

# NEW CHURCH *Life*

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

**MAY/JUNE 2021**



## **Sent Out and Sent Out Again**

The Lord sent out His disciples at the end of His life on earth and again in heaven at the time of the Last Judgment and His Second Coming. The 19th of June is a good time to reflect on the ways that He continually comes to us and sends us out with a mission. (Page 185)

# New Church Life

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

## APOLOGY

Delivery of your copy of *New Church Life* is becoming more and more problematic. The U.S. Postal Service has long been criticized for inefficiency but issues are becoming increasingly frustrating and embarrassing. It seems to be a problem of an overloaded system with insufficient resources. Many of you may have received Christmas cards in February. We were alarmed to hear of many people getting their November/December issue of *New Church Life* in March – four months after being put in the mail! Each issue is separated by country and ZIP code and dropped the same day at a bulk mail center in Philadelphia, where they are processed that day. What happens next we don't know but it's not good. The Post Office has cancelled all overtime as a cost-saving measure and volume has backed up significantly. We just hope it improves soon. Thank you for your patience. Meanwhile, you can read the *Life* online at [www.newchurchlife.org](http://www.newchurchlife.org). You can sign up there for email notification when a new issue is posted. The online version does not include the Announcements (baptisms, marriages, in memoriam, etc.) for privacy protection.

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## In This Issue

Editorials (page 177) include:

- *Our Role in Growing the Church* – We celebrate the vision on the 19th of June of the Holy City New Jerusalem descending from God out of heaven – the birth of the New Church in heaven and on the earth. We are all blessed – and charged – to be a part of establishing and growing this Church. Just what is our role?
- *The Long Arm of the Eschaton* – Christianity describes the final event in the divine plan as “the eschaton” – a seemingly obscure theological concept but more relevant to our daily lives and the issues of the day than we might realize. “The lack of faith stemming from a lack of charity is the underlying cause of every social problem we face.”

In a 19th of June sermon, the Rt. Rev. Peter M. Buss Jr. focuses on the disciples who were “sent out and sent out again” – at the Lord’s first coming in this world and then again in heaven at the time of His second coming. This is an opportunity for us “to reflect on the ways that the Lord continually comes to us, and continually sends us out.” (Page 185)

The Rev. Mark Pendleton also considers the Lord’s first and second comings from the perspective of, “What if?” If Jesus showed up today claiming to be “the Son of God,” how would people respond? And how will they react to His second coming when it does not happen the way they expected? But as the Lord told us: “I have many things to tell you, but you cannot bear them now. But when He, the spirit of truth is come, He will lead you into all truth.” (Page 192)

Some friends recently asked the Rev. Dan Goodenough about a troubling teaching in *Divine Providence* 251: “From birth, each of us is like a little hell in constant conflict with heaven.” How, they asked, “can a God who is nothing but love create babies who are ‘little hells’?” Mr. Goodenough provides an in-depth doctrinal context about the Lord’s leading and the ultimate innocence of children. (Page 197)

The Rev. Michael Gladish concludes his three-part series on church growth with a warning to expect persecution as we seek to grow the church.

Early Christians were enthusiastic evangelists, even though they risked being stoned to death, and they grew the church dramatically. We are more reserved, for a variety of reasons, but we don't hesitate to recommend a book, a movie or a restaurant. Why not the most important thing in our life? "Remember. We're not trying to grow fruit, or even trees, we're just planting seeds in all kinds of soil. The Lord does the rest." (Page 204)

Marvin Clymer, Digital Collections Supervisor at Swedenborg Library in Bryn Athyn mines the material available to him for an article about "a mysterious writer in England" and his story of "Finding the New Jerusalem." This the first of what we hope will be a continuing series about people finding the church, and we will welcome personal accounts. (Page 210)

The Rt. Rev. Bradley Heinrichs, whose duties include supervision of General Church schools, reports on how the schools have admirably kept functioning through the coronavirus pandemic. Administrators have faced a lot of tough decisions, weighing governmental standards for safety with the desire to provide in-school education as much as possible. No matter their decisions some people are happy, others are not, so let's at least give them support and appreciation, not criticism. (Page 222)

The Rev. Clark Echols, pastor in Cincinnati, Ohio, writes on behalf of the Johnny Appleseed Educational Center and Museum there which badly needs support to survive. Johnny Appleseed is a legendary evangelist, spreading the Writings along with apple seeds in 19th century mid-America and his legacy should continue to be honored. (Page 225)

Church News (page 230) includes:

- Highlights of the March meetings of the General Church Board of Directors
- The Annual Meeting of the General Church Corporation
- An update on the Grand Human Project of General Church Outreach
- Highlights of a February meeting of the Academy Board of Trustees
- A report from the Boynton Beach Virtual Retreat
- Fond tributes to Madeline Waters, a much-loved member of the Colchester congregation
- A new book from Swedenborg House in London on *Correspondences*
- Revised plans for Gathering Leaves in England in 2022
- The Jacob's Creek Retreat is on schedule for late July

## Editorials

### OUR ROLE IN CHURCH GROWTH

The vision we celebrate on the 19th of June is the Holy City New Jerusalem descending from God out of heaven. It is the birth of the Lord's New Church – in heaven and on earth – described in *True Christian Religion 787* as "the crown of all churches that have ever existed on the earth."

For those of us blessed with the New Church in our lives this vision, this promise, is both inspiring and humbling. Inspiring because we know that the Lord's New Church will eventually be the light of truth for the whole world – a world wandering in darkness and desperate for that light. And humbling because we have been gifted with this church – and commanded to be disciples ourselves, "teaching all nations" by sharing this new revelation with them.

It is a daunting task, ever inspiring but often discouraging. And it is the ultimate calling for each one of us: growing the New Church on earth, in whatever ways we can.

In this issue we conclude a series of three sermons by the Rev. Michael Gladish on Church Growth – a realistic assessment of "Where it Starts" and "How it Works," and ending with a warning to "Expect Persecution."

Mr. Gladish echoes a lot of well-meaning passion and frustration in evangelization efforts through the years to grow the church – from the Epsilon Society and placing copies of the Writings in libraries to the Grand Human Project and *offTheLeftEye* videos. Many people have been exposed to the teachings of the church – through personal contact, introductory books, visits to churches and formal tours, and now through the internet. But we have not seen a rise in church membership; indeed, numbers are declining in some areas. However, we have no idea how many seeds have been planted – both deliberately and by chance – and are being nurtured by the Lord. But we can be sure that His New Church is growing and spreading in the hearts and lives of countless individuals all throughout the world – which is where it all matters.

A primary reason for the slow growth, as Mr. Gladish points out, is that the falsities of the Old Church must be removed before the revealed truths of the new revelation – the New Church – can be accepted. This is a process begun by the Last Judgment almost 250 years ago. In our time-bound existence, it seems

an eternity. In the Lord's eyes, it is "a time, and times, and half a time" – apart from time but inexorable. Our role is patience, trust and persistence.

Our impatience is tempered by the teaching that only the Lord can grow His Church. But all of us can – and should – do what we can to help. We have both a role and responsibility to share what we have been given.

Some people are enthusiastic evangelists. The late and legendary Otho Heilman comes to mind. In the mid-20th century he never hesitated to approach visitors outside the Bryn Athyn Cathedral and engage them in conversation, eager to share our teachings. There are many families in the church today because of his zeal. But not everyone has his confidence or calling.

We count on the organized efforts of General Church Outreach – formerly known as Evangelization – with its Grand Human Project of building communities of seekers, and programs within individual societies. We may wonder with the psalmist: "How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?" (*Psalms* 137:4) But we do not lack for personal opportunity. Many of us give books and pamphlets to comfort those in need or point friends to websites when asked about our faith. But there may be no more powerful testimony than just the example of living one's faith. People notice. They ask questions. They want to know what makes some of us "different" – so confident in our faith: in the life after death, in the loving operation of the Lord's providence, in the spiritual meaning behind so many challenging mysteries in the Word. We have answers that many are seeking and that the world desperately needs.

But the best we can do for growing the church starts in the quietness of our minds and homes: simply reading the Word.

Consider the teachings that "The church is a church (where) the Lord is adored and the Word is read." (*Apocalypse Explained* 1069) And: "No connection to heaven is possible unless somewhere on earth there is a church where the Word exists and where the Lord is known through that Word. . . . Even if this church consists of comparatively few people, still the Lord is present throughout the world by means of the Word, since heaven is connected to the human race through the Word." (*True Christian Religion* 267)

That is the ultimate reassurance: that even though the formal structure of the New Church is small and has grown so little in 250 years, the Lord is growing it every day – and we can help.

The hope is reinforced in this sublime familiar number:

When the Word of the Lord is being read by someone who loves the Word and leads a charitable life – even by one who, because he is simple-hearted, believes what is written and has not formed opinions that are contrary to the truth of faith that lies within the internal sense – the Lord also sets the Word before the angels. The Lord does so in such beauty and such loveliness, using representatives as well, with indescribable variations, each of which accords

with the angels' entire state at the time, that every detail is perceived as if it had life.

This life is that which is present within the Word and from which the Word was given birth when it was sent down from heaven. By reason of this, although in the letter it appears rough and imperfect, the Word of the Lord is such that inwardly there are concealed spiritual and celestial things, which are fully visible to good spirits and to angels while it is being read by man. (*Arcana Coelestia* 1767)

That is "the Holy City New Jerusalem descending from God out of heaven." We are all blessed – and charged – to be a part of that promise.

(BMH)

### THE LONG ARM OF THE ESCHATON

This June 19th is the 251st anniversary of the announcement of the Lord's Second Coming. The New Church understanding of this event is quite different from how it is widely seen in traditional Christianity, where it is sometimes called "the eschaton."

The eschaton is described in Christianity as the final event in the divine plan – the end of the world. It is called the Judgment Day, the Apocalypse, and the Last Judgment. The Lord called it "the end of the age" in *Matthew* 24. The Writings call it the Last Judgment, the end of the church, and the consummation of the age. It may seem like an obscure theological concept, but it is more relevant to our daily lives than we might think. It might help us to understand what is happening in the world today if we know that, as explained in the Writings, this event addresses the key ingredients of virtually every major issue that affects the world.

We may not immediately identify issues having to do with racism, sexuality, substance abuse, hunger, poverty, injustice and conflict as spiritual predicaments connected with the Last Judgment. Hopefully after reading this, however, you will say to yourself: "This is what the Last Judgment is all about," when you hear about these topics on the news. Here are some examples:

**Racism** – Perhaps no other topic so clearly illustrates why the Last Judgment took place:

The Last Judgment takes place when a church comes to an end, and this happens when there is no faith because there is no charity. (*Last Judgment* 33)

A lack of kindness and goodwill on the part of the peoples of European origin, especially directed towards population groups from other parts of the world, is the essence of what we call racism. Friction between ethnic groups happens worldwide, and racism can exist anywhere. But nowhere have racist



attitudes existed more pervasively, and over a longer period of time, in spite of Christian teaching to the contrary, than among the so-called Christian peoples. (*Arcana Coelestia* 1032, 2121) This is a cause of the Last Judgment, and the Last Judgment is the beginning of its true solution.

**Sexuality** – Intimate relationships are close to the heart of every person's happiness or lack of it. There is no more common cause of conflict, depression, social isolation and emotional suffering than relationships gone wrong. On a wider scale, unhappy marriages, unhappy families, broken marriages, infidelity and abuse are responsible for a huge percentage of the violent interactions, poverty and social dysfunction that exists in society.

The reason for this is that conjugal love is the fundamental love of all loves; it is central to all happiness, and its opposite is the source of all unhappiness. (*Conjugal Love* 229, *Apocalypse Explained* 993) There is no more powerful tool for destroying society than sexual immorality.

Adultery flourishes (within the Christian world) more than anywhere else. For in the church of today adultery is reckoned to be honorable behavior; and those who think anything different are laughed at. Since this is the situation at the present day within the church, it is a sign that its last days are at hand. (*Arcana Coelestia* 6666)

As this is saying, issues connected with sexuality and immorality are a cause of the Last Judgment, and the Last Judgment is the beginning of their true solution. We are promised that "following His Advent the Lord will revive conjugal love, such as it was among ancient peoples." (*Conjugal Love* 81)

This same reasoning can be applied to substance abuse, hunger, poverty, disease, injustice, conflict and any number of other dilemmas. The lack of faith stemming from a lack of charity is the underlying cause of every social problem that we face. Even environmental concerns reflect our inability to cooperatively examine the evidence and act for the benefit of society.

On June 19th we celebrate the answer to these issues, which is the Second Coming. This is the long-term solution, and there is no other true answer. But many of the political, scientific and social efforts to deal with them are also part of the answer. Technology and information of all kinds make the world a better and safer place as we move forward in history. Like the fight against Sauron in *The Lord of the Rings*, however, all the armies of Middle Earth cannot win the day unless the One Ring is destroyed. In the end, the spiritual battle is the one that matters. Ultimately it is all about love, and each of us has a part to play.

What we see on the news and observe in the world is often unsettling. But there is no need to be troubled by it. We are merely observing the long arm of the eschaton, just as the Writings predict.

(JFS)

## Letters to the Editors

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

### *My Journeys Through the Arcana Coelestia*

To The Editors:

Many thanks to Michael Brown for the encouragement he offers in his excellent article in *New Church Life*, November/December 2020: "The Gift and the Challenge of Reading and Understanding the *Arcana Coelestia*."

I first read the first volume of *Arcana Coelestia* at age 23 and understood so little that I immediately read it again. It was not until a couple of decades later that I decided to read the entire work and my beloved parents asked if they could join me. So we read together from the very start until Dad passed on halfway through and Mum and I continued to the end.

From time to time we stopped to discuss and I feel sure that my parents' deeper understanding helped me through that first reading. I find the *Arcana* challenging to read at times and even with my best efforts I cannot always understand. However, I know that my learning will continue to eternity if I follow the teachings that are set out in these and the following works for the New Church.

The *Arcana* was the first of the so-called "published" works written for the New Church and, in my view, it lays down the foundation for all that follows. This includes the essential claim for the New Church that there is an inner meaning, an internal sense, to the Word, a claim made in volume one.

This is called "the internal sense" in the first sentence of the "Author's Table of Contents of Volume 1." Then it is stated again in the very first paragraph; although not named as such the inner meaning to the "sense of the letter" is explained. Again in number 4, the inner meaning to the sense of the letter is called "the internal sense." These statements are the essential departure from the former church to the New Church. Then there follows a revealing explanation of the internal sense of every verse of *Genesis* and *Exodus*.

At the end of my first reading of *Arcana Coelestia*, although I had read all but one of the other works before, I decided to continue reading right on through the published works in the order of their dates of publication. I feel that my first reading of the *Arcana* changed my understanding when I read again the later works, seeing them in a different light – the light of *Arcana Coelestia*.

Then when I reached the end of that marathon read from *Arcana Coelestia* 1 to the end of *True Christian Religion*, what would I read the next day? For so many years I had known exactly what I would read next and in desperation I decided to read *Arcana Coelestia* again. After all, many years had passed since I first started reading it and I needed a refresher course.

Although the decision was made, the *Arcana* was the best choice for me and I am now well on in this second reading. As Michael says with what he finds, I am finding that I often need to reread passages, sentences and even phrases over and sometimes over again, to garner some understanding of the truths that are unfolded and the goods that we should aspire to.

However, the effort is well worthwhile and even in the difficult sections there are gems that are to be found in no other work of this new revelation. Not only is the internal sense of *Genesis* and *Exodus* revealed and explained but there are gems of essential doctrine and a great many explanations of essentially New Church ways of understanding words that are far removed and a clean break away from standard Christian understanding of those words.

An example of a New Church understanding that is unknown in the former church is No. 4538 [4] which explains what good is: “[By good] is not meant civil good and moral good, for these are learned in the world by means of laws and statutes, and by reflections upon the morals of men, and therefore the nations outside of the church also know such things; but by good is meant spiritual good, which good is called in the Word charity; and this good is, in general, to will and do good to others for no selfish reason, but from the delight of affection.”

Then 4585 [3] tells us that many people have “no desire to know the things of eternal life.” However, [4] continues: “Nevertheless, because they are such things as are contained in the internal sense of the Word, and these cannot be explained without suitable terms, and because there is none more suitable than the following: “natural” for exterior things; “rational” for interior things; “spiritual” for things pertaining to truth and “celestial” for those pertaining to good, therefore it is absolutely necessary to make use of these terms, for without terms suitable to the subject nothing can be described.”

To my recollection, none of the other works explains these basic terms as does the *Arcana*, although later works add to the selection.

Also in the *Arcana* are wonderful “inter-chapter” teachings at the end of

chapters. The first three of these, in Volume 1, describe the resuscitation of a person from death of the body, entry of the spirit into eternal life, and what the life of the spirit is.

A favorite inter-chapter section of mine is on the correspondence of the eye at the end of two chapters in Volume 6. This teaches that the “correspondence [of the eye] is with the things of the understanding; for the understanding is the internal sight, and this internal sight is in a light that is superior to the light of this world.” (4526)

There are teachings about flowers that are never found on earth and the glowing and sparkling of the flowers is “because there [is] in each one of them something of the intelligence and wisdom of truth and good.” (4529) “Colors also are seen in the other life, which in splendor and refulgence surpass the luster of the colors of this world to such a degree that scarcely any comparison is possible.” (4530)

“Some spirits also who, when in the paradisiacal regions, said that these surpass every degree of happiness, were therefore taken up into a heaven . . . which sparkled with a still greater resplendence, and finally they were taken up into the heaven where there is also the perception of the blessedness of the intelligence and wisdom that exist in such things. . . . At last they were taken up into a heaven where, on account of the bliss of interior affection . . . they began to fall into a holy swoon.” (4529 [3])

Beautiful and remarkable as these scenes are, these passages make clear that in the higher heavens, the focus of the angels is not on the external beauty but on the intelligence and wisdom that cause not only such beauty but also the interior affection in the angels that result in such bliss. What a goal to aspire to!

There is much of doctrine to learn in the *Arcana* and also much to help us in our learning as we journey to the spiritual world. I would encourage those who have not yet started to read the *Arcana Coelestia* to, as Michael says, “start the journey that is forever.”

Heulwen M. Ridgway  
Canberra, Australia

### *Accommodation and the Holy Supper*

To The Editors:

In the May/June 2020 *New Church Life* you published my letter, “Water Into Wine” wherein I opined that for some medical and psychological cases, both charity and prudence ought to allow ministers of the New Church to offer

water as a substitute for wine in offering the Holy Supper to such people.

I awoke one morning with a new insight on the matter:

The bread is infinite love, the very life of mankind. The fermented wine is truth purified through temptation, the means by which mankind is enabled to perform good uses. Eating and drinking are the assimilation of both into our souls. I think this is approximately the spiritual significance of the Holy Supper. When the Lord said for us to "do this" did He mean for us to do it spiritually or naturally? The answer must be both for this reason: while the spiritual meaning of this parable is essential, the natural performance of the acts creates the final (external) degree without which communication of the Lord with His Church (with us) may not be complete or at rest.

But then I rediscovered notes I had written long ago where a prominent New Church minister, now deceased, explained the spiritual significance of the Holy Supper to me:

For the Hebrew Church, the connection between a representative act and conjunction with heaven was through spirits in the world of spirits. While viewing an earthly act, spirits applied spiritual thought to the act, thus making of it a living connection. But, for the New Church, it is the mind of the individual that makes this connection, and without this a representative act is virtually meaningless. That is why the Holy Supper does no good for someone who approaches it unworthily.

When we take the bread and the wine, because we are using representatives, this is said to be the most holy act of worship. But because the mind is the connector it would appear that, in an emergency, or for reasons of health, etc., the mind can substitute some other substance in the place of bread and wine and still make this holy connection.

This does not mean that we should not use the best possible representatives, but this interpretation of doctrine seems to leave room for substitutions when they appear to be imperative.

This minister added that the representation of wine (where the dregs fall to the bottom) is very different from that of grape juice (where the dregs are purposely left in). Broadly, wine and water have a closer correspondence.

Also, the Lord teaches us that drunkenness is a sin. An alcoholic who purposely gets drunk impairs his rationality and therefore sins. However, if the drunkenness is acerbated by a genetic or physical problem, it would appear that the sin could be corrected after death, that is, unless the spirit would then consciously choose to continue abusing his rationality even after having his physical infirmity removed.

Martin E. Klein  
Boynton Beach, Florida

## Sent Out and Sent Out Again

*A Sermon by the Rt. Rev. Peter M. Buss Jr.*

*Bryn Athyn Cathedral—June 21, 2020*

Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you. (*Matthew 28:19-20*)

The next day He sent all of them out to the entire spiritual world to preach the gospel that the Lord God Jesus Christ reigns and that His kingdom will last for ages of ages. (*True Christian Religion 791*)

Friends, we are amazingly blessed to be able to orient our lives around the truths of the Lord's Second Coming. Considered against the population of the entire globe, it is awe-inspiring to consider that in the Lord's providence we have encountered a new revelation declared across the entire spiritual world 250 years ago, which so many in our world simply do not know about. That of course does not make us better than any of our worldwide sisters and brothers. But today maybe we can be re-inspired to live that faith as disciples of the Lord, doing our part to serve.

What will help toward that end? I suggest that it is a function of absorbing anew the impact of the two times the Lord has come to this world, and two of the times that He specifically sent out His disciples. The opportunity before us is to reflect on the ways that the Lord continually comes to us, and continually sends us out.

**The coming of the Lord.** Let's begin by calling to mind experiences that many of us have had of seeing live enactments of the Lord's birth on earth. Earlier in the service, at least in the broadcast of it, you saw some images of the Christmas Tableaux from a couple of years ago here in the Bryn Athyn Cathedral. If you have not experienced these live scenes, perhaps you can call to mind the pageants you have experienced in your home congregation or elsewhere. It is inspiring to think of the many thousands of people who love



The opportunity before us is to reflect on the ways that the Lord continually comes to us, and continually sends us out.

to revisit those scenes every year, to capture some of the peaceful beauty of Mary and Joseph and the Baby Jesus in the stable.

Let's ask ourselves too if the power of that central scene doesn't grow in our minds when we realize that it changed the course of human history. Yes, the Lord was born in Bethlehem some two-thousand years ago, and yes, some shepherds came to visit Him at

the behest of an angelic choir proclaiming in song the good news. It actually happened as depicted in these familiar and beloved scenes.

But equally inspiring is why they Lord came. The angels said "There is born to you this day in the city of David a *Savior* who is Christ the Lord" (*Luke* 2:11). We see salvation in operation in the healing miracles and the principles of living that the Lord taught while on earth. We can allow our minds to be expanded with the realization that He has the same power to heal us of any spiritual disease infecting us from hell, and enlighten us as to how to apply the very things He taught in the situations and relationships of our lives (see *Arcana Caelestia* 8364:6, 6632). We can go even deeper to absorb what the Heavenly Doctrines reveal concerning the His birth into this world, namely, "Without this no mortal could have been saved, and those are saved who believe in Him" (*True Christian Religion* 2).

Then we can turn our minds to images of the Lord's *second* coming. Again, earlier in the service some of you were able to see images of a New Church Day pageant that took place in this Cathedral. The woman clothed with the sun, the seven-headed dragon, Michael and the angels—all these are familiar images from the book of Revelation, which stand as prophecies of the New Church which would come.

Those New Church Day pageants can become all the more powerful for us when we let it sink in what is depicted in those scenes. The woman symbolizes "the Lord's New Church in heaven, which is the New Heaven, and the New Church to come on earth, which is the New Jerusalem" (*Apocalypse Revealed* 533). The Child born to her is "the doctrine of the New Church"—the very revelation given to us through Emanuel Swedenborg—the Heavenly Doctrine upon which we base our entire faith (see *Apocalypse Revealed* 543). That too happened, and it changed the world. New truth is available in *True Christian Religion*, in the *Arcana Caelestia*, in *Divine Providence*, *Conjugal Love*, and *Doctrine of the Lord*, which collectively fulfill the prophecy of Isaiah we heard earlier: "The light of the moon will be as the light of the sun, and the light of the

sun will be sevenfold" (*Isaiah* 30:26). This is the realization that is before us each year as we celebrate New Church Day. The Lord has indeed come again as He said He would.

But the realization is not really complete if we fail to consider what it means in our lives. Why is it important to celebrate Christmas and New Church Day—to commemorate the Lord's first coming and His second coming? Because in a very real way both of those show that He seeks to come consistently into our lives—every single day.

There's a wonderful passage in the Heavenly Doctrines that describes this energy of the Lord. By His influx it says:

He gives us the power and the desire to receive Divine goodness and truth and to act on them. He never takes this away from anyone. It follows from this that the Lord perpetually wills that we receive what is true and do what is good and therefore become spiritual. (*True Christian Religion* 481; cf. n. 766)

This lines up with what the Psalmist reminds us, namely that "The Lord is near to all those who call upon Him, to all who call upon Him in truth" (*Psalms* 145:18). Also "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble" (*Psalms* 46:1). And to His disciples, as we will focus on shortly, He said, "Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age" (*Matthew* 28:20).

Let's take to heart the *response* that is required here. The Lord is always present, but we do not experience that presence unless we turn to Him and welcome it. We do so by consistent and ongoing effort to open ourselves up to the influence of the Lord. That is why we are instructed to engage in worship, to listen to sermons, to partake of the sacraments, and all the other things of external worship, "for it is by external worship that internal things are aroused, and by means of external worship external things are kept holy so as to enable internal to flow in" (*Arcana Caelestia* 1618). This is also why we are to pray, and to engage in conversation on spiritual matters, and to read the Word as a daily discipline, and to take time to contemplate the promptings of our conscience. It will always be vital that there is a church which calls us to turn to the Lord in worship and inspires these spiritual practices. It will make all the difference to the specific situations we face, and to the overall trajectory of our lives,

Why is it important to celebrate Christmas and New Church Day – to commemorate the Lord's first coming and His second coming? Because in a very real way both of these show that He seeks to come consistently into our lives – every single day.

“By apostles in the spiritual sense of the Word are meant not the twelve apostles who were sent by the Lord to teach concerning Himself and His kingdom, but all those who are in the truth of the church.”  
That’s you and me.

to consciously draw on the Lord’s love and wisdom—to let Him come in to us, and dine with us, and we with Him (*Revelation* 3:20).

**Disciples of the Lord.** Let’s assume that we are successful in doing just that—remaining open and responsive to the Lord in our lives. What would we expect to experience? We would expect to be prompted in how to act and interact with others. We would expect to be called to live in an authentically New Church way in all that we do. Today we consider all of that as our calling to be disciples of the Lord.

In this we can call to mind two of the times that the Lord sent out His disciples. The first is what is called

the Great Commission. It records the time in the resurrection when the Lord brought home for those men what He had been preparing them for: to “make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things [He had] commanded them” (*Matthew* 28:19-20). The second is what signals the birthday of the New Church: the calling together of those twelve disciples who had followed Him in the world, now angles in heaven, to go throughout the entire spiritual world to preach the new gospel that the Lord God Jesus Christ reigns, whose kingdom shall be for ages of ages (*True Christian Religion* 791). Again, we can let it sink in that those events actually happened, and they were pivotal in establishing first the Christian Church and then the New Christian Church.

But again, the power of that realization can grow when we come to see that we are called. We are disciples of the Lord. That can mean an array of things. There is no doubt a teaching and announcing function—a sharing of the truth that we know. Each of us can decide the level to which we are willing to share what we know from the Word, believing it will be helpful to those who may not know it. One passage in the Heavenly Doctrines speaks to this, honoring the need for those “who teach the truths of the church” and calling them apostles (*Apocalypse Explained* 100:2). It goes on to say, “By apostles in the *spiritual sense* of the Word are meant not the twelve apostles who were sent by the Lord to teach concerning Himself and His kingdom, but all those who

are in the truth of the church” (*Ibid.*). That’s you and me.

This is further clarified in another passage which talks about disciples as followers of the Lord. You will recall that the Lord said to the people He called to be His disciples, “Follow me” (*Matthew* 4:19, 9:9, *Mark* 1:17, 2:14). We read, “To follow the Lord... means “to acknowledge, to obey, and to act and live from Him and with Him” (*Apocalypse Explained* 864). Again, that’s us—or at least an invitation to be a disciple in that way. I love how that passage concludes: “For the Lord draws after Him the person who from freedom wills to follow” (*Ibid.*). As with His desire to come into our lives, our level of willingness or our response is key.

In this we come to one of the most pervasive tenets of the faith of the New Church—a life of usefulness to others. Whether we focus on the Lord’s example—“that we should do as I have done to you” (*John* 13:15), or remind ourselves that our part of the covenant presented to the ancient Israelites is to “be a blessing” in all that we seek to do (*Genesis* 12:2), or turn to a familiar passage in the Heavenly Doctrines that says, “We are not born for our own sake, but are born for the sake of others” (*True Christian Religion* 406)—it’s the same message.

The way we are currently articulating the mission of the General Church is to “live a heavenly live.” That means serving. It means showing up in authentically New Church ways in all aspects of our lives. It could be in life-long or career ways of performing a use; it could be in taking to heart the Lord’s promptings in how to be an honorable parent, husband, wife, or child; it could be the discipline of examining ourselves on a regular basis to ensure that we are attentive to what needs to change; or generosity with the riches with which the Lord has blessed us.

The service before this one included an enactment, which you can watch if you choose to, of some of the concrete ways we can be a disciple. One person took a tray of food to someone who was recovering from surgery—as an extension of the Scripture, “I was sick and you visited Me” (*Matthew* 25:26). Another person served as an usher because worship is important. A third putting up a sign in their home that says “As for me and my house we will serve the Lord” because orienting the family to the Lord is important (*Joshua* 24:15). A fourth person is seen preparing a gift to celebrate a 50th wedding anniversary because marriage is important. A fifth carried flowers and a card on the way to visit with someone a month after they’d lost a loved one, because that kind of ministry and reflection on the eternity of life is important. A sixth person took a copy of the Word for Children prepared by our church to read to her younger sibling, because that form of New Church education is important. And there were others.

We call to mind the Lord’s words to those He taught in what is referred to

Letting our light shine is the same thing as being sent out as a disciple. As light radiates from its source, so we can have reach and impact in people's lives from the Lord.

as the Sermon on the Mount:

You are the light of the world.... Let your light so shine before others, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven. (*Matthew 5:14-16*)

Letting our light shine is the same thing as being sent out as a disciple. As light radiates from its source, so we can have reach and impact in people's lives from the Lord.

This service is designed to commemorate the 250th anniversary of the first New Church Day on June 19, 1770. It is a celebration of the faith

that we have the privilege of embracing as our own. It can also be a celebration of the opportunity that lies before us to recognize the countless ways that the Lord comes to us and the countless ways He sends us out to serve. Amen.

**Readings from the Lord's Word:** *Matthew 5:14-16, 28:18-20; Isaiah 30:26; Luke 2:1-8; Revelation 12:1-5; True Christian Religion 791, 779; Arcana Coelestia 68.*

You are the light of the world

You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light so shine before others, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven. (*Matthew 5:14-16*)

Seven times the light of the moon.

Moreover the light of the moon will be as the light of the sun, And the light of the sun will be sevenfold, As the light of seven days, In the day that the LORD binds up the bruise of His people And heals the stroke of their wound. (*Isaiah 30:26*)

Birth of Jesus

And it came to pass in those days that a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered.... So all went to be registered, everyone to his own city. Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, to be registered with Mary, his betrothed wife, who was with child. So it was, that while they were there, the days were completed for her to be delivered. And she brought forth her firstborn Son, and wrapped Him in swaddling cloths, and laid Him

in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn. (*Luke 2: 2-7*)

Woman Clothed with the Sun

Now a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a garland of twelve stars. Then being with child, she cried out in labor and in pain to give birth. And another sign appeared in heaven: behold, a great, fiery red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and seven diadems on his heads. ... And the dragon stood before the woman who was ready to give birth, to devour her Child as soon as it was born. She bore a male Child who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron. And her Child was caught up to God and His throne. (*Revelation 12:1-5*)

The great commission

And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." (*Matthew 28: 18-20*)

Sending out the 12

After this work was finished, the Lord called together the twelve disciples who followed him in the world. The next day He sent all of them out to the entire spiritual world to preach the gospel that the Lord God Jesus Christ reigns and that His kingdom will last for ages of ages, as foretold by Daniel (*Daniel 7:13, 14*) and by the *Book of Revelation (Revelation 11:15)*; also that "blessed are those who come to the wedding feast of the Lamb" (*Revelation 19:9*). This occurred on June 19, 1770. (*True Christian Religion 791*)

Swedenborg as a disciple

This, the Lord's second coming, is taking place by means of a man to whom He has shown Himself in person, and whom He has filled with His spirit, so that he may teach the doctrines of the New Church which come from the Lord through the Word. (*True Christian Religion 779*)

I am well aware of the fact that many people will say that nobody can possibly speak to spirits or angels as long as he is living in the body, and that many will call it delusion. Some will say that I have spread these ideas around so as to win people's trust, while others will say something different again. But none of this deters me; for I have seen, I have heard, I have felt. (*Arcana Coelestia 68*)



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## The First Coming, The Second Coming: What If?

*A Sermon by the Rev. Mark D. Pendleton*

Readings: *John* 16:12,13; *Matthew* 24:29,30; *Revelation* 1:1-7; *Secrets of Heaven* 68; *Heaven and Hell* 1; *Married Love* 1

Our topic is the Lord's first and second comings—the first having been prophesied in the Old Testament, the second in the New Testament.

Why am I raising these topics? There are two reasons. First, over the last half year I've been wondering what it must have been like for people in Jesus' time to accept that this person (Jesus) was who He said He was – the Son of God, God Himself come on earth. Second, I wonder what it will be like for people to encounter the Lord's *second* coming.

To the first question, what must it have been like for people, when Jesus was on earth, to accept the possibility that He was the Son of God – God on earth in human form? What if someone showed up today on the streets of Chicago, or Philadelphia, Austin, Texas, or Phoenix, Arizona, or a city near you, and said: "I am the Son of God. I am God in human form"? Or what if we were watching the news on television, or were on social media, and heard about someone in Madrid or Accra, Delhi or Moscow, Beijing or Tokyo, declaring, "I am the Son of God"? What would we do? What would human society do?

It is true that before the Lord came on earth there were prophecies of His coming. People were expecting the Messiah. Jesus also taught many wise and even astounding things – not crazy, insane things. He did many good works, not questionable or even abusive. And He performed miracles which no mortal has ever been able to perform. These things may have made it possible or even easy for people of His day to believe in Him as God in human form.

At the same time, believing that Jesus was the Son of God would have been a monumental shift for many people to make. It was a big "ask" on Jesus' part. It could have been especially hard for Jewish people of the time when Jesus wasn't the earthly kind of king they were expecting, but a heavenly

king instead. If Jesus showed up today claiming to be "the Son of God," how would you respond? What would it take to shift your paradigm to believing "this is God on earth"?

And what about the Lord's second coming? This, too, was prophesied by Jesus Himself and in the entire book of *Revelation*: "I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. However, when He, the spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth." (*John* 16:12-13) "They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds with power and great glory." (*Matthew* 24:30, *Mark* 13:26) "Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him." (*Revelation* 1:7) Clearly the Lord God Jesus Christ is coming again.

Then there are Jesus' sayings in *Revelation* about the end of days: wars and rumors of wars, cataclysmic global upheaval, destruction, annihilation, the rapture, and all the rest – with anyone's guess as to how all of this is going to happen, or what it's going to look like, before, during and after.

And what if the Second Coming doesn't happen the way scholars and theorists have predicted over the centuries? Jesus was not an earthly king. What if His descriptions of the consummation of the age, and those in *Revelation*, aren't about earthly clashes or worldly destruction? Just once or twice over the several years, I've heard biblical scholars begin to question if these descriptions may be more symbolic than literal.

What will it be like for people who may be primed, ready and waiting – expecting something specific to happen in a certain way and it isn't anything like what they're expecting? Again, what would it have been like in Jesus' day, especially for the Jews who were expecting a different kind of Messiah than what they got?

Well, what if we do what some scholars have started doing and place nearly all of *Revelation* and Jesus' descriptions of the end of times in the category of allegorical/symbolic, rather than literal, and focus on His brief statements in the New Testament? *John* 16 says: "I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. But when He, the spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth." *Matthew* 24 and *Mark* 13 say: "He is coming in the clouds with power and great glory." And *Revelation* 1 says: "Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him."

*John* 16 is talking about the spirit of truth coming and being led into

If Jesus showed up today claiming to be "the Son of God," how would you respond? What would it take to shift your paradigm to believing "this is God on earth"?



What will it be like for people primed, ready and waiting – expecting something specific to happen, and that it will look a certain way, and what ends up happening isn't anything like what they were expecting?

all truth – indicating that the Lord's second coming will have to do, in part, with being guided into truth. As for *Matthew*, *Mark* and *Revelation*, where it says, "He is coming on (or with) the clouds," we know that a lot of Scripture is cloudy and unclear. Meaning has to do with truth – our way of seeing things. And *Revelation* 1 says, "and every *eye* will see him."

The eye has to do with enlightenment and understanding. When we understand something for the first time we say, "I see." This, too, has to do with a truth-oriented experience or process. So, if we place

nearly all of *Revelation*, and Jesus' descriptions of the end of days, into the category of allegorical or symbolic, and focus on these three statements with their truth orientation, what are they saying the Lord's second coming will be? What form will it take?

And what if the allegory in the book of *Revelation*, with Jesus' descriptions of the end of days, aren't talking about earthly clashes, wars and rumors of earthly wars, but about the personal, internal, spiritual upheavals and revolutions we all go through as the Lord makes one final approach into our minds, hearts, and lives? Of what use would everything truth-oriented that the Lord might offer us be through that kind of "end of days"?

Emanuel Swedenborg was an 18th-century scientist, philosopher, theologian and revelator who wrote along these lines more than 250 years ago. He postulated that the second coming of the Lord God Jesus Christ was not going to be a literal coming in person but in a third massive body of spiritual knowledge and truth that would finally – arising out of the Old and New Testaments and focusing back on them – be able to lead us "into all truth."

At the same time, Swedenborg made the astounding claim that for the last 25 years of his life, the Lord performed the greatest miracle of all time by opening his "spiritual eyes" and allowing him to be consciously awake, present, and aware in both the physical and spiritual worlds. He claimed this allowed him to learn all about the spiritual world, heaven and hell, and the inner workings of the human spirit. This gave him the ability, guided by the Lord, to understand the "spiritual meaning" of even the cloudiest parts of Scripture. This unlocked the deeper levels of meaning within the Bible, relating to the life, growth and development of the human spirit.

Are these claims that Swedenborg made astounding? Yes, beyond astounding. Are they "unbelievable"? "Yes," might be our answer. Swedenborg knew this would be the case, even as he wrote his theological works. And so, in two of his entries he wrote:

I am well aware of the fact that many people will say that nobody can possibly speak to spirits or angels as long as they are living in the body, and that many will call it delusion. Some will say that I've spread the ideas [I've written] around so as to win people's trust, while others will say something different again. But none of this deters me; for I have seen, I have heard, I have felt. (*Secrets of Heaven* 68)

Church people these days [the mid-1700s] know practically nothing about heaven and hell or their life after death, even though there are descriptions of everything available to them in the Word [of God]. In fact, many who have been born in the church deny all of this. In their hearts they are asking, "Who has ever come back to tell us about it?"

To prevent this negative attitude from infecting and corrupting people of simple heart and simple faith, it has been granted me to be with angels and to talk with them person to person. I have also been enabled to see what is in heaven and in hell, a process that has been going on for thirteen years. Now I am being allowed therefore to describe what I have heard and seen, in the hopes of shedding light where there is lack of knowledge, and of dispelling skepticism.

The reason this kind of direct revelation is taking place today is that this is what the Coming of the Lord means. (*Heaven and Hell* 1, published in 1758)

Ten or 12 years later Swedenborg followed up with this:

I anticipate that many who read the following descriptions and the accounts at the ends of the succeeding chapters will believe they are figments of my imagination. I swear in truth, however, that they are not inventions, but actual occurrences to which I was witness. Nor were they witnessed in any condition of unconsciousness but in a state of full wakefulness. For it

What must it have been like at the time of the Lord's first coming on earth for people to adjust themselves to the reality of that coming, especially those who, for centuries, had expected something different? And what will it be like for people now, and on into the future, when they first encounter the Lord's second coming, especially if it is different from what they expected?

has pleased the Lord to manifest Himself to me and send me to teach the doctrines that will be doctrines of a New [Christian] Church, the church meant by the New Jerusalem in the book of Revelation. To this end He has opened the inner faculties of my mind and spirit. As a result, it has been made possible for me to be in the spiritual world with angels and at the same time in the natural world with people, and this now for 25 years. (*Married Love* 1, published in 1768)

Even though Swedenborg suggests that this new body of teaching and doctrine would be for a new Christian church on earth, he didn't seek to pigeonhole people or force them into one brand of faith. The theology he wrote was systematic and universal in nature – with the ability to speak to all people, of all faiths and cultures, and also to people who have no faith or religion, and support them in their spiritual walk, for all time to come.

Well, if we simply connect the dots, what are we talking about in this message today? Is it possible, is it *conceivable*, and *what if* the Lord's second coming on earth was never meant to be a coming in person – in the literal clouds of heaven – along with global, cataclysmic destruction, but rather a final download of spiritual knowledge and information intended to guide humankind through its final, deepest, darkest struggles, to lead it into “all truth,” and ultimately to the Lord in heaven? Is it possible? Is it conceivable? What if?

What must it have been like at the time of the Lord's first coming on earth for people to adjust themselves to the reality of that coming, especially those who, for centuries, had expected something different? And what will it be like for people now, and on into the future, when they first encounter the Lord's second coming, especially if it is different than what they expected?

- “I have many things to tell you, but you cannot bear them now. But when He, the spirit of truth, is come, He will lead you into all truth.”
- “He is coming on the clouds with power and great glory.”
- “Behold He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him.”

*What if?*  
Amen.



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## Evil from Birth?

*The Rev. Daniel W. Goodenough*

A couple of friends asked me the following question. I think others may be interested. My reply to them is edited slightly. – Dan Goodenough

**Question:** Here is one of those quotations from the Writings that trip me up every time:

From birth, each of us is like a little hell in constant conflict with heaven.  
(*Divine Providence* 251)

How can a God who is nothing but love create babies who are ‘little hells’? I can accept that through life in the natural world we choose and take on hellish states, but a newborn baby is nothing but innocence – a vessel waiting to be filled. The Writings are full of statements like this, and I really struggle with the whole idea. Rather than babies being in constant conflict with heaven, they seem to me to be little windows into heaven; a vision of what we should strive to be, innocent and receptive to the Lord's love without any guile or expectations. I've tried to understand this for years, and asked many ministers to help me make sense of it, but so far I remain unconvinced that, in and of ourselves, we are born nothing but evil. Born nothing at all, OK, but a baby isn't capable of evil, and Divine Love is incapable of creating anything but love.

There's my religious conundrum in a nutshell!

**Answer:** Thank you for writing about this troubling statement. Your question is important and I'll do the best I can. Sorry this is so long, but there are different sides to this question that need looking at.

I admit that the statement in *Divine Providence* 251 appears contradictory to what we know about infants and little children. Yet that sentence, and similar statements, exist for an important reason.

First: everything you say about babies and their innocence I think is true, and taught abundantly in the Writings, especially in places that discuss infants and children. The Heavenly Doctrines say a lot about children's innocence, in agreement with your understanding, and your description of their goodness puts it well. (More on that below.)

To understand the states of infants and children and their growth, we can look at many wonderful passages . . . telling about both heavenly and earthly children, with emphasis on their external innocence.

The Doctrines strongly reject Calvinist views of children as being evil because of Original Sin from Adam and Eve eating the forbidden fruit in Eden. This view of children implies a cruel God, not truly loving, but having arbitrary power and favoritism toward a select few. Your question is a good New Church question, based on your love for children, whom God creates from His infinite love for *all* human beings, with so many different varieties of people.

So what about statements like *Divine Providence* 251? The heavy statements about humans being evil

from birth are almost never in passages focusing on children, but in longer explanations about why we humans need to be spiritually reborn: regenerated.

The best translation of the *Divine Providence* quotation is: “For from birth a person is like a miniature hell, and between it and heaven there is perpetual dissension.” This is part of a lengthy discussion about why the Lord permits wars and the horrible cruelties and evils that go with war. The passage doesn’t directly discuss children at all, but looks at the grown-up human evils that lie behind war, bring it about, and make it so terrible. The statement is saying that (in some way) evils are present in a person from the time of birth. It focuses not so much on *what we are at birth*, but *what we are during our lives* (beginning at birth) – IF we are NOT REBORN. It isn’t said that man IS a miniature or little hell, but that he is “LIKE” a miniature hell – which is plenty bad enough, yes.

(Because of so many teachings about infantile innocence and goodness, when I read such a passage I usually add a quick comment that this isn’t a picture of infants, but of human beings in general if they don’t turn to the Lord and become reformed and regenerated; this is explained throughout the Writings, but this passage instead focuses on the awful problem of war.)

To understand the states of infants and children and their growth, we can look at many wonderful passages like *Heaven and Hell* 329-345, telling about both heavenly and earthly children, with emphasis on their external innocence. *Conjugal Love* 395-399 describes this innocence of children, also how it gradually recedes as they get older. I know you’re familiar with these strong and beautiful teachings, which fit well with the Lord’s invitation, “Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of heaven.” (*Matthew* 19.13-15; *Mark* 10.13-16; *Luke* 18.15-17) So as we try to understand a strong statement that seems contradictory, we can start by knowing the primary and

basic truths about their innocence, as fully explained in broader discussions.

These fuller explanations about children show they aren’t born perfect or angelic, and they do need to grow up into adulthood. This means they need to grow and realize they must follow God just as we earthlings do. By birth we all do receive tendencies or inclinations toward evils (also toward goods) from parents and earlier generations. These do NOT make any baby evil, and the angels fill infants with innocence and remains of good and truth. But neither are babies good from themselves, because they haven’t made any decisions. (*Divine Providence* 98.6)

Growing up, they start to make choices and decisions, and are influenced by influx from both innocence and, in time, from their bad hereditary leanings – and they make good and bad decisions. But they do NOT make evil decisions that are condemning or directly from hell, because innocence does surround them, less and less as they grow up, but still protective until adulthood. They may grow up more or less self-centered, more or less selfish, and probably with good and bad habits of moral outlook toward others, etc. But angelic influences (influx) protect them from adult love of self until as young adults they start to make spiritual decisions that DO directly form their inner character, and so begin choosing their eternal life.

(While adulthood comes around the 20th year (*Arcana Coelestia* 10,225), the beginning of adult maturity develops gradually, not in a sudden swoosh. This is another broad question. Adult maturity may come early with teens thrown into adult responsibilities, or come late with people whose lives discourage mature rationality and responsible freedom.)

So from birth they do care about self, but inflow of innocence protects them from real evil, and the hells do not flow in and stimulate their selfishness. While upset about not getting something they want, they are still innocent in their willingness to be led by their loving parents – who are God’s workers in showing them love.

As they get older, their spirits gradually come into freedom to reject the protective leading from parents, and their innocence recedes, but not until adulthood (*Divine Providence* 98.6) can they choose and decide to act from really evil, sinful motives. The habits they develop as they grow, especially as teens, are important, and can lead toward goodness or toward evil, but the

The heavy statements about humans being evil from birth are almost never in passages focusing on children, but in longer explanations about why we humans need to be spiritually reborn: regenerated.

As they get older, their spirits gradually come into freedom to reject the protective leading from parents, and their innocence recedes, but not until adulthood can they choose and decide to act from really evil, sinful motives.

external innocence of childhood, and their remains, protect them from absorbing hellish influx as their own, until adulthood.

So if as adults they receive hellish inflow into their selfishness, and act primarily from inner self-love, they start establishing selfishness as their inner motivation, building and confirming the selfishness they had in childhood (from birth). But if as adults they follow the Lord's directions to control their selfishness, their self-love becomes limited and doesn't rule them, but is subordinate to higher loves from heaven.

This makes their self-love not evil, but the kind of self-love we are supposed to have. (*True Christian Religion* 403-405, etc.) Childhood selfishness isn't heavenly, and needs to learn adult control. But neither is it hellish evil, until it allows hellish influx and personal choices that are driven by loving self as their highest good – that's how it comes into "perpetual dissension" with heaven.

Then why do the Writings include such strong statements about man being evil from birth? These statements, though almost never found in discussions about children, are truly important, usually in urgent explanation about WHY we need to repent and be spiritually reborn. Jesus said this, too: "Truly, truly I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God," to the Pharisee Nicodemus, who was shocked and bewildered, without a clue. (*John* 3.1-13)

To enter into God's kingdom, we can't just go there the way we are; we need to be reborn (regenerated) and become new people. We need to become *children of God*. We truly need to go through steps of repentance like self-examination, accepting responsibility, prayer to our Lord, and rejecting, "fleeing" from evil, and look to the Lord, so that He can change us inside and bring us closer to Him. (Second Law of Divine Providence, *Divine Providence* 100-128)

The goodness and innocence of our early years are important beginnings, yet those states were not our own; they were given us from the Lord. They can bring us much good in life, but they aren't the real us until we use them to reject evil, to do good, and to follow the Lord – as free and rational grown-up men and women.

A big part of spiritual rebirth to the Lord is to realize and accept that the good in us (and the truth) are from God, not from ourselves. As children, we

easily believe we are good when we do good, and that good belongs to us, is inherent in us, is our own. Children in heaven can believe this, too. *Heaven and Hell* 342 tells how some children in heaven think they are without evil. Angels told Swedenborg that these children, though they have no actual evil like adults, in fact are

nothing but evil; but, like all angels, they are so withheld from evil and held in good by the Lord as to seem to themselves to be in good from themselves. For this reason [so that they won't have the false idea] that the good in them is from themselves and not from the Lord, they are now and then let down into their evils which they inherited, and are left in them until they know, acknowledge and believe the truth of the matter.

Then an example is given, illustrating that children in heaven need to "know, acknowledge, and believe" the truth. It's just as important for heavenly children, before they become angels, to see and know that they are not born good, and that all their good is from the Lord, as it is for people on earth. Heavenly children accept this more quickly than we adults on earth. (*Heaven and Hell* 343 also shows how heavenly children, like earthly children, need to be taught to resist evil that comes at them from others.)

The heart of spiritual rebirth is looking to the Lord our God for all goodness and all wisdom, and not trusting that we have good inherent in us, or from ourselves. Little by little we accept this in regeneration – partly through temptations, and by living and acting as the Lord teaches, and because He is saying it.

So during our spiritual rebirth it's crucial to realize that from our birth we have inherited tendencies to evil, and without the Lord's inflowing care and protection, we would gravitate to hell. This does not mean we are guilty of any evil at all when we are born (as Calvin and many old Christians have taught). We're not guilty except where we've chosen evil freely. While growing children and teens can be guilty of doing moral evil and being selfish, they cannot be guilty, spiritually, of damning, condemning evils, before they are adults. Of course, it's still important for all children and teens to build good habits, avoid bad ones, and learn self-discipline to stay away from hurtful, immoral actions.

This is especially relevant today in our post-Christian era, because traditional Christian belief has been so strong on salvation by faith apart from charity and good works. This destructive faith-alone doctrine turns people

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away from self-examination and real repenting; and however people say they are sinful, they are also taught that they're on the path to heaven, because God forgives them and that's all that matters: any evil in me is all forgiven, and now I'm OK.

That attractive lie is targeted by the Writings' strong statements about being evil from birth, and we're not born good and pure, but need to examine ourselves and actually see evils within us, or we'll never believe we have them. Faith alone has been so prominent in Christianity that those strong statements are needed to tell people to look at themselves honestly, and not just trust in "faith." They are hard sayings, yes, but crucial truths directed at the conceit that faith alone allows, even breeds in people.

These hard sayings can be scary for anyone and they are intended to get our attention. But the Heavenly Doctrines and Holy Scriptures are also full of encouraging sayings, showing how the Lord helps us and how His inflowing goodness and wisdom uplift us. "Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me." (*Revelation 3.20*) The Gospels show mercy everywhere, and encourage us with simple truths.

And the Writings affirm this. A typical section about repentance and regeneration says this (*Doctrine of Charity 201-204*):

He who does not believe in God does not reckon an evil as a sin, and so does not fight against it, but rather in favor of it. But he who believes in God says also within himself, "With God's help I will overcome it," and so he makes supplication, and he gets help. This is not denied to anyone, but is given to him, because the Lord, from His Divine love is in the continual endeavor to reform and regenerate man, and so to purify him from evils, and this constant endeavor of the Lord comes into effect when the person truly desires it, and makes an effort for it. In this and no other way does a person receive the power to resist evils and to fight against them. (203; also taught in *Coronis 59.3-4*)

Help that we sincerely ask the Lord for is "not denied to anyone, but is given to him," from the Lord's love. As He told us: "Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light." (*Matthew 11.29-30*) As we become his children through rebirth, He does lead us, and He feeds us with goodness that enables us to serve others (and ourselves), and find the meaning of life.

Similarly, *Divine Providence*, which looks closely and realistically at evils, also is full of the Lord's mercy and true ideas to help everyone and lead them toward heaven – affirmative passages of hope and uplifting encouragement. *Divine Providence 324* shows why and how every human being has been created to live to eternity, in a blessed state, and thus is created to enter into heaven. In two passages from *Coronis* (in *Posthumous Theological Works*, Vol. 1):

Every person, when he is first born and is an infant, interiorly is an "image of God" [Genesis 1.26-27]; for the faculty of receiving and of applying to himself those things which proceed from God, is implanted in him." (25)

The spiritual mind in man from birth even to early childhood is closed, but after that first age it is opened step by step; for there is given to every person from birth the faculty, and afterwards the power of procuring for himself steps by which he may ascend and speak. (29.2)

In another passage from *Divine Providence*:

Every person from early childhood is introduced into that Divine Man whose soul and life is from the Lord, and he is led and taught in Him, and not apart from Him, by the Lord's Divine love in accordance with His Divine wisdom. Nevertheless, because a person's freedom is never taken away, he can be led and taught only to the extent of his reception as though of himself. (*Divine Providence 164.5*)

*Divine Providence 162-164* show more about how this is done, with our cooperation. Also numbers 105, 136.6, 324, 328.8-9 and 332.3 tell about children growing into spiritual goodness. Teachings like these, with encouragement and hope, are found everywhere in the Heavenly Doctrines – and they depend on us doing our part in accepting that all good comes from the Divine, and our living from that principle.

So when we see these strong statements about humans being evil, we need to look at the whole passage and the context. The Heavenly Doctrines argue against the notion that we are already good – pure in our own good, without needing fundamental change from God, perhaps saved by our faith, or in some other ideology of self-assurance, that we're fine the way we are. Human beings are NOT fine the way we are. If we think our goodness is inherent and we just have to activate it, our path is not to heavenly good, or to loving others. These strong statements are in the Writings to get our attention, and show us we really do need our God, so as to become new, and truly love others.

If we think our goodness is inherent and we just have to activate it, our path is not to heavenly good, or to loving others.



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# Church Growth: Expect Persecution

*Third of Three Sermons by the Rev. Michael D. Gladish*

Lessons: *Exodus* 19: 1-18; *Matthew* 10:1-39; *Arcana Coelestia* 8768:2 and 6822

Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves. Therefore, be wise as serpents and harmless as doves. But beware of men, for they will deliver you up to councils and scourge you in their synagogues. . . . And you will be hated by all for My name's sake." (*Matthew* 10: 16-17, 22)

One thing we can certainly expect when we take the message of the New Church out into the world is persecution. Whether we declare the teachings by our words or by our actions we are bound to be criticized. Why? Because the worldly life – our own and that of others – is completely opposed to the heavenly life and will not give in to it easily. (*Arcana Coelestia* 9256:3)

The Lord warned His first disciples about this repeatedly, even saying that their foes would be those *of their own household* and that they had better be prepared for the worst. (*Matthew* 10:35-38; 16:24-25) In fact it is among His very first formal teachings, in the beginning of the Sermon on the Mount, where He does *not* say, "Blessed are you IF they revile and persecute you," but "Blessed are you WHEN they persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you, falsely, for My sake." (*Ibid.* 5:11) But then, of course, He goes on to say: "Rejoice, and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven."

Rejoice amidst persecution? Well, it's all a matter of perspective? Either the spiritual is better and more important than the natural or it's not. If it is, and we really believe it, we ought to be able to endure short-term losses for long-term gains. Indeed, the Lord said: "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?" (*Ibid.* 16:24-26)

The same point is made in a different way in the Lord's conversation with the rich young ruler who famously had kept all the commandments of

the second table of the law, refraining from various evils. But when the Lord told him: "If you want to be perfect [that is, whole], go, sell what you have, and give to the poor." The man "went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions." (*Ibid.* 19:16-22)

We know that in these and the many other lessons the Lord taught about self-sacrifice, all the worldly things mentioned correspond to spiritual things. So, the loss of one's natural life refers in its deeper meaning to the loss of one's worldly and self-centered spiritual life. It's the same with one's possessions: wealth in the Word corresponds to knowledge, which is spiritual wealth, and to sell it is to use it for the sake of others. But neither of these commitments takes away anything from the literal sense of the Lord's teachings, since very often doing the right thing for others means giving up something of our own – as if it were really our own to start with – and that may even include our natural lives.

Remember Salome, the mother of James and John, who came to the Lord asking that her sons be allowed to rule with Him in His kingdom? He referred to the rulers of the Gentiles "lording it over people," but said: "It shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant. And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave." (*Ibid.* 20:26-27) So much for serving ourselves or having things our own way!

*The Acts and the Epistles*, by the way, are full of teachings like this, and the accounts of the early church show that the first Christians were regularly persecuted for their teaching, which often included harsh criticism of the Jewish hierarchy. Some, like Stephen, were actually stoned to death or crucified for their efforts. But some, after being beaten and released, "departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name. And [then] daily in the temple, and in every house, they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ." (*Acts* 5:41-41)

What does all this have to do with church growth? One thing we learn from these historical accounts is that the church grew in spite of being persecuted. In fact, the apostles expected persecution and in many ways provoked it, counting it a privilege to suffer for the Lord's sake.

Of course, they had the physical miracles to confirm their faith, but even then they could have shied away from sharing their faith to avoid being abused

One thing we can certainly expect when we take the message of the New Church out into the world is persecution. Whether we declare the teachings by our words or by our actions we are bound to be criticized.

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or killed, but they didn't. And because they didn't the church grew daily – one time by 3,000 in a single day (*Ibid.* 2:41), another time by 5,000 (4:4). Paul, by the way, who was a Pharisee, was one of the worst persecutors – until his conversion, and then he became the most successful of all the Christian missionaries, at which point the Jewish authorities turned right around and began persecuting him, too.

The point is, these early Christians were so deeply committed to the Lord that nothing could stop them from proclaiming the good news of His life and teaching. And because of this the

church grew at a phenomenal rate.

It's certainly true that the New Church is not the same as the primitive Christian Church when miracles had the power to convince and strengthen people through adversity. Today the Lord invites us to think more deeply and to understand not only the spiritual causes of events in our lives, but also the spiritual issues that we need to be dealing with no matter what we may experience on the physical plane.

But in many ways there's no difference at all between our basic teachings and those of the first Christians. It's just that we have been given thousands of pages of new insight and rational arguments to support those basic teachings. So, in a way we have every reason to be even stronger in our faith than they were, even more committed to the business of sharing it, and even more resolute and resilient in the face of persecution. But are we?

To be honest with ourselves we have to admit that, no, in general we're not more committed, and we're certainly not more outwardly enthusiastic about our faith than they were. In fact, as a group we tend to be pretty shy and cautious, even fearful about it.

First of all, we don't want to impose on anyone. Second, we don't want to mess up and say something that isn't quite right, causing people to judge our religion based on our poor explanation or expression of it. Third, we don't want to come across as know-it-alls or somehow better than the people we're addressing. And finally, we don't want them to think less of us if they disagree or don't get it; we don't want to lose their friendship. Basically, we hate the idea of being persecuted for our beliefs.

But let's look at these issues one at a time. As for imposing on people,

the Lord plainly said: "The truth will make you free." (*John* 8:32) Do we care whether people are free or not? Do we care whether they have access to the truth or not? Of course, if there is no interest and the good news of the heavenly doctrine is rejected, we will move on and not bother them. But we'll never know this unless we put it out there in the first place. They don't know what they're missing until we tell them, and then they're in freedom to accept or reject it.

As for saying something that isn't quite right, that's almost inevitable – even for ministers! But it's not the truth alone that's important; it's the affection for it that really matters. Given the affection for truth we're in a good position to have a positive dialog with any who have a similar disposition. We may also learn as we share our own information or insights with them.

Third, it's pretty easy to avoid coming across as pedantic or "holier than thou." We simply need to cultivate a vocabulary that includes phrases like, "The way I see it," or "You know, we have a teaching in our church that . . ." Or even, "Actually, I was just reading something relating to this (Divine Providence or any other topic), and it made the point that . . ." We wouldn't hesitate to recommend a video, a movie, a Facebook post or a restaurant we particularly enjoyed: why don't we want to do it about the most important things in the world?

By using deferential expressions like those mentioned we take the focus off ourselves, point to the ideas themselves, and let them stand on their merits. One can even say: "Well, I certainly don't have all the answers, but it does strike me that (such and such) might be pretty important." Remember, we're not trying to grow fruit, or even trees, we're just planting seeds, and the seeds can be sown in all kinds of soil. The Lord does the rest. (*Mark* 4:3-20; 26-29)

Finally, we have this very serious business of persecution, or the loss of comfortable, friendly relationships. Yet of all the four concerns we've listed this is the one that the Lord Himself tells us we must be prepared and willing to endure. Remember: "Whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?" (*Matthew* 16:24-26)

The idea that we should try to protect ourselves from abuse by not sharing the most important gift the Lord has given the world is hugely ironic, at best,

Remember, we're not trying to grow fruit, or even trees, we're just planting seeds, and the seeds can be sown in all kinds of soil. The Lord does the rest. (*Mark* 4:3-20; 26-29)

The idea that we should try to protect ourselves from abuse by not sharing the most important gift the Lord has given the world is hugely ironic, at best, and selfish, at worst.

and selfish, at worst. When a country goes to war – hopefully in self-defense – doesn't everyone accept the fact that it's a brave and noble thing to sacrifice one's life if necessary in that war? And if a companion, spouse or one's child is at risk, isn't it a given that we must go to that person's aid, even at the risk of great harm? Why, then, are we so reluctant to step out of our comfort zones to defend the truth that provides for all of human life?

Again, the Lord said – quite plainly and repeatedly: “Whoever desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.” (*Mark 8:34; Luke 9:23*) Self-sacrifice is at the very heart of the gospel message, and it's no different in the Writings for the New Church. Sure, we have to provide for ourselves lest we also become the objects of charity, but the only reason is so that we can serve others – and the Lord. As He said: “Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends.” (*John 15:13*)

One reason we want the church to grow is to ensure that we have companionship, mutual support, and help paying the bills. But as ends in themselves these really have no merit and no basis in the Word or the doctrine. The Lord will provide for His own church. What we're instructed to do is to share the faith for His sake, and for the sake of the people who will benefit from its teachings. We are not supposed to be thinking of ourselves – our reputations, our limitations or our imperfections – at all. Remember the lesson; it's not a possibility, it's a fact:

You will be brought before governors and kings for My sake, as a testimony to them and to the Gentiles. But when they deliver you up, do not worry about how or what you should speak. For it will be given to you in that hour what you should speak; for it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you” (*Matthew 10:18-20*) – IF we really believe and trust in Him.

To sum up, there are a lot of reasons to hope – and even pray – for the growth of the New Church. (*Apocalypse Revealed 956*) And the Writings say it will grow – slowly at first, as the falsities of the former church are exposed and removed, and as we do our part to reach out, gently but confidently, to people who are willing to listen. But it will not grow if we do not accept the fundamental principle of self-sacrifice and a willingness to face embarrassment, rejection, personal shame or even persecution for declaring our faith.

Amen.



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# Finding the New Jerusalem: A Mysterious Writer in England

*Marvin B. Clymer*

As a fourth-generation Swedenborgian who grew up in the New Church community of Bryn Athyn, I have long been fascinated by stories of people who found the New Jerusalem as adults and warmly embraced the treasure they had found. I have also been impressed by the enthusiasm of many new members to spread the good news to friends, acquaintances and the general public. New Church history is full of heart-warming stories of sincere people actively searching for the truth and a better explanation of the meaning and purpose of life. In other cases, people were relatively content with their basic beliefs until an unexpected event sparked an epiphany which led to acceptance of a new religious understanding.

In my work on Swedenborg Library's New Church Digital Collections, I have come across many delightful stories which I would like to share with a larger audience. So, I proposed a series of articles in *New Church Life*: "Finding the New Jerusalem." I soon realized that finding the church was only part of the story. Questions immediately arose about what religious experiences had created a receptive mind and how had the conversion contributed to the growth of the New Church. In other words, finding the New Church was not the end of a story, but just the beginning of a new chapter.

Published since 1881, the pages of *New Church Life* contain many fascinating articles about the history of the church and the prominent members who had worked so faithfully to spread the news of the Lord's Second Coming. Rather than summarizing earlier biographies, it seems more appropriate to quote directly from the original authors and list the sources at the end of this article for further reference.

## Mr. Penny's Letter

The first public approval of Swedenborg's theological writings appeared in England, which may seem odd considering the fact that Swedenborg lived and

wrote his books in Sweden. However, the existence of the Lutheran Church as the only acceptable religion in Sweden at that time prevented the publishing of any religious material which did not agree with the doctrine of the established state church.

The promise of religious freedom in England, no doubt, beckoned to Swedenborg as he considered how to publish his works. His first theological book, *Arcana Coelestia* (Volume 1), was written in Latin and printed anonymously in London in the summer of 1749. As the printer, John Lewis, prepared the second volume, he astutely placed an advertisement in *The Daily Advertiser* on Christmas Day of 1749 which quoted a letter he had received from Stephen Penny of Dartmouth.<sup>i</sup>

To Mr. John Lewis, in Paternoster Row, Cheapside, London.

Dartmouth, Oct. 15, 1749

Sir,

Accidentally reading the advertisement of *Arcana Coelestia*, excited by the oddness of the title, I presently ordered my friend in London to send me one. The extraordinary degree of pleasure the reading of it has given me, and the yet more expected from what more is to be published, induces me to request advice as often as any new publication happens, which I apprehend to be designed annually. My reason for troubling you is, because I very rarely see any of the public papers, and consequently future advertisements may escape my knowledge; which I hope will excuse me.

I have long ardently wished to see the historical part of the Old Testament, which seems only to regard the Jewish dispensation, (and upon that account is too lightly regarded by the major part of the present Christian world), proved to be as delightful, instructive, and as necessary for the knowledge of Christians, as the New. This, *Arcana Coelestia*, gives me the fullest satisfaction. But the illumined Author, whoever he is . . . must expect a considerable army of grown men to draw their pens against him: 'tis a blessing their power is prescribed within impassable bounds.

The favor of a line in answer, to know what dependence I may make upon you, will much oblige.

Your most humble Servant,  
Stephen Penny

## William Cookworthy and Thomas Hartley

Stephen Penny was acquainted with William Cookworthy, a distinguished member of the Society of Friends and the original founder of the British porcelain industry.<sup>ii</sup>

Cookworthy was an attractive man of courtly carriage, famous for his hospitality and wit, but withal a strict Quaker. Widower after ten years of very



William Cookworthy

happy marriage, he ruled over his daughters with a rod of iron. He had an ardent and hasty temperament and it was said that “the sight of a frivolous dress or a gay cap was enough to rouse his temper to the boiling point.”

When Stephen Penny had called his attention to one of Swedenborg’s works, sometime between 1760 and 1764, Cookworthy opened it and then threw it down in disgust, but for some reason decided to give it a second trial. It may have been the new idea of heaven as a life of service, or Swedenborg’s explanation of the true nature of Jesus Christ that appealed to

this sincere man. The more he read the more sure he became of the truth of the new revelation.<sup>iii</sup>

The violence of Cookworthy’s temper subsided with the years, the gay little caps were left in peace, and his disposition became mellowed and sweetened, Christian forbearance taking the place of his former intolerance. “The most sensible, learned, kind man I ever knew,” says his biographer.<sup>iv</sup>

Cookworthy for some time continued attending Quaker Meetings, where “the Spirit” always “moved him” to quote ideas from the Theological Writings of Emanuel Swedenborg (without identifying them, of course).<sup>v</sup>

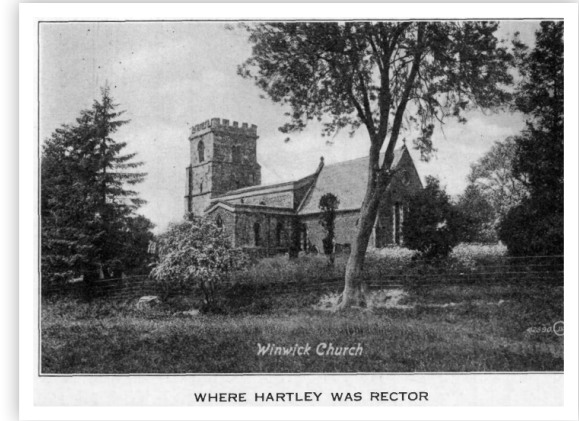
Eventually, Cookworthy became acquainted with Thomas Hartley, a Church of England preacher, who was Rector<sup>1</sup> of Winwick, in Northamptonshire.<sup>2</sup> According to Mr. A. Adcock, of Northampton,

Mr. Hartley interested himself in philanthropy and the religious life of Northamptonshire. He was one of the founders of Northampton Hospital, one of the first in Great Britain, and it was because of his personal interest that he was twice chosen to preach the anniversary sermon.

My picture of Hartley is a kindly, hardworking, conscientious and intelligent clergyman, with a curate relieving him of the duties of ministering to a very small parish and allowing him freedom to associate with the leading Evangelicals of the day, and time to engage in philanthropic work of the county.<sup>vi</sup>

This, however, is certain: Mr. Hartley’s long pastorate was only nominal. He never resided in Winwick but seems to have paid a presumably efficient curate to preach and pray, to marry, baptize and bury in his stead, he himself

living apart – for many years, perhaps most of the time, a hundred miles away in another county. There is no sign of the Rector ever having done a stroke of work in the place. He may occasionally have visited his parish, but, if so, he left no trace behind.



But it must be borne in mind that pluralism<sup>3</sup> and absenteeism in the Church of England had long been an ingrained practice, and continued to be well into the 19th century. Not that the system was universally assented to; on the contrary, an earnest minority always protested against it . . . and denounced it as an impiety. And who can doubt that it was? Some clerics retained their hold on half a dozen benefices [contributing parishes] and served none of them.

Among the clergy were scholars and thinkers whose special gifts were of great value to the church and are indeed always indispensable if stagnation is to be kept at bay. I do not say that many pluralists were of that class, but some of them were, and there is evidence that Hartley was of the number.

Such men were not necessarily or often adapted to the work of a parish, especially of a rural parish. They were probably unfitted for affairs. Leisure and retirement, access to great libraries, and converse with their kind, were essential to them. And is it not a redeeming circumstance . . . that, in some instances, these *literati* were provided for, and enabled to pursue their creative labors, by that very system of patronage and favoritism that was otherwise so deplorable? They lived in London, in Oxford, or Cambridge, or some cathedral city, [often] drew the revenues of several benefices [parishes] and delegated the functions to other men.<sup>vii</sup>

[Hartley] was a delicate man all his life, and probably always required quietude; but the calm was far from being stagnation. Those were by no means barren years for him, but give evidence of active service, and apparently of increasing fame. Thus, on October 30, 1748, we find him preaching a special sermon before the President and Governors of the County Infirmary for Sick and Lame Poor, in the great parish church of All Saints, Northampton.

1 A member of the clergy in charge of a parish.

2 St. Oswald’s Church near Manchester.

3 Holding two or more positions at the same time to increase one’s income.

This would be a big official function, and an opportunity for addressing a vast audience. It is interesting to observe that two years later, on September 24, 1750, he is again the chosen champion of the poor, and fills the same pulpit on the same occasion. And very nobly and notably he pleads for his needy clients.<sup>viii</sup>

Evidently, therefore, the Rector of Winwick was in demand as a preacher, and presumably adapted to urban rather than rural hearers. Both Northampton charity discourses, with a number of others preached on special occasions, are included in the published volume bearing Thomas Hartley's name. None of them was delivered at Winwick, and indeed compositions so elaborate would have been ill-suited to village rustics.<sup>ix</sup>

He had published a volume of *Sermons on Various Subjects*, with a prefatory discourse on "Mistakes of religion, Enthusiasm, Experiences," and other subjects. In this pious and truly excellent work the author exposes, with unflinching severity, the universal degradation of the Christian Church, which had at that time sunk into a darkness more black than heathenism, and he pleads most earnestly for the pursuit of the spirit and life of Religion in place of mere theological faith and science. The work is a powerful and remarkable protest against the prevailing Solafidianism<sup>4</sup> of a corrupt Christianity and exhibits very clearly the simple heart and the truth-seeking mind of the author, who was even then being prepared for the reception of genuine Truth from the LORD out of Heaven.

In 1764, Thomas Hartley appears again as a theological writer in a work entitled *Paradise Restored*, being "A Testimony to the Doctrine of the Blessed Millennium, with some Considerations on its Approaching Advent from the Signs of the Times; to which is added a Short Defense of the Mystical Writers."

There is recognizable also in this work the same earnest and truth-seeking spirit as characterized his former production, the same conviction of the existence of a mystical or interior sense in the Holy Word, and the same perception of the end of the old Christian Church, and of the imminent descent of the New Jerusalem, as a new age of rational faith and living charity. Mr. Hartley speaks in this volume of the time which, he felt assured, was near at hand, "when the knowledge of the Scriptures, both as to the mysteries of our holy faith and the interpretation of prophecy, will be given a greater clearness and a fuller measure than has been hitherto, and that not in the way of human learning or criticism."

Little did he then anticipate how soon and in what manner he would see his expectations fulfilled.

A short time after the publication of this work, it seems that his inquiring

mind became greatly attracted to the apparent, though delusive, simplicity and earnestness of faith and life of the Quakers, and thus it came to pass, about the year 1766, that he formed an epistolary acquaintance<sup>5</sup> with Mr. William Cookworthy, through whose influence he was induced to examine the Writings of the hitherto anonymous Emanuel Swedenborg.

His reception of the Doctrines of the New Church appears to have been as thorough as it was rapid. Gladly he now sold all his previous spiritual possessions, in order to buy the field that contained this precious pearl of Truth Divine. Away, now, with the murky dogmas of the old and dead Theology, and with the vague and fruitless speculations of mysticism! Here, in the Internal glories of the Divine Word, he found the true "Paradise restored," the dawn of that "Blessed Millennium" which he had anticipated.<sup>x</sup>

It appears that Hartley was the first English preacher to accept the new revelation.

[Hartley and Cookworthy] carried on a lengthy correspondence about the doctrines of the New Church. Hartley was a man of affectionate disposition, but nervous and inclined to shrink from society. The two men exchanged letters for a long time before they had a personal meeting. However, the repeated interchange of sentiment between them had produced such a union of minds that when they met for the first time they flew into each other's arms as if they had been old acquaintances and afterward worked together with joyful zeal to spread the new tidings.<sup>xi</sup>

When Swedenborg, in the year 1768, for the first time announced himself as the human author of the Writings of the New Church, it seems that Mr. Hartley became aware of this fact. In the following year Swedenborg arrived in London, and Thomas Hartley promptly seized the opportunity to visit him in company with his friends, Mr. Cookworthy, and Dr. Messiter, another receiver of the Heavenly Doctrines.<sup>xii</sup>

On August 2, 1769, Rev. Hartley wrote to Swedenborg, *I consider myself most highly favored and I rejoice from my inmost heart in having had the honor, which you lately granted me, of conversing with you; and also in your having been so kind and friendly towards me. . . . For who among kings, if he is of a sane mind, would not gladly converse with an inhabitant of heaven, while here on earth?*

*May I be permitted to tell you from a heart full of gratitude, that I consider myself thrice blessed, that your writings, by the Divine Providence, have fallen into my hands? for from them, as from a living fountain, I have drawn so many things, as well for instruction and edification as for my great delight, and I have been freed by them from so many fears, and from so many errors, doubts and opinions, which held my mind in perplexity and bondage, that I seem to myself sometimes, as if transferred among the angels. May the Lord, the Highest and*

4 The theological doctrine that faith alone, without the performance of good works, is all that is necessary for salvation.

5 By means of letters.

*Best, forbid that I deceive myself with a vain and premature hope; and may He always keep me in a state of humility and repentance, anxious to shun all evil, and ready to do all good, so that I may safely and happily reach the goal of our destination in the Lord Jesus Christ.<sup>xiii</sup>*

Later in the same letter, Rev. Hartley asked Swedenborg for some details of his life which could be used in his defense, if necessary, after his return to Sweden. Swedenborg replied with a beautiful letter that not only tells his story in a nutshell but reveals his outlook on life and his Divine mission in a very real and personal way – just two and a half years before his work on earth was completed (see footnote).<sup>6</sup>

Hartley responded with the following letter:

*Most respected and beloved Sir, Your late kindness towards me, as well as your letter, which I received reverently, as if it had come down to me from heaven, I acknowledge with heart-felt joy and thankfulness. Your exhortation to perseverance I shall treasure up and cherish in the depth of my heart. May I never, after having once been made the participant of the gifts of heaven, suffer myself to be drawn away from the truth; for of what profit is it to gain the whole world, and lose one's own soul?*

*You, who are gifted with illumination, have, in your friendly reply, most abundantly satisfied me on the questions I had proposed to you. This is, and will be, of the greatest use to me. Should I be called upon to defend the truth in public, the enemy will not find me altogether unprepared; and I am confident the Lord will provide me with the necessary strength. I neither seek nor avoid such contests. The Lord's will be done in everything. Allow me to congratulate your noble country on your performing the office of your apostolic mission among your countrymen; and on your being thus honored by its princes, its governors, and high councillors.*

*O happy Swedish nation, and happy ye its chiefs, who acknowledge and receive the Lord in your apostle! Blessed, indeed, shall ye be, if your life be the same as your faith! O England, my beloved country, how greatly I desire that the same opportunity may arise of congratulating you on your receiving your own [apostles of the truth]! But, most distinguished Sir, permit even me, from my obscure position, to offer you, in the name of my country, our most heart-felt thanks for your love towards us, for your journeys hither and your sojourn in our midst, and for your indefatigable labors in behalf of our salvation for who else is there to express all this to you, except my own unworthy self? Truly, those great offices of charity you have performed for us, deserve our most heartfelt acknowledgments; but with sorrow I pass over in silence the little fruit they have thus far borne amongst us.<sup>7</sup>*

6 See *A Letter from Swedenborg in New Church Life*, January 2009 (p. 26), or New Church Digital Collections at [www.swedenborglibrary.org/digital](http://www.swedenborglibrary.org/digital) (select Swedenborgiana> Swedenborg's Life & Works

7 This can hardly be said now, inasmuch as England has been foremost in spreading the doctrines taught by Swedenborg, while the New Church has but a feeble existence in Swedenborg's native country.

*May the Lord, the Highest and Best, grant that a rich harvest may at last flourish and become matured among us Britons, from the seed you have sown! About myself and my affairs I willingly keep silence; for I regard myself as of no consequence, and as a mere nothing; yet I am prepared to answer truly and fully all your questions; and if, after your return to Sweden, you should at any time do me the honor, to address a letter to me, and to make use of my services in any way whatsoever, you will find me a willing and delighted servant. Instruct me, exhort me, dispose of me in any way whatever; for if I know myself sufficiently, it will be the greatest pleasure to me to obey your admonitions and commands, and you will find me faithful to all my promises. But if you will not do me this honor, it will be enough for me to remember you always above all others, to love you always; and to have had you for my teacher in Divine things.*

*Most honored Sir,*

*I am, with all due reverence,  
Your most obedient servant  
Thos. HARTLEY.  
August 14. 1769*

*East Malling near Maidstone, Kent.  
To The Honorable MR. SWEDENBORG.<sup>xiv</sup>*

The herald of the new era sat in his poor London lodging, a stranger and an alien – sat writing, always writing, far into the night; and here and there some lonely scholar, untrammelled by tradition, might be found dipping into the *Arcana* or the *De Coelo*, and constrained to read on with a growing wonder and a “wild surmise.”

Of these few scattered ones Thomas Hartley has the distinction of being one of the earliest and most active, and they together constitute the infant Church.

He evidently realized that it was not enough to receive and respond to the new teachings, but that something must be done to rescue them from their Latin mummy cloths and adapt them to English readers.

Thus, in the year 1770, a few months after the correspondence referred to, he translated our seer's pamphlet, *De Commercio*, entitling it, *A Theosophic Lucubration on the Nature of Influx*. To this he appended a Preface, as a pylon or porchway to the temple, wherein he vindicates his author's personal character, and makes a spirited plea for a new and more inward philosophy of life.<sup>xv</sup>

So convinced were Hartley and Cookworthy of the importance of the new revelations that they immediately set about translating some of Swedenborg's writings into English. Cookworthy translated *The Doctrine of Life*, and

[This footnote was included in the original 1895 article]



published it at Plymouth. . . . Later, assisted by Hartley, he published an English version of *Heaven and Hell* at a personal cost of 100 pounds [a considerable expense at that time]. Hartley translated various other treatises.<sup>xvi</sup>

Swedenborg left for Sweden in October of 1769 and then returned to London in the summer of 1771 where he spent the remainder of his earthly days. Hartley had the pleasure of visiting him about 20 times during the last year of Swedenborg's life on earth, spending about two hours with him on each visit. What marvelous conversations they must have had!

But the Seer's sands of life were running out, and his devoted disciple's labor of love was focused for a while on purely personal service. He seems to have been his only close friend in this country – unless Dr. Messiter, a physician, may be reckoned another, both of them being with him near the end.

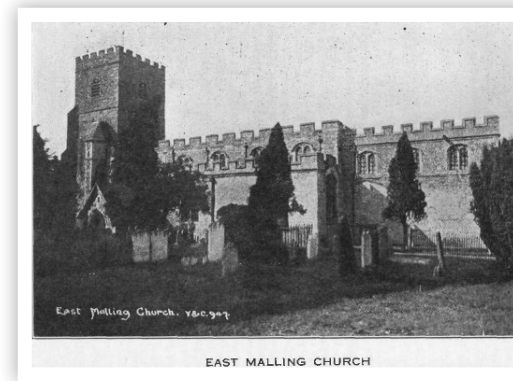
It is unlikely that Swedenborg, at least in his elder years, ever felt lonely in London or anywhere else; he was scarcely of this world. Still, we cannot but feel glad that he had a dear companion not far away, a clergyman of upright character and singularly sweet disposition, a kindred soul in spiritual things, who ministered to him in his last days. What proved to be the Rector's farewell visit to his dying friend is a familiar story and forms another landmark. Feeling that the occasion was a crisis, he appealed to him to declare, in the presence of Dr. Messiter and himself, whether there was anything in his writings he desired to retract or qualify; and the patient, raising himself in bed, solemnly affirmed that he had written nothing but the truth.

That, as we are told, was only three or four days before the death of Swedenborg, which occurred on March 29, 1772. It appears that, in the interval, he sent for Hartley again, but the good friend for some reason was unable to respond, a failure for which he ever afterwards reproached himself.<sup>xvii</sup>

The following year, Hartley published a tract entitled, *The Cause of the Petitioners Examined*.

This little work was called forth by an application to Parliament by a society of freethinkers, who appealed for relief from subscribing to the "thirty-nine articles" of the Church of England, and especially the dogma of the Trinity. Thomas Hartley used this opportunity to defend the Doctrine of a Trinity in the Godhead by explaining at the same time the true nature of this Trinity as revealed in the Doctrines of the New Church.

He avoided here any mention of Swedenborg, as he labored under the fallacious hope that the National Church would gradually and unconsciously become reformed by the permeating influences of the New Heaven operating upon the whole Christian Church. He himself continued a member of the recognized clergy of the Established Church in spite of his radical divergence from its dogmas, assigning as one of his reasons for his conduct the negative

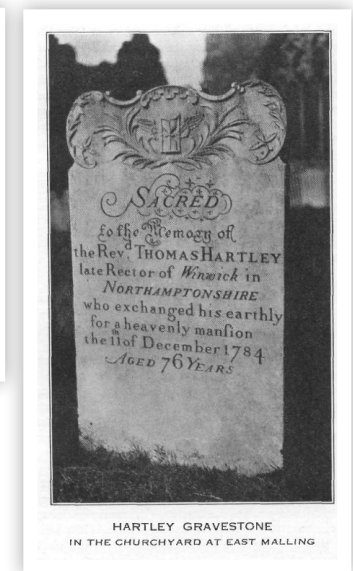


fact that Swedenborg had not directly advised him to the contrary.<sup>xviii</sup>

The next appearance of Thomas Hartley in the annals of the New Church was in the year 1778, when the first English edition of *Heaven and Hell* was published at London. The translation of this work had been begun by Mr. William Cookworthy [as mentioned above], but was revised and continued by Mr. Hartley, who also composed for it an extended preface, which has been much admired in the New Church. The translation of this edition left much to be desired, and was, in many respects, a paraphrase rather than a translation of the original. Nevertheless, it remained for 38 years the only English version of this important work, and had the blessed effect of leading many, very many, minds to the knowledge of the Heavenly Doctrine of the New Jerusalem.<sup>xix</sup>

Thomas Hartley's earthly life ended on December 11, 1784, and his body was buried in the churchyard of St. James the Great Church in East Malling. Those not familiar with the geography of England would assume, as I did, that Hartley's home in East Malling was near Winwick, where he was the Rector. However, East Malling is actually 30 miles (48 km.) southeast of London and about 200 miles (322 km.) from Winwick (250 miles or 402 km. by car today).

Traveling by carriage or stagecoach (covering about 50 miles a day), a trip by Hartley to see Swedenborg in London would have taken the better part of a day, and a trip to Winwick would probably have taken about five days! So, even though Hartley was Rector for the parish in Winwick until his death, it is unlikely that he spent much (if any) time there when he was visiting and corresponding with Swedenborg. Living in East Malling allowed him to have considerably more contact with Swedenborg (and his followers) and likely facilitated his translation and printing of Swedenborg's works.



[The details of this story] present an interesting and lovable personality, and justify feelings of high respect and admiration. We may salute Thomas Hartley as one of the very worthiest of our early Worthies, and as the morning star of the new renaissance. His piety was perhaps in form the piety of the age he lived in, but there can be no question of its reality. He was a profoundly religious and spiritually minded man.<sup>xx</sup>

Thus ends the story of the earthly life of this early disciple of the LORD, in His Second Advent. His love of the Divine Truth was great and his faith strong, even though not entirely free from obscurities (and who dare boast of such freedom?), and his services to the infant New Church were many and important. He, too, we have no doubt, has gone to join the saints of the LORD'S New Heaven, and again to grasp the hand of his heart's friend, Emanuel Swedenborg. Well may the New Church honor his memory!<sup>xxi</sup>

**Note:** Unfortunately, there do not appear to be any images of Rev. Hartley in existence today. The photographs in this article were taken from *The Reverend Thomas Hartley, A.M.*, by Stanley E. Parker printed in the August, 1931, issue of *New Church Life*, pages 476 - 484. The drawing of William Cookworthy was printed in *Rise and Progress of the New Jerusalem Church in England, America and Other Parts* by Robert Hindmarsh in 1861.

For more stories about early champions of the New Church, explore the New Church Digital Collections at [www.swedenborglibrary.org/digital](http://www.swedenborglibrary.org/digital) and select: *Archives*> *New Church History*> *Early New Church People*> *In America or In England*.



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### Endnotes

- i *Rise and Progress of the New Jerusalem Church*. Robert Hindmarsh, 1861, p.5.
- ii *The Swedenborg Epic*. Cyriel Odhner Sigstedt, 1981, p.326.
- iii *ibid*, Cyriel Odhner Sigstedt, 1981, p.378.
- iv *ibid*, p.378.
- v *Highlights in the History of the New Church*. Rev. Douglas M. Taylor. Notes from a series of classes. 1987, p.3.

- vi *The Reverend Thomas Hartley, A.M.* Stanley E. Parker. *New Church Life*, August, 1931, p. 478.
- vii *Rev. Thomas Hartley, A.M.* Rev. Arthur. E. Beilby. *New Church Magazine*, 1931, p.224-225.
- viii *Rev. Thomas Hartley, A.M.* Rev. Arthur. E. Beilby. *New Church Magazine*, 1931, p.9.
- ix *ibid*, p.10.
- x *Thomas Hartley*. Carl Theophilus Odhner. *New Church Life* 1895, p.135-136
- xi *The Swedenborg Epic* by Cyriel Odhner Sigstedt, p.378.
- xii *Thomas Hartley*. Carl Theophilus Odhner. *New Church Life*, 1895, p.136
- xiii *Documents Concerning the Life and Character of Emanuel Swedenborg: Volume 1*. R. L. Tafel. 1875, p.4.
- xiv *The Swedenborg Epic*. Cyriel Odhner Sigstedt, 1981, p.378.
- xv *Rev. Thomas Hartley, A.M.* Rev. Arthur. E. Beilby. *New Church Magazine*, 1931, p.14-15.
- xvi *Thomas Hartley*. Carl Theophilus Odhner. *New Church Life*, 1895, p.152
- xvii *Rev. Thomas Hartley, A.M.* Rev. Arthur. E. Beilby. *New Church Magazine*, 1931, p.15.
- xviii *Thomas Hartley*. Carl Theophilus Odhner. *New Church Life*, 1895, p.152
- xix *ibid*, p. 152
- xx *Rev. Thomas Hartley, A.M.* Rev. Arthur. E. Beilby. *New Church Magazine*, 1931, p.18.
- xxi *Thomas Hartley*. Carl Theophilus Odhner. *New Church Life*, 1895, p.153

FROM THE BISHOP'S OFFICE

## New Church Education Continues Uninterrupted Despite the Pandemic

*The Rt. Rev. Bradley D. Heinrichs*

I want to draw attention to our amazing New Church schools which continue to function well in an incredibly difficult environment. As I write this, all our elementary schools around the world are open and teaching in-person in the classroom. This includes our two schools in Ghana, one in Kenya, and the Kainon School in Westville, South Africa. Carmel New Church School and Olivet New Church School in Canada are also continuing to function despite a second province-wide lockdown in Ontario.

Moving to the United States, we have six New Church elementary schools in Kempton, Pittsburgh and Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania; Oak Arbor, Michigan; Glenview, Illinois; and the Washington New Church School in Mitchellville, Maryland. All of them are teaching in-person as well, although that could change. This brings me to what I want to focus on: how resilient and adaptable our New Church schools have been during the pandemic, which has dragged on for more than a year.

Our school administrators have had to deal with a remarkable burden of leadership. The trying demands of providing “in school,” “online,” and “hybrid” learning options continues to tax not only our principals, but all the teachers in our system. In addition to learning how to educate effectively in all these formats, a huge amount of extra communication with parents and students is required just to keep everyone up to speed. Most of our schools have also had to go back and forth from open to hybrid to closed multiple times.



All of us are aware just how polarizing COVID-19 has been for our communities, and this is evident in our schools as well. Roughly half the teachers and parents think the response to the coronavirus has been overblown and unnecessary, and the other half thinks the response has not been nearly enough. So, no matter what decision our administrators make – whether to keep school open and teach in-person or to go strictly to online learning – they have made half of their constituents unhappy.

This is a very demoralizing situation for our school leaders who have been in this position for more than a year and have managed to carry themselves remarkably well through it all. My gentle plea is for all of us to recognize the “no-win” situation they are caught in and instead of being quick to criticize, be supportive and give them words of encouragement. This will go a long way to boosting their morale and give them much-needed refuge from the storm of negativity they have had to endure.

Back in the fall, General Church Education, together with Human Resources, provided teachers, and separately, administrators an opportunity to meet in groups with Dr. Jeanne DiVincenzo. During the sessions, participants were able to discuss the job stressors they are experiencing in relation to the pandemic. These sessions proved to be cathartic as they drew support from those around them wrestling with the same issues.

Planning is in place for follow-up professional development for the 2021-2022 school year that will address pertinent topics on the minds of administrators and faculties, as they work to recover from these extraordinary times.

On the religious education programming side, work has continued to provide materials for teachers, parents, Sunday Schools and children who are homeschooling. At the start of the pandemic shutdown last year, we made all our digital lesson books free on New Christian Resources. I urge you to check out this fantastic resource and download those free materials at your leisure: <http://newchristianresources.org>.

We now have 51 free digital downloads available. Most of them represent several complete lessons, with series ranging from four to 36 lessons per book.

No matter what decision our administrators make during the pandemic they make half their constituents unhappy. All of us need to recognize the no-win situation they are in and be supportive rather than quick to criticize.

So far during the lockdown we have had 637 downloads of our New Church educational content, so join the masses and download some for yourself!

Our Easter mailings went out at the beginning of March and our New Church Day mailings should be received by the beginning of June. I am thrilled to report that due to a very generous donation endowing the religious mailing program, we will be able to keep this use going for years and years to come. It is wonderful when children around the world are able to go to their mailbox and receive some valuable and beautiful New Church content – all free. We get many notes of thanks telling us how much these mailings mean to families, which makes us even more thankful for such a thoughtful donation.

I am reminded how the Lord is constantly trying to reach all people who desire to be instructed by Him, and thus we are told: “The Lord is present to everyone in the Word, and is there pressing to be received.” (*Apocalypse Revealed* 217) It is amazing to me that despite the pandemic, the Lord has managed to disseminate His truth throughout the world. So while we continue to be challenged, the Lord nevertheless is bending everything to achieve His good ends by providing increased opportunities for people to find Him in His Word, just as He says: “Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice, and opens the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me.” (*Revelation* 3:20)

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## Johnny Appleseed Educational Center and Museum Needs Nurturing

*The Rev. J. Clark Echols Jr*



John Chapman, the real person behind the Johnny Appleseed legends, was an early convert to the New Church faith. By occupation, he was a nurseryman. He planted apple trees and established orchards in remote frontier areas of Pennsylvania, Ohio and Indiana. When settlers arrived in those areas, they found apple trees ready for sale.

Chapman roamed the frontiers, from cabin to cabin. In addition to selling apple trees, he was a missionary of the New Church, bringing “good news straight from Heaven.” Often he would talk to them about his New Church faith and leave religious materials for them to read.

Urbana, Ohio, had become a leading New Church community thanks to another early New Churchman, John H. James, one of the Founders of the New Church Urbana College, later Urbana University. Chapman visited the town regularly and planted one of his orchards on the land of John James.

The best books about John Chapman are careful to distinguish facts from presumptions. And while the facts may be few, the presumption that Johnny Appleseed is a powerful model of authentic humanity is justified. I invite you to use your imagination to fill in the story of the young man who would become what we now know was a truly good man.

I imagine that Johnny was still a young adventurer, immersed in nature every day and night, and in every weather and season, when he experienced nature’s processes as a flowing of the Lord’s Divine Love. He saw those apple



I honor Johnny Appleseed for the awesome effort he made to discover, accept and then live this spiritual truth. Anyone who looks for the flow of life, and seeks to live in its flow of love, will discover the eternal truth Johnny learned.

I honor Johnny Appleseed for the awesome effort he made to discover, accept and then live this spiritual truth. Anyone who looks for the flow of life, and seeks to live in its flow of love, will discover the eternal truth Johnny learned.

I imagine that Johnny's experience opened his eyes to the wisdom he found when he read the books of the New Church, given to him by someone who saw that he would welcome them. He would have come upon Swedenborg's observation: "The good of love is the initial seed when a person is being regenerated or 'planted.' And it is also the final development. The intermediate stages are the truths of faith, which grow from the good of love as their seed and look constantly to the good of love as their final objective, just as the parts of a tree that are formed at intermediate stages look to their fruit containing the seed." (*Secrets of Heaven* 7690)

My imagination is filled with hope for our shared future because I know there are millions of people who have taken Johnny's spiritual journey, and are bringing "good news, right from heaven" into the world, planting seeds of love and truth that will produce fruits of usefulness.

Johnny Appleseed professed and lived by a set of values that include generosity, humility, stewardship, thrift, entrepreneurship and caring for one's fellow human – values always needed. For more than a quarter-century, The Johnny Appleseed Education Center and Museum has taught these values to scholars, teachers, children, travelers and community groups from its location on the campus of Urbana University, in Urbana, Ohio.

seeds as eventual fruit, knowing that as he planted them, they would receive the nutrients and have the conditions that would further the Lord's goal for his creation – useful fruit and the next generation of trees and apples and seeds.

I imagine that Johnny's mind was awakened to the spiritual reality within this experience. He saw his own maturation as the flow of Divine Love through the seed that is his soul. He was motivated by this to feed his mind with the Lord's Divine Love and Wisdom, and to provide the right conditions of a useful, purposeful life that would further the Lord's goal for him: an eternal life of fruitfulness.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic Franklin University, the current owner of the university, permanently closed Urbana University. This closure shuttered The Johnny Appleseed Education Center and Museum, sealing off its collection from the public. The Education Center and Museum housed the world's most significant and complete collection of information about Johnny Appleseed and has been used by hundreds of historians and scholars. It has trained teachers, provided educational materials for classrooms, and published books for children.

Now, the search is on for a new home for the collection, the Education Center and Museum. A small amount of funding for this work has been raised. More is needed. The fund raising is a combined effort of The Johnny Appleseed Foundation and The Johnny Appleseed Society.

The Johnny Appleseed Foundation has created a GoFundMe page. <https://au.gofundme.com/f/save-the-johnny-appleseed-museum>

The Foundation's web address is [www.johnnyappleseedmuseum.org](http://www.johnnyappleseedmuseum.org) where one can learn more and make a donation that will help save history.

Every gift of participation or funding is most welcome!

To subscribe to the Foundation's free newsletter, The Apple Core, visit the website, [www.appleseedsociety.net](http://www.appleseedsociety.net)



**The Rev. Clark Echols** is pastor of the Cincinnati Society in Cincinnati, Ohio, and visiting pastor in Indianapolis, Indiana. He and his wife, Janice, live in West Chester, Ohio. Contact: [jcechols@gmail.com](mailto:jcechols@gmail.com)

My imagination is filled with hope for our shared future because I know there are millions of people who have taken Johnny's spiritual journey, and are bringing "good news, right from heaven" into the world, planting seeds of love and truth that will produce fruits of usefulness.

# The Divine Allegory

*Michael A. Brown*

From the Title page: “The story of the peoples and lands of scripture and their spiritual significance as revealed in the writings of Emanuel Swedenborg. By; Hugo Ljungberg Odhner; Swedenborg Foundation, INC. New York 1954.”

We begin by quoting from the end of the book. “It is into this mental world that the Lord must be born today—received now in the virginal affection of spiritual truth as once in the womb of Mary. For He must enter our hearts through our understanding if He is to work within us the miracle of regeneration. He must enter as revealed truth such as He offers in His Word of Scripture and Doctrine. As such He walks the reaches of our mind as once He journeyed on the soil of Canaan: healing our spiritual diseases and opening our eyes to penetrate the parables of His teaching and visualize goals of charity and faith.”

The Reverend Doctor Hugo Lj Odhner was a man of many words. His words form pictures in our minds. His many books, classes, and papers—based on the Bible and teachings from the Writings (the teachings of the new Church)—were and are a gift, past and present.

One of his many presentations was a talk in 1944 during World War 2, attended by teachers from kindergarten to the theological school.

One of his concerns was the future enrollment of the schools. What effect the war would have was the question. Interestingly, after the war one of the Theological classes included Frank Rose, Dan Pendleton, and Bishop to be Louis King as students.

A key part of the 1944 talk was on the importance of having classes in the study of the Bible, especially in the Theological School. There were no Bible classes that I can remember in the High School while I was a student from 1953 to 1956. There was a mandatory morning 15 minute worship service each day in the auditorium. I can still hear the stomping of feet as we marched down the stairs to the auditorium.

We did have classes in religion each year that stressed the teachings of the Writings.

We move on to a quotation; the long last paragraph in the “Introduction”,

pages 1 to 5 of *The Divine Allegory*.

It stands to reason that if we had an intimate knowledge of oriental life and customs, the literal sense of the Word would be endowed for us with new and more precise shades of meaning which would render it more transparent to the living spirit within. For words mean different things to different ages; and the same holds true of names and places, objects and gestures. Many an obscure passage in the Prophets, referring to some strange little village or district, has received a new glow of beauty or a new and forceful meaning since archaeologists have unearthed its secrets from the sand: perhaps it had a shrine to the Moon-goddess, or was a source of some spice for the sacrifices; perhaps it was the place of some decisive battle. Generations of New Church scholars are yet to come who will *restore* the ancient landmarks of the Word and make its letter speak with a greater power. But in the meantime, the clergy and laity of this Church can at least learn to love the sacred books and seek to read their story with a sympathetic heart, maintain the study of the sacred languages—the Hebrew and the Greek—and encourage a more correct translation than the present versions, which still speak, in places, in the tones of old church theology.

So there it is. That was 1954. Now, 67 years later, there is ‘in progress’ a wonderful New Century Edition translation and publication of *Secrets of Heaven*. The original title was in the Latin language: *Arcana Coelestia Quae in Scriptura Sacrd, seu Verbo Domini Sunt, Detecta: Una cum Mirabilibus Quae Visa Sunt in Mundo Spirituum, et in Coele Angelorum*. This became generally referred to in English as ‘the Arcana.’

There is also available in our new age a Bible Study of some 342 Bible Study classes, most of which are available online; [spiritandlifebiblestudy.com](http://spiritandlifebiblestudy.com).

**Michael A. Brown** graduated from the Academy Boys School in 1956. He and his wife, Lynn, live in Tucson, Arizona. Contact: [mikelynnbrown2@gmail.com](mailto:mikelynnbrown2@gmail.com)

# Church News

*Compiled by Bruce Henderson*

## GENERAL CHURCH BOARD OF DIRECTORS

*(Highlights of the March 19, 20 meetings)*

### President

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

The Board was updated on implementation efforts within the vision casting strategy of the strategic plan, which include:

- Formation of a Bishop's Council
- Developing a process for shared messages from the clergy aimed at influencing each other in a common teaching direction
- An overall communications strategy for the Central Office

**Brett Ludwig**, a communications professional hired as an interim consultant, presented an overview of communication goals, including elevating the voice of the Bishop's Office, with coordinated and consistent messaging in line with the mission and vision of the General Church.

### Assistant Bishops

**The Rt. Revs. Bradley Heinrichs and David Lindrooth** have provided planning, support and coordination for an unusually large number of pastoral moves involving 15 congregations. Bishop Lindrooth reported that the training schedule for the Child Protection Policy is complete.

### Outreach

**The Rev. Pearse Frazier** updated General Church Outreach efforts, including:

- The Grand Human Project (GHP) has 29 active groups. The focus is shifting from connecting people in online groups to in-person experiences. (See separate report on page 233)
- There has been a positive response to the "Big Spiritual Questions" series on the new GHP YouTube channel.

## General Church Education

Board member **Charlotte Gyllenhaal** updated the Education Committee's engagement with two General Church principals on continuing COVID-19 adjustments.

**Rachel Glenn** of the Education Office spoke about:

- Increased New Church digital offerings on *www.NewChristianResources.org* and *www.NewChurchVineyard.org*.
- Positive feedback on festival gifts to more than 550 families. These will continue into the foreseeable future thanks to a generous endowed gift.
- A new series about the Ten Commandments is in production.

**Rebekah Russell** of the Education Office reported:

- Positive feedback on pandemic stressors workshops from school administrators, teachers, students and parents.

## Executive Director

**David Frazier** reported actual financial results for the six-month period ending December 31, 2020, with revenue at \$3 million and expenses at \$2.5 million, and an operating surplus of about \$548,000.

## International Committee

Project Manager the **Rev. Jeffrey Smith** reported that the project in Lomé, Togo, is undergoing a change in leadership.

## Advancement

Director **Mark Wyncoll** and Board member **Amy Buick** reported that fiscal year-to-date giving numbers were up compared to the previous year for number of donors (up 94). Number of gifts (up 82), and donations (up \$3.3 million).

Year-over-year donor retention is holding strong. And there have been extraordinary major gifts supporting Bishop's priorities and New Church Education mailings to families.

## Budgets

Board member **Brent Hyatt** reported that the General Church is projecting a balanced operating budget for the fiscal year 2022 budget, with revenue of \$6.16 million, up approximately \$700,000 from FY 21, including about \$500,000 from prior year surpluses.

Expenses are budgeted at \$6.16 million, up roughly \$710,000 due to higher personnel costs (due to inflation), additional staff and institutional

improvements, plus several non-recurring uses.

The capital budget is projected at \$205,000, of which \$155,000 is for repairs and restoration at Cairncrest and \$50,000 for initial design of the refreshed website.

#### GENERAL CHURCH CORPORATION

The annual meeting of the General Church Corporation is scheduled for June 26 at 3 p.m. in the Pendleton Hall Auditorium of Bryn Athyn College. The agenda includes electing directors to the General Church Board of Directors.

**Amy Buick** and **Jennifer Pronesti** have completed their maximum three consecutive terms and are not eligible for re-election. **Cheryl Cooper** has completed one term and declined renomination. **Patrick Mayer**, with two years remaining in his third term, has resigned.

Incumbents eligible and willing to run for re-election are:

- **John Berridge**, Deal, Kent, United Kingdom
- **Wade Buick**, Kempton, Pennsylvania
- **Rene H. Johnson**, Russell, Pennsylvania
- **Stephanie Klippenstein**, Maysville, Missouri
- **James Uber**, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
- **Ned Uber**, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
- **Wayne Wadsworth**, Marietta, Georgia

Nominated to fill the vacancies on the Board are:

- **Barbara P. Horigan**, Toronto, Ontario, Canada
- **Brynna C. Smith**, Boston, Massachusetts
- **Tanya M. Woker**, Durban, South Africa

**Cathy A. McQueen**, Bryn Athyn, is being nominated to serve the unexpired term of Mr. Mayer.

Biographies and statements of interest from the four new candidates were circulated to members of the Corporation in March.

A Legal Advisory Council has been formed and affirmed by the Board, charged with providing the Board and Administration with legal information and guidance. One of its first tasks will be to work on a comprehensive rewrite and reorganization of the bylaws, which is expected to take about a year. There is a strong desire for transparency and soliciting input from all interested parties. Members of the Council are:

- **Steve Ball**, Chair and Board member
- **Phil Zuber**, In-house Counsel

- **Rene Johnson**, Board member and Secretary of the Corporation
- **Jamie Uber**, Board member
- **John Walko**, Board member
- **John Kern**, Corporation member
- **David Frazier**, Executive Director
- **Peter Buss Jr.**, Executive Bishop

#### GRAND HUMAN PROJECT UPDATE

*(From a presentation to the General Church Board)*

We (**Rt. Rev. David Lindrooth**, **Bergen Jungé** and **Charles Ebert**) are writing to provide an update on the progress General Church Outreach has made with the Grand Human Project. When we presented to the Glencairn Foundation we never anticipated the pandemic and how it would change the dynamics of how people are able to get together and be in community. These changes have shaped our efforts and the evolution of the platform considerably.

The Grand Human Project launched in January 2020 and over the next six to eight weeks we worked to confirm its functionality and improve ease of use. Then as lockdowns were implemented, we came to realize just how providential it was to have this platform in place to help people be able to connect around New Church thought. Our focus grew to include more service to our existing church members, facilitating the setup and use of small groups.

The Grand Human Project is serving participants in five major ways:

- First, it hosts a growing number of small groups that allow people to connect. (Currently 20 different groups, two of which meet five times a week.)
- Second, it offers support for group leaders, with training materials, small group content, and one-on-one support from staff to help new leaders get started and helping them when they encounter problems with their groups.
- Third, it functions as a way for people to find and join groups by having them listed with the links allowing them to connect.
- Fourth, it provides people with connections to other New Church resources, like New Church Audio and newchurch.org.
- Fifth, it houses materials that introduce Swedenborgian thought and principles to people new to the Writings.

Plans include tracks within GHP that will support group leaders and help families find a variety of content to help them offer worship services and support their religious instruction of children. To do this we will be adding



access to additional database resources such as The Vineyard. For leaders looking to facilitate groups that feature video recordings of New Church religious content, the GHP will be adding a library of pre-existing Sunroom videos, and new doctrinal videos.

One of our challenges has been figuring out how to bring people into contact with GHP and start their engagement with Swedenborgian thought. Early on, we recognized that GHP needs to be visible to a large number of people to allow us to attract and interact with the percentage that will eventually have long-term interests. We have been using the marketing model of a funnel with a large opening that reaches many people and then draws them in toward deepening engagement.

We have exciting news on this front. Outreach has created a series of YouTube videos called “Big Spiritual Questions” that articulate New Church thought and that we have used to target newcomers. So far more than 1.2 million people have viewed the videos, with a significant percentage of them watching through to the end. Then many have gone on to watch more of our videos. We are using this visibility as a primary way to lead new people to enroll in the GHP.

We are feeling very encouraged by the way we have seen the platform begin to help church members connect with each other during the pandemic. We also are seeing increasing numbers of people new to the New Church participating in our small groups and using our resources. This activity has resulted in steady growth in the number of groups that are hosted.

We also have a huge number of people who have been exposed to the General Church and our teachings and invited to participate in communities offered by the GHP through our YouTube videos. (See links below) These successes would not have been possible without the strong support we have received and we want to thank the Glencairn Foundation for the large part it has played.

<https://www.youtube.com/newchurchvideo>

<https://grandhumanproject.org>

#### **ACADEMY OF THE NEW CHURCH BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

*(Highlights of the February 5 meeting)*

##### **Vice Chair**

**Dr. Charles Lindsay** was elected Vice Chair of the Board, beginning with the May 21 board meeting. This will require appointment of a new chair for the Finance Committee.

##### **Sustainability**

The Treasurer reported on endowment payout sustainability, assuming various market scenarios. Key points that emerged:

- The Asplundh Founders Fund will have a significant impact on the sustainability of the Academy Secondary Schools
- Sustainability depends on the ability and success of increasing revenues outside of the endowment and eliminating deficit spending to stay within a manageable payout
- There is time to work on these objectives; the situation is not desperate

##### **Bryn Athyn College**

Delivering a college education and college experience continues to be challenged by COVID-19 which has significantly impacted revenues, students, athletics and the need for mental health services. But the College has had “a banner year” with recruitment and fund raising. It reached its Annual Fund contribution goal with several generous and unexpected gifts from new donors. The College expects to meet its budget reduction goals for FY 2021 and FY 2022.

Minor capital projects include renovations to Grant Hall, repairs to residence halls parking lot and walkway upgrades. Thanks to gifts and reserves this will not impact the budget. IT investments are needed in student information systems and financial software.

Faculty leadership changes include **Dr. Jonathan Kline** becoming the new Dean of Academics/Chief Academic Officer. The MSCHE accreditation is in process. The College has partnered with Duquesne University to offer a Master’s in Business Administration.

##### **Academy Secondary Schools**

The schools exceeded their Annual Fund goals and also received an additional generous endowment gift. The Middle States Accreditation visiting team is recommending full and unconditional re-accreditation for the next seven years. The Academy anticipated the official notice in the spring.

The Schools will move forward with strategic planning, rolling the four objectives from the self-study report into the plan. Active and vigorous work is being done by the Diversity, Equality and Inclusion Committee.

One Secondary Schools teacher is leaving and three are reducing percentages and moving to part time next year. Low and non-competitive salaries continue to impact the ability to attract new teachers.

COVID-19 mitigation and prevention remain central, with vaccines

some time away. Garnering the interest of “legacy” families in attending the Secondary Schools and other mission-fit students continues to be challenging. Recent reports from admissions and recruiting advisors are being studied.

### Glencairn Museum

Glencairn has been facile and nimble in adjusting to digital programing and resource creation. The geothermal project (heating and cooling) is moving forward and will not disrupt programs. Glencairn continues to provide quality programs locally and to church schools with online videos on reading and analyzing art. It produced a virtual Glencairn Sing, is planning its Sacred Arts Festival, and is having an exhibition at the Philadelphia Museum of Art.

### General Counsel

The Board adopted an Academy-wide sign/banner policy. The Board also completed a new self-assessment survey, which is being tabulated. An orientation program focusing on Cairnwood was conducted after the Board meeting.

### Finance

The Board approved a 3% increase in tuition and fees at Bryn Athyn College, and no increases for the Academy Secondary Schools.

Academy investments have benefited from the extremely strong and broad asset performance in the stock market, with an overall increase in value of 12% in 2020.

### A VIRTUAL RETREAT

This year’s Boynton Beach Retreat was another victim of the COVID-19 pandemic. But although the popular January event was canceled, a virtual one-day session was held March 14, jointly sponsored by the New Church at Boynton Beach and the Swedenborg Foundation.

There were three successive one-hour sessions for a Zoom audience of 63 sign-ons – with doubtless more than one viewer for each. The first and third were presented by the **Rev. Dr. Jonathan Rose** and **Curtis Childs** on the Foundation’s very successful *offTheLeftEye* videos and the New Century Edition translation of the Writings.

The middle session featured **Dr. Jim de Maine**, speaking about his new book – *Facing Death: Finding Dignity, Hope and Healing at the End* – and his long experience as a pulmonary physician dealing with patients and their families in end-of-life issues.

The online audience was welcomed by **Bob Brickman**, longtime director

of the Retreat, and **Tim Bilger**, Director of Development for the Swedenborg Foundation. An opening worship on “Unity” was offered by the **Rev. Alan Cowley**, pastor in Boynton Beach.

Jonathan and Curtis started with the storied success of *offTheLeftEye* and its YouTube videos, which were created as the most effective way to reach and educate a broad and growing audience about the new revelation given through Swedenborg. They had early success with a Facebook page that drew hundreds of people into the discussion. Now these videos have more than 100,000 subscribers all over the world.

One popular series is “Good News from Heaven” – a direct dive into how to read and understand the Writings. Jonathan and Curtis are passionate about simplifying and clarifying the teachings and making them more relevant to our lives.

Their team has produced hundreds of videos – all archived – and sees no end to the “mother lode” of material in the Writings.

Jonathan finds a real symbiosis in *offTheLeftEye* and the New Century Edition, which together are dramatically increasing public insight and knowledge about the Writings. He says that as a Latin scholar this has been the crowning work of his career in teaching and ministry.

He began the New Century Edition project with a conviction that translations must be modern and readable to benefit the greatest number of people. Nine of the 27 volumes of the Writings have been translated so far and he is confident that the other 18 will be completed within the next five years.

*offTheLeftEye*, he says, is reaching people where they are. The New Century Edition appeals to both the rational and spiritual – in readable form. Together they capture Swedenborg’s (really the Lord’s) message for an increasingly great number of people.

In Jim de Maine’s 32-year career as a pulmonary and critical care doctor in Seattle, he witnessed a lot of changes in medical treatment, technology and ethics. There was no such thing as hospice when he began; now it is foremost in end-of-life care.

Critical life-and-death questions came to define his career and he shares lessons and insights in his excellent book and on his blog, [www.endoflifeblog.com](http://www.endoflifeblog.com). That blog is filled with touching stories, medical issues and insistent decisions, all tempered with the kindness and caring you would wish for any doctor. It’s a treasure trove and highly recommended.

Dying is something we all face – in our families and our own lives – but is shrouded in mystery and fear for a lot of us. Now much of that is relieved with palliative care and end-of-life planning – ideally completed by families well in advance of the need. The goal is for people to die in as much comfort and peace as possible. That goes for surviving family members as well.

We all want “a good death.” That may not be just slipping away in our sleep but should include pain and symptom management, having our wishes honored, being prepared for death – both naturally and spiritually – and leaving a legacy.

These days about 20% die in hospitals and 50% in hospice – and there is more hospice care in the United States than any other country. Almost two-thirds of us can expect to be hospitalized in the last three months of life and 30% in intensive care in the last 30 days. Fewer than 1% experience a sudden death. More than 90% will experience a slow but steady decline. The great improvement is in comfort care, medical directives (such as do-not-resuscitate) and pre-planning. Dying still isn’t easy but it can be moderated.

Jim also offers what few doctors can – a link between medical ethics and teachings in the Writings, starting with the Hippocratic oath to “do no harm” and the commandment to shun evils as sins.

Check Jim’s blog for much more useful information. There is also an index in the back of his book with many helpful websites, including [www.theconversationproject.org](http://www.theconversationproject.org) to help families with those important conversations which can spare a lot of grief and tension at the inevitable time of death.

You can view the Virtual Retreat at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n36UszeDw70>

## MADLINE (MADGE) WATERS

### *Tributes to a Grand Lady*



When Madeline Waters passed into the spiritual world on January 23 at age 85, she left an indelible mark at the Colchester New Church in Essex, England. She was much loved and revered for her devotion and faithfulness – to the church and to Swedenborg House in London where she was the invaluable Secretary for many years. A loving memorial service was conducted by the Rev. Louis Synnstedt, with some members present and many more watching virtually at home. We are grateful for the permission to quote from three tributes

published in the April 2021 Newsletter for the *General Church in Great Britain*.

### **John Cunningham** (*Suffolk, United Kingdom*)

I first met Madeline Waters in the mid-50s at the home of Freda and Roy Griffith. When I moved to Suffolk in 1968, Freda suggested I consider joining

the Board of the Swedenborg Society, which I did. For many years, Madeline and I took the train back from London to Colchester together after meetings. This gave me a chance to be better acquainted with the work of the organization and to find out about the General Church of the New Jerusalem – in particular the Colchester Society.

I was always impressed by Madeline’s dedication to her work at Swedenborg House, her love of the Writings and her application of its teachings in all her interactions with others. I felt privileged to have her as a friend and was always happy to take her to church services in her later years.

A few years ago I noticed the verge on the opposite side to Jasmine looking in need of some plants. The snowdrops I planted will stand as a memorial to this gentle lady, for whose life we give thanks to the Lord.

### **Kurt Benbenek** (*California, USA*)

Through an unexpected set of circumstances, I found myself relocating from the United States to London in 1996. I was already familiar with Swedenborg (I’d discovered a book about him in the dusty bottom of a box at a second-hand store) and had read a good portion of the Writings and had a strong desire to find out more and read more. I knew central London was the home of the Swedenborg Society, so one day I traveled there, strictly to buy a few books.

While browsing in the bookshop I learned that the Society was looking for someone to supplement the work of Secretary Madeline Waters, who was easing into retirement. I was told I might qualify and could apply for the job if I wanted. Within a few weeks I nervously passed an interview with the Council and soon began to work at the beautiful Swedenborg House. Really, it was a dream come true, being able to commute every day to such a lovely building filled with important books that I love and to work with nice, intelligent people.

When I first met Madeline, I knew that I needed to pay attention. She was obviously very focused on each task she undertook, whether it was dealing with new book translations, organizing printing, taking calls concerning room hiring or doing the accounting – or making tea and sending it down the dumbwaiter to visitors or staff.

I learned a lot in a short time, but Madeline made it all happen flawlessly and with good humor; I’ll never forget the patience and confidence she had in me. Simple things but so important. I was a relative outsider from America, attempting to do the tasks she’d done for years and she accepted me and gave me respect. What a blessing.

One morning I saw her sitting at her desk by the window, tearing off the corners of envelopes. She was saving international and unusual stamps from correspondence that came in, dropping each stamp into a shoe box. This is how I’ll remember Madeline, by the window with the constant London traffic passing below.

**Kathy Wyncoll: *Aunty Madge – A Personal Tribute***

My earliest memories of my grandparents and my mother's sisters and brothers were treasured times at Port Bower, their large house in West Mersea, just a few minutes' walk from the beach. Many a summer was spent by the Waters' beach hut, hunting for pretty shells to decorate sand castles or swimming in the salty water.

Clearing the house recently I came across an Endsleigh School magazine from 1950 with an article by Madge inside. But Endsleigh was not the first school she attended. As we read in my grandmother's book, *The War and Us*, the family moved to the safety of Wales in November of 1940, where my grandfather was able to carry on his business. Five-year-old Madge, the youngest of the 10 children, was sent to a small private school, along with her twin sisters, Ruth and Rose.

After the war, the family must have felt blessed to be all together again. But Madge was often quite content in her own company, especially with a book in her hand. One day, having failed to return from her lessons, she was eventually found in the school cloakroom, so absorbed in the story leaping from the pages of her book that she was oblivious to the time.

In 1944 the family returned to Maydays, their home on Land Lane, Colchester, and Madge attended the New Church school on Maldon Road, where her sister, Hilda, became headmistress years later. For religion lessons, Miss Muriel Gill writes in Madge's report that she is attentive and shows real interest. She certainly retained that interest throughout her life!

School days passed and, at the tender age of 17, Madge began her lifetime's work for the Swedenborg Society. Based in a large building in central London, the Society translates and publishes the Writings of Emanuel Swedenborg, books that Madge cherished all her life.

She was eventually appointed as Secretary, a position she held for more than 25 years. In 1989 she received a Glencairn Award for her quiet dedication to the work she loved and in 1995 she was granted Honorary Life Membership in the Swedenborg Society.

After my grandfather's death and my grandmother moving to Jasmine with her four youngest daughters, Madge was able to commute, cycling to North Station before catching the train to London and then the tube to Bloomsbury. It must have been a long and arduous day, especially when the trains were not running on time. But, with responsibilities for other roles connected to the Church, she often carried on working into the evenings.

After Hilda passed nine years ago, Madge continued to live in her beloved Jasmine, with increasing support from an excellent care agency. Her love of literature continued and talking books enabled her to enjoy her favorite authors, even with failing eyesight. Jasmine, too, was showing its age and

needed our help in propping it up, but it seemed determined to keep going for the sake of its little inhabitant. Not that she would admit to being little, as she would say: "I'm not small. Everyone else is big!"

On a few occasions Madge needed to spend time in a care home and it was during these times that I felt I really got to know my aunt. That well-loved prayer we are all familiar with epitomized her attitude to life: "God grant me the serenity to accept what I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can – and the wisdom to know the difference."

Despite her frailty in her last years, Madge would regularly take a taxi to our church to attend Sunday services. There were many helping hands there to assist her and to guide her safely into her taxi on the way home. It was her love of the Lord and her love of New Church doctrines that had been Madge's guiding light throughout her long life. Now she will be reunited with her parents and siblings who have gone before her and, with renewed eyesight, she will be able to see for herself all the wonders of the heavenly kingdom. Farewell, dear Aunty.

(Kathy added this note in forwarding the photo of her Aunt Madge: "I think my aunt would be quite amused by all the attention her passing has caused. She wasn't really one ever to want recognition, but she certainly did, in her quiet, unassuming way, leave her mark on this world.")

**CORRESPONDENCES**

The Swedenborg Society in London, England, has published a short book, *Correspondences*, by **Gary Lachman**. This is the second in a series of pocket introductions to "the thought and influence of Emanuel Swedenborg."

Lachman was a founding member of the rock group Blondie, with whom he was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 2006. He has written many books on a range of esoteric, literary and counterculture themes. For the Swedenborg Society he has written *Into the Interior: Discovering Swedenborg* (2009), which was republished as *Swedenborg: An Introduction to His Life and Ideas*.

*The Washington Post* said of Lachman that he "writes about philosophical and mystical ideas with exceptional grace, forcefulness and clarity."

The subject is introduced with a quote from *Heaven and Hell* 88:

Without a good knowledge of correspondences, no one can have a clear picture of anything about the spiritual world, of its flowing into the natural world, nor of the spiritual in relation to the natural. Also, not a thing can be known of the human spirit called the soul, and its operation in the body; nor of the human condition after death. For all these reasons therefore it is necessary to say what correspondence is, and what its nature is. In this way a path will be prepared for what is to follow.

The book is available through the Bookshop at [www.swedenborg.org.uk](http://www.swedenborg.org.uk)



### GATHERING LEAVES

In an effort to welcome as many overseas visitors to Gathering Leaves as possible, the International Retreat for Swedenborgian/New Church women has been moved forward once again – to 2022.

Gathering Leaves at the Purley Chase Centre in the United Kingdom will be held Friday, August 26 to Monday, August 29. The generous financial aid program is expected to be offered as originally planned.

Please contact [alison.southcombe@purleychasecentre.org.uk](mailto:alison.southcombe@purleychasecentre.org.uk) to move an existing booking ahead to 2022 or to make a new booking.

### JACOB'S CREEK RETREAT

The Jacob's Creek Retreat in western Pennsylvania will go forward July 25 – 28, after being cancelled last year because of the pandemic.

This year's theme is "The Ten Blessings" or "The Beatitudes" from *Matthew* 5:3-12, which remind us to allow the Lord to show us the pathway to eternal happiness, rather than relying on our own judgment.

Due to COVID-19 regulations attendance will be limited to 100 people, so early registration – mail-in only – is encouraged. Various covid restrictions will be in place.

**The Rev. Matthew Genzlinger** again will be pastor, assisted by the **Rev. Mac Frazier** of the Washington New Church and the **Rev. Brett Buick** of the Kempton New Church. Camp Directors are **Bradley and Andrea Cranch** of Bryn Athyn and **Jamie and Julie Uber** of Pittsburgh.

A detailed email and registration form was to be sent out in late April. For information contact Jamie Uber at [james.g.uber@gmail.com](mailto:james.g.uber@gmail.com).

## Life Lines

### 19TH OF JUNE GOING VIRAL

Those apocalyptic plagues in the book of *Revelation's* account of the Last Judgment read like an ancient precursor of the COVID-19 pandemic. We know all that turmoil of removing falsities of faith before the Holy City New Jerusalem can fully descend is ongoing and strains our patience.

We may feel we have been experiencing some of that tumult with the plague of the pandemic. But the Lord always gives us hope. Indeed, we are reassured every 19th of June that the promise is sure and the progress inexorable.

It is worth reflecting that as the curse of the coronavirus has been insidious throughout the world, the Holy City is also descending and spreading all over the globe. It is – gradually – "going viral." Of course, unlike the virus that is threatening to all, what is being planted by the Lord is life-giving and soul-saving.

What is to be "the crown of all churches" is providing "herd immunity" writ large for all the "viruses" infecting faith in the world and giving us all hope.

(Editor's note: An excellent series of daily readings for New Church Day – June 1 through the 19th of June – was prepared last year for the 200th anniversary of the birth of the New Church by the Rev. Jeremy Simons. I highly recommend this booklet. It is available on the Bryn Athyn Church website, [www.brynathynchurch.org](http://www.brynathynchurch.org).)

(BMH)

### JUNETEENTH

Juneteenth is also known as Freedom Day, Jubilee Day, Liberation Day and Emancipation Day. It is a holiday celebrating the emancipation of those who had been enslaved in the United States. Originating in Galveston, Texas, it is now celebrated annually on the 19th of June throughout the United States, with varying official recognition. It is commemorated on the anniversary date of the June 19, 1865 announcement by Union Army general Gordon Granger, proclaiming freedom from slavery in Texas.

Although President Abraham Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation had officially outlawed slavery in 1863, it could not be enforced except where Confederate forces had been defeated.

Recognition of Juneteenth varies across the United States. It is not officially recognized by the federal government, although the Senate unanimously passed a simple resolution in 2018 in honor of the day, and legislation has been introduced in Congress several times to make it either a "national day of observance" (akin to Flag Day or Patriot Day) or a full-scale federal holiday. Most states recognize it in some way, either as a ceremonial observance or a state holiday. (*Wikipedia*)

Each year Juneteenth becomes more widely known and celebrated. Few Americans were aware of it only a few years ago. Its coincidence with the celebration of the New Church is fortunate and appropriate. This is partly because freedom is a core principle of the New Church, with June 19th celebrating the coming of spiritual freedom to the human race. It is also fortunate because the New Church has a special regard for the peoples of African descent worldwide. Among many passages praising them, the Writings say that "a greater proportion of people from Africa enter heaven than from other regions of the earth." (*Spiritual Experiences* 453)

As Juneteenth becomes more commonly known it might be appropriate for its recognition to have a place in American June 19th celebrations. It seems providential that, out of all the dates associated with the end of slavery in the United States, June 19th has become the one most celebrated. Of course, at this point in history Juneteenth is far better known than the beginning of the New Church. So it might be more fitting to hope that the spiritual event that Swedenborg witnessed on June 19th 1770 be occasionally mentioned in connection with Juneteenth.

(JFS)

### THE FUTURE OF CHURCH

One of the questions asked at the virtual Boynton Beach Retreat – in the wake of a year of virtual church services and the growing impact of New Church-based videos reaching people all around the world – was this: "What is the future of bricks-and-mortar churches?" (See a report on the Retreat in Church News, page 230.)

One of the answers given by Jonathan Rose and Curtis Childs is that for all the video surfing that people do in their homes there is still a hunger for community. We saw this years ago with the advent of movie rentals – now displaced by video streaming into your TV. People predicted that rentals would be the end of movie theaters, but they thrived. People still craved a shared experience – a sense of fellowship and connection.

The concept of "church" may change – and is changing. But as forms change, function remains. Rites and rituals (weddings, baptisms and memorial services) will still be important. We'll still need our sacred spaces.

But a French friend once told me that people in Europe more and more go to church only for those family events. Many Americans are known as TCE churchgoers: Thanksgiving, Christmas and Easter. And Thanksgiving is more and more given over to football.

But our real church, as we know, is within. That's where we make the real choice between worship and football.

(BMH)

### CONSENSUS

An often-repeated statement about doctrine in the General Church is that this church has no doctrinal positions except that what is written in the Heavenly Doctrine is true. "The Old Testament, the New Testament and the Writings together are the supreme authority in matters of faith." (*A Statement of Order and Organization of the General Church of the New Jerusalem*).

When it comes to determining what exactly it is that the Heavenly Doctrine says, however, we rely on a consensus of the research. Consensus building can be tricky, especially when it comes to controversial topics. Motivated reasoning can skew the scholarly process.

The process of consensus building is one that is constantly going on around us. We see it and read about it daily on many different platforms. Whether it is about court cases, political issues, scientific, social or other kinds of questions, opinions are put forward, defended, refuted and repeated in a seemingly endless pattern. It usually seems that opinions are seldom changed by this process. The truth is that the consensus of opinion on these topics changes continually. Demonstrations, media-narrative, dramatic events, slogans, evidence and arguments do in fact move public opinion.

The same thing happens in the church.

There is an interesting distinction between building consensus within the clergy, and the same process within the church as a whole. There are topics that are not controversial among the clergy but are disputed among the laity. Similar things happen in other fields. For example, here is how consensus is developed in the scientific community:

Consensus is normally achieved through communication at conferences, the publication process, replication (reproducible results by others), and peer review. (*Wikipedia: Scientific consensus*)

Something similar happens within the church. Clergy and scholars produce studies and papers, and present them in articles, at clergy meetings, assemblies, conferences and programs, and discuss them in various forums. But agreement among the clergy does not necessarily produce agreement among the laity, as in this description of scientific consensus:

These lead to a situation in which those within the discipline can often recognize such a consensus where it exists, but communicating to outsiders that consensus has been reached can be difficult. . . . Scientific consensus may be invoked in popular or political debate on subjects that are controversial within the public sphere but which may not be controversial within the scientific community, such as evolution or the lack of a link between MMR vaccinations and autism. (*Ibid.*)

In the church the most common topics like this are related to conjugal love, some of which are too hotly disputed to easily discuss in sermons or conferences. Public debate can inspire ministers and scholars to re-examine their research on these topics, but many of them are so clearly spelled out in works like *Conjugal Love* that there are only minor disagreements about them among clergy members.

It is unfortunate that last year's planned Assembly or Retreat has been put off, as was also true of the clergy meetings and numerous other forums and conferences. These are the places where progress toward consensus on many different topics is normally made. In the General Church the membership votes on organizational questions but not on doctrinal issues.

The church takes no position on doctrinal issues except that what the Writings teach is authoritative in matters of faith. Even the clergy do not vote on them. Where decisions need to be made, they are based on the consensus of understanding of what the Writings teach. This underlines the importance of encouraging and supporting the environments where discussion and debate take place, and where a consensus of our collective understanding can develop.

It is one thing for a scholar to arrive at conclusions he or she believes to be true. It is another thing to convince others of that point of view and to reach consensus. This is something that takes time, and it is why it is so valuable for there to be assemblies and conferences, publications, online forums, small groups and larger meetings. It also points to the value of New Church education, enhancing the basis within the membership for understanding the issues.

We all have our opinions, and we have every right to them. But a church is composed of many people, and no one's views are formed in a vacuum.

No one, whoever they may be, whether person, spirit, or angel, can will and think from themselves, but from others. Nor can these others will and think from themselves, but all again from others, and so on; and thus each one from the First of life, which is the Lord. That which is unconnected has no existence. (*Arcana Coelestia* 2886)

(JFS)

#### A NEW CHURCH CHALLENGE

We are used to seeing priests, philosophers, psychiatrists and professors speak

and write on the great issues of the day, helping us to understand, with cultural context and historic perspective. We long for the day when New Church spokespeople will be sought out and welcomed for their transcendent insights.

Jonathan Sachs, a leading rabbi in England, has written many useful and insightful books, such as: *The Great Partnership – God, Science and the Search for Meaning* and *To Heal a Fractured World – The Ethics of Responsibility*. His most recent is: *Morality – Restoring the Common Good in Divided Times*.

There is much wisdom and thoughtful guidance in these books. His book on *Morality*, for instance, is described as: "Delivering a devastatingly insightful critique of our modern condition and assessing its roots and causes, Sachs leads readers from Ancient Greece to the Enlightenment to the present day to share that there is no liberty without morality and no freedom without responsibility."

Indeed, Sachs' work is scholarly, insightful, thought-provoking and readable. He comes close to what is missing: the spiritual depth of revealed truth. He says, for instance: "In a world without an agreed basic moral code, do not expect truth to survive. That is our world today."

Yes, but this is a world still in the throes of the Last Judgment and we are not left hopeless but with the ultimate promise of "the Holy City descending from God out of heaven." We need the whole world to be lifted by that too.

Sachs also says perceptively: "The divine light is infinite, but to be visible to us it must be refracted through finite understanding. Truth in heaven transcends space and time, but human perception is bounded by both space and time."

Yes, but not anymore. And as the New Church grows, we need to see our own writers and thinkers and video makers sought out to proclaim a New Church worldview on the issues of the day to a global audience. That is starting to happen. And that is one of the great promises of spreading that "divine light" to a world in shadows.

(BMH)

#### GREAT BOOKS, GREAT QUESTIONS

Most literature engages us with stories of personal growth through overcoming the trials of life. Good books offer case studies of temptation, regeneration, redemption and salvation, though not usually framed in such overt religious terms.

John Steinbeck, one of America's great authors, used religious themes in many of his novels, especially *Grapes of Wrath* and *East of Eden*.

Jonathan Sachs quotes these lines from *East of Eden*, which hint that Steinbeck may have come across Swedenborg at some point – or at least was

familiar with his themes:

Humans are caught – in their lives, and in their thoughts, in their hungers and ambitions, in their avarice and cruelty, in their kindness and generosity too – in the nature of good and evil. I think this is the only story we have and that it occurs in all levels of feeling and intelligence. Virtue and vice were the warp and woof of our first consciousness, and they will be the fabric of our last. A man, after he has brushed off the dust and chips of his life, will have left only the hard clean questions: Was it good or was it evil? Have I done well – or ill?

Those are the questions that define our lives. The answers we take with us.  
(BMH)

### WIDE 'AWOKE'

Suddenly we are in the Age of The Woke, a phenomenon spawned – at least in part – by an epidemic of grievance and oppression. To be sure, there are many good people working responsibly for social justice – ‘woke’ in the best sense. But however you define the word, “woke” seems to be a dystopian view of the world, a culture that elevates feelings and emotion over rationality and facts, embracing victimization and discrimination rather than opportunity and optimism.

But whether we are “woke” or just awake in this challenging world, we are all faced every day with situations that could make us angry or upset, or grateful and ready to help.

We all have choices. Our attitude, in any given moment, is a choice. So are happiness, kindness, generosity, respect, being polite. Anger is also a choice. So are impatience, cruelty, greed, contempt and judging others.

It is what we focus on in our choices that makes us the kind of people we become. And those choices lead us, quite deliberately, to heaven or hell. We don't become angels when we pass into the spiritual world. It is a choice we take with us. But it is never too late to be “woke” to our possibilities.

(BMH)

### THE ANTIDOTE

Fear of the “woke” culture is infecting education at all levels – what our children are being taught and how they feel about it all. The fallout infests history, art, literature, sociology – and how it all relates to the world around them.

It is said that in all of history there are only two questions that matter: Who is teaching our children? And: What are they teaching them? The answers have never mattered more.

In many schools and universities, curriculums are veering to “woke.” History is being rewritten. Classic literature is being “cancelled” – from Shakespeare to Dr. Seuss. Even math is being questioned because it insists on single “right” answers, as though that discriminates. Too much is being viewed – and judged

– through distorted lenses.

Many schools, communities and families are resisting and fighting for traditional values. We can be grateful especially for the light of New Church education in this threatening darkness.

In his seminal book on New Church education – *Education for Use* – Bishop Willard D. Pendleton saw the need in an increasingly (even then) wayward culture “for an educational system which recognizes that the ultimate welfare of society is dependent upon the cultivation of a moral and spiritual conscience in the individual.”

Our General Church schools “consider a key use of New Church education to be introducing children and young people to the Lord and the things of spiritual life. The goal is to assist people in becoming loving, wise and useful human beings who choose the path that leads to heaven.”

The mission of the Academy Secondary Schools is to “prepare students for a principled and useful life both in the natural and spiritual worlds.”

“The ultimate purpose” of the Bryn Athyn College of the New Church “is to enhance students’ civil, moral and spiritual lives, and to contribute to human spiritual welfare.”

Now there's a wake-up call for the “woke.”

(BMH)

### THE WORD OF THE DEVIL, THE WORK OF THE LORD

China is more and more a menacing force in the world – economically, politically, militarily and technologically. It clearly wants to dominate our lives. But the most ominous threat of all is its absolute hostility to religion.

The horrors of the Holocaust led to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, including freedom of religion. But that is under attack in totalitarian countries – most actively in China, where religious books are seized and burned, churches destroyed, and believers sentenced to forced labor camps. In the midst of all this, a brave New Church minister – whom we protect by identifying him only as Timothy – is quietly building a following.

One persecuted Christian minister in China says of this purge: “It is the work of the devil. The situation is becoming increasingly dire; the (communist) government is increasing pressure step by step. In the end, they want to eliminate religious belief completely.” Belief in the Communist Party, he says, “is the only religion allowed.”

In his book, *Morality*, Jonathan Sachs notes: “The Chinese Academy of Social Sciences was given the task of discovering how the West, having lagged behind China for centuries, eventually overtook it and established a position of world dominance. At first they thought it was military power, then the political system, then the economic system. But in the past 20 years we have realized that



the heart of your culture is your religion: Christianity. "That is why the West has been so powerful. The Christian moral foundation of social and cultural life was what made possible the emergence of capitalism and then the successful transition to democratic politics. We don't have any doubt about this."

This is why China is desperate to stamp out the threat of religion. We worry in the West, as well, about the decline in religion – both in personal faith and cultural influence. We are reassured by the knowledge of the Last Judgment still being at play and establishing the New Church, with the sure knowledge that the Lord governs all things and is leading to a good end.

Meanwhile, we can be cheered by the brave perseverance of Timothy and his band of believers in China. The Rev. John Jin, regional pastor for the Church in Asia, acknowledged that this past year was challenging, particularly because of the COVID-19 pandemic, as it was everywhere. But he also reported in *New Church Life* in December:

Since 2018 the China Mission Conference has gathered annually, initially driven by one person's efforts to make a much more systematic, sustainable, organized effort. At first we focused on reaching young people and those without any church background. Recently we have discussed how to support the mission and reach the 'gentiles', not only in China but also in Korea and Japan. We will continue to investigate how best to do our missionary work through our Spiritual Leader training.

China and its communist party are right to be worried. Religion is the one power they cannot control.

(BMH)

### SYLVIA ROSE COOPER

(October 28, 1923 – April 8, 2021)



We do not yet know who will be attending the Academy of the New Church Class of 1942's 80th reunion next year. Classmates Ruth Lynch, Bee Herder and Sylvia Cooper have been meeting regularly for years, and all three plan to be there, whether in this world or the next. On April 8th Sylvia joined the part of the class that is in the spiritual world, leaving her friends Ruth and Bee to celebrate on their own. The Rev. Solomon Keal, Sylvia's great-nephew, gave a wonderful memorial address, a fitting and moving tribute to the last of the Donald and Marjorie Rose family to leave this world.

Most of Sylvia and Rey's children were near my age, including Kent in my class. I enjoyed many happy occasions in their home. Sylvia was also my step-aunt, since Will Cooper married my grandmother, Gertrude Simons, in their old age. My class had frequent activities at the Coopers' house, which was located right next to the school. The favorite was undoubtedly the waffle breakfasts that Sylvia cooked us during exam week in high school.

In recent years Sylvia did many things at the Cathedral, as Solomon noted in his Memorial Address. Her contributions there were so appreciated, whether arranging flowers, greeting visitors, guiding tours, or planning events.

For one program featuring World War II veterans she told what it was like to be a USO hostess during the war, entertaining the soldiers and sailors. In the year 2000 she helped with a program about marriage in heaven, part of a series of angel festivals that the church put on over several years. The program told the story of the marriages of several senior members of the community, such as Kent and Anne Hyatt, Peb and Mace Adams, and Sylvia and Rey. In the program Sylvia is quoted as saying: "From the time I was a child I was told that angels were married, and that I too might someday be married to an angel. I always believed this." Now she is seeing it with her own eyes.

Just a few weeks earlier in March, visiting in her living room, Sylvia was laughing at stories and sharing bits of information about the past, missing her sister Donnette, and wondering what the next step of her life would be like. Now she is finding out, and her large and talented family – children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren – is more than adequately filling in for her here. Thank you to Solomon for telling her story so beautifully.

(JFS)

### JAMES CRONLUND

(October 20, 1939 – January 16, 2021)



Some people, you just know, deserve a free pass into heaven. Jim Cronlund was one of those people.

When he passed into the spiritual world at age 81, people who knew and loved him smiled to think of him coming into the fullness of his potential at last. He was always loving, kind, useful – but limited. Now he knows no spiritual horizons.

The Rev. Ryan Sandstrom noted in his memorial address that Jim suffered a terrible

fall at age two, leaving him with severe head trauma. His parents were advised to put him in an institution, but they resisted and gave him as normal a life as possible. As much as he was able, Jim thrived. He served in the U.S. Navy, was a loyal employee, and lived independently.

But it was his personality and values that stood out. He was devoted to the church, both in Bryn Athyn and Ivyland – always with a smile, ready to help. He is remembered as selfless, always positive, with never a bad word to say about anyone.

Mr. Sandstrom said: “There is no end to all the good things we can say about Jim. Everyone seems to agree that he is an example of what we all should be like – kind, helpful, gentle, hard working, dependable, faithful. He is someone who gave all he had.”

Beyond his Ivyland congregation – where his usual seat is kept unoccupied – Jim was best known for his devotion to Academy Secondary Schools athletics. He was much more than a faithful fan. He pitched in and did whatever he could. One coach said: “He gave to the program with no expectation of compensation or reward. He gave with grace and love.”

Secondary Schools Managing Director Jim Adams said: “I really appreciated Jim’s dedication to ANC. I worked with him for years setting up for, during and after football games. He was always the first to arrive and the last to leave, helping me clean up, put equipment away and start the laundry. He never complained and always looked for the good in every person and situation. We were blessed to have him support ANC in so many ways for so many years.”

Football coach Ty Klippenstein added: “James dedicated an enormous amount of time over the years to ANC football by helping with equipment (including away games), setting up the field, as well as being our unofficial archivist, dutifully cutting out newspaper stories and arranging them in folders that he gave to the coaches at the end of every year.”

Jim’s selfless service went back over many years.

Dudley Davis, whose service to the Academy Secondary Schools over more than 20 years including teaching, coaching (football and baseball), athletic director, housemaster and Boys School Principal, shares his memories:

“In my earlier years in Bryn Athyn I met many interesting and sincere people. When I was head football coach many people attended our home games. At our daily practices on the Ebert Athletic Field, there were seldom people watching. I began to notice one person I did not recognize, quietly standing behind the players’ benches. I wondered why he was there.

“So I introduced myself: ‘Hi, I’m coach Davis. I notice you around quite often, both at practices and games. While I appreciate your support I can’t help but ask, who are you?’ The answer was, ‘I am Jim Cronlund.’ I knew the

last name and discovered that he was the brother of one of my favorite people, John Cronlund.

“I don’t know how many years Jim was easily one of the most loyal fans of ANC athletics, including wrestling. Jim and I became more and more friendly. He always had positive and sincere comments as we spoke after games.

“He asked if I would be interested in helping him develop the history of ANC football. It took me about one second to express my support. He did a tremendous amount of research, coming up with as much history as possible. Jim apparently did complete the project but not before I retired. I have not seen the finished product, but I will find a copy.

“Jim Cronlund was one of those special people whom you might not have known very well but whom you will never forget. If you are curious to know more about this special person I encourage you to read his memorial address by the Rev. Ryan Sandstrom.” (Contact: [rmsandst@yahoo.com](mailto:rmsandst@yahoo.com))

Ron Nelson, longtime wrestling coach, teacher and mentor of young men at the Academy, asked John how his brother became such a big wrestling fan. It all started when John wrestled from 1961-65 and Jim was there for every one of his matches. Their mother Betty was one of the loudest voices when John wrestled – sometimes even at mat-side – and Jim loved her enthusiasm. When John graduated Jim remained more than a fan, volunteering to help with statistics and setting up for meets.

(When Jim had his traumatic accident at age two, his father was serving as a physician in the South Pacific, so he had a special affection for his mother and the way she had so lovingly dedicated her life to his care and rehabilitation.)

Ron says Jim “was a faithful and supportive fan who genuinely loved the sport and the students who competed. He valued the opportunity to be able to give back through his unselfish and dedicated service. He was always willing, able and reliable – a shining example of the doctrine of charity and the love of use.”

Jim will forever be remembered with a smile – and the conviction of a fellow member in Ivyland that “there’s a special place for him in heaven.”

(BMH)



## New Church

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