender. This is not surprising because the Word, and in particular the Writings, has as its primary concern our spiritual life and only occasionally or incidentally does it speak to specific behavioral or organizational actions.

Thus we are left to make applications based on our best understanding of the Word, which has been a hallmark of the General Church from its beginning – attempting to follow the Lord through the Threefold Word's general and particular teachings.

There will be different understandings of doctrine and its application. Doubts can be raised about any particular understanding of doctrine, and especially about any application of doctrine. Variety of understanding enhances our overall appreciation of Divine truth. Yet we seek a prevailing understanding of the Word on a topic like this, even though it will not be embraced by everyone.

Where there is love for the Lord and charity toward the neighbor, these differences do not prevent a church from being one. (See *Arcana Coelestia* 1799:4, 1834:2) Individuals are then focusing on what essentially makes a church – belief in the Lord and following His teachings in their lives – rather than focusing on its externals.

After much study, reflection, prayer, intense listening, and considering what a strong preponderance of the clergy see the Word to be teaching, I believe that we should maintain our current policy of inaugurating only males into the priesthood. At the same time, I believe that we should strengthen our efforts to honor and foster the talents and perspectives of lay people, particularly women, in ways other than the priesthood.

As much as I appreciate the conviction, sincerity and feelings of those who would like a change, the doctrinal guideposts that support an all-male clergy remain more convincing to most of the clergy than doctrinal understandings that suggest otherwise. This resonates with my own understanding of the Threefold Word.

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A word about my role. The Executive Bishop does not operate alone, nor does he unilaterally formulate doctrine or applications for the Church. In his effort to serve the Lord he should speak from his best understanding of the Word, after considering the understanding of the entire priesthood and taking counsel from the laity. This is similar to the teaching about civil leaders being under the law and not being tyrants. (*New Jerusalem and its Heavenly Doctrine* 322-324) Therefore decisions such as the one before us are not the Executive Bishop's alone but include a wide range of people. I have felt humbled and sometimes inadequate to be placed in this role.

Some have wondered why this decision rests with the priesthood. Based on the chapter, "Ecclesiastical and Civil Government" in the *New Jerusalem and Its Heavenly Doctrine* (paragraphs 311-325) we have an episcopal form of government. While the entire chapter is instructive, one paragraph is especially pertinent:

Governors over those things with people which relate to heaven, or over ecclesiastical [church] affairs, are called priests, and their office is called the priesthood. (# 314)

The Latin for "governors" is *praefecti* which can be translated as prefects, governors, people in charge, supervisors, etc. We have always understood this to mean that anything having to do with the organized church, including the clergy itself, is under the direct supervision of the priesthood.

In our exploration of this subject the clergy were encouraged to study the Word anew and take counsel from the laity in their areas of responsibility. It was discussed at most of the regional clergy meetings in 2013. The clergy have read many presentations offered by laypeople, including a summary of an extensive online discussion forum which largely advocated for a change.

At the June plenary clergy meetings there were eight major presentations on the subject, four of which in some way supported the ordination of women. After those meetings, with more time to reflect, most of the clergy sent me a one-page synopsis with leading doctrinal points and an application from them.

What are the doctrinal guideposts that came to the fore? No brief summary

could do justice to the study that has gone into this subject, both advocating for a male-only clergy and against it. A number of presentations have been published in *New Church Life* over the years, and an online site has collected virtually everything produced on the subject: (www.newchurchperspective.com/possible-ordination-of-women/) Here, I will just note some leading themes.

The priesthood's essential function is teaching the truth and leading by means of it to the good of life. (*New Jerusalem and its Heavenly Doctrine* 315; *True Christian Religion* 422; *Apocalypse Explained* 388:3) A primary

reason for regarding this function as a masculine use rests on the beautiful and pervasive differences in the nature and approach of men and women.

We are taught that men are born intellect-oriented, whereas women are born will-oriented. (*Conjugal Love* 33) Men therefore have “an affection for knowing, understanding and becoming wise” that is particularly suited to the priestly role of leading by means of truths. (*Ibid.* 90) We are also taught that the rational wisdom in a male, because of the way he has been created, “climbs into a light in which women are not.” (*Ibid.* 165, 188)

Women, on the other hand, have the gift that their “mind is elevated into a higher warmth.” (*Ibid.* 188) Through women flows conjugal love with its innocence and peace, which is not possible with men apart from this means. Related to this are the teachings that “the church is formed by the Lord in the man, and through the man in his wife,” (*Ibid.* 63, 122), and “if the reverse is the case, it is not according to order.” (*Ibid.* 125)

This suggests that the masculine ought to take the lead in publicly teaching the truths of the Word. It is not an issue of superiority/inferiority, but one of complementary gifts due to an inherent difference in nature and approach.

This is not to say that women cannot raise their understandings above their wills – everyone can do that or there would no hope for regeneration. Nor is it to say that laypeople, both men and women, do not teach. We encourage everyone, layperson and priest, to read the Word and communicate their understandings and affections with others – to instruct and to help them.

All New Church teachers are strongly encouraged to bring teachings from the Word into all their instruction. This is an essential component in

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www.newchurchperspective.com/possible-ordination-of-women/

what makes a church. But the priesthood has a role in public instruction and leading, promoting the integrity and purity of the overall doctrine of the Church, which is qualitatively different from roles all laity are encouraged to do – the ministry of angels in serving others.

Another theme is the nature of representation and the priesthood. The priesthood is a representative office. (*Arcana Coelestia* 3670:2) The Lord assumed the masculine form when on earth because He came as Divine truth, within which is Divine good. (*True Christian Religion* 86) His work of salvation is represented by the priestly office, from a love for all by means of the saving truths of His Word. (*Arcana Coelestia* 9809)

We are told that “the inmost quality in masculinity is love, and its veil wisdom, or in other words, it is love veiled over with wisdom.” (*Conjugal Love* 32; see also *Heaven and Hell* 369) This would seem to parallel the presence and purpose of the Lord in His Humanity.

This is not to say that the Lord is primarily masculine. Both the masculine and the feminine are derived from the Divine and generative organs of both sexes are in the Grand Human of heaven. But how the Lord presents Himself is in the masculine form, and as our Father, even as truth is the form of good.

Some have suggested that the teachings about the differences between the masculine and the feminine are only pertinent to the relationship between husband and wife and should not be applied to gender in the priesthood. It is true that there are a number of passages where the Writings are speaking specifically about the marriage relationship. But there are also many passages that generalize beyond that, even connecting it to occupations. (*Conjugal Love* 174, 175) So it would seem appropriate to include gender and the teachings about the masculine and feminine when considering the priesthood.

One additional point. Some have observed that the Word never explicitly prohibits a female from being a priest. I believe this is true. Some take from this that there is no prohibition preventing a woman from assuming the role of a priest. Argument from omission is an inherently weak argument. But using that approach, it is interesting to consider that in the many passages describing the evils to which the priesthood can fall, none of them appears to be related to masculinity in particular.

However, in considering the dangers of the priesthood there are several passages that seem to be explicit contra-indicators for women serving in the priesthood. (*Arcana Coelestia* 8994:4; *Spiritual Experiences* 5936, 4940; *Conjugal Love* 125) Thus while there seems to be no evidence giving warnings about males serving in the priesthood, there are some about females serving.

Other teachings have been brought out that to some suggest a gender-inclusive clergy, such as the importance of individual freedom of choice, the Church being the combination of the masculine and the feminine, the fact that

we all are to learn from the Word, give voice to what we learn, and be moved by the Lord for a salvation of souls. These are important general teachings and have implications for how the laity participate in the Church and serve the Lord. But at least to a large majority of the clergy who have studied this they are subordinate concepts to the other teachings regarding public preaching and teaching.

Practical or non-doctrinal reasons for making one application or another have also been set forth. Reasons such as our current policy “is offensive to some” or “is a barrier to young people,” or on the other side, “ordaining women will lead to the ordination of homosexuals” or that “it will further discourage men from participating,” should not take the lead in our thinking. Surveys and opinion polls, while giving some indication, do not give reliable guidance for what we should do, especially considering what the Word is teaching.

I should add that the perspective of each priest tends not to rest on one or two leading teachings, but on the overall themes that he sees in his study of the Word, taking into account various contrasting teachings. While many of the clergy pointed to the teachings mentioned here, it is a preponderance of doctrine that many spoke to – their sense, after viewing the teachings as a whole, as to what the Lord is leading to.

Regarding the percentage of ministers who supported one stance or another, I have delayed giving specific numbers because the mind tends to focus on them, whereas it is the shared understanding of the Lord’s Word that is important. Asking the ministers to provide a one-page summary of their understanding was not a vote on doctrine, but an attempt to gain a more complete grasp of what the clergy sees from the Word.

However, I can tell you some general things about the responses. I received statements from 73 ministers, strongly clustered in North America. This is perhaps not surprising because in many other parts of the world this is just not an issue. And with communication challenges, we rarely receive written counsel from some parts of the world.

Of those who responded approximately two-thirds were in favor of maintaining an all-male clergy; approximately one-sixth did not make any application and seemed to be either undecided or unclear in their application; and one-sixth favored a gender-inclusive clergy.

There were few, if any, demographical patterns among the respondents. For example, there did not appear to be a significant generational disparity. Again, this was not a vote, nor should it be taken as any high-resolution picture of “where the clergy stands.” It is simply one of many indicators.

What are the implications of re-affirming a stance on an all-male clergy? We will be maintaining our current policy of having only General Church priests lead in public worship and not inviting lay men or women into preaching roles,

I have a sincere hope that we can enhance and find additional ways for laity – men and women – to respond to the Word. We strive for a church that encourages people to share their perceptions and to be involved in church uses.

yet having both lay men and women conduct private or family worships, such as in classrooms or at home. We also will continue to welcome all lay men and women to search the Word, share their insights and participate in the uses of the Church.

With that said, I have a sincere hope that we can enhance and find additional ways for laity – men and women – to respond to the Word. We strive for a church that encourages people to share their perceptions and be involved in church uses.

I have been perplexed and saddened that the *Theta Alpha Journal*, a wonderful source of feminine

perceptions and wisdom, seems to have fallen into disuse. The unique traits of the feminine mind bring a warmth and connectedness to church life that could not exist otherwise, in addition to their perceptions from their loves and the Word. How might we better recognize distinct masculine and feminine contributions and promote them?

I am not certain what might come of an exploration along these lines, but I will be asking Consistory how we might constructively go about it. I am also encouraging our pastors to engage with the laity in their congregations in how to better integrate respect for, listening to and honoring of the masculine and the feminine in the life of their congregations.

Concerns: I have many. One is that the topic of ordination has become polarized, and many people have their minds made up. Some do not agree with the doctrinal application of a male-only clergy and are unlikely to support the decision to continue this policy.

Unfortunately, this is not the only area where there is disagreement. We face similar challenges when dealing with when to perform remarriages after divorce, sex prior to marriage, the elements of the Holy Supper, and several other areas. In these it appears that attempting to follow the Word produces a “tough” stance that hurts people and discourages some from participating in the Church.

We do need to come from the Word, which is what makes us a church. But we also need to accommodate to people in their current states with their understandings and feelings. We need to reach out to everyone, and even if we do not agree or cannot do what they want, we need to be sensitive to them

and care for them. Those who feel hurt by this position need respect, a willingness to listen, and efforts to see where we can be together in embracing the teachings of the Lord.

A related concern is the acrimony surrounding this subject for some. People don't just disagree, at times they attack those with whom they disagree, sometimes even attributing hellish motives to them. So we hear statements such as: "those who want to ordain women aren't reading the Word or taking it seriously," or "it's just a power thing with the clergy, keeping control of their men's club."

Attributing motives to another or otherwise denigrating those with whom we disagree does not lead to rational thought, and invites the presence of the hells. If we need to disagree let us do it without being ugly with one another. We should be careful in our own speech that we are not doing this, and I think we should caution others to avoid falling prey to this also.

Another concern is the perception that women are not valued in the Church. This could be due, in part, to the ways in which certain teachings about masculinity and femininity are discussed, leaving some women feeling like something is wrong with their minds or approach to life. It could also be due to men not listening to and valuing women's contributions, which tend to be more subtle.

The contributions of men and women, their energy and counsel, are vital to the life of our congregations. And most people recognize the perceptive strength of wise women. (*Conjugal Love* 48) There are also teachings that indicate women have a particular gift from the Lord with regard to healthy relationships, marriage and family. (*Ibid.* 168, 209, 393) Can we further promote a church culture that overtly honors the feminine, and by its practices sends the message that all are valued?

A final concern is that maintaining a male-only clergy sets us somewhat at odds with where some of western culture seems to be heading. As it has come to define any exclusionary practices as inherently negative and harmful, any policy based on differences of gender is viewed with suspicion.

This is not the only instance where this occurs. The Academy of the New Church Secondary Schools, based on derived doctrine from the Word, have long been a proponent of separate education for males and females. Another

We do need to come from the Word, which is what makes us a church. But we also need to accommodate to people in their current states with their understandings and feelings.

example of this is the teaching that whatever children receive as holy, “more so if received from their fathers” is carefully protected by the Lord. (*Arcana Coelestia* 2180:5) This in no way denigrates the irreplaceable gifts that mothers bestow on their children. Mothers provide a tender love that fathers simply cannot. (*Conjugal Love* 393, 403, 406, 410) But it does demonstrate precious things that can be offered by each gender and not the other.

Our teachings, both direct and applied, can be opposed to some culturally accepted norms around the world. One only needs to skim the prophets of the Old Testament to see this is not new. *Conjugal Love* teaches a number of things that European culture at that time found alien. We as a church have defended the second part of *Conjugal Love* even when popular perception found it shameful. And we stand against the practices of having multiple wives and female circumcision, which are widely practiced in parts of the world.

It is true that we need to accommodate to natural states in our cultures and deal with the feelings they generate. But our primary adherence needs to be to the Lord’s Word and then address what comes from that.

Will this policy ever change? We do not legislate for the future. If we follow the Lord and His Word faithfully, He will lead us into greater light and warmth in the future. A great deal of research and thought has gone into the recent papers by laity and by clergy on this subject. We have been digesting the ideas presented, and that will continue.

We should trust the Lord to lead our thinking and pray to Him for guidance. We should periodically re-examine our applications of doctrine. And if anyone has a new insight, it should be shared. Counsel and discussion should continue as we reflect and pray about this. However, in the past we have found it useful to take a break from heated issues to let them cool down, and then approach them in a new light.

Thank you for your forbearance with the length of this communication. I realize it is a painful subject for many. It is a subject that matters to many people, both those who support the policy and those who would like it changed.

In closing, I hope that we can remember and focus upon what is eternally valuable about the New Church. There is so much that unites us – a new vision of the Lord in His Divine Human, a new path for spiritual development, a great help and hope for people going through the many states of life, a comforting view of the Lord’s providential guiding, a beautiful vision of the afterlife, and so many other uplifting concepts that lead to heaven.

While we will always consider and even disagree on some understandings and applications of doctrine, let us join together in worshiping the Lord in spirit and life.

ADDENDUM

Since the original release of this article some weeks ago, several forums have been organized to provide feedback, and a number of people have contacted the Bishop's Office directly. We are working to incorporate as many of the thoughts and ideas as we can, and appreciate the time people are taking to respond, whether in support of our established policy or opposed.

I have encouraged pastors throughout the Church to meet with people, listen, and begin a discussion of how we can better provide for the participation of laity, especially women, in the Church. Please consult with your pastor about this. I look forward to working with the pastors and people of the Church in a variety of ways to promote a culture of respect and opportunities to serve.

Contacts: *Brian.Keith@newchurch.org; Peter.Buss.Jr@newchurch.org*

There is so much that unites us. While we will always consider and even disagree on some understandings and applications of doctrine, let us join together in worshipping the Lord in spirit and in life.

OUR NEW CHURCH VOCABULARY

Part of a continuing series developed by the Rev. W. Cairns Henderson, 1961-1966.

COGNITIONS

Although this term is loosely translated as “knowledges,” it should be retained; it has a very exact meaning and it indicates an important distinction. Cognitions are intermediate between scientifics and truth.

In this context, scientifics are those facts of the Word in the Old and New Testaments and the Writings. Cognitions are those facts organized into ideas. When those ideas are acknowledged in the understanding – when man confirms himself in them and lives according to them – they become truths.

Cognitions, then, are all the ideas that we have formed from the Word but have not yet appropriated by bringing them into life. (See *Arcana Coelestia* 5276)

Responses to the Statement About Gender and Clergy

Dear Bishops Keith and Buss:

As one of the few young people still involved with the General Church, I find it an obligation to let you know how upsetting I found the announcement of maintaining a male-only clergy. I do not write this as a woman who has ever felt a calling to the ministry, but as a young adult gravely concerned for the Church she cares so much about among her generation.

I'm not going to argue the theology behind the decision; others much more eloquent than I am have already spoken what I would say. But I do want to express the impact this decision has made among me and my peers. And of course while I do not speak for everyone, I do believe I'm speaking for the vast majority who are increasingly disassociating and distancing themselves from the Church because of this and subsequent issues.

A question that has been highlighted in many congregations recently is: How can we get more young people reinvested and involved with the Church? And while we all can speculate about strategies and tactics for sharing the Church with them, I, and many around me, firmly believe numbers will continue to decline unless the Church's structure and policies become more inclusive.

Gender equality and many other social justice issues are constantly in the forefront of our minds and conversations. Everything we interact with is seen through the lens of discerning whether it's inclusive or oppressive. Everything – the General Church included. And the reaction when we find something oppressive is one of two things: either to speak up and fight against the injustice we see, or simply to walk away and find something else that does align with our beliefs. The latter of the two is what's currently happening.

One of the beauties of the New Church, especially in this day and age, is its teachings on how necessary variety is in the world. It is one of the only branches of Christianity that says it is not religious upbringing that determines your salvation, but how you live your life; and that other religions have not

only a place in the world, but incredible value to the Lord's Kingdom. What an extremely loving God this portrays! With all the hate, war and pain going around, the world is in dire need of hearing this message of a loving God. What many in my generation have expressed to me countless times is that they cannot fathom that this variety does not extend into the culture and hierarchy of the General Church.

I am often the outsider and many times feel judged among my peers for being involved in the Church. Hearing, "I just can't be a part of something so archaic," is what I endure on a weekly basis. It is becoming increasingly rare to hear the General Church or the Academy talked about in a positive light. When either come up in conversation it's almost always centered around how hurtful or unjust the organizations are and have been to them.

This is the message that many in my generation are sending out to those around them. This is the message being heard by individuals and groups not connected with the Church. This is how many who are learning for the first time what the General Church has to offer are being exposed to – with first-hand negativity.

And if the number-one way people are brought into a church is through personal invitation, imagine what this negative message they're hearing about the General Church is doing.

Thank you for taking the time to read and hear these thoughts. I welcome questions or conversation about this.

Michelle Chapin
Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania
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Editor's note: Michelle was invited to meet with Bishop Peter Buss Jr. in response to this letter and is in on-going dialogue with him. She is still collecting opinions, thoughts and insights about the policy – for or against – from young adults in any way connected with the Church.

Dear Bishops Keith and Buss:

Please allow me to thank you for reading my words, and those of many others as we absorb the communication released by your office on September 26. I know this is not an easy job, and I am grateful for your kind attention.

Your decision regarding women's ordination was not a great surprise to me, but I am disappointed. From my own careful study of the doctrine, I am convinced that the male-only policy is unjustified. I am weary and saddened.

I feel for the women whose call to ministry is being invalidated; I feel for our broken home.

In the wake of your announcement, I also feel for the clergy whose motives are being questioned and whose character is under attack. I want to express my faith that the clergy are good men, trying to remain in integrity with their understanding of doctrine. I don't believe that they (or the Bishops) are intoxicated with power, or that there is a conscious desire to keep women under the thumb of male leadership. I confess my suspicion that there is some unrealized sexism and ignorance at play, but for the most part I think our disagreements stem from differing understandings of the Word.

I want to thank you for being willing to overtly state your position – that you believe the policy should not change – rather than sidestepping. You spoke briefly to the role of the Bishop in this decision, but I wonder: if your opinion differed from the majority of the clergy (after taking due counsel), would the final call still lie with the Bishop?

There has been peripheral discussion about the decision-making process, and I wonder if you have intentions to implement reform, or improve transparency, in the future. It may be wise to develop a specific mechanism for policy change, and communicate that to the laity. Especially since this is not the only controversial or potentially divisive issue the Church will face in the coming years.

Your letter's third paragraph is so well said that I want to re-state it here:

The General Church's policy on ordination is an application of doctrine from the Word. While the Threefold Word gives us many important indicators, it was not written to give any definitive statement on exactly what to do regarding ordination and gender. This is not surprising because the Word, and in particular the Writings, has as its primary concern our spiritual life and only occasionally or incidentally does it speak to specific behavioral or organizational actions. Thus we are left to make applications based on our best understanding of the Word, which has been a hallmark of the General Church from its beginning – attempting to follow the Lord through the Threefold Word's general and particular teachings.

Given the above, I am at a loss to understand how the objections to women's ordination can be so strong as to justify the resulting damage: to individual women; to our culture around gender roles; and to our numbers and longevity as an organization. Given the lack of a clear directive from the Word, the unwillingness to err on the side of inclusion is baffling to me.

I don't believe that any risk or damage incurred if we did ordain women could surpass the loss we are now experiencing. And I do think that this perspective is supported by doctrine.

Several times in your letter, you stated how important it is that we be led by the Word, and not by "cultural sensitivities and individual perceptions." You said that surveys and opinion polls "do not give reliable guidance." You

said that “we need to come from the Word” but still accommodate people’s understanding and feelings. The language of your letter suggests to me that you find the change-advocates guilty of this unfaithfulness to the doctrine, or capitulation to our emotional prejudice.

I’ve heard this warning many times. I’ve been told my conclusions are not legitimate because I am led by my feelings, influenced by the progressive sensibilities of my modern generation, or that I just don’t believe in the Writings. Because of these accusations, I feel like I can’t state any belief without adding, as I did above, “I do think this perspective is supported by doctrine.”

I am sad that this constant defense is necessary. I wish I was given the benefit of the doubt, and I wish the same on behalf of all the women’s ordination advocates. We have amassed a huge body of writing, hundreds of thousands of words, meticulously researched and carefully composed. We are well-educated and very committed to the truth. Please take care not to belittle or dismiss our efforts.

As a tangent to my mention of our extensive research, your summary of the leading arguments against women’s ordination struck me as inappropriate for this communication. The points you touched on were very elementary, and they are the same ones we have heard for years. We have painstakingly – and in my opinion, very convincingly – dismantled each argument in our papers and online essays.

Your letter did not address any of our counter arguments that have been presented in the last few years, and as such it felt condescending to have these same worn, over-simplified points repeated in such an authoritative document. It would have been better to leave the doctrinal case aside for another, much more comprehensive paper. I do hope we will eventually see such a document explaining why our recent papers were deemed unconvincing.

On page five of your letter, you said: “The unique traits of the feminine mind bring a warmth and connectedness to church life that could not exist otherwise, in addition to their perceptions from their loves and the Word.” On the following page, you talk about the sense that women’s “more subtle” contributions are undervalued, and you express the need to more “overtly honor the feminine.”

These phrases rankle. Women are ready to be honored for the sharpness of our minds, for our intellect, for our insight, for our brilliance, and for our leadership capacity. We need to be honored for our whole selves, as human beings. We are not here in this church to passively imbue it with “the feminine,” like a space heater in a cold room. Your language sends the message that you have no room for women to exert their intellectual and leadership ability in this church, but that you will try to help us feel better in our traditional passive role.

I would love to hear your further thoughts on where things now stand, and where we go from here. You recommended that we let the issue cool down, and approach it again in a new light in the future. I wonder if that means you are asking to be left alone on this issue until further notice. Those of us who advocate for change would appreciate knowing the appropriate channels to continue our advocacy, while still respecting your position.

I would also like to express how powerfully I agree with the letter you received from Michelle Chapin. Please consider my voice added to hers, as well as the voices of so many of my generation who are too sad and too tired to carry this flag any longer.

I would be very happy to have this letter shared with any interested Board members, clergy, and friends of the Church. Thank you for reading.

Yours very sincerely, and with gratitude for the work that you do.

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OUR NEW CHURCH VOCABULARY

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COLLATERAL GOOD

In ordinary usage, “collateral” refers to something which has descended from the same stock, but not in the direct line, and is thus connected but in a subordinate way. This idea is carried over into the Writings, in which it is used to describe a good that is intermediate between spiritual and natural good.

Spiritual good inflows directly from the Lord and is therefore in direct line of descent. This intermediate good, although not natural, derives much from worldly things which appear to be good but are not, and is therefore called “collateral good,” which may be thought of most simply as a natural love of spiritual things.

To distinguish it from the spiritual good in which are those of the church specific, the good in which those of the church universal are is called “collateral good of a common stock.” (See *Arcana Coelestia* 3778, 4189, 4145)

His Mercy Endures Forever

*A Thanksgiving Message by
the Rt. Rev. Peter Buss Jr.*

One of the things I love about the *Psalms* is that they are spoken by a person, not unlike ourselves. Someone experiencing the ups and downs of life took the time to turn to the Lord with poetic words of praise or supplication.

Psalm 136 is a perfect example. A human being set out to offer thanksgiving to the Lord, and did so with a repeated refrain: “His mercy endures forever.” In fact so dominant is this theme that it is repeated 26 times.

What is the mercy of the Lord, and why should it evoke similar gratitude in our hearts?

Consider a 10-year-old boy who, in a state of anger, calls one of his classmates a name. We can easily imagine the response of that other child, and, if we happened to be the adult in that situation, the need to intervene with words of reprimand.

Does it change the situation if you know some things about that person? What if you knew he didn’t get enough sleep the night before, couldn’t find the right clothes to wear and because he took so long, didn’t get a lot of breakfast. We might also know that he has a bit of a headache, and his pet hamster died the day before. None of that makes the name-calling okay, but it might make you a little more understanding and forgiving if you knew all this.

A thought for today is that the Lord knows all those extenuating circumstances for all of us, and takes them into account in every wrong thing we do. He looks on us with compassion. He does not think less of us for the bad things we do. Instead He tries to lead us to see how to make better choices the next time.

Regarding the Lord’s attitude toward us, we read: “The Lord’s mercy remains constantly with every individual person; for the Lord wishes to save all the people there are.” (*Arcana Coelestia* 8307) Another teaching says that “love itself is converted into mercy and becomes mercy when anyone in need



of help is regarded with love or charity.” (*Ibid.* 3063)

This does not negate the need for change, because it is also true that the Lord’s mercy is not received by us until we get rid of what stands in the way. As with the child having a bad day, the Lord can work with us to prompt us to wiser decisions that don’t cause hurt. As one of the passages we’ve just referenced concludes: “The Lord’s mercy is universal, that is, is directed toward all people, and is also particular toward those who refrain from evils.” (*Ibid.* 8307)

So we return to *Psalm* 136 and the psalmist’s great gratitude for the Lord’s mercy. For ourselves, our thanksgiving to the Lord can be inspired when we realize how He regards us. He sees all that is good, and all that is self-serving, and He loves us anyway. Not only that, but He works with us in long-suffering ways to mend those hurtful parts of us, so that we are less apt in the future to cause pain to others and experience sadness ourselves.

It is this full way that we receive the Lord’s mercy into our lives that can inspire our deepest gratitude to Him. “[To Him] who remembered us in our lowly state..., and rescued us from our enemies... O give thanks to the God of heaven, for His mercy endures forever.” (*Psalm* 136:23,24,26)

The Name 'Jesus'

The Rt. Rev. Brian W. Keith

Lessons: Luke 1: 26-33; Matthew 1: 18-25; Arcana Coelestia 3004, 3005

The angel speaking to Mary said: “And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name Jesus.” (*Luke 1:31*)

The angel speaking to Joseph said: “And she shall bring forth a son, and you shall call His name Jesus; for He shall save His people from their sins.” (*Matthew 1:21*)

From the beginning of time, the human race has needed some way of thinking of the Divine. For us to visualize our God and feel any affection for Him, we must conceive of Him in some recognizable form and with a label or name – some way to speak of Him. Otherwise, God will be remote, impersonal, and eventually non-existent – not as *someone* who created and guides us, but as *something* who can neither care for us nor help us.

And yet, how far from the real truth this is! There is no one who will ever be closer to us than He is – not a good friend, a dear relative, or even a beloved spouse. For He is Life itself, intimately present every moment of every day – touching our hearts and minds in ways no one else can, opening our eyes to the truth and bringing about good in our lives.

Yes, for us to respond freely to this gift of life, for us to love and worship Him through living a useful, satisfying life of our own, He cannot be physically present, or speak directly to us. If He did, we would rebel. Our sense of independence would feel threatened. So for us to love Him, to approach Him, we must use our minds, both our intellects and feelings, to form some way to embrace Him.

For His part, He reaches out to us. He has revealed Himself to people ever since the very first were born. He spoke with the most ancients mouth to mouth. (*Arcana Coelestia 49*) Apparently these good people could embrace a closer presence of Him than afterward when evil was present on earth. His appearing through an angel gave them the image of Him in a human form, a Divine Person, Jehovah. (*True Christian Religion 9:2; Apocalypse Explained 808:3*) This was how they thought of Him, how they knew that He was real and

When we hear the name 'Jesus' we can think of Him as Divine good – that Divine impetus to approach us, to communicate with us, and to lead us to genuine and lasting happiness. This is how He appears in the New Testament. It was how He wants us to know Him.

cared for them.

When selfishness engulfed these people a new image was revealed, an image to lead the people back into states of happiness – states of good. It also was a human image, but with many features. People even created statues to reflect His various qualities. Many names were then given to describe His attributes. When these names were mentioned, it enabled the ancients to think about a particular aspect of the Divine.

Unfortunately, this church also fell prey to feelings of selfishness, and blinded themselves to the reality behind the various names and images. They began to think that each image and name was a separate Divine.

Polytheism was born.

To restore the Church, as far as possible, until a more concrete and permanent image could be given, the Divine revealed Himself to Abraham as Jehovah. Jehovah became the cornerstone of the Israelitish religion. Their thoughts were directed to Him alone. He would appear to them through an angel, in fire, and many other ways to impress upon them His power. Indeed, the name “Jehovah” in Hebrew means “self-existing” or “eternal.” Although these people kept falling away from this image, even forgetting the name “Jehovah,” it was a sufficient image to prepare them for a new revelation with the Divine descent on earth.

And so the Divine came down, taking on a human through conception and birth by means of Mary. The name He took on, even from before conception, was “Jesus.” An angel appeared to Mary telling her that she would give birth and His name would be Jesus. Joseph also had an angel appear to him, telling him to name the babe Jesus. Then, when eight days were passed for the circumcision, His name was proclaimed to the registrar as Jesus.

Why that name, “Jesus”? There appeared to be nothing special about it. Many others were naming their sons Jesus, because the name “Jesus” is the Greek spelling of the Hebrew name Joshua and evoked memories of the one who had led the sons of Israel into the Promised Land. But the Divine choice of the name stemmed from deeper causes. Jesus means “savior.”

The angel told Joseph that “He shall save His people from their sins,”

meaning that Jesus would be a spiritual savior even as Joshua had been a natural savior, preserving them from the enemies in the land of Canaan. His kingdom was not of this world, but of the spiritual world, bringing spiritual freedom and thus salvation to the souls of all people.

Yet "Jesus" has more meaning than this. It brings to mind the name of the Divine that had been the God of the Israelites and Jews for generations. For Jesus (or Joshua) means "*Jehovah* saves." By using the name "Jesus" it declared He was the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. So the name "Jesus" signifies Divinity in the person Who walked the earth many years ago. (*Apocalypse Explained* 10; *Arcana Coelestia* 9809:9) The central truth about Jesus is that He was Jehovah in the flesh, the Divine on earth, Who became human in order to become fully God and fully Human.

So Jesus came to give us a new way of connecting with the God of heaven and earth. The human form that had been presented to ages past was no longer sufficient to guide people in paths of truth. The previous names He employed were forgotten or abused. And so He came as Jesus. When we hear the name "Jesus" we can think of Him as Divine good – that Divine impetus to approach us, to communicate with us, and to lead us to genuine and lasting happiness. (*Arcana Coelestia* 3004) This is how He appears in the New Testament. It was how He wants us to know Him.

The other name attached to Him is "Christ." He is called that in the infancy narratives and then again in the crucifixion stories, where it became a central point in the desire of the religious leaders to destroy Him. "Christ" means the anointed one, the one to be given glory, the one to be looked up to as a king. So "Christ" as a name refers to His ability to teach and thereby lead. (*Ibid.* 3004) Together, the names "Jesus" and "Christ" mean one Divine Being, the single God to be worshiped. This is what the Lord's advent brought to mankind.

Yet something went awry. The Christian Church began to divide the Divine qualities, to separate the Divine and Human nature of Jesus Christ. We are taught that a desire for power arose and the leaders of the church sought to transfer the power of Jesus Christ to themselves, the power to open and shut heaven.

This began to warp their thinking and they gradually lost sight of the one God, Jesus Christ. The Divine was divided and they focused upon the frail maternal human qualities which were put off with the glorification. Later, with

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But even as we rightly say “Lord,” we should not forget to also use “Jesus.” It directs our thoughts to the Divine nature of Jesus Christ, our Lord. It reminds us that He was not born as others, but of a virgin and with a Divine Soul.

the Reformation and faith alone being received as the sole means of salvation, people looked to the Father instead of Jesus, and further lost sight of His Divinity.

With this false notion about Jesus, instead of seeing Jehovah in Him, as was intended by that name, people could only see human limitations. They saw a simple man with high ideals, but with little material success. And so the real purpose for His selecting that name, to inform all that He came to save people from their sins, was obscured.

With a new revelation it is now possible for us to fully appreciate what He intended. It is now possible for us to

make use of the name “Jesus” to remind us of why He was born on earth – that He was the Divine made flesh, Jesus, our God and Lord.

Yet we have little used the name “Jesus.” Perhaps this is not too surprising, for the teachings of the New Church constantly refer to Him as “Lord.” In the first few pages of the very first book of the New Church, *Arcana Coelestia*, we read: “In the following work, by the name LORD is meant the Savior of the world, Jesus Christ, and Him only; and He is called ‘the Lord’ without addition of other names.” (No. 14) Jesus Himself also suggested the name “Lord:” “You call Me Teacher and Lord, and you say well, for I am.” (*John 13:13*)

But even as we rightly say “Lord,” we should not forget to use “Jesus” also. It directs our thoughts to the Divine nature of Jesus Christ, our Lord. It reminds us that He was not born as others, but of a virgin and with a Divine Soul. On earth He endured and overcame all evils, glorifying Himself so that we could see Him, love Him, and be saved by Him. For this, His name “Jesus” is to be treated with respect.

We are taught that “the name of Jesus is in like manner holy is known from the saying of the Apostle that at this name every knee is bowed or should be bowed in heaven and on earth...” (*True Christian Religion* 297) And that no devil in hell can even pronounce the name! (*Ibid.*)

It is thus so unfortunate and harmful to hear the name “Jesus” used casually or in swearing by so many people today. Think of the harm done by the hells through this – inspiring people to be so insensitive, so callous, that the name then loses all meaning. Consider what the name could mean! The Divinity of the Lord made flesh, dwelling among us, saving us from our sins.

Every time the name Jesus is used without this frame of reference, that idea of God is diminished. Yet think of its power if we truly made use of the name – if when we said it we thought of His life and our salvation by Him – so we would be unable to do violence to His name. (*Apocalypse Revealed* 961)

The real protection against abusing the name “Jesus” is found in doing what is good. (See *Apocalypse Explained* 815:12) His name and the mental image of Jesus Christ, the Lord,

the Divine Human, becomes real to us as we listen to what is taught by Him in His Threefold Word. As we strive to think about the Lord as Jesus, and to do what is right, then it becomes foreign to us to think of His name in any other context and we recoil when we hear it abused.

As we progress in regeneration, then we shall feel more attuned to the sentiment at the end of the book of *Revelation*: “He who testifies these things says, ‘Surely I come quickly. Amen.’ Even so, come Lord Jesus.” (*Revelation* 22:20; *Apocalypse Revealed* 960)

Let us rejoice in the name Jesus. Let us know what it means and how it directs us to the Lord who saves us. And let us use the name “Jesus” regularly that we may feel closer to Him and be drawn more fully into the stream of His providence. “Even so, come Lord Jesus.” Amen.

Every time the name 'Jesus' is used without this frame of reference, that idea of God is diminished. Yet think of its power if we truly made use of the name.



The Rt. Rev. Brian W. Keith is Executive Bishop of the General Church, General Pastor of the General Church, Chancellor of the Academy of the New Church, President of the General Church in Canada, of the General Church in Africa and of the General Church International. He and his wife, Gretchen (Umberger), live in Bryn Athyn. Contact: Brian.Keith@newchurch.org

His Covenant Forever: All Things New

*A Charter Day Address – October 10, 2014
The Rev. Dr. Thane P. Glenn*

Readings: Psalm 111:4-9; Revelation 21:1-5; The True Christian Religion 290

What are you doing here? You may find yourself wondering the same thing as you sit in these pews this morning. Charter Day is exciting – everybody gets dressed up, we get to carry banners and flags – but it can also be a little bit odd. Every year I think about the traffic stopped out on Second Street Pike, and I can only imagine they’re wondering what sort of strange Hogwarts reenactment is going on here. So what *are* you doing here?

I actually don’t know the answer to that question. And I suspect that maybe there isn’t an answer yet. But I can give you at least a partial answer to a slightly different question: *How did you end up here?*

You see, 137 years ago, a group of men and women had a vision. A vision that a good education – a robust private school curriculum at the high school level and an intensive study of the liberal arts in college – could work hand-in-hand with the pursuit of a new kind of Christianity. A Christianity that emphasizes the life-long spiritual growth of every individual, and the principle that having the right belief doesn’t matter apart from the actions of love. You’ve ended up here because that group of men and women had a vision that such an education was possible.

But, friends, their vision was actually much bigger than that. The charter they signed (which we celebrate today) stated that the central purpose of this Academy was to establish a new spiritual church on earth symbolized by the New Jerusalem at the end of the Bible. And one of the charter missions on that document was that this educational institution should have “perpetual existence.” So I’m trying to imagine the conversation between our founders and the state of Pennsylvania:

“So, you are applying to start a new school?”

“Yes, an academy.”

“I see, and what are the educational goals of this academy?”

“Oh, just establish the New Jerusalem, and, uh, to last forever.”

That’s a bold vision!

So the question I want to ask you to consider today is this: Can *anything* last forever? Did they picture 137 years ago that you would be sitting here today? A lot has changed since then. Their idea that campus social life should be distinctly spiritual, different from anything else you might experience “out there” – that idea would be foreign to you today. Your idea that there’s value in studying side-by-side with people of differing faith backgrounds, in learning from a variety of perspectives – that idea might baffle them. A lot has changed.

And so here you sit today. Some of you may be thinking about the game later. Maybe some of you are nervous about your date for the dance. Some of you are probably preoccupied with your weekend work schedule. Is *this* the vision those men and women held 137 years ago? Can anything last forever?

I think on some level, we can probably identify with that passionate desire for things to last forever. Maybe you’ve made new friends in the last few weeks or over the last year. Friends you’ve stayed up late into the night with, talking about *everything*, friends you would already do anything for. When we make friends like that, we want it to last forever.

Maybe you hope to set a record on the athletic field or court that will never be broken at this school. Or maybe for you, it’s wanting to write a song that everyone will remember and still talk about years from now. I think we understand the passion to leave a lasting mark.

And so I want to draw your attention for just a moment to this stone. [Part of a pillar in the cathedral.] One hundred years ago, workmen carved this rock out of the hillside, stone masons crafted it, gave it the elegant contours – the curves and edges – you see. For most of us in this room, this one stone alone would be a lifetime’s achievement, a master work – let alone the more ornately carved stone throughout the rest of the cathedral. The hands that held the chisel which shaped this stone are long dead; we have no record of his name. But the work he’s left behind will stand for a long, long time. But can anything last *forever*?

The truth is, in a few years, the sports records you set today will probably be mostly forgotten. As you grow up, most of your friendships will change and move away. Generations down the road, this school will likely no longer exist. And one day, far in the future, even this granite stone – which took so much care and artistry – even this stone is going to crumble to dust. How can anything really last?

The *Psalm* I read earlier tells us that God commands His covenant forever. (*Psalm* 111:9)

What if forever is not about plans remaining unchanged? What if forever is not about preserving something exactly the way we want it or the way we remember it, not about the traditions we're familiar with, not about people staying just the way we want them to be? What if forever actually means growing ever new?

And yet at the end of the Bible, in the final promise of the New Testament, the same God declares that He makes all things new. (*Revelation 21:5*) *All things*. Nothing lasts unchanging. Isn't this a contradiction? Can anything last forever?

The idea I want to offer you today is that perhaps lasting forever and changing are not incompatible.

I want to tell you a story about a woman named Jacqueline Kiplimo. She is an elite Kenyan marathon runner. She has trained her whole life to win, to be the best, to make a name for herself as the world's top runner. Four years ago, she entered an international marathon in China, a big race on the world stage, with a \$10,000 prize for the winner.

A third of the way into the race, she had the lead time, she was well-paced, everything was going perfectly according to plan. And then she caught up with another runner, also an elite

marathoner, also with dreams of winning. This man was an elite athlete, but he was also disabled: earlier in his life he had lost his hands.

As they ran through a water station, she realized that he couldn't drink and run at the same time. In fact, it took tremendous effort and time for him to drink at all. In that moment, she made a split-second decision. She slowed her pace slightly to help him drink. She ended up running with him for 15 miles, helping him at every water station.

The end of the story is she didn't win. She came in second. The plan fell apart; she didn't see her name come to the top of the international standings, she didn't leave with \$10,000. But because her plan changed, there's at least one marathon runner in China who I guarantee you will remember her forever.

You see, what if forever is not about plans remaining unchanged? What if forever is not about preserving something exactly the way we want it or the way we remember it, not about the traditions we're familiar with, not about people staying just the way we want them to be? What if forever actually means growing ever new? What if "the works of His hands," as the Psalmist says,

“stand fast forever and ever,” (*Psalms* 111:7-8) *because* He makes “all things new”? (*Revelation* 21:5)

Think about the things in our lives that we want to last forever. What if the friendships you forge today are really about giving your friends the confidence to reach out to others as they grow and change? What if the record you set on the athletic field or court is there to give next year’s students something higher to aim for, something greater to surpass? What if the vision of those founders 137 years ago was laying the groundwork for transformations beyond what they could ever have imagined?

One of the books of teachings for the New Church, *Divine Providence*, tells us that God’s providence “is working” “in constancy and change alike,” “in marvelous ways,” “all the while remaining hidden.” (212) And our readings this morning gave us a beautiful image of how what matters most to us in life *both* lasts forever and continually undergoes change. It’s the timeless image of a tree, growing from a seed, spreading to its height, and then dying away so that its seeds will grow into other trees, which in turn will drop their seeds and make way for still new trees, forever and ever. (*The True Christian Religion* 290)

What seeds will grow from this moment? From this educational vision? One day, even this mighty granite stone will crumble. What will become of this Academy? Will you, and the generations of students who like you have sat in this hall, have transformed the ideas of your education here into *new* gifts for the world?

Maybe after graduation you’ll leave this place far behind. But maybe an idea we’ve asked you to consider here will stay with you somewhere in the back of your mind. Maybe it’s the idea that God is one, known throughout cultures across the world by different names and in different forms, but the same God, reaching out with nothing but love for every person ever born. A God who walks with every one of us in every joy, every defeat, every trial, every reassuring touch.

Maybe that idea quietly shines in you as you take your education and go far afield, to seek a cure for cancer, or HIV, or ALS. Or as you take your education and work on governmental

What seeds will grow from this moment? From this educational vision? What will become of this Academy? Will you, and the generations of students who like you have sat in this hall, have transformed the ideas of your education here into new gifts for the world?

So what are you doing here? Is this your school, is this your tradition, or is it someone else's? What are you doing here? Only you get to discover the answer to that question.

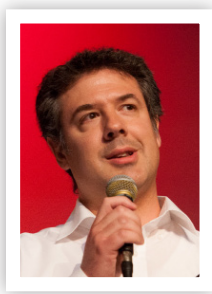
reform, or race relations. Or as you take your education and, wherever you end up, treat your coworkers with simple courtesy and kindness. As you take your education and make loving choices as a wife, a husband, a parent, knowing that these people you are entrusted with are like most precious seeds in the eyes of God.

So what are you doing here? Is this *your* school, is this *your* tradition, or is it someone else's? What are *you* doing here?

Only you get to discover the answer to that question. But before you go today, consider that you may be part of a Divine plan at least as far reaching as the life of this stone. Think about the journey of this rock. Millions and millions of years ago it was born in the pressure and heat deep in our earth. As the continents moved, it was gradually pushed to the surface. Through centuries of wind and rain, it was slowly eroded and covered with earth. One hundred years ago it was dug from a cliff by workmen we no longer remember and painstakingly shaped by craftsmen to hold up the massive pillar of this beautiful cathedral. What if all of this, the eons-long life-span of this piece of granite, was all so that you could be here today?

And what if you are here today so that many generations from now, when this stone has become cracked or forgotten, untold numbers of another generation's children's children, people who will look and sound very different from you and me, whose thoughts might be unrecognizable to us: perhaps you are here today so that one day *they* can be touched in some way by the ripples of our God's everlasting love.

"The works of *His* hands," we read, "stand fast forever and ever." (*Psalms* 111:7-8) "And He who sat on the throne said, 'Behold, I make all things new.'" (*Revelation* 21:5)



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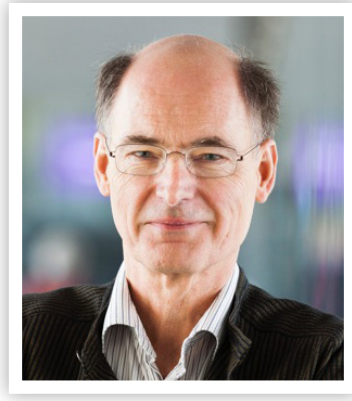


Photo courtesy of Thomas Xavier Floyd

The Rev. Göran R. Appelgren

A Christmas Gift for a Spiritual Quest

The Rev. Göran R. Appelgren is another of our General Church ministers who was launched on a very different and successful career track but felt pulled – or led – to a higher calling.

He is now pastor of the New Church society in Stockholm, Sweden, visiting pastor in Copenhagen, Denmark and Oslo, Norway, and regional pastor for Europe and India. Fortunately, he speaks several languages, including Swedish, English, French and Russian.

Göran was born in Sweden in 1949. His father was a farmer and his mother a teacher. They divorced when he was just four and he lived with his mother, but he loved returning to his father's farm several times a year. It was there, with his father at age eight, that he had a deep religious experience during a Christmas Day service. It stayed with him.

He had his early schooling close to Stockholm. In 1971-73 he had three semesters of Russian at the Universities of Uppsala and Stockholm, Sweden, and in 1974 earned his Masters of Science in Business and Economics at the Stockholm School of Economics.

That year he began working for the Swedish International Development Authority, dispensing Swedish foreign aid. In 1975 he was an assistant teacher in economics and a research assistant in the Stockholm School of Economics. He moved into international banking in Stockholm in 1975-77. From 1978 to 1984 he taught high school as well as Swedish to immigrants. He also worked

as a taxi driver, a nurse assistant and a tour guide in Stockholm.

He was searching.

“On my spiritual quest starting in my late twenties,” he says, “I strongly felt I wanted to contribute toward a better world and spiritual progress for mankind of some sort. At that time being a minister/priest in a traditional church setting was not on the horizon. Eventually I ended up studying theology at the non-denominational Uppsala University together with other students who were planning on becoming ministers in the Swedish Lutheran Church (then the state church).

“I felt some kind of calling but did not feel I had found my spiritual home. I came across Swedenborg in my studies through an older fellow student who had already begun studying the Writings. This pointed me in the direction I was meant to go. Toward the end of my course work at the university I made contact with the Theological School in Bryn Athyn and made a trip there. I was not yet convinced but was two-thirds on my way.”

As for major influences leading him to become a minister, he says: “It is hard to say but I think the experience at that Christmas day service at the age of eight lay under the surface all the time. In the late ‘60s and early ‘70s I was deeply touched by what I felt were incredible injustices around the globe. I was headed for a well-paid career in the financial sector but inside I felt that was just not my life.

“The longing for a deeper understanding of the world and mankind took me on that spiritual quest, and the idea of a higher reality and ultimately of God influencing and guiding our lives in the natural world took hold of me. Helping other people to discover such things and to grow closer to the Lord became more and more a focus. Serving in a traditional, established church organization then felt very natural.”

The process was still gradual. In his first year in Theological School the Rev. Les Sheppard from Australia became a very close friend. “In my conversations with him I became convinced the call was genuine.”

As he got into his Theological School training, he says: “From day one I felt that without the literal sense of the Word – meaning the Old and the New Testaments – the New Church will not be able to fully serve the Lord and mankind. When I had been reading the Writings for a while I was completely convinced this was a Divine revelation, but just because of that it does not mean we can forget about the literal sense being the ‘basis, containant and support’ (*Sacred Scripture* 27, 38; *True Christian Religion* 210, etc.) for the spiritual sense. I had my battles around this in Theological School but it only convinced me even more, and I still stand by it.”

“Simply being in the school and building a friendship with other students,” he adds, “made me both humble and stronger in my dedication to the ministry.”

While in Theological School he met Josephine Turner from England, who was teaching Latin in the Academy Secondary Schools in Bryn Athyn. They married in London, England, in 1990, and returned to Bryn Athyn. They now have three children: Mattias, 21, Jesper, 19, and Susanna, 16.

After graduating from Theological School and being ordained in 1992, he began his ministerial career as pastor of the Surrey Circle and “Open Road” in England, and visiting pastor of the Copenhagen Circle. He was ordained into the second degree in 1994 when he became pastor in Stockholm.

Among the highlights and satisfactions of his career so far he cites:

- Private conversations with people – already in the Church or not – and seeing how the Threefold Word helps them become more focused on their faith
- Writing sermons
- Teaching at the British Academy Summer School
- Teaching courses with the Stockholm Society on more than a dozen volumes of the Writings, in Swedish
- Public lectures on Swedenborg and the New Church in Sweden, Denmark, England, Russia, Ukraine, Czech Republic, India and Cuba
- Grading papers and dissertations for the Theological School in the Ivory Coast

Among the challenges he lists: “Time management and allowing yourself to be off duty,” and “knowing that you cannot satisfy the wishes of everyone. Ministers are human.”

His hopes and goals are “becoming more and more able to serve the Lord in conversations with people in search of a meaning in life, and in pastoral counselling.”

His personal interests include painting, music (guitar), literature, the outdoors (skiing, skating, hiking), and travel “to learn about our civilization and see new parts of the world.” What might you be surprised to know about him? “I am a pretty good cook,” he says, “and love testing new things in the kitchen.”

Among his favorite books are: Fyodor Dostoyevsky’s *The Brothers Karamazov*, John Steinbeck’s *Of Mice and Men*, and Alexandre Dumas’ *The Count of Monte Cristo*. Heading the list of favorite movies are: *The Party* with Peter Sellers, *Alphaville* by Jean-Luc Godard, and *Capricorn One* by Peter Hyams.

Among his favorite passages from the Writings are:

“The power of Divine truth is directed especially against falsities and evils, thus against the hells. The fight against these must be waged by means of truths from the sense of the letter of the Word. Moreover it is by means of the truths

in a man that the Lord has the power to save him; for man is reformed and regenerated and is at the same time taken out of hell and introduced into heaven,



Göran Appelgren's family on a trip to Kerala, India, last year for the wedding of the daughter of the Rev. Peter Devassy. Left to right: Jesper, Josephine, Mattias and Susanna.

by means of truths from the sense of the letter of the Word. This power the Lord took upon Himself, even as to His Divine Human, after He had fulfilled all things of the Word down to its ultimates.” (*Sacred Scripture* 49:1)

“Of the Lord’s Divine mercy I [Swedenborg] ... have been permitted ... to see the Lord’s Word in its beauty in the internal sense, and this many times; not as it is while the words are being explained as to

the internal sense in detail, but with all things both in general and particular brought together into a single series or connection, which may be said to be the seeing of a heavenly paradise from an earthly one.” (*Arcana Coelestia* 1772)

“What is life without delight and pleasure? It is not something living but lifeless. If you reduce delight and pleasure you will grow cold and torpid; and if you take them away you will certainly die. (*Divine Providence* 195:1)

To contact the Rev. Appelgren by e-mail: 19.6.1770@telia.com

CHRISTMAS HAIKU

Gerald Hurst

Open up my soul
Let the Lord be born in me
Sing Hallelujah!

Seeing Life on Three Levels

A Sermon by the Rev. Göran R. Appलगren

Lessons: *John 17:13-26; Arcana Coelestia 3388;*
Divine Love and Wisdom 46; Divine Providence 237

I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one. They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. Sanctify them by Your truth. (*John 17:14-17*)

We will begin with something unpleasant. Imagine you have a bad toothache. It's the only thing that occupies your mind. You are acutely aware of the pain and probably are thinking: I have to get to the dentist as soon as possible.

Another example: You are in your car, driving through a beautiful countryside far from a town or village. You notice the fuel gauge is close to empty. Again you experience pain – more psychological or mental distress – but pain. You begin to think not dentist but fuel station.

Both examples have to do with the physical world and in both cases our senses register something – through the senses of touch and sight – which leads to thoughts.

We observe what is going on in our physical environment, but most of the impressions disappear in a moment. Sometimes we use the information for a very short time. We may observe someone trying to cross the street – or the cars if we want to cross the street. A few seconds later all of that is gone from our memory.

We all do these things with our five senses and our thoughts. Animals also do this. The observations lead to a thought process – sometimes simple, other times more complex: Maybe the dentist is booked for the next two weeks; then what? Or the dentist is on holiday. Will the treatment be expensive? And so on.

As for the low level of fuel: how far can we drive? Should we turn around and go back? What if we run out of fuel before we get to the station? Did we bring the mobile phone?

Our thoughts get more and more complex. If I do it this way, this will happen. If I do it a different way, something else will happen.

These examples are simple. More demanding examples could be education, finding someone to marry, buying a house. But the same thing happens. We make observations. We read information from different schools. We listen to what people say. Then we reflect. We think and we feel.

If we take yet another step we realize that the more important the object of our investigation is, the more deeply we think, and the number of decisions we make increases.

We soon realize that the bigger the decisions are, the more they affect other people. We are moving into new territory. It is not just interesting to see what goes on in our mind, because it affects other people. We need to think and reflect even more.

If you are running out of fuel, going back means driving the same stretch of road again and polluting the air more than necessary. But if you think you will make it to the next fuel station along the road you're on, you might need a tow truck.

These decisions involve things you no longer observe with your senses. It is moving into morals and ethics. Of course, all people make decisions in these areas. Even criminals have some kind of code of honor within their group.

In order to function as members of human society we are forced to make decisions on a moral or ethical level. That entails certain sacrifices. There are things we have to give up – things that would make it easy and comfortable to be put aside to let higher values play a role.

In our neighborhood a homeowner wanted a better view over the lake nearby, so he cut down a good number of trees – not on his property but on common land. Obviously his decision was based on what his sense of sight observed, not on moral, ethical values. Yes, he was prosecuted.

There is yet another level in this train of thought about running out of fuel, and effects on other people when we consider society as a whole. The final step includes something that cannot be observed by the senses, nor measured by how other people would react. This is beyond the senses and moral judgment, and is the most real of all.

This is the spiritual realm, the kingdom of our soul, eternal life. Again we move into new territory. Not everybody takes this step. Some simply do not want to do it. Some try but don't get that far. But we are meant to take that step. This is what the Heavenly Doctrine says:

Every man when born is merely corporeal, and that from being corporeal he becomes natural, more and more interior, and then rational, and finally spiritual. The reason why this takes place progressively, is because the corporeal is as the ground wherein, in their due order, are implanted things natural,

rational, and spiritual; thus the man becomes more and more a man. (*Conjugal Love 59:1*)

Of course, religion has in all times dealt with these questions – the spiritual, the unseen, another dimension that somehow is part of our life and that people have perceived in so many different ways. The basic ideas religions deal with are these:

- Who is God and how does He relate to His creation?
- What happens when we die?
- How does the way we live our lives in this world affect our eternal existence?

None of these questions can be answered from what we observe with our senses. We cannot prove that any one view coincides with reality, because this “reality” cannot be observed by the senses:

Step 1 – We run out of fuel. The car stops. That is easy to see.

Step 2 – How does our decision affect other people and nature? This is more difficult to see.

Step 3 – Now it gets even more difficult, and maybe this example is not the best to illustrate the point.

A better example would be finding your partner. The senses are very active in such a decision:

Step 1 – The man sees a woman who attracts his eye, and she does the same with him. The thought coming from that observation can be pretty primitive.

Step 2 – Moral values come into the process. For some people the third step – the spiritual – also comes into play.

In the New Church we have incredibly uplifting descriptions of how a marriage begins by a consent built on what the senses tell, what moral aspects say, but also how spiritual values play an important role. All three levels are present. It is supposed to be a union of souls before it becomes a union in the flesh. The soul or the spirit is something that can develop and grow to eternity. The body is definitely bound to decay and die.

How much better it is then if the real marital relationship begins at the top, in the spiritual. There will be a lasting, strong bond that will be much stronger than any external bond can ever measure up to. Morality will be a given, and the couple sees beauty in the externals because there is love and faithfulness in their eyes. The rite of betrothal is aimed at making the internal bond strong before the rest is made manifest. This is what it says in *Conjugal Love*, first speaking of how a limited view makes it hard for us:

They who love corporeal natural things, and only from them love things rational, cannot be conjoined with a consort as into a one. (*Conjugal Love 59:2*)

And then something uplifting:

Everyone knows that a married pair who love each other are interiorly united, and that the essential of marriage is the union of dispositions and minds. (*Heaven and Hell* 375)

Such views are unintelligible and irrelevant to many people. They would say it is totally out of touch with reality. And they are right, of course – if reality is only what you can see with your physical eyes. And it is even more out of touch with reality if you throw morals out the window and allow the eye to make all the decisions.

But if reality is more than that, if it is true what all religions in all times have tried to describe and explain, then we have two definitions of reality that stand against each other. And that is exactly what it is. Some people think you can find paradise here on earth. Others believe it is something beyond this physical world, on a different plane, in another dimension.

Even the disciples had difficulty imagining the kingdom of God not being an earthly kingdom. (*cf Luke 19:11*) They saw kings and princes who had power and could do what they wanted. By following Jesus the King, they imagined they would become powerful and influential. Jesus therefore said to them:

“The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them, and those who exercise authority over them are called ‘benefactors.’” (*Luke 22:25-27*) On another occasion He tells them plainly that He knows how they think:

“Jesus asked them, ‘What was it you disputed among yourselves on the road?’ But they kept silent, for on the road they had disputed among themselves who would be the greatest.” (*Mark 9:33-35*)

Then He tried to make them understand that there is a different reality:

“And He sat down, called the twelve, and said to them, ‘If anyone desires to be first, he shall be last of all and servant of all.’” (*Mark 9:33-35*)

And: “He who is greatest among you, let him be as the younger, and he who governs as he who serves.” (*Luke 22:25-27*)

In a conversation with the Pharisees, He told them plainly that the kingdom of God is not an earthly kingdom:

“The kingdom of God does not come with observation; nor will they say, ‘See here!’ or ‘See there!’ For indeed, the kingdom of God is within you.” (*Luke 17:20,21*)

To discover a higher, invisible reality, two things are needed: experience and reflection. Let us go back to the moral and physical levels. Everybody, even children, quickly learns that you cannot stay at the first, lowest level: what my eye says is good for me is what counts. That is going back to something very primitive – say the sandpit. “David’s toy is nicer than mine. I want it. I will take it from him.” No, we are past that stage.

But to go from the moral to the spiritual we need experience and reflection.

Here is an example:

The family next door does not care about anything, but everything seems to go their way. But for another family it is the opposite. They do everything right but they have been struck with misfortune, like sickness, burglary and bullying of their children in school.

This is truly unjust. It is not fair. Or is there a deeper meaning to life? Thinking that way – that there is a deeper meaning to life – we have taken a step in the right direction. But some people don't do that. They turn their thoughts in the wrong direction. *Divine Providence* explains why some people turn their back to religion:

Every worshipper of himself and of nature confirms himself against the Divine Providence when he sees in the world so many wicked people, and so many of their impieties in which some of them even glory, and yet no punishment of such by God. And still the truth is that seemingly unjust circumstances “are all permissions according to the laws of the Divine Providence.” (*Divine Providence* 237)

A person willing to accept a different reality is able to think along those lines.

The way people reflect can go both ways. You can look beyond the limitations of this world to find an explanation, or you can close the door to that possibility. That is why it is important to reflect and study. That is why we have the Bible. That is why there are sacred books all over the world.

- In the *Hindu* tradition the fate of the two families in our neighborhood would be explained with concepts like fate, karma and reincarnation.
- The *Muslim* would say it is the will of Allah and we have to accept fate no matter what it looks like.
- In *Christianity* you would say something like “take up your cross” and “keep the understanding in obedience to faith.” (*Faith* 4)
- In the *New Church* we very clearly state two things: You must understand what you believe in; and what you believe in is truly a living reality.

The first statement recognizes that reason plays an important part. That is how the world we see with our eyes works. We think, reflect and use our reason. We don't pretend that the toothache is something made up. We believe what the fuel gauge says. We understand the world we live in and act accordingly.

It should be the same with religion. We use experience and reflection. And that is what the revelation from the Lord through Emanuel Swedenborg is all about:

- We get fuller explanations of what the Bible means on a deeper level. We can understand that one story hangs together with other stories,

and that they form a system and describe how a person goes through a spiritual journey toward better spiritual states.

- We also get detailed descriptions of the spiritual world. We can understand that there is a heaven for those who have chosen to follow the Lord's commandments, and that there is a hell for those who have opposed the principles of charity and hated God.
- We can understand that marriage is between one man and one woman, and that there is an internal bond that is the real marriage, and that that union never dissolves if the bond is real: "When the partners in marriages on earth tenderly love each other, they think of their covenant as being eternal and have no thought whatever concerning its end by death." (*Conjugal Love 216:4*)

The more knowledge we get about the other dimension, the deeper our faith will be, and the more free we can be in relation to the limited scope of this world that only our external eye can see. No matter which examples we choose, the principle is that "thought from the eye closes the understanding, but thought from the understanding opens the eye." (*Divine Love and Wisdom 46*)

"The lamp of the body is the eye. If therefore your eye is good, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great is that darkness!" (*Matthew 6:22,23*)

A "good eye" means to think and discover new things from an internal sight, from the understanding. A "sick eye" means to think from the senses, and in that case we draw the wrong conclusions.

In summary, we function on three planes:

- The physical that we can see with our eyes
- The moral where we make judgments about our observations
- And the spiritual where we look for inspiration so that we can make the right choices for our eternal life

If we keep these three levels in the right order, spiritual, moral and physical, we will walk on the path that leads to heaven. What is lower should be subordinate to what is higher. That is what Jesus means by these words:

Whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's will save it. For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? (*Mark 8:35-37*)

Amen!

BOOK REVIEWS

Feeding His Flock Parenting Preschoolers

By the Rev. Robert S. Jungé

Fountain Publishing, 112 pages

Reviewed by Kathy Grant Schrock

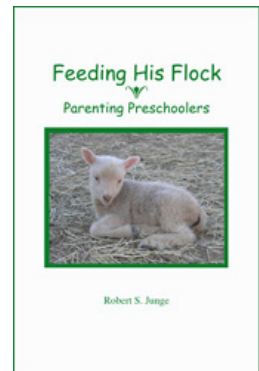
The lamb on the cover drew me in. Innocence, the willingness to be led by the Lord, tugged at my heart. Reading the Rev. Bob Jungé's book brought me back to the days of raising our family. What a useful read it would have been at a time when I so longed to give each of our seven children what was essential for their lives.

One can find books covering nearly every aspect of raising children, from nutrition for physical wellness, to games and education for developing minds, to how to discipline and how to love. *Feeding His Flock* discusses a child's spiritual needs and gives suggestions on how to serve those needs.

Each chapter of the book covers one year of a child's growth, from newborn through age six. First, Mr. Jungé describes the "State and Life Issues" of each age. He then discusses the spiritual food children are ready for in that state, supporting his ideas with quotes from the Heavenly Doctrines.

What touched me most were his comforting pearls of wisdom, which are distilled from decades of studying the Word, coupled with experience gained raising a family of seven children, 24 grandchildren, and 16 great-grandchildren. His seasoned perspective offers insights that ring universally true:

- "Our children do not really belong to us. They are the Lord's children, even as we are."
- "It takes courage to let them learn from their mistakes."
- "Provide the same care for the children's spiritual diet as you do for their



natural one.”

- “...worship is as much from the heart as it is from the mind...”

Mr. Jungé reminds us that children live in the moment, and their concept of time differs from an adult’s. He encourages us to slow down, tying in a quote from Bishop George deCharms: “The idea of education is not that children shall grow up as quickly as possible, but that every state through which they pass shall be filled with remains as completely and perfectly as possible.” (*Growth of the Mind*, p. 186)

Mr. Jungé elaborates that children “flourish where there is peace, and they suffer where there is fear. There is no reason to rush, and every reason to try to be patient.”

As a teacher of first and second graders, I especially appreciated Mr. Jungé’s emphasis on looking to the Lord:

- “...it is the Lord Who is really teaching, and what really counts is the education of the spirit.”
- “...the entire Word is useful for children.”
- “If you can do just one thing, read the stories of the Word to your children. Talk about and explain them where they ask and where you can. But just reading them will do wonders. . . . They speak to the heart, for they contain the Lord.”

There are many more valuable insights, which I will leave for you to discover.

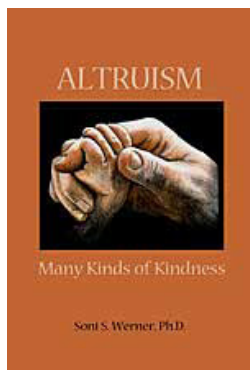
Whether you are a parent, grandparent, or otherwise interact with little ones, this book will nourish your efforts to lead young children and, in turn, feed His flock.

Altruism: Many Kinds of Kindness

Written and illustrated by Soni S. Werner, Ph.D.

Reviewed by Karin Childs, Fountain Publishing

I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.... Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me. (*Matthew 25:34-40*)



Dr. Soni Werner takes this well-known passage from the *Gospel of Matthew* and uses it to explore the concept of altruism. Looking at examples from her own life, from worldwide efforts, from literature, and from psychological studies, she conveys ideas about applying the ways that Jesus asks us to serve our fellow human beings.

Then, using theological insights from Emanuel Swedenborg, she digs even deeper to help us understand ways that we can relieve spiritual hunger, thirst, estrangement, nakedness, sickness and imprisonment, as well as the physical forms of these afflictions.

Dr. Werner guides us to see the “many kinds of kindness” that we have to choose from to make the most of this life we have been given. In reaching out to the people around us, we can grow closer to them and closer to God at the same time.

As with her other books, Dr. Werner makes *Altruism: Many Kinds of Kindness* user friendly and visually appealing with her own powerful illustrations. Icons mark the beginning of each section, alerting the reader as to which angle on the topic is being discussed. The paintings in each chapter focus on human hands, conveying either a need for help or an offering of help.

The chapters are well-organized, offering easily digested amounts of information to get the reader’s own thoughts and ideas going.

At the end of each chapter she offers two tables, side by side, showing four levels that we can develop in our efforts to help others, whether the help be for their physical afflictions or their spiritual affections, or for both. In this way, she gets us to think about not only the state of the person in need of help, but also the spiritual state of the helper. In reaching out to others, we have our own paths of regeneration to go through, in order that the help given is more and more pure and heavenly.

The book concludes with appendices full of examples of organizations around the world dedicated to helping those in need. As with everything Dr. Werner does in her teaching and writing, *Altruism: Many Kinds of Kindness*, urges us beyond just taking these concepts as interesting theories. This book urges us to put our hands to work in active service to the Lord.

Both of these books are available at the New Church Bookstore, (www.newchurchbooks.com), or directly from Fountain Publishing, www.fountainpublishing.com.

Helping Hands

Bryn Athyn College's Altruism Class Shares Their Experience of Serving

When you register for Dr. Soni Werner's Altruism class, you start a delightful journey of intense learning. In her recently published book, *Altruism: Many Kinds of Kindness*, Dr. Werner says: "Altruism involves paying attention to what other people need, feeling empathy, and then kindly serving those needs." She encourages each student to dive into the joy of serving the neighbor and the community.

From late August to early October our class completed 400 hours of service. By the end of this class in mid-November we are hoping to complete 600 hours! According to experts on altruism, the average economic value of an hour of volunteer work is considered to be \$22. With our projected goal, our contribution as a class would have an economic value of \$13,200.

In this class we absorb all the theories of love and service to others, and take in the whole dimension of the words *compassion* and *love*. We also get to discover some very altruistic people. Then we realize how much we can give and how good it feels to love others.

In Dr. Werner's class we are encouraged to live the principles of the New Church. Swedenborg invites us to reflect on the essence of life: What does God ask us to do? What is our mission? We think he answers these questions in this statement: "Can anyone fail to see quite clearly that the goals of creation are useful functions? If it is to be useful, it must be for the sake of others. Anyone who keeps this in mind can also keep in mind the thought that functions that are truly useful cannot arise from us but from one who brings forth nothing but what is useful – the Lord." (*Divine Love and Wisdom* 308)

In altruism class our days are full of small actions of empathy and love that teach us to fulfill the Lord's purpose of living for the sake of others. Consider this statement that shows the need for each of us to engage in altruism:

"God loves every one of us but cannot directly benefit us; He can benefit us only indirectly through each other. For this reason He inspires us with His love, just as He inspires parents with love for their children. If we receive this love, we become connected to God and we love our neighbor." (*True Christian Religion* 457)

Here are testimonials from each student in the class, detailing his and her experience with altruism:

Jen Becker

My community service work is supervising the dance studio at the Asplundh Field House every Monday from 7-9 pm. I am there to open the cabinet so everyone can use the speakers for choreographing/practicing and to make sure that only dancers are using the space. It has been great to help out, especially because of how much I love dance and coming to the studio every week. Every Monday I look forward to my volunteer hours at the end of the day because being in the dance studio to help others is one of the greatest feelings.

Medge Parcily

Because of our Altruism class I serve more in the community and I enjoy it! One of my most pleasurable services is the Stephen Ministry where I can feel God's essence guiding me with my care receiver. It is so good to give her my undivided attention, encouragement and love in order to help her through a difficult time. I also feel great about doing it because we are trained to have the skills to give one-to-one care. Our peers aid us as well. The Stephen Ministry is a beautiful growing process for the care receiver and the caregiver.



Left to Right: Medge Parcily, Nina Dewees, and Rachel Buss

Quentin King

I help to work the cameras for the New Church LIVE webcast for those who cannot attend the service. Ever since I have been volunteering at New Church LIVE, being altruistic has brought me great satisfaction. Working with high-tech equipment, musicians, planners and an organization with a great message is just the icing on the cake. Doing this service really allows me to see and feel altruism in real life. Even though I am only operating a camera, it answers the call from someone in need of help. Even though these people are different than I am, it never felt so good to help out strangers.



Left to Right: Stewart Farmer, Quentin King, Ken Krowther, and Steve Bochneak

Victoria Chareczko

I help out with Ukrainian Scouts called PLAST and a Ukrainian



dance center named Tanci. At PLAST I help the girls with arts and crafts and understanding how things work. Like American Scouts, they have badges. They work as a group to achieve their goals. They do physical activities such as running races and doing arts and crafts. The girls I work with are attempting to get their badge in photography. After PLAST I go to Tanci. That is a bit more difficult because it involves working with little kids which takes patience. It is a bunch of fun though.



Rachel Buss

I have been practicing altruism by being a helper and a companion at Cairnwood Village Retirement Home. I get to sit with different elderly people and share stories about our lives. Everyone I talk to has been interested in my life and my thoughts, even though they have much more experience to offer. Talking to someone who has lived 60 years more

than I have has given me a perspective I would not have known otherwise. I can't say that I now understand what it is like to be their age, but I feel more empathy toward the elderly because of what I have learned from my friends at Cairnwood Village.



Hyun-Jin Yang

What I have done for my service work is to help a couple, one of whom has dementia. The original plan was to spend time with the person with dementia so that the spouse can have some time to be away – to go shopping, do some errands, or take some personal time. My actual service work changed from the original plan and I ended up spending time with both partners, usually having conversations

over a lot of interesting topics. She especially loved telling her old stories and having a companion. Sometimes, I helped her wash dishes or work outside.

Even though I invested my time in this service work, it seemed that I was the one who benefited the most from doing the service work, and by having a warm and close relationship with the people.

Thu-Ha Le

For my volunteer work, I decided to help out a family by spending time with an individual who suffers from a particular type of dementia. I would visit him every Sunday but he never remembers me. We complete



puzzles, take walks, and just sit and talk. Although it doesn't seem that life changing, and he will never remember me, he has taught me a lot. He has taught me to be more grateful, more patient, and more kind to people. And most importantly, he has taught me to cherish every moment in life.

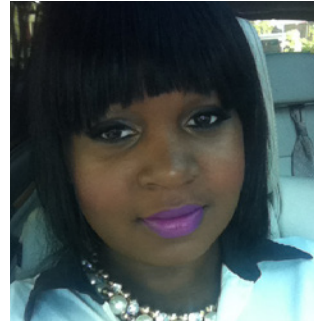
Irish Andrews

The program I volunteer with is called SPIN (Special People In Northeast) at the Norcom Community Center. I assist recreation therapists with classes for adults who have mental disabilities. There are many different classes like dance, arts and crafts, music and cooking. The members pick different classes Monday through Friday to participate in. The most important thing is *choice*. They get to pick the classes and activities they would like to do. This has been one of the most rewarding experiences for me. After our Altruism class is over I will continue to volunteer at the center.



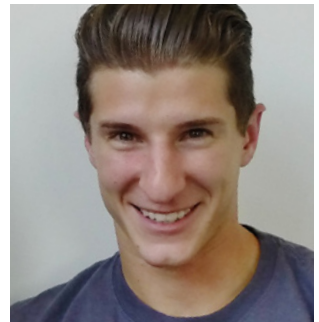
Jasmine Taylor

I assist Dr. Fernando Cavallo with conducting neuro-biofeedback on a six-year-old boy who was diagnosed with autism. The process of neuro-feedback involves monitoring brain activity while the child watches one of his favorite movies, simply relaxing in a chair, and other activities. Shortly after the movie is started we apply conductive paste, skin cleanser and electrodes to the child's ears and scalp for sensory readings of the brain to be recorded onto the computer. The computer interprets sensory readings and displays brain activity through graphics. The goal for neuro-feedback is to teach the child self-regulation of brain activity and conscious behavior.



Graham Lermite

For my service work, I have the opportunity of assisting Micah Alden in his efforts with the Environmental Sustainability Projects Committee at Bryn Athyn College. We have brainstormed ideas that include more than 10 potential projects. The ventures we have examined involve an enhanced recycling program, forest gardens, reducing landfill waste, and tapping into more environmentally



friendly energy sources, such as wind power generation. The first project we are pursuing is a vermiculture (worm composting) program for the campus, attempting to reduce waste produced from dining hall leftovers. As our global environmental and ecological sustainability issues escalate, I am thankful that this class has allowed me to help out in a small way.



Tiffany Cooper

My community service work at the Bryn Athyn Thrift Shop is a great experience. It is a place of therapy for most who have visited the shop. I have been a shopper there since I was enrolled in college (four years now). I have become a volunteer at the shop, assisting the customers and other employees. I chose this line of work because I love business, and I love talking and working with people. I love being surrounded by people who care about serving others through products and services. A few of my duties at B.A.T.S. are sorting and handling clothing

for the sales floor, assisting customers (physically and mentally), and checking them out at the register. Serving others in this manner is a great way to show altruism and the passion for loving and caring for God's people.



Nicole Rogan

I am volunteering at Keansburg EMS (Emergency Medical Services) located in my hometown in New Jersey. I use my training as an EMT (Emergency Medical Technician) to assist the people around me when they need medical attention immediately. An EMT is a specially trained medical technician certified to provide basic emergency services before and during transportation to a hospital. I am also in the process of joining Bryn Athyn Fire Department/EMS, hoping to offer my assistance until I graduate.

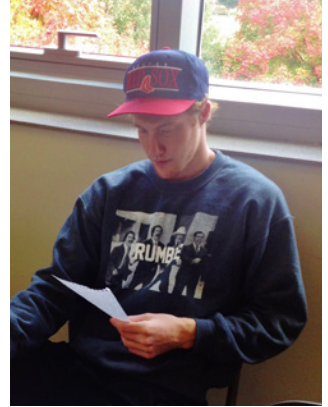
Ashley Henderson

For my service I have been working at the Bryn Athyn Church Elementary School as part of their volunteer program. This includes photocopying, putting up and taking down displays, and helping put together materials for projects. As someone who attended BACS growing up, I sometimes took for granted the papers and supplies we had in the classroom. When we made projects I assumed materials just came ready for me. However, now that I am volunteering, I see that a lot of work is happening behind the scenes to

ensure that each student gets what he or she needs. This experience has been incredibly humbling and I am so grateful for the opportunity to give back to a school I love!

Andrew Dexter

The past six weeks working for Matt Kennedy and the Bryn Athyn College Athletic Department has shown me that they run their organization at an elite level. They handle themselves with class and have shown me what it takes to work in a professional setting. Serving as an intern under Mr. Kennedy I have placed numerous phone calls to make arrangements for teams that travel. I have participated and helped run game-day operations, including the first cross country meet held at Bryn Athyn College – a huge stepping stone for the Athletic Department. I also had the pleasure of helping with the field ceremony, and was able to see the tree that was planted in honor of the family who donated money for the field and the growth of the Athletic Department.



Terrence Johnson, Ben Silvers and Ray Norfo

For our service work we have been working with the Academy of the New Church boys hockey program. Being able to skate with the team has been a privilege. We show them different drills to help them develop their skills personally and as a team. We have been skating with them for a few weeks, showing them different systems and running them through drills. We also coach them off the ice with stick-handling and shooting drills, and improving

their mental toughness. We have set up an easier way for them to communicate with each other, and with their coach.

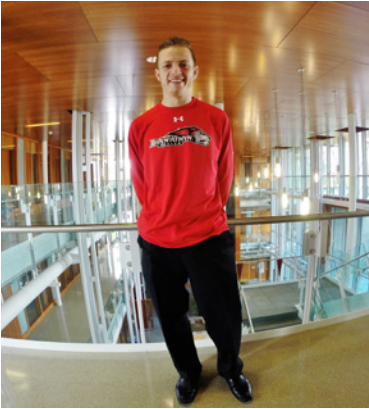


Left to Right: Tori Hallstrom, Kristin Walter, Eden Zecher, Cadin McQueen, and Phoenix Fritch

Eden Zecher

I have loved doing my service work with the organization, Feel Good. Its mission is to end world hunger in our lifetime. Feel Good is present on many college campuses where students run grilled cheese delis to raise money. Bryn Athyn College has its own chapter of Feel Good where we grill at sporting and social events. I have been assisting

our chapter's president with whatever tasks she needs accomplished, from grilling to reaching out to our student body to encourage them to join. I am grateful that I have been able to participate in such a great organization.



Slava Tikhonov

For my service work I help the Bryn Athyn College soccer coach. I enter tons of data about potential recruits which helps the coach do his job more easily. I also help give tours to prospective soccer players, and talk to them if they have questions about the College or the soccer team. Doing this work has made me reflect on how you must try to help other people see the good in a situation, and why this is the best option for them. It felt almost like I became a guide for someone on part of a journey – as if I was one of the people who

offers water on the sidelines during a race. It is a reaffirmation to someone making a decision that he is on the right track, whatever track that may be.

Having done service work for the past month we have been thinking about the question: Why are so many people interested in charity even though doing charitable deeds requires self-sacrifice or self-dedication to a considerable

extent? What motivates people to donate their money or time for the sake of other people?

We have come to the conclusion that altruistic minds are aroused when we empathize with others. As we predict how others might feel in a bad situation, we develop an understanding of their situation and this leads to a sense of altruism.

This process is associated with a part of the brain called the dorsomedial prefrontal cortex, which is “a region consistently involved in understanding another’s mental state.” (Waytz, Zaki & Mitchell, *The Journal of Neuroscience*, 2012)

We normally think that empathy for others and the desire to do altruistic service work originates from our heart; however, because of brain research, we reached the conclusion that being altruistic is a more logical process. Using the dorsomedial prefrontal cortex, we can put ourselves in someone else’s shoes and it seems as if we feel what they feel.

Once we get into this empathetic state from this logical process, our mental functioning is ignited, and thus we enter into altruistic behaviors.

OUR NEW CHURCH VOCABULARY

Part of a continuing series developed by the Rev. W. Cairns Henderson, 1961-1966.

COMMON GOOD

This term, which occurs frequently in the Writings, means the general good of society – the good expressed in such words as commonweal and commonwealth. It consists in the presence of the Divine; in justice, morality, industry, knowledge and uprightness; the necessities of life, for occupations, and for protection, and in a sufficiency of wealth. (See Doctrine of Charity 130)

Church News

Compiled by Bruce Henderson

THETA ALPHA INTERNATIONAL VOTES YES!

Melodie Greer, President

In the July/August issue of *New Church Life*, the Theta Alpha Executive Committee was excited to report that we had decided to work on proposed changes for continuing the organization rather than create a plan for dissolution.

As a committee we felt that the most pressing need was to update our bylaws and bring them into the 21st century. These changes were announced in July through a mailing to all recent and current members. We subsequently voted on these changes at our annual meeting on Charter Day. The vote was unanimous in favor of accepting the new bylaws, thus committing to continuing Theta Alpha International!

One of our first tasks is to bring back the *Theta Alpha Journal*. **Helen Kennedy** has kindly offered her services as editor. She will be assisted by **Kris Earle** and an editorial panel. Bottom line – we need people to write for the *Journal* if we want it to continue!

A high priority task is to reach out to all ages, but especially younger women, who might be interested in supporting our mission. (The mission of Theta Alpha is “to support New Church education in its many forms.”) We want to find out how they envision fulfilling Theta Alpha’s mission in the future. How can we help them? How would they like to help us?

Another project high on the list is to create a special scholarship fund where we determine the criteria and the recipient. This would be in addition to the regular donation we make to the Academy Scholarship Fund.

We would love to enlist your help. For example, we can use more women on the Executive Committee. You do not have to live in Bryn Athyn to participate. If you are interested in any of these projects, or have other ideas, be sure to let us know.

Feel free to contact us at:

- Theta Alpha International, P.O. Box 154, Bryn Athyn, PA 19009

- E-mail us at anccaughters@gmail.com
- Go to our Facebook page and post your thoughts there (search for Theta Alpha International)
- Melodie Greer, President, melodie.greer1@gmail.com
- Janet Krettek, Vice President, jmkrettekdo@gmail.com
- Barbara Doering, Secretary, bcdoering@yahoo.com
- Gillian Mayer, Treasurer, gilliansmayer@gmail.com

With renewed excitement and energy,
The Theta Alpha International Executive Committee

GENERAL CHURCH SCHOOLS ADMINISTRATORS RETREAT

Rt. Rev. Peter M. Buss Jr.

Assistant to the Bishop with Oversight of General Church Education

On September 18 and 19, 25 administrators and board members from 10 schools met with representatives of General Church Education to renew our commitment to New Church education and consider ways in which we can better support each other in this use.

This remarkable retreat in Glenview, Illinois, brought together administrators and board leaders from many of our schools. There were representatives from most of our General Church elementary schools, the Academy of the New Church Secondary Schools, and Bryn Athyn College of the New Church.

I had four goals in mind for this retreat:

- Rallying around the use of New Church education
- Building administrator-to-administrator relationships
- Enhancing connectivity within our system
- Soliciting input from these leaders into the General Church strategic planning process

The Uses of New Church Education. I asked a representative from each school to speak to the mission of that school and how it is brought to life. I came away feeling inspired by that dialogue. There are many wise and caring people leading our schools.

I also had the privilege of giving a presentation which I playfully titled: *New Church Education: What is it and why should you care?* I shared eight ways of describing this use, including:

- Bringing students to the Lord and the Lord to the students
- Helping children to be successful in this world and the next

- Assisting in the development of and response to conscience
- Promoting innocence or a willingness to follow the Lord

I believe that wherever there are parents who want the very best for their children, there will be a call for New Church education. Spiritually minded parents will want their children to learn of the Lord and the things of spiritual life as they grow, so that they can become loving, wise and useful human beings who are following the Lord to heaven. Fortunately for us, the Lord has a great deal to share on this use.

Administrator-to-administrator support. The goal here was to absorb the fact that all the people around that table are current leaders in the field of New Church education. As such, they are not only shouldering the load in their local context, but can provide valuable input to our system of education.

Many of these administrators do see each other as colleagues to whom they can turn for counsel on the leadership issues they are facing. It always helps to take the time to build those relationships at a retreat like this one.

Connectivity. We discussed the premise that we are stronger together than apart. It is easy to say, but sometimes challenging to achieve, given busyness, local pressures, the perception of divergent ideologies and distance.

What we discovered once again is the similarity of commitment that exists within all of our schools, despite differences in approaches based on local contexts.

We also explored ways in which we can assist each other in our respective work: what General Church Education can do to support administrators; what the College can do in terms of educating teachers who meet the needs of our schools; and what we can all do to demonstrate that we are one system rather than a bunch of independent schools.

Planning. Finally, we had the opportunity to access the brain trust gathered to explore major challenges and opportunities before us that could feed into the “education” strand of the General Church strategic planning process.

I believe those present came away from these two days feeling inspired in the use, reminded of their allies in it, and willing to see themselves as the leaders they are for our system. That, to me, is a great success, and I thank all those who took time out of their busy schedules to attend.

CHARTER DAY 2014

The Charter Day Cathedral address – *His Covenant Forever: All Things New* – was delivered by the **Rev. Dr. Thane Glenn**, Chaplain of Bryn Athyn College. (See page 526.)

The Charter Day banquet featured four students using videos to highlight their experiences in the Academy of the New Church Secondary Schools and

Bryn Athyn College: **Jamie Reynolds**, Academy Girls School; **Jack McCabe**, Academy Boys School; **Ivy Daum**, Bryn Athyn College; **David Steen**, Bryn Athyn College Theological School.

Honored as Distinguished Alumni for the Secondary Schools were:

- **Elaine Synnestvedt Asplundh** (Girls School, 1974). She earned her AA from Bryn Athyn College and her BS from Temple University. She is a certified coach for the United States Volleyball Association and the Professional Tennis Association and has coached both sports in the Girls School and College – as well as lacrosse, badminton, basketball and cheerleading. She has served as Athletic Director and Head of the Department of Physical Education at the College. She and her husband, **Reed**, have 10 children and four grandchildren. She loves to volunteer, including as a foster parent for both children and animals.
- **Jill Heilman Rogers** (Girls School 1964). She earned her AA and BA from Bryn Athyn College and her MA in Religious Studies from the Theological School. She taught for many years in the Bryn Athyn Church School and the College, and worked with the General Church Office of Education, including as Assistant Director. In retirement in North Carolina, she teaches Sunday School, consults for the Glenview New Church School, and leads the Education Committee for the Midwestern Academy of the New Church Board. She and her husband, **Prescott**, have five children and 12 grandchildren.
- **The Rev. Prescott A. Rogers** (Boys School, 1964). He earned his BA in Classical Studies at Franklin and Marshall College, his MA in Religious Studies from Temple University, and his MDiv from the Bryn Athyn College Theological School. He has taught in Bryn Athyn at the elementary school, Secondary Schools, College and Theological School – where he still teaches select courses. He has served as Principal of the Bryn Athyn Church School and President of the Academy. In retirement, he is pastor of the Charlotte New Church Circle in North Carolina. His reunion class's gift to the Academy was publication of his book, *The Triune Word*.
- **The Rev. Dr. Jonathan S. Rose** (Boys School, 1974). He earned his AA and BA from Bryn Athyn College, his MDiv from the Theological School, and his MA and PhD in Latin from Bryn Mawr College. He was Curator of Swedenborgiana in the Swedenborg Library for 13 years and joined the faculty of Bryn Athyn College, where he served as chaplain. In 2001 he left to work for the Swedenborg Foundation as series editor and translator for the *New Century Edition* of the Writings. He has served on the General Church Translation Committee, The Word

Committee, as Director of the Swedenborg Scientific Association, and as President of the Swedenborg Foundation. He and his wife, **Dr. Kristin King**, President of Bryn Athyn College, have six children and five grandchildren.

Honored as Distinguished Alumni for Bryn Athyn College were:

- **Dick and Sally Brickman**, who graduated from the Academy Secondary Schools in 1950 and 1952, respectively. Dick earned his bachelor's degree in Landscape Architecture from the University of Illinois. After serving in the Army and marrying Sally, they settled in Glenview, Illinois, where he started The Brickman Group with his father and others. They were both active in the Glenview Society before moving to Bryn Athyn, where Dick has served on the Academy and General Church Boards. They have four children and 16 grandchildren. Both are passionate about New Church education at the Academy and the growth of the Church. They are also involved with Colonial Williamsburg and have helped create internships there for the Academy Schools.
- **Bob and Karen Heinrichs**. Bob graduated from the Boys School in 1956 and Karen from the Girls School in 1959, and each attended Bryn Athyn College for a year. Bob earned a BA in Developmental Psychology and a BPE in Exercise Psychology and Sports Medicine in Canada, where he was also a national champion in wrestling. He was head wrestling coach at the University of Guelph – where he was just inducted into their Hall of Fame – and at the University of Waterloo. He taught high school for five years in Canada before coming to Bryn Athyn College as Director of Physical Education and Athletics. Karen worked in the Academy's new Development Office. In 1992 they moved to Colorado and started a log home business. In 2010 they moved to Oak Arbor, Michigan, where Bob serves on the Board. He has also served on the General Church Board and as President of the Bryn Athyn College Alumni Association.

Honored as the Outstanding Volunteer for 2014 for the Secondary Schools was **Joy Asplundh Feerrar**, (Girls School 1979), who earned her BS from Bryn Athyn College and an MS in Education from Arcadia University. She has taught in the Bryn Athyn Church School and also run a preschool in her home. She has volunteered with the Cathedral Flower Committee, the Bryn Athyn Thrift Shop and the Academy Secondary Schools Adopt-a-Dormie program. She is a constant supporter of the Secondary Schools and provides countless photographs of school and athletic events. She is married to **Dr. Phillip Feerrar**, who teaches eighth-grade boys at Bryn Athyn Church

School, and they have three children.

Class Gifts:

Reunion class gifts to the Academy included:

1944: Secondary Schools Student Scholarship Fund

1954: Theological School Restricted Endowment Fund

1964: Publication of *The Triune Word* by classmate, the **Rev. Prescott A. Rogers**. Extra money will be allotted to the Student Scholarship Fund.

1974: Endowed Academy Scholarship Fund, Student Scholarship Fund, The Steph Coffin Class of '74 Gift Fund

1984: Student Scholarship Fund

1994: Student Scholarship Fund

2004: Secondary Schools Student Scholarship Fund

LONE SURVIVOR

Alaine Fuller York, who recently retired as Secretary of the General Church, reported in mid-September: “When I was visiting my mother (**Kathleen Lee Fuller**) a week ago in Glenview, she mentioned that she had seen a list of class reunions scheduled for this Charter Day in Bryn Athyn. She said she noticed that her class – the Class of 1934 – though not listed, would be due for their 80th reunion. Then she said she realized that there was no one left for her to reunite with, so of course there would not be a reunion.”

Alaine says her mother – who turned 99 on September 18 – still has all of her faculties, has less gray hair than at least four of her seven children, and remembers an autogiro ride while in the Girls School.

Granddaughter **Elizabeth Fuller**, a teacher in the Girls School, says: “When I visited her in August, she was reminiscing about her days at ANC. She was recalling classmates and experiences, sang a portion of their class song, and was somewhat wistful that there were no others to unite with this Charter Day.”

Liz took the accompanying photo of the 1934 class banner, and also supplied the photo of her beloved grandmother.

Technically, there is one other class survivor – **Curtis Glenn**, who lives in New Jersey. He actually graduated in 1933 but got his diploma in 1934 and is considered an Honorary Member of the Class of 1934.



ACADEMY CORPORATION

At the Charter Day annual meeting of the Academy Corporation, four new members were elected:

Andrew Alden, senior portfolio strategist at Lattice Strategies in San Francisco, California. He attended Bryn Athyn College 1999-2002 and earned a Bachelor of Commerce in Economics and Finance from the University of Cape Town, South Africa, and a Master of Financial Engineering from the University of California, Berkeley.

Deane Gyllenhaal, senior portfolio manager at Geode Capital Management. He graduated from the Academy Boys School in 1986, earned a BS from Bentley College and an MBA from Babson College, both in Boston, Massachusetts. He and his wife, **Rosa**, live in Beverly, Massachusetts, with their two children.

Bradley Heilman, founder and CEO of Exploros, Inc. Prior to that he was co-founder and chief designer at Pangea Tools, and worked for several educational technology firms. He graduated from the Academy Boys School in 1988, and earned his Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Mechanical Engineering from Tufts University. He has served on the Boston Society Executive Committee, and lives in Wayland, Massachusetts, with his wife, **Heidi**, and their three children.

Kim Anders Odhner, Executive Director of SEG International Bhd., one of the largest private higher education providers in Malaysia. Prior to that he was CEO of the Institute of American Education, a provider of tertiary education and English language training in Vietnam. He graduated from the Academy Boys School in 1983, attended Bryn Athyn College in 1983-84, and has a Master's Degree from the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, Tufts University, where he also is a member of the Asian Advisory Group.

Robert O. Brickman, Covert, Michigan, and Delray Beach, Florida, and **Gen. Frederick A. Fiedler**, Phoenix, Arizona, were re-elected to the Corporation.

Memorial Resolutions were presented for **Robert H. Asplundh** and **Donald O. Kistner**.

BRYN ATHYN COLLEGE

Dr. Kristin King, President

The College is enjoying a good fall term with 104 new students and 273 total full-time enrollment (268 undergraduates; five theologs). Nine students are engaged part time in the Master of Arts in Religious Studies (MARS) program.

Dr. Wendy Closterman has taken on the role of Dean of Faculty. Other faculty changes include **Ethan King** becoming a core faculty member in Business. Ethan comes to us with a BA in History from Bryn Athyn College and an MBA in Finance from Temple University. **Aram Yardumian** (Anthropology) also joins the ranks of core faculty. Aram has a BA from Prescott College, an MA in English from the University of Texas at Austin, and an MA in Anthropology from the University of Pennsylvania, where he will soon complete his PhD in Anthropology.

The History Major has been transformed into the Human Society Major, a multidisciplinary program in Anthropology, History, Political Science and Sociology. This major examines people and institutions in the context of societies, in order to evaluate individual and collective choices.

Our internship, service learning and career programs continue strong. We emphasize a New Church liberal arts education that prepares students to lead useful, successful lives, in this world and the next. Our alumni and friends are a critical part of that endeavor. As always, please contact **Laura Nash** if you have ideas for supporting internships and career services at the College.

College Conversations are back up and running after a summer hiatus. These alumni-sponsored forums occur monthly at five in the afternoon at Cairnwood Garden House. Topics for this year include the Alumni Association, Fine Arts at the College, Chapel and Spiritual Life, Student Government and Clubs, Academic Programs and Athletics. Topics, dates and locations are advertised in the *Bryn Athyn Post* and online. (www.brynathyn.edu/student-life/events-calendar)

We celebrated our new athletic field on September 27 with an event to thank our supporters and to plant a commemorative Cedar of Lebanon at the northeast corner of the field.

(See below.)

Another good Charter Day has come and gone, with an enthusiastic BAC Alumni Reception at which we honored our 2014 *Distinguished Alumni and Friends*: **Bob and Karen Heinrichs** and **Dick and Sally Brickman**.

COLLEGE ATHLETIC FIELD DEDICATION

September 27, 2014

President Kristin King welcomed friends and supporters to the dedication, with particular thanks to:

- Our Donors/Supporters. Their generosity and vision have made possible not just this beautiful field that surrounds us but the new athletic program, with all its promise and excitement, and many other initiatives to strengthen our programs and mission. We are grateful indeed!
- Thank you to the entire campus community – students, staff, administration and faculty. You have embraced new programs with energy and courage, growing with the challenges as they inevitably arise, and celebrating with pride the extraordinary progress of the past few years.
- Thank you, finally, to our athletic director, **Matt Kennedy**. Matt's vision and competence have moved things forward in remarkable ways. Matt is a gifted leader, able to inspire best efforts and to unite people around a common cause and shared values.

Dr. King also spoke about the features and symbolism of the Cedar of Lebanon tree being planted to commemorate the event:

“This tree was highly valued in the ancient world and remains so today. Its aromatic, durable wood was used for building ships but also palaces, temples and houses of worship, structures that were meaningful and built to last, much as the College and its mission are being built to last. How reassuring to have cedar wood growing on our campus!

“This tree is also known for its impressive stature (though our specimen is deceptively small, a mere sapling at this point, much as we are).

“The Cedar of Lebanon can grow 100 feet tall. This splendid height reflects our spiritual purpose and upward reach. Its canopy, the spread of its branches, can extend 50 feet, symbolizing the College's outreach into the world. The tree's massive trunk – as broad as six feet – reminds us of the solid educational base supporting that impressive canopy and outreach. Finally, there is endurance and longevity. Some Cedars of Lebanon in the Mediterranean area have been growing for 1000 years. We hope the College's mission will also endure long into the future.

“The book of *Ezekiel* refers to the Cedar of Lebanon as, ‘Exalted above all the trees of the field,’ such that, ‘the birds of the heavens make their nests in its boughs.’ (Chapter 31) A long poetic description follows. The Writings explain the correspondence of this tree as being the power of knowledge, learning, or rationality *when properly subordinated* to higher values and truth.

“Isn't this what we're doing here at the College, whether on the athletic

fields, or in art studios, science labs and humanities classrooms? We are acquiring skills and learning *for the sake* of something higher. For the sake of integrity, and character, and service to others. For the sake of bringing heaven and earth closer together.

“This beautiful tree will take some time to develop – many years of reaching toward heaven. It is strangely comforting that it will be here long after we all, gathered here, are gone. It might see 30 generations of students. Hundreds of graduating classes.

“Today we plant this tree, on the corner of this field, on this campus, as witness to our aspirations for the College and confidence in her future.”

(See photos on page 565.)

GENERAL CHURCH BOARD

At their meeting September 26 and 27 in Bryn Athyn the General Church Board of Directors noted that strategic planning is underway. A joint Board/Clergy meeting in June gathered data that the Strategic Planning Committee will use in considering uses. A structure for planning has been determined and the committee is in the process of drafting a plan.

The Board approved the charge for a new Membership Committee, which will promote increased membership in the General Church and make recommendations for membership processes and procedures.

Helping Children in Crisis, which is part of General Church Outreach, reported on their support for the orphanage in Kenya. They have established clear boundaries for supervision and care, and are raising funds for dormitories for the children. (Watch for an article in the January-February 2015 issue of *New Church Life*.)

The fiscal year 2013-14 ended with a deficit of \$431,596, which was \$136,951 better than the budgeted deficit. Additional budget cutting and change in how non-cash depreciation is recorded has produced a 2014-15 operating budget that is projected as balanced.

The restructured Office of Advancement came close to achieving fundraising goals for the fiscal year. As of this September meeting, 100% of Board members are contributing to the General Church's 2015 annual fund, as well as to their local congregations.

The Board discussed the statement by the **Rt. Rev. Brian W. Keith** on gender and orientation – published on page 504. Concern was expressed for its effect throughout the Church, and various suggestions were made to address the needs of men and women in the Church.

Dan Martz was elected as secretary of the Board, replacing **Justin Allen**, who had to step aside because of business activity.

ORDINATIONS

The Rev. Jean Aime Atta, the new pastor in La Crescenta, California, was ordained into the second degree of the ministry by the **Rt. Rev. Brian W. Keith** on September 21, 2014.

The Rev. Christopher Augustus Barber, religion teacher in the Academy of the New Church Secondary Schools, was ordained by Bishop Keith during a special chapel service in Benade Hall on October 17.

About the ordination of Mr. Atta, **Gabrielle Reynolds** writes in the *California New Church Digest*:

“A diverse gathering attended the Sunday worship service at the tiny chapel in the La Crescenta manse on September 21st. The group filled the space with good will and joyful anticipation as Bishop Brian Keith heard the confession of faith by Rev. Jean Aime Atta, and then bestowed on him the blue stole of the General Church ministry, representing the role of full pastor.

“The rite of ordination is extremely rare for the General Church in California. Rev. Atta’s service may have been humble in circumstance, but was very rich in hope and in gratitude from the Los Angeles society, who have been without a pastor for more than 10 years.

“There was much to celebrate on this very warm Sunday. ‘It was a very long time to struggle through, but getting this particular pastor has been worth the wait,’ observed church member **Patrick Reynolds**. Friends from around the Church were present, including the **Rev. David Roth** from the Boulder (Colorado) New Church, and very special guest, Denise, a friend of Jean’s from Philadelphia and a countrywoman from his native Ivory Coast. Neighbors Alecia and Larry attended, having lived across the street from the manse for 40 years and being acquainted with each minister’s family who has served Los Angeles through all this time.

“**John and Greta Davidson** hosted a lovely luncheon in celebration of the event at their home, providing a very pleasant afternoon of fellowship and lively conversation.

“It was a day not to be soon forgotten by all who attended, and to be long remembered in the history of the New Church in California.”

Gabrielle also reported that, “Since arriving in California in mid-July, Jean has overseen the construction work taking place to rehabilitate the manse building, initiated meetings and services for the Los Angeles New Church, traveled to Palo Alto to give services, and outlined his overall program. He has re-initiated contact with past members, befriended many area locals, and invited newcomers to church.”

The day before the ordination, **Carla Washburn** presided as president of the California New Church Board, at which Bishop Keith helped to define Mr.

Atta's role. The Rev. David Roth, regional pastor for the western United States, attended the meeting, as did the **Rev. Mark Perry**, pastor of the San Diego New Church.

Most ordinations take place in front of the minister's congregation. Chris Barber's ordination was unusual in that his "congregation" is the students in the Academy Secondary Schools. It was a powerful experience for them to witness this rite for their Religion teacher as part of their daily chapel service.

The Rt. Rev. Brian W. Keith officiated at the service and the **Rev. Barry Halterman**, Chaplain for the Secondary Schools, also took part.

Mr. Barber distributed this statement to the students, faculty and guests:

"Dear Friends: It is with great humility that I take this next step in my ministry. Entering into the second degree of the priesthood signifies entrance into the pastoral role, but this entrance does not happen overnight. It is gradual and relatively imperceptible. Rest assured, I am not leaving the Academy, but am anticipating serving in this new way as long as providence makes this my home.

"While serving here in the classroom I have developed a love not only of teaching, but a love of stirring affections – helping students to become excited about Divine concepts and to consider putting those concepts into practice on a daily basis.

"In the chapel setting I have been able to bring heaven closer in dialogue with everyone by means of stories from the Word and teachings from the Heavenly Doctrine.

"In the hallways, between classes, after school, and during extracurricular activities, I have had the chance to become acquainted with so many wonderful individuals, each standing as examples of mustard seeds that can someday move mountains. I can't tell you how much joy I get from knowing you now, and what excitement I find in considering where the Lord's loving providence might guide you.

"Many thanks to my fellow faculty members who inspire me to be a better teacher; many thanks to the students themselves who inspire me to be a better representative of heaven; and many thanks to my Lord for all His benefits toward me.

"May we all grow together in His love, wisdom and usefulness to eternity."
(For photos of both ordinations, see page 568.)

SCHOOL EXPANSION IN KEMPTON

Mark Wyncoll, Assistant Principal

Friends of New Church Education may be excited to learn of a new development in Kempton, Pennsylvania. In October our society voted to extend our formal

schooling through 12th grade. Soon we will be a K-12 school.

Since 1979 we have been supporting New Church families with a school. Our school has grown from 11 students to 80 today and serves K-10th grades. Our society has also been assisting those who want 11th and 12th grade education by providing classrooms and sharing staff with our home school cooperative.

We plan to add 11th grade in fall of 2015 and 12th grade in fall of 2016. Early plans are forming now. The program will hope to carry on the flavor of our current school, as well as elements of the cooperative program.

Our education model uses teachers, ministers and volunteers to deliver an education that features teachings from the Heavenly Doctrines for the New Church. Our tuition goal remains to make New Church education affordable for families.

Will we succeed? Only the Lord knows and we put our trust firmly in His hands. "All instruction is simply an opening of the way [to the Lord]." (*Arcana Coelestia* 1495)

If you would like to know more about this venture or to support our work, please reach out to Mark Wyncoll at 484.809.4022 or our Pastor Lawson Smith at 610.756.6140.

LOOKING TO YOUNG PEOPLE

Concern is expressed from time to time about not holding on to the young people in the Church, but there are encouraging signs.

In the September-October issue we reported on the **Rev. Alan Cowley's** optimism for the future of the Church, based on the exceptional group of young people attending the British Academy Summer School this year.

In the Bryn Athyn Church Annual Report, Assistant Pastor **Erik J. Buss** noted:

"The development of young adult activities has been exciting. We continued to hold monthly Young Adult Vespers. In addition, young adults arranged three service initiatives, serving the needy and cleaning up part of the Cairncrest gardens. Several other discussion events happened, and young adults initiated two ballroom dancing events.

"I also started meeting with older young adults (those out of college) and we are beginning to talk about what might serve that group.

"Something that I had nothing to do with, but am extremely excited about, is that there seems to be energy about going back to the Word. Recently three different groups formed within the young adult population to read through portions of the Word. In the coming year we are going to have some discussion groups around topics young adults are interested in."



Students, Faculty, and community members gathered on the new athletic field to form the letters BAC

COLLEGE ATHLETIC FIELD DEDICATION



Student-Athletes planting the Cedar of Lebanon Tree



President Kristin King and Director of Athletics Matthew Kennedy speak during the dedication ceremony

ACADEMY OF THE NEW CHURCH CHAMPIONSHIP TEAMS



The ANCSS Varsity Football team went undefeated, finishing the season with a 9-0 record. They are pictured here following their 28-27 victory over Bristol in the IFL championship game.

The ANCSS Varsity Field Hockey Team won its third consecutive Friends School League Championship, defeating Westtown 2-1 in overtime.



CHARTER DAY



Shane McCurdy runs the ball during the Charter Day Football Game



Sarah Orchard, Brennen McCurdy and Sarah Smith



George Hibbs and Dain Kistner participate in the Chili Cook Off



The Class of 2015 following the Charter Day Banquet



Bryn Athyn College students march in the Charter Day procession



Marley Asplundh and Caelan Allen



Jim Adams, ANCSS Managing Director and Kristin King, Bryn Athyn College President



Bryn Athyn College students perform at the Alumni Open House



Zahir Murray



Lisa Knight, coordinator of the Reunion Artist Exhibit



Back row left to right: Brianna Salvatori, Carnel Harley, Leanna Smith, Hannah Dewees, and Johnny Walker
Front left to right: Zia Cooper, Austin Grubb, and Luke David



Class Banners



Class of 1974



Emily Cooper playing ANC Girls field hockey



Left to right: Soni Werner, Laura Nash, Sarah Wong, Sara Gardam, and Marcy Latta



Left to Right: Graham Johnson, James Allen, Brian McDonald, and Aubrey Asplundh singing Charter Day Songs.



Bishop Brian Keith and Rev. Jean Atta



Group photo of the Los Angeles New Church members and friends in attendance for the ordination of Rev. Jean Atta



Bishop Brian Keith ordains Rev. Christopher Barber



Rev. Christopher Barber center, with Rev. Barry Halterman left, and Bishop Brian Keith right

DONATING THE WRITINGS

The Heavenly Doctrine Publishing Foundation has been established, in part, to keep the classic translations of the Writings in print and available to those who want them. We are aware that there are many of these classic translations (the old green or blue books) around in fairly good shape which are not being used.

If you wish to donate any of these books to us we would be willing to pay postage and find a new home for them. We have a few books already but we are hoping to get more so that we can advertise the books and make them available to those who cannot afford new books, especially for young people. There may be others as well who would like to have the classic translations but cannot find them for sale anymore. Many of these are out of print.

If you have any books you would like to donate please contact one of the following:

If you live in the United States:

Stephen Cole, Bryn Athyn (Stephen.cole@brynathyn.edu – telephone 215-938-8663)

Gideon Alden, Kempton (algoose2@verizon.net – telephone 610-756-4142)

Willard Heinrichs, Colorado (willardheinrichs@gmail.com – telephone 303-527-0051)

If you live in Canada:

Nathan Cole, Kitchener (AsstPastor@carmelnewchurch.org – telephone 519-748-5802)

We hope to have our website up soon: www.heavenlydoctrinepublishing.org

Thank you for your help in this important work.

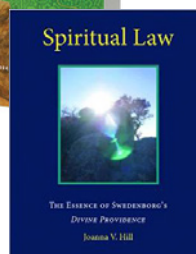
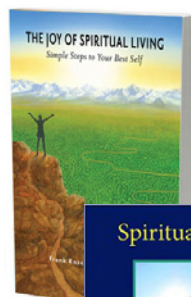
The Heavenly Doctrine Publishing Foundation

TWO NEW BOOKS

The Swedenborg Foundation has published *The Joy of Spiritual Living: Simple Steps to Your Best Self* by the **Rev. Frank Rose** and **Bob Maginel**.

This book offers eight simple techniques for bringing spiritual mindfulness into the daily effort to live spiritually.

A press release from the Foundation states: “Drawing on decades of group work, authors Frank Rose and Bob Maginel provide tested exercises based on Emanuel Swedenborg’s teachings about regeneration, or spiritual growth. The exercises enable you to raise your awareness to a higher level, connect



with your Higher Power, and unlock authentic spiritual joy even at life's most challenging moments.

"Each chapter is structured so that the exercises can be used by individuals working alone or in a group setting. For groups, the book contains additional resources to be used by discussion leaders. For individuals, Rose and Maginel provide highlights of their own group discussions so you can share in their challenges and 'Aha!' moments."

The book is available from the Swedenborg Foundation, www.swedenborg.com and from the New Church Bookstore, www.newchurchbooks.org.

Joanna Hill, former Director of the Swedenborg Foundation, has published, *Spiritual Law: The Essence of Swedenborg's Divine Providence*, through Rock Point Press in New Mexico.

The Rev. Dr. Ray Silverman of Bryn Athyn College writes: "With the concision and clarity of a Zen master, Joanna Hill has crafted this quiet gem. Enjoy the essence of Swedenborg in a simplified, concentrated form. Delight in the power and sweetness of fine wine, distilled in the mind and heart of a woman who sees the love of God in the mind of an 18th century scholar.

"Emerson once said that it would take whole colleges of ordinary scholars to comprehend Swedenborg. He did not know Joanna Hill, who not only comprehends Swedenborg, but elucidates his central teachings with clarity, precision and love."

A review of the book by Publishers Weekly states:

"When Emanuel Swedenborg began his spiritual work, leaving behind a lifetime of scientific and mathematical accomplishment, he knew his ideas would not be well received. As the son of a Lutheran cleric, Swedenborg was expected to follow in his father's footsteps.

"Instead, after claiming to have had visionary experiences and visits to heaven, he began nearly a half-century of writing on religious topics, at first anonymously, and always in Latin. He eventually wrote what he would consider one of his most essential works in 1762: *Divine Providence*.

"He used this concept to describe the entirety of God's law, an 'ordering of the universe.' Swedenborg insisted that God's purpose and plan were not to exclude people from the Kingdom, but to draw them in and improve them in the process. This argument represented a radical transformation of theology as it was then understood.

"Reading Swedenborg can be a challenge, even in contemporary English translations, but Hill does a yeoman's job of distilling *Divine Providence*, which is itself a distillation of Swedenborg's earlier thoughts, into a wonderfully readable and understandable work."

The book is available from www.rockpointpress.com, www.newchurchbooks.org and www.amazon.com.

Life Lines

LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION

We know that our regeneration includes temptation, doubt and conflict. “While a person is being regenerated and becoming spiritual, he is involved constantly in conflict.” (*Arcana Coelestia* 59)

As the Lord’s Church is being formed within each of us, and as the General Church we look to as part of it is embroiled in conflict over women in the priesthood, it seems the Church at times might also need to go through states of regeneration. Certainly the Church is not immune to doubt, temptation and despair. But the Lord also offers hope and assurance to us – as individuals and as a church.

Consider this promise: “With all who are undergoing temptations, truth from the Lord is flowing in, and this truth rules and governs their thoughts, uplifting them every time they are given to doubt and also to feelings of despair.” (*Arcana Coelestia* 5044)

Well, we may know those “feelings of despair” – in our own lives and in the life of the Church – but also live with the faith that as we look to the Lord in our temptations, we will become more spiritual and spiritually stronger.

We have to hope that out of all this turmoil the Church also will become more spiritual and stronger from looking humbly to the Lord and being guided by Him.

As we are told for our own lives and struggles, so must we hope this is true for our Church: “During our spiritual tests, we are apparently left completely alone, although in fact we are not alone. At those time God is most intimately present at our deepest level, giving us support.” (*True Christian Religion* 126)

(BMH)

HOW DO WE LOOK?

Through all of the controversy over whether women should be admitted to the General Church ministry – and with any other issues causing strife – we are challenged to look at the Church as an institution, and also to the Lord’s Church hopefully forming within each one of us. We are challenged as well to

try to see the Church not only through our own eyes and understanding, but to try to imagine how the Lord is seeing us.

Consider from *Apocalypse Revealed* 601:

Every church appears before the Lord as a man. If it is in truths from the Word, it appears as a handsome man, but if in truths falsified, it appears as a monstrous one. The church so appears from its doctrine and the resulting life, from which it follows that the doctrine of a church is its image. This may also be seen from this: Every man is his own good and truth [from the Lord] or his own evil and falsity [from hell]; from this source and no other man is man. Consequently it is doctrine and the life from it which make 'the image' of the man of the church.

(BMH)

A PHILOSOPHICAL REVELATION

One of the things I like about the Rev. Prescott Rogers' new book, *The Triune Word*, is the way he relates the style of the Writings to previous revelations and to the history of the world's cultures and ways of thinking. Here is an excerpt:

By the time Swedenborg wrote the Heavenly Doctrines, western civilization had entered a new age of thought – the modern, intellectual revolution in which a rational, logical, systematic approach to the sciences, philosophy and other fields had developed. This made it possible for the modern European cultures to accept the Heavenly Doctrines, for they were adapted to such a frame of mind, as the Old Testament had been adapted to the minds of the ancient Near Eastern Israelites, and the New Testament to the minds of the classical Mediterranean peoples.

The first stage of philosophy began in Greece during the sixth century B.C., and had spread around the Mediterranean world. Some philosophical thought was used by the Lord in the New Testament, especially in John. Instruction joined representation as a mode of Divine communication in the New Testament, the watershed of thought between the ancient and modern worlds, between the pre-advent and post-advent churches. The Heavenly Doctrines were written after philosophy had entered a new age of reason.

With the Heavenly Doctrines philosophical thought replaced representative thought as the primary means by which the Lord presented His truths to humans. Rational and systematic thinking was employed in the Writings to explain spiritual phenomena and causation. The Heavenly Doctrines also use representative thinking, especially in the descriptive passages, notably the Memorable Relations. But this thinking is very much secondary to, and supportive of, philosophical thinking.

Swedenborg did not adopt the corrupt philosophical thought of his day, but he used the principles of philosophical thinking to learn, to understand, and to explain the rational truths of the Heavenly Doctrines (which) are the Word in a unique way, for they are accommodated to a people of a new, modern culture. (Pages 152-54)

(WEO)

HOLLYWOOD AND THE BIBLE: READ THE BOOK

Hollywood keeps trying to capture the power and drama of the Bible with movies made both to entertain and inspire. The moviemakers often don't succeed with the inspiration because they put more emphasis on marketing than theology, but there have been notable exceptions. It is encouraging, at least, that they keep trying.

There is a spate of new movies this season with religious themes, none of which I have seen yet. Some seem promising, others less so.

The first, *Left Behind*, opened in early October, and was widely panned as a vacuous end-of-the-world apocalypse – a disaster in more ways than one. It is based on a Christian best-selling book about scary end times and eventual rapture. The reviews were scathing.

The Hollywood Reporter said cuttingly: “The rapture won't come soon enough for the unfortunate souls forced to suffer through *Left Behind*.”

USA Today was equally blunt: “*Left Behind* returns at a time when there's been an increase in similar God-fearing fare in theaters, as well as an interest in religious apocalypse stories, thanks to HBO's *The Leftovers*. It's a concept full of inherent drama that, if done well, could explore humanity's faith and foibles in an enlightening fashion. This is not that movie.”

A much more promising movie, which had its first release around Halloween, is *God The Father*. This is the true story of the spiritual transformation of Michael Franzese, son of John “Sonny” Franzese, underboss of the Colombo crime family.

Michael told his story in a TV interview prior to the release. He had been active in the crime family for more than 20 years, witnessing and participating in all the worst you can imagine of organized crime. He spent five years in prison, and after a year of freedom was sent back on a parole violation. He said he was lying on a cot in solitary confinement, feeling absolute hopelessness for the first time in his life, when he heard the thunk of something being dropped onto the floor through an opening in his cell door.

It was a copy of the Bible. Nothing was said, and at first Michael wasn't a bit interested. “I was mad at God,” he said, “typically mad at everyone except myself.”

But eventually he picked up the Bible and started to read. In the depths of his despair it spoke to him. For the following three years in prison he studied that Bible and felt his life transformed. Now he speaks wherever and whenever he can about the power of the Bible to change lives. Hopefully, he will reach others and help them to find purpose and transformation in their lives, as he did. This is where Hollywood can transcend itself.

Another encouraging movie, due for a limited release in mid-November,

is *Saving Christmas*. It is made by and stars Kirk Cameron, an actor drawn to religious expression. He had produced *Fireproof* several years ago, a movie praised by Christians and rewarded with \$33 million at box offices worldwide.

The website for his new film says: "Kirk is enjoying the annual Christmas party extravaganza thrown by his sister until he realizes he needs to help out Christian, his brother-in-law who has a bad case of the bah-humbugs. Kirk's fresh look at Christmas provides Christian the chance to see Christ is where He always has been – at the center of our Christmas celebrations and traditions."

Cameron also issued a statement: "For too many years Christmas has been attacked and hammered by those outside the church, and it's even changed how we think about Christmas inside the church. My hope for *Saving Christmas* is that families all across the country will join with my family in putting Christ back in Christmas."

Due for a pre-Christmas release on December 12 is *Exodus: Gods and Kings*. This is the kind of biblical epic Hollywood loves: Moses leading the slaves out of Egypt, deadly plagues, a pursuing army, dividing the Red Sea, the pillar of fire, cataclysmic earthquakes and fiery brimstone.

Whether or not it all works, critics were warning, depends on how true the script is to the literal sense. People say they do like biblical movies, but only if they are true to the sacred text of the Bible and don't take liberties with the stories. Early indications are not encouraging.

Christian Bale, the actor who portrays Moses, was quoted as saying: "I think the man was likely schizophrenic and was one of the most barbaric individuals I have ever read about in my life." He also speculates in the movie about what was going on in Moses' head.

Director Ridley Scott told an entertainment magazine that it's not God or Moses who parts the Red Sea in the movie but an earthquake. So let's hope Hollywood finally learns a lesson if millions of people choose to skip the movie and stick with the book.

The final movie is not biblical or even overtly religious – but that may be its problem. It is the eagerly awaited film version of Laura Hillenbrand's wonderful best-seller, *Unbroken*, to be released on Christmas day. We will find out then if it is all the gift it could be.

This is the amazing true story of Louis Zamperini, a troubled teenager who turned his life around as an Olympic runner, was shot down over the Pacific in World War II, survived for 47 days on a raft, then was taken prisoner and brutalized for two-and-a-half years in a Japanese prison camp.

Redemption came when Zamperini returned home – physically unbroken but psychologically scarred. He became an alcoholic, had a failed marriage and lived an empty life. But then he became worthy of his unbroken spirit when he found religion and turned his life over to the Lord. This is a highlight of the

book – a triumph of the spirit that exceeded his physical trials and resiliency. But early speculation is that the movie will disappoint because it ignores this final uplifting chapter of his life.

Zamperini died this year at age 97, a man whom the most abject cruelties of war could not break, and whose soul was redeemed by his new-found faith. He deserves to be remembered for that – not just as the defiant, heroic figure who was *Unbroken*, but as the humbled man who found out who he really was. (BMH)

WHAT WOULD LOVE DO?

Throughout the Church this fall groups of people are getting together to consider this important question. The Word clearly teaches that we should act from love. The two great commandments are to love God and to love our neighbors. And the Heavenly Doctrine places remarkable emphasis upon the importance of charity. “All religion relates to life, and the life of religion is to do good.” (*Doctrine of Life 1*)

All love comes from the Lord, but in order to receive it more fully and purely, so that our actions might be truly guided by it, we must go through the process of regeneration – the first stage of which is repentance. Charity, therefore, begins with repentance, or the shunning of evils as sins against God. Repentance begins with self-examination in light of truth from the Word.

“All who do good from religion avoid actual evils, but they very rarely reflect upon the interiors pertaining to the will, for they believe that they are not in evil because they are in good, and even that the good covers the evil. But, my friend, the first thing of charity is to shun evils.” (*True Christian Religion 535*)

Note that this is speaking not just of “actual evils” or misdeeds, but evil affections lurking within us in that we wouldn’t be aware of unless we “reflect” upon our “interiors.” Outward good that “covers the evil” within is not truly good; remember how the Lord compared the hypocritical Pharisees to “whited sepulchres.”

Does this mean we must become absolutely pure within before attempting to do good works? No, in fact part of the process of inner purification is to compel ourselves, if necessary, to act charitably. But let’s not make the mistake of thinking natural good deeds and service to others constitute the whole of charity.

If the satisfaction we get from serving others naturally beguiles us into neglecting the spiritual work of repentance which the Lord requires of us in order to make us capable of genuine, spiritual, “full spectrum charity” (to coin a phrase), then the very service we’re performing on the natural plane becomes a *disservice* on the spiritual plane of life.

Faith is no substitute for charity. But neither is charity a substitute for faith. “What is love without wisdom but folly?” (*Conjugal Love* 183.4)

(WEO)

AMAZING GRACE

This year’s *What Would Love Do?* Journey Program focuses on loving the neighbor – the hungry, the thirsty, the sojourner, the naked, the sick and those in prison, from the familiar parable in *Matthew*. Each of these “neighbors” represents a different way that we are called upon to show love – and to be like the Lord and the angels in looking always for the good in other people.

This is a common theme in Christianity, rooted as well in the story of the Good Samaritan. We are all commanded to live our lives with love, compassion and kindness for anyone in need.

Henry C. Diener, a *New Church Life* reader in Hanover, Pennsylvania, forwarded an article which he calls, “the best New Church message I have seen that was written by a non-New Church pastor.” The article – *Balancing Grace and Truth*, written for a United Methodist newsletter – resonates with the *What Would Love Do?* series.

We don’t often speak of grace in the New Church, although it is a term we use all the time: “Grace be unto you and peace, from Him Who is, and Who was, and Who is to come.” (*Revelation* 1:4) “The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.” (*Revelation* 22:21)

Rob Renfroe, the author of the article, quotes *John* 1:14: “The Word became flesh and made His dwelling among us. We have seen His glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.”

He says it is important that Jesus came with both grace and truth:

“Grace is compassion for people. Grace is being better to people than their actions deserve. It’s trying to understand their struggles, caring for their needs, and sharing their burdens. We see this grace in the ministry of Jesus over and over again throughout the Gospels.

“Jesus also came with a passion for truth. He spoke the words that people needed to hear even if they didn’t want to hear them. He was faithful to His principles even when doing so angered the authorities. He refused to compromise His message even when He knew that He would lose followers as a result, even when He suspected that if He continued to proclaim the truth He would be nailed to a cross. Jesus was as committed to the truth as He was to grace.

“Grace and truth – we see them both in the most beautiful and powerful life ever lived. I believe that one reason Jesus dramatically impacted the lives of so many in His day was that He perfectly combined compassion for people

with passion for truth, and that's one reason why His words and life still have the power to transform people 2,000 years later.

"I am convinced that if we, as individuals and as God's people all together, are to be instruments of real influence and transformation in our time, then we will have to learn how to combine grace and truth in the same way that Jesus did."

Later in the article he says: "I hope that we, as individual Christians and as the church, will be a good friend to all – the greedy, the self-righteous, the sexually immoral, the prejudiced, the alcoholic, and the judgmental, to name a few. Being a good friend means loving people as they are, speaking the truth they need to hear, and then nurturing their growth so that they can become the persons God desires them to be. Anything less and we will fail God and the people we are called to help.

"We must be committed to being a good friend to people who need to know the hope that is to be found in Jesus Christ. And that means combining grace and truth the way that Jesus did – both-and, not either-or."

We could bring more doctrine to bear on this, but it is a universal message throughout the Word. It may be relatively easy to respond to the hungry, the thirsty, the sojourner, the naked, the sick, and those in prison. But those in need of love and support also include the sexually immoral, the alcoholic, the judgmental – those we are less likely to embrace. Both truth and grace tell us that God loves all of us unconditionally, equally and at all times, and is constantly trying to raise us up to heaven, no matter how much we may distance ourselves from Him at times.

This is "what love would do."

(BMH)

'CEASE ASKING'

Whatever good we do – which is truly good, through and through – comes from the Lord, who is Love Itself, working through us. So when we ask what love would do, we're really asking what the Lord would have us do. And He has told us:

When a man shuns evils as sins he daily learns what a good work is, and the affection of doing good grows with him, and the affection of knowing truths for the sake of good; for so far as he knows truths he can perform works more fully and more wisely, and thus his works become more truly good.

Cease, therefore, from asking in thyself, "What are the good works that I must do, or what good must I do to receive eternal life?" Only cease from evils as sins and look to the Lord, and the Lord will teach and lead you." (*Apocalypse Explained* 979:2)

(WEO)