

NEW CHURCH *Life*

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

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2012



NEW CHURCH EDUCATION

On the Edge

See the challenges of Bryn Athyn College admitting students without a New Church background – and how we’re doing – through the eyes of a religion teacher in a memorable Charter Day address. Page 35.

New Church Life

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

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SAMPLE TIMELINE OF PRESERVED RECORDINGS:

Human Uses in Both Worlds

Doctrinal class series ~ Rt. Rev. George de Charms (1948)

Externals of Life in Community and Church

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The Five Churches

Sermon ~ Rev. Norman Reuter (1958)

The Inexhaustible Power of Love

Sermon ~ Rev. Karl Alden (1963)

The Natural Mind: The Middle Natural or Imagination as it Relates to the Opening of the Rational

Talk ~ Rt. Rev. Peter M. Buss (1978)

Mythology as Related to the Book of Genesis

Classes ~ Aubrey Cole Odhner (1979)

Translation

General Assembly session ~ Lisa Hyatt (1980)

New Church Translation of the Word

Talk ~ Rev. Stephen Cole (2000)

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Sermon ~ Rt. Rev. Brian Keith (2011)

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IN THIS ISSUE

Rev. Dr. Thane Glenn, chaplain and teacher of Religion and English at Bryn Athyn College, gave a memorable address at the Charter Day banquet in October, *New Church Education on the Edge*. He talked about teaching Religion 101, an introduction to the teachings of the New Church, and how the course – and his teaching – have changed for the better now that the College is admitting students without a New Church background. Students are responding very well to an approach that welcomes all points of view and invites them to “reason together” in an exploration of the doctrines. He sees the College on the edge of a huge challenge but is optimistic about the future. (Page 35) Included is a collection of glowing testimonials from students in the course. (Page 42)

Bryn Athyn College of the New Church also is featured in two articles by science professors, exploring the links between science and religion in our New Church College. Dr. Sherri Cooper, Associate Professor of Biology, offers a thought-provoking paper based on a talk she gave to the Theta Alpha Guild in Mitchellville, Maryland, last spring: *Is There Such a Thing as New Church Science?* She looks at what science is, and what it isn't, and how it finds common ground with spiritual growth in our College. (Page 45) Dr. Gregory Baker, Professor Emeritus who taught Physics in the College, relates the current Journey program in the Church – *Shift: Small Changes, Big Difference – to The 'Shift in Religion and Science*. “The process has now shifted,” he says. “Instead of experiment producing theory, theory now produces experiment.” What are the other shifts he sees? (Page 53)

The Rt. Rev. Brian W. Keith reports on a trip he and his wife, Gretchen, took to India in October. He ordained the Rev. Peter Devassy, who is leading a New Church movement there. Bishop Keith notes: “What is happening in India is wonderfully exciting, but also quite unique to what we have experienced where people have found the New Church in a new country or continent. It is perhaps an indication of how the Lord leads through the centuries and in ways we cannot anticipate.” (Page 13)

The Rev. Bradley Heinrichs, Pastor of the Carmel Church in Caryndale, Ontario, Canada, recounts an indelible memory as a young boy when a carefree vacation was interrupted by his parents insisting on a get-dressed-up visit to church. That lesson on the importance of remembering the Sabbath has stayed with him, and he challenges all of us to honor the Commandment. (Page 23)

The Rev. Kenneth Alden, Pastor of the Boynton Beach congregation in Florida, recently presented a series of eight sermons on *The Image of God*,

including the sensitive study presented on page 27 on *Homosexuality and the Image of God*. This is obviously a controversial issue in the Church – and in our culture. The approach here is to look at the subject calmly and from doctrine. We anticipate there will be other points of view and will welcome letters presented with the same doctrinal context and spirit of charity.

The Rev. Chuck Blair, pastor of NewChurch LIVE, is the subject for this issue on *Introducing Our Ministers*. Chuck came into the ministry from a very successful career teaching history and leadership in public school, then the Academy Boys School, where he was also the much-loved head housemaster at Stuart Hall for many years. (See his profile on page 56) He also offers a paper, prepared for the Council of the Clergy, on *The Partnership Model for a Healthy Church*. (Page 61)

The Rev. Ronnie Schnarr, Assistant to the Pastor at the New Church of Boulder Valley in Colorado, asks a question that may resonate with a lot of us: *If the Second Coming Happened Why is There Still so Much Dysfunction in the World?* This originally appeared on www.newchurchperspective.org. (Page 67)

Church News includes a tribute to the late Duncan Smith by the Rev. David Lindrooth, Director of General Church Outreach. Duncan was a tireless laborer in the fields of spreading the New Church – from the United States and Ukraine to Ghana and Kenya. His hands-on zeal will be missed. Also included is an inspiring report about the growing commitment to the Church with *The Dream in Asia*. (Page 74)

Editorials

Who Was Emanuel Swedenborg?

In seeking to understand who Swedenborg was it is natural to assign him to a category. Thus he has been described as a genius, mystic, Enlightenment philosopher, theologian, religious reformer, “the last of the Renaissance men,” “the Aristotle of the North,” “the Buddha of the North,” and so on. But truly, he was in a class by himself.

The best way of understanding Swedenborg is to consider the phrase he used to describe himself: “a spiritual fisherman.”

“I was once asked how from a philosopher I became a theologian; and I answered: In the same manner that fishermen were made disciples and apostles by the Lord; and that I also from early youth had been a spiritual fisherman. On hearing this the inquirer asked: what is a spiritual fisherman? I replied that a ‘fisherman’ in the spiritual sense of the Word, signifies a man who investigates and teaches natural truths, and afterwards spiritual truths rationally.” (*Interaction of the Soul and Body*, n. 20)

He went on to explain that this is because spiritual truths are founded upon natural truths. Swedenborg began as an investigator of natural truths, and then, standing upon the foundation formed by his scientific research, he became an investigator of spiritual truths.

This was the orderly way for his understanding of creation to evolve because, as he would learn from the doctrine of correspondence revealed to him in his theological period, there are two worlds, the spiritual and the natural, which are absolutely distinct and yet closely conjoined. The spiritual world is the realm of causes, while the natural world consists of effects produced by those spiritual causes.

His knowledge of natural truths therefore gave him a concrete basis for understanding spiritual truths. It equipped him to explain abstract spiritual concepts by means of particular examples and imagery drawn from nature. It enabled him to “teach spiritual truths rationally.”

For example: his acquaintance with the “genera and species” of plants and animals gave him a correspondential basis for understanding the way human affections and thoughts are arranged in the mind into “genera and species.” The two taxonomies, the one natural, the other spiritual, correspond.

Perhaps we can see the hand of providence in the fact that the science of taxonomy, or classification of plants and animals, was being developed by his fellow Swede (and relative by marriage), Carl Linnaeus, at the same time Swedenborg was exploring the corresponding order of the human mind in the spiritual world.

More generally, we see that the new revelation of spiritual truth given through Swedenborg coincides with the beginning of the scientific revolution, which resulted in the explosion of natural knowledge in the modern age. The two kinds of knowledge are joined together in the thought of the New Church because the natural corresponds to the spiritual. An understanding of each is necessary for a fuller understanding of God and man, and of the spiritual and natural worlds.

Swedenborg's scientific work, and specifically his study of human anatomy, yielded many interesting results; especially his work on the brain. This culminated in his search for the seat of the soul in the body, but he couldn't find it because, as he would learn, there is no one seat of the soul in the body; the soul rests upon and acts into the whole body.

The next step, then, was to extend his investigation into the spiritual realm – but this was not a step he could make himself.

Science had brought him to the door. Or rather, the *love of truth* that inspired his scientific work, the *humility* he had acquired in pursuing it, and the *rational faculty* he had cultivated in the effort to process and understand the knowledge he had acquired, are what led him to the door, and inspired him to knock on it.

And there was something else: he wasn't just an investigator of nature and a solitary thinker, but *he led a life of use*. His thought was not just theoretical, but practical. We have all seen the amazing list of useful crafts he studied, his inventions, and his accomplishments while serving in his country's government.

But the most basic of all his "qualifications" to serve as the instrument of a new revelation was his human character. Simply put, he was a good man. Not perfect, not a plaster saint, but honest and sincere and kind. He examined himself and sought the Lord's help in becoming fit to serve Him. He was a model of self-effacement.

This assessment of his character is based upon abundant and consistent testimony by those who knew him, as well as the thoughts he recorded in the private journals he kept of his spiritual experiences. And although there is very little in the way of personal comment in his theological works (and that fact itself is telling), it is impossible to imagine that anyone other than a good man could have written them.

Swedenborg is often identified as a great genius, but to focus our

appreciation of him on that alone would be like praising a great violinist because of the quality of his instrument. Swedenborg's intelligence was great; his wisdom was even greater. But the real story is that the Divine wisdom revealed through him completely eclipsed his own.

In the final analysis, the best way – the only way, really – to understand Swedenborg is to view him in relation to the Lord and the use he served in the Lord's Second Coming. It is impossible for anyone who understands Swedenborg at all to focus just on him. Swedenborg himself requires us to look beyond him to the One who made him what he was. In this, Swedenborg was like John the Baptist, who said about himself in relation to the Lord: "He must increase, but I must decrease." (*John 3:30*)

And yet, Swedenborg the man does not, and should not, disappear altogether. We are natural creatures, and just as our experience and understanding of the world of nature enhances our understanding of the world of spirit which it represents, so we need to know the story of those people through whom a revelation was given.

This is especially true in the case of Swedenborg, whose own understanding played a key part in the communication of the truth revealed through him. He was not, like the prophets of old, a mere mouthpiece or scribe, but actively contributed to the rational formulation of the Heavenly Doctrine.

Little is known about the various writers and editors of the Bible, but we know that it did not just drop out of the sky in its present form (or forms), and that it has a natural history as well as a spiritual one. It is true of everything in the natural universe that, although it comes from God, it also has a natural history; and some knowledge of both histories is necessary for a real understanding of either one. The "natural history" of the Lord Himself is given in the Gospels. (And, we might note, the Gospel record is the *only* information about His earthly life we have; the efforts by various writers to discover – invent, actually – "the historical Jesus" are misguided, and the results, to say the least, spurious).

Spiritual truths need to be clothed with earthly, particular, concrete forms in order for us to grasp them. On the other hand, apart from the acknowledgment of God and some understanding of the Divine source of creation, the real significance of nature cannot be perceived. Nature brings spiritual truth down to earth, while spiritual truth elevates our view of nature and enables us to perceive the Divine in it.

Knowing the "natural history" of the Writings is therefore useful, and, in providence, much information about their earthly author, Swedenborg, has been preserved; an unusual amount, in fact, for someone from the 18th century. Knowledge and appreciation of the human author need not detract from our knowledge and appreciation of the Divine Author, any more than the majesty

and beauty of nature detracts from the majesty and beauty of its Creator. In fact, our knowledge and appreciation of nature should serve to confirm and enhance our knowledge and love of God.

It is the same regarding our knowledge of Swedenborg. We can, with some enlightenment, discern the hand of Divine providence at work as we consider the course of his life and preparation for the greatest use imaginable.

Swedenborg was led through his scientific work, into philosophy, and then into theology. But he was never a theologian in the ordinary sense. Nor was he a mystic, or a prophet, in the usual meaning of those words. He was, very simply, as he signed himself on the title page of *True Christian Religion*, the last of his theological works: “Emanuel Swedenborg, Servant of the Lord Jesus Christ.”

“Servant.” The humblest of titles, and yet when the One served is the Lord, the most exalted of all.

(WEO)

Swedenborg and God’s Gift

As we begin a new year, the world is teetering under threats of war and terrorism, economic calamity, natural disruptions, political dysfunction. There is a global sense of having lost our way.

We are in cultural retreat as well. In the entertainment and social media the boundaries between normal and abnormal behavior blur to almost no distinction. Humanity seems to have lost its moral compass.

The world goes through cycles and no doubt every generation has wrung its hands over where we are headed.

But the pace of change – glacial for centuries – now accelerates breathlessly. And with each new iPad and digital marvel, devices that can end life apocalyptically or tinker with creating life in research laboratories, we have to wonder if we are really progressing as a people.

The spiritual development of humanity is lagging behind the frenetic advances of the natural world, which helps to explain our spiritual and cultural drift. Our civilization can’t keep up with technological change. It is badly in need of spiritual uplift.

It is coincidental and significant that we celebrate the birthdays of two intellectual giants in January and February who have done more than any others to change the planes of our thinking. The first, of course, is Emanuel Swedenborg, born January 29, 1688, whose gift from the Lord was the

transforming truths of the Second Coming. The other is Thomas Edison, born February 11, 1847, whose gift was the genius of invention. Both have taken us further in their fields than anyone before or since. Given his own inventive mind, Swedenborg no doubt would have been fascinated by Edison's inventions. But that Edison is so much better known and celebrated in today's world helps to explain the gap we are facing.

Edison surely advanced the world and the way we do things, and much of the progression in technology that awes us today just builds on his platforms. But as we marvel at all that he and other scientists and technicians set in motion, we need also to pause and consider where it is taking us – especially as spiritual advancement lags so far behind.

Swedenborg brought us revelation about God, life after death, Divine providence – everything we need to understand that the Lord wants us to know so that we can grow spiritually closer to Him, in this world and in heaven.

Edison launched our technological age, in which mere knowledge expands beyond imagination. He pioneered more than 1,000 inventions – all the fruit of his own genius rather than expanding on the work of others. What is really mind-boggling is what has happened since, with every breathtaking advance eclipsed by “the latest.”

When Samuel Morse sent the first telegraph message from Baltimore to Washington in 1844, he asked incredulously, “What hath God wrought?” Now we wonder what man has wrought – and whether we are going too far.

Albert Einstein warned at the surge of the technological tsunami that now engulfs us, “The concern of man and his destiny must always be the chief interest of all technical effort. Never forget it among your diagrams and equations.”

Thanks to the miracles of modern science, we can keep people “alive” in hospitals – vegetating and useless, but technically alive. We can tinker with genes, operate on embryos, and clone certain forms of life. We call this progress. And we worry about playing God.

With every advance come ethical complications, which is when we need Swedenborg a lot more than Edison. That is when we ask not only what we can do but whether we should, and what are the implications for our spiritual lives, as well as the natural. Much of the thrust of our material progress is useful, beneficial and welcome. We just need to be sure that “concern for man and his destiny” remain central to the diagrams and equations, and that our focus first is spiritual, then natural.

And as the dazzling spectacle of science and technology flashes before us, let us just keep some sense of where the stepping stones are leading us – and where we really want to go. It is easy to get caught up in the spectacle of “progress,” but the journey of the spirit is what goes on forever.

The world still is roiling with the upheaval of the Second Coming, which we cannot see but know the effects are all around us. God offers hope and peace, while the world of Mammon is seductive – and we have to choose. Our calling is to be disciples for the Lord, as were the twelve who followed Jesus. And we have His quiet, steady assurance when He counseled His disciples in the uncertain hours before His crucifixion: “These things I have spoken unto you, that in Me you might have peace. In the world you shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer for I have overcome the world.” (John 16:33)

(BMH)

2011 Index Online

The index for the 2011 issues of *New Church Life* is too long to be included in the publication but has been posted online at www.newchurchlife.org.

If you would like a copy please contact
Bruce.Henderson@anc-gc.org.

Letters to the Editors

Cautions About The Internal Sense

To The Editors:

I wonder if I might make a couple of comments in relation to the September/October 2011 *New Church Life*?

The first concerns Dr. James de Maine's response to my letter about his article, *Please, Let Me Die*, and the second to the article, *New Initiative Aims to Share the Internal Sense Online*.

Dr. de Maine seems to draw a clear distinction between doctrinal issues (which he is not going to discuss) and the practicalities. Is this not the problem we all face? Isn't the whole point of regeneration that we have to make our own practicalities one with doctrine?

Regarding the new initiative for sharing the internal sense online, I would refer readers to the following small sample of the many similar statements in the Writings concerning the internal sense of the Word:

Arcana Coelestia 8106 states that the literal sense of the Word is called a cloud because the internal sense, which is called glory, cannot be comprehended by man unless he is regenerated, and is then illustrated. If the internal sense of the Word, or truth divine in its glory, were to appear before a man who has not been regenerated, it would be like thick darkness.

Arcana Coelestia 2242 states that the Word, while as to the letter, is for man, as to the internal sense it is for the angels, and also for those men, to whom, by the divine mercy of the Lord, it has been given to be as angels during their life in the world.

Arcana Coelestia 6361 states that it may be manifestly evident that there is an internal sense of the Word which does not appear in the letter.

Arcana Coelestia 8899 states that the external sense is for those in the world and the spiritual or internal sense is for those who are in heaven and therefore both senses are for those who while in the world are also in heaven, that is for those who are in the good of life according to the truths of doctrine.

Arcana Coelestia 9086 states that men would apprehend the Word

according to the internal sense if they lived an angelic life. They who live this life are illustrated by the Lord and see the holy things of the Word and never any others.

Clearly the Writings and the Old and New Testaments as we see them and read them are the external sense of the Word.

Clearly, too, the internal sense lies within the external and we only come into the internal sense if we are regenerating and we only see it by illustration from the Lord. The Writings use the terms comprehension and illustration clearly emphasizing that seeing the internal sense is a matter of the mind, of perception. It cannot be seen in the written words. The internal sense cannot therefore be handed from one person to another – if the other is not regenerated he will not see it and if he is he will only see the internal sense according to his own state.

I therefore strongly question the Church's view that the internal sense can be made available to others in any way, let alone online. It seems to me that it is wrong to give the impression that the internal sense is being made available when in fact it is the external sense that is the Writings.

Another Alternative?

To The Editors:

A thought in response to the discussion of Holy Supper elements: Maybe the Lord actually does offer us an alternative to bread and wine. In three Gospels, He institutes the sacrament with bread and wine after the Passover supper (*Matthew 26:26-27, Mark 14:22-24, Luke 22:19-20*). In the fourth, there is no mention of the bread and wine ritual; instead, at the same point in the story, He washes the disciples' feet and commands them to do likewise. (*John 13:4-17*)

I don't recall having seen anything in the Writings defining foot-washing as a sacrament, or mentioning it as a practice that ought physically to be done. Also I recognize that, unlike eating and drinking, washing each other is not something we in the modern Western world normally do as part

of our everyday social communion. Yet in the Gospel of John it is clearly a command, and an important one:

“If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with Me. . . . If I then, Lord and Master, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another’s feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you.”

Perhaps when looking for charitable substitutes for wheat and alcohol, we could look at the alternative the Gospel of charity has to offer?

Laurel Powell
Lenhartsville, Pennsylvania

What God Intends

To The Editors:

Although I did not read the (must have been amazing) article and response to Dr. James de Maine’s *Please Let Me Die*, I as a nursing administrator want to say that decisions that God would approve are as varied and as individual as the people involved.

One quality of New Church people I have always balked at is the statement made in so many ways: “Yes, you were right to make that decision but remember it is not what God wants, and it remains wrong.”

What right does anyone have to give another a yoke of guilt? Did our Lord, Jesus Christ, give us the right to hand out guilt for Him? Is this our judgment to make?

It seems to me we are not “good” Swedenborgians unless we are willing and up to self-flagellation and the continued burden it carries. When will the body of our church realize that our message must be informative, supportive and uplifting to new generations? I don’t think God ever intended what we have been doing thus far.

Please excuse another comment: I read and realize the wine vs. water or grape juice (for the Holy Supper) continues to be of vital importance to some. If a minister and a layman were on a desert basin with no drink available, spit would do and the Holy Supper would be shared in all the very best of God’s grace and intention. What is our real goal? Is it to argue about a ritual, or to bring people to God?

Last comment: Please request that all articles be limited to three pages. That is as much as this exciting new generation has time to give to the meaning of life!

Absolute last comment: Find out which New Church endeavor is bringing more people into the New Church than any other. What can we learn from them? This tool box is the one we would be wise to consider.

In deep appreciation for what you are trying to accomplish.

Zarah Blair
Sarver, Pennsylvania

The Budding New Church in India

Rt. Rev. Brian W. Keith

In October, I had the privilege of ordaining Peter Devassy into the ministry of the New Church in India. Peter, 47 years old, is warm and friendly. He is excited about the New Church and sharing it with others, and has a number of contacts throughout India who are already showing interest.

Peter's Story

Peter's story of finding the New Church and his journey to being ordained is fascinating. He had been a Protestant minister, with previous partial training as a Catholic priest, who was dissatisfied with his church's understanding of the Oneness of God. He had been looking for a new understanding of this and, through the Internet, the New Church and Swedenborg kept coming up.

He quickly embraced our concept of One God since it accorded with his reading of Scripture. And he was intrigued with our other doctrines. He then read much more of the Writings online. When, during this time of searching, he went to a Pentecostal seminary in Poland for training, he finally completely rejected the concept of the Trinity that was being taught and made contact with the Rev. Göran Appelgren in Sweden, as the closest New Church minister to Poland. By then he had also received a copy of *Heaven and Hell* from the Rev. Olaf Hauptmann, which he read avidly.

Göran and Peter engaged in extensive phone calls and e-mail communications and he later traveled to Sweden to learn more about our teachings. He was baptized during the New Church Day celebration in Sweden, June 17, 2007.

Peter returned to India with the intent of spreading the New Church. He obtained legal status for a church, with the purpose statement:

“The object of the New Church in India is to Worship the Lord God Jesus Christ as the One God of heaven and earth, to live a righteous life as it has been set forth in Sacred Scriptures and in the theological Writings of Emanuel Swedenborg, and to spread the New Church in India to all people who embrace the faith of the New Church in India.”

He then ambitiously launched his first “conference” in October of 2007 to spread New Church teachings in India, inviting everyone he knew to come. Nearly 50 people attended. Göran traveled from Sweden to participate, lecturing and baptizing a number of people.

One of the personal challenges Peter faced was to convince his wife and children that he was serious about this and had not gone off the deep end. (If he had completed the course in Poland, he would have had an esteemed status in India and probably significant financial remuneration.) Fortunately, Mary, his wife who is an accountant, and their children Phoebe (a nurse currently working in Saudi Arabia), Boaz (training in hotel management), and Sheila (finishing high school) all came to accept these truths and were baptized into the New Church at the first conference.

Peter also sought theological training so he could be ordained into the New Church. He could not obtain a visa to study at the Academy of the New Church, but through distance education provided by our Theological School and Göran, he was able to complete a course of study that prepared him for ordination. (Göran and the Rev. David Lindrooth have been especially helpful to him as general support.)

Peter is also active in promoting translations of the Writings into the local language, Malayalam. With the financial backing of Swedenborg Publishers International, he was able to have *Heaven and Hell* translated and published, and *The New Jerusalem and Its Heavenly Doctrines* is underway. He employs a skilled translator and then checks his work for accuracy. These volumes are being disseminated in Kerala. English is spoken by many in India, so English translations are also beneficial.

First New Church Ordination in India?

One would presume this was the first ordination into the New Church priesthood in India. It is the first General Church ordination. However, on November 24, 1890 the Rev. Samuel Dike, an ordaining minister from Convention, visited India and baptized, confirmed and ordained John McGowan as a bishop! He was an active missionary for the New Church in the Bombay area (now called Mumbai). The editors of *New Church Life* accepted this ordination and status of “bishop” as valid, although Convention had qualms about it since it was performed outside of the United States.

Unfortunately, Bishop McGowan died in 1894, so his service was short-lived. He did ordain his son as an assistant bishop and Charles Hollier, apparently as a pastor, but neither seems to have done much and they were hardly ever heard from again.

In the past, two other New Church ministers that we know of have visited India. The Rev. Fred E. Gyllenhaal stopped by for about a week on his way to becoming pastor in Durban in 1913. (His report in *New Church Life* is delightful, as he was hosted by the Prime Minister of India and met the Maharishi, in addition to giving lectures and preaching.) And the General Conference sent the Rev. S.J.C. Goldsack there in 1917 for eight months to do

missionary work.

More importantly, two Indian laymen were active missionaries for the New Church in the first half of the 20th century. Professor Manishankar Bhatt translated and published the Writings (at his own expense), and often lectured about the New Church, forming various reading groups in the Bombay area. He also founded the Swedenborg Society there.

Mr. Bhatt died in 1923, but the mantle was soon taken up by Mr. Gopaul Chetty, who was equally active in translating and publishing the Writings in Tamil, suggesting that he was operating more in the southern part of India. He died in 1953 at age 90 and had been actively spreading the New Church until his eyesight gave out shortly after World War II. His son took up some of the work through the early 1960s.

More recently, Göran has visited to participate in all of the conferences, and the Rev. David Lindrooth was able to attend last year's.

Episcopal Trip

Once it was determined that Peter was prepared for ordination, we coordinated a trip to Cochin, on the southwestern coast of India, to coincide with the Fourth International Spiritual Conference. Peter has continued these as a way to stimulate new interest, bring together new receivers, and teach more about the New Church.

Gretchen and I arrived Thursday morning, October 20th. Peter and Brady, the chief musician for the group, showed their dedication by greeting us with smiling faces and welcome arms – at 3:30 a.m! (India appears to have no restrictions on when planes can land or take off – our departure was at 4:30 a.m!) They took us to a small hotel near where the conference was to be held. After a few hours' sleep, we joined with Göran, also staying at our hotel and there to speak at the conference, and spent the day meeting people and seeing the conference setting.

The Kerala state of India, where the city of Cochin is located, is a lush tropical area, with coconut palms, banana trees and beautiful foliage growing everywhere. Cochin is an active port city, with rivers flowing into it, so there seems to be water and bridges everywhere. While there are plenty of people, it does not fit the image that many have of India, of densely packed cities and abject poverty.

It is certainly not a first-world country, but everyone appeared to have some kind of employment or activity. The small businesses and homes along the roadside are often brightly painted. The women dress very modestly with beautifully colored and patterned saris, although the men are more monotone with predominately white shirts and dark pants.

The roads tend to be somewhat narrow, with buses, cars, motorized

Christianity has a strong presence here, perhaps not too surprising since this was a main outpost for the Portuguese and then the Dutch. And they also have a literacy rate of 95%, and so they value reading, which is useful for spreading the New Church.

rickshaws, motorcycles, bicycles and pedestrians all vying for room. But it all flows smoothly, even if not according to the lanes on the road!

Christianity has a strong presence here, perhaps not too surprising since this was a main outpost for the Portuguese and then the Dutch. And they also have a literacy rate of 95%, and so they value reading, which is useful for spreading the New Church.

The Conference

The conference started on Friday morning. The site was a large covered structure next to the water – as much of Cochin appears to be. It was an almost idyllic setting, with palms swaying in the breeze, large Chinese fishing

nets along the shore, small and large groups of plants floating up and down the river depending upon which way the tides flowed, fishermen paddling in canoe-like boats, cormorants diving, perching and spreading their wings to dry out, iridescent kingfishers flashing by, and eagle-like kites soaring overhead.

There were 60-70 attendees from five different Indian states – some people traveling more than 30 hours by train to get there. They all had varying degrees of knowledge and interest in the Heavenly Doctrines, and many had been to previous conferences. It was amazing the number of people who told us about which volumes of the Writings they had read – often *Heaven and Hell* and *Divine Providence*.

Most surprising was that about 17 of the attendees were ordained ministers. Two even introduced themselves as New Church ministers! They had been baptized into the New Church last year by David Lindrooth. They had read several volumes of the Writings, were convinced of their truthfulness, and had been preaching them in their churches.

As is often the case, this did not work out very well, with most of their people leaving their congregations. But they gained about 40% of them back and are building from that basis. Several inquired about where they could obtain more training in New Church theology, hoping for distance learning, perhaps a visiting professor from the Academy, or a short visit for themselves to Bryn Athyn to sit in on classes here. This is a fascinating phenomenon. It is in such a nascent stage that one cannot predict what might develop here. But Peter is carefully nurturing it.



Rev. Brian Keith, Rev. Peter Devassy,
and Rev. Göran Appelgren

Peter has translated *Heaven and Hell* into the local language, Malayalam, and *The New Jerusalem and Its Heavenly Doctrines* is underway.

Peter's ordination coincided with the Fourth International Spiritual Conference. Peter runs these as a way to stimulate new interest, bring together new receivers, and teach more about the New Church.





Gretchen spent time with the women, discussing topics about the church, providing both a workshop on how to prepare and conduct Sunday School, and leading the Sunday School during the Sunday morning service.

The conference site offered palms swaying in the breeze, large Chinese fishing nets along the shore, fishermen paddling along the river, cormorants diving and perching, iridescent kingfishers flashing by.



A mother and her two children making one of John Odhner's paper snowflake angels.

One of the paradoxes of the growing interest in the New Church here is that many people are open to listening to the teachings, as evidenced by Protestant clergy attending the conference and reading the Writings. But there can also be a heavy price to pay for getting too involved. Several noted how they had been ostracized from their communities and sometimes even their families for embracing the New Church.

The conference included music, prayers, lectures and social interaction. On Friday, after opening hymns, introductions and prayers, Göran spoke on the nature of the Word. These lectures tended to be lengthy, usually about two hours, since every sentence had to be translated as we went. After lunch I gave a lecture on the spiritual world. That evening participants joined in singing and fellowship.

On Saturday, again after singing hymns and prayers, I spoke on Divine Providence, and then after lunch Göran spoke on the nature of the Lord God Almighty. At breaks and during the meals there was much socializing and many conversations. Most stayed for the church service on Sunday and Peter's ordination into the ministry.

(Peter has a relatively small congregation of somewhere between 15 and 20. They meet in a large room in his home due to resistance from people to rent to this as-yet-unknown religion. But for this Sunday we used the conference center.)

A vital aspect of what took place was Gretchen's involvement with the women, who flocked to her. She spent much time with them discussing all manner of topics about the church, providing both a workshop on how to prepare and conduct Sunday School, and led the Sunday School during the Sunday morning service.

On Monday, after the conference and Sunday services, we were able to recoup some – especially Peter since he was the major-domo, frantically but calmly, attending to innumerable details at the conference. In the morning

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What is happening in India is wonderfully exciting, but also quite unique to what we have experienced elsewhere where people have found the New Church in a new country or continent. It is perhaps an indication of how the Lord leads through the centuries and in ways we cannot anticipate.

and through a delightful lunch we visited Brady's home. His wife, Egna, is a teacher, who is expected to give leadership on Sunday School. Peter has been consulting with the Office of Education about Sunday School resources for several years and had Gretchen show him and Egna how to access all of the online resources.

(They are very Internet-adept and we now have many new "friends" on Facebook from there. What's more, India is providing the third most traffic to our website, www.newchurch.org, indicating a high degree of interest.)

Then, in the afternoon, we saw something of Cochin driving by the church where Vasco da Gama was buried, taking a brief boat tour of the harbor, and watching Göran barter with a very aggressive salesman for some gifts to take home. (He thinks he got a decent deal!) We then went to Peter's home, had a lovely dinner he and Mary prepared, and then headed to the airport to await our 4:30 a.m. flight home.

Final Thoughts

What is happening in India is wonderfully exciting, but also quite unique to what we have experienced elsewhere where people have found the New Church in a new country or continent. It is perhaps an indication of how the Lord leads through the centuries and in ways we cannot anticipate.

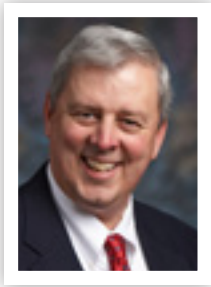
The efforts of previous missionaries seemed to have faded away. Yet, some of those efforts continue to bear fruit. One man had been reading *Heaven and Hell* in the Tamil language, obviously a translation from Mr. Chetty's days, for years before he recently rejoiced to discover Peter and his efforts.

We hope and trust that this new start will be a solid basis for going forward. There is real excitement among those we talked to there, both wanting more of the Heavenly Doctrines and wanting to share the truths with their neighbors.

Peter seems particularly well-suited to re-establish, or found, the New Church in India. He is very dedicated, warm and careful about leaving people in freedom – yet willing to speak out fearlessly even if the message is not well received. And he is very clear that the support he hopes for is primarily additional theological training and translation. He has found a new spiritual

home in the New Church, and wants to share that with all others.

We don't know what will come in the Lord's providence. We will continue our relationship with Peter providing the support we can, especially through the Office of Outreach and Education, and Göran's gentle guidance, and trust that the Lord will establish His Church there in His good time. We can be assured that there will be more to this story.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

The Rt. Rev. Brian W. Keith was ordained in 1976, into the second degree in 1978 and into the third degree in 2004. He serves as Assistant Bishop of the General Church, Vice President of the General Church International, Incorporated, and Chairman of the General Church Translation Committee. He and his wife, Gretchen (Umberger), live in Bryn Athyn.

Statement of Faith



Peter Devassy

October 23, 2011

I believe and affirm that the Lord Jesus Christ is God of Heaven and Earth. He was Jehovah who came from eternity and who made Himself visible to the human race as a man. In Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead. He is the Savior of the world. He is my Lord and my God.

The final combat with hell and His victory over the evil made Heaven possible to everybody by following Him without fear of the hell and evil. Heaven is meant to be for everybody if they choose it from their freedom to love and as they shun evil.

I believe that the essence of the Old and New Testaments is the Love of God. The Lord teaches people most clearly and completely in the Old Testament, the New Testament, and the Heavenly Doctrines of the New Church. I believe that the first and great commandment is to love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. And the second is like it: to love your neighbor as yourself. And that on these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.

I believe that serving as a priest in the New Church, it is not the merit of a person but the mercy of the Lord Jesus Christ to serve the people and the Lord's Church upon the earth.

The Importance of Remembering the Sabbath

Rev. Bradley D. Heinrichs

As a pastor I look at the Ten Commandments as the benchmark by which we can evaluate the overall health of our Church. Are we keeping the commandment of “not taking the Lord’s name in vain?” Are we shunning adultery and false witness?

Overall, I would say in most areas we seem to be doing a fairly good job – keeping in mind I do not know the interior states of anyone – but the third commandment jumps out at me as one that perhaps we are neglecting a bit. This is where the Lord says, “*Remember the Sabbath Day to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of Jehovah your God. In it you shall do no work.*” (Exodus 20:8-10)

Some of it may be due to a misconception based on *Arcana Coelestia* 9349 where it outlines the various laws, statutes and judgments given by the Lord from Mount Sinai, dividing them into three categories:

- 1) Laws which are to be altogether observed and done
- 2) Laws which serve a use if one so pleases
- 3) Laws which have been abrogated or abolished

Interestingly, the second part of the third commandment about doing no work on the Sabbath Day has been placed in category 2. This means that choosing not to work on the Sabbath can serve a useful purpose, but it is no longer strictly enforced. Some good New Church people have mistakenly thought that the whole of the third commandment has been placed in this “optional” category. However, that is not the case. The first part of the commandment, “*Remember the Sabbath to keep it holy,*” has been placed in the category of “*altogether to be observed and done!*”

I have also heard an argument advanced that goes like this: “The commandment only says we are to remember the Sabbath Day to keep it holy; it doesn’t say we have to go to church!” While this is literally true, I think we have to be careful that we are not being too pharisaical by dissecting the commandment to the point where we miss the real intent of it and render it of no effect.

The Lord clearly throughout the Old Testament commanded that places of worship be built to Him, and in the New Testament He frequented the

In 2012 I would urge and challenge each one of you to make a commitment to turn to the Lord in a concrete way by setting aside just two short hours every Sunday.

temple and taught there. Then in *True Christian Religion 301* we are told that when the Lord came to earth, the Sabbath day became “*a day of instruction in Divine things, and thus also a day...of meditation on such things as relate to salvation and eternal life.*” So if we are choosing not to go to church on Sunday, are we honestly still remembering the Sabbath Day by being instructed in Divine things and setting aside time to meditate on them, or are we just getting extra sleep or some work done around the house and yard?

Now if we are sincerely remembering the Sabbath Day even though we choose not to go to church, then it is a good thing that we are genuinely honoring the third commandment; however, there is still a valuable use to be served in making going to church a regular weekly habit.

Think about our annual celebratory church services. Most everyone has fond memories of them. Obviously, one reason is because we are celebrating the momentous occasions of the Lord on earth, such as His birth and resurrection. But another very tangible reason is that there is strength in numbers as the Lord flows in and inspires us, both individually and collectively. Now imagine if that wasn't just once or twice a year, but rather a weekly occurrence!

I think it is safe to say that members of any congregation would become re-energized and really begin to thrive, if *every* Sunday we *all* came together to worship the Lord and be instructed in the truths of His Word. Picture coming to church every Sunday and seeing not 90 people turning to the Lord in prayer and asking for His guidance, but 150, 300 or even 1,000!

Another good reason for making it a habit to go to church and worship the Lord on Sunday is that, as adults, we set the example for our children. If they see remembering the Sabbath Day as optional for their parents, chances are when they become adults it will also be optional, rather than something to be “*altogether observed and done.*”

I'll tell you a story that had a profound impact on me as a child. We used to come to Canada for vacation during the summers to visit my Grandpa and Grandma Heinrichs, and Uncle Phil and Aunt Anne Heinrichs' family. After stopping in Caryndale for a day or two, we would set out for the cottage at Lake Conestoga. As a child this was paradise for fishing, boating, swimming, playing games, etc.

Then right in the middle of our two-week vacation, what ominous day would disrupt all the fun I was having? You guessed it – the Sabbath Day! I can still remember my mother making me get dressed up and my father driving us all the way back to the Carmel Church, extolling the virtue of remembering

the Sabbath Day and reminding us that it was not an optional commandment.

I won't lie to you and say how much I appreciated this as a child. I did *not* appreciate it at all and was quite resentful. However, that example really drove home a critical lesson that has stuck with me throughout my life: Remembering the Sabbath is extremely important, and that I should focus and organize my life around the Church, instead of just trying to squeeze it in when it's convenient.

I don't share these thoughts to point the finger at anyone to feel guilty, or to be preachy – even though that's my job. I do it because the reality is that we are living in insanely busy times where we are all spread very thin, and it is so easy for the Lord and the His Church to get lost in the shuffle.

I really believe that the simple act of remembering the Sabbath on a weekly basis, worshipping the Lord, and being instructed in His Word, is vital and necessary for us to thrive spiritually. It is a once-a-week touchstone where we raise our thoughts above the morass of the world, and find comfort, refuge and peace in the Lord's Holy Temple. And there is a sense of strength and good will that is found in the fellowship of other worshippers who are battling many of the same things that we struggle to overcome.


So in 2012, I would urge and challenge each one of you to make a commitment to turn to the Lord in a concrete way by setting aside just two short hours a week every Sunday – that's just 1.2% of your week! – and see what wonderful things He can do in your life and in the life of your church group. The Lord is waiting to lift us up, feed us and bless us, if we will only turn ourselves toward Him, even as He promises in Isaiah:

“If you turn away your foot from the Sabbath, from doing your pleasure on My holy day, and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy day of the LORD honorable, and shall honor Him, not doing your own ways, nor finding your own pleasure, nor speaking your own words, then you shall delight yourself in the LORD; and I will cause you to ride on the high hills of the earth, and feed you with the heritage of Jacob your father. The mouth of the LORD has spoken.” (Isaiah 58:13-14)



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

The Rev. Bradley D. Heinrichs was ordained in 1999 and into the second degree in 2000. He is pastor of the Carmel Church and Principal of the Carmel Church School, in Caryndale, Ontario, Canada, where he lives with his wife, Catherine, and their six children.



Have you had contact with the spiritual world?

Tell us your story.

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- Have you had a near-death experience?
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- Have you experienced a visit from the spiritual world?

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To participate contact Dr. Erica:

dr.ericahyatt@brynathyn.edu or 267-502-6081

Interviews will be conducted in a private location and will be completely confidential. Your identifying information will be kept private unless you give us permission to use your name. Interviews will be at least 30 minutes long and may be scheduled more than once. Please feel free to pass along this information to others who might be interested.

You can learn more about the Psychology Major at Bryn Athyn College by going to Facebook and searching for "Psychology at Bryn Athyn."

Homosexuality and the Image of God

A sermon by Rev. Kenneth J. Alden

And God created man in His own image in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. (Genesis 1:27)

Whereas before, God proposed to make man in His image, after His likeness, here He develops and perfects the image of God by creating man male and female. So far, in this sermon series, we have seen that “the image of God” refers to the faculty of understanding or rationality that God has given each person, and “the likeness” denotes the faculty of will or freedom. (See *Divine Providence* 328:5,6) Here, the understanding is represented by “male,” and the will by “female.” (See *Arcana Coelestia* 54)

Our sermon today takes up the state of freewill of people who identify themselves as homosexual. Thus we will look at how the Lord from His mercy uses the image and likeness of God in them to lead them toward heaven.

Throughout this sermon, the term “homosexual” is used in its classic definition of “characterized by sexual desire for those of the same sex as oneself,” and thus includes both those who call themselves “gay,” and those who call themselves “lesbian.” (*Webster’s New World Dictionary*)

As background to this topic, consider the implications of God’s elaborating His image and likeness into male and female, and blessing them in marriage.

On an individual level, the image and likeness of God are the faculties which can receive His two great qualities: wisdom and love. (See *Divine Providence* 328:5) But in creating people He further expressed His image and likeness by creating males especially to receive His wisdom and females especially to receive His love. (See *Conjugal Love* 32, 33, 90-92)

Together, in marriage, they form a more perfect image of God than is possible in any individual because His image and likeness are more highly developed: both the will and understanding of the male are specialized for being a form of understanding and receiving God’s wisdom, (see *Heaven and Hell* 367-368) and both the will and understanding of the female are

Editor’s note: This was the sixth of a series of eight sermons preached by the Rev. Kenneth Alden in Boynton Beach, Florida, on the topic, *In God’s Image and Likeness*. You can see all eight sermons at www.newchurchboyntonbeach.org, under Resources.

So much is the marriage of male and female connected with the fulfillment of God's purpose in creation – to regenerate us to be angels of heaven – that all the angels within heaven are married.

specialized for being a form of will and receiving God's love. (See *Heaven and Hell* 367-368)

The Heavenly Doctrine shows that the two together are more perfectly human than either is singly, and thus they are a more perfect image of God. (See *Conjugal Love* 37, 52, 95, 230, 432; *Arcana Coelestia* 2744; *Heaven and Hell* 386; *Spiritual Experiences* 6110:3, 10; *Marriage* 71; *Apocalypse Explained*

555:13, 984:2-3; *Marriage Index* 1 65, 100; *Spiritual Experiences* 6051:5, 6096:21) That perfection is seen, indeed, in the way a married pair in heaven are thought of and even seen as one angel. (See *Conjugal Love* 42, 50, 52; *Heaven and Hell* 367, 372)

On the literal level, the perfection is seen in the way male and female can act together in the image of God actually to create, as it were, new human beings. It is seen also in the blessing the Lord gives with such action, as the verse following our text testifies: "And God blessed them, and God said to them, Be fruitful, and multiply." (*Genesis* 1:28)

The Heavenly Doctrine confirms God's ability especially to bless such a union, where it says of the love in marriage: "into this love have been gathered all joys and all delights, from the first to the last of them." (*Conjugal Love* 68) Again, we read: "Regarded from its origin and correspondence, this love is celestial, spiritual, holy, pure and clean, more so than any other love which exists from the Lord in angels of heaven or people of the church." (*Conjugal Love* 64) Indeed, the whole atmosphere of heaven is that of the marriage of good and truth, which marriage is the origin of the marriage of man and woman. (See *Conjugal Love* 60, 143, 198; *Heaven and Hell* 371, 375)

No wonder the perfection of the Lord's conjunction with heaven and the Church is pictured in the Word by His marriage to His bride, the New Jerusalem. (See *Revelation* 19:7-9, 21:2; *Apocalypse Revealed* 812, 881) So much is the marriage of male and female connected with the fulfillment of God's purpose in creation – to regenerate us to be angels of heaven – that all the angels within heaven are married. (See *Conjugal Love* 50, 432, 531; *Apocalypse Explained* 984:2-3; *Marriage Index* 1 89, 99; *Arcana Coelestia* 2744; *Heaven and Hell* 386; *Spiritual Experiences* 6051:5, 6096:21)

Swedenborg was shown also that those who estranged their minds from married life while living a celibate life, and yet were spiritual, live at the sides of heaven, because within heaven is the sphere of marriage from which they estranged themselves. (See *Conjugal Love* 50-54)

From the plan of creation which we have considered, and these and many other teachings of the Word, we see that the Lord provides for the marriage of a man and a woman because He sees Himself – His image and likeness – in their marriage. (See *Divine Providence* 53) He delights in it because He can more fully bless people who are in that image and likeness than He can in any other way.

Homosexual orientations are a grave concern because they not only fall outside of Divine order, they threaten to destroy God's ability to bless those who have them.

Why else would the Lord speak in His Word so vigorously against homosexual behavior, as we read in *Leviticus*?

“Thou shall not lie with a male as with womankind. It is abomination.” (*Leviticus* 18:22; see *Arcana Coelestia* 6348:2; *Conjugal Love* 519)

“And a man who lies with a male as he lies with a woman, both of them have made an abomination; dying they shall be put to death; their blood shall be upon them.” (*Leviticus* 20:13)

Keep in mind that the Lord condemns no one and casts no one into hell, meant here by the death penalty. (See *Heaven and Hell* 545, 548; *Arcana Coelestia* 2121, 8904:11, 9008, 9075, 10731) His end is to bless people, but how can He do that when they are not in the state where receiving His blessings thrives, and are, in fact, succumbing to a state that opposes it by taking its place?

Although the Lord creates all people and gives them faculties of rationality and freedom so that He may be conjoined with them, He does not create the homosexual orientation of those who have it, for such creation is neither taught in the Word, nor is it a state of angels in heaven. Like all departures from Divine order, it has its origin in hell where the things of Divine order are corrupted. (See *Divine Love and Wisdom* 336 ff.)

Such was the case of the man born blind, of whom we read in our lesson from the Word. (See *John* 9:1-3) And just as the man's blindness was neither the result of his own sin, nor that of his parents, (see *John* 9:1-3), so a homosexual orientation is no fault of either the one who has it nor of his or her parents. To the extent that it is a biologically based, inborn condition, it is a corruption of the Lord's process of creation, permitted by the Lord as the man's blindness was, that the works of God may be revealed in that person. And what was the work of God but to heal the blind man?

Can we not count on the Lord, in His mercy, to will to do His saving and healing work on every person in whom He has created His image and likeness, so that they may become more fully into His image and likeness?

Can we not count on the Lord, in His mercy, to will to do His saving and healing work on every person in whom He has created His image and likeness, that they may come more fully into His image and likeness?

Someone who comes to the conclusion that he or she is homosexual has the faculties of rationality and freedom just as much as the next person. They are what make a person human, and the Lord preserves them in everyone, for they are His own dwelling place with them. (*Divine Providence* 328:6; *Divine Love and Wisdom* 358, 360; *Doctrine of Life* 102) The question is, can people who incline to homosexuality use those faculties where their behavior is concerned? Can they do the “Thou shall not lie with a male as with womankind,” of which we just read?

It is easy to say in theory that someone can refrain from something he inclines to, but what about the burning sexual passion that drives some people, and the claim of some that they have no such response to women, or vice versa? Do such people have any use of freedom when it comes to their sexual orientation?

Keep in mind that the Lord created everyone with the end that they be able to receive His love and wisdom and live happily in the blessed state of heaven. As we saw in the creation story, when God created man male and female He blessed them, and that blessing came in the context of the uses of marriage. Indeed, the Heavenly Doctrine states;

An inclination and also a capacity for conjunction as though into one was implanted in man and woman from creation, and man and woman still [after death] have this inclination and capacity in them.... This means [conjunction] into one person, as is also apparent from the book of creation, where the two together are called “man.” (*Conjugal Love* 156r:1,2)

The enduring capacity of male and female to be conjoined, not only in body but in all areas of the mind and life which make them human, is elaborated in this passage which shows that it continues after death:

After death a male is still a male and a female is still a female, and an inclination to conjunction has been implanted in each of the sexes from creation. In the human being, moreover, this inclination is an inclination of the person's spirit, and of the body as a result of his spirit. After death, therefore, when a person becomes a spirit, the same mutual inclination continues.... (*Conjugal Love* 51)

We see from these teachings, and also from the teachings that declare true love in marriage to involve a union of souls, as well as minds and bodies, (See *Conjugal Love* 179), that this inclination of the two sexes to unite comes down from levels of our being that are beyond the reach of the hells to pervert. (See *Divine Love and Wisdom* 257:5, 260:2, 263, 270, 373, 432; *Divine Providence* 180; *Apocalypse Explained* 790:4-9)

We can only conclude that no matter what people consider their sexual

orientation to be – no matter what their strong feelings and experiences are – they have implanted in them the inclination to conjunction intended by the Lord.

Every person has the potential for feelings and emotions he or she does not yet experience and can hardly imagine. For example, people whose anger and hatred are inflamed by generations of feuding can hardly see themselves doing as the Lord says and forgiving – let alone loving – their enemies. The path the Lord offers to them, He also offers to those who feel no love for people of the complementary sex; and that is: shun evils as sins.

What evils?

First, one must not lie with a male as with womankind because it is the commandment of the Lord.

Second, one must shun the lust to do so, because the Lord showed that lust is committing adultery in the heart. (See *Matthew 5:28*) As we saw in an earlier sermon in our series, (*Rational Dominion Over The Natural Man*), the image and likeness of God were given in order that man may have dominion over all the lower affections of the mind, pictured by the animals God created.

Here, where the Lord created man male and female and told them to be fruitful together, He also said, “fill the earth, and subdue it; and dominate” over everything from fish to things that creep on the earth. (See *Genesis 1:28*) Even those who believe they were born with their sexual orientation and that it has a biological basis are still free to dominate it from their interior rationality and freedom. They have a choice of letting their body and natural mind rule their thoughts, feelings, and behavior, or shunning these so that their rational, human mind can determine who they are.

Part of the domination lies in not allowing sexual lust to stray to members of one’s own sex, just as much as it lies in not allowing it to stray to married members of the complementary sex, or any member thereof if one is already married.

Shunning one’s homosexual inclinations is not a solution that someone confused about his or her sexual orientation will likely hear from a professional counselor. Too many people today identify human beings with their bodies and natural minds, and have no appreciation for the spiritual mind, the celestial mind above it, and the inmost soul where the faculties of freedom and rationality, as well as the inclination to true marriage, especially lie. But the solution is one that must not be dismissed. Hear again what we read in our lesson from *Divine Providence*:

It is the continual endeavor of the Lord’s Divine providence to conjoin a person with Himself and Himself with the person, and so make him to be an image of Himself. It follows as well that the object of this is to enable the Lord to impart to the person the felicities of eternal life, for such is the nature of Divine love.

However, the Lord cannot impart these felicities, nor make the person an image of Himself, unless the person puts away sins as though of himself in his external self...
(*Divine Providence* 123:3)

Through determined effort to shun homosexual lusts, and with sincere prayer and desire to do the Lord's will, a person can allow the Lord to remove those lusts, and the healing work of the Lord can begin. As those lusts are removed, gradually the orderly natural loves, and the spiritual and heavenly loves from which they descend, can manifest themselves. (See *Divine Providence* 33:2, 112, 113, 119)

This much applies to everyone, for the teaching of the Heavenly Doctrine is that all people incline to every kind of evil. (See *Arcana Coelestia* 3469; *True Christian Religion* 520, 521, 593, 612) Those who recognize that all evils flow into them from hell will be more successful at shunning homosexual lusts as sins. (See *Heaven and Hell* 302; *Arcana Coelestia* 6206, 6324-6325)

They will realize that homosexual feelings do not come from themselves, but are actually the hells assaulting them. Those, however, who have been seduced by the hells and other people into a homosexual lifestyle will have to break many habits and dysfunctional relationships to shun homosexual behavior and lusts. (See *Divine Providence* 112, 113; *Doctrine of Life* 97)

Breaking free of dysfunctional relationships and familiar habits will not happen quickly and not without struggle. As we have seen in recent sermons, (see especially, *Spiritual Influences on Freedom and Rationality*), the evil spirits from whom our lusts come, resist leaving us because they long to remain in us and keep our emotions as the foundation of their lusts. (See *Arcana Coelestia* 4077, 4186, 6198, 6203, 7188, 7710; *Spiritual Experiences* 4479, 4337)

Consider, too, how long it takes the body to heal from major trauma. It can take months of gritty determination to get through painful physical therapy just to restore basic functions. But just as surely as the Lord heals the body, He heals those who shun evils as sins, nurturing their freedom to think rationally and choose heavenly, human life.

This is a point we cannot overstate: it is the Lord who does the healing and, as the Heavenly Doctrine teaches, it is He who must have the dominion over us and our freedom and rationality, if we are to have dominion over the lower affections in our mind. (See *Apocalypse Explained* 513:10)

The Heavenly Doctrine indicates that the origin of homosexual behavior is in the love of dominion from the love of self, (see *Apocalypse Revealed* 502; *Arcana Coelestia* 2220), so we can be sure that any attempt to control our behavior or lusts from ourselves will fail eventually. We must shun such evil so that the Lord alone can rule our rational thinking and free choices.

The Lord offers people the highest happiness and delight in heaven, for there people receive into themselves the image and likeness of the Lord, and

the Lord dwells in their faculties of rationality and freedom, individually, and in their marriages, as couples. We pray that such a state may exist throughout the world when we pray that His will be done, “as in heaven, so upon the earth.” (*Matthew 6:10*)

In His mercy, He has created all people with the faculties and inclinations to allow Him to bless them, and in His mercy He preserves them against all that the hells do to destroy what He creates. May we receive of His mercy not only for our own salvation, but also for compassionately cooperating with Him in the salvation, reformation and regeneration of others.

We can be sure that the Lord works tirelessly that His end in creation – that He may dwell with us in what is His own – may come to pass by the means He provides: “And God created man in His own image in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.” (*Genesis 1:27*) *Amen*.

Readings: *1 Samuel 16:1-13; John 9:1-18; Divine Providence 123:1,3,4*



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Rev. Kenneth J. Alden was ordained in 1980 and into the second degree in 1982. He is Pastor of the Boynton Beach Society and Visiting Pastor in Bonita Springs, Florida. He and his wife, Kim, live with their family in Boynton Beach.



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New Church Education On the Edge

Charter Day Banquet Talk – Bryn Athyn, October 8, 2011

Rev. Dr. Thane Glenn

The title of my talk is *New Church Education on the Edge*. What do I mean by that? Let me ask you to visualize a metaphor here, and I beg your indulgence to remember that in the world of metaphors, the rules of imagination apply, so you'll have to play along a little bit.

Picture yourself standing at the edge of a broad canyon, knowing that you are about to step forward. Will you grow wings and soar or will you tumble onto the rubble below?

Two years ago, Bryn Athyn College instituted a new policy of actively recruiting students of non-New Church background to come and study the liberal arts in a framework of New Church ideas. Over the last two years, I've been one of the faculty members tasked with teaching our new students in Religion 101, our introduction to the teachings for the New Church.

How has it been? Are we on the edge of disaster or on the edge of success?

We have had many remarkable testimonials to what students have gotten from the course. For now, I want to share with you one of my favorites from a student of Religion 101, which happened to come out of my class. It is one of my favorites because I think it exquisitely captures the ambiguity of this question: *what are we on the edge of?*

This was a comment made by a terrific young man named Kenny. It came after a lively argument about Swedenborg's claim that non-Christians can go to heaven as well as Christians. Kenny wasn't so sure about that. We went back and forth, and here was Kenny's final word in the discussion: "All I'm saying is that Swedenborg was an *optimist*."

Now, Kenny wasn't saying, "Oh, Swedenborg, that guy was on drugs." Yes, I've gotten a little of that. He wasn't saying, "Swedenborg was a false prophet." Yes, I've gotten some of that. Nope. "All I'm saying is that Swedenborg was an *optimist*."

So... are we tumbling or soaring?

Well, I want to tell you a little bit about my experience of teaching Religion

My task was this:
How can I create an atmosphere in which all points of view are genuinely welcome, but in which we can be challenged to shift our points of view?

101, what has changed about the way I approach the course, and why.

As I prepared to teach the course my first year, two years ago, I had a wonderful vision for what it was going to be. My vision was that I was going to offer an opportunity for a shared journey in which we would explore our individual faith together, guided by the teachings for the New Church.

The problem with my vision was that exploring individual faith translated into the students' minds as meaning that their job was simply to evaluate each of the ideas we talked about, as right or wrong, against whatever background they had come into

the course with. And since we had a wide variety of student backgrounds – and really, we had everybody from a staunch evangelical Christian to a self-proclaimed atheist – we just ended up with a lot of arguments that could be summed up by this little exchange:

“I don't believe that. That's wrong.”

“Well, I don't believe *that*. *That's* wrong.”

Productive.

Halfway through the first section of the course, I had an epiphany. Now you might wonder why somebody who had been teaching for 11 years would need this sort of epiphany. I guess I'm a little slower than some of my colleagues. Here was my epiphany: when I teach first-year composition, I don't just let my students sit comfortably back in whatever writing skills or lines of argumentation they happen to have come into the course with. No. I challenge them to rethink their positions, to refine their argumentation, to move to something better.

Religion is a little bit trickier. You might not be too surprised to learn that most students don't get terribly shaken up when I challenge their idea of what a run-on sentence is. But matters of faith are a little bit closer to our hearts. So my task was this: how can I create an atmosphere in which all points of view are genuinely welcome, but in which we can be challenged to shift our points of view?

I found that many of our new students coming in – students without a background in the New Church – really were not willing to be challenged by the teachings for the New Church alone. And I don't blame them. In order to be challenged by something, we have to start with the premise that it might contain some important truth that will apply to our lives. And some of our new students coming in weren't ready to accept that premise.

But I found that they are willing to be challenged by the Bible. Because

regardless of their background, regardless of what they believe, they know that for thousands of years cultures throughout the world have heard in this book the voice of God.

So I've reframed my course to be an exploration of this question: *What is the Bible calling us to?* What is the life of faith that the Bible is calling us to? And what is the New Church perspective on this?

Now I start my course this way: if the Bible presents an image of God calling to us, what picture of God, what kind of call does it present?

And here is a God who invites us to come and reason with Him. "Come now, let us reason together, says the Lord," in the first chapter of Isaiah. *Let us reason together*: what does that mean? That means that all points of view are welcome. And it means that we are going to be challenged.

I hear a similar invitation to reason together in the New Testament, when Jesus is asked the question, "What must I do to inherit eternal life?" What does Jesus say? Jesus responds by asking another question, "What is your reading of what is written in the Law, in the Scripture?" *What do you read there?* It's an invitation. So in the same spirit, I let my students know that I welcome all their readings, that I welcome all their interpretations, *and* that we are going to let Scripture challenge us, we are going to let Scripture move us to new perspectives. So we reason together.

And as we reason together over what the Bible is calling us to, the New Church teachings then become a set of complementary insights or perspectives for this conversation with the Bible.

Sometimes my students find that perspective genuinely enlightening, and it's wonderful to watch those light bulbs go off: "Oh, so the Old Testament isn't just a bunch of strange old stories! It's a set of stories about what's going on with me in my inner life."

Sometimes my students find that perspective easy to swallow: "Well, of course going to church doesn't matter if you're not living what you believe."

Sometimes my students find that perspective a genuine challenge. Here are two that came up for me this week in class: "What's wrong with love of self? Don't we have to put ourselves first?" And from a very different student, "What do you mean God doesn't punish people? Isn't that what God is supposed to do?" I think the subtext of that question is, *well, if God doesn't punish sinners, who's going to take care of it?* So we reason together.

But the thing about reasoning together is that reasoning takes a lot of

So I've reframed my course to be an exploration of this question: What is the Bible calling us to? What is the life of faith that the Bible is calling us to? And what is the New Church perspective on this?

If it is not promoting allegiance, what is the New Church offering? I believe at its heart, the New Church is offering the idea of a Human God who is able to be present with each and every person with undivided love.

different voices and a lot of different perspectives.

Some days, the conversation lifts right up to heaven. Other days it feels a little like 15 different architects trying to build a house. At those times it feels like we're on the edge of a mess, like we're on the edge of a big old heap of doctrinal rubble. The conversation doesn't always work out the way I expect or hope.

But I want to say something about that messiness. I want to tell you a story about things not working out the way I expect or hope.

A few weeks ago I was surprised to find that the FM on my radio alarm clock stopped working. I don't know why. But instead of waking up to soothing music or cheery news about the economy, I found myself rudely jolted out of sleep by the Christian talk AM radio station that my dial had landed on. Since I can't seem to remember when I'm going to bed at night that this grievous electronic malfunction has occurred, I find myself listening to a lot of Christian talk radio in the mornings.

A few mornings ago I woke up to this message: "Jesus demands your allegiance!"

Now, I have to make an honest confession. I didn't remember that story in the Bible. I didn't remember Jesus opening His mouth to the multitudes and saying, "I demand your allegiance!" So, I decided to go back and check my Bible, to see if I was missing a few pages. But no, they were all there.

You see, my Bible doesn't record Jesus saying, "I demand your allegiance." In my Bible, Jesus says, "He who is not against us is on our side." (Mark 9:40, Luke 9:50)

My Bible doesn't record Jesus saying, "You must have unconditional, unwavering faith in Me!" In my Bible, Jesus says, "Have faith as a mustard seed" (Matthew 17:20) – just a little bit, and it's going to grow.

My Bible doesn't record Jesus saying, "I will love you only if you pledge yourself to Me." In my Bible, Jesus says, "Have love for one another, as I have loved you." (John 13:34-35)

So I figured that the guy on the radio must have a different Bible.

But you know, when he says, "Jesus demands your allegiance," it sounds a lot to me like, "I demand your allegiance. You must take my point of view."

There's actually a point to this story. The point is this: I make it very clear in my course that *that's* not what I'm offering my students. I don't demand

your allegiance. I don't demand that you sign up for the Second Coming Club. I don't demand that you accept this premise or that. No, we reason together. And that means that things can get a little messy.

A demand for allegiance is not what I'm offering in my course, and guess what? I don't think it's what the New Church is offering, either.

If it is not promoting allegiance, what is the New Church offering? I believe at its heart, the New Church is offering the idea of a Human God who is able to be present with each and every person with undivided love.

And if you follow that idea through, it leads to two very important concepts in the theology for the New Church which I have found to be very unusual amongst western theologies. These ideas are the importance of *variety* and *process*.

"Come now and let us reason together" means living together in a classroom with a wide variety of ideas. Some of those ideas are going to be better, some of those ideas are not going to be so good. What does the New Church say?

Heaven and Hell says that "the perfection of heaven is from variety." (§56) The truth is, I don't really like variety. I don't find variety particularly comfortable. I like agreement. I like people seeing things my way. And I hear my God saying, "No. It's perfect."

But what about that doctrinal rubble? What about when other people are stubbornly stuck working with honest-to-goodness wrong ideas?

Perhaps God might say, "Oh, maybe you are forgetting that I also said that the life of faith is a lifelong individual process." *Divine Providence* says that "people... are brought to their places [in the Lord] by countless winding and roundabout ways." (§164) By whom? By me? By my stellar teaching? By the Lord. And it's a *process*.

So what are we on the edge of?

I can only speak for myself. Here's my experience: three years ago, when 95 percent of the faces looking back at me in my classroom had grown up in New Church families, things were pretty great. Teaching was more serene than it is today. It was relatively unchallenging to teach about the New Church. And for me, that's what it was. I was teaching *about* the New Church.

Now, every day that I walk into the classroom, it feels more like I am

Now, every day that I walk into the classroom, it feels more like I am living the New Church. Living in the challenging and sometimes terrifying experience of the Church growing, in conversations that I can't control, and that I couldn't have dreamt of.

living the New Church. Living in the challenging and sometimes terrifying experience of the Church growing, in conversations that I can't control, and that I couldn't have dreamt of.

Living with variety, living with difference, and trusting in the process is not easy. You know this; I'm not telling you anything new. But I wonder, can we trust in faith being a *variety* of ideas and interpretations? Can we trust in faith as a *process* of being led, each of us individually, gradually to the Lord? Well, that sounds kind of . . . optimistic, doesn't it?

What are we on the edge of? Do we have reason to be optimistic?

Remember that doctrinal rubble? Let me read again from *Divine Providence*:

A person does not see [the Lord's] providence [at work.] If he did see it, it would appear in his eyes as... scattered heaps and random piles... [of building materials]; while the Lord sees it as a magnificent palace with its work of construction and enlargement continually going on. (§203)

So we may have reason to trust the process. And that may mean trusting differences in ideas.

What are we on the edge of? Let me read you one more; this is from *Arcana Coelestia*:

If [people] were to make love to the Lord and charity toward the neighbor the chief thing of faith... doctrinal differences would be no more than shades of opinion... which truly Christian people would leave to individual conscience.... If this were so, all different churches would become one, and all the disagreements which stem from doctrine alone would disappear. Indeed, the hatred one man holds against another would be dispelled in an instant, and the Lord's kingdom on earth would come. (§1799)

So yes, Kenny, I think it is fair to say that Swedenborg was an extreme optimist. But in the spirit of the way I approach my class, let me ask this question: just because Swedenborg says it, should we qualify for optimism? Should we be optimistic?

Well, what do the Scriptures say about optimism?

For some reason, my mind is drawn to the very first thing Jesus said in His message to the world. One word: "Repent." (*Matthew* 4:17) Well, actually, that doesn't really sound very optimistic. That sounds like maybe we should be worried about how things are going. Repent? That sounds like a lot of work. It sounds like we have to be willing to change.

What about the promise of salvation, the promise of how things will ultimately work out? Surely there we will find a more optimistic message. I read a little later in the book of Matthew:

Jesus said to His disciples, "Assuredly I say to you that it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. ...it is easier for a camel to go through

the eye of a needle...” His disciples... [ask:] “Who then can be saved?” Jesus said to them, “With men, this is impossible....”

Hmmm...

“With men, this is impossible, but with God, all things are possible.” (Matthew 19:23-26)

Isn't this the story of Scripture over and over again? Often, when things seem least optimistic, the greatest optimism shines through.

Let's look again at that very first message that Christ spoke to the world. Jesus said, “Repent... for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!”

New Church education: what are we on the edge of?

I think we are on the edge of a challenge. I think we are on the edge of a lot of hard work. I think we are on the edge of change, sometimes scary change. I think we are on the edge of needing willingness to learn and readjust.

And maybe, good friends, the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

Thank you.

New Church education: what are we on the edge of? I think we are on the edge of a challenge . . . on the edge of a lot of hard work . . . on the edge of change . . . on the edge of needing willingness to learn and readjust. And maybe the kingdom of heaven is at hand.



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Student Testimonials

Religion 101: Introduction to New Church Doctrines

*Gathered by instructors Rev. Dr. Ray Silverman,
Rev. Grant Schnarr and Rev. Dr. Thane Glenn*

This is my favorite class ever.

I feel that I'm here at Bryn Athyn College because God wants me to be.

Before this course, I had mixed feelings about the Bible and how beneficial it can be to a person's life. I think I had a tendency to associate the Bible with those who read it as if it was a rulebook. This negative association caused me to steer clear of the Word. What I have learned over this class, however, is that the Bible is not just a book full of stories; it is a multidimensional tool that we can all use to help us in all areas of our lives.

I guess I am sort of a "Swedenborgian" because I agree with a lot of what "Swedenborgians" believe and feel about life. The New Church idea of Good and Truth being in all religions is very interesting and eye-opening. It's nice to think that we're all children of God's love and if we follow God's Good and Truth, we will live in heaven with Him for eternity.

I was raised with the belief that we must do everything God said we have to do or we just should prepare ourselves for consequences. I was taught that if we did not follow His every word, we would get punished. In the class I have learned that God is Love, not a bully or punisher.

At first, I believed that this class was to get us to join the New Church. Now I am really excited to learn about the New Jerusalem and the way that heaven works. I am eager to fill in the gaps about God and what heaven has to offer. I am going into the New Jerusalem with an open mind and ready to learn. I have come to realize that the teachings of God from Swedenborg really interest

me. I have learned more about God in these past couple of days than in my whole life.

I find the class extremely interesting, especially the answer as to what the holy trinity is, because it is seemingly very confusing. The Lord Jesus Christ is in fact one with the Father. They are one. The Lord explains by recounting, “When you look upon Me, you look upon the Father.”

I thought the New Church was more of a cult than a Christian religion. This class has helped me to see the New Church, Emanuel Swedenborg and his teachings in a way that I never saw before. With every new topic, my prejudiced ideas seem to fade while I believed more in Emanuel Swedenborg’s teachings because they made more sense. It was easier to see God as love and myself as an object and receiving vessel of God’s love than a God who condemned us all to hell. Now I believe in love, charity and freedom.

Not being a member of the New Church, I thought this class was going to be one in which Swedenborg’s teachings were going to be drummed and forced into us, a system where we would become slaves to things and concepts we might not believe in. Instead I had to get used to a class where individual thinking was greatly appreciated and even more, encouraged. A class where we had to examine ideas and develop our opinions and thoughts on them, based not on what we had just been taught and taken as truth from the beginning, but rather on a careful objective look.

I have learned so much in this course that it is hard to say specifically what I’ve learned, because much of it has become part of my own reasoning.

I plan on continuing this journey for knowledge for the rest of this life, and the next.

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Allen Linnell, Director of Admissions
267-502-6000 | admissions@brynathyn.edu

Thank you,



Dr. Kristin King, President
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Is There Such a Thing as New Church Science?

From a talk to the Theta Alpha Guild in Mitchellville,
Maryland, March 2011

Dr. Sherri L. Cooper

“Science matters because it is the preeminent story of our age, an epic saga about who we are, where we came from, and where we are going.” (Michael Shermer 2006) Religion and science are often viewed as rivals, and statements like this one fuel the fire kindled by differing points of view. But many religious scientists do not see a conflict between their beliefs and their work, and New Church doctrine holds a unique perspective for us to use in reconciling religion and science and clearly explaining the difference. (See George Gantz’s article in *New Church Life* November/December 2011 for a good discussion of this topic).

The fundamental problem often lies in the understanding of what science is, and isn’t. Science is the study of the natural world and by definition is meant to be a value-free investigation of its workings. However, there is no scientist who does not have a value system of his or her own. All scientists are free to interpret the results of their science in the light of their beliefs, but their beliefs must not be allowed to influence the science itself. Science in itself is not a belief system!

Science (from the Latin *scientia*, meaning “knowledge”) refers in its broadest sense to any systematic knowledge-base or prescriptive practice that is capable of resulting in a prediction or predictable type of outcome. In this sense, *science* may refer to a highly skilled technique or practice. Our modern understanding of science is a disciplined and methodical approach to learning about the natural world.

We use science all the time to predict outcomes and solve any number of challenges or problems in the natural world, from figuring out why a flashlight is not working to finding a cure for cancer. It is not correct to state that you “believe in science,” or, for a more specific example, that you “believe in evolution.” Rather than “believing in evolution,” it would be more correct to state that you “accept the scientific evidence” (or reject the scientific evidence) that has revolutionized biology regarding common descent from a single

origin of life.

Religion, on the other hand, is a belief system often based on revelation. Most of the world's "believers" do not read scripture as they would a science textbook or as a technical history of the earth. The Word does not teach us details about dinosaurs and microorganisms, plate tectonics, or the photosynthetic pathway in chloroplasts. The text is not updated with new scientific evidence. There was no conflict with revelation when Newton's physics of gravity was further explained and detailed by Einstein's explanation of relativity. Instead, the Word is read as the teaching and expectations of God in regard to our spiritual identity and regeneration; how we are to live and relate to our neighbors and our Lord for spiritual sustenance.

Revelation can be read with different meaning at different times and by different people. Yet scientific details can help us understand revelation because we know the workings of nature correspond to something spiritual. Revelation can influence scientists' perspectives, affecting both how they approach their research and how they view the outcomes; but it cannot change the science itself.

In my case, the correct way to state my view would be that based on my New Church value system, I believe that the process of evolution is in correspondence with regeneration and Divine Providence because I accept the scientific evidence and also believe in Divine Providence. When rightly viewed, science can provide not only solutions to questions about our natural world, but also profound spiritual insight through correspondences that enhance our regeneration, quality of life and usefulness.

Discovery

Truly scientific results must be repeatable in a natural sense by scientists of any religion or worldview. As our scientific understanding of the world has increased, there has been progress in developing agricultural and medical technology to sustain larger and larger human populations on the earth. At the same time, the complex web of the natural world continues to challenge our knowledge and leads us to search deeper.

For a specific example, consider the scientific study of epigenetics. Epigenetics indicates that organisms are not simply programmed by "hardwired" DNA but by "software" markers such as methyl tags that affect how DNA is expressed, and these are determined by our environment and experiences. This discovery supports (but does not prove) the notion that human decisions concerning the treatment of others can affect both the decision-maker and the object of the treatment physically, emotionally or spiritually.

New Church scientists can view the world with exciting perspectives based

on the correspondences of the natural and spiritual worlds, and hypotheses can be informed by this understanding. These perspectives can lead to new paradigms (see Dr. Reuben Bell, 2010), but the scientific method is no different than the process used by any credible scientist. Only the unique insights are different, but those insights could lead to new experimentation. Still, if we are to call it science, observations are followed by questions, hypotheses, tests and conclusions. Conclusions must stand the scrutiny of further tests, peer review, reproducibility and conjunction with the laws of nature.

Evolution and Regeneration

Science has uncovered many wonders about the earth and the universe that apply to our natural lives. Technology and medicine, two facets of science, have transformed the way that humans exist in this world. Of all these advancements in understanding, no subject has caused more philosophical division between science and religion than evolution. Jerry Coyne (2009) writes:

Learning about evolution can transform us in a deep way. It shows us our place in the whole splendid and extraordinary panoply of life. It unites us with every living thing on the earth today and with myriads of creatures long dead. Evolution gives us the true account of our origins, replacing the myths that satisfied us for thousands of years. Some find this deeply frightening, others ineffably thrilling.

To investigate a spiritual perspective in relation to a specific scientific theory, the question might be posed: “Is New Church doctrine compatible with the theory of evolution?” Swedenborg writes that “man is solely a recipient of life, whereas the Lord is Life itself.” (*Arcana Coelestia* 3043) According to this teaching, we share life from the Lord with each other, and every living creature on the earth. The Lord is life itself.

It follows therefore that all of life on earth has a single origin from the Lord. It is then the process of natural selection that comes into question. How is it that humans are imbued with will and understanding and are in the “image of God?” Is it the physical vessel that has evolved to accept the life of the Lord in a different way than all other life on earth? How could the “life force” or potential for life of the Lord lead a single-celled life-form eventually to become a complex organic vessel that is capable of receiving and returning the love of the Lord as a spiritual being?

To answer this question, consider how each of us started as an individual. What does it mean to be human? Is the single cell that exists as a sperm fertilizes a human egg considered to be a complete person? Is a baby that is born without sight, or without arms and legs, considered to be fully human? Humans are able to regenerate and become spiritual beings, regardless of most physical limitations. Helen Keller may come to mind as an example. So there are multiple stages and forms of humanity evolving right before our eyes every

day.

Why then would it not be possible for this to happen at a different scale of the period of millennia? Swedenborg writes that even plants and animals have souls of use and affection (respectively). We cannot exist on the earth without them. Could humans be viewed as the spiritual extension or “spiritual medium” for all of life on earth?

New Church doctrine teaches that humans have a distinctive ability among living organisms to attain spiritual levels while at the same time using our senses, scientific knowledge and understanding for good uses in this world. Our comprehension of *why* this is so is in part answered with the understanding from revelation that the Lord created human beings to populate the heavens. Our perception of *how* this is so regards the process of regeneration within our minds and souls, which has correspondence to the process of evolution (the generation of our physical bodies).

Swedenborg reveals that regeneration is a slow and sometimes painful, error-prone process that often proceeds at a pace to remain hidden from our consciousness. Our myriad decisions are based on shifting circumstances and environment, and it is only in hindsight that we see the incredible progress that has been wrought. Why would not the Lord use a similar process to create living organisms on the earth? Space and time as we understand it are not limiting factors to an all-wise Creator.

Scientific Theories

To back up a bit, it might be appropriate to expand on the semantic differences between a scientific theory and a scientific hypothesis. Many of my students who take a literal view of the Bible will state, “...but evolution is only a theory!” A scientific theory is not the same as a hypothesis. It does not become a theory without repeated support from various avenues of research, and general acceptance by the scientific community through peer-reviewed written material.

The theory of evolution, or the theory of common descent, has a history of more than 200 years of scientific investigation, with the overwhelming body of evidence supporting this “theory” of a continual process. It is considered a theory and not a “law” only because it continues to be refined as our knowledge grows, although it is unequivocally accepted to be true by the scientific community.

Charles Darwin, the “father” of evolutionary theory, came up with the concept of “common descent” that has continued to stand the test of time and scientific inquiry (see Richard Lines, 2009). The evidence shows that all of life – from bacteria to humans – is of common physical descent, or in other words, all life has one “origin.” We are made of the same material, use the same

biochemical pathways, share redundant processes, structures, energy needs and development.

Evolution of species follows natural laws. No living organism is without physical connection through the past to all other living things on earth. Evolution therefore can be seen to support on a natural level the tenet that all of life is from the Lord, a single creator and common essence.

New Church doctrine also teaches that all natural laws were created by God. The current understanding of evolution is of a complex interactive process that has been unfolding through time following these laws of nature. It is truly amazing. Physical organisms adapt to changes in the environment around them, and continue to develop in complexity and variety. The more that I learn about it, the more I appreciate the connectedness of all life on earth, especially from a New Church perspective. I marvel at the correspondences between evolution and the regeneration of our souls as we grow, learn, change, make choices, and experience the Lord through nature, each other and revelation.

Our existence on this earth follows natural laws, yet this does not preclude our spiritual nature. Our atoms and molecules are of the same origin as those in all other living organisms – and have been recycled from, and will be recycled to, other living things. But evolution on earth has shaped an organic vessel that has the ability to hold a soul that transcends the natural world. Human souls are able to rise above this natural plane and become unique spiritual and celestial beings from the Lord.

Is there such a thing as New Church Science?

New Church scientists study and use the scientific method to discover facts and processes that can be repeated and used for good purposes by everyone in our natural world. Given that scientific study is by definition value-free, there is nothing unique about this science simply because it is performed by people with New Church values. However, the New Church does have a unique perspective on the correspondence of the natural and spiritual components of human life and understanding that might influence how science is interpreted. Credibility as good scientists will increase our credibility in the context of our religious views, including the concept of spiritual correspondence with the natural world.

As never before,
Swedenborg enlightened
the world to the inner
spiritual meaning of
scripture. New Church
education can provide a
unique perspective on how
these two foundations of
truth – one on a natural level
and the other on a spiritual
plane – correspond.

Science education at Bryn Athyn College strives to elevate the thought and affection of its students and faculty out of the merely natural perspective to connect their observations to a spiritual belief system that works with it.

As never before, Swedenborg enlightened the world to the inner spiritual meaning of scripture. New Church education can provide a unique perspective on how these two foundations of truth – one on a natural level and the other on a spiritual plane – correspond. In *Spiritual Experiences* 5709, Swedenborg writes that: "... all things of heaven constantly have their foundation in the laws of the order of nature, in the world and in man, so that the foundation remains permanently fixed ..." Clearly, we are to investigate and study the natural world for the betterment of society, as described by Swedenborg in *Arcana Coelestia*

(or *Secrets of Heaven*) 129:

Indeed nobody is forbidden to acquire knowledge, since it is useful for life and gives delight. And the person in whom faith resides is in no way forbidden to think and to talk as learned people in the world do. But ... his premise must be the Lord, not self; the former is life, while the latter is death.

New Church educators with a belief in the underlying order of life from an all-wise creator see processes in many facets of nature that correspond to spiritual regeneration. Facts and details are discovered that can be corroborated by others, but it is the uncovering of the process that is most significant. Examples in New Church thought related to correspondence (with progressive creative processes that result in more complex interactions and variety of life) include evolution (Linda S. Odhner, 1987), ecological succession (Dr. Sherri L. Cooper, 2004), education (Bishop George de Charms, 1953), plate tectonics (Dr. Erland Brock, 2000), and many others.

Bishop Willard Pendleton (1985) wrote in *Education for Use*, "We hold, therefore, that there is no real discrepancy between science and faith, but that when rightly interpreted the sciences support and perfect man's understanding of an all-wise creator..." Although the spiritual and natural planes of life are discrete, their correspondence connects them in ways that are evident if we believe that these correspondences exist, and look for them.

The responsibilities of science education at any institution are to provide natural knowledge and teach the scientific method of inquiry in an ordered structure. The curriculum of most colleges and universities follow this tenet. But the goal of science education at Bryn Athyn College of the New Church includes two purposes:

First, to practice and apply science to good uses in the world, and

Second, to promote spiritual growth in the students and therefore the

Church.

In these ways science education at Bryn Athyn College strives to elevate the thought and affection of its students and faculty out of the merely natural perspective to connect their observations to a spiritual belief system that works with it. The bottom line, however, is that teaching science in the New Church does not mean teaching a different brand of science that we call “New Church Science.” It does mean teaching science in the context of a deeper understanding of the grander scheme.

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Experience A Meaningful, Transformational Community Online

New Church Journey Unveils an Online Small-Group Ministry

Starting this February, New Church Journey will be offering online small groups to coincide with the launch of their current Journey program, *Shift. Small Changes. Big Difference.*

Want to sign up to participate?

Visit www.newchurch.org/activities/online-small-groups or browse to see what other group content is available.

Aren't Online Small Groups Complicated?

Online groups aren't all that different from in-person small groups. You will meet with your group for 60-90 minutes, and enjoy getting to know each other and studying the Word from the comfort of your own home. Once you sign up, your group leader will contact you to help get you set-up on Google+ (all you need is a microphone, webcam, high speed internet, computer).

Who Might Benefit from an Online Small Group?

Since you participate from your own home, there is no need to find a sitter for your kids or struggle with commuting in bad weather. If you're feeling ill, lack transportation or are otherwise stuck at home, no worries! Online small groups can even accommodate for international time-zone differences.

Contact Michelle Chapin at michelle.chapin@newchurch.org if you have questions about this exciting program.

"I recently participated in an online small group, and had an incredible experience. In a very short time it became one of my favorite hours of the week. Thanks to the internet and webcams, small groups are no longer limited by geography."

~Online Small Group Participant

The ‘Shift’ in Religion and Science

Dr. Gregory L. Baker¹

Recently many people in the New Church have been participating in the Journey program, *Shift: Small Changes, Big Difference*. The program is based on the scriptural story of Jacob and the change or “shift” in our spiritual being as we progress from reformation to regeneration. In this article we suggest that the way science develops might correspond to the spiritual “shift.” But first let us fix the main ideas in mind by briefly reviewing the spiritual process.

Spiritually, we start our spiritual growth for very human reasons; perhaps for the sake of gaining reputation and honor, or some vague notion of wanting to do the right thing, or simply the fear of eternal life in hell. We understand at some level that we need to learn and follow spiritual truths and therefore we submit ourselves to that body of truth, trying to let truth govern our lives.

As this process develops, we do good things from obedience to the newly learned truths. The Writings speak of this as the doing of “good from truth.” With continued practice and work, a change begins to happen in our minds. We come to take some delight in the doing of good. And the continuing effort to do good from truth starts to generate a new perspective and a new will that rejoices in the doing of good. This is the transition or ‘shift’ from the state of reformation to regeneration.

The miracle of this new perspective is that we then are given new insights, new clarity – new truths – that we want to apply to life. The Writings refer to this new truth as “truth from god.” This is the “shift” process that is the focus of this latest Journey campaign.

Spiritual things correspond to natural things and therefore we would expect to see “shift” processes in the natural world. With a little imagination we can find correspondences that would fit together in such a process. Consider the history of science.²

1 Dr. Gregory Baker is professor emeritus at Bryn Athyn College.

2 Dr. Forrest Dristy originally applied this idea to some events in the history of mathematics. See *New Philosophy*, Vol. 80, 1977, pp 63-69. Having seen Dr. Dristy’s article I applied the idea to the history of physics. A fuller discussion of the latter work may be found in *New Philosophy*, Vol. 81, 1978, pp. 167-171, and in *Religion and Science: From Swedenborg to Chaotic Dynamics*, pp. 152-8. (Solomon Press, New York, 1992.) The notion of shifts in science was described as a “paradigm shift” by Thomas Kuhn in *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (U. of Chicago Press, 1962.)

The scientific enterprise has two primary ingredients: experiment and theory. Experiment provides the raw data or facts upon which to build theory. *Experiments* or experimental results can be thought of as corresponding to truth. (Of course, the data are actual truths about the natural world.) What about good? Let us think of the *theories* of science as corresponding to good. In summary, experiments equal truths, and theories equal goods – correspondentially.

Just as people's spiritual development passes through phases of 1) reformation, in which truth leads good, and 2) regeneration, in which good produces truth, the history of science, shows similar shifts.

As scientists, we begin our observation of nature by looking at nature, gathering facts, perhaps singling out certain phenomena. We do some simple experiments. Then we look at our newly acquired data and, hopefully, find that this data (truth) can be the basis for a theory. The theory might be some generalization from our data – a theory, which in our schema, corresponds to good. Thus, we have developed some good from truth, just like the reformation process in humans.

As we intensely focus on the results of the experiment, we might see beyond the collection of data, beyond even the general characterization of the data of our original theory. As we concentrate further, a kind of miracle may happen. We may be given some sort of inspiration that allows us to see a deeper level of causation.

Our theory grows broader and deeper to the point where it can make predictions for the results of new experiments. Rather than the experiment leading to the theory as before, the new expanded theory can lead to new experiments.

The process has now shifted. Instead of experiment producing theory, theory now produces experiment. The history of science has gone through a many shift cycles, most on the small scale, but some of major significance.

Here is one of the most important shifts in modern physics. During the late 19th and early 20th centuries, a variety of experiments were carried out which yielded puzzling results that were not explainable by the existing classical theories of Newtonian dynamics and Maxwellian electromagnetism. The results of these experiments, confusing as they were, revealed truths about the natural world.

The first efforts at a theory to explain these results were limited in scope and only partially representative of physical reality. This first effort is sometimes referred to as the "Old Quantum Theory"¹ – a theory that had quite limited application and a kind of unsatisfactory *ad hoc* aspect. Furthermore, while it agreed in a general way with many experimental results, it often conflicted as to details. This theory's predictive power was also quite limited. Correspondentially, the initial theory is, then, a set of first attempts at good that results from trying

to align action and thought with truth.

But as the experiments were further studied, modified, and improved, a new theory emerged that has, since its genesis in 1925-26, stood the test of time. This theory is known as “quantum mechanics.”

Quantum mechanics is an incredibly outstanding predictor of a great many physical phenomena. It is the theoretical basis behind modern experimental atomic physics, molecular physics, nuclear physics, and any field involving the microscopic quantities of nature.

Correspondentially, the theory of quantum mechanics is the “good” that leads to new truths – new experimental data – from vast regimes of nature. The paradigm of quantum mechanics is a huge “shift” in the science of the physical world. And furthermore, quantum physics, as an over-arching theory, has promoted many smaller “shifts” in the ongoing cycles of experiment and theory in physical science. The accompanying chart illustrates the big shift of quantum physics and some examples of smaller shifts within that new paradigm.

We know that natural and spiritual worlds correspond. We would therefore expect that processes described in revelation and science would also correspond. Our paralleling of shifts in the development of science with shifts in the spiritual reformation/regeneration process seems to be an excellent example of this general correspondence.

In conclusion, we might well ask the following questions: Are there other shifts of this type in, for example, economics, politics, art and so on? Do we see the structure of this Divine process elsewhere in life?

Example SHIFT in Science

Experiments (truth) lead to initial Theory (good)

Atomic spectra (1880's)
 Photoelectric Effect (1902) **lead to** Old Quantum Theory (1913-)
 Many others

SHIFT

Theory (good) leads to new Experiments (truth)

Atomic experiments
 Quantum Mechanics (1925) **leads to** Molecular experiments
 Nuclear experiments

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Dr. Gregory L. Baker is Professor Emeritus at Bryn Athyn College, where he taught physics. He serves on the General Church Board of Directors, sings with the Bryn Athyn Church Choir and volunteers as an accompanist for the Ivyland New Church. He and his wife, Margaret, have four grown children and live in Huntingdon Valley, Pennsylvania.

☞ *Introducing Our Ministers* ☞



Rev. Charles E. (Chuck) Blair

Putting the Life in NewChurch LIVE

Chuck Blair is another of our second-career ministers who seemed to be led through ministry into the ministry.

He began as a public school history and world cultures teacher – and varsity swimming coach – in the Pocono Mountains area of Pennsylvania. There he honed his passion for teaching – and for working with teenagers.

He really made his mark as a teacher in the Academy Boys School and as a legendary housemaster of Stuart Hall, where he guided, counseled – and inspired – a lot of boys. He helped them to bring out the best in themselves, including taking turns leading worship in the dorm.

From there it was a natural step into Theological School, and then into developing the all-new NewChurch LIVE.

It hasn't been easy. He enrolled in Theological School while he was teaching and running the dorm, hoping to teach religion and be an administrator at the Academy. He left for a while “due to challenges over what I saw as issues regarding casting women in very limiting roles. However, I returned, realizing that the gift of New Church Christianity was a beautiful thing and not to be confused with individual opinions that differed from mine.”

NewChurch LIVE has been successful in attracting new people to the Church, with a non-traditional approach, but has also been impacted by budget cuts within the General Church. But Chuck is optimistic, committed

Editor's note: This is part of a continuing series introducing ministers of the General Church. Next: The Rev. Scott Frazier, instructor in Latin, Hebrew and Religion at Bryn Athyn College.

and passionate by nature, so he perseveres.

He was born to Kenneth and Zarah Blair in Sarver, north of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, graduated from the Boys School in 1983, attended Bryn Athyn College, got his undergraduate degree in Political Science at Penn State and a Master's in Education at the University of Pittsburgh. He graduated from the Theological School and was ordained in 2006.

Like many young men in the Church, he thought about the ministry long before making the commitment. This was when he was at Penn State, and he even met with a minister to talk about it, but decided it wasn't the right choice – at least not yet. Fifteen years later he revisited that decision – and hasn't looked back.

When he was in Theological School he found the key experience to be “really reading the Writings for myself. There was so much more there than I ever imagined (and I had always loved out theology). What I found was a faith that was more compassionate, nuanced and loving than I had made it out to be.”

He remembers Robert Cole speaking about “Swedenborgians’ view of an intensely loving God. “That shook my world. What had all those old Swedenborgians found that I had not?”

“I love theology – I loved the head stuff. I had no idea how much heart stuff there really was. This was a man (Swedenborg) who when asked by a girl to show her an angel, showed her a mirror! Sign me up for that faith.”

One of his delights has been performing weddings at Cairnwood, which pushed him to moving from the Academy to a congregation. “I put my name in as a “preferred provider” (at Cairnwood for couples looking for a minister) and with the invaluable help of Evelyn Stephens (Director of Cairnwood), found a side job I loved. (Several of those couples have joined the Church.) I loved it so much I realized I wanted to lead a congregation. And that is when NewChurch LIVE came along.”

The highlights of his career so far with the NewChurch LIVE team – paid and volunteer staff – include:

- Partnering with a team that cares deeply about making a difference
- Launching and sustaining NewChurch LIVE
- Figuring out systems/plans and watching them actually work
- Drawing more than 140 people to the New Church

In Theological School he found the key experience to be “really reading the Writings for myself. What I found was a faith that was far more compassionate, nuanced and loving than I had made it out to be.”



- Doing 20-plus weddings a year
- Sharing Sunday's message via the Internet with more than 300 "plays" per week online

His deepest satisfaction, he says, "is watching our faith make a difference. Swedenborg was a radical in the true sense of the word – as in going to the root. I think, and this is odd to say, that he penned a revelation that points us back to 'religionless Christianity' – a form of Christianity that is ancient-future.

"By 'religion' I mean all the faith alone stuff. He was clear – that was the biggest danger. I see Swedenborg as having great fun with the question: 'What was Christianity before man-made institutional 'religion' got ahold of it?' I think the Lord called Swedenborg to get us back to basics – the heart of the Christian message – and build a church around that. It is not a surprise that the last book he wrote is titled *True Christian Religion*."

Chuck says he gets "e-mails and phone calls constantly from those for whom the New Church has been life-saving. We hear from these folks all the time." Here is one he received recently from New England:

"I just wanted to thank you for all your videos that you posted . . . Funny thing is, I was sitting here crying and losing hope and just typed in something

– *don't remember what it was – but the Lord seemed to have led me to your video on Alcatraz.*”

Such testimonials, he says, “are about a team and a faith that all of us are privileged to be able to share. What we have really, really matters.”

When it comes to challenges, he says “it's time for some honesty. The two biggest challenges have been those who react with anger and a number of clergy more interested in auditing than partnering. Both are deeply painful.”

“I assumed that everyone was pro-growth. My experience is that people are pro-growth. Some, however, are ‘pro’ only if growth occurs within certain very prescribed limits, especially in terms of how those limits apply to worship style. The Lord gave very, very little direction to how worship was to look. In *Heaven and Hell*, Swedenborg writes that the variety of worship in heaven is the source of heaven's perfection. Amazingly strong and clear statement. The New Church is *not* a worship style.”

Those challenges in most environments are minor, he says, “compared to the blessings of the work as evidenced by the incredible generosity of those who support us in time, talent and treasure. We are always searching for partners. If you are interested, e-mail chuck.blair@newchurchlive.tv. Let's talk!”

Chuck's hope “is to help the Lord drawing people into closer relationship to Himself and to each other. The two occur together, aka the Two Great Commandments. I think traditionally we have celebrated when we draw people to the Writings. Nothing wrong with that but in the end is always God and other people. My prayer: ‘Lord, help me to see what You are trying to show.’”

A secondary hope “is that NewChurch LIVE creates a transferable model that will help support struggling local congregations who are searching for ways to grow. Right now we are learning more from our failures than anything else but maybe over time, with hard work, we can hammer together a new model that helps small churches.”

Among goals he lists:

- Grow the number of new people served by 20%+ a year
- Become a financially self-sufficient congregation
- Speak to the meaning of God for the next generation

Chuck lives with his wife Keene (Smith) and children – Joren, Brooke, Gage, Gannon and Tegan – in Bryn Athyn. He loves reading and being

‘I think traditionally we have celebrated when we draw new people to the Writings.

Nothing wrong with that but in the end is always God and other people. My prayer: Lord, help me to see what You are trying to show.’

outdoors. “I love a good book, a good Podcast. Combining anything with a walk, I find heaven.”

His particular love is for Christian literature, and among his favorites are Jeff Pugh, Richard Rohr, Ann Lamont, Mary Carr, Ann Voscamp, Shaine Claiborne and Rob Bell.

He also finds recreation in work-related hobbies. “I’ve been taking people down to the Ronald McDonald House (in Philadelphia) for years, and love doing that. Thanks really go out to people like Gail Steiner, Lindy Bochnak, Martha Pitcairn and Wendy Walter who always were clear on the call to serve.”

And what might people be surprised to learn about him? He loves dirt track racing.

His favorite passage is *Divine Providence 60,61*: “In what is angelic there is a walking in the way from a knowledge of it and knowledge of the way from walking in it.” Restated: “We learn and the learning shapes our experience. And then, in experiencing life, life becomes a form of revelation as well. I think all parents know this. We learn how to parent both from learned sources and then from parenting itself.”

The Partnership Model for a Healthy Church

Rev. Charles E. (Chuck) Blair

New Church theology speaks of the fact that “Divine love constantly aims to forge a partnership with us.” The relationship God seeks is “a mutual partnership brought about by cooperation not action and reaction.” (*True Christian Religion* 371) How can we, in our limited human ways, try to cooperate more effectively with God’s desire for partnership as we seek to build a church? How do we make the partnership “mutual and reciprocal?” If community is “heaven in a lesser form,” how do we create community? (*Heaven and Hell* 52)

These are critical questions. Christianity, in the form of institutional religion, faces many challenges. We are not unique in that regard. Older models of “church” appear to be fading quickly as congregations age and shrink. The average age, for example, of a Presbyterian Church goer in the United States is 60. The same is true in many of our New Church congregations. Newer models are emerging but remain undefined and unproven. Through the process of change, remaining mindful that “emptying out” occurs before a “filling up” appears to be of note.

How then are we to navigate these changing waters? Arguably we, as in clergy, cannot. We can think long and hard. We can develop papers and positions. And yet the future appears to be best served by developing partnership models that pull clergy and laity into an increasingly close, cooperative model based on the partnership model God seeks to establish with each of us and with His Church. Restated, if God desires mutual and reciprocal partnership we need to practice mutual and reciprocal partnership not just with God but with others. As is noted, we must govern our world as God governs His. Leadership and partnership then join.

Such a form of leadership entails gaining clarity on the non-negotiables and then allowing new forms to evolve out of those “knowns.” This occurs in the same way that knowing musical scales or a mathematical equation allows for further growth and creativity. Through this all the greatest of knowns is love. What moves us toward being more loving, moves us closer to God. “To the extent the truth becomes the leader, good becomes obscured; but to the extent good becomes the leader, truth is visible in its own light.” (*Arcana Coelestia* 2407)

The focus for many younger adults is shifting away from church attendance as the key marker of spirituality; however, a solid Sunday program that informs and inspires remains central to church life. Therefore it needs to be fashioned around a partnership model.

Many lines of New Church theological thought support a partnership model, i.e. “Nunc Licet,” “freedom according to reason,” etc. The role of the clergy then shifts from being resident expert, all-knowing seer with answers, to a living partner with the laity. I believe the Catholic model of God → Clergy → Parishioner does not serve. The New Church model of God → People is what does serve. The special intuition/perception given to clergy as a function of the clergy’s use

is not denigrated in this model. Arguably it is even more needed as a way to navigate the difficult, changing waters with grace.

How then, specifically, do we create a church where we live into this partnership model?

Sermon-Writing Team

Sermon construction is one core of church life. The Sunday service and other related services still remain the primary focus of church life. The focus for many younger adults is clearly shifting away from church attendance as being the key marker of spirituality; however, a solid Sunday program that informs and inspires remains central to church life. Therefore it needs to be fashioned around a partnership model.

People do form communities that we know partner with communities in heaven in ways unseen and unknown. The pastor is not the conduit. The pastor is just part of the community. These connections are with “all the varieties of what is good.” (*True Christian Religion 15*) So bringing a community together to create the Sunday message appears highly appropriate given the need to draw on these “varieties,” an orientation found in many memorable relationships that speak of gatherings of individuals for the purpose of conversation and learning.

A strong, connected teaching of the New Church is that we all possess our own individual spiritual lives. We, like the disciples, all speak “in unique voices.” (*True Christian Religion 146*) Our unique spiritual lives then are not dependent on man-made organizations or formal church structures which attempt to have all sing in one-note versus everyone singing in harmony. And yet there is a continual, and I believe misguided default to seeing the minister as the only one with a grasp of the spiritual – as the one who knows THE note. As one former bishop noted, a great disappointment he faced often was

being a “conversation stopper” in which others looked to him for THE answer.

Yet every week we are actually preaching to a room or auditorium filled with experts. It is not like a doctor addressing sick patients. It is like a doctor addressing other doctors. “Come, let us reason together.” They may be doctors in search of more knowledge, in search of care, in search of community, some of whom may have reached the end of their “knowledge” but we should still assume they are doctors.

We need to remain humble to the fact that what we do not know is “infinite” in comparison to what we do know. (*Arcana Coelestia* 1557) Therefore as clergy we must reach out to our congregations in the spirit of co-creation, doctor to doctor. As pointed out in the Writings, “The Lord’s Church differs from one group to the next, and not only from one group to the next but sometimes from individual to individual.” (*Arcana Coelestia* 3451)

Personally, the creation of a sermon-writing team may have been the most significant change at NewChurch LIVE compared to how I formerly functioned. We employ a team approach – from picking topics, to crafting the message, to sharing thoughts and readings during the service. I say it without hesitation: the most resonant ideas that I speak are gleaned from the thoughts of others – a fact consistently reinforced week in and week out.

Examples abound. Our recent series, *Let’s Build a Church*, included topics that were encapsulated in wording that absolutely got right to the core of the New Church message in language that was highly accessible. A sermon on *The Empty Chair*, for example, spoke of the need to keep space open for others in the church. Of course, the concept was not hard to grasp, but wording/language such as that opens up the message in new and memorable ways. The same is true for the graphic for the series. A volunteer designed it. It captures the concept of “Church Universal” in a brief, memorable snapshot.

Worship as a Sunday activity is made real by worship as a Monday activity. This is a clear New Church teaching:

The essential Divine worship in the heavens does not consist in going to church regularly and listening to sermons but in a life of love, thoughtfulness and faith. (*Heaven and Hell* 222)

The Monday morning experts are sitting in the congregation! They know the experiences of “love, thoughtfulness and faith” in the arena of life better than I do, encumbered by my own ego, blind spots and prejudices. Importantly, they know the questions. Clergy, as one author famously noted, must stop answering questions people are not asking. I believe we hear better what questions are in need of answering if we partner with our congregants. That requires an outlook more aligned with partnership than has traditionally been the case.

There is a deeper form of volunteering that seeks to ask people what it is that is calling to be born in their lives. Out of that grows ministry – a volunteering born of the heart vs. just duty. Ask out of duty and someone will deliver her body. Ask of her heart and she will deliver her spirit.

Volunteering/ Ministry

True Christian Religion 38 holds that the two essentials of the Church are goodwill and faith. Aligned to that idea is the concept that “a person who lives a life of faith and compassion is constantly at worship.” (*Arcana Coelestia* 1618) The compelling *why* behind volunteering therefore is self-evident. And here is another area where the New Church concept of partnership as being “mutual and reciprocal” can be applied in fresh ways.

A traditional approach to volunteering is listing the needs of the congregation and/or community and then asking who would like to fill that need. This approach is not without merit. And yet there is a deeper form of volunteering that seeks to ask people what it is that is calling to be born into their lives. Out

of that grows ministry – a volunteering born of the heart vs. just duty. Ask out of duty and someone will deliver her body. Ask of her heart and she will deliver her spirit.

Restated, imagine a congregation that is highly effective at tapping into the deeply held loves of its congregants. In a recent conversation, I shared a laugh with a NewChurch LIVE congregant who is willing to give us 12 hours of her time writing, and unwilling to give us one hour of her time parking cars on Sunday. The pastor’s role then is to help her develop that love of writing and to help discuss the avenues where her particular gift can be made an offering in her church. And the miracle? We have people who love parking cars.

Importantly, this deeper partnering allows church to be a dynamic entity. For example, a typical volunteer list includes (a) hosting/ushering, (b) music, (c) Sunday School. NewChurch LIVE has much the same list. That being said, if a, b and c are the *sole* opportunities of giving, what does that in turn say about what church is? To me it says church is static – limited to a, b and c – which is hard to support given New Church teachings which center on the fact that love in action is what remains.

In the ministry approach far deeper springs are tapped into. There is a meeting of people’s strengths, their loves and the world’s needs. Restated in New Church terminology – love, wisdom and use. Through that small convergence in the middle, passion is born, and truly generative service grows. We are able to give to the given use out of our life and gifts. And we can trust that God will

bring people to our congregations who can fill even the most mundane of tasks with the passion born of useful service. And where “service rules the Lord is ruling.” (*Heaven and Hell* 564)

Out of this approach to growth small groups can grow. Some groups will spring from a more traditional desire within the congregation for instruction. Other groups will grow from a desire for community or to delve into a topic. Regardless, the groups will spring from congregational interest.

This ensconces the small groups in relevance. The congregation requests and forms what its members want. We are to serve spiritual hunger, and spiritual hunger is particular in nature. Not everyone hungers and thirsts after the same particular thing. One individual may be excited about a reading group because he is in a learning phase, another may be searching fellowship and is pulled more toward community building. Therefore, creating a process that allows these particular interests to bubble to the surface is important.

Growth

Engaged people engage people. Engaged people invest in relationships. Investing in relationships in turn grows a church – the “invest and invite” strategy of evangelization. In other words, if the congregation takes the partnership model to heart and applies it in their own lives, that partnering in turn will bring others into the church. If we can create church where the *modus operandi* is “walking with” that is exactly what we will get. “If you plant corn, you get corn.”

As Jesus notes in the Gospel of John, “Feed My sheep.” Yet we live in a world where the primary concern is, “Am I fed?” That is true of many church attenders. If they feel “fed” they return. If not, they leave. And clergy – and I include myself here – can feel that way as well. Am I “fed” by my congregation?

Growth in a real sense will not come from those merely looking to be fed. It will come from a counter-intuitive flip of perspective. This flip is where the concern moves from being fed to feeding. Can I feed others? Can I invest in the relationship? This is the question that must be asked by both laity and clergy. And that is where compassion and love come alive – true worship.

You continually pray when you are living a life of kindness, although not with your mouth yet with your heart. That which you live is continually in your thoughts, even when you are unconscious of it.” (Apocalypse Explained 325)

Then we live into the Great Commission, making disciples who carry forth the message – not as omniscient teachers but as engaged learners, focused students out to be a vehicles for bringing the Kingdom into the world.

ANC

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GIRLS SCHOOL AND BOYS SCHOOL

We warmly invite applications to the Academy of the New Church Girls School and Boys School. Since 1877 we continue to pursue excellence in New Church education.

At the Academy of the New Church Secondary Schools we prepare our students for good and useful lives, in this world and the next. As an educational arm of the General Church of the New Jerusalem, we lead students through a rigorous academic curriculum so that they may find meaning, fulfillment and happiness in their lives. As we instruct our students in the teachings of the New Church and encourage life according to New Church principles, we develop their intellectual powers, teach them about the spiritual realities of life, and offer them many avenues to practice spiritual and moral virtues.

Complete information about the application and admissions process, can be found on the Secondary Schools website, www.ancss.org, under Admissions. Letters, phone and e-mail inquiries – including requests for information about financial aid – should be addressed to:

Denise DiFiglia
Director Admissions/Financial Aid
267-502-2539
admissions@ancss.org

Jennifer Allen
Associate Director

Admissions procedure is based on receipt of: Application, Transcript, Pastor's Recommendation, Agreement Form and Health Forms.

The Academy does not discriminate against applicants or students on the basis of race, color, gender, national or ethnic origin.

Thank you.

Jeremy T. Irwin
Boys School Principal
Box 707, Bryn Athyn, PA 19009
267-502-4565
Jeremy.Irwin@ancss.org

Susan O. Odhner
Girls School Principal
Box 707, Bryn Athyn, PA 19009
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If the Second Coming Happened Why is There Still so Much Pain and Dysfunction in the World?

Rev. Ronnie Schnarr

Many people in this world are waiting for the Second Coming because they are so frustrated with the apparent pain and dysfunction in the world. So how come we can say that the Second Coming has taken place when there is so much craziness around us?

Well, here is my best understanding from the Heavenly Teachings of the New Church:

The ideal world portrayed in the last chapters of the book of Revelation is coming and is on its way. The New Heaven has already been formed and it is growing daily. The New Earth which represents a New Church is still among the few for a period and this is what is symbolized by the woman in the wilderness being kept safe in the wilderness for “a time, and times, and half a time.” (Revelation 12:14)

If you look at what has happened since the 18th century in the world, and more specifically in the world of theology, you will see a world that is increasingly changing for the better. Yes it is true that much dysfunction is coming into the open, but this is part of the process. This process is much like the one Swedenborg described in the second state of processing that people go through after they die (*Heaven and Hell* 499) – *that their internal life has to be exposed and their inner life must be seen.*

For instance, you can look at some of the abuses that Catholic priests have committed in recent years and think this world is getting worse and worse, yet if you do a little study or read some of Swedenborg's *Spiritual Diary* you will realize this sort of thing has been going on behind closed doors for a long time; it's only now that people see and care. Though things are coming out in

Editor's note:

This essay originally appeared on New Church Perspective: www.newchurchperspective.com.

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the open now, on a deeper level some really good things are happening. There is a new light of rational thinking in religion and there is a new freedom to come to religion freely, unlike the past.

This new spiritual light is from the Lord coming again in the spiritual world and in the Word with a new set of Heavenly Teachings to set in order a world which had almost completely fallen into spiritual darkness.

The prophecy of Jesus coming again “with glory in the clouds” can more literally be translated as coming “with a light in the cloudiness.” (Daniel 7:13; Matthew 24:30; Luke 21:27) This coming while it happened literally in the spiritual world represents a new spiritual light in the mind. It is a new enlightenment (glory) in the confusion surrounding the scriptures (cloudiness).

If you take a deep look at what has changed in the last 200 years, you will see that an understanding of who God is, what the Bible means, and how one should live and believe have really grown. This is seen in the freedom of religion that has entered the world. No longer can religious leaders and kings compel people to believe as was done with the Spanish Inquisition, other religious movements throughout the Dark Ages, and with many, many kings. People now can come to the Lord freely.

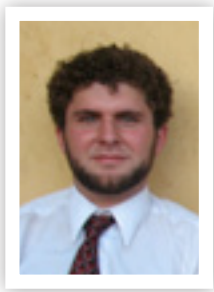
Also people are more and more being turned off by the image of an angry and vengeful God who would demand the sacrifice of His Son to quell His anger, but instead are beginning to see that Jehovah loved us so much that He was born into this world and suffered enormous temptations – both spiritual and physical – to save us from the forces of darkness. This belief is being professed by many in the new Emergent movement and also in some new more conservative movements within the Evangelicals.

And more and more people are beginning to see spirituality as a process of growing with God, not a one-time profession of faith that magically makes us worthy of heaven, but a life committed to being transformed and reformed by the Lord Himself acting upon us.

Hope for the world to become a better place is a very noble thing, but just like life, things take time. The Lord is in the process of bringing a new light into this world. And as it is said in the last chapter of Revelation, He will be the light of our hearts in that city and the “crystal waters” of truth and justice will

“flow from the throne of God” – a symbol of the Lord’s loving judgment. God will “wipe away every tear,” representing the pain of false and hurtful teachings being dispelled, and there shall be “no more death,” meaning the damnation accompanying an evil life being removed.

One thing that must happen before the New Earth can really start being established is that the hypocrisy that has existed in the world – especially in the Church – must be exposed before healing can occur. When things have really come out into the open and people freely choose to reject that which comes out, the reformation of society will begin, and the process of starting to reflect what has already been established in the New Heaven will also begin. Then we will start to see the New Earth as the Lord has promised, full of joy and light.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Rev. Ronald (Ronnie) Schnarr is Assistant to the Pastor at the New Church of Boulder Valley in Colorado, and is visiting minister to Palo Alto, near San Francisco, and La Crescenta, near Los Angeles. He was ordained in 2010. In recent years he has led teen camps, managed NEXUS (a camp for New Church teenagers) and traveled in Africa.

Swedenborg and Islam

William L. Weaver

The Writings make several references to Islam, Muslims and Muhammad. It appears to me that some of these statements are not entirely correct.

Islamic law is derived from two sources – the *Quran* and the *Hadith* (collections of the sayings and doings of Muhammad). The *Quran* is about 300 pages long and the *Hadith* collections much longer. Muslims say that the *Quran* can't be properly understood without consulting the *Hadith*. The six *Hadith* collections vary from three to nine books each.

I don't know if Swedenborg read the *Quran*; it wasn't widely available in the 18th century. He almost certainly did not read the *Hadith*, which were even less available. It is said that there was no complete English translation of the *Hadith* until 1924.

“What Bernard Lewis tells us about Gibbon is applicable to almost all the writers on Islam in the 17th and 18th centuries. (Gibbon's) own imperfect knowledge of the defective state of European scholarship at the time hampered his work and sometimes blunted the skepticism which he usually brought to the sources and subjects of his historical inquiries. . . . The Muslim religious myths enshrined in the traditional biographical literature on which all his sources ultimately rest were more difficult for him to detect, and there are failures of perception and analysis excusable in a historian of the time.” (Edward Gibbon, 1737 – 1794; from *Why I Am Not a Muslim*, by Ibn Warraq)

Speaking of Sir William Jones 200 years ago: “In Sir William's day, when it was unheard of for native Muslims to learn a Western language . . . and when even written translations were few, scarce and for the most part inaccurate.” (*Islam in History* by Bernard Lewis)

Following are differences I noted:

Conjugal Love 342 says: “The Muslim make the *Koran* the only book of their religion.” But then there are the *Hadith* volumes.

Apocalypse Explained 1180 says: “A Muslim sees . . . that the evils forbidden in the Commandments of the Decalogue must be shunned.” Well, sort of. The *Quran* says: It is unlawful for a believer to kill another believer. (4:92)

Here we have a double standard that is evident throughout Islam. As an Iranian cleric said, the penalty for killing a believer is death; for killing an unbeliever the penalty is a fine.

The Muslim Golden Rule could be stated thus: “Do unto Muslims as you would have others do unto you.”

“Thou shalt have no other gods before me.” Swedenborg says that Muslims believe in one God, and indeed they do, as do sun worshippers. But, Allah is not the God of the Word, least of all of the New Testament. Allah leads people astray and sends people astray, and is made to seem arbitrary. He can save anyone he wishes and condemn anyone he wishes. Does this make Allah another “god before Me”?

Honor thy father and thy mother? “Believers, do not befriend your fathers or your brothers if they choose unbelief in preference to faith.” (*Quran* 9:23)

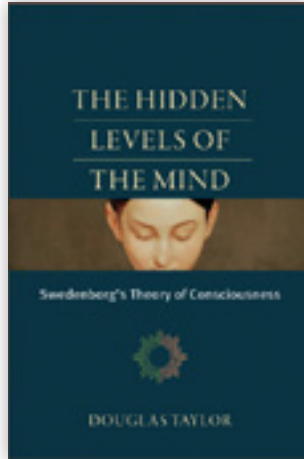
The Writings in several places speak of Muslims believing that Jesus was “the greatest prophet,” as in *Last Judgment* 50. This, however, is not the case.

The *Quran* gives a list of prophets including Jesus and says, “We make no distinction among any of them.” (2:134-137) Jesus was “no more than an apostle.” (5:75) “He (Jesus) was but a mortal whom We favored.” (43: 57-59)

Swedenborg also says in several places that from the *Quran* Muslims acknowledge Jesus as the “Son of God,” (as in *Conjugal Love* 348). This is simply not true. The *Quran* mentions Jesus as the “son of Mary” some 16 times, and never as the “Son of God.” Likewise in the *Hadith*.

Then there is this seeming contradiction: “Muslims consider the Lord to be greater than Muhammad.” (*Divine Providence* 255) On the other hand, “(Muslims) follow (Muhammad) with a kind of worship, and think little about our Lord.” (*Conjugal Love* 342) The latter would seem to be correct.

Book Review



The Hidden Levels of the Mind: Swedenborg's Theory of Consciousness

By Rev. Douglas M. Taylor

Swedenborg Foundation Press, West Chester, Pennsylvania 2011

Reviewed by Dr. Erland J. Brock, Bryn Athyn

In this small work of 90 pages the Rev. Douglas Taylor brings clarity to the words “soul,” “mind” and “body” in lucid terms that relate to our common experience of the life of the mind.

The author draws attention to the fact that Swedenborg uses the word “soul” in a number ways but selects the use that is most crucial to our humanity – the soul as “the spiritual organ that receives life inflowing from the Lord.” (p. 1) It is from this that we have the faculties of freedom and rationality: “the freedom to choose between good and evil,” and “the ability to evaluate everything in life in a spiritual light.” (pp. 3, 4)

“Mind,” on the other hand, is where our life is played out (both consciously and subconsciously) in our loving, thinking and doing through the agency

of our bodies. The relationship between these three – soul, mind and body – is clearly illustrated in diagram 3 (p. 16) as a set of concentric circles, the innermost being the soul; the next, the mind (both internal and external); and the outer, the body.

Then follows a treatment of the natural mind with its sensory, middle natural, and rational levels. The first becomes “open” by means of sense experiences, the second by reflection on these whereby generalizations are formed – the “scientifics” of thought at all ages, from childhood ideas about life to the most sophisticated thinking in the natural and social sciences and the humanities.

But the rational level can only become open first by knowledge from the Word – the Ten Commandments, for example – then, and most importantly, by the inflow from the “internal mind” of good and truth, the Lord’s love and wisdom, by which we become truly enlightened. This is the way of regeneration that we tread when we hear the Lord knocking on the door of our internal mind, open it, and invite Him to enter our external natural mind.

So chapters 3, 4 and 5 treat in some detail of the sensory, middle natural, and rational levels of the natural mind, while chapters 6, 7, and 8 treat of the path of regeneration – first of the rational level, then successively of the middle natural and sensory levels.

The book provides clear examples of the kinds of affection, thought and action associated with each level, and shows how the Swedenborgian concepts of inflow or influx, and discrete degrees, are crucial in all of them. In addition, line diagrams provide excellent support for the ideas discussed. Simplicity and clarity of expression characterize the whole work, which I highly recommend, not only for the general public, but also for parents and teachers in their roles in nurturing the development of the mind.

The volume also includes an essay by the Rev. Dr. Reuben Bell, *Swedenborg’s Mind* (pp. 91–100) that gives a survey of theories of “mind” from Plato (424–348 BCE) to Kant (1724–1804), providing the historical context of Swedenborg’s concepts. This survey could well be read first.

Closing the volume is the author’s brief account (pp. 101–104) of the regeneration of the human mind as given in the internal sense of the creation story at the beginning of Genesis, as expounded by Swedenborg in *Arcana Coelestia*.

Front matter includes a Preface and a short statement “About the Source Material.” The volume has an index (pp. 107–109).

Church News

DUNCAN SMITH: WELL DONE, FAITHFUL SERVANT

Rev. David Lindrooth, Director of General Church Outreach

Duncan Gilbert Smith

November 2, 1942 – November 25, 2011

Duncan Smith was a laborer in the fields of the New Church. He worked hard, using every resource available to him to help, build and improve – using anything he could lay his hands on to open the way for the growth of the Church.

He seemed to embody the Lord's teaching in *Matthew* that "the harvest truly *is* plentiful, but the laborers *are* few. Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest." (*Matthew 9:36-38*) Knowing that the laborers are indeed few, Duncan was ready to help with the harvest whether in Glenview, Illinois; Dnepropetrovsk, Ukraine; Tema, Ghana; or Kisii, Kenya. He was there to help wherever he saw signs that the New Church was ready to grow.

He helped open the way for translation. He built meeting centers for the New Church – churches and schools. Often you could find him with dirty hands, a shovel, hammer, paintbrush and copy of *Heaven and Hell*, working literally to build the church brick-by-brick and page-by-page.

It is easy to imagine his incredible joy when he woke up to find himself in the Spiritual World surrounded by his wife Sylvia and other friends from the New Church. I can also think that it wasn't long before he was again pushing forward, upon seeing some clear task connected with establishing the Church on earth. Eager, not willing to take no for an answer, pushing to help the Lord become known among men.

Duncan's passing leaves a large void in the service of the Church. We will all need to step forward and to continue his momentum so that no uses are left idle and no field goes un-harvested.

You can read the text of Duncan's memorial service by the **Rev. Peter M. Buss Jr.**, or listen to the audio, at www.glenviewnewchurch.org.

THE DREAM IN ASIA

Following are excerpts from a letter sent out by the **Rev. John Jin** as a Christmas solicitation, which highlights what is happening with the Asian

New Church. John is Pastor of the Philadelphia Korean New Church, which worships at Bryn Athyn College. He is also responsible for outreach to the Korean-speaking community in the United States, is Regional Pastor for Asia, and Dean of the Korean New Church Theological School.

“During the past General Church Assembly, our *Asia Night* revived our dream and passion for the growth of the New Church. Here are some quotes from those who responded that evening: ‘I was so moved to tears, feeling the closeness of my father’s dreams for Asia.’ ‘I am feeling high hopes for our church to revive the lost dreams and passion of our previous missionaries.’

“Embraced by your supports and prayers, we the Philadelphia New Church have grown physically and spiritually. We thank you. During this past year, with the theme of ‘becoming one heavenly community,’ we put in a lot of effort to become a peaceful church under the Lord. Here are some specific efforts that show our work:

Many of our families began their own family worship in their homes on a regular basis, in order to foster the church inside their homes in a new way. We saw a lot of positive results – more laughter and joy in their daily lives and true application of the Lord’s teachings in their day-to-day lives.

At my visit to the California Korean Church Group, I saw the fruitful result of their work and gave worship with 30 members – 16 of whom received baptism at that service. Under their lay New Church leader, they study the doctrines every week.

“More specific to our work in Asia:

In the Korean New Church Theological School, the four candidates preparing to be ordained next year are working extremely hard. Moreover, there are newly recruited theological students (10 in total, from U.S., Korea and Japan). With the support of the Asplundh Foundation we have a goal: within 10 years we are to have all of the Writings translated into Korean.

In the Academy Theological School correspondence course, there is one candidate preparing for ordination next year. Moreover, there are two – in China and Japan – preparing to become candidates. There are four students still in the early stages of their coursework.

In Japan, they continue to work hard with their lay members’ support in translating and publishing the Writings. The biggest Christian bookstore in Japan has started to carry the translated Writings on its shelves. This is quite a miracle!

In China there is a candidate named Timothy, who moved his family to a very small, remote area to do missionary work. The Christian Non-Government Organization sent him there to educate the people. They promised him a lifetime job and monetary support. When they found he was teaching “Jesus Christ as one God,” they urged him to teach the trinity concept. If he didn’t,

they would fire him. Being strong in his New Church beliefs, Timothy denied their demands and quit working for them, but he continues to work there as an educator and church leader, with small funds from village members.

“It is truly our wish to revive the dreams and passion that we felt at the Assembly last June. We want to gather all of our efforts with you to make this dream come true. We believe that the Lord will guide and lead this work.”

(If you would like to contribute to this dream you can send a check to the Philadelphia New Church, Un Tang, Treasurer, 537 Anne. St., Huntingdon Valley, PA 19006, or contribute through the Development Office, Box 711, Bryn Athyn, PA 19009.)

ACADEMY OF THE NEW CHURCH BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Rev. Eric Carswell, Vice Chancellor

The Academy of the New Church Board of Trustees has helped guide the institution through several governance changes recently. In December 2010, **T. Dudley Davis** stepped down as Chief Executive Officer and **Jim Adams** was appointed as an interim replacement. The title and job description of the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) position served functions of leadership and cross-campus coordination but created problems for clear, effective governance of the different Academy schools.

This issue was underlined by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE), which provides accreditation for Bryn Athyn College. It mandates that the College President be the Chief Executive Officer for the College and report directly to the Board.

A committee of trustees, Corporation members, administration and faculty representation from the ANC Secondary Schools and Bryn Athyn College met for several months considering different models of governance and recommended two options to the trustees in their final report.

The trustees chose to eliminate the position of CEO for the Academy overall and to create the position of Managing Director of the ANC Secondary Schools, a position which reports directly to the Board and to whom the ANC Secondary Schools Principals report. Jim Adams was appointed to this position. Principals **Jeremy Irwin** and **Sue Odhner** run the academic portions of their schools under the overall coordination and leadership of the Managing Director, together with input from the Vice Chancellor. Bryn Athyn College President **Dr. Kristin King** and Jim Adams split oversight of Central Shared Services, such as IT, Development, Marketing and Consolidated Plant Operations.

To renew the accreditation of the Theological School, MSCHE also required that the program be brought directly under the leadership of the

College President. While alternative independent accreditation for the Theological School program is being investigated, the small size of the program potentially stands in the way of qualifying for alternative solutions. Accreditation is essential because it allows for student visas for non-American students and it allows for the awarding of recognized graduate degrees, which in turn help with graduates seeking visas to work in countries different from their citizenship.

A major concern focus for the trustees and the Administration has been the on-going budget deficits. Last year the Academy faced its largest operating deficits and the high point in the payout rate from endowment as we have been absorbing the cost of the strategic plan. Steps are underway to cut expenses while still striving to achieve enrollment growth.

As part of our ongoing restructuring, a number of different departments have moved to new locations and other changes have been made to reduce the budget deficits facing the Academy overall. With the elimination of a number of jobs on campus, we said goodbye to dedicated employees who were part of our Academy family and we thank them for all that they did for our institution. These reductions were painful, but a necessary part of our overall reduction plan.

Recently appointed to the Board of Trustees were **Laird Pendleton**, a former trustee, Wayland, Massachusetts, **Joseph Seckelman**, San Diego, California, and **John Walko**, Abington, Pennsylvania. They replace **Philip Zuber**, Mitchellville, Maryland, who resigned shortly before his term expired, and **Jamie Uber**, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and **Alan Elder**, Bryn Athyn, whose terms expired in 2011. Also, the **Rev. James Cooper**, Mitchellville, was appointed to replace the **Rev. Derek Elphick**, Oak Arbor, Michigan, as one of two General Church priest advisors to the Board. He joins the **Rev. Eric K. Buss**, Bryn Athyn.

BUILDING BRIDGES

Ken Turley, President of the General Convention, visited Bryn Athyn after their General Council meetings in Michigan in the fall, and wrote a most glowing and gracious appreciation in the December issue of *The Messenger*.

“On the way home from our meetings, I took a slight detour and visited the campus of Bryn Athyn College. I was warmly welcomed by the **Rt. Rev. Tom Kline**, the Bishop of the General Church for the last eight years, who personally treated me to lunch in the college cafeteria and led me on a tour of the campus.

“It includes the cathedral, of course, but also an educational system, recently opened to and welcoming in students from outside the General

Church community, which serves students from pre-school through seminary.

“I was overwhelmed by the warmth of my welcome as Tom introduced me to other ministers, educators and staff and showed me the grounds, pointing out to me new accomplishments and the continuing needs in their situation.

“I was also very pleased to find an atmosphere of openness and a willingness to explore any and all opportunities for cooperation and collaboration between our two denominations which, in spite of our theological differences, have far more in common than we do in difference.”

SWEDENBORG COLLOQUIUM

A second Swedenborg Colloquium is planned for Saturday, March 31, at the Philmont Country Club in Huntingdon Valley, Pennsylvania. This follows a similar colloquium in October 2010 that brought together speakers from the General Church, Convention and the Lord's New Church.

The theme of this year's event is “Spiritual Practice.” The program will be moderated by the **Rev. Susannah Currie**. Among the speakers will be:

Drs. Robin and Stephen Larsen

Rev. David Millar, Australia

Peter Rhodes

Rev. Frank Rose and Rev. Dr. Jonathan Rose

Rev. Jane Siebert

Rev. Dr. Ray Silverman

Dean Sluyter, author of *Why The Chicken Crossed The Road* and renowned educator in Buddhist meditation

There is no admission fee, but reservations are required and attendees may purchase a box lunch. For information and to make a reservation please contact **Doris O. Delaney** at swedenborgcoll@gmail.com.

The program will conclude with a book-signing session, with an opportunity to buy books, have them signed and chat with authors, organized by the Swedenborg Foundation.

CHRYSALIS READER

The Swedenborg Foundation has just published *It's a Deal! Dynamic Transactions*, the 18th edition of the Chrysalis Reader, the Foundation's popular annual anthology.

A news release from the Foundation says: This literary collection of original essays, poems and short stories enhanced with artwork focuses on how people enrich their lives by exchanging news, by networking in new and old relationships, and by participating in transactions in both society and nature through which new understanding and ideas are revealed.

A number of notable poets and poet laureates have contributed to this year's Chrysalis Reader, including:

- Robert Bly, who has written many books of poetry and prose and whose work has been read on National Public Radio
- William Kloefkorn, poet laureate
- Judith Ann Levinson, poet laureate
- Linda Pastan, poet laureate

Other notable entries include:

- Pushcart Prize nominee Frank Scozzar spins tales of revolution and sacrifice
- Bailey Prize winner Byron Edgington, whose journey home to see his dying father means tough choices
- Chloe Joseph with a poem about a mother's infidelity
- Robert F. Lawson and Carol S. Lawson, editors of the Chrysalis Reader, present a new spiritual theme in each annual publication.

New Church author **Naomi Gladish Smith** of Glenview, Illinois, who has written many essays and three novels on the afterlife, says on the inside cover that this anthology "is an exploration into the deals we make with ourselves and others. There are essays that inform and ones of deeply felt experience, poems surprisingly playful or thoughtful, and stories that give a glimpse of the human heart – a sly peek into people's interactions – or sometimes unexpected results. We are introduced to the 2012 Bailey Prize winners while also enjoying a variety of poets and writers who have spent years at their craft.

For information or to place an order for the Chrysalis Reader, please go to www.swedenborg.com/chrysalis.

SECRETS OF HEAVEN: VOLUME 2

The Swedenborg Foundation has just published *Secrets of Heaven: Volume 2* as part of the New Century Edition of the Writings. This volume, translated by **Lisa Hyatt Cooper**, covers Genesis 9-15, beginning with God's covenant with Noah after the flood and ending with Abraham.

This is the second time that the Foundation is releasing the text of a New Century Edition in advance of the deluxe edition. That scholarly version, with a translator's preface, notes explaining historical points in the text, and an index to both volumes will be released next year.

This new volume is available from the Foundation, www.swedenborg.com.

GLENCAIRN FOUNDATION

The Glencairn Foundation in Bryn Athyn annually makes grants for various

uses throughout the General Church. **Kenneth J. Schauder**, President of the Foundation, recently sent a letter to General Church ministers and treasurers outlining procedures for grant requests.

The Foundation says: “We work very closely with the General Church and we have established some new requirements for 2012. For a grant to be considered there needs to be criteria met for the grant to be successful:

If the money is to go through the General Church there needs to be a General Church employee who has ‘direct supervision’ over the project. This is an IRS regulation and it will be strictly enforced by the General Church.

If you do not fit the above requirement (we occasionally do grants outside of the General Church arena) then the organization **must** be a charitable organization 501c(3) under IRS regulation and support New Church uses.

There **must** be a matching part of the program. This ensures that the program you are requesting funding for is a viable program. If there is local support then chances are very strong that the program will be successful.”

Requests for grants must be received by March 1 and those submitting requests will be notified by May 1 about the status of the request. Anyone with questions or suggestions for grants should contact his or her pastor and/or local treasurer.

SUNDAY SCHOOL MATERIALS

The General Church Office of Education in Bryn Athyn has just published a series of newly designed Sunday School pages at www.newchurch.org/materials/educational/sunday-schools. The pages are easy to read and navigate and offer an amazing variety of materials. You are invited to explore the pages and spread the word. You can also read about them on the Office of Education Facebook page.

FUND NAMED FOR GORDON JORGENSON

The Board of the General Church in Canada passed a resolution in November renaming the Canadian Scholarship Fund for **Gordon Jorgenson**. Gordon, who earned an Associate degree at Bryn Athyn College (then the Academy College) in 1958 and served on the Academy Board of Trustees in the 1990s, passed into the Spiritual World in October 2010. The following is from a report by the **Rev. James Cooper**, Pastor of the Olivet Church in Toronto, where Gordon lived with his wife **Joan (Parker)** and family, from the society newsletter:

“Gordon Jorgenson was a textbook example of someone who benefited from exposure to the teachings and the people at the Academy Schools. Last summer I visited some of the places where Gordon lived as a child, small

friendly towns in central Manitoba . . . Gordon's mother was an Eidse, a member of that large New Church family. She heard about the Doering Fund, received a grant, and put Gordon on the train for Bryn Athyn.

"He, like so many other young men of that era, thrived at the Academy, enjoying both the academic stimulation and broadened social horizons. The seeds were planted and they took root.

"Because he appreciated the value of that gift from the Doering Fund, he spent his adult life donating his time and professional management skills to the Church in a wide variety of ways, and in particular he encouraged people to support the GCIC Canadian Scholarship Fund because of what it had meant to him, and because the Canadian Scholarship Fund did not have the limitations of the Doering Fund.

"Gordon was not the kind of person to seek recognition for himself. What he did, in his own mind, was just what everyone was supposed to do. The rest of us know, however, that he did far more than his share and was an inspiration to many.

"Because Gord's life was a good example of what can happen to young people when they are given the opportunity to prepare for life by getting an education in the sphere of the Church – something that may be beyond the financial reach of many – the General Church in Canada is pleased to be in a position to help."

The scholarship fund for Canadian students now is known as the **Gordon Jorgenson New Church Educational Opportunity Fund**. Canadian students who are planning to attend the Academy Secondary Schools or Bryn Athyn College of the New Church are invited to contact Rev. Cooper, Chairman of the Scholarship Committee, early in the application process, at Pastor@olivetnewchurch.org or 416-239-3054.

BROWSE THE BRITISH LIBRARY

Carroll Odhner, Director of the Swedenborg Library in Bryn Athyn, invites curious readers in the Library's newsletter to discover one of the world's largest libraries, The British Library, at <http://www.bl.uk>.

The British Library contains more than 150 million books, manuscripts and other items published in the United Kingdom, with 3 million items added every year.

"The Online Galley," Carroll says, "allows you to get a close-up look and turn the pages on many rare documents, texts and musical scores. Would you like to see the draft score of Handel's *Messiah*? Or you could peruse the *Linisfarne Gospels*, Blake's *Notebooks*, Jane Austen's *History of England* in her own hand, etc."

People with iPads “can download eBooks from the Library’s eBook Treasures or select images and texts from the collections and create your own gallery.” There are many other features available.

Carroll notes that “The Swedenborg Library owns a reprint version of the *Gutenberg Bible*, donated by **Lynn Hyatt**. I found amazing virtual views of the *Gutenberg Bible* which included information about it. The British Library’s website states: ‘Explore the World’s Knowledge.’ Anyone using this outstanding site will find a world of knowledge that is easily accessible.”

THE NEW CHURCH IN FRANCE

The current issue of *Nouvelle Terre*, a little monthly publication by the **Rev. Alain Nicolier** in France, notes that *l’Association Swedenborg*, which has existed for two-and-a-half centuries under various names has recently been dissolved, for lack of interest and support.

Funds have been transferred to a new association called *Institut de Recherches et d’Information sur l’Epanouissement Humain*. Alain, who is struggling to keep the beliefs of the Church alive in France, says it will be less doctrinal and dogmatic, more practical and universal, than *Nouvelle Terre*.

SAD NEWS

The Rev. Khalid Rangi, pastor of the General Church congregation of Riounde, in Kisii (Kenya), unexpectedly passed into the spiritual world on November 11, 2011.



At its 50th reunion the Class of 1958 contributed to a tree and bench on the Academy campus honoring much-loved teachers Morna Hyatt and Charles S. Cole. The project was begun by the late Lynne (Halterman) Smith, and recently completed by adopted classmate Lois (Walton) McCurdy. The pictures are courtesy of classmate the Rev. N. Bruce Rogers.

Life Lines

ANGELS OF SWEDENBORG

Angels of Swedenborg, a 1985 dance theater work by Ping Chong, was the opening production of the 50th anniversary season at La MaMa in New York City in the fall of 2011.

Ping Chong, a theater director and choreographer, was born in Toronto and raised in New York and “is considered a seminal figure in Asian American theater and the Asian American arts movement.”

A news release noted: “One of Ping Chong’s signature works, *Angels of Swedenborg*, is a multi-media dance theater meditation on the fate of the modern man, caught between his material existence and spiritual aspirations. (It) is inspired by the 18th century scientist and philosopher Emanuel Swedenborg, who realized that science could not give him his wholeness or sense of spirituality, and subsequently wrote 30 volumes about the visions he had traveling to heaven and hell and back in his lifetime. Ping Chong notes that Swedenborg, re-imagined as a contemporary man in *Angels*, is ‘a perfect prototype of the dilemma we’re all in now.’”

The production “combines dance, theater, music, multi-media projections, eight angels, two spirits, Swedenborg himself and 600 pounds of feathers.”

Several reviews were quite favorable. One stated: “Performed in a heavenly arena of feathers, *Angels* is a hauntingly beautiful and wry meditation on contemporary man caught between longings for material comfort and spiritual enlightenment.”

Another review noted: “For all of his modern trappings, however, this Swedenborg is still preoccupied by one of the central concerns of the original: the location of the seat of the soul. The performance is a dance-theater meditation on this spiritual quest, and while there are no concrete answers offered, there is a clear journey undertaken.”

We would love to know if any New Church men or women are aware of this production, have seen it and have impressions to share.

(BMH)

SWEDENBORG AND THE NEW YORK TIMES

Neil Genzlinger, who graduated from the Academy Boys School in 1973 and is a writer/reviewer for *The New York Times*, did not review *Angels of Swedenborg* but had notified Bryn Athyn College and the Secondary Schools about the production. Neil also forwarded a review from *The Times* when *The Angels of Swedenborg* was presented in 1985 as a play by Ping Chong at the Brooklyn

Academy of Music.

The play was based on *The Book of Imaginary Beings* by acclaimed Argentinian writer and Swedenborgian scholar Jorge Luis Borges. The reviewer said the inspiration for the play came from Borges' statements that angels are "those souls who have chosen heaven," and that "earthly things are but emblems of heavenly things." The play was favorably reviewed as well.

Neil also supplied a brief review of an adaptation from C.S. Lewis's *The Great Divorce* in 2007, which he says is the only time he's been able to work Swedenborg into *The New York Times*. He even mentioned "ruling love"! Here is an excerpt from that review:

"Walk into a New York theater at random and you have a decent chance of encountering a story about sex and its consequences, or a parody of some pop-culture phenomenon, or a tale of war and power. You have very little chance of encountering a play that looks beyond the earthly realm to the spiritual one. Life after death? Puh-lease; don't be so unfashionable.

"The Magis Theater Company, though, is daring to be different with a thought-provoking adaptation of *The Great Divorce*, C.S. Lewis's story about a bus ride through heaven and hell. With a template that seems drawn from Dante's *Divine Comedy*, Swedenborg's *Heaven and Hell* and assorted other sources, Lewis planted himself as an observer of a series of vignettes in which souls struggling to find their proper place in the afterlife are led by more experienced spirits to confront their ruling loves. The viewpoint is Christian, of course, but the ideas carry across religious boundaries.

"Trying to translate such a book to the stage could easily result in something resembling a rickety Christmas pageant, but the Magis version is long on theatrical skill and remarkably short on preachiness. . . .

"By the end of the 90-minute show, you're feeling the limits of the form; even well-staged vignettes can only be so involving. Still, the various characters – the artist who is dismayed that what he thinks of as fame does not exist in heaven; the wife who realizes that what she felt for her husband was not love, but the love of dominion – have plenty to say to those interested in matters of the spirit."

(BMH)

SWEDENBORG AND JEOPARDY

Any New Church people watching *Jeopardy* on December 20th no doubt were surprised by the clue in a category, "Touched by an Angel": "This 18th century Swedish scientist who had visions of angels gave his name to a Christian mystic movement." The "mystic movement" we could have done without. But another pleasant surprise was that one of the contestants correctly answered: "Who is Swedenborg?" This is the third time that Swedenborg has been used

in a *Jeopardy* question. Bishop Kline may not be able to count this as part of the “million meaningful contacts” for the General Church but millions of people saw and heard this mention of Swedenborg and angels – and who knows what seeds may have been planted?

(BMH)

OUR WONDROUS SEER

A smidgen of eccentricity isn't the worst thing in the world, it seems to me, and one or two of our New Church customs fill the bill nicely. When I was pastor in Michigan, we always sang *O Swedenborg, Our Wondrous Seer* every year at our banquet in honor of our wondrous seer's birthday. To the tune of *O Christmas Tree, O Christmas tree!* Some of our more practical-minded members may view this as rather quaint, but I've always thought it should be mandatory. Along with blue and yellow cupcakes sporting little Swedish flags. Perfect!

(WEO)

A BIRTHDAY PARTY WITH FOOTNOTES

Another feature of our Swedenborg's birthday celebrations that I find delightful is the subtext of anxiety over whether we should be celebrating it at all. It seems fitting somehow, that the speeches in praise of Swedenborg's character and genius should be *interlarded* with disclaimers and apologies to the one we're honoring . . . for honoring him. I think we all understand that it isn't the *man* we're honoring so much as the use he served as the instrument of the Lord in His Second Coming. But still, it's probably a wise precaution to add a few footnotes to the toasts to be sure no one gets the wrong idea.

(WEO)

FRESH FROM THE CORNER LEXICON

And by the way, isn't “interlarded” one of the greatest words ever! “Interspersed” would do the trick, but why settle for a plain slice of bread when you can have a cupcake with blue and gold icing.

As far as I can tell, the word “interlarded” appears only once in the Writings, and only rarely elsewhere. Sadly, this may be the only use of “interlarded” you ever encounter: “From a false principle nothing but falsities can flow; and even if truths are interlarded among them, they became truths falsified when used to confirm a false principle.” (*Arcana Coelestia* 2385.3)

A rare word employed in the service of rare wisdom.

(WEO)

A ROLE MODEL IN COACHING

It is easy for athletics to be over-emphasized in education, but in their proper place they are an important part of the curriculum. In New Church schools, especially, the playing fields and gym floors become laboratories for the values taught in the classroom.

Many graduates of the Academy have fond memories of coaches who taught life lessons as well as athletic skills and helped to make them what they are in life – men like Stan Ebert, Ron Nelson and Dudley Davis.



Andy Davis

Among their ranks is Andy Davis who just retired from the Academy of the New Church after 38 years of coaching football – plus some basketball and baseball – and teaching English.

The Academy has a long and rich tradition with other schools, officials and the media for the sportsmanship of its coaches, teams and fans. Probably more people outside the Church are exposed to the Academy through athletics than anything else. They don't attend chapel or classes, but they come to sporting events. And our coaches and students are exemplary ambassadors.

The Academy tradition has been honored and nurtured by coaches like Andy Davis, who has enormous respect among his peers. At a retirement event in early December, the coach and athletic director of Bristol High School remembered Andy bringing his team over to their school to talk to their players after one of their teammates and another student died in a car crash. They'll never forget what that said to them about Andy and the Academy.

Too many coaches at all levels these days are anything but role models, assailing us with temper tantrums, ego eruptions and histrionics. Andy was always a gentleman on the sideline. He kept football and sports in perspective within the curriculum, and knew their value beyond wins and losses. The boys he coached over 38 years are better men because of him.

(BMH)

“SOMETIMES BY WINDING PATHS”

Do the Writings ever seem dry or coldly intellectual? Perhaps, but the truths they present in such a dispassionate manner are full of human pathos. Consider, for instance, the phrase “sometimes by winding paths” in the following passage. It describes how, after a period of instruction in the world of spirits, people

are led to their place in heaven; but of course the secret leading by the Lord that guides them in the spiritual world is a continuation of the same Divine providence that protected and led them all through their lives in this world from the moment of their birth.

The path of life is not always smooth or easy, and sometimes we may feel that we, or others whom we love and whose happiness we fervently desire, are directionless, or even lost; but the Lord is working constantly, in countless secret ways, to bring each person to his or her place in His kingdom. And no matter how indirect the route may be, there is no road that is off the map of providence.

Consider how much love, mercy, tender compassion, infinite patience, wise and gentle accommodation, and hope, are implied in these few sentences:

When spirits have been prepared for heaven by instruction.... they are clothed with angelic garments, which are mostly glowing white as if made of fine linen; and they are brought to the way that leads upwards towards heaven, and are delivered there to angel guards....

After this each one is led by the Lord into his own society, which is effected by various ways, sometimes by winding paths. The ways by which they are led are not known to any angel, but are known to the Lord alone. When they come to their own society their interiors are opened; and as these are in conformity with the interiors of the angels who are in that society they are immediately recognized and received with joy. (*Heaven and Hell* 519)

(WEO)

RELATIVITY

Time is a property of nature, and as natural creatures we are subject to it. But we are also spiritual creatures, and as such time's hold on us is not absolute. Here is a beautiful thought about the relativity of time from the exposition in the *Arcana* of this verse from *Genesis*: "And Jacob served for Rachel seven years. And they were in his eyes as a few days, for the love he had for her." (*Genesis* 29:20)

When anyone enters a state of love or heavenly affection he enters an angelic state, and it is as if time does not exist, provided that that affection holds no impatience in it. For impatience is a bodily affection, and insofar as anyone is subject to it he is in time; but insofar as he is not subject to it time does not exist. When someone is experiencing the delights and glad feelings that go with love, he is not conscious of time, since he is then living in the internal man. Genuine love draws him away from bodily and worldly interests, and lifts his mind toward heaven. (*Arcana Coelestia* 3827)

(WEO)

THE MORAL VISION

Vaclav Havel, the Czech playwright who stood up to communism and helped transform his enslaved country into the free Czech Republic in 1989, was renowned for his moral vision and authority. Havel, who died on December 18, was the first president of his new free nation, which split off from Slovakia, following the “Velvet Revolution.” In a famous essay, *The Power of the Powerless*, he called on oppressed people to reject the lies of their leaders and always to “live in truth.”

He was honored in the United States with the Liberty Medal, and gave a riveting, inspiring address before the joint Houses of Congress in Washington. This land was a beacon for those yearning for freedom but still he gently chastised the West for “a selfish cult of material success” and “the absence of faith in a higher order of things.”

Havel rose from a blue-jeaned devotee of rock music to distinguished president who took his power and responsibility seriously. He abandoned the atheism of communism and embraced a search for spirituality, convinced that the source of our basic human potential lies “in man’s relationship to that which transcends him.”

THE ‘INTELLECTUAL’ VISION

After Havel’s acclaimed address to Congress, American “intellectual” Noam Chomsky dismissed it as “an embarrassingly silly and morally repugnant Sunday School sermon.” People a lot wiser but perhaps not as “intellectual” as Chomsky felt it was his put-down of Havel’s moral vision that was “embarrassingly silly and morally repugnant.”

Just a few days before Havel’s death, another prominent “intellectual,” Christopher Hitchens, died. It’s doubtful they will meet in the spiritual world, for they had so little in common, but it would be an interesting discussion.

Hitchens was an “evangelical atheist” who railed against those who believed in God and wrote a best-seller, *God is Not Great*. It’s no surprise he felt that way. He never knew God – or inclined to.

Hitchens, whose brother Peter was an ardent believer, was a bombastic speaker and glib writer who never held back on his convictions and charmed a lot of people with his way with words. Like many so-called “intellectuals,” he thought people did not need God to tell them how to be good. That, of course, is the ultimate ignorance because there is nothing good without God. He may have passed for an intellectual but Psalm 14:1 has it right: “The fool has said in his heart, ‘there is no God.’”

C.S. Lewis, who called himself a “lapsed atheist” and came to be one of Christianity’s foremost champions, once said: “I believe in Christianity as I

believe that the sun has risen. Not only because I see it, but because by it I see everything else.”

(BMH)

A BROTHER'S 'MODEST HOPE'

In observance of the passing of atheist Christopher Hitchens, here are a few thoughts from his brother Peter's book, *Rage Against God*:

“I am, of course, concerned about Christopher. His passion against God, about which he used to say much less, grew more virulent and confident during the years while I was making my gradual, hesitant way back to the altar rail.” (p. 11)

“I do not loathe atheists as Christopher claims to loathe believers. I am not angered by the failure of atheists to see what appears obvious to me. I understand that they see differently. I do think they have reasons for their belief, as I have reasons for mine. It is my belief that passions as strong as his are more likely to be countered by the unexpected force of poetry, which can ambush the human heart at any time.” (p. 12)

“He has bricked himself up high in his atheist tower, with slits instead of windows from which to shoot arrows at the faithful, and he would find it rather hard to climb down out of it. But I have the more modest hope that he might one day arrive at some sort of acceptance that belief in God is not necessarily a character fault – and that religion does not poison everything. Beyond that, I can only say that those who choose to argue in prose, even if it is very good prose, are unlikely to be receptive to a case that is most effectively couched in poetry.

“On this my brother and I agree: that independence of mind is immensely precious, and that we should try to tell the truth in clear English even if we are disliked for doing so. Oddly enough, this leads us, in many things, to be far closer than most people think we are.... This will not make us close friends at this stage. We are two utterly different men approaching the ends of two intensely separate lives. Let us not be sentimental here, nor rashly optimistic.”

But then Peter recalls their boyhood together “in an England now impossibly remote from us,” and ends on a hopeful note: “It may actually be true, as I have long hoped it would be, that ‘the end of all our exploring will be to arrive where we started and know the place for the first time.’ “ (pp. 218-219)

(WEO)

HOWARD PYLE

Howard Pyle: American Master Rediscovered is the title of a special exhibit at The Delaware Art Museum in Wilmington (through March 4th) in observance of the 100th anniversary of the famed illustrator's death in 1911 at the age of 53. I recently attended the exhibit with some New Church friends and fellow Howard Pyle enthusiasts, and we much enjoyed the dramatic and beautifully rendered paintings and drawings of pirates, battles, mermaids and other romantic subjects.

"Hundreds of thousands of Americans saw his published pictures, making him a major contributor to the nation's visual culture," according to an article in the December *American Art Review*. But his influence extended beyond America – Van Gogh, for example, mentioned him as an inspiration.

Pyle was revered as an artist, teacher and author. He gave art classes in Philadelphia and Wilmington, and was the founder of the Brandywine School of Art in nearby Chadds Ford, Pennsylvania. It was a school first in the sense that classes were conducted there, and then in the sense of a new style of art.

He and his students – including N. C. Wyeth, Maxfield Parrish and other luminaries – revolutionized the art of illustration and gave birth to what is now known as the Golden Age of children's literature. It is noteworthy that of the 110 students who attended his classes 40 were women, including Jessie Wilcox Smith and Violet Oakley (about whom more in some future Life Lines).

Born into an old Quaker family, Pyle became a devoted reader of Swedenborg's Writings, and did his best to acquaint his students with them, reading aloud from the *Arcana Coelestia* during his classes.

Pyle wrote many of the books and stories he illustrated, including *The Merry Adventures of Robin Hood*, *The Wonder Clock*, *Otto of the Silver Hand*, and *The Garden Behind the Moon*, as well as four volumes of Arthurian stories that became classics of children's literature, and which his student N.C. Wyeth called "his most important contribution to the world of art."

In addition to its artistic and literary merit, New Church people have a special reason to be delighted by the work of Howard Pyle because of the spiritual influence of the Church's teachings which they can detect in his stories.

(WEO)

"WHEN WE GROW UP, WE SHALL BE MARRIED."

Here are a few lines from near the end of *The Garden Behind the Moon*, written and illustrated by Howard Pyle:

The Princess led David up to where the box was, and David took the key that hung about his neck by the golden chain, and fitted it in the lock. David turned the key

and opened the box, and there lay the Know-All Book as white as snow. He opened it, and on the first page were written, in letters of gold, the words –

“When we grow up, we shall be married.”

Yes, that is what they read when they opened the Wonder-Box, and what followed after, thousands upon thousands of words, told of the same thing – “when we grow up we shall be married; when we are married we shall grow up; when we are married there shall be joy; hence there shall be joy when we are married.” Thus it was from the beginning to the end of all there was in the book.

“What!” you say, “was that all?”

Ah, little child, you do not know – you do not know. The words sound as simple as moonshine, and the foolish man who believes himself wise may laugh to think of a hero going all the way to the other end of nowhere to fetch back nothing more than that written in it. But in all the world, and in all the world to come, there is nothing else that is worthwhile to write about; for if the yellow heaven had not married the brown earth there would never have been green and blue eyes to the peacock’s tail feathers.

Yes, the words are as simple as moonshine, but then you must read them in the Know-All book to understand what they mean.

(WEO)

LARRY KING’S BIGGEST FEAR

Some say that whether or not there is life after death is something we can’t know, that we’ll find out when the time comes, and that what we believe about it now isn’t important. The truth, though, is that we can know quite a bit about it, and that what we believe about it is very important. If, in fact, the purpose of life in this world is to prepare us for eternal life, what knowledge could be more important? It affects how we live here and now, and also how we feel about life, and death.

The famous interviewer Larry King recently said: “I want to be frozen on the hope that they’ll find whatever I died of and bring me back. My biggest fear is death, because I don’t think I’m going anywhere.”

Not everyone who believes there is no afterlife lives in morbid fear of death, but Larry King describes this as his “biggest fear.” Clearly, his lack of belief in eternal life is a source of mental torment for him, and to get rid of that fear would be a great relief. He needs to think about the subject more deeply.

We’re all going somewhere, whether we think we are or not. Having a destination in mind, as well as detours you want to avoid, makes the trip far more rewarding. Not to mention having a Guide.

(WEO)

HOW MUCH LONGER UNTIL CLOSING TIME?

An editorial on page 6 mentions the inventor Thomas Edison and how much he did for the advances and material comforts of the world. As a somewhat whimsical commentary of what he helped to set in motion, consider this perspective from the Journals of Edmond and Jules de Goncourt, acclaimed French writers and critics, written on April 7, 1869:

At Magny's dinner: They said that Bethelot had predicted that in a hundred years of physical and chemical science man would learn to know the atom and that with this knowledge he would be able, at his will, to dim, extinguish or relight the sun like a Carcel lamp. Claude Bernard, for his part, is said to have announced that with a hundred years more of physiological knowledge we would be able to make the organize law ourselves – to manufacture human life, in competition with the Creator.

For our part, we did not raise any objections to this talk, but we do believe that at the particular stage of scientific development, the good Lord, with a flowing white beard, will arrive on Earth with his chain of keys and will say to humanity, just as they do at the Art Gallery at five o'clock, 'Gentlemen, it's closing time.'

(BMH)

Immaculate Correction

I was mistaken in the November-December 2011 Life Lines when I wrote that the Catholic doctrine of Mary's "Immaculate Conception" means that Mary was born of a virgin. The actual Catholic belief is that Mary's conception was brought about in the normal way, but that she was "conceived without original sin."

The New Church doesn't believe in "original sin" (the idea that everyone is born guilty of Adam and Eve's disobedience), but we do believe in "hereditary evil" (that is, an hereditary inclination toward evil in our fallen human nature). In any case, the perfect purity ascribed to Mary by the Catholic doctrine is contrary to the New Church teaching that it was through her that the Lord took on the impurity of our human heredity.

(WEO)

New Church Life

Published bimonthly by
the General Church of the New Jerusalem
Bryn Athyn, PA 19009
U.S.A.

www.newchurch.org
www.newchurchlife.org
January / February 2012



OFFICES Bryn Athyn, PA 19009

PUBLISHED BY General Church of the New Jerusalem

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SUBSCRIPTIONS New Church Life, Box 45, Bryn Athyn, PA
\$30 for any address, \$5.00 a single copy

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