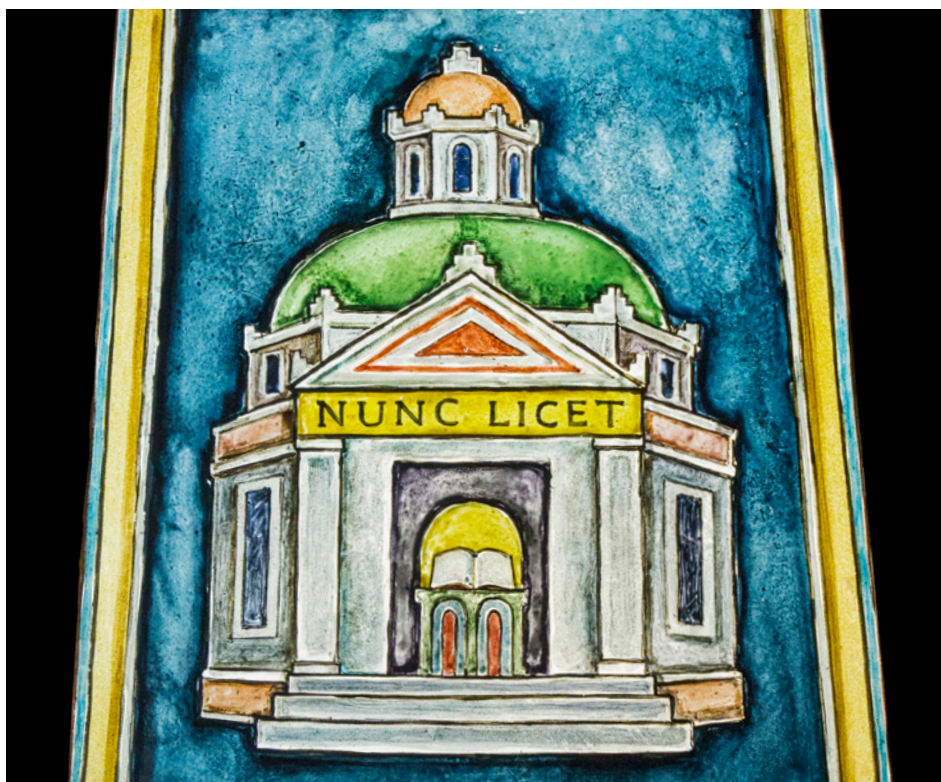


# NEW CHURCH *Life*

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

**NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2017**



## **An Opened Door to a Higher Education**

The vision for New Church education is represented by the Nunc Licet Temple of Wisdom, where we are permitted to enter to learn from the Lord and which will never be shut. Read the Charter Day Cathedral address by the Rev. Michael K. Cowley, *An Opened Door to a Higher Education*. (Page 512)

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

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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

Editorials in this issue (page 476) include:

- *Christmas Counterpoint* – They don't get much attention but John the Baptist, Herod and the call to regeneration are very much part of the Christmas celebration. "Emphasis on shunning evil and repentance may seem counter to the Christmas message of peace and happiness, but this is what makes the peace and happiness possible."
- Part of a series on *Religious Feelings* focuses on *Peace* – the elusive but constant promise of Christmas
- A reprint of a 1955 Thanksgiving editorial, *The Increase of the Earth*, by the Rev. W. Cairns Henderson. "The average man can enjoy more goods and services than were ever available in the past. And yet men are no happier, no more contented, no kinder to one another, no less selfish, no more free from fear and mistrust." Why? Because we have not first praised the Lord.

In a Christmas sermon, *Nothing is Impossible for God*, the Rt. Rev. Brian W. Keith says the fact that nothing is impossible for God "is a vital message. It and all the wondrous events of Christmas inspire confidence in us." We just need to accept the Lord's power on His terms, not ours – "to ask the Lord that His power might create life within us is to ask that His vision of good might be born within us." (Page 485)

The Rt. Rev. Peter M. Buss Jr. writes about *Timeless Messages in the Word*. He offers several examples about teachings within a specific context that still have application in our own lives: "So we see one thread of many in the Word where truths are given within a particular context. They're true in that context as literally spoken, yet also deliver one of the most powerful 'timeless' truths we have about human interaction." (Page 490)

October 31<sup>st</sup> was the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Reformation, when Martin Luther famously used his *Ninety-Five Theses* to challenge teachings of the Catholic Church, such as the selling of indulgences. The Rev. Dr. Andrew M. T. Dibb traces the history and the impact of the Reformation– on the Catholic and Protestant churches, the Last Judgment, and the New Church. "When he

nailed the *Ninety-Five Theses* to the church door,” he writes, “Luther could not have imagined how this act would change the course of history. The full result would not come to light until the giving of the Heavenly Doctrine.” (Page 503)

In a stirring Charter Day Cathedral Address, the Rev. Michael K. Cowley offers the vision of *An Opened Door to a Higher Education*. The Academy of the New Church takes its vision from the Nunc Licet temple, whose door will never be closed. “This elevated vision was so powerful that they [the founders] built this church.” And “it becomes our own Academy as we continue to walk the walk, when we continue to see the vision given by the Divine. He sets before us the open door which no one can shut.” (Page 512)

John Bigelow was a remarkable man in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century who discovered Swedenborg’s Writings in a moment of serendipity in a God-forsaken situation, plunged into reading them with intense curiosity and equally intense skepticism, but convinced himself this had to be Divine revelation. His story is told in a reprint from the February 1912 *New Church Life* by the Rev. William Hyde Alden. (Page 517) See also an item in Life Lines – ‘*I was blind and now I see.*’ (Page 561)

Steve David offers a comprehensive update on the impressive work of the New Christian Bible Study Project. “We’re now offering the Writings online, linked to the Word and to each other, in 17 languages, which are spoken by more than 3.7 billion people. It’s a hugely important step for the New Church to be taking.” A lot of volunteers are helping, but more involvement – and contributions – are needed to keep the effort growing and connecting. (Page 524)

The Rev. Dr. James F. Lawrence, Dean of the Center for Swedenborgian Studies at the Pacific School of Religion in California, reviews a book by Theodore D. “Doug” Webber, *The Symbolism of the Psalms: A Spiritual Commentary*. This is the first of a projected three-volume study of the meaning of the *Psalms* as set forth in the Writings. (Page 530)

Church News, beginning on page 532, includes:

- A summary of the General Church Board of Directors meetings in September
- A summary of the Academy Board and Corporation meetings
- The Charter Day celebration, including: the banquet, reunions and Theta Alpha luncheon; Distinguished Alumni and Outstanding Volunteers for the College and Secondary Schools; an exhibit by reunion artists; the annual scholarship golf outing
- A special visitor to the Bryn Athyn Cathedral – a direct descendant from a brother of Emanuel Swedenborg
- Notes from the Living Waters Camp

IN THIS ISSUE

This issue includes several annual features: The General Church Annual Report (page 564), the Directory of the General Church Clergy (page 568), and the *New Church Life* Index for 2017 (page 588).

**Cover:** The image on the cover is from a panel on a lampshade in the Glencairn Museum chapel. It was painted about 1940 by Frank Snyder, using oil paint on plexiglass. Photo by Edwin Herder.

# Editorials

## CHRISTMAS COUNTERPOINT

*And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord. . . .*

*And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying: Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men. (Luke 2:10,11,14)*

This is the glory and the promise of Christmas every year – peace, happiness, good will. It is celebrated with lights and carols, the joy of anticipation, the smiles of love. Eternal images stir our remains: Mary and the Baby Jesus, shepherds and wise men, a simple stable, angels on high. But Christmas has a sober side as well – the birth of John the Baptist, the terror of Herod, the call to repentance. But they're all part of delivering on those “good tidings of great joy.”

We know that the Lord was born on earth not just to give us a happy holiday but to show us the way to the peace and happiness of heaven. The world had turned to spiritual darkness, corrupted with ignorance, falsity and evil. Humanity needed hope and a path to salvation.

The Lord came into the world to remove hell from angels and people, and to glorify His Human [to make it one with God in heaven]. He brought hell under control and opened heaven so that from then on He could be present with people on earth, and save those who lived according to His commandments. Consequently, the Lord could regenerate and save them, for those who are regenerated are saved. Without the Lord's coming no one could have been regenerated. (*True Christian Religion* 579)

Because of the corruption of the human race, hell had become so strong that it upset the essential balance between heaven and hell. People were becoming less and less free to make their own choices. This is what the Lord coming on earth restored to us – our spiritual freedom to choose God and heaven.

Isaiah prophesized: “The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in the land of the shadow of death, upon them a light has shined.” (*Isaiah* 9:2) We all walk in darkness at times and need Jesus’



promise to His disciples: “I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness but have the light of life.” (*John 8:12*)

The Lord could have chosen to be born in a palace and hailed as a king. But that is not how He chose to lead us. He was born in a simple stable, representing the still, quiet place where He can be born within our own hearts. We see similar themes of hardship and skepticism in such Christmas classics as *A Christmas Carol*, *It’s a Wonderful Life* and *The Grinch Who Stole Christmas*. In their own ways they lead to discovering a new spirit of what Christmas is all about. “And the light shined in the darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.” (*John 1:5*)

Too many people had forgotten God because they did not know Him, so He came into the world to be seen and known as a human being – and understood as a human God. That is why He needed to be seen not as a king, separate from the people, but an innocent and vulnerable baby – someone just like them. And as it is with us, He had to be attacked and tempted by the hells throughout His life in order to triumph over them. Then He could restore the balance between heaven and hell that is essential to our spiritual freedom.

That is also why the similarly miraculous birth of John to the elderly Elizabeth and Zacharias needed to come before the birth of the Lord – because John’s mission was baptism and repentance. We know we must shun evil and repent before we can enter heaven. “Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.” (*John 3:5*)

Emphasis on shunning evil and repentance may seem counter to the Christmas message of peace and happiness, but this is what makes the peace and happiness possible.

The washing ritual of baptism also represents repentance: cleansing the spirit, with the promise of a life lived according to the Ten Commandments – the life that leads to heaven.

The Lord came on earth to teach us to love – to love Him by living His commandments and loving our neighbor. This is innocence – following Him rather than our own inclinations. But we have to find Him first. And that baby wrapped in swaddling cloths, lying in a manger, points the way. We make room for Him – in our own lives – by seeking Him in His Word and sharing His love with others.

Then there is Herod. He is often pushed aside among the happy,

Emphasis on shunning evil and repentance may seem counter to the Christmas message of peace and happiness, but this is what makes the peace and happiness possible.

glittering aspects of the season. But he is essential to what Christmas is all about. He represents the evil that can come into our minds, and that even the joy and promise of Christmas come with an enduring challenge to stand up against evil in the world – and in our own lives.

Herod was a roadblock in the Wise Men's journey, as he can be for ours. He was a threat to the Lord's mission – a threat He had to confront throughout His life on earth. The presence of the hells can afflict our lives too – even overwhelm us – if we let them. But the Lord shows us how to confront Herod and overcome temptation by nurturing His own presence in our lives.

When we stand against Herod we enter into the presence of Simeon, a man who was “just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him.” And when Mary and Joseph presented the young Jesus to Simeon, he blessed Him and said: “Lord, now let Thy servant depart in peace, according to Thy word: for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation, which Thou has prepared before the face of all people; a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of Thy people Israel.” (*Luke 2:25-26, 29-32*)

This is the redemption and peace the Lord gives to all who live with such love and faith. This is the hope and promise of Christmas.

We are blessed to know that the Lord's unconditional love and mercy did not just visit the world 2,000 years ago but are with us every day. Even, and especially, in this hurting world He still heals and renews.

By coming on earth He reopened the pathway to salvation and heaven. John the Baptist had to come first to teach the hard truth: that heaven does not come without struggle – shunning evil, fighting against temptation, working at regeneration. But “Fear not.” That is when we are ready for the ultimate Christmas gift – the birth of the Lord on earth and into our lives, the “good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.” Then only with “Glory to God in the highest” comes the promise we all yearn for: “Peace on earth, good will toward men.”

(BMH)

### **RELIGIOUS FEELINGS: PEACE**

Every human soul yearns for peace, but we do not come by it easily. The desire for it is deep and constant because we were created to live in heaven with the Lord, who promises “rest for your souls” to those who come to Him. (*Matthew 11:28-30*) But there are many traits in our natural heredity that are opposed to heaven, so to get to a state of peace we must first go through the spiritual trials of temptation.

Peace is often thought of simply as the absence of conflict, but to define peace just by what it is *not* would be like defining happiness as the absence of

sadness, or health as the absence of disease, or life as “not dead.” Peace is not an absence but a presence: the presence of the Lord with us.

It appears as if we were alone in our spiritual battles, but the Lord is with us always, and fights for us by means of the truths He teaches us in His Word. “These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.” (*John 16:33*)

The Lord promised His disciples a kind peace that far transcends any peace the world can provide, or that we can find on our own. “My peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth give I unto you.” (*John 14:27*).

Peace is happiness of heart and soul arising from the conjunction of the Lord with heaven and the church, as well as from the conjunction of good and truth, when all conflict and combat of evil and falsity with good and truth has ceased. (*Apocalypse Explained 997: 4*)

Spiritual practices such as meditation may help us in our quest for peace, but apart from the love of God, the light of truth from His Word, a life of charity, and trust in His providence, nothing can give us the kind of peace we most need – “the Peace of God that passeth all understanding.” (*Philippians 4:7*)

The two inmost qualities of heaven are innocence and peace. Innocence is a willingness to follow the Lord, the source of all goodness. Peace is the delight that the good of innocence brings with it, and this enters into all the joys of heaven. They arise from it and converge upon it.

During our life in this world, the peace of heaven is not perceptible to us; even in the best of people it “lies hidden in their interiors.” But those who have gone through a temptation and come into a new state of love and wisdom can feel something of heavenly peace even in this world. It is said to be like a spring morning when dew is on the grass and the fragrance of opening blossoms fills the air. (See the chapter on heavenly peace in *Heaven and Hell* 284–290.)

Whatever turmoil and hardships we may have to endure in this world, trusting in providence gives us confidence, and the promise of peace gives us hope.

For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given: and the government shall be upon His shoulder: and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end. (*Isaiah 9:6*)

(WEO)

**THE INCREASE OF THE EARTH**

(This Thanksgiving editorial by the late Rev. W. Cairns Henderson is from the November 1955 *New Church Life*. It is also part of the published collection, *Selected Editorials*.)

The sons of Israel lived under a peculiar operation of spiritual law into the natural world. When they turned away from the Lord, pestilence and drought ravaged the land, famine wasted them, and they were enslaved by their enemies. But when they were faithful to the Lord's precepts – when they praised Him by observing the sacrifices, keeping the feasts, and obeying the statutes and the judgments – the earth yielded her increase in the form of bounteous harvests. No foe invaded their land, and every man sat at peace under his vine and his fig tree. And because the Israelites regarded earthly peace and material plenty as Divine blessings, they felt that their God had indeed blessed them.

Men no longer live under such an operation of spiritual law. The yearly harvest of the earth is not now manifestly determined by the extent to which men have praised the Lord. Yet the material increase of the earth is not the true blessing which the Lord seeks to bestow. We live in the most wonderful age of applied science this world has ever known. Never before have men been able to compel nature to yield her secrets and her resources as they have today. The average man can enjoy more goods and services than were ever available in the past. And yet men are no happier, no more contented, no kinder to one another, no less selfish, no more free from fear and mistrust. The earth has been made to yield her increase, but no blessing has followed.

To the New Church man the answer is obvious. It is that men have not first praised the Lord. Truly to praise the Lord is to go to His Word from love to Him. It is to seek out there the Lord's purposes in all His creations in nature, to perceive the uses the Lord made them to perform, and then use them as the Lord intended – to promote the true happiness and eternal welfare of others.

This is what it is to praise the Lord spiritually, to show forth His praises by showing the works of His hands as His works, performing the tasks He made them to do. And when men learn to praise the Lord in this way the earth will indeed yield its increase. The secrets and resources of nature will be used, not merely to build up a material civilization, but to promote civil, moral and spiritual wisdom; and to the extent that this is done the Lord will pour out His blessings of mutual love and charity, of intelligence and spiritual peace.

We mention these things as Thanksgiving draws near because, deep in the thought of Thanksgiving, are two ideas. The first is that all the Lord's gifts, like His productions in nature, are proffered in such form that men must work as if of themselves to enjoy their fruits; the second is the true gratitude goes far beyond formal expressions of thanks, showing itself in support of the use for

the sake of which the gift was bestowed.

We have much for which to give thanks to the Lord; and from the Writings, as from no other source, we can learn how to work as of ourselves to enter into the real benefits of all the Lord's gifts, and how to promote the uses for the sake of which they were given. As we strive to do these things we will truly praise the Lord. The earth will yield its true increase, and God, our own God, will bless us.

**OUR NEW CHURCH VOCABULARY**

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

**MEDITATION**

As used in the Writings, this is not a synonym for reflection but a term with a distinct meaning. Meditation is a state of the interior thought of the understanding, which is the ruling love thinking, into which man comes when he is alone or in his own home and thus in freedom. It is that mental activity in which the understanding contemplates, intends and plans the ends of the ruling love, and ponders and seeks means to their attainment; and it is characterized by the fact that in it man thinks and wills what he really loves.

Meditation should be cultivated as a means of becoming acquainted with the internal man and of discovering those evils which will remain hidden even from ourselves if we are never left alone. (See *Divine Love and Wisdom* 404; *Divine Providence* 61, 296)

# Letters to the Editors

Letters may be sent to the Editors of *New Church Life* at  
Box 743, Bryn Athyn, PA 19009  
or e-mailed to [Bruce.Henderson@newchurch.org](mailto:Bruce.Henderson@newchurch.org).

## *What Role for the Laity?*

To The Editors:

The article by the Rev. Willard L. D. Heinrichs, “Progress and Development of the New Church,” in the May/June 2017 issue of *New Church Life* is very interesting and a subject that has occupied my thoughts.

I understand in the article that it is said in the Writings that the growth of the New Church on earth will be slow. How slow in terms of years we do not know. The article refers to passages in the Writings and mentions that “the internal and the external,” will have a direct impact on the growth of the New Church. This leads me to ask: who will prepare the external?

What I would like to address here is the duty or role of the lay man and woman of the church in its growth. Are we to sit back and let things happen, or do we have a duty and therefore a role to play? After all, the Lord when on earth sent his disciples to preach and spread the Word, and on the 19<sup>th</sup> of June He sent them again to spread the news.

I do not know of anything in the Word or the Writings that spells out the duty or role of the laymen and women of the Church with regard to the growth of the Church. However, it seems to me that the laity does have a duty and a role – moral, implied, or otherwise – which is to let the world know about the revealed teachings of the New Church.

The Church has been established in small pockets around the world, thanks to the efforts of the ministry and powerful laypeople who have devoted their time and money to do this – as well as regular people with great devotion. This happened from Robert Hindmarsh in the late 1700s to today – where the Swedenborg Foundation is doing very good work using the internet. General Church Outreach, the Swedenborg Society and others are also working hard.

However, the world is going through great changes at a fast pace, with

the status quo challenged at every turn. To me this means that the world is ready to welcome a presence of Swedenborg and the New Church, even if to some newcomers the Writings would be just academic knowledge. Others may embrace the doctrines. Either way it would be good for those who are searching to have this knowledge readily available.

Yet, in a world of 7.5 billion people, how many have heard or seen the name Swedenborg? I would guess the number is minuscule, maybe 1 million. Some people may say more, but not much more and certainly far from 1%, which is 75 million.

So, does the New Church laity have a duty and a role to play in the growth of the Church? And if so, can that duty be defined? And how is it to be fulfilled?

We live in a secular world, where it is often not acceptable to speak of religion. If people do so, it is usually to their detriment, socially and in business.

For those who may think the laity have a duty – yet to be defined – and a desire to act in promoting the Church in some acceptable way, I propose two ideas:

1. Encourage people to send brief items to as many news publications as possible. Each item would include the name Swedenborg and a quote. Or it could be asking a question for which the reader could order a pamphlet for the answer. This could be done very modestly.
2. Send a letter and a New Church book to people who might be interested. I believe the late Rev. Don Rose used to do this. This could be a standard cover letter. The lay person would pay for the book and sending the letter – a modest contribution with potentially great ripple effects.

In addition to these suggestions, I am sure there are many other ways in which lay people could band together in giving the world more opportunities to learn about the beautiful teachings that been given to establish the New Church. This is the time to act. Let's not miss it.

Denis de Chazal  
Montreal, Quebec, Canada

### *A Beautiful Book*

To The Editors:

Thank you for the article by the Rev. Willard Heinrichs on *Earths in the Universe* (*New Church Life* September/October 2017). In a way, *Earths in*

*the Universe* introduces a second Copernican revolution in our thinking. As Copernicus showed that the earth is not the center of the universe, around which everything turns, so *Earths in the Universe* again shows that the earth is not rare in the universe in being inhabited by human beings.

*Earths in the Universe* is a beautiful book in that it shows that the universe is full of the Lord's Divine Love and Wisdom. Everything is created for a purpose, namely, a heaven from the human race, not just from one planet but from infinitely many. Therefore the universe is teeming with human beings, all created so that they may freely choose to follow the Lord and be led to heaven, if they are willing. It is a wonderful testimony to the infinite power, wisdom and love of the Lord, our Heavenly Father.

The Rev. Lawson M. Smith  
Kempton, Pennsylvania

### *A Welcome Perspective*

To The Editors:

Thank you to the Rev. Jeremy F. Simons for his perspective and doctrinal back-up shared in his article, *A Racist Free World*, (*New Church Life*, September/October 2017).

It appears to be a very fresh and relevant perspective on how we can view the Heavenly Doctrines unfolding in our modern world as it relates to race and religion.

I thank him for taking time in his semi-retirement to document and share this.

I have a whole new (positive) perspective on *New Church Life* when these types of relevant articles are published. Very high kudos and praises to the Rev. Walter Orthwein and Bruce Henderson for their publishing quality since they took over. I now eagerly await each new publication.

Mark Elder  
Rochester, Michigan



*And For a Follow-up*

To The Editors:

I read with much interest the article by the Rev. Jeremy Simons: *A Racist Free World* (*New Church Life*, September/October, 2017). Mr. Simons rendered a valuable service to the *New Church Life* readership by clarifying what the Writings have to say about various races and religions, both favorable and unfavorable. The fact that the article also focused much on other religions was a real bonus.

For me, an obvious follow-up to this article would be, *The Causes of Racism*. Of course, one could simply state that the hells are behind racism and religious bigotry. But it would be interesting to take a deeper look.

What causes people to look down on those who are in some way different? Why are we afraid of people who are different? Does over-protection of things we hold dear adversely affect our view of the neighbor? Is there transgression of a particular commandment that comes into play with bigotry? What, about us as human beings, lends itself to this particular evil?

Perhaps Mr. Simons (or others) might be encouraged to give us their insights into the religious psychology of this ongoing problem. Again, I very much appreciated and enjoyed this article.

Gregory L. Baker  
Huntingdon Valley, Pennsylvania

*Confident in Church Leadership*

To The Editors:

In the July/August 2016 issue of the *New Church Life* I had the honor of having a letter to the editors published wherein I tried to commend the Bishop and the clergy of the General Church for their diligence and integrity as they searched for the Lord's guidance regarding the old policy of a "male-only clergy."

In the November/December 2016 issue of *New Church Life*, Mr. Barrie Ridgway took exception to my view, essentially asking me how it could be that *some* of the current-day, thoroughly dedicated, New Church disciples of the Lord, using the same Divine Word for their guidance, could end up divided from the majority on the question of women in the clergy?

He answered his own question by saying: "The Word does not directly address the issue and the answer is subject to interpretation regardless of the

prayers offered and the counsel given by our clergy.”

I happen to believe that prayers offered can actually result in enlightened counsel, but I think the real answer may be that, if one questions the Word with a mind-set, only confirmations of that mind-set will be perceived. Of course, that works for an opposite mind-set as well, but I still think the decision process was good and wise, and therefore, because I believe that the Divine Providence oversees everything and the decision process was orderly, thorough and remarkably transparent, I expect that the decision was probably the right one.

As the future church grows surely the Lord will guide it to see more clearly the path it should follow. But now, although I’m just a layman with a limited view, I enthusiastically commend the present leadership of the General Church.

Martin E. Klein  
Boynton Beach, Florida

**OUR NEW CHURCH VOCABULARY**

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

**MERCY**

The universal definition of this term given in the Writings is that mercy is that into which love is turned when it looks upon those who are in need and grieves for their misery. Thus the Lord’s mercy is His love toward the human race since the fall: the love behind His Providence and all its operations, and the salvation resulting from them. It is universal and equal, and it consists in withdrawing man from evil, leading him into good, and keeping him in good – if, and as, it is received by him. (See *Arcana Coelestia* 5816)

# Nothing is Impossible for God

*A Christmas Sermon by the Rt. Rev. Brian W. Keith*

Lessons: *Luke 1:26-38, 2:1-7; Arcana Coelestia 8700:2*

*For with God nothing will be impossible. (Luke 1:37)*

Nothing will be impossible! The Angel Gabriel declared this after Mary's amazement that a virgin could give birth. He also noted how her relative Elizabeth, well past her child-bearing years, was also pregnant through Divine intervention, albeit with a natural father – Zacharias. For Mary, the Holy Spirit would overcome her. His power would overshadow her. And the Son of God would be born. Nothing will be impossible for God.

This virgin birth, and all the many other miracles recorded in the Word, can fill us with a sense of wonder and reverence. These Christmas stories touch a deep cord within us. In addition to stirring warm childhood memories, they epitomize the Lord's love for us in His willingness to take on the human form, to walk among us and be one with us. And they speak to us of hope – the promise that the Lord's coming will bring us joy and happiness.

It is interesting that as much as we are affected by this in the stories of Christmas, we may have trouble making a direct connection with our own lives. Yes, the Lord came, He has power, and with God nothing will be impossible. But do we really believe it? Do we believe it in our lives?

All too often we tend to think of the Lord as remote and perhaps somewhat disconnected from our daily activities and struggles. "Yes, He was born on earth. He saved mankind. But that does not do me too much good. Look at the problems I have to deal with. Look at the pain I suffer. Look at my failing attempts to make things better." While we may intellectually accept the teaching that the Lord's power is capable of doing great and marvelous things, we may feel it has not done too much in our own lives.

Yes, the Lord came, He has power, and with God nothing will be impossible. But do we really believe it? Do we believe it in our lives?

Yet, with God nothing will be impossible. This is a vital message. It and all the wondrous events of Christmas inspire confidence in us.

Yet, with God nothing will be impossible. This is a vital message. It and all the wondrous events of Christmas inspire confidence in us. They lift us up so that in spite of problems, in spite of hellish situations, we can be reminded that the Lord is near and that He can do what we cannot.

While we can feel less than successful or perhaps even defeated, the Lord was born into the world in such a miraculous way to change our

thinking, to help us realize that “with God nothing will be impossible.” Such confidence, or trust, in the Lord’s care gives us strength, gives us hope. For we cannot effectively marshal our forces against pessimism and hellish gloom if we do not believe that the Lord can create life, that He can be born even in apparently impossible situations.

The Lord Himself demonstrated this when He was approaching His final hours on this earth. While at prayer in the garden of Gethsemane He said, “Father, all things are possible for You.” (*Mark* 14:37) Even in the depths of despair, facing a painful death and feeling cut off from the Divine essence within, He recognized that the ability to overcome any problem lay with the Divine.

For us to sense the Lord’s power to do good, we need to appreciate the limits of our abilities. Yes, there is much we must do. We have to learn what the Word teaches. We have to follow the truths, even compelling ourselves at times. But our power is limited to that. We cannot regenerate ourselves. We cannot save ourselves. We cannot even change our affections. “Without Me you can do nothing.” But with His help, His power, we can do all good things!

Feeling assured that with the Lord impossible things become possible, we are relieved of a tremendous burden. We are relieved of having to do everything for ourselves. Welcoming His power into our lives gives us the strength to confront any problem, for we know that there is nothing in this world that can destroy us, nothing that can inflict lasting damage upon us, nothing that can stand against the power of the Most High.

But to say, “with Him nothing is impossible,” is not to say that He can and will do anything at all. For He does not act in a haphazard or random way. He does not choose one over another. We sometimes think that Divine power should be able to do anything. But if pressed we could all find things that we would not want the Lord to do, or even have the ability to do.

Would we want the Lord to predict the exact nature of our future, including all our choices? (What better way would there be to rob us of our initiative!) Or

would we want the Lord to step in and prevent us from making any mistakes? (How utterly frustrating it would be to be deprived of our free choice!) Or would we want the Lord to force us to do what is right? (How much would we resist this kind of pressure?)

To say that the Lord has all power to do what appears to be impossible, is to say that the Lord has all power to do what is good. Every shred of His energy is focused upon the goal of happiness – happiness for all, happiness forever. His power has as its purpose the salvation of everyone. (*Apocalypse Explained* 293) Its purpose is not to create a disease-free world. Its purpose is not

to remove all pain from our lives. Its purpose is not even to guarantee that all will go to heaven. Yes, providence does work toward these ends also, but only as secondary to the main goal of human beings freely choosing to follow the Lord by leading good lives.

So, the Lord's power is limited – not by any outside forces (or even forces from hell) – but by His own nature. His love is so strong that He cannot work against it. He cannot work against it by forcing anyone into heaven. He cannot work against it in any way at all. His power is the power to operate according to the order mandated by His love. This power is unlimited. This power has all possibilities for good within it. This power can do anything that will further the Divine love.

This is why the Lord's power could create life in Elizabeth, and then Divine life in Mary. It was good for the Lord to be born. It was good for Him to come into the world to save us. It was good for Him to take on a human form and open the minds of people to see His salvation. The Lord's power here is infinite and absolute. It can do all things, all things which will lead to our freely accepting His love, His heavenly life.

And as the purpose of this power is our salvation, it is the Lord's intention that we receive it in our lives. Our joy over the display of the Lord's power at Christmas time can inspire us to receive His heavenly life within our hearts. For,

*He gives power to the weak,  
And to those who have no might He increases strength.  
Even the youths shall faint and be weary,*

We cannot regenerate ourselves. We cannot save ourselves. We cannot even change our affections. “Without Me you can do nothing.”  
But with His help,  
His power, we can do all good things!

*And the young men shall utterly fall,  
But those who wait on the Lord  
Shall renew their strength;  
They shall mount up with wings like eagles,  
They shall run and not be weary,  
They shall walk and not faint. (Isaiah 40:29-31)*

His power is given to us whenever we sincerely ask for it. (See *Life* 31e) Whenever we want the good He has to offer, He is more than willing to give it.

Of course, sometimes we may say we want it, and in reality do not. The rich young man who asked the Lord how to gain eternal life wanted His blessings, as long as he did not have to give up too much to get it. This is why he was so sad when the Lord told him to give away all his riches. We may want heaven, but not really want to give up our personal hellish delights. It's like saying, "I want to be happy, as long as I can have my fun by tearing down and making fun of others." The Lord's power cannot achieve that since He can only do good.

We need to accept the Lord's power on His terms, not ours. To ask the Lord that His power might create heavenly life within us is to ask that His vision of good might be born within us.

His power is also given to us when we, with a humble spirit, seek to serve others. (*Arcana Coelestia* 3417e) As we relinquish a sense of complete control of our own lives, as we accept the ways of providence and come to trust in the Lord to take care of our essential needs, then His power can affect us. This was seen in Mary.

The Lord's power could create Life there because she was open to Him. She had a humility making her receptive to the Lord. This is quite evident from her joyous acceptance of Gabriel's message: "Behold the maidservant of the Lord! Let it be to me according to Your Word." She did not argue with

him. She did not resist. Rather, she was happy to serve – to do what the Lord wanted her to.

And the Lord's power does touch our lives as we strive to make good choices, as we do what is right in His eyes. (*Arcana Coelestia* 8700; *True Christian Religion* 68) For where there is order, where people are trying to do what is right, there His power is fully received. When we make hellish choices, we cut ourselves off from His power – we reject it. When we are self-

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centered we lose His power, for we refuse the power for good.

But even when we are not availing ourselves of all His power, this does not mean that the Lord abandons us. He never gives up. He never ceases directing our sight to the truth and stirring our feelings for good. He never stops caring for us. While never forcing us, He encourages us to seek His order. So, whenever we sincerely seek His way, that Divine power is present, making what is impossible for us to be possible for Him.

For with God nothing is impossible. The Lord sees in our lives all that is possible. He sees all the potential for good, for heaven. And He can do all that is good for us. He can create heavenly life where there was apparently nothing before. He can miraculously conceive a delight in good, and affection for what is true. We cannot do this, but He can. He can do what seems impossible to us.

Let us then rejoice and be glad over this message of Gabriel: “With God nothing will be impossible.” We are limited. We cannot see the ideal course for our lives, nor can we control all that might occur in this world. But we can be released from worrying about it. What is not possible for us is possible for the Lord. He can do what we cannot. He can be born where there is barrenness. He can create heavenly life where we see none.

This is the joy of Christmas, the wondrous hope we sense at the celebration of His birth on earth – that the Lord has power to bring about good. He has the power to do everything that flows from love. He has the power to create happiness. He has the power to create a heaven even from this human race. “For with God nothing will be impossible.” Amen.

What is not possible for us is possible for the Lord. He can do what we cannot. He can be born where there is barrenness. He can create heavenly life where we see none.



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# Timeless Messages in the Word

*The Rt. Rev. Peter M. Buss Jr.*

**I**n the New Church, we are tremendously blessed to have three revelations to which we can turn for guidance: the Old Testament, the New Testament, and the Heavenly Doctrines.

Those who have spent time exploring the Word know that each of the three revelations available to us has a character, or style of teaching. We know that the Old Testament was written the way it was because of the people to whom it was addressed. The same is true of the New Testament and the Heavenly Doctrines. Yet by means of all these revelations, the Lord has provided insight into truths that will always be “true” – in all cultures and throughout all time.

We can hear the Psalmist declare concerning the Lord’s commandments and judgments: “More to be desired are they than gold . . . , [for] by them Your servant is warned, and in keeping them there is great reward.” (*Psalm 19:10, 11*) We can add to that what the Lord said while in the world: “The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life.” (*John 6:63*) Yet how literal should we be? What level of interpretation is appropriate and necessary? When do we cross the line in terms of explaining away something that is stated, because the culture in which it was delivered appears so foreign to the world we live in now?

The goal of this presentation is to explore the dynamic of using the revelations we have been given, with all their time-bound imagery, to access those timeless messages. The Word itself gives us ample guidance into how to approach it, so that we discover the Lord’s intended meaning – for us personally, and for the church as a whole.

## **Revelations Given in Time**

To begin, I draw your attention to three pivotal Scriptural stories that give us greater insight into the challenge at hand – one for each of the revelations we have at our disposal.

**1. The Second Set.** The first is the way in which Moses received the Ten Commandments on Mt. Sinai – the specific tablets of stone. We know that the first set of tablets, written with the finger of God, was shattered by Moses when he descended and discovered the Israelites worshipping a



golden calf. (*Exodus* 31:17, 32:19) After putting an end to that profane worship, Moses was commanded by the Lord: “Cut two tablets of stone like the first ones, and I will write on these tablets the words that were on the first tablets which you broke.” (*Ibid.* 34:1) The *Arcana* shares with us the significance of this second set of tablets in this way:

The breaking by Moses of the tablets which were the work of God, when he saw the calf and the dances, and the hewing by Moses, as commanded by Jehovah, of other tablets, which then had the same words inscribed on them . . . hold an arcanum unknown up to now. The arcanum is that *the literal sense of the Word would have been* different if the Word had been written among another people, or if the character of the Israelite people had not been such as it was. (Emphasis added, *Arcana Coelestia* 10,453:3)

Clearly the character of the Word in the Old Testament was determined by the nature of the people to whom it was delivered. Yet we all know that timeless truths are revealed by means of this revelation. There are powerful reasons, for example, that the Lord appears as a vengeful God; yet we have the opportunity to view these presentations as apparent truths which contain an internal message of a merciful God. (See *Arcana Coelestia* 1838) There are so many other things about this revelation that are adapted to the people of that time, such as polygamous marriage, or that Israel is a “preferred” people, that one teaching says, “the truths of the letter of the Word are, for the most part, appearances of truth.” (*Apocalypse Explained* 777) All this is conveyed by the fact that there was a second set of tablets.

**2. Simeon Holding Jesus.** The second story is of Simeon giving thanks as he held the baby Jesus:

So he came by the Spirit into the temple. And when the parents brought in the Child Jesus, to do for Him according to the custom of the law, he took Him up in his arms and blessed God and said: “Lord, now You are letting Your servant depart in peace, according to Your word; for my eyes have seen Your salvation.” (*Luke* 2:27-30)

This image is amazing not only because the God of the universe chose to be born into the world at a specific point in time in a specific Middle Eastern part of planet Earth. That in itself is incredibly instructive concerning the challenge at hand – how to see by means of time-bound events eternal truths about the Lord Himself.

But “Simeon” himself adds a dimension of time – a change of era that was taking place. He is an old man. The previous era of the church was coming to a close. (See *Luke* 2:26, *Apocalypse Explained* 684:42) A new era of the church was dawning which would have the opportunity to worship the Lord in visible human form, and to hear from His own mouth some of the truths that He would reveal.

This image, then, reminds us that the New Testament, too, has a character

determined in large part by the people to whom it was revealed. One example will suffice. We know from the Heavenly Doctrines that there is one God of heaven and earth, yet the New Testament contains multiple references to Father, Son and Holy Spirit as if they were separate entities. The reason, we learn, is that it was “wholly incomprehensible” to the people interacting with the Lord Jesus at the time, that He and the Father were one. (*Arcana Coelestia* 6993) The timeless truth that there is but one God was delivered in such a way that people at that time could grasp it, with appearances of truth accommodated to their state.

**3. The Rider on the White Horse.** The third Scripture comes in the 19<sup>th</sup> chapter of the book of *Revelation*:

I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns. *He had a name written that no one knew except Himself.* He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God. (Emphasis added, 19:11-13)

This prophetic vision of the white horse is directly associated with the revelation of the Lord’s Second Coming – specifically, “the spiritual sense of the Word revealed by the Lord and the deeper meaning of the Word thereby disclosed, which is the coming of the Lord.” (*Apocalypse Revealed* 820) In other words, this is a picture of the Heavenly Doctrines themselves.

Nevertheless, a curious thing is said about this new revelation. The Rider “had a name written that no one knew.” Concerning this we read, “A name symbolizes someone’s character, here the character of the Word, or what the Word is like inwardly, that is, in its spiritual and celestial senses.” (*Apocalypse Revealed* 824) It would seem, with the revelation of the Heavenly Doctrines, that we *would* know what the Word is like inwardly. But no one knew the name. Even with the revelation of the Heavenly Doctrines, we absorb the amazing statement that no one sees “what the Word is like in its spiritual sense [except] the person to whom the Lord reveals it” (*Ibid.*)

This is stated even more directly in the next passage, which says concerning the spiritual sense: “Nor is it revealed to anyone now unless he or she possesses Divine truths from the Lord.” (*Apocalypse Revealed* 825; cf. *Sacred Scripture* 26) The conclusion we reach from these passages is that the Heavenly Doctrines too have a “letter” or a mode of manifestation. In other words, there’s still the challenge of a revelation given at a certain point in time, within a certain culture. It goes a long, long way to helping us see the timeless truths of the Lord directly on the pages themselves, but apparently it still needs some level of rational engagement based on enlightenment. Otherwise the “name written that no one knew” concept would be moot.

### A Particularly Telling Example

I'd like to offer a case-in-point, or an example of the dynamic conveyed by means of the three Scriptures we've just reviewed. I am choosing the Law of Retaliation and the Golden Rule, because the same truth spans all three of the revelations we have, and brings forward the "accommodated-to-the-people-of-the-time" challenge in each case.

In the Old Testament, the Lord commanded:

But if any harm follows, then you shall give life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burn for burn, wound for wound, stripe for stripe.  
(*Exodus 21:23-25*; cf. *Leviticus 24:20*)

Here's a place where it is relatively easy to see the character of the people influencing the message. How many of us have heard, in a sermon or elsewhere, that the intent of this law was not to encourage retaliation but to limit the extent to which people took the law into their own hands? You can retaliate, but only to the level of the offence endured. The implication is that the people at that time would be inclined to do much more than was done to them or their loved ones, in a never-ending escalation of violence.

Of course, we are aided in our teaching by passages such as *Arcana Coelestia* 9049, which reminds us of a similar law that exists in the other life, namely that "one who does evil to another with all his or her heart receives evil in like measure." We are also taught that this law of retaliation is the law of hell (*Apocalypse Revealed* 762), reminding us that we're not talking about the better states of human beings, but the necessary limits to our selfish tendencies which can "burn with hatred and revenge against those who set themselves in opposition" to us. (*Arcana Coelestia* 8744)

There's a timeless truth delivered by a time-bound Scripture; it has an accommodated form in ancient Israelite culture, and it is speaking about a timeless human tendency, namely the selfish urge to lash out at those who cross us.

In the New Testament we hear the polar opposite of the law of retaliation: "Whatever you want others to do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets." (*Matthew 7:12*)<sup>1</sup> On the surface, we can see it as a summary message of the many new truths that the Lord was delivering by means of His life on earth – truths about love toward the neighbor. We can consider the people alive at that time hearing, perhaps for the first time, about the kingdom of heaven. We can imagine them absorbing this principle to live by:

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1 There is also an obvious companion to the Law of Retaliation spoken earlier in the Sermon on the Mount, "You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.' But I tell you not to resist an evil person." (*Matthew 5:38-41*). I choose the so-called Golden Rule instead, because the Heavenly Doctrines say that it and the Law of Retaliation are essentially the same law. (See *Arcana Coelestia* 9049)

So we see one thread of many in the Word where truths are given within a particular context. They're true in that context as literally spoken, yet also deliver one of the most powerful "timeless" truths we have about human interactions.

if you want to go to this kingdom, stop and consider what you would want to happen to you in any given situation, and treat others likewise. Again, there's a historic context which feeds into why the Lord delivered this truth in the way He did.

But we know there's much more to this principle, revealed by means of the Heavenly Doctrines. *Arcana Coelestia* 8223 is a great example. It provides us with a broad statement of reality: This law is "unchanging and everlasting in the spiritual world. . . . [There] the evil which people aim in the direction of others recoils on themselves." The same is true of goodness: it comes back on those who do it in overflowing measure. (See *Luke* 6:38) There is a

timelessness to a truth like this that's right there for us to see.

Finally, we encounter Emanuel Swedenborg's testimony concerning this reality: "It is a frequent occurrence in the next life for the evil to be severely punished . . ." (*Arcana Coelestia* 8223:3) Our mind is drawn by this statement to the reality that the Lord caused Swedenborg to be able to see into the next life and share with us what he saw there.

A time-bound series of events is the means of adding depth and perspective to this universal law. Not only is it stated, but we can see through Swedenborg's eyes how it plays out in the lives of people in the life to come. We can imagine the whole of heaven and hell governed by means of this eternal truth, and we can reflect that our own lives will be too.

So we see one thread of many in the Word where truths are given within a particular context. They're true in that context as literally spoken, yet also deliver one of the most powerful "timeless" truths we have about human interactions.

### Two Other "Test Cases"

It could be argued that the example just given is so obvious as not to present any challenge whatsoever. After all, most of us would agree that the Golden Rule is a "face and hands" or "genuine truth" passage. (See *Sacred Scripture* 55, *True Christian Religion* 444)

Therefore, we could consider other teachings where the intended meaning

could be debated. Take, for example, the so-called “needlework” passage in *Conjugal Love*. In the chapter on “*The Origin of Conjugal Love from the Marriage of Good and Truth*” we read:

With respect to the employment of the female, it can be seen that it should do with things that are works of the hands and are called *sewing, needlework, and other names*, which serve for decoration, for her personal adornment, and for enhancing her beauty. (Emphasis added, *Conjugal Love* 91)

Context can help us see that the goal of this passage is to define femininity as opposed to masculinity. But many of us know that this teaching has caused much debate within the Church, as to whether the intended message is about what women should do, namely learn sewing, needlework, etc., or is using things from Swedenborg’s day to illustrate the deeper fundamental differences between men and women, or whether it belies a cultural bias of Swedenborg himself that is off-base in some way?

My own way of absorbing this teaching is that it is primarily illustrative – using examples to get to a timeless truth about the complementary nature of men and women. My assessment aside, the point is that a level of interpretation comes into play with a teaching such as this one, however you might weigh its meaning.

Another test case, or series of them, comes in the form of Swedenborg’s direct reference to the limitations of human language:

What they were saying is beyond description. *Most of it cannot be put into the words of any natural language*. But because I had been myself a number of times in the company of angels in heaven, and had then used the same language as they, being in the same state, I was consequently able to understand them now and to take from their conversation some thoughts that I could express in rational terms in the words of a natural language. (Emphasis added, *Apocalypse Revealed* 961)

The subject at hand is “the oneness of God, conjunction with Him, and so salvation.” It is a beautiful passage using a number of concepts and words to get some measure of the truth across. But the full message was “beyond description.” The invitation, it seems, is to see something about the Lord beyond what the words themselves can convey.

### **Principles to Guide Our Access to Timeless Messages**

Hopefully by now we see the challenge, in that all forms of the Word, even the Heavenly Doctrines, require some level of interpretation, or a process of discovery, as we seek to absorb the messages the Lord delivers to us. There are, however, principles of engagement that we are called to utilize to keep ourselves successful in this regard. What follows is a list of seven such principles – not intended to be exhaustive, but to contain many of the things that the Word itself says can aid in our understanding of its teachings.

## 1. Seeking Enlightenment

The first is to acknowledge that we need help from the Lord to understand His Word. We could turn to the fourth law of Divine Providence, which tells us: “It is a law of Divine providence that people be led and taught by the Lord from heaven through the Word and through doctrine and preaching from the Word, and this to all appearance as though of themselves.” (*Divine Providence*, heading to 154ff)

One major message of this law is that “the Lord teaches a person by enlightenment,” this being His direct path of light into our lives. (*Ibid.* 165) It matters not that we receive the Word through the agency of others (preachers, teachers, parents, etc.), for it is the Lord who teaches us by means of these people. (*Ibid.* 72:4) It also matters not, evidently, what part of the Word we are talking about – Old Testament, New Testament, or Heavenly Doctrines – as all qualify as “the Word” and therefore require the Lord’s enlightenment to understand.

A companion teaching comes in the work *De Verbo*, describing three things that we need, in order to see the spiritual sense of the Word: the doctrine of genuine truth, the knowledge of correspondences, and enlightenment (n. 21). I would suggest that the former two have been given to us by means of the Heavenly Doctrines, but that the latter element comes only from the Lord.

If, therefore, we require enlightenment from the Lord to be able to draw meaning from His Word, it follows that we should seek that enlightenment. It could usefully be noted that enlightenment is available to all people who turn to the Word with a desire to understand its meaning for their lives. (See *Apocalypse Revealed* 224) An inspiring teaching along these lines is: “Read the Word and believe in the Lord, and you will see the truths that must be those of your faith and life.” (*Ibid.* 224:3)

## 2. Going Back to the Text, Repeatedly

There are four powerful Scriptures that illustrate the message that we need the Word as a continuous point of reference. The first comes in the Lord’s commission of Joshua:

This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to *do according to all that is written in it*. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.”  
(Emphasis added, *Joshua* 1:8)

The second Scripture comes during the time of King Josiah, when Hilkiah found the Book of the Law. (*2 Kings* 22:8) We know that it had been lost and neglected, and that the people had strayed significantly from its commands. We know too that Josiah led a full reform of Judah, leading to these words of praise:

Now before him there was no king like him, who turned to the LORD with all his heart, with all his soul, and with all his might, according to all the Law of Moses; nor after him did any arise like him. (*2 Kings 23:25*)

The third Scripture comes out of the mouth of the Lord Himself when tempted by the devil. In each of the three tests, the Lord responded with the words, “It is written . . .” (*Luke 4:4,8,10*; cf. *Matthew 4:4,6,7*) The answer to the first temptation, concerning turning stones to bread, is particularly instructive. The Lord said: “It is written, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.’” (*Matthew 4:4*; cf. *Luke 4:4*)

The fourth Scripture comes in a famous exchange between Jesus and a lawyer, “who tested Him, saying, ‘Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?’” (*Luke 10:25*) The Lord responded: “What is written in the law? What is your reading of it?” Then come the two Great Commandments.

All four of these Scriptures remind us of the importance of what is actually written and recorded for us. The obvious message is that the Word is intended to be a check-and-balance to our actions – as individuals and as a church. We are to return to it over and over, and where we find ourselves out of keeping with its teachings, we are called to correct course.

### 3. Drawing on the Lamp of Doctrine

Several teachings in the Heavenly Doctrines point to the need for guiding principles to aid in our understanding of the Word. These guiding principles are referenced under several related names: sometimes just “doctrine” (see below), other times “the doctrine of the church” (*Heavenly Doctrine 257*; *Sacred Scripture 50*), or “the doctrine of genuine truth” (*Sacred Scripture 25*), or “heavenly doctrine.” (*Heavenly Doctrine 7*) In all cases, the message is clear that without these guiding principles our understanding of the Word’s intended meaning is beyond us.

For example, regarding the letter of the Old and New Testament, we encounter this somewhat ominous teaching:

From all this it is evident that those who read the Word without doctrine, or who do not acquire for themselves doctrine from the Word, are in obscurity as to every truth, and that their minds are wavering and uncertain, prone to errors, and pliant to heresies, which they also embrace wherever inclination or authority favors, and their reputation is not endangered. For the Word is to them like a lampstand without a lamp, and in their gloom they seem to see many things, and yet see scarcely anything, for doctrine alone is a lamp. (*Sacred Scripture 52*)

This teaching is in the section titled, “*The Word cannot be understood without doctrine.*” Then comes a passage with the positive side of the message:

By means of doctrine . . . the Word is understood, and is like a lampstand with a lighted lamp. People then see more things than they had seen before, and also understand those things which before they had not understood. (*Ibid. 54*)



Fortunately for us, we have a beautiful collection of genuine truths in the Heavenly Doctrines to guide us in our understanding of these Scriptures. But what about the Heavenly Doctrines themselves? What do these teachings imply about them and our correct approach to them?

It appears clear that guiding doctrinal concepts are still needed. Let the following example serve to illustrate: We know that the Lord works entirely by means of our freedom, without which we could not, as of ourselves, follow Him to heaven. (See *Heavenly Doctrine* 149; *True Christian Religion* 485)

We can use this guiding principle to help us further understand other teachings in the Heavenly Doctrines concerning such things as permissions (see *True Christian Religion* 479ff, *Divine Providence* 234); the reason some are not saved (see *True Christian Religion* 72, 580; *Divine Providence* 333); and why we are not able to see the hand of providence as clearly as we might wish. (*Divine Providence* 179, 187)

Any one of us who has studied a subject in any depth knows the rubric of seeing some teachings in the light of others. It is tremendously helpful to us to have a guiding set of principles – from the Word itself, and from the church’s long-standing understanding of the Word. We are wise to interpret anything that may seem confusing in one section in light of the overall messages of the Word.

#### 4. The Discipline of Research

A highly related principle to the need for doctrine is a discipline of research. We are taught in so many ways to be students of the Word, who make it a life-long pursuit to grow in our understanding of its messages. Consider these teachings:

- “People moved by an affection for truth . . . examine the Word closely with no other end in view than to see the truth itself.” (*Arcana Coelestia* 5432)
- “A more perfect conscience is possible with those who are more enlightened than others in the truths of faith.” (*Heavenly Doctrine* 132)
- “The Word is . . . like a mine containing richer and richer veins of gems the further one goes into it.” (*True Christian Religion* 245)
- “Those in the spiritual affection for truth . . . study the Word, and desire nothing more than that they may understand it.” (*Apocalypse Explained* 112:4)
- The understanding that the church possesses . . . exists when people read the Word, assiduously take one statement together with another, and by doing so see what they ought to believe and what they ought to do. (*Arcana Coelestia* 6222:3)



The picture that emerges is of a person who takes the time to set aside preconceived ideas, to get the heart and mind in the right place, to see teachings in context, and to check them against the whole of the doctrines. This student of the Word is much more likely to discover the Lord's intended meaning in any part of His revelation.

### **5. Letting the Word, Not Culture, Lead**

We come next to a sobering warning presented to us in the *Gospel of Matthew*. The Lord addressed the scribes and Pharisees with a challenging question: "Why do you transgress the commandment of God because of your tradition?" (*Matthew* 15:3) He went on to give them a particular example of where they had encouraged people to give to the church (them) rather than using their resources to care for their parents. "Thus," the Lord said, "you have made the commandment of God of no effect by your tradition." (*Ibid.* 15:6) Then He followed it up with an even more cutting quote from Isaiah, "In vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men." (*Ibid.* 15:9; *Isaiah* 29:13)

If we are being honest with ourselves, our culture cannot but influence the ways in which we see the teachings of the Word. Equality of the sexes, themes of tolerance or a merciful approach, rampant sex outside of marriage, secular versus spiritual trends, even particular religious strands that are more dominant in a given area – these things influence what we research and how we approach the messages of the Word.

Yet none of us would want to find ourselves guilty of the Lord's reprimand of the scribes and Pharisees. I note that the Lord quoted Isaiah. Isaiah was a prophet, and the prophets were often called to say things to the people of the day that they did not want to hear. In many of those cases, it was a trend in

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culture, or an example of something that serves self, that necessitated a strong and unpopular message.

In this we return to the overarching challenge addressed in this study: how to access the timeless truths of the Word – the things that will always be true, in all cultures and throughout all time – despite the fact that we ourselves live in a particular culture with its significant pressures. This is another reason we need a written revelation to check us.

In this regard I share a quote by my father, the Rt. Rev. Peter M. Buss Sr., from a paper he wrote in 1995 on *“The Word of God”*:

I believe very deeply that if we consider the Writings [aka Heavenly Doctrines] anything less than the Word, we will begin to pick away at them, questioning this or that unpalatable truth, assigning certain statements to Swedenborg’s cultural bias, detecting in him the flaws of a dated European culture, holding that we are more advanced in our thinking now, and so on. They won’t be hurt by this. The Lord protects His own. But our church will be weak, and churches which have an uncertain faith don’t stand for very long.

## 6. Avoiding Any Kind of Dismissiveness

Related to this goal of letting the Word lead, we come to another sobering challenge in our efforts to see the timeless truths of the Word. We know that we don’t get to pick and choose which teachings to follow and which ones to dismiss. We can’t do away with certain teachings that we wish were not there.

Two Scriptures come to mind to illustrate this point. The first is the Lord’s tunic at the scene of the crucifixion:

Now the tunic was without seam, woven from the top in one piece. They said therefore among themselves, “Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it.” (*John* 19:23-24)

We know from the *Arcana* and other places that the tunic represents the Word as to its internal sense, which is seamless or hangs together as one unit. (*Arcana Coelestia* 4677:6; *Apocalypse Explained* 64:4, 195:21) There’s a powerful directive here, namely that we should strive to see any given teaching, no matter how challenging, within the context of the Word’s overall messages.

The second Scripture is the “belt” of Aaron the high priest and his sons. (*Exodus* 29:5) This too is a symbol for “the holding together of all the truths and goods of faith in connection.” (*Arcana Coelestia* 10014) It is “a common bond to ensure that everything has the same end in view.” (*Ibid.* 9829) It is that guiding set of doctrinal principles ensuring that “the things of love and faith [are not] broken apart and scattered.” (*Ibid.* 9341:6)

Most of us could point to examples from our experience where this tendency of dismissiveness is evident. Sometimes it comes in the form of focusing on the generals of doctrine, and paying less attention to the details. Other times it is seen in a person who loves certain things about the message of the New Church, but is not yet in a place to accept other parts. Or there

are people who draw on several of the world's faith traditions, based partly on what is attractive to them, without needing to absorb the whole of any particular faith.

Other times, dismissiveness can come in the form of relegating certain teachings to the time in which the revelation was given. How many of us have heard hesitancy or even outright rejection of certain parts of the Old Testament because they seem so tied to a culture foreign to our own, or fall into the realm of appearances of truth that are so clothed as to be perceived today as offensive? We also know of the challenge before us of figuring out how to absorb the examples that the Lord inspired Swedenborg to use from his own background.

The point is, we cannot get caught up in any dismissiveness. Yes, there will always be a need to see some passages in the light of others, and we can usefully debate their intended meaning as a result. But the key warning is against saying in any way: "I don't like that teaching so I'm going to leave it over here."

Another Scripture that comes to mind in this regard is Moses before the burning bush. He was commanded by the Lord: "Take your sandals off of your feet, for the place where you stand is holy ground." (*Exodus* 3:5) Perhaps we could all agree that we are on the same ground when reading anything in the Word of God.

## 7. Removing Time-And-Space Thinking

A final guiding principle helping us to see the timeless truths of the Word is to rise above time-and-space thinking as much as possible. Several teachings remind us of this difficult challenge:

However, please do not allow your ideas to become confused with notions of time and space, for the more notions of time and space you have in your ideas when you read the following discussions, the less you will understand them. (*Divine Love and Wisdom* 51; cf. *Apocalypse Explained* 1217:3)

This same concept is repeated a little later in a more philosophic way: "The Divine is present through all time independently of time." (*Divine Love and Wisdom* 73) Then there is this teaching:

The Word may be likened to a Divine human being; the literal sense is so to speak His body, while the internal sense is so to speak His soul, from which it is evident that the literal sense receives life through the internal sense. It seems as though the literal sense disappears or dies through the internal sense; but the contrary is the reality. It does not disappear, still less does it die; rather it receives life through the internal sense. (*Arcana Coelestia* 9943)

Seeing on two levels, then, appears to be the pivotal challenge of this entire study. Within all of the Word, even the Heavenly Doctrines, there is a "soul" –

a message from the Lord Himself that we need to hear. It can only be seen by means of, and must be grounded in, what is actually written. Yet to see it, we have to rise above time and space thinking as much as we can.

### Conclusion

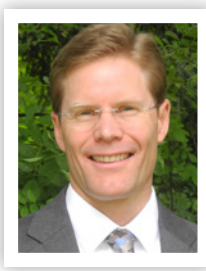
We all know that there are timeless truths in the Word. There are things the Lord wants us to know that will be true at all times in all cultures – a few of which are alluded to in this study.

All of them are delivered to us in three revelations given at a certain time in history within a certain culture. No matter how clear the revelation, questions will always come up as to what the Lord really meant by what He has chosen to reveal to us. Fortunately for us, we have the hope of enlightenment, so long as our approach to the Word is valid.

I'd like to close with one more teaching. It relates to a different manifestation of timelessness. We read concerning “old age” in the Word:

In the internal sense “old age” does not mean old age, for the reason that the internal person, or person's spirit, does not know what old age is; but as the body or the external part grows old, so he or she passes into newness of life. (*Arcana Coelestia* 4676)

When we look in the mirror we may indeed see an aging human form. But we know that the spirit within remains vibrant and strong, because it is eternal. So, too, with the Word. It has some external forms that can appear at times to be dated and decrepit. Yet it has a spirit within – the voice of the Lord Himself – which will forever enliven it and make it shine. Our job is to discover its timeless messages, so that our spirits may be made forever young by the Lord, as we learn to live the path of eternal happiness that comes to all who follow Him to heaven.



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# 500th Anniversary of the Reformation

## Martin Luther, The Last Judgment and the New Church

*Rev. Dr. Andrew M. T. Dibb*

October 31, 1517: A German Augustinian monk approached the doors of the castle church in Wittenberg, Saxony. Amongst the other notices pinned to the door, he nailed a new document and walked away. The monk was Martin Luther, the document was the *Ninety-Five Theses*, or points of contention with the Roman Catholic Church. Whether the event took place as described, or Luther published his *Theses* in some other way, is a matter of debate, but that this event changed the course of history, first in Germany, then in Europe and finally in the world, is a fact.

Martin Luther was a doctor of theology teaching at the University of Wittenberg when Johan Tetzel, a Dominican monk, was charged with the task of selling indulgences in Germany. Indulgences, sold by the church, released people from time of suffering in purgatory. The money raised was to be used to build the new St. Peter's Basilica in Rome – although half was given to the Archbishop of Mainz for his use.

In Luther's eyes, selling indulgences amounted to selling salvation. He was appalled at the assumption that the pope had any right to forgive sins, something that can only be done by God. He was even more appalled at the commercialization of forgiveness.

The alternative Luther offered to papal abuse was based on the concepts of faith and grace he saw taught in the book of *Romans*. *Romans 3:28* is the perfect summary of his teaching: "Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds of the law." Faith justifies a person's sins in the sight of God, which is the essence of salvation. No amount of papal remission,

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no number of indulgences or good works, could change that.

It is often said that Luther's goal was not to dismember the Roman Catholic Church, but to repair doctrinal errors and abuses. But the Church saw his teaching as an attack on the core doctrinal values: that a person is saved by attending the sacraments, by performing good works, and by submitting to the authority of the Church.

In 1521 Luther was called on to recant. Instead he demanded Biblical proof that his position was heretical. He reiterated his doctrine and uttered the famous line: "*Unless I am convinced by Scripture and plain reason – I do not accept the authority of the popes and councils, for they have contradicted each other – my conscience is captive to the*

*Word of God. I cannot and I will not recant anything for to go against conscience is neither right nor safe. God help me. Amen.*" The final schism in the Catholic Church was inevitable.

The events of the Reformation, precipitated 500 years ago, led to a radical change in the path of European and world religion. Europe divided into Protestant and Catholic camps, frequently at war with each other, culminating in the Thirty Years War between 1618 and 1648, arguably the bloodiest conflict in Europe until World War I.

Within Protestantism, Luther's declaration opened doors for further religious dissent and division. He was followed in short order by Anabaptists, the Church of England, John Calvin, and the host of different interpretations of religion that have fragmented the overall Protestant movement even to the present.

The Roman Catholics, realizing the need for reform, gathered at the Council of Trent in the 1540s and codified Catholic doctrine, eliminating some of the more serious medieval innovations, and developing some new ones. The two religious camps have stood in mutual opposition from then onwards.

The story of the Reformation is recounted in different ways, depending on the historian's point of view. Protestant scholars see Luther as a hero, the Catholics as villains. Catholics, of course, take the opposite point,

often readily admitting some of the allegations against them, but showing developments since that time. Modern historians attempt to be impartial, often admirably so, but every historian has a particular lens through which he or she views the past.

This is equally true of New Church historians. The Heavenly Doctrine has a great deal to say about Luther and the reformers, Catholics and Protestants, and concepts of salvation, all of which is woven into the narrative of church history building up to the establishment of the New Church.

The Doctrine paints a picture of Christianity in steep decline, with increasing falsity (for example, papal power and the sale of indulgences) and the evils of life that flowed from them. Spirits entering the World of Spirits created false heavens based on these falsities, forming what the Doctrine's describe as a "dense cloud" between heaven and earth.

As truth descended from the Lord through this cloud of spirits, it was twisted into falsity so that by the time it reached the people of this world, it bore little relation to the Lord's truth. Unless something changed, the Church would be completely cut off from the Lord, and humans would perish. This change came with the Last Judgment of 1757.

Like every church before it, the Christian Church was not designed to fall, but to grow in understanding and love, becoming increasingly receptive of the heavenly things the Lord wished to teach, and which He promised would follow in time. But the Christian Church did fall. There are many reasons for this, but a principle one was the failure to recognize the Lord Jesus Christ as the God of heaven and earth.

Early Christians battled to understand the relationship between the Father and Son, with the different positions growing increasingly acrimonious until the Council of Nicaea, in 325, arrived at a solution which became binding on the entire church. The doctrine of the Trinity that developed at that council has been the unquestioned foundation of doctrine for all Christian Churches,

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but it has also been the source of the falsity and evil that increasingly plagued Christianity until the Last Judgment.

The Heavenly Doctrine divides the Christian era into two distinct periods: the Apostolic Church before the Council of Nicaea, and the Church afterwards. The doctrine of the Trinity developed at Nicaea, and elaborated on by council after council in the following centuries, redirected Christian theology, and therefore practice, leading to increasing corruptions and abuses that destroyed the Church.

At Nicaea the Trinity was seen to exist in three Persons, who, while distinct, are of one substance and therefore form one God. At the Council of Chalcedon – 125 years later – the Person of the Son was recognized as having two distinct natures, one Divine, the other human, forever separate but within one person. These divisions within God affected the development of Catholic and later Protestant doctrine, and the New Church acknowledgment of Jesus Christ as the One God of Heaven and Earth stands as the complete rejection of it.

As the centuries wore on, the Roman Catholic hierarchy increasingly extended papal power. In time the pope was recognized as exercising the authority of the human nature within the Son of God. He was given the title the “Vicar of Christ,” meaning that he was God’s representative on earth and that the work of the Lord was arrogated to him. The sale of indulgences, which sparked Martin Luther’s outrage, was one outcome of this: the pope believed he had the power to reduce the amount of time a person spent in purgatory, so reducing the pain and suffering of those who had passed on.

Pope Urban II used this power in 1098 to launch the Crusades, promising an indulgence to those who took up arms to liberate Jerusalem from the Muslims. In 1516 Pope Leo X instituted a massive sale of indulgences, claiming his right to liberate souls from purgatory, while raising money at the same time; his goal was to rebuild St. Peter’s in Rome. This was the final straw for Luther, and the first step towards the Reformation.

Papal power was not the only development in the wake of the Council of Nicaea. The book, *Apocalypse Revealed*, outlines a list of grave errors undermining the church: papal claims of absolute authority over kings and emperors (not to mention ordinary people), with power to excommunicate and consequently condemn to hell those who challenged him.

Power connects with wealth, and wealth with greed. Over the centuries, the Church claimed taxes and tithes from the poorest serf to the richest monarch, gathering their wealth into cathedrals, monasteries and lavish lifestyles. Those who challenged this state of affairs, like John Wycliffe (died 1384) or John Hus (died 1415), were persecuted and condemned. Killing those in opposition became increasingly frequent, especially in the years following



the Reformation when the Inquisition was at its peak.

The Medieval papacy, characterized by a lust for power and wealth, allowed the church to become increasingly commercialized. This meant that the Church had to teach things that could both generate cash and keep people in subjection to its power. The veneration of saints is one example of this: people were encouraged to make pilgrimages to places where saints had lived or worked. Once there, and for a price, pilgrims could visit relics of the saints – bits of bone, or clothing, or in some cases, the entire preserved body.

The sale of relics and religious artifacts was a tremendous source of income for the church. Increasingly religion focused on the imagined power of these things and became a matter of superstition with very little foundation of truth in it.

Most egregious of all the things characterizing the Medieval Church was the subordination of the Word. As “Vicar of Christ,” only the pope had the authority to interpret the Word and draw doctrine from it. True, popes delegated this to scholars and theologians, but the doctrine they drew tended to support the status quo.

Over time people, ordinary and scholarly, were denied access to the Word. Literacy was at a low level, making it difficult for people to read the Word, but this was compounded by the insistence that the Word only be available in an official Latin version, the Vulgate. This limited even further the number of people who could read it even if they could get a copy.

In place of the Word the Church instituted tradition: the writings and opinions of the Church Fathers from the early church, or the doctrinal systems of Augustine, Aquinas and others. In many ways, genuine Biblical study disappeared from the Church except what was filtered through the approved channels.

Not everyone forgot the Word, however. The Waldensians in the Piedmont district, between France and Italy, kept the Word alive and in regular use, but they were severely persecuted for it. In England, John Wycliffe taught that the Word should be available to people in their own language, so that they could read and interpret it for themselves. Bits of the Word existed in vernacular languages, but mostly those were hidden in monasteries or wealthy households, well out of the way of ordinary people.

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Yet within the church there were voices of dissent. In the 1380s John Wycliffe began the project of translating the Word into English, the first such translation into the language of the people. The translated Word was copied by hand and circulated by itinerant preachers to receivers called “Lollards.”

Lollards survived in England until the Reformation, but they were persecuted strenuously for opposing the authority of the Church. By introducing the idea that the Word needed to be accessible, Wycliffe stands at the beginning of a process of religious change that would eventually result in the Last Judgment.

Martin Luther furthered the process when he set into motion a Reformation that undermined hundreds of years of Catholicism. He challenged the corruption of the papacy, and the doctrines that were derived from and supported it – especially saints, relics and indulgences. Like Wycliffe, he insisted that people should be able to read the Word in their own language. After refusing to recant he was forced to flee.

On his way home to Wittenberg he was “kidnapped” and taken to Wartburg Castle, owned by the ruler of Wittenberg, Frederick the Wise. While he remained in hiding he began a translation of the New Testament into German. He used the new Greek version produced by Erasmus in 1516 – so it was brand new and untainted by the translation errors found in the Catholic Vulgate.

Luther’s goal was to translate the New Testament into common language, and to do this, he would venture out into towns and villages and listen to the people talking to capture the nuances of language. This translation is to Germans what the King James Version is to the English.

The Reformation marked the beginning of the restoration of the Word. By 1534 the German Bible was complete, and stands as one of the greatest achievements of the Reformation. In the years immediately following Luther’s break with the Catholic Church, other reformers followed suit. In 1526 English and Dutch translations appeared, and in 1531 the French version. In 1609 even the Roman Catholics produced an English translation of the Vulgate.

By the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century the Bible had been translated into dozens of

languages and was easily available (except where it was suppressed) because of the invention of the printing press and the expansion of the world through the discovery of the Americas, Africa and Asia.

When he nailed the *Ninety-Five Theses* to the church door, Luther could not have imagined how this act would change the course of history. The full result would not come to light until the giving of the Heavenly Doctrine.

The Heavenly Doctrine describes the Christian Church in a downward spiral from the time of the Council of Nicaea onwards. What may have seemed like theological quibbling over the nature of the Lord in 325 developed into a sequence of forces with the potential of destroying everything spiritual in the Church.

By 1517 this spiral was in full force as the medieval Roman Catholic Church increasingly obliterated every good and truth, until there was very little left except the sale of salvation for money, overweening papal power, and a church, both clergy and lay, kept in ignorance of the Word. The only solution was to wipe the slate clean and begin again.

Protestants see the Reformation as this cleansing, but in the New Church world, it was only part of the beginning stages of a process that would not be complete until 1757. The Reformation had to happen or else all goodness and truth in this world, and all connection with heaven would be lost. However, the Last Judgment did not take place for another 200 years.

It is absolutely fair to ask why, if the church was in such a tremendously corrupt state in 1517, did Luther's actions cause the Reformation but not the Last Judgment. The answer is that many other things had to be in place before the Judgment and the institution of the New Church could happen.

The words written above the door of the Temple of Wisdom in *True Christian Religion* 508 state: "Now it is possible to enter with understanding into the mysteries of faith." In Luther's time the level of understanding necessary to reveal the mysteries of faith did not yet exist. Nor could that understanding exist as long as the mind was held in thrall by the Catholic Church. There could be no progress toward the Last Judgment until the Word was freely available in a language people could read and understand.

The Reformation restored the Word to people; this is the foundation of the Last Judgment and the New Church. Neither would be possible without it. So, in this sense, the Reformation was a major milestone toward the Last Judgment, and without it the New Church could not be established. Reading and studying the Word became the hallmark of Protestant churches, including the Lutheran Church in Sweden where Swedenborg grew up.

Yet more things were necessary to provide the rational terms needed for the new revelation. The Spirit of Truth would guide into all truth, but that truth needed to be expressed in ways people understood, provided through

When New Church historians consider Martin Luther and the Reformation in the light of the Heavenly Doctrine, it becomes clear that he set into motion events that would make the Last Judgment and the formation of the New Church possible.

auxiliary studies.

Liberation of thought springing up in the wake of the Reformation led people to question many of the things taught in the medieval world. The limiting dominion of Catholic thought was gradually broken, and over the next centuries human understanding would grow exponentially, both outward into the universe and inward into the human body. The mysteries of science slowly revealed themselves, philosophy asked new questions, and explored new ways of answering them.

It was as if shackles had been cast off, and people could move with a freedom never experienced before. Of course, not everyone experienced this; there was still vast ignorance, pain and cruelty in the world, for true faith and

charity could no more exist in the wake of Luther's teaching than it did in the Catholic Church. But the building blocks of the Last Judgment and the New Church were slowly being formed.

When New Church historians consider Martin Luther and the Reformation in the light of the Heavenly Doctrine, it becomes clear that he set into motion events that would make the Last Judgment and the formation of the New Church possible.

Martin Luther's *Ninety-Five Theses* did not arrest the decline of the church. The work *Brief Exposition* makes it clear that when the dust settled there was little major difference in doctrine before and after the Reformation. The Reformation may not have restored the Church, but slowed down the decline until all the other pieces needed for the New Church were in place.

One can compare this to an airplane coming in to land, but being put into a holding pattern, circling the airport until its turn to land arrives. The Heavenly Doctrine could not have been written if the Bible was still withheld from people; it could not have been published where there was no freedom of religious thought in at least some countries in Europe. It could not have contained the many scientific references if they had not been discovered.

These things did not exist during Luther's life, yet they were in place, at a sufficient level to reveal a rational teaching of truth so that when Swedenborg was well schooled in them, he could begin his work.



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#### **OUR NEW CHURCH VOCABULARY**

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

#### **MERIT**

Here we have a striking example of a term being used in the Writings with a meaning radically different from that which is in common usage. Ordinarily, “merit” has a positive connotation. It stands for goodness and worth, and conduct which is deserving of honor and praise is described as meritorious.

In the Writings, however, they are said to seek merit who suppose that they can do good from themselves, and would demand heaven as a reward which they have earned and to which they are therefore entitled, and their works are described as merit-seeking or meritorious. (See *Apocalypse Revealed* 86)

# An Opened Door to a Higher Education

## Charter Day Cathedral Address

*The Rev. Michael K. Cowley*

The text – and the (Class of 1977) banner down here to my right – are taken from the book of *Revelation*: “I have set before thee an open door.”

The second lesson mentions Swedenborg saying, “When I got closer, I saw there was an inscription over the door: *NOW IT IS PERMITTED TO ENTER . . .*”

Taking part in the procession leading up to this moment, we find ourselves seated from front to back in this House of God. We’re all here for the same reason: to celebrate the founding of the Academy of the New Church. We are remembering that time when the State of Pennsylvania officially formally recognized this brand new church movement. Twelve original signers and several others formed and constituted the membership, thus giving ultimate form to the “Academy of the New Church.” They operated as a school and also a church.

Various forms and levels of education took place after the founding: a theological school started, a college, then primary, elementary and middle school grades were added, and a high school. Over the past 140 years the work of the Academy has grown and shrunk. It’s been added to, things have been removed. All kinds of grade levels, programs, departments, schools and extensions have taken place, leading up to this moment when we sit together. Academy buildings have been erected, modified, destroyed, torn down, burned, rebuilt and remodeled here and all over the world. I come from a pastorate in Toronto which opened an Academy school back in the 1890s.

Many now mainly think of “ANC” as the Secondary Schools and their buildings. The Theological School and the College took on a different name: Bryn Athyn College of the New Church. And so, when people say “ANC” or

“The Academy” they think mostly of just you high school students. We older people have to rethink. When we hear or mention ANC to us it’s the whole “shebang.” It’s everything. And that’s what we’re here for – the high school and college and theological school. There are no elementary school children here. So we think of the Academy as an institution for “higher education.” There are lots of places where you can get “higher learning” but not like the “higher learning” this institution was grounded upon and moved to become.

So at this moment we are assembled to look at the common spiritual ancestry of the various (now educational) uses which have grown from that November 3, 1877 day when the original Charter was signed and sealed, with 12 members putting their names to it, and others becoming members of the Corporation.

That’s what we are doing here as a group, as a congregation. Individually each one of us may have different known – and perhaps some unknown – secret reasons for entering through that back door, or one of the side doors, to find our place, find your place, wherever you happen to be. Only the Lord truly knows why each of us finds ourselves seated with all the rest. A n d only He knows what we will take from here after we leave, or what you will take from the Academy after you’ve been here for a while.

We each come from a different place. We all jumped up out of bed, or rolled out of bed, or maybe dragged ourselves out of our bed, or our side of the bed. We each came from a different place this morning, different from anyone else. Some of us have come here from just across the Pike. Others from across the town, or the other side of the state, or other side of the world. To be here this morning.

We each made a journey, large or small, and this procession is an external, ritualistic symbol of the internal journey we’re taking.

Who opened that door for you to come in here from wherever it is you have come?

People open doors for each other. I had a number of people this morning open doors for me. It’s been wonderful. That’s good. And people keep the doors open.

Our lesson talks about the Lord God opening a door for you. That is the spirit of the Academy we celebrate today. Wherever you are from – local

Our lesson talks about the Lord God opening a door for you. That is the spirit of the Academy we celebrate today. Wherever you are from . . . wherever you are going in your life, be mindful of what open doors the Lord is setting before you.

So the spirit we celebrate this morning is a Spirit of Love. A higher education to train our minds to achieve, not primarily academic goals, but a training of the heart, and an ability to have a vision, to see a door the Lord places before you.

students, international students, visitors, friends – wherever you are going in your life, be mindful of what open doors the Lord is setting before you.

Doors are visions. Doors are portals to new places. Early “Academicians” asked each other, “Do you see what I see?” A star appeared in a constellation of ideas about the teachings of the New Church. “Do you see what I see?” they said to one another. So those who saw, they gathered under a banner. And open fields became the Academy of the New Church.

There is a door, there is a portal to a higher vision, to a higher education,

provided by the Academy. This door was first opened, and has been kept open by the Divine Human and not by a mortal human hand. Just as it is the Divine of the Lord who makes heaven, and the angels constitute it (*Heaven and Hell* 12), so it is the Divine of the Lord which makes the Academy of the New Church, and the students and faculty constitute it. The Lord sets before us an open door, an open vision leading us to spiritual heights of angelic wisdom.

So the spirit we celebrate this morning is a Spirit of Love: a higher education to train our minds to achieve, not primarily academic goals, but a training of the heart, and an ability to have a vision, to see a door the Lord places before you.

More than a hundred years ago, Bishop Nathaniel Dandridge Pendleton told a group such as this: “(The Academy) is for the sake of the Church, and not the Church for the sake of the Academy . . . A coldly intellectual learning will not take us to our goal, but only a learning that is based upon the law of love, the law of love to God and love to one another. All our learning, and all our doctrinal attainments, are gathered up and contained in the two great, simple principles of our religion: love to God and love to the neighbor. And the measure of our success (of the Academy movement) will depend upon how far we can put aside the passions and conceits of the natural man.” And achieve higher goals.

On a beautiful day like today, we march from the school buildings to the church. It’s a way for us to pay tribute to the Lord for the privilege of the doors He has opened over all the years to us and all who have come before us.



Wherever you are sitting this morning know that 10, 20, 50, 100 years ago a former student or teacher with his/her classmates also sat there before you.

Whose seat are you in?

You're in your own seat, because the Lord has called you this morning to sit there. But who has sat there before you?

The freshman boy, sophomore girl of today, becomes the college student a few years and rows later. After 10, 40 or 60 years they find themselves scattered further back on Charter Day. Eventually the former students and faculty don't gather in this temple but in ones like the Nunc Licet Temple mentioned in our reading, in heaven.

Now it is permitted for them to enter. And we join with them. We call upon the spirit, which is the spirit we see to be a heavenly spirit, to be with us. We will all gather, and a door will be set before all of us. This will come to pass and from here we will go to the next life's celebration, a gathering of the saints – a door will be opened which no one can shut.

Of course, all the original Charter members of the Academy (from 140 years ago) passed through that opened door set before them. When those old, now made young and freshman-faced students of a former Academy were here, they labored to bring together and establish what we enjoy today – the paths we tread to bring us here. People speak about vision, and what can be seen and achieved if we but stand upon the shoulders of giants, our past heroes?

A central vision gathered them originally, seeing the pages written by Emanuel Swedenborg, which they actually saw as pages of the Word of God written by the Hand of the Divine Human and not by a mortal hand.

This elevated vision was so powerful that they built this church. And they put a copy of the Word – that has the Old Testament, the New Testament and the Third, The Word to the New Church – upon their altar. That's what gathers us here today. It is the vision and the dedication to a belief which those of the early Academy saw.

This is the higher education, the higher vision which becomes an open door through which an even higher, more interior education can be received. We honor that vision here in the house created by that vision, by that door which was opened.

Just before we entered those back doors we stood at a threshold and could

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the early Academy saw.

It becomes our own Academy as we continue to walk the walk, when we continue to see the vision given by the Divine. He sets before us the open door which no one can shut.

see through the doorway up the aisle – almost a tunnel vision with the 12 steps up to the golden altar – the altar upon which lies the Threefold Word. This was the early Academy and the continuing Academy vision. To come and worship and to know what God has revealed by His Word.

This is the access to the Temple of Wisdom, spoken of in other passages (*Divine Providence* 36) in the Word for the New Church. A higher, interior education is set before us.

These steps, made of stone, are actually made of love.

Do you see what I see? Steps of Love?

It is permitted for us to see the steps made from love. To see the pages written by the Divine Human God of our newly opened understanding. To see, to share the vision of the Academy, not an Academy of a bunch of people who are all dead now. But as the Academy of the New Church.

It becomes our own Academy as we continue to walk the walk, when we continue to see the vision given by the Divine. He sets before us the open door which no one can shut.

He invites us to enter with our understanding to receive a higher education, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and continue to come in year in and year out to inquire and seek in His Temple.



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# The Remarkable Story of John Bigelow

*The Rev. William Hyde Alden*

*(Reprinted from New Church Life, February 1912)*

**Editor's note:** This November 25 would be the 200<sup>th</sup> birthday of John Bigelow, a man who deserves to be better known in New Church history. He was an accomplished man in many fields. His classic book, *The Bible That Was Lost and Is Found*, tells the amazing story of how he was introduced to the Writings of Emanuel Swedenborg – how he was both intrigued and skeptical, but came to embrace their teachings as clearly revelation from God. This is a slightly condensed version of the article written by the Rev. William Hyde Alden – *John Bigelow as a New Churchman* – for the February 1912 issue of *New Church Life*.

**O**n the 19th of December last there passed into the spiritual world John Bigelow, journalist, diplomat, author, philosopher, at the age of 94 years.

It is the present purpose to deal with him primarily, not in any of these capacities, but simply in his relation to the New Church; not to the New Church as an organization, for, so far as I am aware, he was not a member of the organized New Church, and with its external work he was associated only in a slight degree; but his relation to the New Church as a matter of faith and life.

His belief in the New Church was not a matter of heredity or environment. His parents were of sturdy Presbyterian stock, and his own biographical references to fears of Sabbath breaking, accentuated by “the sight of an enormous copperhead snake, all coiled up with his head erected and perfectly ready for business” in an old stump where he was about to pick certain tempting clusters of strawberries one Sunday morning, indicate that his early training was of a Puritan sort.

His first contact with Swedenborg's Writings occurred apparently by accident, when he was about 37 years of age. He had been detained by a cholera quarantine on the island of St. Thomas, of the [then] Danish West Indies. The

story may best be told in his own words in his *Retrospections of an Active Life*:

Owing to my preoccupation with the preparations for our departure from St. Thomas, I failed to make any record in my diary of quite the most important event which occurred to me in the course of my visit to the Antilles in the winter of 1853-4. During the second week of my sojourn on the island of St. Thomas, Mr. Kierolf and I chanced both to be seated in the spacious, but then otherwise deserted dining hall of Bonelli's Hotel, he at one end and I at the other, both with books in our hands.

[Here Rev. Alden added a footnote: The Writings of Swedenborg were introduced into the Danish West Indies by a Swedish jurist, Mr. H. G. Linberg, who had taken a prominent part in the early New Church movements in Stockholm and Philadelphia. He resided for some time in Harrisburg, PA., but in 1830 became Judge of the High Court of St. Croix. His first converts were two brothers, Carl A. Kierulff and U. Kierulff, attorneys-at-law in the neighboring island of St. Thomas. A small New Church Society was organized in 1841, and maintained itself for many years, but is now extinct. - C. Th. O.]

I was reading the Bible. I had read everything readable that I had brought with me from home, and had bought and read everything readable in the solitary bookstore in St. Thomas. I had done the island thoroughly, and my Bible was all that was left upon which to expend my superfluity of leisure. It so happened that I was reading the 12<sup>th</sup> chapter of Genesis, which gives the account of Abram, who had been driven by a famine into Egypt. When I had finished the chapter I said to Mr. Kierolf, "Is it not extraordinary that this book should be accepted by the most highly civilized nations of the earth as the Word of God? Just listen." I then read the verse in which the patriarch passed off Sarah, his wife, for his sister.

"This Abram," said I, "is the man whom it is pretended the Lord selected from all the people of the earth as most deserving of His favor, and promised to make of him a great nation; to bless them that bless him; to curse them that curse him, and that in him all the families of the earth should be blessed. And yet almost the first thing we hear of him is his commanding his wife to tell a falsehood, which inevitably exposed her to insult and degradation, apparently for the sole purpose of saving himself from apprehended, but as the event proved, imaginary dangers. Does not the Egyptian, whom the Bible represents as the oppressor of God's people, appear, according to our standards at least, to have been the better man of the two?"

"Well, yes," replied Mr. Kierolf, "it does appear so at first."

"But," said I, "does it not appear so all the time?"

Mr. Kierolf seemed to rather avoid a direct answer to my question, and, in turn, asked me if I had ever read any of the writings of Swedenborg. I said that I could not say that I had. "Well," said Mr. Kierolf, "in his *Arcana Coelestia* Swedenborg has given an exposition of the chapter you have been reading, which, perhaps, would satisfy you that there is more in it than you seem to suspect."

I intimated mildly that there was no obscurity about the meaning, and that I did not see how anyone could get any impression of those verses different from mine. Mr.

Kierolf then went on to explain something about an interior meaning and spiritual correspondence, etc. Failing entirely to understand what he was talking about, I asked him if he had the work to which he referred. He said he had it somewhere, but he was not sure that he had it with him in his luggage at the hotel; he would see.

He left the room and after a little returned with the first volume of the *Arcana Coelestia*, which contained, as I found on examination, Swedenborg's exposition of the verses of which we had been speaking. After running my eyes over the title page and preface and some introductory paragraphs to the 12<sup>th</sup> chapter, I read what he proceeded to give as the internal sense of the chapter which arrested my attention. I then read Swedenborg's exposition of what he terms the interior or spiritual meaning of each verse, I might say of almost every word of each verse of the chapter, occupying 45 broad octave pages. I could not make much out of his exegesis, but I was a little disappointed in one respect.

Nothing was further from my thoughts than to suppose that in this book, written over a hundred years ago, of which I had never before seen a copy, and to which, in my not inconsiderable and varied reading of the English classics, I had rarely seen an allusion, I should find anything that could change or in the least modify my opinion of Abram or of the Bible. I read from curiosity merely, expecting to drop the book as soon as I came to something – and I did not in the least doubt soon should – that would be so absurd, or improbable or illogical, as would justify me, without rudeness, in returning the book to my Danish friend with thanks.

Though I understood but imperfectly what I read I did not find what I was looking for; I found nothing that I could point to with confidence and say, "There, you see, your man Swedenborg must have been either a fool or an impostor, or both." On the other hand, I did find several curious and striking things which piqued my curiosity for example, his opening comments on the first verse of the chapter showed me that, at least, I was following a thoughtful guide. I had neither heard nor read anything like it before. [The account then goes on to quote in full n. 1408 of the *Arcana*, and continues:]

This idea, that the Word had degrees of significance which varied and expanded in exact proportion to the spirituality of a man's life was one which had never crossed my mind before, in a way to distinguish the Bible from Dante or Plato, and it seemed to me as though there might perhaps be something in it – but what? And how does he know, and what are the proofs?

Still I could not say, "This is nonsense; this is unscriptural," though the distinction made between the chapters preceding the 12<sup>th</sup> and those following, by which it was claimed that the narratives of the first 11 chapters of the Old Testament, embracing the careers of Adam and Eve, of Cain and Abel, the deluge, the building of the tower of Babel, etc., "were not matters of true history," had somewhat of a heretical, not to say profane ring. I was, however, so pleased to find that anyone had found a way of retaining his faith in the divine origin of the Bible, without being obliged to accept the account of the creation as history, that I did not feel like having Swedenborg burned as a heretic for that.

In spite of these redeeming features in his writings, however, I did not, in the least, despair of bringing him to the stake before I had done with him. I persuaded myself

that he had built up a theosophy from his imagination, and I know enough to know that no human imagination was capable of producing anything of that kind that would not bristle with weak points, which could not all escape the penetration of even so poor a theologian as I was. So I turned to other places to see what he said, for example, of Abram's subsequent misrepresentation to Abimelech; what of Isaac's repetition of the same fraud in Gerar; of the tower of Babel; of Hagar; of Jacob and his mother's scheme to deprive Esau of his birthright.

In this way I spent the entire day and looked through the whole volume. Much of it was too mystical to be intelligible to me then, but to my mortification it began to dawn upon me that it was unintelligible to me much for the same reason as the "*Mechanique Celeste*" would have been. While I ran upon many things that were quite new to me and seemed wise, I did not find anything upon which I could move to put the author out of court. On the contrary, the desire to read grew by what it fed on and began a longing to know something of the author's personality.

I met Mr. Kierolf again at dinner in the evening and said to him that I had spent the day with his friend, Swedenborg, but that the value of what I had read depended so largely upon the tenor of his life and the character he had borne in the flesh that I felt as though, before spending any more time upon his works, I would like to be enlightened upon these points.

Mr. Kierolf, therefore, ran over the prominent events of Swedenborg's life in a rather enthusiastic strain, and wound up by assuring me that no other man in history could be named who had succeeded more completely in delivering himself from the sway of the world, the flesh and the devil. And he was, fortunately, able to supply me from his luggage a collection of documents relating to Swedenborg, compiled by Professor Bush, formerly a professor of Oriental literature at the University of New York, with whom I was not only personally acquainted, but for whom both as a scholar and a man, I had the profoundest respect.

The book was entitled *Documents Concerning Swedenborg* (published by Prof. Bush in New York in 1847) and consisted chiefly of letters and publications of Swedenborg's contemporaries showing the estimate, and reasons for the estimate, in which he was held by them.

I read the book at a sitting, and laid it down with mingled surprise and mortification that I had lived till then in such dense ignorance of the career and work of so remarkable a man, at once so great and so good as Swedenborg was there shown to be, while I had spent so much of my life in trying to make myself familiar with the lives of men unworthy to unloose the latches of his shoes.

Whatever doubts I had entertained of Swedenborg's good faith and sincerity this book effectually dispelled. He might have been subject to illusions, but I had no longer any suspicions of his being an impostor. These convictions naturally increased my curiosity to know more of his writings and especially of his theology, though still my curiosity was all of a purely intellectual origin and character.

I asked Mr. Kierolf, who joined with me in employing a schooner to convey us to New Orleans, to take with him whatever books he had about Swedenborg, that I might acquaint myself with them on our voyage, for which we had made final

arrangements. More than 20 days elapsed between the time of our departure from St. Thomas and my arrival at New York.

I do not recollect but one day in all that interval that I did not pore from 10 to 12 hours over those writings. It would not be possible to convey to anyone who had not had a similar experience the effect they produced upon me, the almost insane appetite with which I devoured them, the complete revolution they wrought in all my opinions about spiritual matters, and especially about the teachings of the Bible.

Though, like the blind man in the Gospel, I as yet saw only men as trees walking, before I reached home I had acquired a thorough conviction that what I had been reading were not the words of him that hath a devil, and that Swedenborg was "a scribe instructed unto the kingdom of heaven." It seemed to me that every line I read removed some difficulty, cleared up some doubt, illuminated some mystery, revealed some new spiritual wealth in the Word of which before I had no conception. I felt that my eyes had been opened to a world of which till then I had seen only the reflection or shadow. Before reaching New Orleans I found myself on my knees, exclaiming, "Lord, I believe; help Thou mine unbelief!"

Nearly 50 years have elapsed since that voyage, and every year had given me a new sense of my obligations to Swedenborg for the Bible, which was lost and is found, and of the special Providence that in such a mysterious way introduced me to the acquaintance of Mr. Kierolf.

During my lifetime I think I am warranted in saying that the changes brought in the theology of the Christian world directly attributable, under Providence, to the teachings of Swedenborg are more important than those wrought in all the 10 centuries immediately preceding his birth.

The reading thus begun was never discontinued. For 20 years after the time of his becoming acquainted with them, he stated in an address as presiding officer of the meeting held in celebration of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the New York Society that he spent several hours a day reading Swedenborgian books. The Rev. J. K. Smyth, whose services he regularly attended for years, records that "for years it has been his custom every morning before breakfast to read a chapter from the Bible, and then a few pages from some of Swedenborg's works in the Latin." Mr. Bigelow told Mr. Smyth that "in this way he had gone through the *Arcana Coelestia* several times."

Mr. Bigelow wrote to Rev. J. F. Potts, on July 10, 1910, a letter showing his exalted appreciation and use of the *Arcana*. He says in this letter:

I have been for the last six months devoting more or less than an hour on an average every day to reading your version of the *Arcana Coelestia*, in course; and I am now approaching the end of the ninth volume. The perusal thus far impels me to express my admiration for the manner in which you have discharged your duty as translator. My acquaintance with the *Arcana Coelestia* had before been limited to occasional studies in the old edition, which I acquired many years ago and which, for reasons that perhaps no one was more to blame for than myself, I found usually very tedious. But reading it in course, as I have done in your translation, the *Arcana*

becomes to my mind, one of the very most important books in print -- I will say perhaps the most important book in print, after the Word.

I think it my duty to let you know that I, for one at least, and I hope there are multitudes who feel as I do, think that the Church is under very great obligations to you personally for the version of the *Arcana* which you have given it. No one, however, but a scholar and somewhat familiar with the original text of that book, can understand and appreciate the difficulty of transferring the spiritual revelations of Swedenborg into a tongue so essentially materialistic as ours and preserving any considerable portion of its spirituality.

In September he wrote even more urgently:

I still think, more strongly even than when I wrote you before, that the New Church ought not to give sleep to its eyes nor slumber to its eyelids till it had provided itself with as perfect a copy as possible of the original text of the *Arcana Coelestia*. . . . A perfect text of Swedenborg's version is only of less importance than a perfect original text of the different parts of the Bible. . . . Leaving the *Arcana* without a perfect and accessible form is like leaving the Ark of the Covenant with the Philistines.

How far Mr. Bigelow followed up this proposition I do not know, but the suggestion may well have been the inspiration for the recent appeal of the president of the Convention for the preparation of a revised text of the Latin *Arcana*, in which the editor should make use of the original first draft preserved by the Academy of Sciences at Stockholm.

Having missed attendance at service one Sunday, Mr. Bigelow made apology to Mr. Smyth that he had not been well and that his physician had forbidden his leaving home. "And so," he said, "when I could not go out to your pasture, I thought I would hunt about and browse for myself."

Mr. Smyth asked him, "What did you find to browse on?"

"I read through Clowes' little book on *Miracles*," he said. "All of it?" asked Mr. Smyth. "Certainly," he replied, "a sheep has more than one stomach, you know." He had even made marginal notes as he went, Mr. Smyth reports, "and he told me that he had about made up his mind to republish the book in an enlarged form as he thought it was just the sort of book for people who are troubled about that subject."

He did not take much of an interest in the organization of the Church, its ecclesiasticisms and the questions arising out of its external form and activities. On the same authority that we have already quoted, we know that "he deplored the subjects of controversy that have disquieted the Church. To him Jerusalem was a place of walls and bulwarks and not a place for throwing stones."

To an interviewer who asked him as to his being a Swedenborgian, he answered:

"I am a great admirer of Swedenborg and believe that he understood the Bible better than anyone except those who wrote it. But I do not like the



idea of sect in religious beliefs. I want the Christian Church to open its eyes to the necessity of unity and not waste its energies on sectarianism. In this matter Protestants – I dislike that word – could take a lesson from the Roman Catholics.” (*New York Herald*, October 8, 1911.)

John Bigelow was never worldly wise. Some little anecdotes which there is not space to relate here, which he himself tells, intimate his heedlessness in matters of mere money, and that his first love was for doing uses. Beginning life as a lawyer, a profession not altogether to his taste, it was deserted after a dozen years for journalism, when he became joint editor and proprietor with William Cullen Bryant of the *New York Evening Post*.

In its first year this new engagement gave him an income of \$1,500 a year. In 12 years this had increased to \$25,000 a year. In the year 1860 he sold out his interest with the intention of retiring to his library and literary work with a modest competence. But with the opening of the Civil War he was sent by President Lincoln as representative of the United States to France, first as Consul at Paris, and later as Minister to France. After his return in 1867 his life was passed in what might be called active retirement.

He records of himself that there has not been a time since he left the editorial chair that he was not collecting materials for some projected literary work. He was a trustee under the will of Samuel J. Tilden, and at the time of his death president of the trustees of the New York Public Library. But of these external interests of his life this is not the place to speak. They belong to public record, which is amply made elsewhere.

Although he was in his 95<sup>th</sup> year at the date of his death, he was never an old man. A youthful spirit, intense intellectual vigor, and active work continued almost up to the last day of his life in this world.



(Portrait) John Bigelow;  
Library of Congress

**Editor’s note:** We are indebted to Marvin Clymer, Digital Collections Supervisor for the Swedenborg Library in Bryn Athyn, for passing along this article. He notes that Bigelow’s book, *The Bible That Was Lost and Is Found*, is available in the Library and also in its New Church Digital Collections. (Go to [www.swedenborglibrary.org/digital](http://www.swedenborglibrary.org/digital), browse to Archives, then New Church People, then Bigelow, John – courtesy of SwedenborgStudy.com. Another book describing Bigelow’s life – *Forgotten First Citizen: John Bigelow* – by Margaret Clapp, is also available in the Library.

# New Christian Bible Study Project Update

*Steve David*

**H**ere's an update on the New Christian Bible Study Project. It's going really well.

In the summer, as part of our "Writings for Everyone" strategy, we ran a highly successful translation-importing work session, led by Ben Cole, and manned by high school and college students: Wes Wedell, Ben Conroy, Atticus Boatman, Zack Lambertus and Sean Frost. With their help, we imported 51 more translations of books of the Writings in Korean, Japanese, German, Italian, Serbo-Croatian, Russian, Dutch and Czech, bringing the total to 236.

It's not just students helping, either. We've been really lucky to have contract staff: Ben Cole and Annalisa Alden, and volunteers like Helen Ference, to keep marking up translations and pulling them into the system.

We're now offering the Writings online, linked to the Word and to each other, in 17 languages, which are spoken by more than 3.7 billion people. It's a hugely important step for the New Church to be taking.

There are another 50 translations on-deck, waiting to be processed. We've even got several in as-yet-unimported languages for us, Malayalam and Zulu. There's a lot of work in these 50, because we've done short works in each language, to cut our teeth on them, and saved long ones like *Arcana Coelestia* for last, when our importing tools are as good as they can get.

Speaking of importing tools, it's taken hard work by Roy Odhner, Yan Sun, Laird Cooper and others to get our importing system to the point where it can correctly do the lion's share of reference-tagging automatically, making it much easier on the human taggers.

None of this would work without the dedicated translators and publishers that seem to crop up throughout the New Church worldwide. The New Church seems to grow more than its fair share of talented people – like Elaine Kim, Henk Weevers, Bagrat Mamasakhvili, and Lenka Machova – who work carefully to make Swedenborgian ideas available to their countrymen and women. It's inspiring!

All this builds on the financial support that's been provided to translators, publishers and to the NCBSB, which comes from committed New Church people who see clearly how important this work is, and decide to invest in it.

When you put it all together, you get something pretty powerful. The "Writings for Everyone" effort is far from finished, but a lot has come through the pipe already, and there's strong momentum. If *New Church Life* readers want to help with text-processing, we can show you how to help. And if you want to help fund the work, we can show you how to do that, too!

### The "Cover to Cover Commentary" Project

Back in 2011, when we were putting together our first designs for this project, we did a lot of research. We wanted to find good ways to explain the internal sense of the Word, cover to cover. We found to our surprise that there was **already** New Church commentary for almost the whole Word. Some was new, and a lot was old. Some went verse by verse, and some went story by story. Some was fairly concise; a lot was not.

We realized that we could, by importing texts that already existed, provide a baseline set of New Church commentary covering the New Church canon. This past spring, we finally had a chance to tackle this body of work in earnest. Annalisa Alden led the way on it, with Laird Cooper and Yan Sun providing key assists with programming.

We parsed and imported the works listed in the table below, so that a person reading the Word can see a cohesive explanation of the internal sense, side by side. *Arcana Coelestia* provides that for *Genesis* and *Exodus*, and *Apocalypse Revealed* covers the book of *Revelation*, but elsewhere, it's really helpful to have this derived commentary. On our site, it's available to Bible readers when they click the "Study the Inner Meaning" button.

<b>Book</b>	<b>Commentary</b>	<b>Author</b>
Leviticus	The Book of Leviticus Interpreted	H. Maclagan
Numbers	The Book of Numbers Interpreted	H. Maclagan
Deuteronomy	A Study of the Internal or Spiritual Sense of Deuteronomy	A. Payne
Judges, 1 Samuel, 1 Kings, 2 Kings, Daniel, Ezekiel, Isaiah, Jeremiah	The Parables of the Old Testament Explained	E. Mitchell
1 Kings, 2 Kings	The Two Books of Kings Explained	H. Maclagan
Daniel	The Book of Daniel Explained	A. Dibb

Matthew	The Gospel According to Matthew Explained	J. Clowes
Mark	The Gospel According to Mark Explained	J. Clowes
Luke	The Gospel According to Luke Explained	J. Clowes
John	The Gospel According to John Explained	J. Clowes

We also cleaned up a bunch of other commentary, and saved it in *.pdf* form. We'd like to do more with it, at some point, but for now it's online, clean, and well-organized. Here's a list of those resources:

<b>Book</b>	<b>Commentary</b>	<b>Author</b>
Genesis	Allegories of Genesis	Thomas A. King
Exodus, Deuteronomy	Essays on the Ten Commandments	H. Odhner
Genesis, Exodus	Survey of the Arcana Coelestia	H. Odhner
Genesis	The Story of Creation in Genesis	T. Pitcairn
Genesis	Creation	H. Odhner
Genesis	The Language of Parable	W. Worcester
Exodus	The Tabernacle of Israel	G. de Charms
Many Books	Bible Study Notes	Anita S. Dole
Matthew, Mark, Luke, John	The Miracles of Jesus Christ	J. Clowes
Genesis	The Path: The Inner Life of Jesus Christ	Geoffrey S. Childs
Many books	The Tree of Life	LG Hoeck
Psalms	The Psalms	J. Clowes
1 Samuel, 2 Samuel, 1 Kings, 2 Kings	The First Three Kings of Israel	W. Bruce
Daniel	The Book of Daniel	W. Hinkley
Matthew, Mark, Luke, John	The Parables of Jesus Christ Explained	J. Clowes
Matthew, Mark, Luke, John	The Parables of the New Testament Explained	E. Mitchell
Joel	An Exposition of the Prophecy of Joel	J. Hyde
Revelation	Commentary on the Revelation of St. John	W. Bruce

Matthew	Commentary on the Gospel According to Matthew	W. Bruce
John	Commentary on the Gospel According to St. John	W. Bruce
Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi, Most books...	Minor Prophets, Major Message	G. McCurdy
	The Sower	W. Worcester

Overall, the cover-to-cover commentary effort is coming along nicely. It's useful and accessible now to the world's Bible readers. It's a great resource for ministers and teachers, and it provides a strong platform for current New Church explainers to use. We hope to parse more of it, as time and funds allow, and we want to add a steady flow of new explanations, too.

We would like to express our appreciation for the help and generosity of Andy Dibb, George Dole, The Swedenborg Foundation, George McCurdy and Dove Press, Jon and Karin Childs and Fountain Publishing, Chuck Ebert and NewSearch, Carroll Odhner and the Swedenborg Library, and others, for providing much of this material. We've been awed by the level of scholarship and dedication that is evidenced by this body of work, and by the steady support for publishing, over many years, provided by the Swedenborg Society, the Swedenborg Foundation, and the New Church branches. How did people ever do this work without computers?

#### **How's Traffic?**

We're seeing 140,000 site visits a month now, up 102% from this time last year. That's good! We're happy, but it's still a long way from the traffic that the top Bible Study sites get. The road to being a top-tier Bible Study site is going to require a bunch of steps. If we can keep taking them, we can hope to see 100x growth.

#### **What's next? We want to really help people on their spiritual journeys.**

We are planning to gradually shift more emphasis to helping users get what they need. Until now, we've placed a lot of emphasis on stocking the shelves with content. That's been a fundamental, important, necessary thing – but it's not sufficient.

To make the site more and more useful to visitors, we need to be really good at helping people make spiritual progress. We have been thinking about

how best to do that. We've benchmarked other sites, and talked with some stakeholders. Here are some of the things we want to tackle:

- We want to offer pathways – so that a user can choose an interesting path, and follow it: start here, then try this, and this, and this...
  - They could be “read the Bible in a year” paths, or
  - Topical paths, e.g. “Fighting Addiction” or “Wrestling with Doubt” or “What the Bible says about Parenting” or many other possibilities.
  - Start with solo paths, with resources that are primarily one-way, where users could read, watch videos, listen to podcasts, keep track of where they left off, etc.
  - Then we could gradually work our way up to offer shared paths, perhaps with coaching/mentoring in collaboration with the clergy, or to small groups that study together – secure, confidential, maybe anonymized groups.
- Pandora-model: This is related to the pathways idea. In Pandora, users can make their own radio stations, that play things that the user selects. Users can have private stations, or public ones. We could have users who construct Bible Study paths, and share them with friends, or with all users. See [www.pandora.com](http://www.pandora.com)
- LibraryThing – The site, [www.librarything.com](http://www.librarything.com), provides another interesting model for us. On that site, users can add their libraries, share what books they like, join groups of people who have shared interests, and talk together. It's a good model for us to look at for crowd-sourcing and for study groups.
- Stack Exchange is another interesting model for us, and a potential source of tooling for Q&A and discussion groups. Our software developers (and 40 million other developers each month) use it as a go-to place to get focused advice on technical questions.
- Bible Gateway, Bible Study Tools, Crosswalk, and many other Bible Study sites offer reading plans, daily devotions, daily emails, and articles like “10 things that the Bible says about x”. We think they all have some useful ideas, and we want to create something similar that comes to it from a New Church perspective.
- The “spiritual Fitbit” – what might that look like?

### **Can New Church People Help with the Project?**

Yes! People can import sermons, write explanations, proofread, find or create photos and artwork to illustrate stories and concepts, pitch in on software development. We very much need people to donate money to help fund the work. More and more, it's getting to be a crowd-sourced project. Check it out, and get in touch! Here's a link to our "Get Involved" page: <https://newchristianbiblestudy.org/get-involved>.

**Website:** [www.newchristianbiblestudy.org](http://www.newchristianbiblestudy.org)

**Contact for Steve David:** [sdavid@skymark.com](mailto:sdavid@skymark.com)

# The Symbolism of the Psalms: A Spiritual Commentary

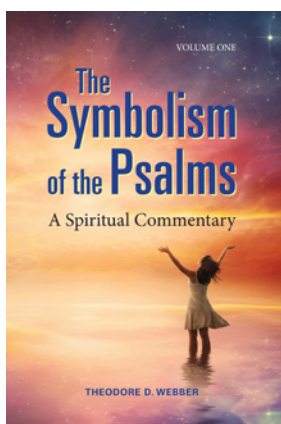
*Reviewed by the Rev. Dr. James F. Lawrence*

**A** Swedenborgian verse-by-verse spiritual meaning of all the *Psalms*! In a landmark work in Swedenborgian biblical spirituality, Theodore D. “Doug” Webber has just released volume one of a projected three-volume study of the Swedenborgian meaning of the *Psalms*.

*The Symbolism of the Psalms: A Spiritual Commentary* proceeds with the same method of Swedenborg’s continuous interpretation of *Genesis*, *Exodus* and *Revelation*. Each chapter contains the biblical text first (the full psalm), followed by a brief summary of the main spiritual theme(s) of each psalm, which is then followed by a thorough verse-by-verse discussion of the correspondences. At 550 pages for 40 psalms, the treatment of the symbolisms of the text presents abundant material from Swedenborg’s Writings and steady cross-references to other biblical instances of the same terms.

This new work is similar to the long out-of-print 1837 work on the *Psalms* by the Anglican priest Rev. John Clowes (1743-1831) that carried the title, *The Psalms: A New Translation from the Hebrew with the Internal Sense and Exposition*. Webber’s method, from his skill being trained in Hebrew, improves translation of the *Psalms* so that it accords closest to what Swedenborg would have been working with via his primary biblical text, the *Schmidius Bible*.

For every verse, wherever Swedenborg has commentary either in his own posthumously published workbook, *Prophets and Psalms*, or in another work, Webber relies on that. For verses or whole psalms on which Swedenborg never directly commented, he relies on Swedenborg’s spiritual meaning of the same Hebrew word that shows up in other parts of Swedenborg’s biblical commentary.





An amazing feat, we now will have a new complete and thorough Swedenborgian spiritual meaning for all 150 psalms. It is a must for every serious Swedenborgian's library. The work can only be purchased through Amazon – when last checked for \$25: [https://www.amazon.com/s?ie=UTF8&page=1&rh=n%3A283155%2Cp\\_30%3AApocryphile%20Press](https://www.amazon.com/s?ie=UTF8&page=1&rh=n%3A283155%2Cp_30%3AApocryphile%20Press)

Though long active in a San Jose Swedenborgian discussion group associated with the San Francisco church, Doug Webber is an independent scholar with a degree in Near Eastern Studies at the University of California. He studied ancient languages of the Middle East while living there. He has also published on Amazon a combined work that puts *Apocalypse Revealed* and *Apocalypse Explained* together, as well as the major works of Swedenborg in a multi-volume work: *The Divine Revelation of the New Jerusalem*.

In addition, Doug Webber is a specialist on Nostradamus and has appeared as a guest on programs on Nostradamus and is the author of *The Decoded Prophecies of Nostradamus*.

**Note:** An article by Doug Webber, *A Search for Truth*, appeared in the March/April 2014 issue of *New Church Life*. **Jim Lawrence** is Dean of the Center for Swedenborgian Studies and Assistant Professor of Spirituality and Historical Studies at the Pacific School of Religion in Berkeley, California. Contact: [jlawrence@psr.edu](mailto:jlawrence@psr.edu).

# Church News

*Compiled by Bruce Henderson*

## **GENERAL CHURCH BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

**Bishop Brian Keith** reported at the September 29-30 General Church Board of Directors meeting that the Advisory Committee had conducted a retreat to consider church-wide needs and ministerial resources. **Jim Adams**, Managing Director of the Academy Secondary Schools, has been added to the Communication Committee as an Academy representative to expand dialogue between the boards and the clergy. The European Assembly in England went well, with about 100 participants from eight countries.

**Vice President Peter Buss Jr.** reported that the new General Church Education website is up and running, with enthusiastic acclaim. ([www.newchurchvineyard.org](http://www.newchurchvineyard.org)) A new health curriculum is being implemented in General Church schools and generating useful conversations. The Women's Task Force report has been considered by many of the clergy. There is support for the approach but some concern about the implementation of recommendations.

**Executive Director David Frazier** reported an approximate \$40,000 surplus for fiscal year 2017. This is the first time a surplus has been recorded since 2007 – after nine years and almost \$11 million in deficits.

He also noted that the International Committee is working on:

- Clarifying global vision of where we expect to be in 3-5 years
- How to improve collaborative decision-making between central and local offices
- Dealing with distance, culture and language barriers

Strategic planning metrics indicate positive tracking in General Church Education and Outreach. Three areas will be studied to clarify goals and better understand successes and areas needing improvement.

The Board of Directors voted not to pursue the possibility of converting Cairncrest – current home of the General Church offices in Bryn Athyn – into an elegant inn.

A comprehensive study had determined the financial feasibility of such a use and four plots had been identified as potential sites for a new General

Church office building. But the clergy were united in opposition to a church-owned inn on moral and mission appropriate grounds and the board agreed.

The Board will invite broad community input for alternate uses which can produce adequate funding for the Cairncrest property – including continued use as the General Church office building, viable alternatives, or selling the building and/or part of the property – providing there is alignment with religious principles and mission.

**Mark Wyncoll** reported for Advancement that the number of donors is up 10% but total contributions are down 3.5%. More personal contacts are being made and additional e-newsletters sent to members and friends.

General Church treasurers met the first weekend in November in Boulder, Colorado.

## ACADEMY BOARD OF TRUSTEES

### (September meeting)

Bryn Athyn College President **Brian Blair** reported fall enrollment of 320 full-time students, and a total enrollment of 351 including the Theological School, MARS program and part-time students.

He also made the case for a new Student Union and Conference Center for the College, for which \$12 million has been contributed anonymously to cover design and construction costs.

He said the Brickman Center cannot continue to hold all the events needed; that students need more social and recreational space; more space is needed for conferences and major social gatherings; the College eventually will need more dining space, and this facility could be expanded if necessary.

This multi-level facility – to be located between Pendleton Hall and the new residence halls on College Drive – would include a food court, recreation room, fitness center, meeting rooms, study areas, and state-of-the-art video and conference equipment.

It is anticipated the building will generate sufficient revenue through student fees, conferences and other rentals to offset operating costs.



An architect's rendering of the proposed new Student Union and Conference Center

The Board also expressed its deep gratitude to the Glencairn Foundation for a \$2 million grant for the purchase of the Michael and Geneva Pitcairn property.

**(October meeting)**

The Finance Committee reported both the College and Secondary Schools were over budget for 2016-17, with deficits becoming larger for the first time since steps were taken in 2012 to bring the budget under control. In the College this was due to enrollments not meeting projections, although the largest class in history has just been admitted and recruiting is ahead of schedule for next year. There were multiple reasons in the Secondary Schools: a large freshman class required triple sectioning and more staff, financial aid demands were significantly higher, and a major donation shifted from operations to endowment.

The Fieldcrest property on Byberry Road is moving slowly toward a final sale.

**Marty Nash** will be retiring as Executive Administrative Assistant before Christmas and **Jackie Cranch** has been hired as an Administrative Assistant, starting in mid-November.

**James Uber**, a former member of the Board, was elected Secretary, replacing **Joseph Seckelman**, who remains on the Board. Joe was thanked for his service.

For Bryn Athyn College President Brian Blair reported that it is shifting to a tuition-based model rather than endowment driven. Rentals provide a new source of income. The number of donors has increased, with the greatest percentage of alumni giving of all but two Pennsylvania colleges and universities. The College is developing a New Church welcoming area in the Brickman Center, clearly stating its religious mission. It is on target for close to 500 enrollment in 2020-2021 and a balanced budget.

For the Secondary Schools Managing Director **Jim Adams** reported that endowment income is about half of what it was 10 years ago. Administrative costs have been cut by \$1 million and overall operating costs are slightly below what they were 10 years ago. The financial aid structure is being addressed and additional endowment sought to offset deficits. The schools continue to do well in athletics, with numerous team championships, and a large percentage of students are involved in performing arts. More events are live streamed for parents, alumni and supporters.

Director **Brian Henderson** reported that Glencairn Museum's revised mission statement has been unanimously approved. The Mythology Camp had 77 students and was staffed with ANC Secondary Schools and College students. There was a budget surplus of almost \$600,000 last year, primarily

due to an increase in endowment payout, which is not being spent. This is important because museums are endowment driven and some major expenses are expected in the next 10 years.

Dean **Andy Dibb** reported that there are four students in the Theological School this year.

**Mark Wyncoll**, Manager of Giving Operations for the General Church, has been named Planned Giving Coordinator for the Academy and the General Church.

Investment Committee chair **Leonard Gyllenhaal** reported that investments are up 12% this year.

Chancellor **Brian Keith** reported that in an effort to connect graduates of the Secondary Schools and the College with the General Church each received a book of the Writings with a letter from the Bishop welcoming them into the life of the Church. He also reported that Norm Norton has resigned from the Board.

#### ACADEMY CORPORATION

At the Academy Corporation meeting on Friday morning before the procession and Cathedral service, these members were re-elected: **Jill Brickman, Alan Elder, Christopher Lynch, Laird Pendleton** and **James Uber**.

Elected as new members were: **Justin Allen, Susan deMaine, Eli Echols, Jonathan Kline, Chad Odhner** and **David Radcliffe**.

**Maj. Gen. Frederick A. Fiedler** was moved to emeritus status.

Retiring from the Corporation and thanked for their service were **Andrew Damm** and **James Horigan**.

#### CHARTER DAY 2017

This year's Academy Charter Day celebration was a week later than usual (October 19-23) but the weather was sunny and summery throughout. That matched the mood of attendees and reunion classes – including a handful proudly celebrating their 75<sup>th</sup> reunion!

The Cathedral address – *An Opened Door to Higher Education* – was delivered by the **Rev. Michael Cowley**, pastor of the Olivet New Church in Toronto, Canada. (See page 512.) The procession to the Cathedral – with the growing numbers in the College – may have been the largest in history.

Charter Day highlights included a sold-out Mix & Mingle at Cairnwood, featuring the Bostock Band; a “sold out” Student Scholarship Golf Tournament (a maximum of 144 golfers, with two foursomes starting on each of the 18 holes); a festive tailgate party at the Saturday afternoon football game; the annual Bob Eidse Run; lots of sporting events, a special exhibit by reunion artists; and the annual Bryn Athyn College Kite Day.

The tailgate party featured lunch and snacks sold by College and Secondary Schools clubs, including AKM, Deka, Phi Alpha, Sigma Delta Pi, the Honor Society and FeelGood. Vintage athletic jerseys were also on sale.

On Thursday evening there was a free concert in the Mitchell Performing Arts Center featuring local singers and songwriters: **Turner Adams, Michelle Chapin, Aurelle Genzlinger, Angella Irwin, Anders Hyatt and Reade McCardell.**

(See four pages of Charter Day photos beginning on page 547.)

### **Charter Day Banquet**

**The Rev. Dr. Thane P. Glenn**, Dean of Academics at Bryn Athyn College, was emcee for the banquet, attended by 340 alumni and friends. He introduced the program, which focused on service as part of the College experience. He framed the philosophy of service with *True Christian Religion* 457: “God loves each and every human being; and because He cannot do good to them directly, but only indirectly by means of other people, He therefore breathes into people His love.”

**Maia Wyncoll**, one of two student speakers, came to the College from Kempton, Pennsylvania, with a passion for religion and hard work. She was looking for a sense of community within the College, which she found in FeelGood, a national organization with roots in Bryn Athyn that is focused on raising awareness and funding for fighting poverty.

Her roles as chair of Marketing and Public Relations, then Education and Recruitment committees, have given her the confidence to reach out to others and create a community of service.

She said: “As I learned more about the FeelGood mission, which aligns with and supports sustainable development goals, I became closer to its mission. I saw the connections between my home and FeelGood and school communities. Those principles of religion and hard work are centralized around service as a form of loving the neighbor. Service has been an integral part of my college experience and aligns strongly with the College’s mission of thinking for yourself and living for others.”

Student athlete **Jon Carr** – captain of the lacrosse team and Male Athlete of the Year – quickly took to the social responsibilities that come with the role. He saw this primarily as being an ambassador for the team in the community and around campus.

“Service work,” he said, “as inferred from the Heavenly Doctrines, is an embodiment of charity. In order to properly represent the College and my team, it was necessary to understand every aspect of the image this institution prides itself upon. Knowing that, it became a focus for myself – and the lacrosse team – to also embody the teachings of charity through our efforts.”

As part of the goal they joined with the Headstrong Foundation to raise money for cancer research – including growing mustaches as part of its “Movember” event.

This is just the beginning of a lifetime commitment. “I believe that the efforts of the coaches and the administration here at Bryn Athyn will lead the new generation of students toward spiritual and personal excellence.”

**Matthew Kennedy**, Vice President for Business Development and Athletics at the College, told a touching story about how the lacrosse team took it on themselves to “sign” a 10-year-old boy – nicknamed Chico – who was suffering from a life-threatening disease.

He was expected to live under the same rules as the team – doing his homework, cleaning his room, respecting those around him. He came to practices and games, sat on the bench, and led the team in rally cries. Their relationship grew over the years.

The team traveled to Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP) in the spring to help Chico get ready for his prom, then stayed through the night dancing with patients.

When it came time for him to undergo life-altering surgery, the team sat with him before hand and waited with his family until the surgery was successfully completed. As one student said: “Chico needed us today. He was our strength in the game. Today we were there for him.”

Matt continued: “So why is service different at Bryn Athyn College? Most colleges and universities across the country have elements of community service. What people don’t know is that our administration heard these stories of charity by our students **after** they occurred. There were no chaperones or directives for our students to build this relationship with Chico. These men had learned through our type of education that they had an opportunity to extend their use.

“There are countless stories that go unheard about meaningful service that our students do every day. What is different at Bryn Athyn is that our mission is embedded in everything we do. These stories are evidence that Bryn Athyn College is preparing young adults for a life of meaningful service.”

### **Class Reunions**

In addition to that special 75th reunion class of 1942, six classes celebrated reunions and presented gifts to the Academy at the banquet. The Class of 1977 dominated with more than 70 attending. The class gifts and presenters were:

**Class of 2007, Brienne Lermite and Alex Rohtla:** Senior Project

**Class of 1997, James Cole:** ANC Scholarship Fund

**Class of 1987, Wendy Closterman:** ANC Scholarship Fund

**Class of 1977, Chara Daum:** Repair and restoration of class banners;

establish The Open Door Mentoring Fund for Secondary Schools administration to recognize and support faculty and staff establishing meaningful relationships with students outside the classroom

**Class of 1967, Charlotte Huft:** Memorial grove of dogwoods; ANC Student Scholarship Fund

**Class of 1957, Gerald Halterman:** To the Girls School to complete its *Conjugal Love* study and begin work on *Growth of the Mind*; to provide for a religion teacher to get a college degree in human sexuality; to the Bryn Athyn College Scholarship Fund

### Bryn Athyn College

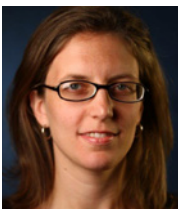
Plans were announced at a Friday evening Alumni and Friends Reception for a new Student Union and Conference Center. (See the report above for the Academy Board of Trustees.) Presentations were made to this year's Distinguished Alumni and Outstanding Volunteer.

#### Distinguished Alumni

Bryn Athyn College honors Distinguished Alumni who have achieved personal and professional success by practicing the values of New Church liberal arts education and by contributing to the communities where they live and work. This year's honorees are:



**Curtis Childs** (AA 2006): Curtis transferred from Bryn Athyn College to Oakland University in Rochester, Michigan, where he earned a degree in communications. His career path led – through several diverse jobs – to his passion: Swedenborgian outreach. He started with NewChurch LIVE, eventually heading KidsLIVE, which helped him distil Swedenborgian concepts for the minds and loves of children. He began working in online video in 2011 and was hired by the Swedenborg Foundation to build digital community and exposure for the Writings through the web. He is Digital Media Producer and his OffTheLeftEye YouTube videos are seen throughout the world. His projects have amassed more than 400,000 Facebook “likes,” nine million YouTube views and 74 million viewing minutes. Seeing so many people around the world embracing Swedenborg’s message is a constant source of wonder, inspiration and gratitude. He lives in Bryn Athyn with his wife, **Brooke (Herder)**, and their daughter.



**Becca Synnestvedt Smith** (BA 2003): Becca graduated from Bryn Athyn College with a degree in French and English and recently earned a Master’s in Arab Studies from Georgetown University. She worked for six years as a defense and national security analyst after obtaining a Master’s in International Affairs from George Washington University. She spent four of those years



with the Center for Strategic and International Studies and two years in the Pentagon. She and her husband, **Lincoln**, are members of the Washington New Church where she runs the local Theta Alpha and directs the Parent Service Program for the school. Her interests include U.S. history and foreign affairs, the Middle east, Islam and Muslim-Christian relations, Arabic and sustainable agriculture.

**Lincoln Smith** (BA 2003): Lincoln earned a Bachelor's in English at Bryn Athyn College and says he has been using the critical thinking and communications skills learned there ever since. He earned a Master of Arts in Landscape Design from the Conway School of Landscape Design and worked in high-end landscape architecture for five years before founding Forested in 2012, a forest-garden company in Mitchellville, Maryland. He is helping to create a shift toward forest agriculture, a farming approach designed to restore environmental health while producing abundant food and supplies. He is passionate about production ecosystems and lectures at a wide range of venues – from the U.S. Botanical Garden to Bryn Athyn College. His work has been featured on National Geographic and other media. His website: *www.forested.us*.



**Outstanding Volunteer**

**Laurie McQueen Horan** (AA 1976): After earning her Associate Degree Laurie continued taking courses in the College before transferring to the Tracey Warner School of Fashion Design in Philadelphia. She and **Richard Horan** were married in 1981 and lived in Mitchellville, Maryland, for 21 years before moving to Bryn Athyn. She found many opportunities to help in the New Church schools that served their five children but felt especially drawn to the College. She got involved with the new Bryn Athyn Alumni Association, serving as Secretary for many years and has continued to serve on the board.



**Academy Secondary Schools**

Every year since 1992 the Secondary Schools have honored Distinguished Alumni – two each for the Girls School and Boys School – who often are chosen from reunion classes.

They are invited to speak to the seniors about what the Academy has meant in their lives and how its influence can help to guide the lives and careers of these young people. These are alumni “whose personal and professional achievements model New Church values. (They) continue to impact the Academy Secondary Schools through generous contributions of their time, talent and treasure.”

The Distinguished Alumni and Outstanding Volunteers are honored that night at a dinner with their spouses, the school principals, and guests from the Academy faculty and administration. This year's honorees are:

**Distinguished Alumni**



**Maj. Gen. Fred Fiedler**, U.S. Air Force (Retired) (BS 1957):

Fred grew up in rural Colorado, attended the Boys School for two years and Bryn Athyn College for one year. He graduated from the United States Air Force Academy and had a distinguished 30-year career as an Air Force pilot. Since his retirement in 1992 he has consulted in the defense industry. He served for six years of the Academy Board of Trustees, chairing a joint board/community committee to make all Secondary Schools and College buildings as accessible as possible. This was inspired by a serious brain injury to one of his sons. He was appointed by the Governor of Arizona to two terms on the Council on Head and Spine Injuries. Fred also served six years on the General Church Board of Directors. He and his wife, **Barbara (Allen)**, live in Arizona. They have four children – all of whom graduated from the Secondary Schools, and six grandchildren.



**Burton Friesen** (BAC AA 1959): Burt was born in Boggy

Creek, Manitoba, Canada, one of 11 children. He is grateful for loving parents and has lived a blessed life “thanks to Divine Providence for stewarding me in my journey.” He says attending Bryn Athyn College was a life-changing experience. He graduated from Penn State University and got his teacher certification from the University of Manitoba. After his first day of teaching he knew he had found his calling. He married “the only girl I’ve ever loved” – **Margaret (Rae) Champion**. They raised their family in Bryn Athyn where he began teaching science and coaching ice hockey in the Boys School in 1968 and served as Principal from 1982 to 1989. He says: “It was a wonderful experience to work with a dedicated New Church faculty, not to mention all the great memories of having been involved in the education of so many wonderful young people in the Church.”



**Sharon Jungé** (GS 1977): Inspired by Margit Boyesen’s

course on Anatomy and Physiology in the Girls School, Sharon went into health care, completing college, medical school and a family medicine residency, then embarking on a career focused on underserved populations. She has worked in seven states and five continents – from the Outback in Australia to the jungles of Brazil and an island in Alaska. Her most recent adventure was teaching in a medical school in Tanzania, East Africa, through an assignment with the Peace Corps.

**Noël Klippenstein** (GS 1987): Noël was Deka president in her senior year and was active in athletics, playing field hockey, volleyball, track (at Lower Moreland), managed lacrosse, and was involved with the yearbook, Factores, Social Committee and choir. She attended Bryn Athyn College for one year, then earned a BS and Master's in Education at Virginia Tech. She returned to Bryn Athyn to teach physical education with Bob Eidse in the Bryn Athyn Church School, helping to enlarge the sports program. She was head basketball coach for the Girls School for three years. In 1997 she moved to Fairfax, Virginia, to coach lacrosse, volleyball and basketball for the past 23 years.



**Outstanding Volunteer**

**Kenneth Schauder:** Ken is married to **Glynn (Cole)** (GS 1974) and they have six grown children and two grandchildren. He owns a landscaping business, is Mayor of Bryn Athyn, Deputy Emergency Management Coordinator for the borough and has been a volunteer firefighter and EMT for 37 years. He has served on the board and as president of the Glencairn Foundation. He loves to scan text books for the Secondary Schools so that students can access them online. He has helped with the faculty and Support Center for many years. He looks forward to the day when he can be replaced in his volunteer uses but loves them too much to give them up now.



**Theta Alpha Luncheon**

The Theta Alpha luncheon program featured a panel on creative writing. Excerpts were read by **Gayal “Tikah” Echols** and the panel of presenters included **Estelle Rogers, Abbie Nash** and **Merry Farmer**. Illustrators presenting included **Sylvia Odhner** and **Jency Latta**. A Q&A session followed with the panel.

In the business meeting preceding the program, elected to Theta Alpha International were: President, **Janet Krettek**; Vice President, **Carla Reuter**; Treasurer, **Melody Greer**; Secretary, **Brita Conroy**.

**Reunion Artists**

In what has become a Charter Day tradition, a special art exhibit featuring the work of reunion class artists opened with a reception on Thursday afternoon in the Fine Arts Center (Old Library). The exhibit remained for several weeks. On hand to talk about their art were:

- Gwenn Synnestvedt Hodgell** (GS '57)
- Gail Morey Simons** (GS '67)
- Karen Childs Elder** (GS '77)

**Linda Simonetti Odhner** (GS '77)

**Candy Rose Quintero** (GS '77)

**Ryan Sandstrom** (BS '97)

**Sasha Silverman** (GS '97)

**Briene Lermite** (GS '07)

Among comments from the artists in the program:

Briene Lermite, Photography: "As a junior in high school, I sat in a Friday assembly at ANC and listened to a woman speak about her program that facilitated gap years all over the world. In that moment, my soul caught fire and I dreamed that I'd be able to travel the globe for my work, heavily utilizing both my left and right brain. Little did I know I'd have the opportunity to realize my dreams so soon – spending time connecting with creatives who find kernels of stories that matter and helping them to tell those stories with authentic beauty."

Ryan Sandstrom, Drawing: "My joy is to create the greatest thing of all Creation, with the added human touch. Through drawing, I get a closer appreciation of what God sees when He makes these people. There's so much life to be seen through the eyes, faces and expressions. But my works aren't only to express what I see. Like all works of art from all different artists, let the works serve to help you discover some things about yourself"

Sasha Silverman, Portraits of Seven People Who Died Young: "One day a friend came to me with a touching request: would I be willing to create a portrait of her infant daughter who had passed away? The feeling I had while working on that portrait was incredibly tender. I realized that art had power beyond an objective likeness – that it could bring something to life."

**Judy Merrell** (Class of 1976) spent many hours coordinating this event.

### **Student Scholarship Golf Outing**

The 23<sup>rd</sup> Annual Student Scholarship Golf Outing at Philmont Country Club was sold out. Even before the first balls were teed up \$46,975 was raised in sponsorships. This event has raised more than \$500,000 in scholarship funds over 23 years. Thanks go to the sponsors, generous alumni and the Golf Committee that plans the event.

### **What Makes it all Happen**

Once the Charter Day weekend is over, planning starts for the next year, including debriefing meetings and surveying those who attended. The overall planning is coordinated by **Jim Adams**, Managing Director for the Secondary Schools, assisted by **Kaylene Glenn**, Events Coordinator; **Jahna Henderson**, Assistant Events Coordinator; **Amanda Lichtenstein**, Alumni Relations Manager for Bryn Athyn College; and **Chloe Kund**, Advancement Office for the College.

Final major event planning happens between January and May, and class reunion planning begins in February/March. Selection of the banquet menu – which was a big hit this year – takes place in the late spring or summer, with representatives of the reunion classes joining administrators and Advancement Office staff for taste testing and choosing the menu.



Göran Winqvist in the Cathedral

**DISTINGUISHED VISITOR**

**Göran Winqvist**, a direct descendant of one of Emanuel Swedenborg’s brothers, paid a special visit to Bryn Athyn on October 8.

Göran contacted the Cathedral a few days before coming. He was visiting New York City with a friend, Maria, who wanted to attend a service at the Old Swede’s Church in Philadelphia and he wondered if they could fit in Bryn Athyn as well. **Julia Schmucker**, administrative assistant at the Cathedral, and **Michelle Rose**, head of New Church Audio, set the wheels in motion.

Michelle and **Christine McDonald**, Education Coordinator at Glencairn Museum, picked up Göran and his friend at the Trenton train station and brought them to the 11 o’clock service, which was followed by tours of the Cathedral, Glencairn Museum and the Swedenborg Library Archives.

**The Rev. Dr. Jonathan Rose** and **Carroll Odhner**, Director of Swedenborgiana and New Church Research, led the tour of the Library, where Göran was especially interested to hear about Sweden’s Queen Sylvia’s visit for the dedication. Michelle later sent him a recording of the event, plus talks about Swedenborg from New Church Audio, and he was most appreciative.

Göran left a gift for the Library of a commemorative coin of Swedenborg, with his garden house on the back. When he returned to Stockholm, he sent Carroll and Jonathan a photo of a letter written by Swedenborg, in Swedish, which has been added to the Library’s collection.

He was very appreciative of the tours and was impressed that Bryn Athyn has schools from elementary grades through college dedicated to the revelation in Swedenborg’s Writings. He is a world traveler, newly retired, and looks forward to



Göran with a portrait of his forbear in the Swedenborg Library

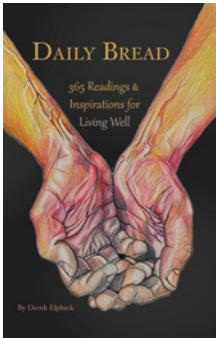
returning and spending more time in the community.

Michelle learned that Göran's grandmother liked to point out that he shared Swedenborg's birthdate – January 29. Swedenborg's remaining relatives get together every three years, usually in Stockholm, and invite a speaker – reportedly **Lars Berquist** one year. Göran and the **Rev. Stephen Cole** spent some time chatting about genealogy.

Julia says glowingly, “It was an afternoon I will never forget.” Apparently Göran Winqvist felt the same way.

(Carroll Odhner is writing up Göran's visit to the Library – with photos – in the Bi-Lines Newsletter. It is available at <https://brynathyn.edu/swedenborg-library/bi-lines/newsletter/>

#### FOR THE NEW YEAR: DAILY BREAD BY DEREK ELPHICK



*Michelle Chapin*  
*General Church Outreach*

Many of us know how important it is to spend time on a regular basis focusing on our spiritual lives and reading Scripture. Yet, committing actual time is difficult. General Church Outreach has published a new book, *Daily Bread: 365 Readings & Inspirations for Living Well* written and compiled by the **Rev. Derek Elphick**, senior pastor at Oak Arbor Church in Rochester, Michigan.

For each day of the calendar year, this book offers a brief reading from Scripture accompanied by commentary of how to bring these Biblical verses into our lives. Just one page to read for each day, allowing individuals a chance to practice integrating the Word into their lives however it best fits.

Derek draws from his wealth of experience exploring the Lord's Word over the span of his career as a pastor to bring a New Church perspective into these nourishing and informative readings. *Daily Bread* addresses a wide variety of topics such as doubt, happiness, excuses, heaven and trusting God. These and many more can be found in a topical appendix so that when an event in our lives arises, we can read a daily offering specifically on that theme.

As Derek writes: “My prayer is that you will find something to help you experience the daily care, comfort, hope and insight that the Lord provides in His Word. Whether you are in between errands, on a lunch break, waiting at a doctor's office, finishing your day or having a morning quiet time, I warmly invite you to engage the ideas here with an openness for how the Lord will lead you today.”

*Daily Bread* is available to purchase at [www.NewChristianResources.org](http://www.NewChristianResources.org) for



\$19.99. It is a perfect Christmas gift.

### LIVING WATERS CAMP

The Living Waters Camp in Paisley, Ontario, Canada, in July was hailed in its fifth year as “the best ever.” There were 83 attendees, including 17 new participants, hailing from as far away as Kamloops, British Columbia, and ranging from two months to 80-plus.

The theme was from *Joshua* 24:15: “As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.” **The Rev. Brad Heinrichs** said the focus was on “how we can pass on a love for the truth of the Lord’s Word and for His Church to the next generation.” As **Naomi Reid** reflected in *New Church Canadian*: “A thought that occurred to me as I was enjoying seeing the children play and interact with each other, wouldn’t it be wonderful if these children want to bring their own families back when they are grown and married someday? Eventually this camp could be bursting at the seams!”

Also serving the camp were the **Revs. Jared Buss** and **Nathan Cole**. Each minister took turns leading worship, doctrinal classes and discussions.

Next year’s camp is set for July 5-8.

### UPDATE ON SENIORS RESIDENCE IN KEMPTON

Kempton New Church Home, Inc., which is associated with, but independent of, the Kempton New Church, is establishing a residential, independent-living facility for senior members of the growing Kempton New Church congregation and, following them, members of the New Church from other places as well.

The facility is being crafted within the walls of a re-purposed, fairly modern elementary-school building. The design of the apartments and upgrades to the building’s infrastructure are in process, and it is hoped a few of the units will be ready by the end of 2018 for those who are waiting to live there.

Only a lack of funding stands in the way. If you are moved to help launch this important use, feel free to contact Tom Kerr, president of Kempton New Church Home, Inc., for details at [tjkerr3@gmail.com](mailto:tjkerr3@gmail.com), (610) 756-4376, or P.O. Box 162, Kempton, PA 19529.

### MARS PROGRAM

The Master’s of Arts in Religious Studies (MARS program) was instituted by Bryn Athyn College in 1996 to provide advanced education for lay people in New Church thought and scholarship. In its two decades it has graduated 40 students with more on the way.

For each student the program culminates in a thesis with a New Church focus. This research is vital for the students and the Church. It is building a

storehouse of knowledge for a New Church perspective and world view.

Developing our world view is our gift to humanity. Taking what the Lord has given we shape it to provide a new way to understand world events and new ways to act in the world. We hope to implement additional tracks: one focused on Death and Dying, the other on Philosophy.

Listed below are the courses offered in the winter and spring terms in 2018. We will add additional courses as interest, resources and funding permit. The courses also are available as synchronistic distance courses.

For more information please contact Dr. Jane Williams-Hogan, 267-502-2501 or at either [jane.williams-hogan@brynathyn.edu](mailto:jane.williams-hogan@brynathyn.edu) or [Janewh@dwave.com](mailto:Janewh@dwave.com).

Winter term, beginning January 2: **Church History 587: Divine Presence over Five Dispensations.** A study of how the Lord addressed the changing spiritual needs of humanity in the five churches described in the Heavenly Doctrine. Demonstrates why the New Church is the “crown” of the churches. Seminar – 5 sessions; 1.5 Credits. *Staff: The Rev. Stephen Cole*

Beginning February 5: **Theology 513: Transitions, Perspectives of Death and Resurrection.** This course explores the role of society in the death experience, the psychological states leading to and from death, and New Church teaching on the resuscitation process. Seminar – 3 sessions; 1 Credit. *Drs. Jane Williams-Hogan, Erica Hyatt and Andrew Dibb*

Spring term

**Theology 522: The Doctrine of Life** (April 2 - May 4) The nature and practice of religion, the foundation of the Ten Commandments, and the role of human choice. Five sessions, 1.5 credits. *The Rev. Grant Odhner*

**Religious Studies 550: Swedenborg’s Life and Times.** The Swedish context for Swedenborg’s intellectual and spiritual development, call and revelatory works. Examines the geography, history, culture and society of Sweden in Swedenborg’s time. Seminar – 10 Sessions; 3 Credits. *Dr. Jane Williams-Hogan*

**Theology 501: Heavenly Doctrines as Systematic Theology.** An introduction to important perspectives on general theology and the Heavenly Doctrines by studying the core teachings and the interrelationship of major New Church doctrines.

Seminar – 10 Sessions; 3 Credits. *The Rev. Prescott A. Rogers*



CHARTER DAY 2017  
(Photos courtesy of Holly Adams)



Left to right: Hannah Dewees, Jamie Reynolds and Samuel Barriskell



David Uber



Student Government President Alex Hyatt



Redate Kibret



Left to right: Laura Clymer, Maia Wyncoll, Sierra Phillipi and Alair Brock



Left to right: Bryan Martinez, Spencer Cartier, Ashley Walsh, Alex Hyatt, Redate Kibret, Marie Daum, Calvin Heinrichs, Katharina Karenbauer, and Vojtech Luza

CHARTER DAY 2017  
(Photos courtesy of Holly Adams)



Charter Day Banquet



John and Lori Odhner, with their children Hope, Aurelle and Zack



Kyle Genzlinger tees off at the golf outing



Michaela Boyesen and Nora Roscoe during the Charter Day Banquet



Zahir Reed runs the ball for a touchdown



Brent and Linda McCurdy with their daughter Nicole



CHARTER DAY 2017  
(Photos courtesy of Holly Adams)



Teresa and Peter Buss



Phi Alpha grilling during the Football Game Tailgate



Classmates Terrence Johnson and Blake McCurdy reconnect during the BAC Alumni Reception



Jennifer Allen and Aileen Synnsvedt at the golf outing



Nina Dewees with her children Hannah, Teagan and Kevyn



Back row left to right: Erika Smith, Sarah Jackson, Rosemary Fuller, Caroline Brock, Avery Phillips  
Front row left to right: Marie Daum, Ashley Smith and Sierra Phillipi



Chara Daum presenting a class gift during the Charter Day Banquet

CHARTER DAY 2017  
(Photos courtesy of Holly Adams)



Left to right: Leah Antwi, Julia Schriver, Emma Reuter and Maggie McCabe



Students singing on the cathedral lawn



Left to right: Will Schenk, Matt Thygeson, Francis Xi, Anthony Grassella



Left to right: Lauryl Mergen, Libby Allen, Caitlin Irwin and Waverly Wadsworth



Back row left to right: Lisa Antwi, Gavin Hungaski, Navon Cooper, Jared Banks, Ricky Amorim  
Front row left to right: Kaitlyn Pierce, Kaylee Smith, Mariah Sellner, Leah Antwi



# Life Lines

## THE STILL SMALL VOICE

When Hurricane Irma was churning through Florida back in September, the Rev. Jeremy Simons noted in his Pastor's Message in the *Bryn Athyn Post* that the media were calling it a "heartless storm." But, he said, "Perhaps more than anything else, natural disasters illustrate the difference between natural and spiritual things . . . that nature is heartless, it has no mercy, whereas spiritual life is all about mercy."

Besides the hurricanes assaulting the Caribbean and the Southeastern United States, we have seen an earthquake in Mexico City, forest fires in California and the American northwest, and flooding in Asia. Such natural disasters used to be called "acts of God," but we know the Lord never wills such tragedy. These are permissions – whose fury is matched by the Lord's mercy.

The Sermon on the Mount reminds us: "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you . . . that you may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sendeth rain on the just and the unjust." (*Matthew 5:44-45*)

Our natural world is governed by physical laws, and we live in freedom between the conflicting influences of heaven and hell. And so we witness and experience tragedy and disruption – without apparent mercy for the victims. But heaven is governed by spiritual laws – by the Lord's love and mercy. On earth our peace is often threatened. In heaven there is always "the peace that passeth understanding."

This is the Lord's mercy: "Peace I leave with you. My peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you." (*John 14:27*)

Even in the wake of hurricanes, earthquakes, fires and floods, the assurance is always there. When Elijah was commanded to stand upon the mount before the Lord, "a great and strong wind rent the mountains and broke in pieces the rocks before the Lord; but the Lord was not in the wind: and after the wind an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake: and after the earthquake a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire: and after the fire a still small voice."

That is what we always need to be hearing and heeding as turmoil rages around us – the still small voice of the Lord, speaking to us of love and mercy.

(BMH)

**TEACHABLE MOMENTS**

Beyond the ravages of nature is growing turmoil in our culture. Just one example is the trend of professional athletes kneeling in protest against their flag and country during the pre-game playing of the National Anthem. Raising consciences about perceived injustice, racial oppression and police brutality is legitimate. More effective is getting involved in real solutions, and some individuals and teams do noble work in their communities.

For example, the Baltimore Ravens met as a team with law enforcement officials to explore ways to work together. Chris Long of the Philadelphia Eagles, who grew up in Charlottesville, Virginia, and attended the University of Virginia there – where tensions had erupted earlier this year – is donating his entire million-dollar salary this year for education. He and his wife are passionate about education as a gateway for upward mobility and equality.

But the movement has gotten out of hand – filtering into colleges, high schools and even elementary schools. A third-grade football team took to their knees during the Anthem to “show solidarity” with the protests. Obviously these eight-year-olds did not decide this on their own. Their coach said he took advantage of a “teachable moment” to enlighten and encourage them.

What coaches, teachers and parents should be educating their children about is that yes, protest is part of our freedom. But with freedom also comes opportunity and responsibility to address our grievances in positive ways.

The most important words in the Constitution that underlies American freedom are the first: “We the people.” This makes clear that we are a “government of the people, by the people, for the people.” It is up to us to make this country what we want it to be. That is true of any free democracy. With our values and our actions we define what our nation stands for.

No nation ever achieves all of its goals or completely realizes its vision, but it is the mutual striving and commitment that make the difference.

When the Constitutional Convention completed its work in Philadelphia in 1787, a woman passing by asked Benjamin Franklin: “Well, Doctor, what have we got – a Republic or a Monarchy?” He famously answered: “A Republic – if you can keep it.”

It was up to the people if this noble experiment could survive. It still is – and it is a never-ending process and challenge.

French philosopher Alexis de Tocqueville toured this infant nation in the early 1800s and his observations in *Democracy in America* still resonate. He found an idealism here which recognized that the country – and its government – would always be in a state of improvement and of rising to challenges. That is still the calling to free citizens everywhere – to recognize that each of us has both opportunity and obligation to make things better, whether it be for our

country, our church, our community, our family.

As American poet Walt Whitman once put it: “America is nothing but you and me.” It is that simple – and that profound.

Howard Fast said of the American Revolution in *Citizen Tom Paine*: “The revolution goes on: a man does not make the revolution, not a hundred men, not an army and not a party; a revolution comes from the people as they reach toward God, and a little of God is in each person, and each will not forget it.”

We pray each day: “Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done; as in heaven, so upon the earth.” We know that no amount of praying will bring heaven on earth. But by committing to living the life of heaven we bring it closer. And kneeling takes on real purpose – not protest.

Talk about teachable moments.

(BMH)

### AGAINST THE TIDE

Sadly, much of the decline in our culture is happening where it should be most protected – in the halls of “higher learning.” Our colleges used to be rooted in traditional values, free speech, open minds, spirited inquiry and critical thinking. Now too many of them – especially in the “elite” tier – aggressively promote a progressive ideology. They are all about diversity, inclusion, social transformation and protecting against offense, and have all but abandoned their religious roots.

One sad example: Late in the summer a pair of law professors – one from the University of Pennsylvania Law School, the other a law professor from the University of San Diego – wrote an op-ed for the *Philadelphia Inquirer* calling for a revival of the cultural norms of the 1950s. Their message: “Get married before you have children and strive to stay married for their sake. Get the education you need for gainful employment, work hard and avoid idleness. Eschew substance abuse and crime.”

They argued that the weakening of these “traditional” norms was contributing to low job performance, declining educational levels and the rising opioid epidemic.

Not too controversial, right? Wrong. The dean of the Penn law school wrote an op-ed in the student newspaper condemning his professor’s views as “divisive, even noxious.” Half of her colleagues denounced her in an open letter and asked students to report any such cases of “bias or stereotype.” Students and alumni signed a petition accusing her of white supremacy, misogyny and homophobia – the new trifecta of social offenses. They demanded she be banned from teaching first-year law classes lest she corrupt the minds of these “adult” innocents.

The University of San Diego is a Catholic institution, but the dean of its law school publicly repudiated his professor and promised to compensate “vulnerable, marginalized” students for any “racial discrimination and cultural subordination” they experienced.

Several Penn professors snorted disdain for their colleague for embracing the “bourgeois virtues” of the ‘50s. Certainly there still were issues of inequality and injustice then but upholding marriage, hard work, personal responsibility and self-discipline should hardly be feared as threatening law students’ vulnerable psyches.

But the new “progressive” orthodoxy protects feelings above all, and condemns such views as insensitive to students who feel “vulnerable, marginalized or fearful that they are not welcomed.” The clear message is: don’t dare to challenge the smothering group-think of *academia*, no matter how valid your research or concerns.

Fortunately, not all colleges and universities bow to these new “divisive and noxious” sacred cows or “higher learning.”

Bryn Athyn College is more and more a beacon. It’s mission – among the first things an inquiring student finds on its website – says forthrightly:

“Bryn Athyn College of the New Church serves as an intellectual center for all who desire to engage in higher education enriched, guided and structured by the study of the Old Testament, New Testament and the theological writings of Emanuel Swedenborg. This education challenges students to develop spiritual purpose, to think broadly and critically from a variety of perspectives, and to build intellectual and practical skills. The ultimate purpose is to enhance students’ civil, moral and spiritual lives, and to contribute to human spiritual welfare.”

People driving the I-95 corridor through Philadelphia may be struck by a Bryn Athyn College billboard boldly proclaiming what it is all about: “Think for yourself. Live for others.”

No progressive taboos here about marriage, hard work, traditional values and personal responsibility. No fear of upsetting delicate psyches. Just a forthright commitment to help make students strong and independent, sure of their moral and spiritual values.

(BMH)

## A METAPHORICAL UNIVERSE

The letter of the Word has a spiritual meaning hidden within it, and so does the world created by means of the Word. We live in a metaphorical universe. All creation is inherently symbolic. Things seen, heard and felt in nature suggest human spiritual analogies. Birds soar, so do hopes. Cymbals and colors may



clash, and so may opinions, personalities, religions and cultures.

In the world around us, trees and rivers have branches; in the human body, the bronchial tubes that bring air to our lungs and the aorta that takes blood from our heart have branches; on the spiritual level there are branches in philosophy, government, science and other systems of thought.

On earth, rocks are heavy and a bright day follows a dark night; spiritually, someone may bear a heavy burden, go through a dark night of the soul, and finally come to the light.

The natural world is a “theater representative” of the spiritual world. “Every single thing in the sky above and on the earth beneath is representative because it has come into being, and is kept in being, from the influx of the Lord through heaven.” (*Arcana Coelestia* 1807)

Human beings inhabit both worlds simultaneously – our minds in the spiritual world and our bodies in the representative world of nature. We therefore have an instinctive sense that there are depths of spiritual meaning within nature and in our own natural existence. Who can fail to see a symbol of resurrection in the transformation of a caterpillar into a butterfly? Who doesn’t know what is meant when television is referred to as a cultural “wasteland?” Or when, during the lead-up to a conflict, there is said to be a “storm brewing?”

Nature and human nature are inextricably linked and affect each other. The natural environment affects us, physically and spiritually. It influences how we feel and think. And we, in turn, have an impact on the natural environment, our thoughts and feelings guiding us in our stewardship of it. Human beings constitute the linchpin in this interaction between the spiritual and natural worlds.

(WEO)

### **NATURE WAS DESIGNED WITH US IN MIND**

Knowing the doctrine of correspondences is a great help in understanding Scripture, but even without that knowledge there is life in the Word, the Spirit of truth, that affects everyone who reads it humbly and sincerely, seeking to learn how to live rightly. It is similar regarding the relationship between the two worlds, spiritual and natural; it is not just symbolic but a subtle, dynamic, living relationship, like that between a person’s mind and body. Nature affects us very directly, physically and spiritually. The Word and nature are both foundations of truth.

Take, for example, the health benefits of negative ions in the air (oxygen atoms with an extra electron). In nature they are most prevalent around moving water, at the beach or near a waterfall, for instance, and also after a thunderstorm. They make you feel good mentally and physically.

Consider also how colors affect people's mood. Much study has gone into choosing the best colors for the walls and furnishings in hospitals, schools, restaurants and other facilities. Rich red is a favorite for restaurants because it has been found to stimulate appetite. But a loud, irritating shade of yellow may be chosen for fast food restaurants where it is hoped customers will eat quickly and leave. Blues and purples, colors often associated with toxins, decrease appetite and aren't a good choice for dining establishments. Cool colors, soft blues and greens, are calming, and thus good for hospital rooms.

Nature's general color scheme – blue sky above, green grass and quiet earth tones below – is very restful. This is no accident. Human beings didn't design nature, but it was designed for our benefit, and with infinitely more wisdom than we could ever bring to the project. "He maketh me to lie down in green pastures."

The Lord influences our minds with beauty and peace from within, and correspondingly, through nature, with beauty and peace from without.

(WEO)

#### **FINDING PEACE IN NATURE**

"There is not one thing of beauty and delight in the sky above or on the earth beneath that is not in some respect representative of the Lord's kingdom."  
(*Arcana Coelestia* 1807)

But it isn't just the *things* we see in the natural world that represent heaven, it's the *order* in which they exist. All things in nature obey the laws of nature, just as, in heaven, the angels all obey the laws of heaven – that is, the Divine laws of the Lord's Word. They obey them because they love the Lord and wish to follow Him, as sheep follow their shepherd. This is their defining quality: innocence. And it is represented in nature, also, in that everything in nature, even down to the atomic and subatomic level, obeys the laws of nature.

Heaven and the world are conjoined by correspondence and influx. The flow of life from the Divine into heaven continues on down into our world, bringing with it something of the sphere of innocence and peace that encompasses heaven. We can sense this in nature, which thus serves, along with the Word, and the direct influx of life from the Lord into our souls, to instill innocence and peace in us.

(WEO)

#### **SPIRITUAL EVOLUTION**

There is no question about the complex forms of use humans create – light bulbs, microscopes, cameras, etc. – they all begin in the mind before they take on a material form. They evolve from the spiritual into the natural, and each

new step in their continued evolution (from incandescent to LED bulb, for instance) is also driven by a new idea. Evolution on the material plane is an effect of evolution on the spiritual plane.

Moreover, the initial ideas for advances in human technology are often based on something seen in nature; in fact, it seems to be the general rule. Human inventiveness mimics nature's. The design of the human arm preceded that of the swing-arm desk lamp which was based upon it.

So what is the source of nature's genius? It, too, is a product of spiritual intelligence, that is, the Divine wisdom of its Creator. And God is supremely *Human*: "It is impossible for angels to think of God in any other way." (*Divine Love and Wisdom 11*) This is why the natural world is such a rich source of prototypes for human inventions.

There are countless examples. Here is one from an on-line *NBC News* report: "The Pentagon is pouring millions of dollars into the development of tiny drones inspired by biology – such as the hummingbird – each equipped with video and audio equipment that can record sights and sounds."

And another: "Imagine a raincoat that heals a scratch by shedding the part of the outer layer that's damaged. To create such a material, scientists have turned to nature for inspiration. They report a water-repellent material that molts like a snake's skin when damaged to reveal another hydrophobic layer beneath it." (*ScienceDaily.com, May 17, 2017*)

In nature we find not just the materials we need to sustain our natural lives, but also ideas for using those materials in new ways. Sustainability? Recycling? Organically grown food? Nature already does it.

(WEO)

### **EVEN NATURE LOOKS BEYOND NATURE**

We are natural creatures living in the natural world, but also, and more essentially, we are spiritual creatures preparing for life in the spiritual world. Nature is designed to serve us in both respects.

The things it provides for our natural existence (food, clothing and shelter) are obvious. But it also serves our spiritual development in various ways. For one thing, we constantly have to use our mind and will power to overcome the limits imposed upon us by nature – both the natural world around us and the limitations of our own natural bodies. No other creature struggles against nature the way we do.

And we need to overcome, not just the physical obstacles of life in the natural world, but the errors that arise in our minds when we base our thought only on what appears in nature. To become truly human and think spiritually, we have to rise above naturalism or a materialistic idea of creation. Again, no

other creature struggles to improve upon its own nature.

Nature itself, therefore, urges – in fact, requires – us to raise our minds above nature. What else is science but a perpetual effort to overcome and free ourselves from the restrictions imposed upon us by time and space? Nothing in the room around you – the lamp, telephone, computer, the clothes you are wearing – is natural.

As human beings we are not naturally at home in nature. Nature is, in a sense, unnatural to us! It seems paradoxical, but only if the essential, spiritual component of human nature is denied.

(WEO)

### **WHEN BREATH BECOMES AIR**

One of the most memorable books I've read recently is *When Breath Becomes Air: What Makes Life Worth Living in the Face of Death?* by Paul Kalanithi. It is the sad, humbling, profound, inspiring story of a brilliant young neurosurgeon struck down by lung cancer. Here was a man who had chosen his career as a calling, dedicated his life to saving lives and then was forced to confront death himself – while teaching all of us about the meaning of life.

Paul Kalanithi was a gifted man. He had degrees in English literature, human biology, history and the philosophy of science and medicine from Stanford and Cambridge, before graduating from the Yale School of Medicine. He died much too young at 37 but never felt sorry for himself or challenged God with “Why me?” He accepted what was inevitable and was determined to face death with courage and integrity. And with this book – a painful obsession in the last year of his life – he still is profoundly influencing the lives of countless people.

Much of that was fueled by his own love and empathy for his patients. Once the tables were turned and the life-saving doctor became the suffering patient, it added depth to his perspective. “Instead of being the pastoral figure aiding a life transition, I found myself the sheep, lost and confused.”

He tells a sad story of learning that a good friend and colleague had taken his life when a patient he had operated on died, and how he wished he could have been with his friend then. “I wish I could have told Jeff what I had come to understand about life, and our chosen way of life. Death comes for all of us. For us, for our patients: it is our fate as living, breathing organisms. Most lives are lived with passivity toward death – it is something that happens to you and those around you. But Jeff and I had trained for years to actively engage with death, to grapple with it, like Jacob and the angel, and, in so doing, to confront the meaning of life. We had assumed the onerous yoke, that of mortal responsibility. Our patients' lives and identities may be in our hands, yet death

always wins.”

He also had to confront a creeping atheism spawned by his emergence in science. “Although I had been raised in a devout Christian family, where prayer and Scripture readings were a nightly ritual, I, like most scientific types, came to believe in the possibility of a material conception of reality, an ultimately scientific worldview that would grant a complete metaphysics, minus outmoded concepts of souls, God and bearded white men in robes.

“The problem, however, eventually became evident: to make science the arbiter of metaphysics is to banish not only God from the world but also love, hate, meaning – to consider a world that is self-evidently *not* the world we live in.

“Science may provide the most useful way to organize empirical, reproducible data, but its power to do so is predicated on its ability to grasp the most central aspects of human life: hope, fear, love, hate, beauty, envy, honor, weakness, striving, suffering, virtue.”

So his choice was clear – as is his lesson: “I returned to the central values of Christianity – sacrifice, redemption, forgiveness – because I found them so compelling. There is a tension in the Bible between justice and mercy, between the Old Testament and the New Testament. The main message of Jesus, I believed, is that mercy trumps justice every time.”

Paul Kalanithi did not get to complete his book – not formally. But it is complete, thanks to a tender and poignant *Epilogue* added by his wife, Lucy, also a physician. Lucy not only lived and suffered through her husband’s illness, but had produced a daughter just seven months before his death.

She says that in the last year of his life he wrote relentlessly, “fueled by purpose. Paul confronted death – examined it, wrestled with it, accepted it – as a physician and a patient. He wanted to help people understand death and face their mortality.”

“Paul’s decision not to avert his eyes from death,” she writes, “epitomizes a fortitude we don’t celebrate enough in our death-avoidant culture. His strength was defined by ambition and effort, but also by softness, the opposite of bitterness. He spent much of his life wrestling with the question of how to live a meaningful life, and his book explores that essential territory.”

In the midst of suffering and tragedy, she says, they still felt lucky and grateful. “Although these last few years have been wrenching and difficult – sometimes even impossible – they have also been the most beautiful and profound of my life, requiring the daily act of holding life and death, joy and pain in balance and exploring new depths of gratitude and love.”

What they both experienced and what now stays with her is “the inextricability of life and death, the ability to cope, to find meaning despite this, because of this. What happened to Paul was tragic, but he was not a tragedy.”

And now she reflects: “When I see the hospital where Paul lived and died as a physician and a patient, I understand that had he lived he would have made great contributions as a neurosurgeon and a neuroscientist. He would have helped countless patients and their families through some of the most challenging moments of their lives – the task that drew him to neurosurgery in the first place. He was, and would have continued to be, a good person and a deep thinker. Instead, this book is a new way for him to help others, a contribution only he could make. This doesn’t make his death, our loss, any less painful. But he found meaning in the striving.”

And so this book is a moving memorial to a man, and his commitment to his ongoing use. But why the title: *When Breath Becomes Air*? It is in the inscription this wise, poetic, philosophical, caring man chose for his book, from 16<sup>th</sup> Century poet, dramatist and statesman Baron Brook Fulke Greville, in *Caelica* 83:

*You that seek what life is in death,  
Now find it air that once was breath.  
New names unknown, old names gone:  
Till time ends bodies, but souls none.  
Reader! Then make time, while you be,  
But steps in your eternity.*

(BMH)

## MARKETING LIFE AFTER DEATH

Five years ago Dr. Mary Neal, an orthopedic surgeon, wrote a best-selling book, *To Heaven and Back*, about a near-death experience when she was trapped under water for 24 minutes in a kayaking accident in Chile.

The book was an immediate success, spawning a personal website, a Facebook page, a newsletter, speaking tours and a lot of radio and TV exposure. This has led to a recently published sequel: *7 Lessons from Heaven: How Dying Taught Me to Live a Joy-Filled Life*.

This book was prompted by a nagging question: How does knowing heaven is real change our lives on earth? This is her attempt to answer the question. She says: “I am praying that the words I speak during the interviews will bring people into a new or deeper relationship with the God who is real and present in our world, loves each of us beyond what we can imagine, and has a plan for us that is one of hope.”

But, she adds, “I have never finished speaking at a venue, including corporate settings, without people wanting to know more.”

Of course they do. The one sure knowledge we all live with is that someday we will die. And then what? Most people believe in life after death and that it

will be forever. But they want to know more.

That is why so many of the tales of near-death experiences have been so popular – and useful. They do help to answer some of the questions. They seem to have a positive impact on the way people then live their lives. And for the most part these stories resonate with the one book that has real answers from God: *Heaven and Hell*, as revealed to Emanuel Swedenborg.

Dr. Neal tells about encounters with angels, a journey to a “city of light,” and what it was like to meet Jesus. She offers her own insights into how we can experience God every day in our lives “and begin living without regret, worry, anxiety or fear.”

She is successfully marketing her experience with life after death and making a positive difference in people’s lives and faith. But, yes, they still want to know more.

We can help to answer those questions and provide the “more” they seek. But are we doing enough?

Life after death and *Heaven and Hell* have always been primary tools for evangelization but there is so much of the “more” that we have to offer. The Swedenborg Foundation is engaged in active marketing with its Heaven and Hell Facebook page and the increasingly popular *offTheLeftEye* video series beamed throughout the world by Curtis Childs and the Rev. Dr. Jonathan Rose. These initiatives are reaching and helping a great many people.

The Lord is providing answers to people’s questions about life after death through Mary Neal and many others. But nowhere are there more “lessons from heaven” than those given in the revelation given through Swedenborg. And that is our challenge: answering the needs of all those who “want to know more.”

(BMH)

### ‘I WAS BLIND AND NOW I SEE’

*The Remarkable Story of John Bigelow*, told by the Rev. William Hyde Alden and reprinted from the February 1912 *New Church Life* on page 517, recounts how this learned man was introduced to the Writings of Swedenborg almost by chance 170 years ago.

Bigelow was a prominent American journalist, lawyer and statesman. He helped to found the New York Public Library and was the U.S. ambassador to France. As editor and co-owner of the *New York Post* he was fiercely anti-slavery – this was before the Civil War – and went to Haiti to study how that nation of former slaves was coping with self-government. He was marooned there by an outbreak of yellow fever.

He was a devoted reader of the Bible but struggled with its mysteries.

When he read the story in *Genesis*, for instance, he could not understand why Abram – “a great man of God” – would tell his beautiful wife, Sarai, to lie to the Pharaoh and say she was his sister. The only other resident of the hotel was a Danish lawyer who knew Swedenborg and gave Bigelow a copy of the *Arcana* – with the passage explaining the spiritual meaning of this troubling story.

Bigelow was intrigued but skeptical. He pored over every book of the Writings that he could get his hands on – in Haiti and when he returned to the States. He was sure he would discover the flaw that would expose all this as a grand hoax, but the more he read the more he became convinced that this simply had to be direct revelation from God. He records all of this in his classic book, *The Bible That Was Lost and Is Found*. It is a treasure.

Bigelow confessed how fruitless had been his previous search for answers in the Bible: “This taste for hunting and running down what seemed to me to be incongruous, inconsistent or inconsequential passages of the letter of the Word grew by what it fed on, and it is mortifying and painful for me now to think how blind and stupid I was all this time.”

It is like the story in *Mark* 9 of the man whose son was cured by Jesus and cried out: “Lord, I believe. Help Thou mine unbelief.” Bigelow might have cried: “Lord, I see. Help Thou my blindness.” And He did – because Bigelow was willing and eager to see what was revealed.

He was living testament to what is said in *Apocalypse Revealed* 224: “Read the Word and believe in the Lord, and you will see the truths which should constitute your faith and life. Everyone whose soul desires it is capable of seeing the truths of the Word in light.”

(BMH)

### A GIFT TO BE USED

In his fascinating article, *The 500<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Reformation: Martin Luther, the Last Judgment and the New Church*, (page 503), the Rev. Dr. Andrew Dibb notes that part of the immediate fallout from Luther’s *95 Theses* was making the Bible more accessible to the people.

Not only had the common folk been denied the opportunity to read or even hear the Bible read in anything but Vulgate Latin, but those who dared to try to make it accessible were openly persecuted. The King James Version, produced in 1611 by the dedicated labor of 47 of the most learned men of England over seven years, was revolutionary.

Dr. Rainolds, the man whose suggestion led to the translation of this Authorized Version of the Bible, offered a timeless message in a letter to a friend – and really to all of us:

“Divinity, the knowledge of God, is the water of life. God forbid that you



should think that divinity consists of words, as a wood doth of trees. True divinity cannot be learned unless we frame our hearts and minds wholly to it. The knowledge of God must be learned from God. We have to use two means, prayers and the reading of the Holy Scriptures – prayers for ourselves to talk with God, and reading to hear God talk with us. We must diligently give ourselves to reading and meditation of the Holy Scriptures. I pray that you may."

(BMH)

#### OUR NEW CHURCH VOCABULARY

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

#### **MIND**

The mind consists of the understanding and the will, which two faculties constitute the life of man. They are distinct from each other, but so created as to form one; and when they do so, they are called the mind. This mind is what is called the internal man, and it is within the external man.

Note that the mind is spiritual and that the brain is not the mind but its organ. It is indeed said that the mind consists of both spiritual and natural substances; but the latter, from which the limbus is drawn, are the substances of that organ, and affection and thought do not take place in them but in the spiritual substances, and this by changes and variations in their form and state. (See *Last Judgment* 12; *Heavenly Doctrines* 28; *True Christian Religion* 156; *Divine Love and Wisdom* 257)

# Annual Report

## Secretary of the General Church of the New Jerusalem

*Anita F. Halterman*

Between July 1, 2016 and June 30, 2017, 67 new members were received into the General Church, and 5 members resigned. During the year the Secretary's office received notice of the deaths of 49 members.

<b>Membership July 1, 2016</b>	<b>5414</b>
<b>New Members</b>	<b>67</b>
<b>Resignations</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Deceased Members</b>	<b>49</b>
<b>Membership June 30, 2017</b>	<b>5427</b>

### GENERAL CHURCH OF THE NEW JERUSALEM NEW MEMBERS

#### **CANADA**

Horigan, Caroline Louise  
Lemky, Vivian Cheryl  
Walker, Ann Louise

#### **CHINA**

Heng, Zhang  
Liu, Jun Hua  
Long, Wang Ming  
Xie, Ielool

#### **GHANA**

Agyei, Eric  
Atieteh, Naa Sackley  
Brefo, Benjamin Yaw  
Dickson, Boadi

#### **IVORY COAST**

Amahin, Abel N'Guessan

#### **JAPAN**

Nakato, Sachio

**MAURITIUS**

Baissac, David

**NIGERIA**

Akpogbugha, Tamarakuro  
 Burupamo, Ala-Ere Edward  
 Dorgu, Princess  
 Ebute-Metta, Peter  
 Efebo, Sunday  
 Egberibin, Ebipaepere Manson  
 Esemokumo, Akpa-Ere Blessing  
 Felix, Matthew  
 Isaac, Winnie  
 Jonah, Emibe  
 Kenigua, Elizabeth  
 Luke, Desmond Oruah  
 Okeremo, Patrick Goodluck  
 Okolo, Glory  
 Okuru, Ikabuno  
 Onimite, Ayibanua Irene  
 Peter, Bridget  
 Tamarakuro, Justina  
 Tulagha, Jane Preye

**SOUTH AFRICA**

Masikhwa, Ntodeni

**UNITED STATES OF AMERICA**

**Arizona**

Wood-Osmus, Claudia Ruth

**Colorado**

Hendricks, Dallas

**Illinois**

Fidalgo, Ashley Smith  
 Fidalgo, Rodrigo  
 Hartfield, Kelli Ann

**New Jersey**

Mercer, Daniel Richard, II  
 Mercer, Joann Bicking

**Maryland**

Crossman, Lyle Kingdon  
 Glenn, Richard Michael  
 Wanyis-Kazeem, Marie-Natacha

**Michigan**

Elder, Jacob Scott

**Pennsylvania**

Asplundh, Brandon Kirk  
 Frazier, Jessica Hyatt  
 Frazier, Owen James  
 Glenn, Angus Wolf  
 Glenn, Kaylene Rae Heldon  
 Jungé, Cathlin Adele Smith  
 Jungé, Kevin Eli  
 Jungé, Liza Renee  
 King, Matthew Colton  
 Kindred, Beth Emily  
 Lockard, Janet Carswell  
 Manogue, Natalie Grace  
 Morrill, Katherine Lorraine  
 Odhner, Zachary Shiloh  
 Rivera, Angelo Mark  
 Rose, Ivan Eidse  
 Schaible, Trevor Lee  
 Schumacher, Randy  
 Silverman, Star Bruner (re-joined)  
 Simons, Julia Edgerton  
 Smith, Tovah

**South Carolina**

Spruell, Sharon Elizabeth

**DEATHS**

*Acton, Elsa Asplundh, 87, November 6, 2016, of Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania*

*Arnoux, Gale Coffin, 78, March 26, 2017, of Tampa, Florida*

*Ashburn, Lennie Lunceford, 80, September 19, 2016, of Doylestown, Pennsylvania*

*Baekstrom, Gunnar, 97, June 30, 2017, of Stockholm, Sweden*

*Bishop, Nancy Kuhl, 82, February 7, 2017, of Wellington, Florida*

*Blair, Shareen Hyatt, 93, September 3, 2016, of Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania*

*Boyesen, Marah Pendleton, 49, January 1, 2017, of Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania*

*Brown, Janina Cole, 65, April 23, 2017, of Kempton, Pennsylvania*

*Cole, Charis Pitcairn, 94, June 10, 2017, of Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania*

*Cole, Ulla Elisabeth Fornander, 77, October 22, 2016, of St. Augustine, Florida*

*Coy, Flora Ethne Ridgway, 89, January 24, 2017, of Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania*

*Day, Kathleen Maureen Barthel, 68, March 16, 2017, of Palatine, Illinois*

*Echols, Alonzo McDaniel, 85, January 7, 2017, of Vancouver, Washington*

*Echols, Steven McDaniel, 61, August 2, 2016, of Watkinsville, Georgia*

*Edmonds, Frances Jean Headsten, 91, September 13, 2016, of Glenview, Illinois*

*Glenn, Curtis Rau, 102, December 21, 2016, of Wharton, New Jersey*

*Griffiths, David Allen, 77, February 23, 2017, of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania*

*Gunther, Carl Robert, 89, September 14, 2016, of Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania*

*Hall, William Alfred, 87, December, 2016, of Rockhampton, Queensland, Australia*

*Hammond, Clydene Morrison Holland, 85, August 22, 2016, of National City, California*

*Heinrichs, Philip Owen, 92, November 14, 2016, of Kitchener, Ontario, Canada*

*Henderson, Hugo Denis, 81, February 6, 2017, of Warminster, Pennsylvania*

*Horigan, Philip Clark, 89, November 3, 2016, of Boynton Beach, Florida*

*Hyatt, Anne Davis, 95, January 20, 2017, of Rydal, Pennsylvania*

*Jansson, Lone Birgith Leisted, 72, October 20, 2016, of Norrahammar, Sweden*

*Keal, Wellesley Ruth Rose, 62, February 26, 2017, of Kempton, Pennsylvania*

*Keller, Kenneth John, 78, March 28, 2017, of Willow Grove, Pennsylvania*

*Kingdon, William Sumner, 83, March 22, 2017, of College Park, Maryland*

*Lee, Nancy Synnvestvedt, 93, December 8, 2016, of Glenview, Illinois*

*Leeper, Thomas Niles, 85, April 8, 2017, of Alpharetta, Georgia*

*McClarren, Rachele Nicholson, 75, February 4, 2017, of Glenview, Illinois*

*McLeay, Graeme Douglas, 85, February 26, 2017, of Moss Vale, New South Wales, Australia*

*Naill, Eleanore Barbara Soderberg, 90, April 20, 2017, of Warminster, Pennsylvania*

*Owusu, Ntiri Emmanuel, 66, July 15, 2016, of Nteso-Kwahu, Ghana*

*Pendleton, Julie Anne de Maine, 83, May 21, 2017, of Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania*

*Posey, Barbara Leonard, 95, January 14,  
2017, of Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania*

*Renn, Kenneth Franklin, 71, November 12,  
2016, of Riverton, New Jersey*

*Retzius, Lillian Betten Ueland, 86,  
December 12, 2016, of Stavanger, Norway*

*Riley, Rev. Norman Edward, 90, September  
4, 2016, of Hatboro, Pennsylvania*

*Risley, Lillian Virginia Dierks, 90, November  
29, 2016, of Clermont, Florida*

*Seckelmann, Dorothy Elizabeth Phipps, 89,  
March 8, 2017, of Carlsbad, California*

*Smith, Carl Blair, 40, November 23, 2016, of  
Lenhartsville, Pennsylvania*

*Smith, Carey Neal, 76, March 10, 2017, of  
Portland, Oregon*

*Synnestvedt, Miriam Ruth, 93, June 18,  
2017, of Glenview, Illinois*

*Taylor, Shirley Louise, 93, August 08, 2016,  
of Panania, New South Wales, Australia*

*Warley, Teresa Dunlap, 70, February 26,  
2017, of Atlanta, Georgia*

*White, Charles Frederick III, 90,  
February 16, 2017, of Huntingdon Valley,  
Pennsylvania*

*Willis, Mary, 55, January 23, 2017, of  
Huntingdon Valley, Pennsylvania*

## **RESIGNATIONS**

Hirayam, Mugihito

McQueen, Polly Suzanne

Olson, Matthew Donald

Olson, DeNese Johnson

Woofendon, Louis

# Directory

## GENERAL CHURCH OF THE NEW JERUSALEM 2017-2018 OFFICIALS

*Bishop:* The Rt. Rev. Brian W. Keith  
*Assistant to the Bishop:* The Rt. Rev. Peter M. Buss Jr.  
*Secretary:* Mrs. Anita F. Halterman

## GENERAL CHURCH OF THE NEW JERUSALEM (A Corporation of Pennsylvania)

### OFFICERS OF THE CORPORATION

*President:* The Rt. Rev. Brian W. Keith  
*Vice President:* The Rt. Rev. Peter M. Buss, Jr.  
*Secretary:* Mr. Daniel P. Martz  
*Treasurer/CAO:* Mr. David O. Frazier

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE CORPORATION

Kay R. Alden	Axel D. Coulibaly	Mary Jane Jungé
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Stephen D. Ball	Robert M. Dike	Daniel P. Martz
Bengt Boyesen	Charles H. Ebert	Patrick A.P. Mayer
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Jake C. Brown	Darryl G. Hasen	Jennifer B. Pronesti
Andrew R. Bruell	Kirk Hasen	David G. Radcliffe
Amy C. Buick	P. Blake Hill	Arthur E. Uber III
Wade W. Buick	Lee Horigan	Dawn R. Wadsworth
Ian B. Carswell	Brent H. Hyatt	Thayer L. York

*Ex-officio Members:*  
The Rt. Rev. Brian W. Keith  
The Rt. Rev. Peter M. Buss Jr.  
Mr. David O. Frazier

## BISHOPS

**Keith, Brian Walter.** Ordained June 6, 1976; 2<sup>nd</sup> degree, June 4, 1978; 3<sup>rd</sup> degree, October 17, 2004. Serves as 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, President of the General Church in South Africa, and President of the General Church International, Incorporated. Address: PO Box 743, Bryn Athyn, PA 19009

**Buss, Peter Martin, Jr.** Ordained June 6, 1993; 2<sup>nd</sup> degree, June 18, 1995; 3<sup>rd</sup> degree, June 9, 2013. Serves as Assistant to the Bishop of the General Church, Vice President of the General Church International, Incorporated, and Head of the General Church Education Department. Address: PO Box 743, Bryn Athyn, PA 19009

## PASTORS

**Abuga, Samson Mogusu.** Ordained May 25, 2003; 2<sup>nd</sup> degree, September 20, 2009. Serves as Pastor of the New Church Etorá, Director of the Keugata (Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania) Theological School, Principal of the Good News Preparatory School in Etorá, Kisii, Kenya, and Regional Pastor for East Africa. Address: The New Church Etorá, PO Box 13, Kisii, 502, Kenya

**Adognon, Alex Koami.** Ordained September 1, 2013; 2<sup>nd</sup> degree, April 19, 2015. Serves as Assistant to the Pastor in Togoville, Togo, and Pastor of a start-up group in Lomé. Address: BP 61202, Lomé, Togo

**Aggro, Hennock.** Ordained July 13, 2008; 2<sup>nd</sup> degree, July 4, 2010. Serves as Assistant Pastor for the Abelenkpe New Church. Address: PO Box 306, Ofankor-Accra, Ghana

**Agnes, Sylvain Apoh.** Ordained May 23, 2004; 2<sup>nd</sup> degree, June 25, 2006. Serves as National Pastor of the General Church in the Ivory Coast, President of and Instructor in Theology in the New Jerusalem Theological Institute in Abidjan, and Senior Pastor of the Sinai Chapel, Bobby. Address: 01 BP 12161 Abidjan 01, Côte d'Ivoire

**Aka, Honoré Amahin.** Ordained July 11, 2010; 2<sup>nd</sup> degree August 12, 2012. Serves as Pastor of the Bouake Group in Côte d'Ivoire. Address: 01 BP 1453, Bouake 01, Côte d'Ivoire

**Akotey, Edward.** Ordained July 4, 2010; 2<sup>nd</sup> degree October 21, 2012. Serves as Pastor of the Nteso Group of the New Church in Nteso, Ghana. Address: PO, Box 4, Nteso-Kwahu, E/R Ghana

**Alden, Kenneth James.** Ordained June 7, 1980; 2<sup>nd</sup> degree, May 16, 1982. Serves as a translator for the General Church and curriculum consultant in General Church Education. Address: PO Box 743, Bryn Athyn, PA 19009

**Allais, Mark Barry.** Ordained May 24, 2009; 2<sup>nd</sup> degree November 21, 2010. Serves as Pastor of The New Church Buccleuch in Buccleuch, Johannesburg, South Africa, and as Executive Vice President of the South African Corporation of the General Church. Address: PO Box 816, Kelvin 2054, South Africa

**Amoako, Kwadwo Adu.** Ordained July 13, 2008; 2<sup>nd</sup> degree July 4, 2010. Serves as Pastor of the Pankrono-Kumasi New Church in Kumasi, Ghana. Address: PO Box RY 143, Railways, Kumasi-Ashanti, Ghana

**Amouzouvi, Ablam Komlan.** Ordained July 11, 2010; 2<sup>nd</sup> degree October 21, 2012. Serves as Pastor of the New Church in Lomé, Togo. Address: La Nouvelle Eglise du Togo, BP 61202, Lomé, Togo

**Ampem-Darko, Israel Gyan.** Ordained July 13, 2008; 2<sup>nd</sup> degree July 4, 2010. Serves as Assistant Pastor for the Ofankor New Church Group in Ghana. Address: The New Church, PO Box KK 113, Kukurantumi-Akim, E/R, Ghana

**Anato, Guillaume Joseph Kuassivi.** Ordained May 30, 2010; 2<sup>nd</sup> degree October 28, 2012. Serves as Pastor in Hevie and Theology Teacher in Cotonou, Benin. Address: 03 BP 3850, Cotonou, Benin

**Ang'asa, Fred Onsiro.** Ordained July 6, 2014; 2<sup>nd</sup> degree April 9, 2017. Serves about an hour away from Kisii. Address unavailable.

**Appelgren, Göran Reinhold.** Ordained June 7, 1992; 2<sup>nd</sup> degree, July 3, 1994. Serves as Pastor of the Stockholm Society and as Visiting Pastor of Oslo, Norway and Copenhagen, Denmark; Regional Pastor for Europe and India. Address: Aladdinsvägen 27, S-167 61 Bromma, Sweden

**Atta, Jean Aime.** Ordained May 27, 2012; 2<sup>nd</sup> degree, September 21, 2014. Serves as Assistant to the Pastor at The New Church of Boulder Valley, and Visiting Pastor, Western US. 1370 Forest Park Circle, Lafayette, CO 80026

**Ayi, Segno-Kodjo.** Ordained May 27, 2001; 2<sup>nd</sup> degree July 20, 2008. National Pastor for the Church in Togo, and Pastor in Togoville. Address: La Nouvelle Eglise du Togo, B.P. 61202, Lomé, Togo

**Bab, Moise.** Ordained August 25, 2013; 2<sup>nd</sup> degree, August 9, 2015. Pastor of the Sinai Chapel, Bobby. Address: 01 BP 12161, Abidjan 01, Côte d'Ivoire

**Barber, Christopher Augustus.** Ordained May 26, 2013; 2<sup>nd</sup> degree, October 17, 2014. Serves as an Instructor of Religion in the Academy of the New Church Secondary Schools in Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania. Address: PO Box 295, Bryn Athyn, PA 19009

**Beirith, Eduardo.** Ordained August 16, 2012; 2<sup>nd</sup> degree, October 16, 2015. Serves as Pastor of the New Church Group in Curitiba, Parana, Brazil. Address: Nestor de Castro 223, Loja 2 Centro, Curitiba, PR 80.020-120, Brazil

**Beiswenger, Todd Jeffrey.** Ordained May 22, 2011; 2<sup>nd</sup> degree, January 19, 2014. Serves as Pastor of the Hurstville New Church in Hurstville, and the Brisbane New Church of Australia (New Church in Australia). Address: 26 Dudley Street, Peshurst, NSW 2222, Australia

**Blair, Charles Edmund.** Ordained May 28, 2006; 2<sup>nd</sup> degree, April 27, 2007. Serves as Pastor of NewChurch LIVE and Chaplain at Cairnwood Estate in Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania. Address: PO Box 716, Bryn Athyn, PA 19009

**Borketey-Kwaku, Jacob Borteye.** Ordained, May 18, 2003; 2<sup>nd</sup> degree, July 13, 2008. Serves as Pastor of the Nungua New Church, and as Dean of the Ghanaian Theological School, Ghana. Address: PO Box TNE 1278, Teshie-Nungua Estates, Accra, Ghana

**Buick, Brett.** Ordained May 31, 2015; 2<sup>nd</sup> degree November 13, 2016. Serves as Assistant Pastor of the Kempton Society. Address: 8560 Kistler Valley Road, New Tripoli, PA 18066

**Buss, Erik James.** Ordained June 10, 1990; 2<sup>nd</sup> degree, September 13, 1992. Serves as Assistant Pastor of Bryn Athyn Church in Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania; Regional Pastor for parts of Northeastern U.S. Address: PO Box 277, Bryn Athyn, PA 19009



**Buss, Jared James.** Ordained May 31, 2015; 2<sup>nd</sup> degree, October 23, 2016. Serves as Assistant to the Pastor of the Olivet Church in Toronto, Ontario, Canada. Address: 134 Smithwood Drive, Etobicoke, Ontario, M9B 4S4, Canada

**Carswell, Eric Hugh.** Ordained June 10, 1979; 2<sup>nd</sup> degree, February 22, 1981. Serves as Pastor of the Bryn Athyn Society in Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania. Address: PO Box 277, Bryn Athyn, PA

**Cole, Nathan Field.** Ordained January 11, 2009; 2<sup>nd</sup> degree, August 22, 2010. Serves as Assistant to the Pastor of the Carmel New Church in Kitchener, Ontario, Canada. Address: 35 Chapel Hill Drive, Kitchener, Ontario, N2R 1N1, Canada

**Cole, Stephen Dandridge\*.** Ordained June 19, 1977; 2<sup>nd</sup> degree, October 15, 1978. Serves as Assistant Professor of Religion and Philosophy in Bryn Athyn College of the New Church and of Theology in Bryn Athyn College of the New Church Theological School. Address: PO Box 717, Bryn Athyn, PA 19009

**Cowley, Alan Michael.** Ordained May 26, 2013; 2<sup>nd</sup> degree, July 13, 2014. Serves as Pastor of the Boynton Beach Society in Boynton Beach, Florida, and Visiting Pastor of Bonita Springs, Florida. Address: 103 Half Moon Circle, F-2, Hypoluxo, FL 33462

**Cowley, Michael Keith.** Ordained June 13, 1982; 2<sup>nd</sup> degree, May 13, 1984. Serves as Pastor of the Olivet Church in Toronto, Ontario, Canada. Address: 2 Lorraine Gardens, Etobicoke, Ontario, M9B 4Z4, Canada

**Dakouri, Evariste Daligou.** Ordained July 11, 2010; 2<sup>nd</sup> degree August 12, 2012. Serves as Pastor of the Gesco General Church Group in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, and Secretary of the General Church in Côte d'Ivoire. Address: 21 BP 4352, Abidjan 21, Côte d'Ivoire

**Dayoro, Aime Okpo.** Ordained August 25, 2013; 2<sup>nd</sup> degree, August 9, 2015. Serves as Pastor of Ayama General Church Group. Address: 01 BP 12161, Abidjan 01, Côte d'Ivoire

**Devassy, Peter Naduvilaveettil.** Ordained October 23, 2011; 2<sup>nd</sup> degree October 25, 2015. Serves as Pastor of the New Church in India. Address: The New Church, Ompathungal Canal Road, Mattathur, PO, Trissur, Kerala, India

**Dibb, Andrew Malcolm Thomas.** Ordained June 6, 1984; 2<sup>nd</sup> degree, May 18, 1986. Serves as Dean of the Bryn Athyn College of the New Church Theological School. Address: PO Box 717, Bryn Athyn, PA 19009

**Doukourou, Moise Gogable.** Ordained July 11, 2010; 2<sup>nd</sup> degree August 12, 2012. Serves as Pastor of Abobo N'dotre General Church Group in Côte d'Ivoire, and Assistant Head Pastor of the General Church in Côte d'Ivoire. Address: 01 BP 12161, Abidjan 01, Côte d'Ivoire

**Dube, Jerome Bhekuyise.** Ordained June 5, 2005; 2<sup>nd</sup> degree November 11, 2007. Serves as Pastor of the Clermont Society in South Africa. Address: Private Box 1164, New Germany 3620, South Africa

**Dziekpor, George Genya.** Ordained July 13, 2008; 2<sup>nd</sup> degree July 4, 2010. Serves as Pastor of the Abelenkpe Group in Accra, Ghana. Address: PO Box CS 9277, C7, Tema, Ghana

**Elphick, Derek Peter.** Ordained June 6, 1993; 2<sup>nd</sup> degree, May 22, 1994. Serves as Pastor of the Oak Arbor Society in Rochester, Michigan, and as Regional Pastor for the Midwestern U.S. Address: 395 Olivewood Court, Rochester, MI 48306

**Eshun, Ekow Essiedu.** Ordained May 27, 2007; 2<sup>nd</sup> degree July 13, 2008. Serves as Pastor of the Tema, and Madina Circles and in Ghana, West Africa, and Principal of the Tema New Church School; National Pastor of Ghana. Address: PO Box CS 9299, Community 7, Tema, Ghana

**Ferrell, Michael Eugene.** Ordained June 5, 2005; 2<sup>nd</sup> degree, June 3, 2007. Serves as part-time Assistant Pastor of the Washington New Church Society in Mitchellville, Maryland. Address: 4210 Canyonview Drive, Upper Marlboro, MD 20772

**Frazier, Glenn “Mac” McKinley.** Ordained May 28, 2006; 2<sup>nd</sup> degree June 22, 2008. Serves as Associate Pastor of the Glenview New Church. Address: 2730 Park Lane, Glenview, IL 60025

**Frazier, Pearse McCollum.** Ordained May 22, 2011; 2<sup>nd</sup> degree September 30, 2012. Serves as Pastor of the Atlanta Society in Alpharetta, Georgia. Address: 1880 Kinridge Road, Marietta, GA 30062

**Frazier, Scott Innes.** Ordained May 28, 2006; 2<sup>nd</sup> degree, May 11, 2008. Serves as Assistant Professor of Religion and Latin and Chair of the Religion Department in Bryn Athyn College of the New Church. Address: PO Box 717, Bryn Athyn, PA 19009

**Genzlinger, Matthew Laird.** Ordained May 27, 2001; 2<sup>nd</sup> degree, August 10, 2003. Serves as Pastor of the New Church of Concord in Concord, Massachusetts. Address: 62 Church Street, Concord, MA 01742

**Gladish, Michael David\*.** Ordained June 10, 1973; 2<sup>nd</sup> degree, June 30, 1974. Serves as Pastor of the Washington New Church Society, in Mitchellville, Maryland, and Regional Pastor for the Southeastern U.S. Address: 11910 Chantilly Lane, Mitchellville, MD 20721

**Gladish, Nathan Donald.** Ordained June 13, 1982; 2<sup>nd</sup> degree, November 6, 1983. Serves as Pastor of the Sunrise Chapel in Tucson, Arizona. Address: 11240 E. Miles Street, Tucson, AZ 85748

**Glenn, Coleman Starkey.** Ordained May 24, 2009; 2<sup>nd</sup> degree October 3, 2010. Serves as an Instructor of Theology in the Bryn Athyn College of the New Church, Instructor of Religion at the Academy Secondary Schools, and is in charge of General Church youth leadership. Address: 3859 Dempsey Lane, Huntingdon Valley, PA 19006.

**Glenn, Joel Christian.** Ordained May 31, 2015; 2<sup>nd</sup> degree September 25, 2016. Serves as Assistant to the Pastor of New Church Westville in Westville, South Africa. Address: 30 Perth Road, Westville 3629, South Africa.

**Glenn, Thane Powell.** Ordained May 24, 2009; 2<sup>nd</sup> degree June 6, 2010. Serves as Assistant Professor of Religion and English, Dean of Academics and Chief Academic Officer in Bryn Athyn College of the New Church. Address: PO Box 717, Bryn Athyn, PA 19009

**Gnagne, Gedeon G.** Ordained August 25, 2013; 2<sup>nd</sup> degree, August 9, 2015. Serves as Pastor of Sikensi, Gomon, and Bakanu Groups. Address: 01 BP 12-161, Abidjan 01, Côte d’Ivoire

**Gyamfi, Martin Kofi.** Ordained June 9, 1991; 2<sup>nd</sup> degree, August 28, 1994. Serves as Pastor for the New Church in Asakraka-Kwahu, Visiting Pastor for the Oframase Group in Ghana, West Africa, and Regional Pastor for West Africa. Address: The New Church, PO Box AS 10, Asakraka-Kwahu, E/R, Ghana

**Halterman, Barry Childs.** Ordained June 5, 1994; 2<sup>nd</sup> degree, September 8, 1996. Teaches and serves as Head of the Religion Department in the Academy Secondary Schools and as Chaplain for the Secondary Schools. Address: PO Box 707, Bryn Athyn, PA 19009

**Heilman, Andrew James\*.** Ordained June 18, 1978; 2<sup>nd</sup> degree, March 8, 1981. Serves as Regional Pastor of Brazil, Pastor of the Fatima Society in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, and Assistant Pastor of the Kempton New Church in Kempton, Pennsylvania. Address: 1050 Mountain Road, Kempton, PA 19529

**Heinrichs, Bradley Daniel.** Ordained May 23, 1999; 2<sup>nd</sup> degree, November 19, 2000. Serves as Pastor of the Carmel New Church in Kitchener, Ontario, Canada, Principal of the Carmel New Church School, Executive Vice President of the General Church in Canada, Chairman of Information Swedenborg, Incorporated, and Regional Pastor for Canada. Address: 58 Chapel Hill Drive, Kitchener, Ontario, N2R 1N2, Canada

**Jin, Yong Jin.** Ordained June 5, 1994; 2<sup>nd</sup> degree, June 16, 1996. Serves as Pastor of the Philadelphia Korean New Church, and responsible for outreach to the Korean-speaking community in the United States; Regional Pastor for Asia; Dean of the Korean New Church Theological School. Address: 537 Anne Street, Huntingdon Valley, PA 19006

**Juma, Emanuel Wanjala.** Ordained July 6, 2014; 2<sup>nd</sup> degree April 9, 2017. Serves as teacher in the Good News Preparatory School and is Visiting Pastor to the Masai group. Address: New Church Etoro, PO Box 13, Kisii 502, Kenya

**Jung, Young Ho.** Ordained April 29, 2012; 2<sup>nd</sup> degree, April 26, 2014. Address: Do-Bong, Chang, Dong, 380 Jukong Apt, Seoul 403-810, Republic of Korea

**Keal, Solomon John.** Ordained May 27, 2012; 2<sup>nd</sup> degree, February 2, 2014. Serves as Assistant to the Pastor of the Bryn Athyn Church in Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania. Address: PO Box 277, Bryn Athyn, PA 19009

**Kim, Seoung Gil.** Ordained April 29, 2012; 2<sup>nd</sup> degree, April 30, 2016. Serves as Pastor of Kangbuk New Church in Seoul, South Korea. Address: In Su Dong 391-15, Suyu 5-dong, Kangbuk-Gu, Seoul, Republic of Korea 142-884

**Koudou, Roger.** Ordained July 13, 2008; 2<sup>nd</sup> degree July 11, 2010. Serves as Pastor of Nouvelle Eglise Chrétienne de Côte d'Ivoire in Abidjan. Address: 01 BP 4853 Abidjan 01, Côte d'Ivoire

**Kouhoui, Henry Joel Kouassi.** Ordained July 11, 2010; 2<sup>nd</sup> degree August 12, 2012. Serves as Pastor to a start-up group in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, and as Secretary of the Clergy in Côte d'Ivoire. Temporary address: 12161 Abidjan 01, Côte d'Ivoire

**Lee, Jong-Ui.** Ordained May 31, 1998; 2<sup>nd</sup> degree, June 17, 2001. Serves as Pastor of the New Church at the City of Light in Gwangju, Korea. Address: 204-605 Kumho Ssangyong APT, Chipyeong-dong, Seo-gu, Gwangju 502-754, Republic of Korea

**Lee, Soon Cheol.** Ordained April 29, 2012; 2<sup>nd</sup> degree, April 26, 2014. Serves as Pastor of Seoul New Church in Seoul, South Korea, and Translator of the Writings into Korean. Address: 101-301 Samik Ceramic Apt. 374-1, Mochung-dong, Hungduk-ku Chungju-si, Chungchungbuk-Do, Republic of Korea 361-140

**Lindrooth, David Hutchinson.** Ordained June 10, 1990; 2<sup>nd</sup> degree, April 19, 1992. Serves as Director of the Office of Outreach. Address: PO Box 743, Bryn Athyn, PA 19009

**Lompo, Samuel Oumpouguila.** Ordained August 25, 2013; 2<sup>nd</sup> degree, August 16, 2015. Serves as Pastor to the New Church Group in Burkina Faso. Address: 11 BP 412 Ouagadougou CMS 11, Burkina Faso

**Lumsden, Derrick Alan Mark.** Ordained May 25, 2008; 2<sup>nd</sup> degree May 16, 2010. Serves as Pastor of the Sower's Chapel in Freeport, Pennsylvania. Address: 980 Sarver Road, Sarver, PA 16055

**Magero, George Omosu.** Ordained July 6, 2014; 2<sup>nd</sup> degree April 9, 2017. Serves as teacher in the Good News Preparatory School and is Pastor of Kiangware Group. Address: New Church Etoro, PO Box 13, Kisii 502, Kenya

**Mangoua, Cyprien Kouamé.** Ordained July 11, 2010; 2<sup>nd</sup> degree August 12, 2012. Serves as Pastor of the Cité Verte General Church Group in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, and as District Pastor of Abidjan. Address: 01 BP 12161, Abidjan 01, Côte d'Ivoire

**Matsumoto, Shiro.** Ordained April 30, 2012; 2<sup>nd</sup> degree April 27, 2014. Serves Pastor of Tokyo New Church in Tokyo, Japan. Address: 1-206, Inagedai-House, 7-8, Inagedai-cho, Inage-ward, Chiba-shi, 263-0032 Japan

**McCardell, Ethan Derek.** Ordained May 25, 2003; 2<sup>nd</sup> degree March 21, 2004. Serves as Pastor of the Michael Church in London, England. Address: 21A Hayne Road, Beckenham, BR3 4JA, England

**Mkhize, Sibusiso Protus.** Ordained May 25, 2003; 2<sup>nd</sup> degree November 11, 2007. Serves as Pastor of the Kwa Mashu Society in South Africa; Visiting Pastor to Empangeni. Address: Box 16932, Eshowe, KwaZulu-Natal, 3815, South Africa or General Church of the New Jerusalem, H-602 Umgankla Road, KwaMashi 4360, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa.

**Nicolier, Alain.** Ordained May 31, 1979; 2<sup>nd</sup> degree, September 16, 1984. Serves as Pastor of groups in Bourguignon and Ariège, France. Address: Conte' 09420 Rimont, France

**Odhner, Calvin Acton.** Ordained May 22, 2011; 2<sup>nd</sup> degree February 17, 2013. Serves as Pastor of the Pittsburgh New Church and Principal of the Pittsburgh New Church School in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Address: 299 Le Roi Road, Pittsburgh, PA 15208

**Odhner, Grant Hugo\*.** Ordained June 7, 1981; 2<sup>nd</sup> degree, May 9, 1982. Teaches Theology in the Bryn Athyn College of the New Church Theological School. Visiting Pastor of the New York City Circle. Chairs the General Church Publication Committee and is Secretary of the Council of the Clergy. Address: PO Box 717, Bryn Athyn, PA 19009

**Odhner, John Llewellyn\*.** Ordained June 7, 1980; 2<sup>nd</sup> degree, November 22, 1981. Serves as Assistant to the Pastor of Bryn Athyn Church in Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania, and works on the Office of Outreach Internet Project. Address: PO Box 277, Bryn Athyn, PA 19009

**Pendleton, Mark Dandridge.** Ordained June 9, 1991; 2<sup>nd</sup> degree, May 29, 1994. Serves as Pastor of the Glenview New Church, and President of the Midwestern Academy of the New Church. Address: 73 Park Drive, Glenview, IL 60025

**Perry, Charles Mark.** Ordained June 9, 1991; 2<sup>nd</sup> degree, June 19, 1993. Serves as Pastor of the San Diego Society in San Diego, California; visits Palo Alto, California. Address: 7911 Canary Way, San Diego, CA 92123

**Rose, Jonathan Searle\*.** Ordained May 31, 1987; 2<sup>nd</sup> degree, February 23, 1997. Serves as translator for the Swedenborg Foundation. Address: PO Box 717, Bryn Athyn, PA 19009

**Roth, David Christopher.** Ordained June 9, 1991; 2<sup>nd</sup> degree, October 17, 1993. Serves as Pastor of the New Church of Boulder Valley in Boulder, Colorado, and Regional Pastor for the Western United States. Address: 3421 Blue Stem Avenue, Longmont, CO 80503

**Sandstrom, Ryan Matthew.** Ordained May 22, 2011; 2nd degree January 13, 2013. Serves as Pastor of Ivyland New Church in Ivyland, Pennsylvania. Address: 851 W. Bristol Road, Ivyland, PA 18974

**Schnarr, Grant Ronald.** Ordained June 12, 1983; 2nd degree, October 7, 1984. Serves as an Instructor of Theology and Chaplain in Bryn Athyn College of the New Church. Address: PO Box 475, Bryn Athyn, PA 19009

**Schnarr, Philip Bradley.** Ordained June 5, 1996; 2<sup>nd</sup> degree, May 31, 1998. Serves as School Pastor of Bryn Athyn Church School. Address: PO Box 277, Bryn Athyn, PA 19009

**Segbenu, John Kwaku.** Ordained July 13, 2008; 2<sup>nd</sup> degree July 4, 2010. Serves as Assistant to the Pastor in Tema, Pastor of the Abbey New Church Reading Group, and teaches in the Tema School. Address: PO Box 325, Madina-Accra, Ghana

**Silverman, Ray\*.** Ordained June 6, 1984; 2nd degree, June 19, 1985. Serves as Associate Professor of Religion, English and Moral Philosophy in Bryn Athyn College of the New Church. Address: PO Box 717, Bryn Athyn, PA 19009

**Simons, Jeremy Frederick\*.** Ordained June 13, 1982; 2nd degree, July 31, 1983. Serves as Bryn Athyn Cathedral Chaplain and as a Visiting Pastor to Central Pennsylvania. Address: PO Box 277C, Bryn Athyn, PA 19009

**Smith, Brian Donald.** Ordained May 30, 2010; 2<sup>nd</sup> degree October 30, 2011. Serves as Assistant Pastor of the Washington New Church and Principal of the Washington New Church School. Address: 11503 Chantilly Lane, Bowie, MD 20721

**Smith, Lawson Merrell\*.** Ordained June 10, 1979; 2<sup>nd</sup> degree, February 1, 1981. Serves as Pastor of the Kempton Society in Kempton, Pennsylvania, and Principal of the Kempton New Church School. Regional Pastor for parts of Northeastern United States. Address: 171 Kunkels Dahl Road, Kempton, PA 19529

**Smith, Malcolm Glenn.** Ordained May 30, 2010; 2<sup>nd</sup> degree February 26, 2012. Serves as Pastor of New Church Westville in Westville, South Africa, Visiting Pastor for Cape Town. Address: 13 Glencairn Close, Westville 3629, South Africa.

**Souka, Eric Messan.** Ordained July 20, 2008; 2<sup>nd</sup> degree July 11, 2010. Serves as Pastor of the New Church Group in Vogan, Togo, and Visiting Pastor to the Aveta Group. Address: Nouvelle Eglise du Togo, BP 61202, Lomé, Togo

**Thompson, Howard Arthur.** Ordained May 22, 2011; 2nd degree June 23, 2013. Serves as Pastor of the Colchester New Church, Colchester, Essex, England. Address: 8 Stoneleigh Park, Lexden, Colchester, Essex CO3 9FA, England

**Villanueva, Johnny Antônio Zavalaga.** Ordained October 28th, 2008; 2<sup>nd</sup> degree August 19, 2012. Serves as Assistant to the Pastor in Rio de Janeiro. Address: Rua G, 123, Bairro de Cedae, Campo Grande, Rio de Janeiro, RJ, Brazil

**Walsh, Garry Brian.** Ordained May 27, 2001; 2<sup>nd</sup> degree, September 8, 2002. Serves as Pastor of the Phoenix New Church Society in Phoenix, Arizona, and Visiting Pastor Midwest and Western US locations. Manager of the e-mail lists for General Church clergy and clergy wives, Webmaster of portions of the General Church clergy website and associated wives' website. Address: 4036 E. Coolbrook Avenue, Phoenix, AZ 85032

**Xaba, Langalibalele Abraham (Phila).** Ordained August 27, 2006; 2<sup>nd</sup> degree August 9, 2009. Serves as Pastor for the Impaphala Society in South Africa. Address: 2375 Sono Road Zone 2, Diepkloof 1862, South Africa

**Zathey-Agboga, Godwin.** Ordained May 27, 2007; 2<sup>nd</sup> degree July 13, 2008. Serves as Pastor for the New Salem New Church in Ho, Ghana. Address: PO Box HP 396, Ho, Volta-Region, Ghana

**Timothy**<sup>1</sup>. Ordained May 1, 2013; Second degree, April 30, 2016. Serves as a New Church Pastor for China. Address: Contact Rev. Yong Jin

*\*Due to changes in the benefits package, these men have found it financially advantageous to retire officially. However, they continue serving faithfully in their current uses between two-thirds and full time.*

## MINISTERS

**Acton, Elmo Kenneth.** Ordained May 28, 2017. Serves as Assistant to the Pastor of the Oak Arbor Society in Rochester, Michigan. Address: 122 Drace Street, Rochester, MI 48307

**Amahin, Abel Nguessan.** Ordained April 2, 2017. Serves as Acting Pastor of Abengourou General Church Group, Côte d'Ivoire. Address unknown.

**Assiobo, Yaovi Kouglo** Leopold. Ordained April 9, 2017. Serves as Assistant Pastor, Chapelle le Puits de Jacob, Vogang, Togo. Address unknown.

**Beugre, Étienne Mogue.** Ordained April 2, 2017. Serves as Acting Pastor of the Divo General Church Group. Address unknown.

**Choe, Mahn Hoe.** Ordained April 29, 2012. Serves as Acting Pastor of Ahnseong Uri New Church in Ahnseong, South Korea. Address: Woorim Apt 105-806 Jinsa-Ri, Kongdo-Eup, Kyeong-ki, Ahnseong-Si 456-713, Republic of Korea

**Floyd, Thomas X.** Ordained May 31, 2015. Serves as Assistant to the Pastor in Stockholm and is Visiting Pastor in Scandinavia. Address: PO Box 2029 Gullhaug, Holmestrand 3087, Norway

**Lasme, Mellon René Agnès.** Ordained, April 2, 2017. Acting Pastor of the Dabou General Church Group, Côte d'Ivoire. Address unknown.

**Park, Jea S.** Ordained April 26, 2014. Serves as Minister to the Ham Pyung Chundranamdo Korea. Address: 658 Sanggok-Ri Haebo-Myun, Hampyung-Gun Chunnam -Do, Republic of Korea

**Sakae, Seiich.** Ordained April 26, 2014. Serves as Minister to Tokyo, Japan. Tokyo Group co-Pastor and Visiting Minister in Japan. Address: 2-26-21 KitakaSai Edoga Wa, Tokyo, Japan

**Yang, Dong Y.** Ordained April 30, 2016. Serves as Assistant to the Pastor, Seoul New Church. Address: 305-401 Jayean & Eyulrim Apt. 1629, Jangji-Dong Kimpo-Si, Kyungki-Do, South Korea

1 Last name is omitted for protection



**Zoho, Alphonse Téhé.** Ordained August 25, 2013. Serves as Acting Pastor of the Duekoue General Church Group in Côte d'Ivoire. Address: 01 BP12161, Abidjan 01, Côte d'Ivoire

**AUTHORIZED CANDIDATES**

**Ahotosse, Martin Cokou** (Benin)

**Beugre, Anselme** (Côte d'Ivoire)

**Ferreira, Francisco Das Chagas.** Address: Rua Belarmina 144, Vila Militar/Rio de Janeiro – RJ, CEP: 21745-110

**Nakato, Sachio.** Address: College of International Studies, Ritsumeikan University, 56-1 Toji-in Kitumachi, Kita-Ku, Japan, 603-8577

**N'Drin, Rodrigue** (Côte d'Ivoire)

**Smith, Jeffrey O.**

**Stole, Mandla.** 392 E Bank Ave, Alexandra, 2014, South Africa

**Sie, Gabriel Amari** (Côte d'Ivoire)

**Synnestvedt, Judah Edward**

**NON-GENERAL CHURCH MINISTERS SERVING GENERAL CHURCH GROUPS**

**Keyworth, Richard John.** Serves as Pastor of the Auckland Circle, New Zealand. Address: 15 Dunkirk Road, Panmure, Auckland 1072, New Zealand

**RETIRED**

**Acton, Alfred, II.** Ordained June 19, 1964; 2<sup>nd</sup> degree, October 30, 1966; 3<sup>rd</sup> degree, May 16, 1999. Serves as co-Pastor of the Charleston Group in Charleston, South Carolina. Address: 116 Walnut Way, Pineville, SC 29468

**Buss, Peter Martin Sr.** Ordained June 19, 1964; 2<sup>nd</sup> degree, May 16, 1965; 3<sup>rd</sup> degree, June 1, 1986. Bishop Emeritus of the General Church. Address: 950 Pendleton Avenue, Longmont, CO 80501

**Kline, Thomas Leroy.** Ordained June 10, 1973; 2<sup>nd</sup> degree, June 15, 1975; 3<sup>rd</sup> degree, November 30, 2003. Bishop Emeritus of the General Church. Address: PO Box 219, Bryn Athyn, PA 19009

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**Alden, Glenn Graham.** Ordained June 19, 1974; 2<sup>nd</sup> degree, June 6, 1976. Address: 2260 Brown Road, Ferndale, WA 98248.

**Ankra-Badu, William Ofei.** Ordained June 15, 1986; 2<sup>nd</sup> degree, March 1, 1992. Address: PO Box 11305, Accra-North, Ghana

**Asplundh, Kurt Horigan.** Ordained June 19, 1960; 2<sup>nd</sup> degree, June 19, 1962. Address: PO Box 26, Bryn Athyn, PA 19009

**Asplundh, Kurt Hyland.** Ordained June 6, 1993; 2<sup>nd</sup> degree, April 30, 1995. Teaches Theology part time at Bryn Athyn College of the New Church and sixth-grade Religion at Bryn Athyn Church School. Address: PO Box 411, Bryn Athyn, PA 19009

**Barry, James Headsten.** Ordained May 24, 2009; 2<sup>nd</sup> degree June 6, 2010. Address: 330 Wellesley Road, Philadelphia PA, 19119

**Bau-Madsen, Arne.** Ordained June 6, 1976; 2<sup>nd</sup> degree, June 11, 1978. Serves as Associate Pastor of Kempton Society in Kempton, Pennsylvania. Address: PO Box 333, Bryn Athyn, PA 19009

**Bown, Christopher Duncan.** Ordained June 18, 1978; 2<sup>nd</sup> degree, December 23, 1979. Address: 1349 Beechwood Boulevard, Apt 2, Pittsburgh, PA 15217

**Burke, William Hanson.** Ordained June 7, 1981; 2<sup>nd</sup> degree, August 13, 1983. Address: 2465 Spring Harbor Drive, Cumming, GA 30041

**Cooper, James Pendleton.** Ordained June 13, 1982; 2<sup>nd</sup> degree, March 4, 1984. Acts as Chaplain of the Military Service Committee. Address: 31 Dalegrove Crescent, Etobicoke, Ontario, M9B6A5, Canada

**Darkwah, Simpson Kwabeng.** Ordained June 7, 1992; 2<sup>nd</sup> degree, August 28, 1994. Address: New Church School, DTD Community 5, Tema, Ghana

**Echols, John Clark, Jr.** Ordained August 26, 1978; 2<sup>nd</sup> degree, March 30, 1980. Serves as Pastor of the Cincinnati Society in Cincinnati, Ohio, and Visiting Pastor in Indianapolis, Indiana. Address: 9331 Westchester Park Court, West Chester, OH 45069

**Elphick, Frederick Charles.** Ordained June 6, 1984; 2<sup>nd</sup> degree, September 23, 1984. Address: 21B Hayne Road, Beckenham, Kent BR3 4JA, England

**Goodenough, Daniel Webster.** Ordained June 19, 1965; 2<sup>nd</sup> degree, December 10, 1967. Serves as Visiting Pastor in the Northern Rocky Mountains, USA. Address: 201 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Two Harbors, MN 55616

**Heinrichs, Daniel Winthrop.** Ordained June 19, 1957; 2<sup>nd</sup> degree, April 6, 1958. Address: 9115 Chrysanthemum Drive, Boynton Beach, FL 33437-1236

**Heinrichs, Willard Lewis Davenport.** Ordained June 19, 1965; 2<sup>nd</sup> degree, January 26, 1969. Serves as Visiting Pastor in the central United States. Address: 7358 Mt. Sherman Road, Longmont, CO 80503

**Howard, Geoffrey Horace.** Ordained June 19, 1961; 2<sup>nd</sup> degree, June 2, 1963. Serves as co-Pastor of the Charleston Group in Charleston, South Carolina. Address: 128 Boyle Way, Summerville, SC 29485

**Jungé, Robert Schill.** Ordained June 19, 1955; 2<sup>nd</sup> degree, August 11, 1957. Address: 9212 Quaker City Road, Kempton, PA 19529

**Larsen, Ottar Trosvik.** Ordained June 19, 1974; 2<sup>nd</sup> degree, February 16, 1977. Address: 2145 Country Club Drive, Huntingdon Valley, PA 19006

**Lewin, Alan.** Recognized as Priest in the General Church in November 19, 2006. Ordained 2<sup>nd</sup> degree December 2, 2007. Address: 72 Nipper Lane, Whitefield, Manchester M45 7RF, England

**McCurdy, George Daniel.** Ordained June 25, 1967; Recognized as a Priest of the New Church in the second degree July 5, 1979; received into the priesthood of the General Church June 9, 1980. Serves as Visiting Pastor of the Harleysville Circle in Harleysville, Pennsylvania. Acts as the General Church's Ecclesiastical Endorsing Agent for Military Chaplains, Civilian Chaplains. Address: PO Box 911, Bryn Athyn, PA 19009

**Nemitz, Kurt Paul.** Ordained June 16, 1963; 2<sup>nd</sup> degree, March 27, 1966. Serves as a translator for the General Church. Address: 7127 Willard Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15208

**Nicholson, Allison La Marr.** Ordained September 9, 1979; 2<sup>nd</sup> degree, February 15, 1981. Address: 63 Sam Houston Drive, N Ft Myers, FL 33917



**Nobre, Cristóvão Rabelo.** Ordained June 6, 1984; 2<sup>nd</sup> degree August 25, 1985. Serves as a translator for the General Church. Address: Rua Fernando Cunha, 114, Barra, 45990-000 Alcobaca, Brazil

**Nzimande, Bongani Edward.** Ordained November 14, 1999; 2<sup>nd</sup> degree May 25, 2003. Serves as Visiting Pastor of the Enkumba Society in South Africa. Address: PO Box 848, Pinetown, 3600, South Africa

**Orthwein, Walter Edward III.** Ordained July 22, 1973; Recognized as a priest of the General Church in November, 1976 and ordained into the 2<sup>nd</sup> degree, June 12, 1977. Serves as Spiritual Editor of *New Church Life*. Address: 2934 Orchard Lane, Huntingdon Valley, PA 19006

**Pendleton, Dandridge.** Ordained June 19, 1952; 2<sup>nd</sup> degree, June 19, 1954. Address: PO Box 550, Bryn Athyn, PA 19009

**Rogers, Norbert Bruce.** Ordained January 12, 1969. Address: 449 Woodward Drive, Huntingdon Valley, PA 19006

**Rogers, Prescott Andrew.** Ordained January 26, 1986; 2<sup>nd</sup> degree, April 24, 1988. Serves as Pastor of the Charlotte Circle in North Carolina. Address: 6211 Lowergate Drive, Waxhaw, NC 28173

**Rose, Frank Shirley.** Ordained June 19, 1952; 2<sup>nd</sup> degree, August 2, 1953. Address: 9233 E. Helen Street, Tucson, AZ 85715

**Rose, Patrick Alan.** Ordained June 19, 1975; 2<sup>nd</sup> degree, September 25, 1977. Address: 502 Knollwood Place, Woodstock, GA 30188-4588

**Rose, Thomas Hartley.** Ordained June 12, 1988; 2<sup>nd</sup> degree, May 21, 1989. Address: 3245 Masons Mill Road, Huntingdon Valley, PA 19006

**Sandström, Erik Emanuel.** Ordained May 23, 1971; 2<sup>nd</sup> degree, May 21, 1972. Address: PO Box 740, Bryn Athyn, PA 19009

**Smith, Christopher Ronald Jack.** Ordained June 19, 1969; 2<sup>nd</sup> degree, May 9, 1971. Serves as Religion teacher for grade 11 students in the Kempton Church ASPIRE program. Address: 741 Old Philly Pike, Kempton, PA 19529

**Synnestvedt, Louis Daniel.** Ordained June 7, 1980; 2<sup>nd</sup> degree, November 8, 1981. Serves as Assistant to the Pastor of Kempton. Address: 3657A Route 737, Kempton, PA 19529

**Tshabalala, Njanyana Reuben.** Ordained November 29, 1992; 2<sup>nd</sup> degree, September 18, 1994. Serves as Pastor of the Balfour Society in Mpumalanga, South Africa. Address: PO Box 851, Kwa Xuma, 1868, South Africa

**Waters, Gerald Gilbert.** Ordained March 17, 2002; 2<sup>nd</sup> degree October 17, 2004. Serves as Chaplain of Providence Home, Westville, and as Visiting Pastor of the Zululand Group in Kwa-Zulu Natal. Address: 39 Sandown Village, 27 Harvey Road, Pinetown 3610, South Africa

**Yang, Gyu Dae.** Ordained into 2<sup>nd</sup> degree October 21, 2007. Address: Kyomoon Apt. 104-1403, Kyomoon-dong, Kuri-si, Republic of Korea 471-020

*In addition to the specific assignments listed for some of the retired clergy above, several retired priests travel regularly to serve as visiting pastors/preachers where needed.*

#### UNASSIGNED MINISTERS

**Alden, Mark Edward.** Ordained June 10, 1979; 2<sup>nd</sup> degree, May 17, 1981. Address: PO Box 204, Bryn Athyn, PA 19009

**Barnett, Wendel Ryan.** Ordained June 7, 1981; 2<sup>nd</sup> degree, June 20, 1982. Address: 19 Milton Drive, Yardley, PA 19067

**Bell, Reuben Paul.** Ordained May 25, 1997; 2<sup>nd</sup> degree April 11, 1999. Address: 121 North Street, Saco, ME 04072

**Chapin, Frederick Merle.** Ordained June 15, 1986; 2<sup>nd</sup> degree, October 23, 1988. Address: 101 Windmill Road, Butler, PA 16002

**Childs, Robin Waelchli.** Ordained June 6, 1984; 2<sup>nd</sup> degree, June 8, 1986. Address: 723 Sampson Avenue, Willow Grove, PA 19090

**Clifford, William Harrison.** Ordained June 6, 1976; 2<sup>nd</sup> degree, October 8, 1978. Address: 1544 Giddings Avenue SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49507-2223

**Fitzpatrick, Daniel.** Ordained June 6, 1984. Address: 2 Raquel Court, Marietta, GA 30064

**Glenn, Robert Amos.** Ordained May 28, 2000; 2<sup>nd</sup> degree, June 2, 2002. Address: 700 Lenox Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15221

**Hauptmann, Olaf.** Ordained May 23, 2004; 2<sup>nd</sup> degree July 30, 2006.

**Paek, Sung-Won.** Ordained May 27, 2001. Address: Administration, Moss Rehab/ Einstein, 60 E. Township Line Road, Elkins Park, PA 19027

**Schorran, Paul Edward.** Ordained June 12, 1983. Address: 631 Old Philly Pike, Kempton, PA 19529

## SOCIETIES AND CIRCLES

**Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire**  
Rev. Sylvain Apoh Agnes, Senior Pastor  
Rev. Moise Bab, Pastor

**Accra, Ghana**  
Rev. George G. Dziekpor, Pastor

**Alexandra, Johannesburg  
South Africa**  
Rev. Mark Allais providing oversight

**Asakraka, Ghana**  
Rev. Martin K. Gyamfi, Pastor

**Atlanta, Georgia**  
Rev. Pearse M. Frazier, Pastor

**Boulder, Colorado  
(New Church of Boulder Valley)**  
Rev. David C. Roth, Pastor  
Rev. Jean Atta, Assistant to the Pastor

**Boston, Massachusetts**  
Rev. Matthew L. Genzlinger, Pastor

**Boynton Beach, Florida**  
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**Note:** In addition to Societies and Circles, there are Groups of General Church members in various geographical areas that receive occasional visits from a priest.

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