

NEW CHURCH *Life*

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

JULY/AUGUST 2019



The Final Journey

In a charming essay – *Cramming for Our Finals* – the Rev. Robert Jungé says we'll all pass our final test for heaven – individually, as a couple, or temporarily separated by death – if we just let the Lord lead. (Page 293)

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Bruce Henderson, Editor | bruce.henderson@newchurch.org

Rev. Walter Orthwein, Spiritual Editor | walter.orthwein@verizon.net

Michelle Chapin, Layout

SUBSCRIPTION: \$30 TO ANY ADDRESS. To order: 267-502-4990 or susan.wright@anc-gc.org

Postmaster: Send address changes to: New Church Life, PO Box 708, Bryn Athyn, PA 19009 or e-mail:
datacenter@anc-gc.org

New Church Life

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

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PO Box 743, Bryn Athyn, PA 19009

267-502-4981

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In This Issue

Editorials (page 280) include:

- *Between Dream and Destiny*: Our Church, our country and we ourselves are all on a journey to live up to high ideals and pursue our goals. For Church and nation it is being true to the founding vision and reaching for fulfillment. For each of us it is regeneration on the path to heaven. At all three levels we have freedom and responsibility – and the hope of great reward.
- *The Conjugal Element in all Doctrine*: Every doctrine of the New Church intersects with and is part of all the others, because they are all aspects of the one supreme doctrine of the Lord. The doctrine of conjugal love, for example, courses through the rich fabric of spiritual truth out of which the wedding garment of salvation is woven.

The Rt. Rev. Peter M. Buss Jr., who began his service as Executive Bishop on July 1, offers his vision for the Church: *Proudly General Church*. It includes the things he is proud of in the Church, what he is not so proud of, and what could make him prouder – and he invites readers to consider their own answers. He recognizes that we have many challenges but is optimistic that the Church has the right message for the world and that the Lord is on our side. (Page 285)

We are all *Cramming for Our Finals* says the Rev. Robert S. Jungé – especially the older generation in “the graduate school of life.” “Some of the exams for our aging bodies,” he says, “are really tough.” But the Lord wants us to pass and come into heaven. “The Divine Teacher is preparing every single one of us for an eternal use if we can find it in our minds and hearts to follow His leading.” (Page 293)

In his address for the Bryn Athyn College commencement, former professor Dr. Gregory Baker describes the experience at the College as *Transformative*. Three elements combine in the process: the opening of the rational mind in the college stage; the rational revelation of the New Church, and its implications for life choices; and the “*Nunc Licet*” invitation, which infuses every subject with a New Church foundation and insights. (Page 300)

Gail Cooper, who has retired after a 30-year career as a much-loved

Latin teacher in the Academy Secondary Schools, delivered a “final lecture” Commencement Address on the importance of the choices graduates will be making throughout their lives – dealing with the consequences and facing up to their own responsibilities. A life based on mindful and good choices may not always be easy, she said, but ultimately it’s simple: Do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with your God. (Page 303)

In a sermon oriented to Independence Day in the United States – *Loving and Serving One’s Country* – the Rev. Michael Gladish says the teaching to “render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s” often is used to justify the separation of church and state. But it is really saying that we have a duty to both. “We can and we must continue to strive for ever greater wisdom in the application of spiritual principles to our civil life. Only as we do so will this or any nation truly prosper in the long run.” (Page 308)

In a sermon, *A Song for the Sabbath Day*, the Rev. Grant Odhner says the Lord wants to make us holy – which means keeping us close to Him. Observing the sabbath is one way to do this. “The seven-day week, with its six days of work and Sabbath rest, represents the alternations of spiritual state through which we are regenerated. The Sabbath is that state of ‘knowing that we are the Lord’s’ and feeling joy in this, peace in this.” (Page 314)

Ray and Star Silverman have updated their popular book, *Rise Above It*, as a textbook: *Spiritual Development for College Students*. It is being used very successfully at Bryn Athyn College, and the goal is to get it into other colleges because its application works for students everywhere. Dr. Kurt Frey, a colleague of Ray’s, reviews the book and its universal usefulness: “Students don’t just learn about the Ten Commandments,” he says, “they learn to practice them,” and “to make spiritually informed decisions in every aspect of their lives.” (Page 321)

Vance Genzlinger offers an in-depth personal study “About Kingdoms, Heavens and Societies” and how it all reflects the Grand Man of Heaven and our place in it. (Page 326)

We are used to hearing ministers’ Statements of Faith at their ordinations. Martin Klein offers *A Layman’s Statement of Faith* – based on his lifelong experience with the Church. (Page 346)

Church News, beginning on page 348, includes:

- Formal affirmation of the new Assistant Bishops
- Bryn Athyn College Commencement, graduates and awards
- Academy Secondary Schools Commencement, graduates and awards

IN THIS ISSUE

- Highlights of the May meeting of the General Church Board of Directors
- Highlights of the May meeting of the Academy Board of Trustees
- A Theistic Science Symposium planned for Bryn Athyn College in October
- The Annual Summer (January) Retreat in Australia
- A report on Regional Clergy Meetings in Stockholm, Sweden, in May
- A report on Regional Clergy Meetings in Bryn Athyn in June
- Plans for the Boynton Beach Retreat 2020

Editorials

BETWEEN DREAM AND DESTINY

We are all on a journey between dream and destiny – in our Church, in our country, in our lives.

July, the month of American independence, is a good time for all of us to reflect on the role of church and government in our lives – and our own responsibilities to them.

We treasure the vision of the New Church descending from God out of heaven. Its destiny is to be “the crown of all churches that have hitherto existed in the earth.”

The dream for America is to be a model of freedom and responsibility, of values founded on faith and charity. Its destiny is vested in “we the people” living up to those ideals – a hope shared in every thriving democracy.

In an iconic tableaux of America’s founding an anxious woman outside Independence Hall in Philadelphia asks Benjamin Franklin after the drafting of the Constitution: “So, what do we have – a republic or a monarchy?” Franklin famously answered: “A republic – if you can keep it.” *If you can keep it.* The destiny is up to us.

Our personal destiny is heaven, but it is not bestowed on us either. We also have work to do to get there.

After the American and French Revolutions, British statesman Edmund Burke, who supported the cause of freedom, said: “The effect of liberty is that men may do whatever they please. We should wait to see what it pleases them to do before we risk congratulations.”

So, would Burke congratulate us on what we have made of our nation so far, and the direction we are headed?

Are we pleasing the Lord with where we are as a Church and how much – or how little – we have grown its acceptance and influence in the world?

And how are we progressing – through regeneration – toward our own destiny?

Some people cringe at the phrase “American exceptionalism,” as though it implies “better than,” but it actually means an exception to all other forms of government that have gone before. The American model is based on God-given rights, recognizes man as a spiritual being, invests power in the people,

not a king, and pledges allegiance to “one nation under God.” That is what is “exceptional.”

The New Church is “exceptional” to every other church that has gone before because it is based on new revelation from the Lord. And we are charged to build that church on earth – and within our own hearts and lives in pursuit of destiny.

What makes our Church and nation exceptional is what flows into them from the Lord. What we are blessed with is the Lord’s “exceptionalism” – how His love and truth lead us all in freedom.

As the Rev. Michael Gladish notes in his sermon, *Loving and Serving One’s Country*, (page 308), we use the familiar verse, “Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s” as a touchstone for separation of church and state. But as he points out, the Lord is not saying we should keep God and nation separate, just that we have duty to both.

We keep faith and government separate, but much of the vision of the Founding Fathers – and the Constitution that articulates their values – was based in the Bible. And this, says Mr. Gladish, “is where religion and politics converge. For while it is true that they require separate allegiances, it is also true that without revelation from the Lord we would have no idea of what is really good – for ourselves, for our communities, or for our country. So as good citizens we have a responsibility to turn to the Lord for guidance even in our love for our nation.”

On the 150th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence – which framed those God-given rights – President Calvin Coolidge called it essentially a spiritual document, whose words and ideals “through use for a righteous purpose have become sanctified.” He insisted that the future of the country depended on this faith enduring. “Governments don’t make ideals,” he observed, “but ideals make governments.”

As this country was forming, he said, “The best ideas of democracy had been secured at church meetings.” And because the Declaration had its roots in religion, “It is no wonder that Samuel Adams could say, ‘The people seem to recognize this resolution as though it was a decree promulgated from heaven.’”

Among the most revolutionary words ever written are “We the people.” This was a turning point in history – faith that government could be entrusted to citizens. And the most revolutionary concept was that “these truths are self-evident” – that we are endowed by our Creator with the inalienable rights of “life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.”

French philosopher Alexis de Tocqueville wrote in *Democracy in America* in the early 1800s that this nation’s strength lay in its unique fusion of liberty and religion. More than 150 years later President Harry Truman lamented: “The fundamental nature of this nation’s law was given to Moses on the Mount.

The fundamental basis of our Bill of Rights comes from the teaching we get from *Exodus* and *Matthew*, from *Isaiah* and *Paul*. I don't think we emphasize that enough these days. If we don't have the fundamental moral background we will end up a totalitarian government that does not believe in the right of anybody except the state."

But de Tocqueville also found that Americans had "a lively faith in the perfectibility of man," that they saw – and still see – their country "in a constant state of improvement," with its future always better than its past. On the Fourth of July Americans do not celebrate a perfect government but the conviction that the perfection is up to them and is an ongoing process. And doesn't that resonate with our own process of regeneration?

Our church, our country, and we ourselves have histories of struggle and on-going challenges. We believe, too, that each is in a state of continuing improvement and that the process is up to us. And we recognize that all of our challenges, on whatever level, are essentially spiritual.

We are blessed to know that with the Last Judgment and the Second Coming the Lord is continually bringing new light into the world. *Is bringing*. It is an ongoing process. And we are not spectators. We are meant to be involved.

As a church, as a nation, as individuals, we must be constantly renewing ourselves to advance toward our destinies. We need good, visionary leaders and sound, moral institutions. But we also need committed followers – the quiet, patient, persevering, loyal people who are invested and engaged. The masses may determine what we see on TV and Facebook. The committed forge our values.

Walt Whitman once said, with the profound clarity of a poet: "America is nothing but you and me." We can say the same for the Church. Both have their foundation in truths from the Lord but depend on us to keep the flame alive.

We stand between what was and what will be – between dream and destiny – aware that in the Church, the nation and our own lives we are not yet all that we could or should be. We have work to do but the Lord always gives us hope. We should not be discouraged. Neither should we be complacent.

All of our blessings need to be nurtured and valued and carried forward. The Lord came to save the whole world and He has given a new revelation to light the way. That light is a torch in our hands.

As we stand between dream and destiny, listen to what the Lord says to us:

- You have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you.
- You are the light of the world.
- Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.

When the Lord calls on us to be exceptional and asks, "Whom shall I send,

and who will go for us?" let us say with all humility: "Here I am, Lord. Send me."

(BMH)

THE CONJUGIAL ELEMENT IN ALL DOCTRINE

Each doctrine of the New Church intersects with and is part of all the others. This is because they are all aspects of the same supreme doctrine, the doctrine of the Lord, just as each color in the rainbow is a refraction of the same light from the sun. It is similar regarding the Ten Commandments, which is why it is said that to break one of them is to break them all.

Take the doctrine of **conjugal love**, for example. It runs through the whole fabric of spiritual truth out of which the "wedding garment" of salvation is woven. Remove the conjugal principle and the whole garment will come unraveled. This is because "conjugal love forms the inmost element of life in a person." (*Conjugal Love* 509)

The doctrine of conjugal love is bound up with **the doctrine of the Lord** because of the marriage of the Divine and the Human in the Lord, and the marriage of the Lord with His "bride" and "wife," as the Church is called in the Word.

Conjugal love is an essential component of **the doctrine of the Word** because the Word was given to unite good and truth in us, and thus make us fit to be called to "the marriage supper of the Lamb." (*Revelation* 19:9) The Word itself is a marriage of Divine good and truth, which is indicated by the frequent pairings of terms such as "joy and gladness" in it. In the letter, these pairings appear to be redundant or merely for poetic effect, but they are a sign of the Divine marriage of good and truth in the internal sense.

The same theme of good and truth united is also found in **the doctrine of creation**, which begins with the Word (as is stated in the first chapters of *Genesis* and of *John*). As **the doctrine of correspondence** explains, all things in nature represent aspects of the Creator's Divine love and wisdom, and thus feminine or masculine human qualities. Furthermore, a sphere of conjugal love, with its constant striving toward procreation, emanates from the Lord through the heavens and fills all creation with a tendency to bring forth forms of use.

The doctrine of conjugal love is essential to our whole understanding of **human nature** because the Lord created us male and female, so that each sex complements the other. This is for the sake of marriage, procreation and mutual support in the process of regeneration. Every human being, as to his or her soul (and even the DNA that forms the body) is either male or female; there is really no such thing as a gender-neutral individual.

Conjugal love is an essential aspect of **Divine Providence** because the goal of providence is to bring us into heaven, whose greatest joys are associated with marriage – because, as the Writings explain, the use of marriage (that is, the procreation of the human race) is the greatest of all uses. Conjugal pairs seem to meet "as if by chance," but we are assured that it is really providence that brings them together. (*Conjugal Love* 316.3)

And finally, the doctrine of conjugal love is related to **the doctrine of life after death** because marriage, as understood in the New Church, is eternal. It's not just that people in heaven are married forever, but that the state of heaven itself is a state of conjugal love. The sphere of that love permeates every aspect of heavenly life. It is in the very air the angels breathe.

The point of this exercise is to show that there is an element of each and every doctrine of the Church in each and every other doctrine. I focused on conjugal love to illustrate this because it has sometimes been regarded, erroneously, as a sort of collateral doctrine – less fully Divine and more shaped by the culture Swedenborg lived in than the Church's other teachings.

If that were true, life would be simpler for us. We could sidestep the "culture war" raging around us and be at peace with the world (for a time at least). But we can no more dispense with the doctrine of conjugal love than we could with any of the other foundations of our faith. And that particular doctrine has now become a lightning rod.

It should not surprise us that the truths concerning heaven's highest love should provoke hell's fiercest opposition. The general rule that "all religion relates to life" is especially evident regarding marriage. Of all doctrines, the doctrine of conjugal love is an especially immediate and practical threat to hell's plans for us. If that love can't be utterly eradicated – which it can't, because it is too innate and strong – it can certainly be perverted into various forms of adultery; and the hells are relentless in their quest to do just that.

Much as the Church would like to avoid conflict, the apostles of a "new normal" are eager for it. They have made it very clear that mere acquiescence will not satisfy them, but that active participation in their radically corrupted version of reality is required. We, too, must be clear about what the Lord's Word requires of us.

The same revelation that obliged the New Church to stand firm for the priority of charity, despite being condemned as heretical by the prevailing culture of "faith alone," now obliges us to stand firm in defense of marriage, even though, as the Lord predicted, "you will be persecuted."

(WEO)

Proudly General Church

A Status Report on the General Church

The Rt. Rev. Peter M. Buss Jr.

To many people with a New Church background “proudly” carries with it something of self-aggrandizement or even arrogance. That is certainly not the intent here. Instead, readers are invited to consider the affirmative principle that is spoken of in the Heavenly Doctrines (see *Arcana Coelestia* 2568, 2338), or the call to look for what is good – in this case within this organization. (*Ibid.* 1079, 6655) It is my contention that there is ample evidence to view our church in this way. A repeated line I have used is that the General Church does good the world over every single day. I am proud to be a part of it – as my spiritual home and as the object of my professional energy.

My assignment as incoming Executive Bishop has been to answer the dual question: Where are we and where are we headed? The focus here is on the General Church, with a commitment to share a parallel message about the Academy of the New Church in a subsequent article. I have had the opportunity to address that question in several venues, and those presentations are the basis for this article.

My approach is to ask three related questions:

- What am I currently proud of?
- What am I not proud of?
- What could make me more proud?

As you consider my answers to these questions, I invite you to consider your own answers: What are you currently proud of within the General Church – in the sense of affirming what is good? What are you not proud of or wish was different? What could make you prouder?

Things I’m proud of:

- 1. Our heritage.** One of the great things about coming into this position is that we are not starting from scratch. We have an organization that has

been in existence and serving faithfully since 1891. Many who have gone before us have resonated with the promise of a newly proclaimed gospel that the Lord God Jesus Christ reigns whose kingdom shall be for ages of ages. (*True Christian Religion* 791) Picture the Bryn Athyn Cathedral with all its grandeur; or note some of the congregations that have long since celebrated their centenary. Think of the work that has gone into translation of the Heavenly Doctrines, and the collective understanding of those teachings that has been articulated through countless classes and sermons. Think of the assets that have been accumulated over the years in the form of endowments and also by generous giving. We are a small organization, yes, but we are the beneficiaries of the efforts and devotion of many people who have built this church that we love.

2. **Our worship services and worship spaces.** My wife, Teresa, and I have the privilege of traveling to many parts of the world where the General Church has a presence. We participate in worship services at every location, often in beautiful buildings dedicated to the spiritual functions of the church. Some of you have seen the lovely photographs taken by Gretchen Keith of the interior of these worship spaces. Beauty aside, the true value of them is the worship of the Lord that happens there week-in and week-out. Think of the songs sung every Sunday, together with the sermons digested and the prayers spoken. These are the outward activities that spring from an internal desire to be strengthened in a life of love and charity. (*Arcana Coelestia* 1175:2) Heaven rejoices and so should we, even where attendance is small.
3. **Our people.** A church simply isn't a church without congregants. Teresa and I, as is true of many of you, are privileged to have friends around the world who are allied with us in a common cause. (See *Arcana Coelestia* 6637:2) We get to see people doing amazing things: chairing building projects, faithfully serving as employees, stepping onto a church board or pastor's council, volunteering within their community, sharing how their New Church principles show up positively in their work environments. Churches tend to gather people who care about what is most important, and that is certainly true of the General Church.
4. **Our schools.** New Church education is one of my passions and I am tremendously grateful for the opportunities I have had to support this use in all its forms. Some of our General Church schools are small and struggling but they are finding their way. The Academy Secondary Schools continue to educate and graduate students in exemplary fashion, including our son this past year. Bryn Athyn College is working extremely hard to promote New Church education at a collegiate level.

In this category I also include the many programs for Sunday School and for homes that are produced and distributed by General Church Education. Included as well is the work of all those parents and teachers who strive to open the eyes of the next generation to the Lord and the things of spiritual life. As one congregant told me years ago when considering the school in Glenview, “There’s magic that happens within those walls.”

5. **Our clergy.** I have had the opportunity, since being nominated, to sit down for one-on-one sessions with a majority of the clergy. I gained insight into each person’s work, including his concerns and passions. To a person I saw deep commitment to the faith of the New Church and great hopes for the General Church. Travels come into play here too, as some of the trips are to ordain new colleagues, or to support others in their work. While it is true that the clergy has its differences and challenges, we are blessed to have them serving all of us. I certainly look forward to working with them in my new capacity and have told them on many occasions that I cannot serve in this function without them.
6. **Events that serve.** Our church exists to help people in the spiritual dimension of their lives. We know that certain milestones take place – a wedding or a baptism of a newborn child. We know also that transitions to the next life happen, sometimes in due course and sometimes tragically. Our church has a great way of rising to the occasion, offering deep support and love. These worship services are treasured by many, because of the vision from the Lord that is powerfully offered. Add to that festival times – Christmas Eve services, Easter celebrations, New Church Day pageants. Most of us can testify to events that have touched our lives deeply, because we felt the presence of the Lord and were touched indelibly by heaven.
7. **Our faith.** Underlying it all is a faith that resonates. Many of us are acquainted with the iconic New Church teaching, “Now it is permitted to enter with understanding into the mysteries of faith.” (*True Christian Religion* 508:3) I share a recent experience of traveling to Yenagoa, Nigeria. Upon request I had the opportunity to present on the Lord’s Second Coming. We digested concepts of the Lord as the one God, the Word including the internal sense, salvation, spiritual choice, life after death, the church, useful service, conjugal love, and the Second Coming itself. The message we are able to share from the Word is the foundation of all the other things we can celebrate within the General Church. It is why we are here.

Things I am not so proud of:

Here is where humility comes in. Each of us is called to acknowledge our own personal failings and inclinations to evil. The Word also contains many warnings for the church as a whole, in terms of trends and influences which are not inspired by heaven. I have found that people express relief simply in the fact that some of the challenges of the General Church are named. And that is all I propose to do here, namely list the challenges we face as an organization. This is my list, based on the many conversations and visits I have experienced in preparing for my new role.

- **In-fighting:** We have a propensity to argumentation within the church. People with strong opinions and perspectives clash with others who hold equally strong but different perspectives. Some of that is to be expected and can even be healthy. Other parts leave people talking past each other, getting upset, and feeling negative toward the church as a whole.
- **Non-healthy worry about the future:** From time to time I run into perspectives that conclude we are dying, or that there is no hope for the General Church. While we are wise to pay attention to trends and acknowledge our struggles to serve, there is no usefulness to a kind of forlorn paralysis that can set in when we fail to believe that the church can succeed.
- **Talk of splits:** I want to be careful about this, because some have questioned me about this. If we are clear in what the General Church stands for, and some people choose to opt out, that is their prerogative, and it need not be seen in a negative light. I do, however, resist the conclusion that we are healthier if we divide our small organization, concluding instead that there is ample room to explore the ways we can serve together.
- **People opting out:** Again, in the spirit of confronting reality, it is true that some segments of the population are stepping back from active engagement in the church or are choosing not to make the General Church their spiritual home in the first place. We know some of our disagreements over women's roles within the church, or over a perception of intolerance by a younger generation for whom tolerance is vital. When people step back it can rightfully cause us to grieve, and to reflect on the things we could do to ensure that unnecessary barriers or misimpressions about the church do not persist.
- **Influences of culture:** The cultures within which the church operates are varied. Most would acknowledge that western culture is rapidly changing, in ways that makes the work of the church more challenging. Prevailing attitudes and sentiments that used to be supportive of the

church are now opposing and, in some cases, antagonistic. Nowhere is this more evident than in the realm of marriage and healthy relationships between the sexes.

- **Ways in which we don't seem up to the challenge:** Apathy is an insidious thing. It saps the energy out of capable people, leading them to a kind of coasting that is not what we most want. This can manifest itself in the lives of employees of the church as well as volunteers. We all want to believe that our good faith efforts are making a difference. I acknowledge that some do not feel this way, or at least wonder if their energies would be better spent elsewhere.
- **Resistance to trying things that the Lord might bless *and* lack of respect for our past:** This is a kind of either-or dynamic that comes into play. Some want to do things entirely differently, with little sensitivity to traditions that resonate with significant segments of the church. Others want to hold onto one way of doing things, with a reflexive negativity to anything new. There can be a healthy balance between these two perspectives; my point here is that we do not always get it right.
- **Limited structure and support for areas where the Church is young:** Many are aware that wonderful things are happening within the church in Africa, Asia, and other parts of the world. From an organizational and a funding perspective though, we run into challenges to effectively support the establishment of the church in these new lands. Hopes often exceed available time on task and finances, and the result is a fair amount of frustration. We are right to celebrate the expansion of the church globally. We are wise to continue to strive for better mechanisms to support it.

The challenges that I have enumerated are decidedly organizational in nature. They are an attempt to acknowledge some of the struggles we face at this time in our church's history. As with our own spiritual lives, self-examination can be a healthy means of identifying what we need to work on.

What would make me more proud?

I subscribe to a mentality of realistic optimism. Because of that, I am personally inspired by the opportunity to build on our strengths and face our challenges. The Lord has given us the ability to engage with prudence as we look to the future. (See *Divine Providence* 210) One of my favorite teachings in the Heavenly Doctrines speaks about a kind of excitement that can arise when we see a way forward. "When people prepare themselves most eagerly to achieve some end or effect, by seeking out and organizing the means to achieve it, they can no longer contain themselves once all the preparations are complete."

(*Arcana Coelestia* 5869) It is with that sentiment that I share with you some of the things I believe we could strive for as a church in the coming years.

It starts with a vision. I would be honored if we took to heart the goal of “a General Church that increasingly manifests the faith of the New Church.” By way of background I would share this perspective: most people I talk to who associate with the New Church say that they love the faith: they love the concepts of freedom, of the Lord’s providence, of life after death, of the internal sense of the Word, and so on. What they often do not resonate with is some part of the General Church as an organization. They love the faith but have problems with the organization.

If we wanted that to change, a logical way to do so is to demonstrate that the faith that is beloved is manifested more overtly within the organization. The beauty of this concept is that it works for those also who currently have a favorable impression of the General Church. It could be a useful “bring-forward” of our heritage and why we exist in the first place.

Detailed planning remains to be done to show how this vision could become a reality, but some of the areas within which it will almost certainly be seen are as follows:

1. **What does it mean to be “General Church”?** It is my belief that we are wise to be intentional about articulating what we stand for as a church. That requires a process, starting with the clergy, with appropriate feedback and input from laity. The goal is to arrive at a greater shared understanding of the great truth upon which our organizational choices rest.
2. **Communication.** There is an age-old adage to the effect that you either pay for communication or pay for the lack of it. I believe we could invest in better communication mechanisms within the church. That includes means of sharing information from the Central Offices with the church, but also sharing among church locations what is happening elsewhere in the church. Some are familiar with an Ambassador Program that served as a prior attempt at multi-layered communication. A renewed effort of this nature could build on teachings concerning subject or emissary spirits in the next life whose job it is to communicate. (See *Arcana Coelestia* 4403, 5856) Building also on well-known teachings of the “as of self,” or the perception of our own autonomy, we could put in place mechanisms for input – a Bishop’s Council, or occasional member surveys. There is a need for people to feel informed and to sense that their voice and perspectives are welcomed.
3. **International Church.** Mentioned above is the challenge of supporting the church around the world. A group of people has been meeting

for the past months to wrestle with what the General Church Central Offices can do to provide for more effective support. One part of that is to fund and launch two pilot congregations in the West African subregion, aimed at helping us learn what it will take to see well-established church centers that will stand the test of time. This is a start to hopefully many projects and processes that help the General Church to thrive around the world.

4. Professional Development. In an organizational sense, we are a people business, in that our mission is carried forward by means of priests, teachers and others. A strategy professor I once studied with impressed on me the value of investing in these people first and foremost in terms of their professional development. Some structures and funding exist, but there is much more that could be done. A beginning concept of an employee university is one idea that has been built out to some degree. It is my hope that everyone who works for the church will feel encouragement to ask what's next in terms of their learning and support, so that they can serve in increasing ways.

5. Outreach. There is no question that we wish to serve more people as a church. In the Lord's providence one area that provides significant opportunity is through intentional online community. Even now we are exploring ways to invite people who have discovered some of the power of the Heavenly Doctrines to gather with others.

In doing so we will strive to provide church experiences, focusing on living according to the teachings and supporting each other in living the life that leads to heaven. We will strive to remain open to other ways in which we can serve people too, with the prayer that the Lord will bless our efforts. (See *Apocalypse Revealed* 932)

6. Education. Mentioned earlier are the many things that are happening to build on our solid heritage of New Church education. We are blessed with a long-standing capability of sharing the faith of the New Church in a systematic way with young minds as they grow. One project already underway within this realm that excites me relates to New Church teacher competencies. One of the ways in which we deliver on the promise of New Church education is through excellent New Church teachers. Pulling together the training modules for those who have not had formal training in how to do it, is what this is all about, and it has potential to reach across our New Church educational system. Another hope I have is to do more as a church to support parents in the spiritual dimension of their parenting. This, too, is at the heart of New Church education. As mentioned earlier the Academy of the New Church also

has its significant reach and coordinating all efforts to further the use is vital to our collective success.

7. **Engagement.** What I mean here is inspiring and utilizing the many talents and energies of the people of the church. We might agree that the church is healthier to the degree that more people are serving it and helping to make the world a better place by means of it. We have a beloved doctrine of usefulness and know that all of us are called to use our gifts and talents to enrich the lives of others. What could we do as a church to build pathways for people to give of themselves in these ways?

As will easily be noted, each of these planning dimensions is broad in scope, and would need to come into specific focus. It is also true that the General Church Central Offices are more the focus than any given congregation. The point in mentioning them is to indicate where I believe we could focus our organizational energy as a church. There are so many things we can do to build on our strengths and to address some of our known challenges.

As I close, I share with you one inspiring Biblical story that has lived in the front of my mind for some time now. It is the story of Elisha and the chariots of fire from *2 Kings* 6. You will recall that Elisha had made known the plans of the king of Syria, who in retaliation sent a huge army to surround the city where he lived. Elisha's servant woke one morning to see all those enemy forces and cried out, "Alas, my master, what shall we do?" Elisha calmed this man with the famous words, "Do not be afraid, for those who are with us are more than those who are with them." Then he prayed that the servant's eyes be opened, and he saw the mountainside filled with horses and chariots of fire.

As is true of any time in the church, we face significant challenges. What energizes me and gives me great hope is the reminder that we have an awesome message and the Lord is on our side.



The Rt. Rev. Peter M. Buss Jr. assumed the role of Executive Bishop of the General Church on July 1. He had been serving as Assistant to the Bishop, Vice President of General Church International, Incorporated, and Head of General Church Education. He had previously been pastor of the Glenview (Illinois) New Church. He and his wife, Teresa (Farrington), live in Bryn Athyn with their four children. Contact: *Peter.Buss.Jr.@newchurch.org*

Cramming for Our Finals

(Thoughts for some of my old friends)

The Rev. Robert S. Jungé

When friends come up and say, “How are you?” wouldn’t it be nice to reply, “Grateful?” And mean it! I like to think of old age as the graduate school of life. Some of the courses are harder than others, but they all look forward to graduation when we can take up our eternal use in heaven.

The curriculum isn’t always easy. Some of the exams for our aging bodies are really tough. Some of the doubts are hellishly persistent, for that’s where they come from. But one thing we can be sure of is that we can learn from whatever comes our way. Each challenge can be turned to use, if we follow the Divine Text and really try to let the Divine Teacher explain it.

So here, my fellow students, are some of my efforts to try to think positively and from use about what confronts us.

Let’s start with perhaps the toughest course. I only know two married couples where both partners went to the other world at the same time. Most of us are, or are going to be, separated physically from one who in this world has been our best friend. For some it may be a relatively short time. I guess I am a slow learner because I’ve been in this course for some 39 years and still haven’t taken the final test.

Spiritual Diary 5002-3 tells us: “The life of every man is foreseen by the Lord, as to how long he will live, and in what manner; wherefore he is directed from earliest infancy with a regard to a life to eternity.” That pretty well sums up Who is in charge of our education. The passage continues:

There are four reasons why some die old and some die young. They are: 1) On account of use in the world to men. 2) On account of our use, while still in the world, to spirits and angels; for man, as to his interiors, is with spirits, and he is there as long as he is in the world, in which all things in the spiritual world terminate. 3) On account of our use to ourselves in the world, either that we may be regenerated, or that we may be let into our evils lest they lie dormant and afterwards break out, which would result in our eternal ruin. 4) On account of use afterwards in the other life, after death, to eternity; for everyone who will be in heaven has his

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place in the Grand Man, or, on the other hand, he has his place in hell.

Every one of these reasons can have application to the spouse left behind in this world, but I get real help from the second reason: "On account of use, while he is in the world, to spirits and angels." Couple that with *Conjugal Love* 321, which lists several reasons why those who have lived in love truly conjugal do not wish to marry again after the death of their partner, the first of which is: "Because they were united as to souls and thence as to minds, and this union, being spiritual, is an actual adjunction of the soul and mind of the one to the soul and mind of the other, which can never be dissolved."

There may be reasons apart from conjugal love why some remarry, but some of us don't wish it. I like to think that we (my wife and I) still perform a use together. We may not be in the same classroom but we're in the same course and often do our homework together. We pray together as always. We read the Word differently but still together.

During courtship my wife and I found that looking at and "interpreting" sunsets gave us the chance to subtly communicate feelings which otherwise would have been hard to put into words. So now we both reflect together when I look at a beautiful sunset or any other wonder of nature.

There are special lessons to be learned from our circumstance. Things I wish I had done differently. Things I did yesterday that I wish I hadn't. Having completed some lessons first she may be subtly tutoring me, but we can still be in the Lord's plan together. So, I tell myself, "Just do the assignments, Bob, and eventually you'll graduate, too."

Heaven and Hell 249 says: "Some also who lead a solitary life sometimes hear spirits talking with them, and without danger." And anyone who has a partner in the other world knows what solitary is. So, I allow myself the luxury of talking to my wife. Rarely does she answer. But not so long ago when I was having a particularly bad day, I said to her, "Why don't you get our house built?" To which came back a clear and characteristic reply: "You have to give me the materials to work with."

And if doubts about whether we are still together come from the basement

boys, I tell myself: If Providence led two such unlikely students together as my wife and I, I don't think the Lord is going to change His mind in the middle of the course. I remind myself: "Just do your homework and you'll pass even if the course gets pretty tough at times. And if you aren't too stubborn you can always ask the Divine Tutor for help."

That's one of the big ones, but here's another. When we go to the other room, and can't remember what we went for; can't think of a person's name; or the right words are lost somewhere in mid-sentence, perhaps we should reflect on the simple teaching: "In the other life when he is a spirit in the spiritual world (a person) does not think naturally but spiritually, and to think spiritually is to think intellectually or rationally. For this reason, the external or natural memory in respect to its material contents is then quiescent, and only those things that man has imbibed in the world by means of material things, and has made rational, come into use." (*Heaven and Hell* 464:2)

Just think, all those details we fuss so much about when we can't remember won't be on the final test at all. But still there are those memories that affection has anchored in our lives – those things the Heavenly Doctrines call remains. Don't you think angelic couples remember their weddings?

Becoming more and more forgetful doesn't mean that we can just neglect our bodies or thinking about other people. I remember when I was still an active minister visiting in Florida. A group went out to breakfast together, and after we sat down, I wondered what in the world that rattling sound was. They were getting out their pills. We still have to eat, remember our doctor's appointments, and if we believe them, we still need to remember to take those pills.

Sixteen pills a day! When I pay for them, I wonder if I really am worth it. A valve job on my heart about 20 years ago, then a pacemaker! I think most of us have one form or another of replacement parts. Why, in Providence, do so many of us live so much longer than in the past? Why must we face so many

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decisions about health? Does it confront us with the importance of the spirit? That our bodies are not us?

But let's look at a few daily tests rather than just the big exams. I try to remind myself that the greater the feeling of loss, the more it confirms how much I value what is missing. Many of us have to deal with some form of hearing loss. It makes you feel left out and isolated. In fact, it can lead to withdrawing into ourselves. On the other hand, it can lead us to appreciate how much we care for others and love to share thoughts and affections with them.

In my teaching, particularly in children's talks, I liked to use a lot of questions and answers. When I couldn't hear the little kids' replies and tell if the answers were right or wrong, I realized I had to quit. It was not an easy way to learn how much I loved the ministry and those kids, but in affirming that love, I think I can at least see a possible reason for the hearing loss.

Even if the loss is severe, we can still listen to the Lord. In the quiet we can still reflect and savor our affection for others. Hearing involves hearkening. We can obey our affections, and not bottle them up, but rather find opportunity to give voice to those quiet thoughts.

Is it so bad to have to listen more carefully to others? One of my pet hates is when someone is "talking to me" but looking around or over my shoulder to see who they can talk to next. If you have difficulty hearing, it helps to look at the other person and really pay attention. Actually, it helps them pay closer attention to you and communicate more effectively.

I don't have a sure reason for why most of us lose high pitches first, but I'm quite sure it's not what my hearing doctor said: "It's OK, pastor, because now you don't have to listen to the women in your congregation." I'd rather think that having to pay closer attention to others, perhaps particularly the voices of women and children, might be a useful graduate course. Little children are innocent. Is longing to hear them a lesson on the importance of being willing to follow the Lord?

One of the states of conjugal love we receive from the Lord but through our wives is innocence. I think there's a connection between listening to our wives, and willingness to be led by the Lord through them.

I remember when I first got glasses in elementary school. For the first time I saw the individual leaves on the trees. Now once again I don't see them. Perhaps at my age it is important to see the big picture and not get bogged down in details.

A new course was added to my program when the eye specialist turned to me and said, "Sir, you are not safe to drive." You don't realize how many times you get in the car and drive somewhere or just drop in on friends. Take it away, and there goes a big chunk of your sense of independence. But we aren't really independent, and if we're getting ready for a world where mutual dependence,

sharing and love of the neighbor are the norm, there just might be a lesson for some of us here when we lose our ability to drive.

In that spirit when my daughter drives me to some appointment or other, I cheerfully remind her that she is getting an opportunity to be charitable. The truth is I find that being driven by friends or family invites really wonderful conversation. Another course: “Accepting Help Cheerfully 101!”

There is something about holding a book and turning the pages that a Kindle or a computer screen just can’t replace. Not being able to read from the copy of the Word that my wife and I read together was another blow. I can still read the bright screen with the dark and enlarged font on the computer. Perhaps it is the Lord’s way, among many others, for healing the blind today.

The actual written words are the ultimate. The Word on the computer makes me wonder about all the possible ways the Lord is preparing for His Church to spread. I’m not a techy. It takes extra concentration and effort for me to open the computer and find the place. But is the demand for the effort just one more little reminder that we really have to “learn of Him?”

One of my daughters gave me a little recorder with all of the Scriptures on it. It was something of a new experience to listen to the Word being read to me and I can turn the volume as loud as I like. In my devotional daily reading, I have tended to read one chapter at a time, so again it was a new experience to listen to the sweep of five or six chapters at a time.

I confess, tilted back in my chair I sometimes fall asleep, but there’s a special sphere that I really love in just listening to the Word. But I can’t resist telling of the smile it brought when I put on my glasses and read on the recorder cover, “Made in China.” A smile, and yet the wonder at the Lord’s attention in Providence attending to details everywhere.

I have a cane too. I like to poke my stick at great grandkids’ feet to make them dance for me. I think perhaps I could get along without it, but I call it my “sympathy stick.” My cane is sort of like the little handicap sign that hangs on the mirror that makes you “special” when you park at the store. It gets in the way when I want to open doors for ladies, but I still want to.

I put it in the cart at the supermarket and use the cart for stability. I sometimes wish the stores had all the products I like at eye level, but I realize that then the aisles would be twice as long and those who drive themselves around in special carts would have a terrible time reaching anything. Bending is difficult, and we move more slowly. People pay attention and help, and that’s good for them; and as I said before, a good lesson for me. Perhaps in this graduate school there is an advanced course in recognizing that we all need each other.

Finding a positive take for pain is, I think, one of the hardest lessons. It’s amazing how many ways our bodies can hurt. We can and should learn to ignore a lot of the little ones. We don’t have to tell everybody about them. When it gets

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really tough, I like to say to myself, "My body is there, but it's not me. I'm over here." I told that to a friend not long ago and he said, "Why, that's what I do when I go to the dentist!"

But pain, like all sickness, is clearly a permission. And so, I think we need to look for perhaps a basic lesson to be learned from severe pain. When the really tough ones hit, most of us pray or cry out to the Lord for help. Like those the Lord healed when He was in the world, we seek His love and mercy. We seek Him in the very Human terms that we have to learn to think of Him.

Many of us when we ordinarily pray scarcely think of what we are saying, or to Whom we are talking. Our Lord is not an infinite abstraction way off there someplace. He, our loving Savior who came into the world to help us, He is with us at all times; and particularly

so when we are learning that we really need Him. The lesson may be hard, seemingly impossible perhaps. Nevertheless, pain may be the only way we can learn how much we need the Lord; not in the abstract, but in the truly human and approachable terms of mercy and love.

Time is also hard to handle. The kingdom of heaven is within us. There is no time or space there. In place of time there are changes of state. So, when time drags, we need to make the effort to change our state. There's a whole world, a spiritual world of thoughts and affections to explore even if we have to sit in the same chair, or even lie in the same old bed. We are going to live forever, and forever is not a long time.

The goal of our education here is not just to change our way of thinking, but to open our hearts so the Lord can change the very loves that make our lives. And like all education, it is one step at a time, one state at a time. We can't afford to stagnate spiritually, just because we are old. The Lord knows and is in charge.

We are very like ducks on a pond, moving smoothly towards a shore which the Lord sees clearly. Our job is to paddle like crazy underneath. It may seem as if our paddling is getting weaker and slower; the course is still sure; and there may be lessons which like unseen currents are urging us forward.

One of my favorite quotations is: "In your patience possess ye your souls."

(Luke 21:19) Isn't the struggle between impatience and patience really a struggle with wanting to be in charge and in control? I think there is a potentially very powerful lesson in not being able to do many of the things which we did in the past easily and without thinking.

As frustrations mount, we may ask, "How long?" When those times come, I try to remind myself, "Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever." Each phrase in the Lord's Prayer can help us in different ways. I sometimes have to repeat one special phrase several times, to meet different challenges. For example, when I am particularly thinking of my wife, I say, "As in heaven so upon the earth."

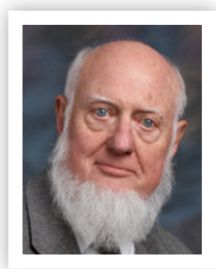
The Lord's Prayer has universal application. When we learn all the lessons from it that we can in this world, we'll graduate. Is it wrong to think of our book of life, in some sense like a diploma?

If you have read this far, you may well be thinking: "How Pollyanna can you get!" I know, I haven't completed the course. But we're all fellow students and I hope there may be a use, as it were, in studying for the tests together. What's more, there is also post-graduate school in the world of spirits.

In post-grad school, we may need to take some courses over. We may find a sense of wonder over a host of things we never thought of before. But one thing we can know for sure: "The life of every man is foreseen by the Lord, as to how long he will live, and in what manner; wherefore he is directed from earliest infancy with a regard to a life to eternity."

The Divine Teacher is preparing every single one us for an eternal use if we can find it in our minds and hearts to follow His leading.

The Divine Teacher is preparing every single one us for an eternal use if we can find it in our minds and hearts to follow His leading.



The Rev. Robert S. Jungé has been a minister of the General Church for almost 65 years. He has been a pastor in Denver, Colorado, and founding pastor of the Ivyland and Kempton congregations in Pennsylvania. He has also been Secretary of the General Church, Principal of the Bryn Athyn Church School, teacher at the Academy of the New Church, and Dean of the Theological School. He has also been a visiting pastor, from the Western United States and Central Pennsylvania to West Africa, Japan and Korea. He lives in retirement in Kempton and looks

forward to being reunited with his wife, Vera (Pitcairn), who has been in the spiritual world for 39 years. Contact: revjunge@gmail.com

‘Transformative’

Gregory L. Baker, Ph.D.

It is a great pleasure and privilege to have this opportunity to speak with you today, a day which, for the graduating class, is a very special day; indeed, it is a Transformative Day. Today you are being transformed from undergraduate students to the next stages in your amazing lives.

I love the word “transformative.” It has a lovely cadence. “Trans-**form**-a-tive.” Its four syllables project a kind of forward motion, a kinetic energy. “Transformative” pushes us forward, makes for positive change, sends us on our way to better things. With transformation, we grow by quantum leaps.

Bryn Athyn College was a transformative experience for me as a student. Here is what happened:

I grew up in a pleasant residential part of the city of Toronto, Canada, on the north shore of Lake Ontario. My parents were steady and supportive members of the New Church congregation in Toronto. As a child, I was a pretty good student. So, for high school, I was privileged to attend what was considered to be the premier academic prep school in the city. By the end of my first year at that school, I was academically in the middle of the pack.

But now the story starts to head south. Entering my middle teenage years, I became a lackluster student. Even in subjects I sort of liked, such as math, science, English and history, I barely kept up with my homework; French and Latin hardly at all. From grade 10 to 12, I did a long, slow, glide down toward an academic black hole. Even my extra-curricular life was uninspired. And personally, I was relatively oblivious to, well, anything.

So, my parents, with a sense of increasing concern for their only son, made the seemingly desperate decision to send me 500 miles from home to a small Pennsylvania New Church college, about which they knew precious little. During my first day at the College, I registered and, because of my previous record, was promptly and correctly placed on academic probation.

Yet the circumstances and timing of my arrival in Bryn Athyn combined to make for a wonderful transformative experience. In time, I transformed into being a good student.

Looking back, I see several factors at play.

First, a college freshman student is about the right age for the opening of the rational mind. Even I was beginning to wonder what this world was all about. Who were we? Why were we even here?

Second, and connected to the opening of the rational mind, it turned out that the revelation to the New Church, the guiding light for this college, is a rational revelation – well fitted to slot into that brand-new rational student mind. The Heavenly Doctrines speak to the many questions that philosophers and theologians have debated since the beginning of Christianity. Not only are questions answered, but new questions are generated because the Writings encourage open debate and curiosity – perfect for the college state.

And third, the faculty was inspired by the *Nunc Licet* statement, “Now it is permitted to enter with understanding into the mysteries of faith.” This sense of mission – to infuse every subject with a New Church foundation, New Church insights – gave the faculty members a passion for their subjects that was unlike anything I had previously experienced. They were completely dedicated to the goal of understanding everything – both natural and spiritual.

The combination of these three factors and others nurtured my previously latent talents, gave me reasons to study, to learn, to dig deeply, to find answers, to become a seeker of truth.

I even got off academic probation.

This was my transformative experience. This was the experience that gave me the foundation and the strength to continue on in the academic life. After two years, I returned to Toronto, ready to take on the difficult challenge of consecutive degrees in mathematics and physics.

And, I might note, the chance to help other students have that same transformative experience was much of what encouraged me to return to Bryn Athyn College nine years later as a faculty member.

But let us think a little more broadly.

“Transformative” is a word that also describes much of what happens in both our global outer lives – in politics, in science, in economics – as well as within our personal inner lives, our psychological and spiritual lives.

A classic example that you all learned about at Bryn Athyn College was Emanuel Swedenborg’s transformative experience: his change from philosopher and scientist to revelator serving the Divine plan to bring a new revelation to God’s children. This was a difficult transformation for him. We know something of this profound spiritual struggle through his unpublished *Journal of Dreams*.

But even as Swedenborg struggled with his new role as revelator, western civilization was undergoing its own transformative experience, changing from a pastoral society that relied on superstition and folk-wisdom, to one of increasing mechanization and science. Isaac Newton’s foundational work on

classical mechanics and gravity, his *Principia*, was published within a year of Swedenborg's birth. Galileo and others had already shown that the earth actually rotated around the sun. These scientists, and others, were demonstrating the almost magical power of mathematics and analysis in describing nature. The great scientific adventure leading to the modern age had begun.

Similarly, political systems changed as philosophers and revolutionaries saw a new vision for the place of man in human society, and therefore new ways to organize society

It is no random coincidence that these global transformative experiences in the natural world were paralleled by the great transformation in the spiritual world – that cleansing of the spiritual world that we call the Last Judgment – the re-ordering of that world that took place in 1757. And all this happened while Swedenborg was putting pen to paper to give us the Heavenly Doctrines. The late 17th and early 18th centuries therefore gave us the ultimate transformative experiences, both natural and spiritual.

So, back to the graduates of 2019. It is almost a truism to say that you will each have many transformative experiences as you go forth from this College. You will spread out to jobs or graduate studies. You may marry, have children, discover cures for cancer, battle global warming, do all kinds of amazing things, that will be transformative for you. In your inner lives, you will work hard to become better people, better friends to those around you, more useful to society. You will transform yourself to the better you, that is now growing inside each one of you.

So, congratulations to you on your hard work that brought you to this achievement today. My wish, and that of everyone in this hall, is that you will continue to be wonderfully transformed throughout the rest of your lives and to eternity.



Gregory L. Baker earned an Associate Degree from Bryn Athyn College in 1961; a Bachelor of Science degree in Mathematics and Physics at the University of Toronto in 1963, where he also earned a Master's in 1967 and a Ph.D. in Nuclear Quadrupole Resonance in 1970. He taught mathematics, physics and computer science at Bryn Athyn College until his retirement in 2010, and also served many leadership roles in the College. He has published books on chaotic dynamics and contributed articles to more than 70 publications. He has been president of

the Swedenborg Scientific Association and Friends of the Swedenborg Library, and served nine years each on the Bryn Athyn Church and General Church Boards. He and his wife, Margaret (Henderson), have four children and 10 grandchildren, and live in Hatboro, Pennsylvania. Contact: gregmarg@msn.com

Choices, Consequences, Responsibility

Gail R. Cooper

(Note: After the quote from *Heavenly Secrets*, italicized portions are taken from the creed of a Women's Institute in Georgian Bluffs, Ontario, which was included in the graduation program.).

Let us start with the ESSENCE of life's meaning: the Word of the Lord.

For every smallest moment of a person's life involves a series of consequences extending to eternity, each moment being as a new beginning to those which follow. (Heavenly Secrets 3854)

I love this passage. Reflection tells us immediately that there is an obvious and profound truth here. Whatever action I take will have a consequence, and that consequence will have implications far beyond the moment at hand. But the effects of those acts have consequences beyond the immediate. We can, in fact, see effects on three different levels.

Let's start with the most obvious consequence: the immediate impact of what we do. If I plug in my phone, it is charged. If I say a kind word to someone, their day can be better. If I take a chromebook out of the Media Center, use it, take it back, and plug it in, it can be ready for use by another student – no inconvenience to anyone. But if I take it back and shove it on the shelf without plugging it in, the next user could be out of luck.

What I have done has an immediate impact on another person. And the reverse holds true. What if the person ahead of me used the chromebook and left it unplugged for a couple of hours? I could have a dead chromebook on my hands when I was counting on being able to do my work. That's a consequence.

Or say I'm a Boys School student who decides not to wear a belt to school. Or a Girls School student who decides to wear a skirt that is shorter than regulation. A teacher writes up a dress code violation on me.

This brings up another aspect of actions and consequences. If what we do

has an impact on others, or even on ourselves, it is only right and fitting that we take responsibility for our decisions and actions, for good or ill. Although it is the teacher who writes me up for a behavior violation, it is a result of MY decision. My decision to plug in my computer means that the system works for other students. I am part of that success. We are all in this together.

It is far better to be a positive part of how the world around me operates than to be a negative force, one who disrupts the workings at large. If I want the system to work for me, I must take my part in making the system work for others. I can be a part of making the world a place that works for everyone. The key here is kindness: acting so that the world around me functions better and benefits others, not just myself.

Sometimes my actions or those around me have consequences that weren't foreseen, or that are negative. I know that when I make a mistake, or make a poor choice, my hope is that others will give me the benefit of the doubt: that I was doing my best but failed. I will extend the same courtesy to those around me. We all make mistakes. I believe that most of us are doing the best we can.

The key here is not to make the mistake of judging another person's intentions. None of us can know what is going on in someone else's mind. It is a common mistake to think we can, but we can't. Let's extend the benefit of the doubt to others.

Let's go back to the quote from *Heavenly Secrets*, the part that reads: "*each moment [is] a new beginning to those which follow.*" I have the ability to take a negative consequence and change the direction toward the positive. The Lord is always there to help us make these changes.

Another aspect of consequences: sometimes actions outside our control have a direct impact on our own lives, and one that we didn't anticipate. Let me tell you a true story. We will go back a little over 100 years to a small family farm in western New York, to a young teen-aged boy named George.

George helped with the livestock and one hot summer day he was watching the cows in the pasture. The sun was beating down. He was hot. The cows were hot. There were no Yeti water containers in the early years of the 20th century. There wasn't even bottled water, but George knew how to take advantage of the situation at hand.

He spotted, at a little distance, a small, still pool of water filling a pothole. The mud had settled to the bottom, and clear water had risen to the top, just right and handy for a thirsty boy. As George eagerly headed to the pool, just within reach of quenching his thirst, a cow stepped in the pool, stirring up the muddy bottom.

George watched the only relief for his thirst go up in clouds of mud, and said to himself: "There has to be something better than this." Not long after, he left the farm and went off to school to become a teacher.

I'm pretty sure the cow here did not intend to change George's life, but that cow certainly had an impact. A positive one. George made a positive decision and went on to complete Normal School and become a teacher, and then an education administrator in Genesee County, New York. A lifelong worker in education. Not a farm worker.

Keep us from pettiness: Let us be large in thought, in word and deed. Let us be done with fault-finding and leave off self-seeking. May we put away pretense and meet each other face to face, without self-pity and without prejudice.

This brings to mind the recent Oratorical Event, one of the best in my memory, and that is due in no small part to the role that the four participating seniors played. Their four speeches created a cohesive unit within the event at large.

Winston started out by reminding us that we should not make judgments about others, that we don't know another person's intentions, nor do we know what challenges lie in each person's life.

He was followed by Serena, Kaitlyn and Ben. Their speeches reminded us that we can never know what forces are at work in someone else's life, and the bravery that it may take to face each day. Their stories told of how the kindness and support of the people around them affected their lives positively and made a difference, an impact.

This brings us to the next level of consequence: the broader impact of our words and deeds, the impact that goes beyond our day-to-day actions. The people whose kindness can reach the Bens, Serenas, Kaitlyns, and beyond, those deeds are ones that can have a longer range, even a lasting effect. When we act in such a way, we can help build a world in which more people can feel safe. Each of us can be part of that creation.

We all need to be aware that we can't see what the long-range, or even the shorter-term outcome of our actions will be. This knowledge shouldn't paralyze us into inaction but make us aware and humble that we are constantly setting events into sequence.

We all need to be aware that we can't see what the long-range, or even the shorter-term outcome of our actions will be. This knowledge shouldn't paralyze us into inaction but make us aware and humble that we are constantly setting events into sequence.

Let's not forget that "each moment is a new beginning to the ones that follow." When we make a mistake, we can learn from that mistake and head the consequences into a positive direction.

Let us return to George, who did indeed go to Normal School, where he met another teaching student named Eva. They married. They had three children. They had eight grandchildren, and three of those grandchildren are in this room, including me. And their great-great granddaughter Emma is graduating today. And beyond mere procreation, these two educators passed on a love of teaching that is now in its fourth generation.

That cow had no idea the effect she would have in strolling the pasture on a hot day. Personally, I am grateful to her for stepping in that puddle.

May we never be hasty in judgment and always generous. Let us take time for all things. Make us grow calm, serene, gentle. Teach us to put into action our better impulses, straightforward and unafraid.

Let me ask a question here. If we decide to take an action that is self-centered, even hellish – if no one knows, is there still a negative impact? If I act kindly and unselfishly, and no one knows, is there still a positive impact? Yes, there is, because the third level of impact is eternal.

Our choices, our actions, not our intentions, determine the people that we become. What sort of person do you want to be? Every time we make a good decision, one that looks beyond ourselves to the good of others, it becomes easier to make the next good decision. And whenever we make a self-centered, selfish, or harmful decision, it becomes just a little easier to do it again.

Let us take an extreme example: someone who chronically, serially abuses another, either physically, emotionally or mentally. The first instance of abuse may have been difficult, but the abuser can find "good" reasons to justify their behavior. The next time it is easier, and easier.

If you talk to abusers, they can tell you that they have a good reason for harming their victim: their victim is better off, their victim asked for it, their victim brought it on themselves, they are justified in what they do. For them, abuse becomes something that they are entitled to do, and they no longer see it as an evil. But harming another person is never acceptable. Let's watch out for the pitfalls in making excuses. When we become entitled, or justified, we lose sight of the big picture that is the world we all inhabit. Together. What kind of person you want to become?

Let's not forget that "each moment is a new beginning to the ones that follow." When we make a mistake, we can learn from that mistake and head the consequences into a positive direction. When we make a good choice, we have started a positive chain that can have a wide ripple effect. And a final consequence of living a life of thoughtful integrity is true happiness – one that is not of the moment, but has peace at its heart, endures in the midst of all that happens. and is part of a chain.

Remember, we are all in this together. My choices can affect you, and your choices can have an effect beyond what you can imagine. What kind of effect do you want that to be, in the immediate, in the long term, and in your eternal character?

In the end, a life that is based on mindful and good choices may not always be easy, but is, in the end, rather simple. As Micah says: "He has told you, O mankind, what is good; And what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?"

I hope for you all that you have a life of mindful, good choices.

Grant that we may realize that it is the little things that create differences, that in the big things of life we are one. And may we strive to touch and know the great human heart common to us all.

And, O Lord, let us not forget to be kind.



Gail R. Cooper retired at the end of this school year as the much-loved "Latin Queen" (magistra) in the Secondary Schools throughout a 30-year career. Her husband, Scott, also has retired as Director of Security for the Academy. They live in Bryn Athyn. Contact: gailcooper753@gmail.com

Loving and Serving One's Country

A Sermon by the Rev. Michael D. Gladish

Lessons: Jeremiah 1, selections; Matthew 22:15-22; True Christian Religion 414

Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's.
(*Matthew 22:21*)

This well-known verse from the *Gospel of Matthew* has become sort of a proverb about the separation of church and state. But if you think about it you'll see that the Lord didn't say the church and the state should be separate, only that we have a duty to both. And that duty relates to the internal and the external aspects of life – the duty to what is spiritual and the duty to what is natural, specifically, moral and civil. Far from being separate these are meant to be one! For what is spiritual flows down into what is natural and gives it life.

The truth is we have a big responsibility to bring our religion into our civil lives, and not only that, but a good civil life prepares us and builds a foundation for heavenly life, since it requires that we practice what we preach and that we cultivate the disciplines of service and self-sacrifice for the sake of others. This is all about the love of the neighbor, or what we call the doctrine of charity.

What is True Charity?

For most of us it probably goes without saying that true love of one's neighbor is the love of what is good *in* the neighbor. If it were not so we would be obliged to love every aspect of everyone close to us, and that would imply loving the evil as well as the good, since every one of us has both good and bad traits.

Still, we know that we can love the whole person by doing what is good *for* the person, and that may at times involve difficult judgments about what we can or cannot support, even to the point of rejecting or condemning certain actions. Punishments also are sometimes necessary for the sake of amendment of life – not that we can go around willy-nilly punishing people whose lives or opinions differ from ours, but when there is a general consensus based on the Word that something is out of order, we may be called upon to join in

the effort to curb, control or eliminate that behavior. All this is just common sense – but it is also clearly taught in the revelation for the New Church.

The really interesting thing about it, though, is that the same rules that govern our relationships with individual people also govern our relationships with groups of people, and institutions. We read:

Not only is an individual person one's neighbor but also a group of people; for the community whether small or large is one's neighbor, as is one's country, the Church, the Lord's kingdom, and above all others the Lord. All these are meant by the neighbor whom one should be moved by charity to benefit. They are also *ascending degrees* of the neighbor, for a community composed of a group of people is the neighbor in a higher degree than an individual person, one's country in a still higher degree than the community, the Church in a still higher degree than this, and the Lord's kingdom in a still higher degree than that. But the Lord is the neighbor in the highest degree. These ascending degrees are like a flight of stairs which have the Lord at the top." (*Arcana Coelestia* 6819)

“Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s.” . . . The Lord didn’t say the church and the state should be separate, only that we have a duty to both.

Concerning the country specifically we read:

One's country is the neighbor over the community because it is like a parent, for being the place where the person is born, it nurtures him and protects him from harm. *One ought out of love for one's country to do good to it according to its needs*, which have regard primarily to its sustenance, its public life, and its spiritual life. Anyone who loves his country and out of goodwill does good to it will in the next life love the Lord's kingdom, for there the Lord's kingdom is his country. And anyone who loves the Lord's kingdom loves the Lord since the Lord is the All in all of His kingdom, for strictly speaking the Lord's kingdom is the goodness and truth which reside with the inhabitants of that kingdom, and which they receive from the Lord. (*Arcana Coelestia* 6821; also *Heavenly Doctrine* 93, *Heaven and Hell* 64 and *True Christian Religion* 414)

What is True Patriotism?

Now let's think seriously about this and observe not only how our patriotism can serve to prepare us for heaven, but what true patriotism is. For a start, it is *not* blindly following our elected governors to do whatever they may suggest, for they, like the rest of us, have their flaws and limitations, their evils and falsities, and conflicts of interest. This is why we have laws, and why no

True patriotism is doing what is good for the country, in return for the good it does for us – and not just in return, but in unselfish service, that the good may be developed, and the evil either shunned or removed.

governor is (or should be) above the law.

Rather true patriotism is doing what is *good* for the country, in return for the *good* it does for us – and not just *in return*, but in unselfish service, that the good may be developed, and the evil either shunned or removed. When we act in this manner we act from heavenly love, which is the key to heavenly life. And heavenly love cannot exist without heavenly wisdom, all of which comes from the Lord through His Word.

This is where religion and politics converge. For while it is true that they require separate allegiances (as in our text) it is also true that without

revelation from the Lord we would have no idea what is really good – for ourselves, for our communities or for our country! So as good citizens we have a responsibility to turn to the Lord for guidance even in our love for our nation.

That said, the little work on the doctrine of charity has some important things to say: for example, that everyone “is born that he may become (a form of) charity; and this he cannot become unless he perpetually does the good of use to the neighbor, from affection and delight.” Furthermore, “The *general* good exists from the goods of use which individuals perform; and the goods of use that *individuals* perform subsist from the general good,” (*Charity* 126) “In a well constituted commonwealth, therefore, provision is made that no one shall be useless.” (*Ibid.* 128)

So far so good, but note the following:

The general good consists in these things: I. That in the society or kingdom there shall be what is Divine with them. II. That there shall be justice with them. III. That there shall be morality with them. IV. That there shall be industry, knowledge and uprightness with them. V. That there shall be the necessities of life. VI. That there shall be the things necessary to their occupations. VII. That there shall be the things necessary for protection. VIII. That there shall be a sufficiency of wealth; because from this come the three former necessities. (*Charity* 130)

On special holidays – such as Independence Day in the United States – we are accustomed to honor especially those who sacrifice for the defense of our nation. It is the seventh in the list of eight necessities for “a well-constituted

commonwealth.” But consider also numbers one through five. Generally, a sufficiency of wealth comes from gainful employment, and the things necessary for employments come from other employments, including trade and innovation. There is a good reason why heaven is never filled, but always expanding, and that is because every new person who enters heaven contributes some new use, which adds to the whole complexity of uses that continue to enrich the lives of all who are there.

In other words, a sound economic policy is as good a reason to support one's country as any other, and one way we can “do good” to our country is to promote that very thing.

Still, the first four necessities should be of particular interest. Although we understand that an evil or self-centered person can be as useful to society as a good person (and sometimes even more useful because he is driven by the desire for personal gain), it is really critical for all of us that we do our best to secure and maintain the conditions necessary for the free expression, practice and promulgation of the things of religion in our land: *that the Divine may be among us, and that the nation may be known for true justice, morality and uprightness.*

What do you think? How are we doing in these areas? What is our reputation among other nations? Surely, we have a record of enormous success in critical areas but like any individual, as a nation we have many flaws and weaknesses we need to overcome. What can we do to help? What can we do to protect, enhance and contribute to the greater GOOD?

When our nation declared its independence from Britain it was dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal, and that all have a right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. Yet even then, human slavery was an accepted institution and an integral part of the economic engine that contributed to its prosperity for nearly a hundred years. It took a civil war to acknowledge the real meaning of “all men,” and even then “men” still literally meant “men,” and it was another 60 years before women were allowed to vote.

The point is, we can and we must continue to strive for ever greater wisdom in the application of spiritual principles to our civil life. Only as we do so will

We can and we must continue to strive for ever greater wisdom in the application of spiritual principles to our civil life. Only as we do so will this or any nation truly prosper in the long run.

True freedom is no license to do whatever seems good in our own eyes, or whatever we can get away with. It involves self-discipline and a good conscience drawn from the Word.

this or any nation truly prosper in the long run. And we can do it today on a wide range of issues from social justice to the economy, the environment, foreign policy and, of course, personal freedom.

What is True Freedom?

Concerning this last, vital issue in American life we read in the Heavenly Doctrines that “it is a law of the Divine Providence that people should act from freedom according to reason.” (*Divine Providence* 71)

But in the New Church we know that there are two *kinds* of freedom. We read:

There is infernal freedom and there is heavenly freedom. It is from infernal freedom to think and to will evil, and so far as civil and moral laws do not hinder, to speak and to do it. On the other hand, it is from heavenly freedom to think and to will good, and so far as opportunity is granted, to speak and to do it. Whatever a person thinks, wills, speaks and does from freedom he perceives as his own; for all the freedom which everyone has is from his love. Therefore, those who are in the love of evil perceive only that infernal freedom is freedom itself, while those who are in the love of good perceive that heavenly freedom is freedom itself and consequently the evil and the good (both) perceive the opposite to be slavery. Still, it cannot be denied by anyone that *one or other of these is freedom, for there cannot be two kinds of freedom in themselves opposite, and in themselves freedom.* Moreover, it cannot be denied that to be led by good is *freedom*, and to be led by evil is *slavery*; for to be led by good is to be led by the Lord, and to be led by evil is to be led by the devil.” (*Divine Providence* 43; see also 73)

True freedom, then, is no license to do whatever seems good in our own eyes, or whatever we can get away with. It involves self-discipline and a good conscience drawn from the Word. It involves a willingness to subordinate one’s own needs and interests to the greater good of the whole community. It involves courage, integrity, prudence, generosity, honest employment, community service, the payment of taxes, and at least the possibility of military service.

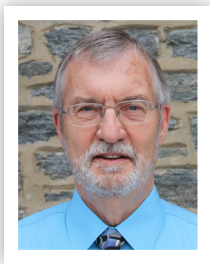
There is a slogan, “Freedom is not free.” And yet to those who treasure the opportunity to be of service, which is an essential element of heavenly life, *the right to do any of the things just listed will be seen as a privilege*, and in fact even the need (if it be so) to step aside for the sake of another who is better qualified will be seen as *an honor* – that the greater good may be served.

We live in a democratic republic. That means we have a combination of

personal responsibility to vote and participate in the government of the land, something we must all do with the greatest possible wisdom and prudence drawn from the spiritual principles revealed by the Lord. But it also means that we are obliged to honor our elected officials and abide by their legislative decisions until or unless we can throw them out and elect new representatives, or unless their government is patently corrupt, in which case we must be prepared to suffer the consequences of civil disobedience as we respond to a higher law.

The principle is: “Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s.” But the things that are truly Caesar’s in this teaching are the things that truly serve the common good and build a foundation for life in heaven.

Amen.



The Rev. Michael D. Gladish retired June 30th as pastor of the Washington New Church Society and School in Mitchellville, Maryland, where he and his wife, Virginia (de Maine) will continue to live. In his career he has been a pastor in Hurstville, New South Wales, Australia; Los Angeles, California; the Olivet New Church in Toronto, Canada; the Calgary New Church in Alberta, Canada, and the Dawson Creek Society in British Columbia, Canada. Contact: mdgladish@gmail.com.

‘A Song for the Sabbath Day’

A Sermon by the Rev. Grant H. Odhner

Lessons: Psalm 92; Mark 2.23-3.6; Arcana Coelestia 8893

Are you holy? That is the Lord’s goal for you: to make you holy. On the Eve of His crucifixion, the disciples were witnesses to the Lord’s prayer to His Father. It was a prayer in which He spoke with assurance of the work He had accomplished, the work the Father had given Him to do. And He prayed for His disciples, whom He was sending out to continue His work: “[Father,] Sanctify them by Your truth. . . . For their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also may be sanctified by the truth.” (*John 17:17-19*) “*Sanctified.*” “*Made holy.*” “*For their sakes I make Myself holy, that they also may be made holy by the truth.*”

We tend to be suspicious of the idea of sainthood, but the truth is, it is a solidly Scriptural concept. When Jehovah tells the Israelites that they are to be a holy people (*Deuteronomy 7.6, 14.2,21; Isaiah 62.12*), He is speaking to us. It is conditional. Moses says: “Jehovah will establish you as a holy people to Himself . . . if you keep the commandments of Jehovah your God and walk in His ways.” (*Deuteronomy 28:9*)

So, *do* we keep His commandments and walk in His ways? *Have* we let the Lord sanctify us by the truth?

What does “holy” mean? “Holy” is simply a way of labeling “Divine presence.” (We call this presence “the Holy Spirit.”) Something is holy because God is near to it, in it, has set it apart so that it can be an avenue to Him, a conduit by which He can touch us, a tool by which He can work (e.g. the “Holy Scripture”).

Why does the Lord want to make us holy? Well, so that He can be in us, with us, use us to bring His blessing to others, and to experience His blessing. So, *does* He touch you? *Do* you let Him use you to touch others, and bring His blessing? *Are* you a vessel of His holiness?

It is pretty hard for us to answer a flat “No” to these questions. I’d be very surprised if the people here, or watching online, could assert that they have made no effort and progress in being “sanctified by the truth.” But you may be squirming at the word “sanctified.”

We have the commandment, “Remember the Sabbath Day to keep it holy,

six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh is the Sabbath of the Lord your God. In it you shall do no work . . . for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it.” – “made it holy.”

This commandment is actually about our regeneration. The Sabbath Day represents our regenerated state. The Lord works to re-create us and make us holy. That’s symbolized by the six days of creation. And when we are in a regenerate state the Lord has rest. His work is done. And we have rest from the conflicts and indecision of unregenerate life. That day is “blessed” and “holy” because the Lord can be

present with us when we are regenerated. We are receiving Him totally.

The Israelites were not to work on the Sabbath because working was a symbol for our failing to grasp *what the Lord has accomplished*. To work on the Sabbath is to fail to “get” that the goodness we experience is on account of the Lord’s presence with us, and the work that He alone has been doing.

This is what the commandment means to us today: we are to practice recognizing that all good is the Lord’s – the good we experience, the good we accomplish, the insights that we have and share. These gifts – sensory, natural, spiritual and heavenly – are *the Lord’s with us*, and in fact are *the Lord*. He shares them with us from pure mercy and grace.

In reflecting on the meaning of the Sabbath for this sermon and trying to make this acknowledgment in my own life, I noticed how difficult it is. Yes, I can think of many things to thank the Lord for. And that is useful, to “count your blessings.” Yet imperfection always looms so large.

Many things about our lives seem less than ideal, and even sullied by the seemingly persistent realities about our character. We can easily see how choices that we’ve made over time limit where we are now – limit our usefulness, our wisdom, our impact on others, our connection with others. Rather than seeing the goodness of the Lord’s work with us, and feeling a sense of His grace, it’s easy to feel inadequate and selfish – far from holy!

Now the wiser of you have probably seen what’s missing in what I’ve just

Why does the Lord want to make us holy? Well, so that He can be in us, with us, use us to bring His blessing to others, and to experience His blessing. So, *does* He touch you? *Do* you let Him use you to touch others, and bring His blessing? *Are* you a vessel of His holiness?

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said. One reality that the Heavenly Doctrine teaches us about, that we need to take into account, is that we are always “in process.” The good we are able to do, and experience, is always imperfect. The Lord artfully “partners” our higher aspirations with the limitations of our present state of mind. Yes, we are hoping for recognition, yet He also shares with us a desire to serve, and a delight in serving unselfishly. He shares His goodness with us in the measure that we can accept it at present. Our act of

service is mixed, but each act, partnered with a higher motivation, becomes the basis for better states to come.

Another reality that's important to take into consideration (which is implied in the previous one), is that we are not monolithic people. At least, in this sense: our minds are constantly entertaining inflowing life from different sources. We feel the thoughts and emotions that enter us as our own, yet this is not the truth. Our minds are multileveled, with higher and lower loves. And each of these loves draws influx from different sources outside of us.

And yet, unless we reflect, all of these sources seem to be “talking in the same room in our head,” and seem to be our own. But if we reflect, we are invited to see that we can evaluate these different influences, disagreeing with some, agreeing with others, refusing to own some, allying ourselves with others. And as we become accustomed to doing this, shunning the evil without letting it “stick,” choosing the good and attributing it to the Lord, the Lord's presence is strengthened with us, day by day.

His presence is strengthened. But it's important to realize that the old voices never go entirely away, while we are in this world of choice. It becomes easier (often) to identify our old will, and disarm it, but we do not become “holy” in a monolithic way. Rather, we come to recognize and enjoy the *holy states* with us, which are the Lord's alone: His gifts. They are the Sabbath with us – especially when these states *prevail* with us.

Now, our Sabbath states are muted compared with the angels' states. The angels are said to enjoy a “perpetual Sabbath.” (*Arcana Coelestia* 1618, 8510, 8888e) We read:

What was represented by [the Israelites] “not doing any work on the Sabbath day” [is] that they should not do anything from their proprium, but from the Lord. For the angelic state in heaven is that they *will* and *do* nothing from themselves (or from

their proprium), and they do not even *think* and *speak* from it. Their conjunction with the Lord consists in this. . . . This state with the angels is the heavenly state itself; and when they are in it, they have peace and rest, and the Lord also has rest. For when they have been conjoined with Him, they labor no more, because they are then in the Lord. (*Ibid.* 8495.3)

Swedenborg adds in another passage:

It has also been given me to perceive by influx the sweetness which angels perceive from the fact that they do not think and will from themselves, but from the Lord; from this they have tranquility, peace and happiness. (*Ibid.* 6469)

Angels are able and willing to sense more keenly what is coming directly from the Lord:

Angels manifestly perceive the influx [of life from the Lord], and also how it flows in; and likewise the fullness and quality of their reception of it.¹ When they are in a fuller state of reception they are then in their peace and happiness; otherwise they are in a state of unrest and of a certain anxiety. (*Arcana Coelestia* 3742)

Ah, do you note here how even angels are not always in a glorious state of happiness? Their consciousness is still something dynamic and changing. They are actively discriminating what flows in and choosing to affirm and enjoy what comes from the Lord. Let me share another passage. It speaks of angels, yet brings us back to the universal human process that we (on earth) are involved in:

A person who is being regenerated is at last so far reduced by repeated alternations of desolation [i.e. being deprived of happiness] and being sustained [i.e. by good times] that he no longer wills to be his own, but the Lord's. And when he has become the Lord's he comes into a state of such a nature that when he is left to self he grieves and is seized with anxiety; and when he is delivered from this state [of self] he returns into his happiness and bliss. In such a state are all the angels. (*Ibid.* 6138)

Notice the reference to “alternations” here. We learn and are perfected through alternations. We learn to be angels (and are perfected as angels) by dealing with highs and lows. In the creation story the Lord makes the sun, moon and stars, and says: “Let them be for signs and for seasons, and for days and for years.” (*Genesis* 1:14) In explaining this the Writings say:

In these words are contained more arcana than can be unfolded at present. . . . Suffice it to observe here that there are alternations of spiritual and heavenly states,

1 Note that angels' general state is one of feeling life as their own: “Angels perceive that they live from the Lord, although when not reflecting on the subject they know no other than that they live from themselves; but there is a *general* affection of such a nature that at the least departure from the good of love and truth of faith they perceive a change. Consequently they are in the enjoyment of their peace and happiness, which is inexpressible, while they are in a *general* perception that they live from the Lord.” (*Arcana Coelestia* 155.2 emphasis added)

The seven-day week, with its six days of work and Sabbath rest, represents the alternations of spiritual state through which we are regenerated. The Sabbath is that state of “knowing that we are the Lord’s” and feeling joy in this, peace in this.

both in general and in particular. These are compared to the changes of days and of years. . . . From [these natural changes] come the alternations of heat and light, and also [the alternations] of the earth’s fertility. To these changes are compared the alternations of spiritual and heavenly states. Life without such alternations and varieties would be uniform, consequently no life at all; nor would good and truth be discerned or distinguished, much less perceived. (*Arcana Coelestia* 37)

The seven-day week, with its six days of work and Sabbath rest, represents the alternations of spiritual state through which we are regenerated. The Sabbath is that state of “knowing that we are the Lord’s” and feeling joy in this, peace in this. It is not a state of believing that we are holy or pure or

good. It is a state of recognizing that *the Lord is*, and “loving it to be so.” When we do this we are “singing a song of the Sabbath.”

Psalms 92 bears a title: “A Song for the Sabbath Day.” “A *Song for the Sabbath Day*.” That was the heading that Jesus found when He turned His eyes to reading that Psalm (probably as a young boy): “A *Song for the Sabbath Day*.”

Just as we know days, and weeks, and seasons in our spiritual lives, so did Jesus. “For their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also may be sanctified by the truth.”

He came to earth to undergo, in a human mind, that process that He had created for us. He came to do it in such a way that we could benefit from His “blazing the trail.” It was *His* process, foreseen from eternity. Our regeneration is simply an image of His glorification – i.e. of the process by which a mind can be educated from ignorance, purified, brought into order, and united to God. (See *Heavenly Doctrine* 185 refs; *Arcana Coelestia* 5827) **Glorification** brings these things about in an infinite way and completely; **regeneration** brings them about only in a finite, and limited way. But the process is the same. A process foreseen from eternity.

So when Jesus read *Psalms* 92 He was reading about His own process. As He once said to a group of Jews, “If you believed Moses, you would believe Me; for he wrote about Me.” (*John* 5:46) “Before Abraham was, I AM.” (*Ibid.* 8:58) “And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to [the disciples] in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.” (*Luke* 24:27) In the early

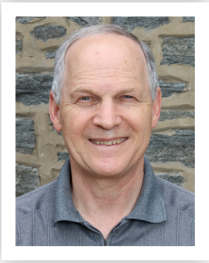
church they believed this and when they read the *Psalms* they heard “the voice of Christ.” To them the *Psalms* were the “word to Christ,” the “word about Christ,” the “word of Christ.”

The Writings confirm this. In his *Summary Exposition of the Psalms*, Swedenborg very much opens the level of meaning that relates to the Lord when He was in the world. He says that this psalm is about the Lord’s perception of “the oneness of His Divine with His Divine Human.” “This union is the Sabbath.” It’s about His joyful sense of “cooperating” with that Divine. He is given a strong sense that “although the evil flourish,” yet in declaring themselves, they are able to be judged and perish. That He is graciously being given “Divine omnipotence against those who rise up against Him.” And that from His process “the church will flourish and will sing praises” to Him.

So as we reflect on the Sabbath today, it is wonderful to think of the Lord working beside us in His Divine Humanity. Like us, He knew states of obscurity and combat. He engaged in effort to open His mind to the inflowing Divine. And He enjoyed Sabbath states in which He felt more keenly the burning Love that was present in Him, sanctifying His Human, ordering heaven and hell, and bringing power and peace to humanity. In these states His heart, and mind, and maybe even His vocal chords, joyfully sang this “*Song for the Sabbath Day*”:

<p>Psalm 92</p>	<p><i>Prophets and Psalms</i> n. 342</p>
<p>¹ A psalm. A song for the Sabbath day</p> <p><i>It is good to give thanks to Jehovah, And to sing psalms to Your name, O Most High;</i></p> <p>² To declare Your mercy in the morning, And Your faithfulness in the night,</p> <p>³ On an instrument of ten strings, and on psaltery, And on harp, with harmonious sound.</p> <p>⁴ For You, Jehovah, have made me glad in Your work; I will sing aloud in the works of Your hands.</p> <p>⁵ How great are Your works, O Jehovah! Your thoughts are very deep.</p> <p>⁶ A brutish man does not know, Nor does a fool understand this.</p> <p>⁷ When the wicked spring up like grass, And when all the workers of iniquity flourish, <i>It is that they may be blotted out forever.</i></p> <p>⁸ But You, Jehovah, <i>are</i> on high forevermore.</p> <p>⁹ For behold, Your enemies, O Jehovah, For behold, Your enemies shall perish; All the workers of iniquity shall be dispersed.</p>	<p><i>title</i> The oneness of the Lord’s Divine with His Divine Human. This union is the “Sabbath.”</p> <p><i>vv. 1-5</i> Song in praise of the cooperation of the Father with Him.</p> <p><i>v. 6</i> The evil do not understand this.</p> <p><i>vv. 7-9</i> Although the evil flourish, yet they perish.</p>

<p>¹⁰ But My horn You shall lift up as a unicorn; I have been anointed with fresh oil.</p> <p>¹¹ And my eye shall look on my foes, My ears shall hear the evildoers who rise up against me.</p> <p>¹² The righteous [one] shall flourish as the palm tree; He shall grow as a cedar in Lebanon.</p> <p>¹³ Planted in the house of Jehovah, They shall flourish in the courts of our God.</p> <p>¹⁴ They shall still bear fruit in old age; They shall be fat and flourishing,</p> <p>¹⁵ To declare that Jehovah is upright; My rock, and there is no unrighteousness in Him.²</p>	<p><i>vv. 10, 11</i> Thus He has Divine omnipotence against those who rise up against Him.</p> <p><i>vv. 12-14</i> From this the church will flourish,</p> <p><i>v. 15</i> and will sing praises to the Lord.</p>
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The Rev. Grant H. Odhner teaches Theology in the Bryn Athyn College Theological School. He is also visiting pastor to the New York City Circle, chairs the General Church Publication Committee, and is Secretary of the Council of the Clergy. He and his wife, Sarah (Bruell), live in Huntingdon Valley, Pennsylvania. Contact: Grant.Odhner@brynathyn.edu

² This translation was constructed by Grant Odhner, based on study of various translations.

BOOK REVIEW

Rise Above It: Spiritual Development for College Students

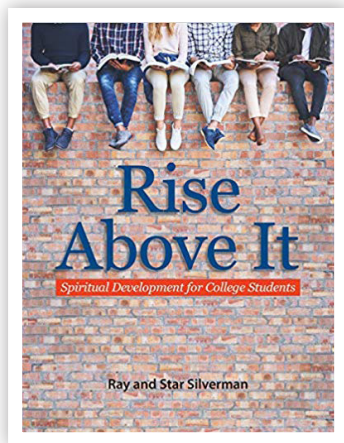
By Star and the Rev. Dr. Ray Silverman

Reviewed by Kurt Frey, Ph.D.

One's *coming of age* is a time of boundless potential as well as dangerous pitfalls. This is especially true in today's world of rich cultural diversity and confusing moral complexity. Young people between the ages of about 15 to 25 have heartfelt questions about *life*, the *world*, and their *future*.

Erik Erikson, an eminent psychologist of the past century, claimed that young adults are faced with three (largely unconscious) existential questions: *Who am I? Who can I be? Can I love?* They also want to know their inherent value as individuals and the overarching *purpose* of their lives.

Like anyone, they experience a mix of excitement, optimism, disappointment and disillusionment, although perhaps more intensely than those who are younger or older. They also tend to feel invincible, when in fact they can be quite fragile. Their parents and mentors recognize that they need protection and guidance.



Psychologists have recently coined a new term: *emerging adulthood*. This is the stage between *adolescence* (historically also a relatively new concept) and *adulthood* proper (now divided into early, middle and late stages, and even further subdivided). There is ample evidence to support the claim that emerging adulthood is a stand-alone cognitive, emotional and social stage of life.

Although one's body is no longer going through the dramatic upheavals of puberty, one's mind is continuing to expand. One is acquiring important *post-formal* thinking skills, including being able to anticipate and plan for future outcomes, combine subjective and objective perspectives, question childhood beliefs and counter stereotypes, and mentally juggle opposites. Moreover, recent research is finding that the young adult's brain is still undergoing critical changes as the rational *prefrontal cortex* learns to better control the impulsive *limbic system*.

Young people tend to be driven by new experiences, stimulating sensations, and peer pressures, and to ignore the wisdom and caution of their parents. Furthermore, the demands of the young person's social world are rapidly changing, often in contradictory ways. One is no longer considered to be a child and yet one is still not recognized as a full-fledged adult. Cultural *rites of passage* are not clear.

When exactly does one become a man or woman – when they get their driver's license, graduate from high school, have sex for the first time, or land a 40-hour job? Or is it – more vaguely – when they come to have an independent and stable role in society? Becoming an adult comes with some strange ironies, such as not being allowed to have a hot plate in one's dorm room and yet being old enough to go to war and die.

Enter Ray and Star Silverman's *Rise Above It: Spiritual Development for College Students*, a textbook that provides spiritual protection and promotes spiritual maturation for those who are coming of age and emerging as full adults. The book inspires students to harken to the voice of God in their lives, stimulates their discovery of their essential selves, and enables them to experience the deep satisfaction that comes with pursuing their true destinies.

Rise Above It is built around the Ten Commandments, one per chapter. Each chapter opens with a captivating vignette. For example, the chapter featuring the commandment not to take God's name in vain tells the story of the Native American known as Geronimo, the great defender of the Apache nation. His name became synonymous with the refusal to surrender in the face of oppression, a name shouted by World War II paratroopers as they mustered their courage to jump from planes.

As another example, the chapter featuring the commandment to honor one's father and mother describes the heart-wrenching story of Len Bias, predicted to be one of the greatest basketball players of all time, but who died of a cocaine overdose at age 22. Instead of honoring his parents and upbringing, he chose to hang out with associates who were "too cool for school."

A given commandment is then examined through the lens of each of the world's major religions. It is reassuring to discover the profound similarities in the essential teachings of different religions. For example, the Old Testament

commands that one should remember the Sabbath day and keep it holy. Accordingly, Jesus also respected the Sabbath, even if He saw it less as a day of rest from physical labor (a superficial understanding) and more as a time to rest in God and focus on acts of charity (a more profound understanding).

In Islam, the Sabbath is a time to restore one's inner tranquility and offer "salutations of peace" to others. In Hinduism, the concept of the Sabbath is mirrored in deliberate efforts to still the mind and surrender to God. In Buddhism, the concept of the Sabbath is similarly spiritual in nature. It is a time to find rest from anxious thoughts and selfish desires.

Next come directions for how a given commandment can be applied fruitfully in daily life. For example, the chapter featuring the commandment to rise above lust and not commit adultery discusses today's perilous "hook up" culture, the powerful need for intimacy, the problems with "meaningful" sex outside of marriage, struggles with pornography addiction, the mistake of excessive self-condemnation and the value of forgiving others regarding sexual issues.

Moreover, the chapter featuring the commandment not to bear false witness explores the lies that we tell to others, the lies that we tell about others, and the lies that we tell ourselves. It also includes an insightful discussion of how "false witnesses" and the "whisperings of the devil" can provoke feelings of stupidity, inadequacy and worthlessness, along with paralyzing social anxiety.

Finally, each chapter features a series of journal reflections, activities and meditations designed to bring a given commandment to life. For example, in the chapter featuring the commandment not to covet, *Psalms* 27:4-5 is mentioned: "In a time of trouble, the Lord shall set me upon a high rock."

How might one gain a "high rock" perspective on some pressing personal problem or disturbing situation? One strategy is to have someone guide one through a visualization exercise – or to go through the exercise on one's own.

What, in precise detail, was the bothersome event? What specific thoughts and feelings transpired? How did a normal healthy desire – for example, to be respected or to belong, to accomplish or achieve something, or to share one's ideas with others – turn into a covetous desire? What role did one's covetous desire play in the disturbing situation? Is one ready to accept personal responsibility for their role in the situation and earnestly ask God for help?

Following these steps can lead to miracles. (I know this from experience.) *Rise Above It* offers many practical exercises that will empower one to deal with personal mistakes and the challenges of life.

Rise Above It is explicit in what one should rise above: false gods, lower nature, self-effort, ingratitude, anger, lust, theft, lying and covetous desire. Each of these "sins" has layers of deeper meaning. For example, "You shall not murder" has more than its obvious meaning. Sarcasm, criticism, gossip and

character assassination are all forms of murder.

Furthermore, each of the Ten Commandments can be expressed positively. For example, to rise above one's lower nature is about harnessing one's spiritual power and utilizing one's spiritual gifts. To rise above self-effort is to let God work in one's life. To rise above ingratitude means to see the best in other people. To rise above lust is to honor marriage. To rise above covetous desire is to be content. The Ten Commandments are not tiresome *proscriptions*; they are vitalizing *prescriptions*.

Not to be overlooked are the many personal reflections quoted throughout *Rise Above It*. These bring the book to life. Each reader will connect with different entries. Here are but two among hundreds. The first is from a student who learned to recognize a *false god* in her life:

An incident occurred this week that helped me realize how destructive this god is in my life. After finishing up my calculus homework, I went out to the student parking lot to get my car and drive to work. When I got there, the tire on my car was flat. Until that point, I felt like I was in perfect control of my day. I knew that I didn't have time for this. I didn't have time to wait around for the tire to be changed. I needed to be driving to work. I just stood there letting the feelings of defeat overwhelm me.

It was then that I realized I was breaking the first commandment. I was serving the false god of perfectionism. This god demands that I control everything, that I stay on top of everything, that I get good grades on everything, and that everything in my life be perfect. This god has no tolerance for low grades or flat tires. According to this false god, "It's a sin to be late for class; it's a sin to be late for work; and it's a deadly sin to be anything less than perfect!" I took a deep breath and said to myself, "OK, I am not perfect." I no longer felt defeated or (like my tire) deflated.

Such an entry reflects valuable growth and allows readers to share in that growth. (Just typing the quote encourages me to let go of perfectionism myself and to recognize an important meaning of the words, "I am the Lord your God.") The second entry is from a male student regarding *covetous desires*:

A college experience is a great experience, and is unbelievably valuable to have, but it's also very expensive. My family is not able to contribute at all to my college education, and it's also very difficult for me to take out loans. So college for me consists of an enormous amount of work and talking with the school to figure out how I'm going to get everything paid for. It is probably the biggest source of stress and anxiety in my life right now.

I know that jealousy and resentment toward others do me no good at all. These emotions will destroy me physically and spiritually. It would be much healthier if I focused on what I have – the opportunity to go to college, the chance to learn the value of hard work, and the privilege of getting a solid education that will prepare me both for this life and the next. I need to remember that it's not my financial situation that makes me miserable. It's the covetous desires that arise when I begin to feel sorry for myself. There is a reason the Lord says, "Do not covet." It makes you miserable.

Not being content with what one has, wanting what someone else has, and thereby feeling miserable is a common experience. However, it is not an inevitable one. Psycho-spiritual growth can be promoted and embraced. The self-insights of the above student represent the nitty-gritty of *character education*.

Psychologists have identified key variables that determine important outcomes in a person's life. One is *delay of gratification* – being able to resist the temptation of an immediate reward to obtain a more significant reward later. Another is *resiliency* – being able to cope effectively with stressful life events. Another is one's *interpersonal style* – how one handles the conflicts and anxieties of social life, whether in an unhealthy manner through people-pleasing, aggression and isolation or in a healthy manner through honesty, kindness, and generosity. Yet another is *altruism* – rather than living to gratify selfish and worldly desires, loving God through serving others.

Rise Above It addresses these and other character traits. It fosters self-discipline, effective coping, healthy relationships and unselfish love.

Living a healthy, productive and happy life is no simple or easy task for anyone, let alone young adults. “Life is difficult” (the first sentence of Scott Peck's celebrated *The Road Less Travelled*).

Moral intelligence (concerning dynamics within a person) and *ethical intelligence* (concerning how one relates with other people) are crucial. And yet these forms of intelligence do not develop automatically. They need to be encouraged from without and received from within. *Rise Above It* is the perfect textbook for developing these intelligences in the classroom.

It provides powerful guidelines and effective tools in one's pursuit of an optimal life. Importantly, *Rise Above It* is not a strictly academic book. Students don't just learn *about* the Ten Commandments – they learn to *practice* them.

This sets *Rise Above It* apart from typical self-help books, the words of which tend to go in one ear and out the other. Readers learn through practice to make spiritually informed decisions in every aspect of their lives. As such, *Rise Above It* is an exceptionally valuable book, especially for college students, but also for everyone.



Kurt Frey, PhD is Assistant Professor of Psychology at Bryn Athyn College. He has taught for more than 20 years, primarily at Yale University and the University of Bridgeport, and has taught more than 20 graduate and undergraduate courses. Contact: Kurt.Frey@brynthyn.edu and Ray.Silverman@brynthyn.edu

About Kingdoms, Heavens and Societies

Vance Genzlinger

This is a story about the organization of heaven as it relates to the Lord's Divine Human, the Grand Man of Heaven and the human body as seen through the eyes of a Swedenborgian layman with an engineering, computer system design and business background.

Since Our Lord God Jesus Christ is infinitely loving, powerful and wise, He must have had reasons for having His disciple, Emanuel Swedenborg, write in *Heaven and Hell* separate chapters for the Two Kingdoms, Three Heavens and Innumerable Societies. I assume they must be different, and it is my job to show how they differ and how they relate to the Lord's Divine Human and the human body. I will do this by using the rational concepts of *Trinities, Degrees, Correspondences and Influxes* (*New Church Life*, May/June 2019), to analyze the relationships between *Kingdoms, Heavens and Societies*.

Do the three chapters describe different parts of heaven? How do they relate to each other? Why do the celestial and spiritual kingdoms often sound like they are the same as the celestial and spiritual heavens if they are truly different? Where is the natural kingdom? Why does the Lord, in His *Writings* – the Lord's *Third Testament* – sometimes use kingdoms, sometimes heavens and other times societies to describe the various aspects of heaven? I attempt to answer these and similar questions in what follows.

I have found no reference to these questions in doctrinal classes or sermons. But, from the mid-1880s onward, some of our ministers have been troubled by them enough to publish articles in *New Church Life* and other places. References pointing to five of these articles appear in the Appendix. In my opinion, none quite hit the nail on the head.

I have formulated a hypothesis that answers the questions for me and hopefully for some of you. It includes a Part for each of four summary propositions followed in detailed form with references from the Third Testament, that show why I believe them to be true. A fifth Part analyzes several numbers that appear not to support my hypothesis and tells why the

celestial and spiritual kingdoms are not the same as the celestial and spiritual heavens.

Quotes from the Lord's Word and other sources are in *italics*. My comments are in plain type. Underlining is used for emphasis. This is my understanding of what the Writings say. It differs from what I previously understood from church services, classes and literature. Some differences are highlighted with bold type with the hope that clergy and layman will provide feedback.

My Hypothesis Summary:

An analysis of two kingdoms, three heavens and innumerable societies starts with the Lord God Jesus Christ, the one Lord of heaven and earth, as we view Him in His Divine Human. We know that our Lord is in the form of many trinities of discrete degrees, including Father, Son, Holy Spirit; Divine Love, Divine Wisdom, Divine Useful Endeavor; and End, Cause and Effect.

We also know that each trinity defines Him in a different way, just as His many Biblical names define Him in different ways. I start with an overall trinity of discrete degrees: "The Lord as seen through the spiritual sun, the Heavenly Kingdom, and the Earthly Kingdom" hereinafter referred to as "Lord, Heavenly Kingdom (or Heaven), and Earth." This report focuses on the middle degree, the Heavenly Kingdom.

Part 1: The Heavenly Kingdom contains the final homes for all good angels and spirits. It is divided into two continuous degree kingdoms, the celestial and the spiritual. Both are divided into three discrete degree heavens – celestial, spiritual and natural. These kingdoms with their heavens embrace innumerable societies. These kingdoms, heavens and societies describe the entire Heavenly Kingdom in three different ways. They are the Grand Man of Heaven.

Part 2: The Two Kingdoms are organized into **continuous degrees ranging from the celestial kingdom to the spiritual**. Angels and spirits in the celestial kingdom are in love of the Lord and are of the celestial genius that perceives good that leads to truth. Those in the spiritual kingdom are in love of the neighbor and are of the spiritual genius that reasons about truth that leads them to good.

In the Grand Man of heaven, the celestial kingdom corresponds to the heart system and the spiritual kingdom corresponds to the lung system. Angels reside in societies along the spectrum from the celestial to the spiritual kingdom depending on their genius and love of uses. On both sides of the center of this continuum are societies of angels and spirits that serve to facilitate communications between kingdoms. The uses of these facilitators correspond

to the uses of the arteries and veins that transport blood throughout the entire body. **People are born into either the celestial or spiritual genius**, progress to the celestial or spiritual church on earth and graduate into the celestial or spiritual kingdom in heaven respectively.

Part 3: The Three Heavens are organized into three discrete degrees – celestial, spiritual and natural. **Each kingdom has within it these three discrete degrees** of heaven. The celestial heaven, in the *Arcana* called the home for angelic spirits, is for angels who have regenerated to the most interior level of love of the Lord. The spiritual heaven – called the home for good spirits – is for angels who have regenerated to the intermediate level of love of the neighbor. The natural heaven -- the home for spirits – is for angels who have regenerated to the most exterior level of good love of the world. These three levels have a corresponding relationship to the human head, body and its extremities. People regenerate into the heaven of their ruling love.

Part 4: The Innumerable Societies of heaven are organized into the form of a Grand Man, i.e. in the form of the Lord's Divine Human. Each society has the use in this Grand Man that corresponds to the use of an organ, member, viscera or other part of the human body. Each society is in either the celestial kingdom (heart) or the spiritual kingdom (lungs). **Each society has angels from all three heavens.** Good people migrate to the society that shares in the use they love most at the level of their regeneration.

Part 5: Problem Ideas and Numbers that appear not to support my hypothesis are analyzed.

My Hypothesis Detail:

PART 1: THE HEAVENLY KINGDOM:

Aka Grand Man of Heaven, universal heaven, kingdom of God, or just plain heaven.

The universal heaven is so formed as to correspond to the Lord, to His Divine Human; and that man is so formed as to correspond to heaven regarding each and all things in him, and through heaven to the Lord. (Arcana Coelestia 3624)

Heaven is called 'the kingdom of God.' . . . There is in heaven the general division of two kingdoms, (Heaven and Hell 20-28), a specific division of three heavens, (29-40), and a particular division of innumerable societies. (Ibid. 41-50)

The Grand Man is the universal heaven, which in general is a likeness and image of

the Lord, and that the correspondence is that of the Lord's Divine with the celestial and spiritual things (i.e. kingdoms) therein; and of the celestial and spiritual things therein with the natural things in the world; and chiefly with those in man. Thus, there is a correspondence of the Lord's Divine through heaven or the Grand man with man, and with all the things in man. (Arcana Coelestia 3883)

There are three heavens: the first (natural) is the abode of good spirits; the second (spiritual) of angelic spirits, and the third (celestial) of celestial angels. Natural, spiritual and celestial angels are all distinguished into the celestial and spiritual (kingdoms). The celestials are those who through love have received faith from the Lord, like the men of the Most Ancient Church. The spirituals are those who through knowledges of faith have received charity from the Lord, and who act from what they have received. (Arcana Coelestia 459)

"The spiritual kingdom and the celestial kingdom are in three divisions, being inmost, middle, and external (heavens)." (Ibid. 993:[2], 9873)

These numbers give us God's overall trinity: The Lord's Divine, His Grand Man of Heaven (including His celestial and spiritual kingdoms), and the natural world (including all things in man – His natural kingdom).

About the application of the Lord's rules for creation:

"The Lord, and everything created by Him is in the form of a trinity of discrete degrees (*Divine Love and Wisdom* 154). Each element of such a trinity has within it a pair of continuous degrees. Each element of such a duality has within it another trinity of discrete degrees." (Summarized from my *New Church Life* article mentioned above). Note that this pattern continues from discrete degree to continuous degree to discrete degree to infinity, each one within the other. (*Divine Love and Wisdom* 236).

Applying these rules to the Heavenly Kingdom, we have the overall trinity of discrete degrees, "Lord as seen through the spiritual sun, Heavenly Kingdom, and Earthly Kingdom". Within the middle discrete degree "Heavenly Kingdom", we have this pair of continuous degrees, "Celestial Kingdom and Spiritual Kingdom". Within each of these two kingdoms, we have another trinity of discrete degrees, "Celestial Heaven, Spiritual Heaven and Natural Heaven". Within each of these elements we have "Innumerable Societies".

About some differences between kingdoms and heavens:

1. An obvious difference is that there are two kingdoms and three heavens in the spiritual world. The third kingdom is in the natural world.
2. **Kingdoms are in continuous degrees** and heavens are in discrete degrees. What makes the one continuous and the other discrete will be explained in Parts 2 and 3 below.
3. **People are born into either the celestial or spiritual genius**, grow into

the celestial or spiritual church on earth, and graduate into the celestial or spiritual kingdom in heaven. But the same people can regenerate into the natural, spiritual or celestial heaven by the quality of their loves and lives.

4. The Lord's Third Testament says the two kingdoms correspond to the heart and lung systems, and the three heavens correspond to the head, body and extremities.

About hell:

There is some speculation that kingdoms, heavens and societies include all of God's children including the good in heaven, the newly arrived in the world of spirits, and the bad in hell. I will not discuss the bad in hell other than these quotes: "*The hells are out of the Grand Man . . . all men in the universal world have a situation either in the Grand Man (that is, in heaven), or outside of it in hell.*" (Arcana Coelestia 3642–3645, 3894) "*Heaven and hell are arranged in such an order, one under the other, that on either side they form a single person, heaven forming a single beautiful person, and hell forming a single monstrous person.*" (Divine Providence 293)

About what follows:

I will show in Part 2 below that the two kingdoms are organized into two continuous degrees ranging from the heat of love to the light of wisdom, and that their continuous nature is confirmed by their correspondence to the uses of people's heart and lung systems. I will also show in Part 3 that the three heavens are organized into three discrete degrees from celestial through spiritual to natural degree, and that their discrete nature is confirmed by their correspondence to the uses of people's head, body and extremities.

Part 4 will show that the numerous societies are distributed throughout the two kingdoms and therefore throughout the three heavens according to their uses in the Grand Man that correspond to the uses of the organs, bones, skin or other human body parts. Part 5 will discuss numbers that seem to disagree with this hypothesis and some people's idea that the two kingdoms may be the same as the upper two degrees of heaven.

I believe the case is this: kingdoms, heavens and societies are different ways to describe the Grand Man of heaven – the entire heaven. The three heavens are the specific way to describe the more general kingdoms, and the numerous societies are the particular way to describe these kingdoms and heavens. (*Heaven and Hell* 20) The Third Testament describes, and I visualize these relationships by seeing how the uses of the heart and lung systems describe the two kingdoms, how the uses of the head, body and extremities describe the three heavens and how the uses of the organs, bones, skin and other body

parts describe the societies as explained below.

PART 2: THE TWO KINGDOMS:

Heaven and Hell chapter 4 is an easy read introduction to the two kingdoms. The lead paragraph says: “*The two kingdoms are the general division of heaven, with the three heavens being the specific division and the innumerable societies being the particular divisions.*” Heaven is divided into a celestial and spiritual kingdom. In each, good is implanted by means of truth.

About the differences between celestial and spiritual kingdoms:

Some of the many differences between the celestial and spiritual kingdoms are given here. Asterisks are used to separate descriptions of celestial from spiritual kingdoms.

1. Celestials regenerate from good to truth. * Spirituals regenerate from truth to good.
2. Those in the celestial kingdom receive the good of love from the Lord, which is love returned to the Lord. * Those in the spiritual kingdom receive the good of faith from the Lord, which is charity toward the neighbor.
3. With the celestial man, the Lord implants good by means of truth in the will, and from this truth into his understanding. It does not become memory-knowledge, or faith, or conscience in the will. It does become reception in the good of love, and so far as the life is according to it, it becomes perception, which grows and is perfected with them in accordance with love. * With the spiritual man, the Lord implants good by means of truth in the understanding; i.e. truth is implanted in the external or natural man, where it first becomes memory-knowledge, and in so far as the man is affected by it, and forms his life according to it, it is called forth into the understanding, and becomes faith and charity toward the neighbor. This charity constitutes his new will, and this faith his new understanding, and both his new conscience.
4. Men of the internal celestial kingdom are in the good of love to the Lord – in love of the truth in the rational from the good of the will – while men of the external celestial kingdom are in the good of mutual love – love toward the neighbor, from the truth of good. * Men of the internal spiritual kingdom are in love toward the neighbor, from good of truth, while men of the external spiritual kingdom are in the good of faith – love of reasoning about truths and living them to become goods. Note that the nexus between the celestial and spiritual continuum is

love toward the neighbor that corresponds to the arteries and veins (see below).

5. For spirits with a celestial disposition, the mere mention of a genuine truth is accompanied by a very keen perception of the good to which that truth will lead. * For spirits with a spiritual disposition, something of that perception can be gained only by using logic and reason when truths are seen in harmony with each other, and they lead to the spirit's living it.
6. Celestials are in the state of peace and innocence like little children. * Spirituall are gifted with intelligence and happiness from the Lord in proportion to the use they perform to others from the affection of the will.
7. Some people are born of celestial genius, regenerate into the celestial church on earth, and pass into the celestial kingdom of the spiritual world to the heaven of their level of regeneration in the celestial society of their ruling love. * Other people are born of spiritual genius, regenerate into the spiritual church of earth, and pass into the spiritual kingdom of the spiritual world to the heaven of their level of regeneration in the spiritual society of their ruling love.

Numbers 1 through 7 are paraphrased from these passages: *Arcana Coelestia* 3887, 4138 [1], 6295[1], 6296[2] 6435[1], 9741[3], 10129 [1], *Heaven and Hell* 21, 23.

About the two Kingdoms being in Continuous Degrees:

My thinking on this developed over time. It started with the ideas in *Trinities, Degrees, Correspondences and Influx*, in which I tried not to interpret but only to report what I found scattered throughout the Writings in an orderly way. I could find nothing in church literature or the Writings that adequately explained kingdoms and heavens, so I had to be more creative.

I summarize from that article, “*that everything He ‘has created,’ or I should say ‘is creating,’ contains three discrete degrees, that each discrete degree contains within it a pair of continuous degrees, and that each continuous degree has within it a trinity of discrete degrees.*” We have established that “Lord, Heaven, Earth” are a valid overall trinity. Taking the middle degree, heaven, I ask: What are the continuous degrees within this trinity? It can't be the heavens, since there are three of them. So, since there was no other choice, I assumed it to be the two kingdoms, with the three heavens within them. After several years of experimenting with other arrangements, I concluded that this was correct, since it agrees with well over 95% of what I could find in the Third Testament.

The other 5% is discussed in Part 5 below.

I now believe **the two kingdoms – celestial and spiritual – are in continuous degrees**, i.e. with continuous qualities ranging from pure celestial to pure spiritual kingdoms, as temperature ranges from hot to cold. This concept is explained here and illustrated below by its correspondence to the heart and lung systems. These two kingdoms pervade all the heavens, as do the three discrete degrees of heaven described in Part 3, and the many societies described in Part 4.

About the nexus between the celestial and spiritual kingdoms:

The Third Testament says: *“Celestial kingdom angels cannot communicate directly with spiritual kingdom angels. . . . The speech of the celestial angels is not intelligible to the spiritual angels, for it is produced by affections which are of love; whereas that of the spiritual is produced by intellectual ideas.”* (Arcana Coelestia 3886) *But there are intermediate angelic societies of celestial-spiritual angels that assist in communications. (Heaven and Hell 27, Arcana Coelestia 4047, 4048, 8796, 8802)*

“The two kingdoms agree in that the external of the celestial kingdom coincides with the internal of the spiritual kingdom.” They both are in love toward the neighbor, the celestial angels from truth of good and the spiritual angels from good of truth.

“And they communicate through intermediates that are called the celestial of the spiritual.” (Ibid. 6435[2]) On the celestial side of the midpoint there are celestial-spiritual societies, and on the spiritual side there are spiritual-celestial societies. These societies facilitate mediate influx from the Lord through the celestial into the spiritual kingdom and also facilitate communications between angels in the kingdoms. The correspondence of these communications societies is to the arteries and veins discussed below.

“Good as it exists among celestial angels is called celestial good, and good as it exists among spiritual angels is called spiritual good. Celestial good is the good of love to the Lord, while spiritual good is the good of love towards the neighbor. As for what joins the two kingdoms together, the good of charity toward the neighbor does so. For with members of the celestial kingdom love to the Lord is what is internal and charity toward the neighbor what is external; but with members of the spiritual kingdom charity toward the neighbor is what is internal and faith deriving from it what is external. From this one may see that what joins the two kingdoms is charity toward the neighbor; for charity is that in which the celestial kingdom ends, and the spiritual kingdom begins. What comes last in the one comes first in the other and is where they receive each other. (Arcana Coelestia 5922[2] and 9139[4])

I have a vague recollection of numbers in the Writings that indicate there

are some celestial kingdom angels with spiritual kingdom inclinations and vice versa. They could have started as people who had a crossover genius that was part spiritual and part celestial. Modern science seems to have determined that some people are born with a gender that is part male and part female, or with reproductive organs that differ from their gender. Also, there are some organs of the body that may be in both the heart and lung orbits. More study is needed on this subject.

About all people being born into either the celestial or spiritual kingdom:

It has been said above that children are of a genius either celestial or spiritual. Those of a celestial genius are easily distinguished from those of a spiritual genius. Their thought, speech and action are so gentle that hardly anything appears except what flows from a love of good to the Lord and from a love for other children. But those of a spiritual genius are not so gentle; but in everything with them there appears a sort of vibration, as of wings. The difference is seen also in their ill-feeling and in other things. (Heaven and Hell 339, Arcana Coelestia 2301, Spiritual Experiences 6067, Last Judgment Posthumous 132)

Moreover, the Africans are more receptive than others in this earth, of the heavenly doctrine – which I was given to know from the spirits who are thence. These willingly receive, from the angels, the doctrine concerning the Lord. They, more than others, have it implanted in themselves that the Lord must appear altogether as a man, and that it can by no means happen otherwise. They are in the capacity of receiving not only the truths of faith, but especially its goods. They are of the celestial genius. (Arcana Coelestia 4783, Spiritual Experiences 5518-5520)

This was the state of things in Swedenborg's day, but may have changed today.

We are born male or female and with an inclination toward a specific use that corresponds to a particular human body part. All body parts belong to either the heart or the lung system. These earthly systems in turn correspond to the heavenly celestial kingdom and spiritual kingdom respectively. It follows that people are born with either a celestial or spiritual genius and grow into the Lord's Celestial Church or Spiritual Church while on earth.

When they enter the spiritual world, they will be in either the Lord's celestial or spiritual kingdom depending on their genius. There is nothing they can do to change their genius, just as there is nothing they can do to change the sex they were born with. "Most Africans, some Chinese and some others *are of the genius of those who are angels in the celestial kingdom, and most Europeans and others are of the genius of those who are angels in the spiritual kingdom.*" (Spiritual Experiences 5518)

About the priesthood and royalty:

There are two things which are predicated of the Lord, namely, priesthood and royalty. The celestial kingdom corresponds to His priesthood, and the spiritual kingdom to His royalty; for the Lord is called 'Priest' from Divine good, and 'King' from Divine truth. (Heaven and Hell 24, Arcana Coelestia 8625)

The Lord in His priestly function is called Jesus, in His kingly function Christ. (True Christian Religion 114)

All the preachers are from the Lord's spiritual kingdom, none from the celestial kingdom. They are from the spiritual kingdom because the angels there are in truths from good, and all the preaching is done from truths. There are no preachers from the celestial kingdom, because those who are there are in the good of love, from which good they see and perceive truths but do not talk about them. (Heaven and Hell 225).

This quote does not preclude preachers from the celestial heaven in the spiritual kingdom.

These kingdoms are like the will and the understanding of the Grand Man of heaven that correspond to the heart and lung systems of people on earth.

About the natural kingdom:

"In the natural kingdom, where people are while they live in our world, in the spiritual kingdom where spiritual angels are, and in the celestial kingdom where celestial angels are." (Last Judgment Posthumous 31s6)

According to NewSearch there are, in the Third Testament, about 435 references to the "spiritual kingdom" and 330 to the "celestial kingdom," but only 18 to the "natural kingdom." But 11 of these, (*Last Judgment Posthumous* 303, 304, 311, 316; *True Christian Religion* 212, 393d; *Arcana Coelestia* 2758, 4104[5]; *Sacred Scripture* 34, 67; *Divine Love and Wisdom* 232) explicitly attribute "natural kingdom" to the Lord's kingdom on earth. Five more, (*True Christian Religion* 236; *Arcana Coelestia* 5406; *Last Judgment Posthumous* 326; *Sacred Scripture* 69; *De Verbo* 24) strongly imply a natural kingdom on earth by context. One other (*Apocalypse Revealed* 232) could refer to a kingdom on earth, but does not indicate either way. Only one number (*True Christian Religion* 195 - Ager and Dick) attributes "natural kingdom" to heaven. But the Rose translation attributes it to earth, making it unanimous. (See below in Part 5: About *True Christian Religion* number 195)

So all 18 references to the natural kingdom can be interpreted as meaning people on this earth. They will be in either the Lord's celestial or spiritual church on earth depending on their genius. When they leave this world, they will enter either the celestial or spiritual kingdom depending on their genius, the heaven of their degree of regeneration and the society of their dominant use.

About the heart and lung systems corresponding to the celestial and spiritual kingdoms:

The celestial kingdom corresponds in general to the heart and all things of the heart in the whole body, and the spiritual kingdom to the lungs and to all things of the lungs in the whole body. Likewise, in man heart and lungs form two kingdoms, the heart ruling there through the arteries and veins, and the lungs through the tendinous and motor fibers, both together in every exertion and movement. So, in every man, in his spiritual world, which is called his spiritual man, there are two kingdoms, one of the will and the other of the understanding, the will ruling through affections for good, and the understanding through affections for truth; and these kingdoms correspond to the kingdoms of the heart and of the lungs in the body. It is the same in the heavens; the celestial kingdom is the voluntary part of heaven, and in it good of love reigns; the spiritual kingdom is the intellectual part of heaven, and in it truth reigns. These are what correspond to the functions of the heart and lungs in man. It is because of this correspondence that in the Word the "heart" signifies the will and also the good of love, and the "breath" of the lungs signifies the understanding and the truth of faith. For the same reason affections are ascribed to the heart, although they are neither in it nor from it. (Heaven and Hell 95c)

There are in the human body two things which are the fountains of all its motions, and of all its external or mere bodily actions and sensations, namely, the heart and lungs. These two correspond in such a manner to the Grand Man of the Lord's heaven that the celestial angels constitute one kingdom, and the spiritual angels another kingdom. . . . The celestial kingdom consists of those who are in love to the Lord; the spiritual kingdom of those who are in charity toward the neighbor. (Arcana Coelestia 3635)

The two essential and universal things through which human bodies come into existence and continue to exist are the heart and the lungs, or the systolic and diastolic motions of the heart and the respiration of the lungs. It is a known fact that these two pairs of motions are at work in each and every detail of our bodies. This happens because the heart corresponds to love and the lungs to wisdom, a correspondence that is fully demonstrated in Divine Love and Wisdom 371-431. (True Christian Religion 27[2])

A minister once asked me about the gradation between the heart and lungs in relation to my hypothesis that their correspondence to the celestial and spiritual kingdoms is in continuous degrees. He speculated that "it seems that one cannot be modified by continuous degrees to become the other or vice versa." True, but maybe the correspondence is in their uses. The heart and lungs, through their arteries and veins, continually serve the entire human body with fresh blood, thus giving it the sustenance for life. Correspondingly, the two kingdoms continually serve the entire universal heaven with love, thus giving it the sustenance for life. It is this ongoing purification cycle of blood/truth through the heart/celestial and lung/spiritual chambers/kingdoms that make them in continuous degrees.

"The universal kingdom of the Lord is a kingdom of ends and uses." (Arcana

Coelestia 3645) The Third Testament also says that it is the ends and uses of the human heart and its systems that correspond to the ends and uses of the angels in the celestial kingdom, and the ends and uses of the human lungs and their systems that correspond to the ends and uses of the angels in the spiritual kingdom.

The following ideas are extracted from the inter-chapter material in *Arcana Coelestia* 3883 - 3896, parts of which are included here:

Heaven or the Grand Man has cardiac pulses, and that it has respirations; and that the cardiac pulses of heaven or the Grand Man have a correspondence with the heart and with its systolic and diastolic motions; and that the respirations of heaven or the Grand man have a correspondence with the lungs and their respirations. (Arcana Coelestia 3884.4)

Both the cardiac pulsations and the pulmonary respirations which are in the heavens pass off into something continuous, and thus into endeavor, which is of such a nature as to excite these motions variously in accordance with the state of every subject. (Ibid. 3885)

This is a strong indication that the heart and lung systems are of continuous rather than discrete degrees.

About the correspondence of the uses of the heart and lungs to the two kingdoms:

“*Blood signifies Divine truth.*” (*Ibid.* 10033) The first, use (function) of the heart is to collect blood, contaminated mostly with carbon dioxide, from veins throughout the body and pump it to the lungs. Correspondingly, the first use of celestial kingdom angels is to collect spiritual blood, i.e. Divine truth contaminated with falsities, from intermediate angels throughout the Grand Man of heaven and pump it, by means of intermediate angels, to the spiritual kingdom.

The primary uses of the lungs are to receive the contaminated blood pumped by the heart via veins, to remove and to expel its impurities, to add oxygen, breathed in from the air, to the blood, and to send it back to the heart via the pulmonary artery for distribution to the entire human body. Correspondingly, the primary uses of the spiritual kingdom angels are to receive spiritual blood, contaminated by falsities, that has been pumped by celestial kingdom angels via intermediate angels, to remove and expel the falsities, to add new truths from God to the spiritual blood, and to send it back to the celestial kingdom angels for distribution to the Grand Man of heaven.

The second use of the heart is to pump clean blood (with oxygen) from the lungs throughout the body for its use. Correspondingly, the second use of celestial kingdom angels is to pump clean spiritual blood, with truths attached, to the rest of the heavens for their use.

Note that the correspondence is in the action words: collect, pump, accept, remove, expel, add and send.

PART 3: THE THREE HEAVENS:

Heaven and Hell chapter 5 is an introduction to the three heavens.

Swedenborg and the translators have used different names for the three heavens. I use “celestial” for the most interior heaven, closest to God, “spiritual” for the heaven somewhat removed from God, and “natural” for the heaven furthest removed from God. These three heavens are formed in discrete degrees; each of the three heavens is as discretely different from each other as Divine Love, Divine Wisdom and Divine Useful Endeavor; Father, Son and Holy Spirit; and end, cause and effect are discretely different from each other. The celestial heaven is within the spiritual heaven and the spiritual is within the natural as the end is in the cause and the cause is in the effect.

The three heavens follow the rules for discrete degrees summarized in my previous article. Since God is a trinity of discrete degrees, “*Everything created by God is created in three discrete degrees.*” (*Divine Love and Wisdom* 154) Since heaven is created by God, therefore, heaven is created in three discrete degrees.

There are two worlds, a spiritual world where angels and spirits are, and a natural world where men are. . . . In each world there are three degrees, called degrees of height (celestial, spiritual and natural and inmost, intermediate and outermost). The angelic heavens, the human mind and everything else in both worlds are arranged in these three discrete degrees. There is a correspondence between things in the spiritual world and things in the natural world. (True Christian Religion 75)

The Lord inflows immediately from His Divine Human into celestial good of love to the Lord which makes the inmost heaven. The Lord inflows immediately from His Divine Human and mediately from celestial good into the good of charity toward the neighbor called spiritual good which makes the second heaven. And He inflows immediately from His Divine Human and mediately from spiritual good into the good of faith called spiritual natural good which makes the ultimate heaven. (Arcana Coelestia 3691[3], 10270)

With the angels, it is their interiors that cause them to be in one heaven or another. . . . There are three degrees of interiors in each angle and spirit, and also in man. Those in whom the third degree is opened are in the inmost or celestial heaven where Love to the Lord rules. Those in whom the second degree is opened are in the intermediate or spiritual heaven where spiritual love to the neighbor rules. Those in whom the first degree is opened are in the outermost or natural heaven where natural love toward the neighbor called charity, or love of the world (in a good sense) rules. (Heaven and Hell 33, Divine Love and Wisdom 179, Coronus 16)

Correspondence of the head, body and extremities of the Grand Man of Heaven:

There are three heavens, entirely distinct from each other, an inmost or third, a middle or second, and an outmost or first. These have like order and relation to each other as the highest part of man, or his head, the middle part, or body, and the lowest or feet. (Heaven and Hell 29)

The whole heaven, called the Grand Man of heaven, corresponds to all things of man. The inmost, celestial or third heaven corresponds to the head that signifies the good of celestial love, i.e. the good of love to the Lord, because that good rules and makes that heaven. The middle, spiritual or second heaven corresponds to the breast/torso/loins that signifies the good of spiritual love, i.e. the good of love to the neighbor, because that good rules and makes that heaven. The outermost, natural or first heaven corresponds to the legs/feet and arms/hands that signify the good of natural love from spiritual love, i.e. the good of faith, because that good rules and makes that heaven. (Apocalypse Explained 65[3], Heaven and Hell 65)

The neck is the intermediary uniting the inmost and middle heavens. Since all representatives on the natural level resemble the human form, and have the same meanings as the parts of it which they resemble. (Arcana Coelestia 9913, 9914, 10005[4])

Heaven corresponds to the Great Man; the inmost (celestial) heaven, where is the Lord's celestial kingdom, relates to the head of that man; the middle or second heaven, where is the spiritual kingdom, to the body; and the ultimate or first heaven, to the feet. (Ibid. 6436, 4938, 4939, 5328, 6296)

The Divine Spiritual is Divine Truth in the middle heaven, the heaven that is also called the spiritual kingdom. (Ibid. 10091)

We have in these paragraphs two seemingly conflicting ways to view the organization of the whole heaven. The first is that the heavens are formed in the discrete degrees of the celestial, spiritual and natural heavens. The second is the analogy of the heavens to the human body, i.e. to the head, body and arms/legs. The problem with a literal interpretation of these two views is that the head, body and arms/legs trilogy **taken literally**, does not meet the requirements of discrete degrees. The head is not the substance that the body is made from, nor is the body the substance that the limbs are made from. Nor is there an obvious correspondence and influx between the head and body and between the body and its extremities. Nor is there the required end, cause, effect or purpose, means, result or endeavor, force, motion relationship between them.

But we know that the Lord has given us both of the above ideas of heaven, so they both must be true. The first paragraph gives us a clue – that the three body parts signify the good of celestial, spiritual and natural love respectively. To find the spiritual meanings between them and their discrete degrees **we must look to their uses**. What is the main use of the head that includes the brain and seat of the nervous system? Its use is to provide the

end, purpose and endeavor (Father) to the whole person. What is the main use of the body that includes the breast, thorax, heart, lungs and other organs that sustain the body? Its use is to provide the cause, means, force (Son) to the whole body. What is the main use of the body's extremities? Their use is to provide the effect, result and motion (Holy Spirit) of the entire body.

The main use of the celestial heaven is to provide the entire heaven with its end, purpose endeavor as the Father does for His entire universe or as the head does for the whole body. The main use of the spiritual heaven is to provide the entire heaven with its cause, means, force as the Son does for His entire universe. The main use of the natural heaven is to provide the entire heaven with its effect, result, motion as does the Holy Spirit for His entire universe. Thus, the use of the three body parts is identical the use of the three heavens, and the correspondence is complete.

People entering the world of spirits have all three of these degrees within their spiritual souls, minds and bodies, but only the natural degree will be active. After their stay in the world of spirits, good spirits will move to their permanent residence; their spiritual life will be activated in one of the three heavens depending on which level of regeneration they have achieved while in this world. Their spiritual life will be opened to that degree of heaven and the other two degrees will become dormant. Most good people of European origins will enter one of these degrees of heaven in the spiritual kingdom and most good Africans and some good Chinese will enter one of these degrees in the celestial kingdom.

PART 4: THE INNUMERABLE SOCIETIES

Heaven and Hell chapter 6 is an introduction to the innumerable societies.

Heaven consists of countless societies, which are distinct one from another. Each society has a general good distinct from the good of other societies; and each one in a society has a particular good distinct from the goods of all others in the society. From the distinct goods of those who are in the society, which are thus various, but accordant, there is produced a form, which is called 'the heavenly form.' The universal heaven consists of such forms. Relatively to goods these conjunctions are called 'forms', but relatively to persons they are called 'societies.'^m (*Arcana Coelestia* 8469)

A society is nothing but a harmony of many, for no one has any life separate from the life of others. (Ibid. 687)

Everyone in a society in heaven communicates his good to all who are in the society, and all therein communicate with each one, whence arises the good of all in general, that is, the general good. This good is communicated to the general good of other societies, whence arises a good still more general, and finally one most general. Such is the communications in heaven, and hence, it is that they are a one, just as are

the organs, members, and viscera in man, which although various and dissimilar, nevertheless by such communications form a one. Such a communication of goods is possible only through love, which is spiritual conjunction. The universal thing that forms and brings into order all things in general and in particular is the Divine good of Divine love from the Lord.” (Ibid. 8470).

The innumerable societies of heaven collectively are in the form of the Lord’s Divine Human, that is, in the form of the Grand Man of heaven, or, if you prefer, in the form of the earthly human body. Each particular society performs the spiritual use that corresponds to the use of their human body organ, member or viscera. Each angel performs a specific spiritual use that is a sub-part of his/her society’s overall use. Each human body part belongs to either the heart or lung system. Since each angelic society is in either the celestial or spiritual kingdom, its correspondent body part will be in the heart or lung system respectively.

Each angel is born of either the celestial or spiritual genius. They grow into either the Lord’s Celestial or Spiritual Church while on earth. Upon graduation from earth, they enter either the celestial or spiritual kingdom depending on their genius. Each good angel will have regenerated into either the natural, spiritual or celestial heaven within his/her kingdom. Each angel is in the good and use of a society that corresponds to a particular body part. Each body part corresponds to a particular society of angels that collectively perform the uses in heaven that correspond to the uses of the Grand Man of heaven.

Within each of the two kingdoms, i.e. within each of the three heavens, there are numerous societies of angels. Each has angels whose primary use corresponds to the use of one of the different organs, members or viscera of the human body. Since each body part belongs to either the heart or lung system, it follows that each body part (society of angels) is in either the celestial or spiritual kingdom, and each body part (society of angels) has within it all three of the celestial, spiritual and natural heavens. *“Each society is a heaven in a smaller form, and each angel is a heaven in the smallest form.” (Heaven and Hell 51)*

PART 5: IDEAS AND NUMBERS THAT APPEAR TO DISAGREE WITH MY HYPOTHESIS:

Some people have speculated or even built a strong case for the idea that the celestial and spiritual kingdoms are the same as the celestial and spiritual heavens. This will be discussed in the next section.

There are Third Testament numbers that, if taken literally, seem to violate their own principals of trinities, degrees, correspondences and influx, which are the foundation for my hypothesis. These numbers will be discussed in the

section: “About Third Testament numbers that appear to disagree with my Hypothesis.”

About the idea that the Two Kingdoms are the same as the higher Two Heavens:

I refute their case based on the simple fact that the Lord would not have given us separate chapters for kingdoms and heavens in *Heaven and Hell* if He did not mean for them to be different. I built a case for this difference in Parts 1 through 4. It was sincere and worthy of a response.

There are difficult passages to do with this subject that were written by the Lord through Swedenborg. The first work, *Arcana Coelestia*, was published in 1756 to start Last Judgment of the former Christian Church in 1757. The last work, *True Christian Religion*, was published in 1770 to start the New Jerusalem Church in heaven and on earth. This is important because the Christian heavens that Swedenborg saw and reported on changed during that period.

Between the time of Christ and the time of the old Christian Church Last Judgment evil, strong-willed spirits formed imaginary heavens in the world of spirits that mimicked churches on earth, where they could and did attract and rule over weak-willed good and bad spirits. Meanwhile, Christian celestial heavens were opened in the celestial and spiritual kingdoms for regenerated spirits with a strong love of the Lord. Also, temporary provisions were made to protect spiritual heaven-bound spirits who were strong enough to avoid the imaginary heavens.

The Christian spiritual and natural heavens had not yet been opened. Therefore, the Christian celestial heavens were, for all practical purposes, the same as the Christian celestial (and spiritual) kingdom. The same was true of the Christian spiritual heaven being the same as the Christian spiritual heaven part of the (celestial and) spiritual kingdom, since both were empty at the time. The Lord had not yet completed passing the Heavenly Arcana on to Swedenborg for publishing, the act that would initiate the Last Judgment of the old Christian Church. So, **what Swedenborg saw and reported in the *Arcana Coelestia* was a Christian heaven that included celestial and spiritual kingdoms with only their celestial heavens opened.**

This soon changed. The old Christian Church Last Judgment was for the most part completed by the end of 1757. The new Christian spiritual and natural heavens had been opened in both kingdoms. The imaginary heavens were emptied out. The bad spirits were sent to their proper places in hell, and the good spirits were moved to the spiritual and natural heavens of their proper kingdoms. So, **Swedenborg saw and reported on all three heavens in both kingdoms filled with good spirits from then on.**

Celestial kingdom angels are often described as being closer to God than spiritual kingdom angels. **This is true if you compare the celestial heaven angels in the celestial kingdom with spiritual heaven angels in the spiritual kingdom, but not true if you compare celestial heaven angels in the celestial kingdom with celestial heaven angels in the spiritual kingdom.**

One claim implies that because many passages in the Third Testament about kingdoms are the same or similar to those about heavens, it follows that kingdoms and heavens must be the same. All 18 examples given in a recent paper to the Council of the Clergy were found to be the same or similar. But, as a point of logic, that doesn't prove anything. They all were given in different contexts. I could easily come up with 18 characteristics of a groundhog that match those of a rabbit, but we all know they are not the same.

But it does make sense that there are so many same or similar phrases describing celestial (or spiritual) heaven angels with celestial (or spiritual) kingdom angels because there is a part of the celestial (or spiritual) heaven in the celestial (or spiritual) kingdom.

About Third Testament numbers that appear to disagree with my Hypothesis:

These numbers require special treatment as do “the parting of the Red Sea” in the Lord's First Testament, and “the resurrection of Lazarus from the dead” in His Second.

“The celestial kingdom constitutes the inmost, or third heaven; the spiritual kingdom the middle, or second heaven.” (Arcana Coelestia 6417 - Potts) The problem with this is in the word “constitutes.” According to my dictionary, it does not mean “is the same as.” Rather, it is an action verb meaning “establishes,” “forms,” “gives being to,” etc. This makes sense when you consider that “the two kingdoms” are the general division of heaven and “the three heavens” are the specific divisions contained within the general division, and that each kingdom “constitutes” all three heavens.

“For the celestial kingdom of the Lord, which is the inmost or third heaven, is divided from the spiritual kingdom, which is the second or middle heaven, by intermediate things whereby the celestial kingdom flows into the spiritual kingdom, but not the reverse.” (Ibid. 8796 - Potts) This number is discussing intermediate things that separate the two kingdoms. The last part confirms that the kingdoms are continuous degrees: *“The celestial kingdom flows into the spiritual kingdom.”*

The phrase “which is” makes it sound like celestial kingdom is the same as, or equal to the celestial heaven, and the spiritual kingdom is the same as the spiritual heaven. Could “which is” here have been translated “constitutes” as it was in 6417 above? That translation would be consistent with my hypothesis if

we consider that both the celestial and spiritual kingdoms (general divisions) had already set up or established their part of the celestial heaven (specific division) and during the Last Judgment would set up their part of the spiritual and natural heavens.

There are two kingdoms that form heaven – the celestial kingdom and the spiritual kingdom. The celestial kingdom is the inmost or third heaven, and the spiritual kingdom is the middle or second heaven. (Arcana Coelestia 5922[2] and 9139[4])

Could “is” mean “constitutes”?

The Divine Spiritual is Divine Truth in the middle heaven, the heaven that is also called the spiritual kingdom. (Ibid. 10091)

Heaven corresponds to the Great Man; the inmost (celestial) heaven, where is the Lord’s celestial kingdom, relates to the head of that man; the middle or second heaven, where is the spiritual kingdom, to the body; and the ultimate or first heaven, to the feet. (Ibid. 4938, 4939, 5328, 6296, 6436)

But kingdoms correspond to the heart and lungs. They are clearly different than heavens. It will take further research to reconcile their differences with these and other similar numbers. For example: “In what respect is the celestial kingdom the inmost heaven?”

There are three heavens: the highest, the middle, and the lowest. The highest (celestial) heaven constitutes the Lord’s heavenly (celestial) kingdom; the middle (spiritual) heaven, his spiritual kingdom; and the lowest (natural) heaven, his earthly (natural) kingdom . . . the primary (celestial) component (of heaven) is present in the middle (spiritual) component; and by means of the middle component it is also present in the outermost (natural) component. In exactly the same way, a purpose is present and by means of the middle component it is also present in the outermost component. (True Christian Religion 212 - Rose)

This makes it clear that the heavens are in discrete degrees. But It says these heavens “constitutes,” not “is” the celestial, spiritual, natural kingdoms. My dictionary definition for “constitutes” is “forms,” “sets up,” “establishes” or “gives being to.” But a bigger problem here is that this quote has heavens (specific division) forming kingdoms (general division) whereas most other quotes have kingdoms forming heavens. (See the above section, “About the idea that the Two Kingdoms are the same as the two Higher Heavens.” How can “specifics” form “generals”?

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION:

Heaven consists of spiritual and celestial continuous degree kingdoms into which people are born that vary from spiritual to celestial. Each kingdom has within it natural, spiritual and celestial discrete degree heavens that progress

from good love of the world to love of the neighbor to love of the Lord into which people can regenerate. The innumerable societies are distributed among the two kingdoms and three heavens to form the Lord's heavenly kingdom – the Grand Man of heaven i.e., a heaven in the image of the Lord's Divine Human.

Part 5 contains some problems that must be completely resolved if we are to continue believing that the second half of *Divine Love and Wisdom* and other places that mention “Trinities, Degrees, Correspondences and Influx” are the Word of God. I have tried to identify these problems and to make a start on resolving them. But I need help to complete the job.

On a positive note, it is the beauty of the Lord's Infinite Love and Wisdom that I see in the above picture of the Lord's Divine Human as reflected in His Grand Man of Heaven with its two kingdoms, three heavens and many societies.

Appendix: Previously published minister's articles on this subject:

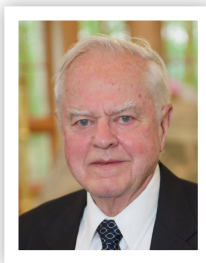
1884 – *New Church Life, Three Heavens and the Two Kingdoms*. Summary of a letter in <http://www.newchurchthought.org> from the Rev. Richard de Charms to the Rev. N. C. Burnham, written in 1840.

1908 – *New Church Life, The Two Kingdoms and the Three Heavens*, by the Rev. F. E. Waelchli. (From a summary in “Proceedings of the Councils of Clergy and General Church, June 23 -29.)

1929 – *New Church Life, Divisions of Heaven, General, specific and Particular*, by the Rev. Victor J. Gladish. (A paper read at The New Church Club, London, April 12, 1929.)

1969 – *New Church Life, The Spiritual World*, by the Rev. Dr. Hugo Lj. Odhner. (Excerpts from his book, *The Spiritual World*)

1995 – “*The Kingdoms and the Heavens*” by the Rev John L. Odhner: (A paper to the Council of the Clergy)



Vance Genzlinger is a former engineer, computer system designer and businessman. He lives in retirement in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Contact: vance@genzlinger.com

A Layman's Statement of Faith

Martin E. Klein

God is infinite love working with infinite wisdom to create all finite things. Love, wisdom, creation: that is the trinity of God. And we (every human created) reflect the oneness of our creator's Divine Trinity – each person: loving, thinking, and doing useful proceedings.

Life is the operational result of the union of Divine love with Divine wisdom. Its flow is ceaseless creation, universally the same, yet received with infinite variety according to the receiving vessels: e.g., heat, light, a man, an animal, a plant, a rock, an atom, an electron, etc. Every receiving vessel is formed (created) by God for a specific purpose.

God creates humans as finite replicas of His love (will) and wisdom (understanding) to be recipients of His life so that He can make us happy by our wisely choosing His way; loving all His children (each other) more than ourselves. The result is shared heavenly happiness to eternity.

Humans are unique animals gifted by God with an ability to distinguish between and to evaluate right and wrong, and so become images and likenesses of His humanity.

God is order itself. God has provided humans with knowledge of His order in the form of laws revealed in His Word. The quality of our happiness depends on our willingness to submit to the Divine order revealed there.

Alone, individual men and individual women are incomplete. Couples are created by God to be united spiritually, reflecting the marriage or conjunction of Divine love with Divine wisdom, and any offspring, then, complete the image of the trinal Divine “going forth” in use. Marriage is a holy “picture” of God that must not be sullied.

It is not possible for us to manipulate the maleness or femaleness we are given by the Lord. There are many natural birth-anomalies and we cannot change the clay we are given, but we must take up our cross and strive to follow the Lord.

In a language exclusively in parable, unknowingly represented by the history of the ancient Jews, God's Word is given to us in the Old and the New Testaments. And now, anyone may understand the internal cryptography of the Bible as revealed by the Lord through the Writings of Emanuel Swedenborg.

To seem to “own” eternal happiness, humans must choose whether to live within God’s loving order, or to live in self-created ways that are contrary to God’s order. While loving the neighbor is expressed by performing useful services, shunning evils of life as sins against the Lord is an essential part of serving under His umbrella.

Life is granted to any newborn human with the first unaided breath taken. A human life, once granted, is eternal. Parents are guardians and mentors of their children; not owners.

The natural mind and body given to every human are like investments deposited in the hands of that human’s spirit; to be managed by them in total freedom just as he/she chooses. When that task is complete, the spirit (that has been residing within the person’s natural body) is withdrawn from the physical body and activated to perceive and live in its previously unnoticed spiritual dimension. This spiritual dimension has no time or space, but it appears to have both according to what is loved.

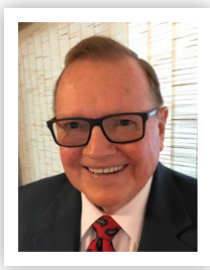
Natural death is an inevitable transition from natural to spiritual awareness. It is precisely timed by the Lord to occur at the pinnacle of potentiality for the best possible spiritual outcome.

A person’s most predominant love is established by his/her choices during natural life; if a love of the Lord and the neighbor, then the spiritual person dwells in heaven to eternity; if a love of self and the world, then the person dwells in hell, also to eternity.

Believing all this and yet not living by it is profanation (mixing filth with purity), which is among the worst of all evils.

The anguish of hell is that if we indulge in the evils that we dearly love we are severely punished by fellow evil spirits – with never, ever, a chance to “get away with it.”

The joy of heaven is that as we follow the Lord’s ways we are doing the very things that we love to do, and mutually sharing the joy of that is exquisitely heavenly for everyone – together! So, God’s order prevails – in hell with misery, but in heaven with joy!



Martin E. Klein is retired and lives in Boynton Beach, Florida.
Contact: martpat2@gmail.com

Church News

Compiled by Bruce Henderson

ASSISTANT BISHOPS AFFIRMED

The Rt. Rev. Peter M. Buss Jr.

The **Rt. Rev. Bradley D. Heinrichs** and the **Rt. Rev. David H. Lindrooth** have been affirmed by the General Church membership as Assistant Bishops of the General Church.

An affirmation vote had been ongoing since March 21 and voting closed on May 24. They were affirmed by an 88.26% margin of members casting a vote. Of eligible voting members, 1,567 did so – a 33% response rate.

This vote completed the three-stage process for becoming an Assistant Bishop: affirmation by the Clergy, the General Church Board, and the General Church membership. It has been a long and useful process.

I thank all General Church members for your part in it and send my heartfelt congratulations to Brad and Dave, and their wives. Not only will I benefit from their help – in truth it can't come soon enough – but so will the Church.

(All three assumed office on July 1.)

BRYN ATHYN COLLEGE COMMENCEMENT AND AWARDS

Dr. Gregory L. Baker, retired professor of Mathematics, Physics and Computer Science at Bryn Athyn College, spoke at the 142nd commencement on the theme “Transformative.” (See the address on page 300.) He said the education and experience at the College is “transformative” because it “pushes us forward, makes for positive change, sends us on our way to do better things. With transformation we grow by quantum leaps.”

Degrees were conferred on 60 students (37 Bachelor of Arts, 23 Bachelor of Science), with 25 graduating *cum laude*. The graduates represented six countries (Cameroon, Congo, Greece and Latvia, as well as Canada and the United States) and 10 states (Alabama, Arizona, Delaware, Illinois, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, New Jersey, North Carolina and Pennsylvania).

Many photos, in addition to those on pages 354 and 355, have been posted on the College website, www.brynathyn.edu and its Facebook page, courtesy of Holly Adams and Serena Sutton. There are also graduation videos on the website.

This year's graduates:

Bachelor of Arts (* indicates *cum laude*)

Nickolaos C. Balis, Nafpaktos, Greece
Anisha T. Benson, Philadelphia, PA
Cecil C.L. Boyd, Monroe, NC
Timothy R. Browne, Philadelphia, PA
Spencer T. Cartier, Abington, PA
Angelo J. Cascarelli, Philadelphia, PA
Saleem H. Chisholm, Wilmington, DE
Andrew C. Clark Jr., Philadelphia, PA
Shannah G. Conroy,* Bryn Athyn, PA
Marie L. Daum,* Bryn Athyn, PA
Michael V. Dudley, Paterson, NJ
Danae M. Elder,* Rochester, MI
Rosemary K. M. Fuller,* Bay Minette, AL
Calvin B. Heinrichs, Ontario, Canada
Drew R. Heller, Philadelphia, PA
Sarah Jackson,* Bryn Athyn, PA
Matthew C. King, Kempton, PA
Sonja J. Kistner,* Huntingdon Valley, PA
Nikita Klinisovs,* Riga, Latvia

Hovlaine Marcellus, Philadelphia, PA
Brennen A. McCurdy,* Bryn Athyn, PA
Cullen J. McNally, Wayne, PA
Alejandro M. Morales, Philadelphia, PA
Safi M. Mpemba, DR Congo, Africa
Kathryn Peavy, Elkins Park, PA
Madeline L. Pendleton,* Trappe, PA
Avery T. Phillips, Bryn Athyn, PA
Morgan L. Phillips,* Annville, PA
Russell R. Pitcairn,* Bryn Athyn, PA
Curie-Ann Reid,* Philadelphia, PA
Brandy N. Rose,* Bryn Athyn, PA
Lily A. Riley, Philadelphia, PA
Dustin L. Smith, Glenview, IL
Wilma S. Tejada,* Catasauqua, PA
Dustin P. White, Advance, NC
Keir S. Williams, Huntingdon Valley, PA
Maia M. Wyncoll,* Kempton, PA

Bachelor of Science (* indicates *cum laude*)

Samuel A. Barriskell, Philadelphia, PA
Alair S. Brock,* Rochester Hills, MI
Gracelyn A. Bullard, Boston, MA
Janalene G.S.B. Phillips,* Knoxville, MD
Shelby L. Puccio, Southampton, PA
Stephanie Rath,* Abington, PA

Lamarr A. D. Crenshaw Jr. , Philadelphia, PA	Malcolm D. Riepert ,* Ontario, Canada
Natalie A. Daum ,* Huntingdon Valley, PA	Matheus M. Souza , Levittown, PA
Devyn W. Dworsky , Newark, DE	Shelly Suah , Ewing, NJ
Jacob S. Elder , Rochester, MI	Abdul Sule , Didango, Cameroon
James Flagg , Fairless Hills, PA	Brenna L. Sweeney ,* Bowie, MD
Shane B. McCurdy ,* Bryn Athyn, PA	Ashley B. Walsh ,* Phoenix, AZ
Brian E. D. Novais , Philadelphia, PA	Amber N. Wood ,* Warminster, PA
Jessica L. Philipp , Collingswood, NJ	Brianna M.B. Zabielski , Holland, PA
Sierra L. Phillipi ,* Bryn Athyn, PA	

The Valedictorian was **Brennen McCurdy**.

Academic Awards

Alair Brock

Rosemary Fuller

Maia Wyncoll

Departmental Awards:

Biology: **Janalene Phillips**

Business: **Nikita Klinisovs, Maia Wyncoll**

English and Communications: **Anisha Benson, Madeline Pendleton**

Human Society: **Marie Daum, Rosemary Fuller, Brennen McCurdy**

Psychology: **Wilma Tejada**

Religion and Arts: **Sonja Kistner, Brandy Rose**

Spirit of Service Award:

Amber Wood

Athletic Awards:

Female Scholar Athlete: **Marie Daum**

Male Scholar Athlete: **Nikita Smirnov**

Female Athlete of the Year: **Calyshonia Cogman**

Male Athlete of the Year: **Rahim Washington**



Ben Thompson



Anji Cooper



Atticus Boatman delivers the valedictory for the Boys School



Serena Boyesen



Seniors singing their class song



Jeremy Irwin and Bradley Robinson



Getting ready for the procession



Moments before becoming high school graduates



Cheyenne Andrews with her diploma



Stage reunion: Chris Waelchli with Camryn Buss, Serena Boyesen and Bradley Robinson



Phumzile Lester



A smile after receiving a diploma



Emma Reuter



Jeremy Irwin presents Faculty Award to Zach Lambertus



Seniors prepare for their class song



Jeremy Irwin presents diploma to Yates Pendleton



Girls school graduates



Zach Lambertus and Anji Cooper



Shaun and Brenda Buss with daughter Camryn



Lisa Uber and Kevin Buss



Anji Cooper delivers the valedictory for the Girls School



Allen Bedford helping a student with her graduation hood



Excited to embark on the next stage of life



One of many friendships formed at college



Jessica Bostock and
Sierra Phillipi



Russell Pitcairn



A reflective moment over time
spent at Bryn Athyn College



Greg Baker inspires
the graduates



The graduates on the steps of the Brickman Center



Procession from the Brickman Center



Richard Glenn and Sonja Kistner with her parents Annika and Dain



First graduates of Sigma Beta Delta's Bryn Athyn College chapter



Brandy Rose with President Blair



Anisha Benson



Brennen McCurdy delivers the valedictory



The Daum family: Natalie, Sheila, Rich, and Marie



Brenna Sweeney with her mother Paige



Celebratory cap toss



A kangaroo visitor



Todd Beiswenger entertains two children



The whole happy gang



A dance circle



From left, Martin Pennington, David Millar, Howard and Debra Thompson, Jenn and Todd Beiswenger



The Grounds



Martin Pennington all in for Australia

ACADEMY SECONDARY SCHOOLS GRADUATION AND AWARDS

Gail R. Cooper, who retired at the end of the school year after a storied 30 years teaching Latin in the Secondary Schools, presented her “last lecture” as the commencement speaker on June 8 in the Asplundh Field House. She spoke extemporaneously on all the choices the graduates will make in their lives – together with the consequences and their responsibilities. And she encouraged them always to choose to be kind. (See page 303 for a written version of the speech.)

There were 49 graduates, including 24 from the Girls School (11 with honors) and 25 from the Boys School (8 with honors). The graduates represented seven states (Colorado, Connecticut, Illinois, New Jersey, New York, Oregon and Pennsylvania), plus four girls from China.

Many photographs, in addition to those on pages 351 through 353, have been posted on the Schools’ Facebook page and website (www.ancss.org), courtesy of **Holly Adams** and **Serena Sutton**.

Graduates of the Girls School (* indicates With Honors)

Cheyenne Andrews ,* Gresham, OR	Caroline O’Hagan ,* Jenkintown, PA
Leah Antwi , East Orange, NJ	Kaitlyn Pierce , Philadelphia, PA
Serena Boyesen , Bryn Athyn, PA	Emma Reuter ,* Bryn Athyn, PA
Camryn Buss ,* Bryn Athyn, PA	Dara Rogers ,* Bryn Athyn, PA
Anji Cooper ,* Bryn Athyn, PA	Julia Schriver , Philadelphia, PA
Rachael Fields ,* Huntingdon Valley, PA	Mariah Sellner , Pittsburgh, PA
Ursula Friesen , Huntingdon Valley, PA	Yixin Sheng , Hangzhou, China
Fiona Hogan , Huntingdon Valley, PA	Kaylee Smith , Glenview, IL
Hannah King , Huntingdon Valley, PA	Siyu Song ,* Taian, China
Phumzile Lester , Niwot, CO	Madeline Tucker , Trumbull, CT
Xiaoyang Liu ,* Xi’an, China	Elizabeth Uber ,* Pittsburgh, PA
Margaret McCabe , Churchville, PA	Zihui Zhu ,* Guangzhou, China

The valedictorian for the Girls School was **Anji Cooper**.

Theta Alpha Gold Medals were awarded to:

Camryn Buss
Anji Cooper

An Honorary Girls School Diploma was awarded to:
Deborah Pierce

Graduates of the Boys School (* indicates With Honors)

Zachary Anusky , Philadelphia, PA	Colin O'Hara , Huntingdon Valley, PA
Atticus Boatman ,* Huntingdon Valley, PA	Joseph Paterno III , State College, PA
Kevin Buss , Bryn Athyn, PA	Yates Pendleton ,* Bryn Athyn, PA
Andrew Carr , Huntingdon Valley, PA	Zahir Reed ,* Philadelphia, PA
George Devincent , Hatboro, PA	Bradley Robinson , Queens Village, NY
Jozeph Dybalski , Langhorne, PA	Winston Roth ,* Bryn Athyn, PA
Cameron Grasela , Huntingdon Valley, PA	Christopher Schenk ,* Huntingdon Valley, PA
Joshua Haddock , Wyncote, PA	Benjamin Thompson , Abington, PA
Henry Hungaski , Kempton, PA	Matthias Thygeson , Jenkintown, PA
Hunter Jaronski , New Hope, PA	Layne Trautmann ,* Huntingdon Valley, PA
Zachary Lambertus ,* Bryn Athyn, PA	Weston Trautmann ,* Huntingdon Valley, PA
Tyrese Lesane , Philadelphia, PA	Tenzin Wade , Huntingdon Valley, PA
Matthew Marcinowski , Hatboro, PA	

The valedictorian for the Boys School graduates was **Atticus Boatman**.

Boys School Faculty Awards were presented to:
Zachary Lambertus (Gold)
Benjamin Thompson (Silver)

An Honorary Boys School Diploma was awarded to:
David Hyam

ACADEMIC AWARDS

Academic Excellence Award:

Deidre Bongers and **Camryn Buss** (Girls School)
Levi McFall (Boys School)

Emilie K. Asplundh Performing Arts Award:
Madison Zagorski

Theta Alpha International Essay Winners:
First Place: **Freya King**

Second Place: **Hannah Matsukawa**
Third Place: **Caelen Henderson and Emma Stine**
Honorable Mention: **Laken Bau-Madsen**

Major individual athletic awards:

Girls School

Outstanding Sportsmanship: **Ursula Friesen**

Outstanding Female Athletes: **Margaret McCabe and Caroline O’Hagan**

Boys School

Payson Lyman Award (for Charity and Dedication): **Colin O’Hara**

Stanley F. Ebert Award: (For Courage, Integrity, Perseverance, Sportsmanship and Scholarship): **Yates Pendleton**

GENERAL CHURCH BOARD AND CORPORATION

At the May 17-18 meetings of the General Church Board of Directors the **Rt. Rev. Peter M. Buss Jr.**, soon to assume the role of Executive Bishop on July 1, announced the theme for the 2020 General Assembly: “Behold, I make all things new.”

The Assembly will take place June 18-21 in Bryn Athyn. That 19th of June will be the 250th anniversary of the birth of the New Church, with the Lord sending His disciples throughout heaven, proclaiming that “The Lord God Jesus Christ reigns.”

General Church Education: Bishop Buss also reported on a faculty in-service held in Bryn Athyn in March. There were 110 faculty members from the Academy Secondary Schools and the Bryn Athyn, Kempton and Washington New Church Schools renewing their focus on the spiritual aspects of teaching and attending workshops on the critical role of creativity in the classroom.

General Church Outreach: **Bishop David Lindrooth** updated the Grand Human Project – a church community offering support, learning, service, worship and interaction with others who have found the New Church online.

The plan is to work with three pilot congregations, using online marketing to support the development of online communities within the geographic regions around the pilot areas.

Bishop Buss reported on a refined research and development plan for two pilot locations in the Ivory Coast and Togo. A project management position and a five-year budget have been created to implement the plan.

Budgets: Executive Director David Frazier reported a budget surplus of \$1.5 million as of March 31, with \$5.1 million in revenue and \$3.7 million expenses. Of that surplus \$1 million has been earmarked for the qualified pension plan, plus increasing the annual contribution to the pension trust.

The operating budget for 2020 projects a surplus of about \$15,000. The capital budget of \$326,000 includes funds for Cairncrest restoration projects, land and building in the Ivory Coast and Togo, and a website for the Grand Human Project.

The Advancement Office reported a large increase in contributions this year due to a generous one-time estate gift. A position is included in the 2020 budget for a part-time church-wide communications person.

General Church Corporation: At the annual meeting of the General Church on May 18 in Bryn Athyn, six new members were elected to three-year terms:

- **Allen J. Bedford**, Huntingdon Valley, Pennsylvania
- **Darren Bau-Madsen**, Berthoud, Colorado
- **Jesse Cole II**, Glenview, Illinois
- **Charlotte Gyllenhaal**, Glenview, Illinois
- **James G. Uber**, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
- **John F. Walko**, Abington, Pennsylvania

Incumbents re-elected were:

- **Beth Brock**, Huntingdon Valley, Pennsylvania
- **Darryl G. Hasen**, Old Greenwich, Connecticut
- **Kirk Hasen**, Huntingdon Valley, Pennsylvania
- **Brent Hyatt**, Bowie, Maryland
- **David Radcliffe**, Mitchellville, Maryland

Thanked for their years of service were retiring Board members:

- **Andrew R. Bruell**, Felsted, United Kingdom
- **Robert M. Dike**, Atlanta, Georgia
- **P. Blake Hill**, Kitchener, Ontario, Canada
- **Lee Horigan**, Toronto, Ontario, Canada
- **Daniel P. Martz**, Huntingdon Valley, Pennsylvania
- **David Norman**, McGregor, Texas

ACADEMY BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Highlights from the May 3-4 meetings of the Academy Board of Trustees:

Bryn Athyn College: President Brian Blair reported that the new Student Center should be completed on time and on budget this summer. It will open for the fall term and will be dedicated at Charter Day.

Deposits are higher for enrollment next year, with dormitory occupancy increasing also.

The College is beginning the re-accreditation process with self-study, anticipating an accreditation visit in 2022.

The College has gained approval to offer online courses for credit, beginning with graduate offering in religion and education.

Bergen Jungé has retired from the faculty in the Business Department. **Dr. Allen Bedford** has resigned from the College to take a new position as Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs at Bemidji State University in Minnesota.

Academy Secondary Schools: Managing Director James Adams reports that the schools are midway in their preparation for Middle States Accreditation.

The schools had a very successful fund-raising year, including \$2 million for endowment, plus other gifts. A contribution for the full cost of a new turf field for Girls School athletics was approved.

Next year's enrollment anticipates an enrollment of 215, and the budget projects a \$1.5 million deficit. A request for an enrollment consultant to examine and update the schools' process was approved.

Faculty and administration were involved in very useful curriculum meetings with General Church Schools.

Glencairn Museum: Director Brian Henderson said they continue to run many programs for schools, the community and the surrounding area, with adult workshops sold out.

A major preventative infrastructure project will include geothermal climate control. This will significantly reduce costs and protect the collection, allowing for borrowing pieces from other museums. It means the museum will have to close for about a year but it will remain active, taking some programs and displays on the road and providing time to develop new programs.

Cairnwood Estate: Director Shannon Walko said Cairnwood is becoming a gateway for visitors to the Historic District, where people gain an understanding of the Church, the schools and the community.

There were 76 wedding receptions last year, plus increased events for

school and Church, plus corporate rentals. A deficit of \$30,000 is anticipated this year, and slightly higher next year, but Cairnwood is working to close the gap and achieve a balanced budget.

BRYN ATHYN COLLEGE SYMPOSIUM

Lisa Childs

Upcoming: Breaking the Shell: Connecting the Spiritual Cascade to the Physical with New Church Science. A *Theistic Science Symposium* presented by *Swedenborg Scientific Association* (host) and the *Theistic Science Group* will be held Saturday, October 12, 2019, 9 a.m.–5 p.m., in Pendleton Hall, Bryn Athyn College. Free registration requested, see below.

The SSA would like to introduce the *Theistic Science Group* -- a collaboration of New Church scientists and theologians working on a model of scientific principles based on the axiom of spiritual-natural causation. If natural things and processes are derived from spiritual causes, how can these be described in scientific terms? Using doctrines from Swedenborg's scientific and theological works, the *Theistic Science Group* asks: "How does spirit descend into nature, creating as it comes?"

Questions on the origin of matter, divine order, in nature, and the emergence of organic forms are being addressed by the group. Their process will be reported at this first *Theistic Science Symposium*. See <http://swedenborg-philosophy.org> for details, updates and registration. Housing is available for a charge at Bryn Athyn College. Talks will be live-streamed and posted on YouTube. Contact: SwedenborgScientific@gmail.com.

Agenda:

Reuben Bell, president, *Swedenborg Scientific Association* – Welcome

Ron Horvath, chairman, *Theistic Science Group* -- Introduction to who and what is the *Theistic Science Group*, and what are we doing here?

Reuben Bell – The Emergence of Organic Forms, with Q & A

Andy Heilman – Introduction to discrete degrees in New Church Science

Ian Thompson – Enneads of Spiritual and Physical Sub-degrees

Andy Heilman and **Ian Thompson** – Q & A

Lunch – Lunches available for purchase at the college cafeteria. Book exhibit for review and purchase, including new releases.

Steve Smith– Puzzles and Fine-Tuning in Physics and Biology, with Q&A

Ian Thompson – A Mechanism for Spiritual Influx into the Physical (the *Nexus*), with Q & A

Panel Discussion moderated by **Dan Synnestvedt**

Ron Horvath – Summary remarks: Where are we going from here? Not

just an intellectual experience; a call to action in research and observations of spirit acting into nature according to the principles discussed today.

New book releases at the symposium, highlighting:

Intelligent Default: *Using Emanuel Swedenborg's Theistic Science to Solve Contemporary Problems In Natural Philosophy.* By Reuben P. Bell, Publisher: Swedenborg Scientific Association. Will be for sale at Amazon.com and swedenborg-philosophy.org.

JINDABYNE RETREAT, AUSTRALIA

The Rev. Todd J. Beiswenger

It was probably 2004 or 2005, and I had made arrangements to make a product presentation at Ford Motor Company in Dearborn, Michigan. One of my colleagues had arranged to make a pitch at General Motors in Detroit, and I was enlisted to be the presenter there too. It was going through my mind that I was selling now to the big boys and everything had to go right. No mistakes would be made, no detail overlooked. I had a Dell laptop that was fairly robust, but I was well aware of the possibility of technology going awry, so I brought every possible cable and adapter I could think of to make sure my computer talked to their projector. Failure was not an option. Since I was prepared, everything went just as it should.

In the past 15 years or so apparently I lost that lesson. These days I travel with a tablet, and a single video adapter to connect to the projector. I've never had a problem – until now. I did not have the adapter or port that the venue needed to connect to the projector, and since I rely on technology to help give my presentations some punch with audio and video clips, I was wondering how I was going to recover. Thankfully **Claudia Horner** was there, who not only had the right output on her computer, but the right software too.

We had a different array of presenters this year. In fact, I think I'm the only one who presented this year and last. While it is normal to have some different presenters year to year, this was the first time in 27 years that **Ruth and Julian Duckworth** were not with us, so he was not a presenter. **Howard Thompson** took his spot, and we also had the help of **David Millar, Joe Vandermeer** and **Sarah Walker**.

Not only did we have new presenters, but it was a new venue as well. I was a little skeptical as it didn't have a swimming pool and some of the other activities we like to keep the kids busy and happy in the afternoons. But it didn't take long to fall in love with this new venue. We made it down to the lake one afternoon for a swim, but the kids had no trouble staying busy with

board games, riding bikes and interacting with wildlife. Alpacas, horses and kangaroos roamed around freely. The horse was very tame and willing to let the kids pet it, which was a new experience for most of us city dwellers.

Meanwhile, some adults went on bush walks, worked on puzzles, took lessons from Jenn on how to Zentangle, did yoga with Julie, or just hung out with people they haven't seen much of in the last year.

Evenings offered entertainment each night, including a "Price Is Right" set of games, two trivia events, square dancing and talent night. We only had 55 or so campers but had 18 acts. Many were not solo, so there was a very high participation rate.

My challenge is to let you see how our time in Jindabyne made people feel. It's one thing to give a rundown of what we did, but that's not what these yearly events are about. It's really about experiencing a heavenly community right here on earth. Usually when people think of heaven, they think of a place we go after we die, where there will be great joy, happiness and bliss. The Writings tell us that heaven is not just a place, but also a state of mind and as a result the joy, happiness and bliss of heaven can be had here and now.

The problem is that when we do experience it here and now, it becomes painful to leave it behind. As I saw people tearing up as they said their farewells, it was clear they knew they were leaving behind something really special. A place where our spiritual understanding grows, but more importantly a place where because of our shared spiritual beliefs it allows for deeper friendships to be created and maintained.

I know that for me, these retreats are the highlight of the church year. And based on what I observe, I don't think I'm the only one who thinks that.

(See photos on page 356.)

SPIRIT & LIFE BIBLE STUDY NOW ON YOUTUBE

Rev. Todd J. Beiswenger

For eight years the **Rev. Dr. Jonathan S. Rose** ran a Bible study class in Bryn Athyn. Its purpose was to look at the Bible, the whole Bible, and nothing but the Bible, but through a Swedenborgian lens. The classes were audio recorded, then a few months later they switched to broadcasting live on UStream. That's where the full library of videos still resides but that's starting to change.

Last year a project began to upload all of the old recordings to YouTube. Not many people were finding the videos on UStream, so to get them to a wider audience a transition was needed. The idea is to upload one video per week, the same pace as the original classes, to build up an audience of subscribers on YouTube. The more subscribers and views of the videos you

have, the more YouTube will promote them.

Views of the videos are picking up slowly but surely. The most viewed video is *Seeing the Horses and Chariots of Fire – The Meaning of Elijah and Elisha*, with 542 views as of this writing.

STOCKHOLM REGIONAL CLERGY MEETINGS, MAY 7-11, 2019

Reprinted with permission from the Newsletter for Great Britain, June 2019

The Rev. Lou Synnestvedt, Pastor, Colchester, England

Our host pastor, the Rev. **Göran R. Appelgren**, gave the opening talk, “Outreach Effort in Stockholm,” which served as a keynote. Many of the themes and passages he shared were picked up by others in discussions throughout the week. The value of social media and artistic display was discussed and evident in the lovely brochures and website design for the Swedish audience. Göran spoke of how we should carry among ourselves an integrity of teaching and remember that the New Church begins from love. (*Arcana Coelestia* 3773:2)

You may wish to visit: www.swedenborgsminneskyrka.se

The **Rt. Rev. Brian W. Keith**, set to retire at the end of June, offered a paper with the intriguing title: “How Bad Can We Be and Still Get to Heaven?” Demonstrating the Lord’s intention to save everyone, Brian quotes from the Gospel: “And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to Myself.” (*John* 12:32) This intention to save is illustrated by the story of Abraham appealing to Jehovah over the rescue of the good from the destruction of Sodom. (See *Arcana Coelestia* 2140) Included in the presentation was the idea of the mustard seed. The Lord may help us get started with the small beginnings of faithfulness that can be fulfilled in the world to come.

Bishop Bradley D. Heinrichs, recently ordained as one of two Assistant Bishops, gave a paper: “As For Me and My House, We Will Serve the Lord!” This was a clear and inviting assembly of teachings that may serve as a guide for our spiritual lives and our life together as a church. Brad spoke of the need to remind ourselves and our children of our history as a church, to see and appreciate the journey, the struggles and the blessings of those who went before us, as we see in the example of Joshua. (*Joshua* 4:1-24; *Apocalypse Explained* 700:11-14)

The Rev. Peter N. Devassy spoke from the heart on his experiences in sharing the New Church in his home country. He referred to India as “God’s own country.” Peter has received much resistance from those of traditional Christianity in his area, yet spoke of the miracle of his being one who is living with the great God. Even in the face of negativity, he finds peace in praying for others.

The Rev. John Jin focused on his work with the China Mission. John's work in South Korea, including the training of ministers, has been a gateway for outreach in China, a work with unique challenges. Yet the Lord in His Providence is beginning to open hearts to the New Church in this great country. One promising avenue is to build a mental bridge between our teachings on correspondences of nature and spirit with their traditional Confucian philosophy.

The Rev. Ethan D. McCardell spoke on "Developing a Model for New Church Spiritual Practice." Ethan shared lessons from his training and work as a hospital chaplain. He referenced the passage from Scripture where a man responded wisely to the Lord's mention of the Two Great Commandments: "You are not far from the Kingdom of God." (*Mark 12:34*)

Spiritual practice begins with an awareness of this reality and moves a person along a path toward a goal, which is a heavenly state of life. Ethan pointed to the teachings about the affections of knowing, understanding and seeing, and then asked how we might develop methods of practice that help people in their spiritual walk. (See *Divine Love and Wisdom* 412)

The Rev. Louis D. Synnestvedt shared reflections from his recent studies of the Joseph story in the book of *Genesis* and the *Arcana*. He mentioned how the New Church has common ground with this much-loved story, not only with Christians and Jews, but also with Muslims since Joseph is favorably portrayed in the Quran. In the end, Joseph is reconciled with his brothers foretelling a time when the Lord restores harmony and good will among the religions of the world.

Visits and Outings

The Rev. Ethan D. McCardell

After Wednesday morning presentations by Göran and myself, the group headed off to see some of the sights in Stockholm marked in commemoration of Swedenborg, including: St. Jacob's Church, which still has the original font used for Swedenborg's baptism; the apartment where he lived; the park with a statue depicting him showing "an angel" to the girl who lived next door; his actual summerhouse, followed by a visit to a full-sized replica which we could enter; and ending with a dinner in a local pub where we are certain Swedenborg actually dined!

On Thursday, a visit to the Swedish Royal Academy of Sciences, which houses first-edition manuscripts of the Writings. We were able to engage with the volumes (including pre-theological as well as theological works), holding them in our hands and turning the pages. This was especially moving to all.

Afterwards we were given an update of the new scanning process being undertaken in Kempton, Pennsylvania, to get better images of these editions

for future use. An explanation was given of the process, with a demonstration of the unique machine used for the project.

After further presentations by the ministers, we were treated to a tour of the extensive library upstairs in the Stockholm New Church and given an explanation of what they are doing to catalog their materials and make that data available to the Swedenborg Library in Bryn Athyn, and thus to the wider world.

Back downstairs we then enjoyed a beautiful catered dinner with the Stockholm congregation. Each minister shared some reflections on the week, as well as gratitude to the group for so graciously hosting us. All in all it was a week filled with the presence of the Lord through our connection with the Word and one another. A taste of heaven!

(Addition from Lou Synnestvedt.) On Saturday a group of ministers and their wives traveled to Uppsala to visit the grand cathedral where Swedenborg's father was rector before becoming Bishop of Skara, and where a handsome granite sarcophagus contains Emanuel's remains.



Uppsala Cathedral

BRYN ATHYN REGIONAL CLERGY MEETINGS, JUNE 2019

(From a report by the Rev. Jeremy Simons in the Bryn Athyn Post)

The Bryn Athyn Church hosted regional clergy meetings for 25 ministers, who heard the following 11 presentations:

- **New Bishop's Session: The Rt. Rev. Peter M. Buss Jr.** discussed what he is proud of and not so proud of in the General Church, and how he plans to approach his new job.
- **What Do We Mean by the Term 'Use'?** The Rev. Stephen Cole showed that we don't know what the Writings mean by the term "use." It is not our job but is really about our ends and loves.
- **Permission not Will: Swedenborg's Theodicy: The Rev. Dr. Andrew Dibb** explained that theodicy is the attempt to answer the question of how God could allow evil to come into the world and persist, and gave the history of this line of thought.
- **The General Church Approach to Doctrine: The Rev. Jeremy Simons** discussed the hypothesis that genuine scholarship in the Word is an important part of the answers to the questions that trouble the Church. Part two of this hypothesis is that the methods that guide this kind of scholarship are defined in the Heavenly Doctrine itself.
- **Themes from Donald Rose's 1980s Council of the Clergy Papers: The Rev. Eric Carswell** said these clergy papers were greatly loved and discussed his themes and central points.
- **Canoeing the Mountains: The Rev. Chuck Blair** said Lewis and Clark discovered that their canoes were of little use to them once they reached the Rockies. The tools and methods that have carried the Church to this point may need to be modified for the way ahead.
- **New Parents to the Academy Secondary Schools: The Rev. Barry Halterman** talked about how much he enjoys his work in the Secondary Schools with families who are new to the Church.
- **What was Abrogated at the First Coming and How Was it Known to be Abrogated? The Rev. Kenneth Alden** said the Writings speak frequently about the laws and teachings that the Lord abolished at His coming, such as the sacrifices, polygamy and the dietary laws. But when we look into it we may wonder how He did this, since most of these things were barely mentioned in the Gospels.
- **Divine Providence and Leadership: The Rt. Rev. Peter M. Buss Jr.** described how the theme of each chapter in *Divine Providence* describes a principle of leadership.

- **How Good Does One Have to Be to Get to Heaven – or How Bad Can One Be and Still Get to Heaven?** The Rt. Rev. Brian Keith showed how many passages there are that address this common question, and that there are no easy answers.
- **New Church Pro-Slavery Thoughts: The Rev. Christopher Barber** said early New Church members took varying positions on slavery in the first half of the 19th century, a fact that is as disturbing as it is surprising. What mistakes of judgment might we be making today that future generations will find similarly shocking?

BOYNTON BEACH RETREAT 2020

Bob Brickman, Director, says next year's Retreat is set for January 26-30, 2020, at the Duncan Center, with costs unchanged for the fifth year. Registration material will be sent out in the late summer.

Because of problems with acoustics and video facilities in the chapel, where the last few retreats have been held, the 2020 Retreat will move back to Meeks Hall, across from the dining hall.

Speakers have been secured, two of whom will do four-day presentations and two who will be on for two days. They are:

- **Dr. Devin Zuber** (four days): Devin is Assistant Professor of American Studies at the Graduate Theological University in Berkeley, California. He has studied and written about Swedenborg for many years.
- **Chelsea Odhner** (four days): Chelsea is Director of Productions for the Off the Left Eye video series of the Swedenborg Foundation.
- **Bruce Henderson** (two days): Bruce is a former newspaper editorial page editor, Director of Development and Communications for the General Church and Academy of the New Church, and current editor of *New Church Life*. He will be talking about his books, *Window to Eternity* and *Why Does God Let it Happen?*, and especially his latest, *A New Key to the Bible*.
- **The Rev. Alan Cowley** (two days), Pastor of the Boynton Beach New Church.

For further information, contact Bob Brickman at BoyntonBeachRetreat@newchurchboyntonbeach.org

Life Lines

CHOOSE THIS DAY

I'm quite sure that Greg Baker and Gail Cooper did not compare notes before their commencement addresses for Bryn Athyn College and the Academy Secondary Schools. But there were complementary themes.

Greg focused on the educational experience at the College as “Transformative” for students as their emerging rational minds begin to grasp the rational revelation of the New Church and apply it to their lives.

Gail talked to Academy graduates about the importance of the choices they'll make throughout their lives – dealing with the consequences and their own responsibilities.

Norman Cousins, a brilliant editor and philosopher, wrote in his book, *Human Options* (1981): “The ultimate test of education is whether it makes people comfortable in the presence of options; which is to say, whether it enables them to pursue their possibilities with confidence.”

New Church education adds a spiritual “test,” that our choices are fundamentally spiritual and that we are choosing – every day – our eternal destiny, hopefully in heaven.

Our choices – and the loves directing them – are what transform us. Some of those choices loom large and are carefully considered. Many seem inconsequential. Some we are hardly aware of as choices. But we have the sobering and hopeful teaching:

For every smallest moment of a person's life involves a series of consequences extending to eternity, each moment being as a new beginning to those which follow. (*Heavenly Secrets* 3854)

We have the opportunity each day to choose a “new beginning,” as did Joshua in challenging his followers to “choose this day whom you will serve” – the false gods of their fathers or the one true God. He left no doubt about the “transformative” nature of his choice: “As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.” (*Joshua* 24:15)

(BMH)

RESTORING NATURE'S BEAUTY

Some may deny that the beauty of nature comes from a Divine Creator, but the fact that man did not create it is all too evident. Looking at nature, and what we've done to it, should impress upon us how dependent we are upon an order of life that we did not create and which represents a wisdom far beyond our own.

While in the past people struggled to conquer nature, now we are engaged in a struggle to undo the damage we've done to it and restore its balance and beauty. The everglades in Florida are a dramatic example. After practically destroying that unique and invaluable natural ecosystem in the name of progress and profit, now we are desperately trying to save what's left.

Ancient peoples lived in harmony with nature and felt a kinship with the mountains and trees and animals because they perceived that they actually were related to them, having been created by the same Divine Spirit. The key to living in harmony with nature (to be a "child of nature"), and with one another ("the brotherhood of man"), is the acknowledgment of God as Creator and our Heavenly Father.

The modern scientific view removes God from the picture and makes nature itself our creator; and yet our immersion in human technology has largely alienated us from the natural environment. Ironically, the very scientism that grew out of the modern belief that man is nothing more than a natural creature has existentially severed our connection with nature.

This alienation has given rise to the longing to "get back to nature." A major selling point for grocery items is the claim that they are "natural." For the sake of their children's mental and physical health, parents are making an effort to get them to spend less time staring at electronic screens and go play outside.

The New Church doctrine of correspondence heals the breach between man and nature, not by reducing humans to only natural creatures, a species of animal, but by revealing the essential humanity present in nature from its Divinely Human Creator. By means of this and other teachings we can see the face of God, and thus of the human beings made in His image, reflected in nature as in a mirror.

For there is nothing beautiful and delightful in the skies or on the earth, which is not in some way representative of the Lord's kingdom. The reason is that they have all come forth, and continually come forth, that is, subsist, from the influx of the Lord through heaven. It is the same regarding the human body, which comes forth and subsists by means of the soul, which is why all things in the body both in general and in particular are representative of the soul. (*Arcana Coelestia* 1807.2-3)

Perceiving the Divinely Human Soul of nature opens our eyes to a new and deeper appreciation of nature's beauty.

(WEO)

THE BRIDGE BETWEEN CHURCH AND STATE

The editorial, *Between Dream and Destiny* (page 280), quotes American President Calvin Coolidge proclaiming on its 150th anniversary that the Declaration of Independence was “a spiritual document.”

Coolidge is sometimes scorned in history as “Silent Cal” – a man of few words and not great intellect. But while he was not loquacious – perhaps a blessing among politicians – he chose his words wisely. His address in Philadelphia on July 5, 1926, is one of the great speeches in American history. He was unequivocal that faith and religion are essential to moral government.

Consider how these excerpts still resonate in today’s world, frame recurring issues in spiritual terms, and speak to our enduring challenges and responsibilities:

In its main features the Declaration of Independence is a great spiritual document. It is a declaration not of material but of spiritual conceptions. Equality, liberty, popular sovereignty, the rights of man – these are not elements which we can see and touch. They are ideals. They have their source and their roots in religious convictions. They belong to the unseen world. Unless the faith of the American people in these religious convictions is to endure, the principles of our Declaration will perish. We cannot continue to enjoy the result if we neglect and abandon the cause.

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About the Declaration there is a finality that is exceedingly restful. It is often asserted that the world has made a great deal of progress since 1776, that we have had new thoughts and new experiences which have given us a great advance over the people of that day, and that we may therefore very well discard their conclusions for something more modern. But that reasoning cannot be applied to this great charter.

If all men are created equal, that is final. If they are endowed with inalienable rights, that is final. No advance, no progress can be made beyond these propositions. If anyone wishes to deny their truth or their soundness, the only direction in which he can proceed historically is not forward but backward toward the time when there was no equality, no rights of the individual, no rule of the people. Those who wish to proceed in that direction cannot lay claim to progress. They are reactionary. Their ideas are not modern, but more ancient, than those of the Revolutionary fathers.

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If there is any one thing among us that is established beyond question, it is self-government – the right of the people to rule. If there is any failure in respect to any of these principles, it is because there is a failure on the part of individuals to observe them. We hold that the duly authorized expression of the will of the people is a divine sanction. But even in that we come back to the theory of John Wise that ‘democracy is Christ’s government.’ The ultimate sanction of law rests on the righteous authority of the Almighty.

Ours is a government of the people. It represents their will. Its officers may sometimes go astray, but that is not a reason for criticizing the principles of our institutions. The real heart of the American Government depends upon the heart of the people. It is from that source that we must look for genuine reform. It is to that cause that we must ascribe all our results.

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Our forefathers came to certain conclusions and decided upon certain courses of action which have been a great blessing to the world. Before we can understand their conclusions we must go back and review the course which they followed. We must think the thoughts which they thought. Their intellectual life centered around the meetinghouse. They were intent upon religious worship. While there were always among them men of deep learning, and later those who had comparatively large possessions, the mind of the people was not so much engrossed in how much they knew, or how much they had, as in how they were going to live.

While scantily provided with other literature, there was a wide acquaintance with the Scriptures. Over a period as great as that which measures the existence of our independence they were subject to this discipline not only in their religious life and educational training, but also in their political thought. They were a people who came under the influence of a great spiritual development and acquired a great moral power.

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No other theory is adequate to explain or comprehend the Declaration of Independence. It is a product of the spiritual insight of the people. We live in an age of science and of abounding accumulation of material things. These did not create our Declaration. Our Declaration created them. The things of the spirit come first. Unless we cling to that, all our material prosperity, overwhelming though it may appear, will turn to a barren scepter in our grasp.

If we are to maintain the great heritage which has been bequeathed to us, we must be like-minded as the fathers who created it. We must not sink into pagan materialism. We must cultivate the reverence which they had for the things that are holy. We must follow the spiritual and moral leadership which they showed. We must keep replenished, that they may glow with a more compelling flame, the altar fires before which they worshipped.

(BMH)

SEPARATION OF CHURCH AND STATE

This often-quoted phrase simply means there should be no church established by the state. It does not mean banishing religion from the public square – although many today seem to think, or wish to think, that it does. If it did

mean that, then Lincoln would have been deprived of his main argument against slavery, just to name one example.

The phrase "separation of church and state" is not in the U.S. Constitution, in the First Amendment or anywhere else, though people often say it is. The phrase is actually from a letter President Thomas Jefferson wrote to members of a Baptist Church organization to assure them that the First Amendment protected their right to practice their religion free from interference by the government.

The reason for the Constitution's "building of a wall of separation between Church and state," as Jefferson put it in his letter, was not to insulate the government from the influence of religion, but to protect the free exercise of religion from meddling by the government.

It's a good principle but observing it has become more problematic as the religious landscape in the United States has become more diverse. Strange new cults and fanatical offshoots of long-established faiths strain the boundaries of what counts as a "religion." This results in a conflict between the restriction on government intrusion, on the one hand, and the government's responsibility to protect the rights and lives of the citizens from violence or other nefarious activities perpetrated in the name of "religion." Surely Jefferson and the other architects of religious freedom in America never intended that the principle of governmental non-interference in religion would be used to shelter violent fanaticism.

Whatever the resolution of this dilemma turns out to be, the principle of separation is a good one – as long as it is not interpreted to mean that government by the people requires the people to stifle their religious beliefs as they go about the business of governing themselves.

(WEO)

"AMERICA THE BEAUTIFUL"

This well-known patriotic song extols the beauty of America's "spacious skies, amber waves of grain, and purple mountain majesties above the fruited plain." But natural beauty apart from spiritual beauty is incomplete, and so the song goes on to ask God to "shed His grace on thee, and crown thy good with brotherhood, from sea to shining sea."

Americans, like people of every land, want their country to be a *good* country, "a city set on a hill," a beacon of virtue as well as liberty and prosperity; a beacon of spiritual and moral goodness as well as military might. Along with its praise for the country's natural beauty, "America the Beautiful" expresses this desire for spiritual goodness and the country's need for God to "mend thine every flaw" in order attain it.

America! America!
 God mend thine every flaw,
 Confirm thy soul in self-control,
 Thy liberty in law!

America! America!
 May God thy gold refine,
 Till all success be nobleness,
 And every gain divine!

(WEO)

“GOD BLESS AMERICA”

People of all nations should ask for the Lord's blessing upon their country and reflect upon the profound implications of that plea. In the United States, the phrase "God bless America" is used so routinely at the end of political speeches that it's become a cliché, but it expresses something very important.

First of all, it serves as a reminder that God exists and has power to bestow blessings upon a land. In fact, not only *can* God bring peace and prosperity, but ultimately these blessings cannot be sustained apart from God.

Heaven is heaven because of the Lord's presence there. Hell is hell because His presence there is unwanted, unacknowledged and unperceived. A nation that turns away from God and embraces secularism, materialism and hedonism can't at the same time seriously ask for or expect God's blessing.

America is a pluralistic society. But belief in God is common to all religions, and pluralism doesn't mean there can be no national acknowledgment of God, but just that the government cannot sponsor any particular religion.

Americans are free, of course, to deny God – but that very freedom was established and is maintained by a civil order that grew out of the revolutionary declaration that human beings are "endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights."

That declaration was the seed out of which the whole tree of American liberty grew. And we might note that the philosophical "tree" that produced that "seed" in America had its roots in ancient Greek philosophy, Roman law and English common law; and, of course, most deeply in the eternal Word of God.

God is referred to four times in the Declaration of Independence: as "God," "Creator," "Supreme Judge of the World," and as the source of "divine providence." Should America cease to acknowledge God it will lose its soul and the very reason for its existence.

There is no question of the Lord's desire to be present and bless the people of every nation. The only question is how well prepared they are to receive Him. Officially, on its currency, the United States of America claims that

"In God We Trust." In so far as those words are true, the prayer "God bless America" will continue to be answered.

(WEO)

PREPARING FOR GOD'S BLESSING

When the Lord came into the world 2,000 years ago He sent John the Baptist to prepare people to receive Him. John's message was: "Repent!" It was not a message everyone wanted to hear, but many responded because they knew in their hearts that they needed to do this.

Our regeneration today begins with repentance: examining ourselves in light of the Lord's Word, feeling deeply sorry for our sins, and praying for the Lord's help in doing better. Then, as we work on changing our behavior, the Lord will at the same time transform our inward thoughts and affections to be more responsive to heavenly influences.

Actual reformation is not easy, but difficult and painful, for it involves that spiritual struggle with our lower self which the Writings call "the combats of temptation." (*Apocalypse Explained* 750)

The spiritual renewal of a nation, comprised of a great number of people, all at different stages in their own personal path of life, is a more general development, less intense and concentrated, than the regeneration of an individual person. But the same general order of spiritual progress applies as in the life of an individual: "cease to do evil, learn to do good." (*Isaiah* 1:16-17)

This order is worth reflecting on. If a nation wants to become better spiritually and morally, the first step, which is absolutely essential, is to stop doing and celebrating what is bad. Every step away from evil is a step into good. And with goodness comes peace and happiness.

(WEO)

THE KEY TO NATIONAL PROSPERITY

Human happiness results from human virtue; and heaven, with God at its center, is the wellspring of human virtue. The presence of the Church, therefore, is essential to the human happiness of a nation. And, of course, the state of the Church itself determines how well it can carry out its mission. "Salt is good, but if the salt itself loses its flavor, what's going to season it?" (*Luke* 14:34)

The government is responsible for maintaining and improving the *civil* order. Educators work to instill *moral* values. But only the Church is dedicated to promoting the distinctly *spiritual* work of repentance, reformation and regeneration. And whether this is recognized or not, the spiritual is the lifeblood of the moral and civil order of a nation.

The soundness of a nation as a whole depends upon the spiritual condition of the individuals who make up the nation. Ultimately, the words the Lord

spoke to His disciples apply to nations as well as individuals: "Abide in Me . . . for without Me you can do nothing." (*John* 15:4 and 5)

A nation formed by people who abide in the Lord will in turn provide a civil and moral environment that encourages and supports individuals in their spiritual work of resisting (not celebrating) evil and cultivating virtue in their own individual lives.

(WEO)

THE THIRD MOUNTAIN

David Brooks, cultural guru for *The New York Times*, is always exploring trends, searching for deeper values and a higher path to guide our way. He's written a number of best-selling books, in addition to his columns. One was *The Road to Character* – a road "less traveled" but worth choosing.

Too many people today, he says, are caught up in the indulgences of the Me Generation, more in pursuit of achievement than character. This is the culture of the cell phone "selfie" and the narcissism of Facebook. His underlying theme is that we need to get back to faith – guided by something greater than ourselves.

His latest book is a natural progression: *The Second Mountain: The Quest for a Moral Life*. For much of our lives we are consumed with climbing our "first mountain" – personal goals, career, marriage, success. The "second mountain" is a higher calling. It goes beyond serving self to commitment to a cause – to family, to a vocation (different from a job), to faith and community. The mountain-top goal is achieving a more meaningful life, which leads to joy.

"If you want to inculcate character in someone else," he says, "teach them how to form commitments – temporary ones in childhood, provisional ones in youth, permanent ones in adulthood. Commitments are the school of moral formation."

Brooks is a serious, sincere thinker. Sometimes he's too caught up in the psycho-babble of today's intellectualism, but his intentions are good. For all the great thinkers he quotes endlessly I cannot help thinking that he would love the profound simplicity of the doctrine of use as the key to a moral and satisfying life.

It took him two tries to get marriage right, but he believes in the ideal – which we call conjugal and he calls "maximum marriage." He describes it in the story of an old man talking to his daughter about his wife, just after she has died:

Love itself is what is left over when being in love has burned away, and this is both an art and a fortunate accident. Your mother and I had it. We had roots that grew toward each other underground, and when all the pretty blossoms had fallen from our branches we found that we were one tree and not two.

Brooks wasn't always serious about religion, but is now, and although he has been immersed in it most of his life, he is still a seeker. He was raised Jewish and has come to love his faith. But he has been exposed to Christianity throughout his life, beginning in Christian school camps and organizations, and loves and respects it as well.

He understands that the Bible is not just a history of ancient peoples but speaks to our own lives. "Adam and Eve experienced temptation and fall from grace, and we experience temptation and fall from grace. Moses led his people from bondage meandering toward a promised land, and we take a similar spiritual journey. . . . These stories are not just common things that happen to people. They are representations of an ongoing moral life. We are alive in the natural world, and we use science to understand that layer of aliveness. We are also alive in another dimension, the dimension of spirit and meaning."

These Biblical stories, he says, "describe a great moral drama," and "we are still a part of this drama."

Although he still considers himself Jewish, he reveres Christianity, especially the Sermon on the Mount: "I can't unread *Matthew*. The beatitudes are the moral sublime, the source of awe, the moral purity that takes your breath away and toward which everything points. In the beatitudes we see the ultimate road map for our lives."

And he is deeply impressed by this perceptive quote from a theologian: "The Kingdom of Heaven is not a place that you go to; it's a place you come from. It's a transformed way of looking at the world, which comes about when you move deeply into God and God moves more deeply into you."

But for all the writers and thinkers he quotes – from St. Augustine and Jane Austen to William Wordsworth and Yo-Yo Ma – the one he has yet to discover is Emanuel Swedenborg. That would give him a whole new mountain to climb – a whole new perspective to savor.

Brooks has read all the "right" books on culture and theology in his "quest for a moral life," but he misses the profound simplicity of what the Lord teaches:

If you keep My Commandments, you shall abide in My love. . . . These things I have spoken unto you, that My joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.
(*John* 15:10,11)

Love the Lord. Love the neighbor.
Now there's a mountaintop.

(BMH)

MOUNTAIN CLIMBING 101

One of the things that concerns David Brooks in his moral quest is what education today – especially higher education – is doing to undermine the goal. He laments that so many of our universities once were morally based

but now are largely humanistic. He quotes the president of Mount Holyoke a century ago: “Character is the main object of education.” Now the focus is on “the research ideal that offers little in the way for the university to engage the student as a whole person, an entity that has longings and a hunger for meaning. It subtly says: Ignore the soul behind the curtain.”

He quotes Steven Pinker of Harvard: “I have no idea how to get my students to build a self or become a soul. It isn’t taught in graduate school, and in the hundreds of faculty appointments and promotions I have participated in, we’ve never evaluated a candidate on how well he or she could accomplish it.”

Our universities, Brooks laments, “are information rich and meaning poor.” He studied classic Western Civilization at the University of Chicago, including the Great Books, which “inspired me to spend my life pursuing philosophy – to spend decades trying to find a worldview that could handle the complexity of reality but also offer a coherent vision that could frame my responses to events and guide me through the vicissitudes of life.”

“Too many colleges,” he says, “feel like one another. But the ones that really leave a mark of their students (St. John’s, Kenyon, Wheaton, MIT) have the courage to be distinct. You can love or hate such places. But when you meet a graduate you know it, and when they meet each other, even decades hence, they know they have something important in common.”

Such institutions, he says – echoing Greg Baker – “don’t merely educate; they transform.”

That transformational goal is articulated in the distinctive Mission Statement of Bryn Athyn College:

At Bryn Athyn College, our courses pair the intellectual inquiry of a strong liberal arts education with spiritual inquiry rooted in the teachings of the New Church.

This education challenges students to develop spiritual purpose, to think broadly and critically from a variety of perspectives and to build intellectual and practical skills. The ultimate purpose is to enhance students’ civil, moral and spiritual lives, and to contribute to human spiritual welfare.

Ideally then, when people meet a graduate of Bryn Athyn College – which still has the courage to be distinct – hopefully they will know it.

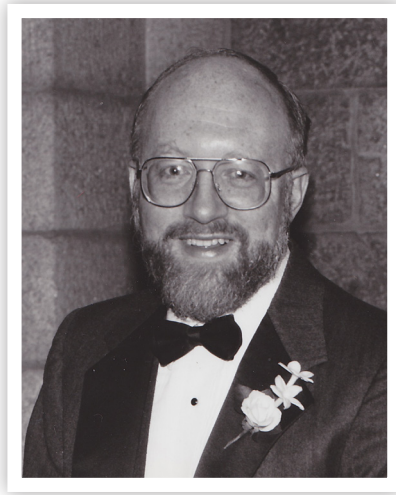
(BMH)

HAIL, CAMERON

Whether you knew Cameron Churchill Pitcairn in person or as a larger-than-life presence on stage, he was always at home in his role: confident and grounded, with a chuckle in his heart and a wink in his eye. When he passed away in May after a courageous five-year battle with cancer, he evoked a line

(of course) from Shakespeare: “Welcome ever smiles, and farewell goes out sighing.”

Family and friends shared a wealth of memories and smiles. Mine begin when Cameron graduated from the Academy Boys School in 1967 and was the valedictorian. He and his classmates were steeped in the turmoil of the ‘60s and here they were, he said – “rebels without a clue.” That was vintage Cameron.



In his memorial service, the Rev. Mark Alden lauded Cameron’s devotion to freedom and rationality. He liked to have his fun, but there was always a loftiness to his thinking, anchored in higher principles. He was brilliant in mathematics – like his father Joel – and was accepted into the prestigious Mathematics Program at the University of Chicago. This was the ultimate for a math major. But he became disillusioned and dropped out after a year – not because of what went on in the classroom but outside of it: the rampant atheism and lack of patriotism that festered in the ‘60s.

He went on to Dickinson College, majoring in English with a math minor, and graduated *magnum cum laude*. And every term he performed in the college’s theater program. This was the crucible of a lifelong devotion. He and his wife, Kathleen, were instrumental in founding the Bryn Athyn Community Theater (BACT), which has grown to a rich and treasured tradition in the larger community. He took many a leading role – but just as many backstage. His love for the theater – and its audience – was his lifeblood. It was his way of giving.

Mark said in his Memorial Address: “The measure of a human being is not

his scholastic accolades. It is not his accomplishments, be they many or few. It is how he affected those around him for good. Cameron touched many lives. As a husband and father, he encouraged one to think beyond what we see, to look to higher principles, to choose, of your own volition, a path to service. As a friend he brought us laughter. As a trustee, he looked after us. As an artist of the theater, he helped us escape to worlds beyond our own.”

That is the ultimate in a New Churchman’s life of use and service – having a positive influence in the that throughout his life, in whatever role he took on. No doubt he will be doing just that forever – and loving it.

Friends serenaded him during the service in the Bryn Athyn Cathedral, and at the reception following, with the sacred hymn from Gilbert and Sullivan’s *Pirates of Penzance*, which he had once sung on stage and still touches on his soul:

Hail, Poetry, thou heav’n-born maid!
 Thou gildest e’en the pirates’ trade:
 Hail, flowing fount of sentiment!
 All hail, All hail, Divine emollient!
 And they added a verse, just for Cameron:
 Hail, Cameron, thou heav’n-born man!
 You’re held with love in God’s own plan.
 Hail, Kathleen, wife of many years;
 May joy and peace bring comfort in your tears.

(BMH)



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EDITORS **Bruce Henderson**, Editor
Box 743, Bryn Athyn, PA 19009
Bruce.Henderson@newchurch.org

Rev. Walter Orthwein, Spiritual Editor
Walter.Orthwein@verizon.net

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