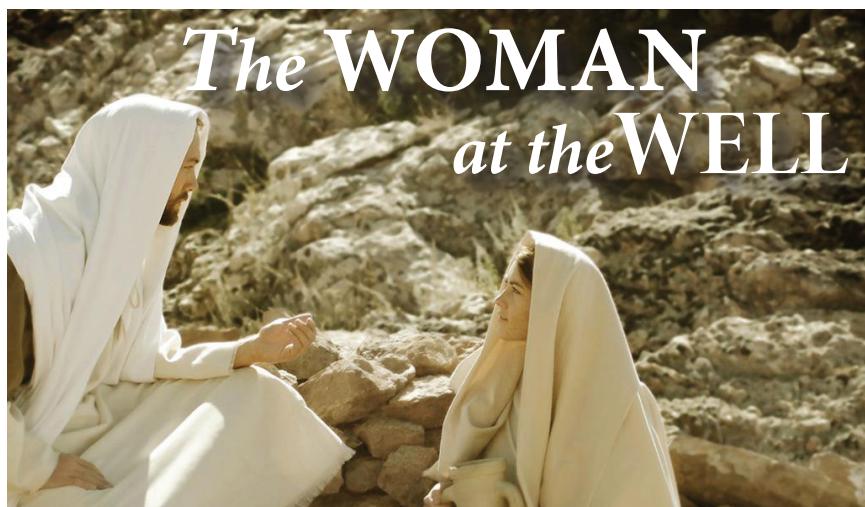


NEW CHURCH *Life*

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

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2023



*The familiar story in the Word about the interchange between Jesus and the woman at the well is all about teaching us how we **know** the truth, how we **love** the truth, and how we **live** the truth. (Page 13)*

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New Church Life

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In This Issue

Editorials (page 7) include:

- *The Celestial Fire of Conscience*: As a new democracy was launched in the United States George Washington implored its citizens “to keep alive that spark of celestial fire called conscience.” The Writings differentiate between natural conscience, which serves self, and spiritual conscience, which is guided by our faith. All around us we see true conscience lacking and need to feel that old fire burning within us.
- *Five Thoughts About the Future*: There are many reasons why we cannot, and should not, know the future but there is every reason – at least five of them – why we should always look forward with hope.

In a sermon on *The Woman at the Well*, the Rev. Scott Frazier illustrates how we know the truth, love the truth, and live the truth. “We participate in the heavenly marriage of God and His church,” he says, “when we take the Lord’s truth and live it in our lives. This is what He was offering as living water.” (Page 13)

In a sermon – *Hard Sayings: The Slow Growth of the Church* – the Rev. Daniel Fitzpatrick says we should not be alarmed that the growth of the church has been so slow, but neither should we feel helpless about it. “It will be a struggle to bring the new ideas in our teachings to a world that desperately needs them. But this is a struggle we must embrace, for there is no one else who can do what we have been given to do.” (Page 20)

Writing From the Bishop’s Office the Rt. Rev. Peter Buss Jr. says that our part in living a life of engagement with our faith – especially with our regeneration – is simply living our lives according to the teachings of the Ten Commandments. Every one of those commandments has relevance for our lives. (Page 29)

All three of our bishops report on recent travels, with photos: Bishop Peter Buss to Nigeria and Togo, Bishop Brad Heinrichs to Cuba; and Bishop David Lindrooth to the Pacific Rim – South Korea, Japan and Australia. A common theme, expressed by Bishop Lindrooth, is that it is moving to reflect on how deep an impact a relatively remote congregation has on the General Church over the years. (Page 56-57)

An article reprinted from the *Bryn Athyn College Alumni Magazine* about Dean of Academics and art history professor Jonathan Kline, “discusses his care for students, the college’s religious identity, and the current challenges and opportunities of the institution.” He says: “If we have students from any different religion and we help them to begin to think on a spiritual level, then we’re making an impact that can be eternal. And that to me is the essence of New Church education.” (Page 33)

In an article written for a Bryn Athyn College course, Religion and Marriage, Alisha Reid, who graduated last year, reflects on *Marriage to Eternity?* The concept may seem daunting at first but the teachings of Conjugal Love make the ideal worth pursuing because the more a husband and wife grow closer to the Lord by living the commandments together, the closer He becomes to them. It just gets better to eternity. (Page 38)

Beginning in 2012 the Academy Girls School faculty and administration began a study of *Conjugal Love* aimed at making the doctrine more accessible to an increasingly divergent student body. Now, writes Principal Kira Shadegg, the study is complete and is being implemented across the curriculum. That makes the teachings more relevant to the girls’ lives at every level and also “ensures that parents understand the reason behind our integrated curriculum.” (Page 41).

A new book by Bishop Brad Heinrichs – *As For Me and My House, We Will Serve the Lord* – offers tips to parents about raising children in today’s challenging environment with the help of our teachings. The book is enthusiastically reviewed by the Rev. Dr. Ray Silverman and the Rev. Walter Orthwein. (Page 44)

Church News (page 47) includes:

- A follow up from the Bishop on the Task Force response on gender and sexuality issues
- Highlights from the Academy Board of Trustees October 8, 2022, meeting
- A report for 2022 on the Asian New Church, including severe repression in China
- A report from General Church Education, including special mailings to families and plans for a revived New Church Education Conference in June
- Many classic collateral New Church books are available

Editorials

Bruce M. Henderson and the Rev. Jeremy F. Simons

THE CELESTIAL FIRE OF CONSCIENCE

Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord. (Psalm 33:12)

In those days there was no king in Israel;

Every man did what was right in his own eyes. (Judges 21:25)

This is not a blessed time in the world. Nations claim to high ideals and people yearn for “what is right,” but amid wars and wantonness – all of the dark side of humanity shrouding our world – too many leaders do that which is right in their own eyes, for their own selfish reasons. We are losing sight of what George Washington implored of the first American citizens: “to keep alive in your breast that spark of celestial fire called conscience.”

Conscience is the calling of our lives – to regeneration, to following the Lord, to the life of heaven. Our glib permission is: “let your conscience be your guide.” But what we heed is not always true conscience. It may be simply justifying what we want.

What is true conscience? In the United States our democracy is rooted in moral principles and biblical faith – as it is in many lands. In the Writings we are taught what is true spiritual conscience and what is “spurious” – what will lead us to heaven and what will lead us astray.

American history is steeped in faith and principle, beginning with George Washington, confessing to his father as a boy that “I cannot tell a lie” (about cutting down his cherry tree) and “Honest Abe” Lincoln walking miles as a young man to repay a debt of one penny.

Washington’s vision for the new government was fundamental: “Let us raise a standard to which the wise and honest can repair.” He could not conceive of governing “without the Bible as my guide.” James Madison, fourth President and author of the Constitution, said: “We have staked the whole of our political institutions on the capacity of mankind to govern themselves according to the Ten Commandments.” They all looked to the Bible, to providence, and that “celestial fire of conscience” as their moral compass.

We need leaders today with such unabashed faith and vision. But the path we all need to be on is laid out in the revelation given to us in the Writings. There a critical distinction is made between spiritual and natural conscience.

Natural conscience is only as noble – or baseless – as the values it represents. It is of this world and may be as simplistic as justifying behavior because “everyone’s doing it,” “he deserved it,” “I can’t help myself,” or “nobody got hurt so what’s the harm”? We may be well-intentioned but self-focused, feeling “the pangs of conscience” but too easily shrugging them off. Such “conscience” often lacks guilt, remorse, empathy, shame. It helps us to feel OK about what we’re doing – even when we know better.

Conscience in the Writings is a spiritual virtue. It is something we attain from faith and doctrine – not from an inner voice whispering in our ear when we’re about to go astray. Because it is based in doctrine and faith, people of any church can be guided by a true conscience that leads to heaven.

Spiritual conscience is not innate. It is created within us as we respond to the Lord’s teaching and leading. As long as we hold to the values and ideals nurtured in our homes, schools and churches – as we learn to shun evil and do good – true conscience is formed and perfected to eternity.

Conscience is described in the Writings as that “reborn” state we receive from the Lord through regeneration – when we choose to treat everyone with charity, no one with malice. So only good, regenerating people can develop true spiritual conscience. Indeed, we have the daunting warning in *Divine Love and Wisdom* 138:

Those who have not received conscience in this world cannot receive it in the other life, wherefore they cannot be saved. The reason is that they have no plane into which heaven – that is, the Lord through heaven – may flow and through which He may operate and so draw them to Himself; for conscience is the plane and receptacle of the influx of heaven.

Thus, to be “true to your conscience” – true spiritual conscience – brings a state of blissful peace. Such people “are in the quiet of peace and internal blessedness . . . and they are in pain only when they act in opposition to it. This pain is what is called the gnawing of conscience.” (*Ibid.* 139) Or as Shakespeare

echoes in *King Henry VIII*: “A peace above all earthly dignities: a still and quiet conscience.”

When Bishop Willard D. Pendleton wrote his seminal book on New Church education – *Education for Use* – in 1985, he saw “modern education” as a “values vacuum” which “emphasizes the need 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.”

This is what is truly distinct about New Church education – in our elementary schools, the Academy Secondary Schools and Bryn Athyn College: developing a moral and spiritual conscience in students as preparation for a life of use in heaven.

That is the calling of the New Church and a beacon for a struggling world, lighting the way out of the darkness that engulfs us. We are all called to channel that fire and let our light so shine that others may see the Lord and follow Him.

The hope is that “the Son of Man is come to save that which was lost.” (*Matthew 18:11*) But the Lord needs our help. Many people throughout the world live lives of sincere conscience from their faith, and that fuels our hope. But too much of what we witness all around us invokes a spurious conscience that seeks power, control and wealth, not justice, charity and honor.

The fire in the midst of the burning bush, where Moses was called to “holy ground,” calls to us as well. As we read in *Secrets of Heaven* 6832:3:

The fire or flame of this sun [the Lord] is what supplies each individual person with the being of their life; it is that life-giving fire which fills a person’s inner levels with warmth, as we may recognize from what happens with love. To the extent that love increases in us we warm up; but to the extent that it diminishes we cool off. This explains why, when the Lord appeared in this vision, He appeared as fire and flame.

Remember the disciples walking to Emmaus after the crucifixion who were joined by the Lord along the road but did not recognize Him. Their spiritual eyes were opened and then they knew Him. “And they said, one to another: did not our hearts burn within us, while He talked with us by the way, and while He opened to us the Scriptures?”

This is the fire we all need burning within us, “to keep alive in our breasts that spark of celestial fire called conscience.”

(BMH)

FIVE THOUGHTS ABOUT THE FUTURE

The *Heavenly Doctrine* tells us plainly numerous reasons why we do not know the future. One of the more amusing reasons is this:

Knowledge of the future, which spirits are most eager to have, would involve very many things that would upset them. (Spiritual Experiences 2271)

Nevertheless, people do ponder the future, and this is not a bad thing. We are told:

Reason's essential delight is to envision from love the effect in thought – not at the time of the effect, but prior to it, or not at the present time, but in a time to come. It is this that gives a person what we call hope, which grows or dwindles in his reason as it envisions or anticipates the outcome. (Divine Providence 178)

Thinking about the future can make us anxious, but it can also give us hope and put the present into perspective. Here are five thoughts about it that may be helpful:

First is a new book published in 2022, *Superabundance*, by Marian Tupy and Gale Pooley. The book offers convincing testimony that, although it is true that we live on a delicate planet, the earth's capacity to support life is greater than people often believe. A quote from Nobel Prize-winning economist Angus Deaton states: "With great writing and a mountain of good evidence, Tupy and Pooley remind us that we are immeasurably better off than our ancestors."

The optimistic theme of this book reminds us that life in the physical world has an ability to reproduce abundantly, as the Writings tell us plainly:

In all animal sperm and in all plant seeds there is an intrinsic kind of immensity and eternity – immensity because it can be replicated to infinity, and eternity because its replication has continued without interruption from the creation of the world until now and will continue perpetually . . . (For example) if all the seeds that one plant produces each year were planted, within 20 or 30 years they would cover the surface of not just one planet but many. (True Christianity 32)

The considerations that Tupy and Pooley offer may temper our anxieties with respect to our climate and ecology, however well-founded those anxieties may be.

Second is an older book, *The Better Angels of our Nature* by Stephen Pinker, published in 2011. It shows in a similar way that despite the unhappiness and dangers that are called to our attention on a regular basis, people today are

much safer and materially better off than at any time in our past. Not only are people healthier, safer, wealthier and more free, but these characteristics are increasing year by year in most of the world – even though we focus tremendous attention on the exceptions to these trends.

Third is the observation, especially with respect to climate change, that humans tend to be poor at evaluating future problems and responding cooperatively to them. We are much better at adapting to problems once they arrive. We would be much better off if we would do the former, but that is not what history tells us about human behavior.

In the case of these first three items there are good reasons why our focus tends to be more negative than hopeful. Hopeful signs are no reason to be complacent. More than that, the very decline in things like violence and hunger makes us all the more sensitive to the situations that continue to exist. Another reason is that worldwide communication makes it possible to be aware of things that have never been possible in the past. Beyond this, it is only natural for people to be aware of the problems created by headwinds and to ignore the benefits of tailwinds.

Fourth is the observation that even though Christianity has long been on the decline in the West, it is still growing extremely rapidly worldwide. The Old and New Testaments remain the largest selling book on earth, and their long-term effect is inevitable.

By the Word of the Lord the heavens were made, and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth. (Psalm 33.6)

Scarcely anyone has any other idea of Divine Truth than this – a word or utterance issuing from a speaker's mouth and transmitted into the air. This idea about Divine Truth leads to the notion that "the Word" means simply a command, so that all things that have been made exist solely because a command has been delivered, not because of some reality that has come forth from the Lord's Divine. But the Divine Truth going forth from the Lord is the ultimate reality and essential being from which all things derive their existence. Every form of what is good and true owes its existence to this. (Arcana Coelestia 5272)

In short, Divine Truth holds all power within itself, so completely that it is power itself. (Arcana Coelestia 8200)

The spread of the Word worldwide is surely having an impact beyond any that is apparent to us.

Fifth is the conclusion that all of this is preparing the way for the spread of the Heavenly Doctrine, and therefore of the New Church. This may not seem

likely to us considering how small and apparently ineffectual New Church organizations may currently be, but it is the claim written in the books. This may give us hope and put the present into perspective.

This New Church, truly Christian, which at this day is being established by the Lord, will endure to eternity, as is proved from the Word of both Testaments; also it was foreseen from the creation of the world; and it will be the crown of the four preceding churches, because it will have true faith and true charity. In this New Church there will be spiritual peace, glory, and internal blessedness of life, as is also proved from the Word of both Testaments.” (Coronis)

(JFS)

The Woman at the Well

How we know the truth, love the truth, live the truth

The Rev. Scott I. Frazier

Readings: II Kings 17:24, 27-34; John 4:5-43; Arcana Coelestia 2702

*For you have had five husbands,
and the one you have now is not your husband.*

Our story today is about how we know the truth, how we love the truth, and how we live the truth. The Lord wants us to understand Him, approach Him, and find joy and enlightenment in obeying Him. Using the themes of water, marriage and formal worship, the story of the Samaritan woman at the well is a picture of our path to enlightenment and happiness. We will examine this conversation in three parts: the Lord's offer of living water; His question about her husbands; and His answer about where to worship.

The Lord meets the woman at a well outside Sychar, also called Shechem – an important city in Samaria, what used to be the northern kingdom of Israel – and the encounter seems to start accidentally. He is sitting by a well and a woman comes to draw water. Notably, she is a Samaritan.

The Samaritans of the north were openly hated by the Jews of the south, largely due to Jewish perception of the origin of the Samaritans, as we read:

But every nation still made gods of its own and put them in the shrines of the high places that the people of Samaria had made, every nation in the cities in which they lived. (II Kings 17:24,29)

The Old Testament maintains that the Samaritans were placed in the land by the Assyrians hundreds of years prior to the New Testament in order to occupy the land. When they arrived, they adopted the worship of Jehovah – even though they were not descendants of Jacob – but did not abandon their previous gods from five different cults. The Samaritans insisted they were heirs of Jacob, but the Jews considered them idolaters and imposters.

In the internal sense, the first part of the conversation is about the Word:

when He asks her to give Him a drink, this is the Lord asking us: “What do you know from the Word?” The well, being near Shechem, symbolizes a place of interior truth while “drinking” symbolizes instruction. (*Arcana Coelestia* 680, 3069, 4430) Obviously we are not in a position to instruct the Lord in His Word, but this is the Lord asking us to think about what we know, what we have drawn from the Word, what truth we know. She does not answer His question, but considering Jewish hostility to Samaritans, wonders aloud why He asks.

*For this is the Lord asking us to think about **what we know, what we have drawn from the Word, what truth we know.***

He doesn't answer her question either. Instead, He makes the amazing claim that she should ask Him for living water and never thirst again. She then challenges Him, pointing out the difficulty of drawing water. She even makes her own counterclaim to the well through her ancestor, Jacob. This depicts our reaction to the Lord's question to us: “Are You talking to me? The Word is difficult to understand, but I have been taught what it says.” (*Ibid.* 2702) Think how much information from the Word we each have, and how we have gone to the Word, bucket in hand, and worked to understand what it is saying to us. Her point seems valid – and the Lord does not disagree.

Instead, He merely insists His water is superior because those drinking it will never thirst again. Now He has her attention! This promise, in its barest, natural sense, would be an amazing gift to a Samaritan woman who had to draw water from a well daily. But what is this living water? Simply put, it is Divine truth flowing as life into our minds producing enlightenment. (*Ibid.* 3424, *Sacred Scripture* 2) The difference between drawing normal water from the well of Jacob and drawing living water from the Lord is the difference between reading the Word for information or habit or curiosity and reading it reverently as Divine truth.

We may read the Word for information – and there is nothing wrong with this. We may have an interest in a story or read it because of a habit of daily reading. Perhaps we read it looking for answers. Maybe we prefer stories to psalms, or psalms to prophesies. Our states vary greatly, and so will our appreciation of different parts of the Word. Anyone who has found themselves reading devotionally and coming into the book of, say, Jeremiah, has likely felt lost and confused. What does the Lord ask us to do?

To receive living water, we must read reverently. We must read as listening, believing the words and thoughts to be those of the One Living God, the Lord. This change of attitude may be subtle but is essential. When we read, are we

listening? Perhaps we find ourselves evaluating the ideas we read in the Word, preferring some to others. Maybe we like the parts that speak about joy more than sorrow. He asks us to listen because the Word offers us Divine Truth. We are even promised that spiritual and celestial things are stored up secretly if we approach the Word reverently as Divine. (*True Christian Religion* 239)

This attitude should bring us a new perspective. The goal is to think from the truth, not just about the truth. The truth becomes a fountain within us when it becomes our perspective, our point of view, our means of living a spiritual life. (*Apocalypse Revealed* 956) This is what enlightenment is: seeing the world and our lives through the lens of the Lord's truth and finding eternal happiness by living according to this perspective. This enlightenment, this fountain of living water, is what the Lord offers to us.

And the Samaritan woman wants this living water. We want this guide to spiritual happiness. Imagine for a moment if our view of our daily lives was first and easily and joyfully "what would bring the neighbor happiness?" Imagine if this was not merely a question we remembered to ask ourselves, but our constant disposition? Whether you are ordering tea at a café, taking the garbage out, or getting out of your car after a fender-bender, imagine if we greeted all of these as opportunities for love and learning. This is how angels live. This requires seeing the Word as entirely Divine.

It is at this point that the conversation takes a baffling turn. The Lord does not explain how to get the living water, nor does He explain further what it is. Instead, He suggests she go call her husband and then return.

This would be baffling to any of us, perhaps even offensive. Why does He presume she has a husband or that a husband is required for the living water? To the ancient audience, however, this reminds them of something specific: betrothal.

This encounter mirrors the semi-formal ritual for a couple arranging a marriage. The bridegroom arrives; the bride comes to draw water; the bride then brings the bridegroom to her people; her people invite the bridegroom to stay with them.

This is how Abraham's servant found Rebekah for Isaac; it is how Jacob and Rachel met; and it is how Moses and Zipporah met. This is exactly what we see in John 4: Jesus arrives; the woman comes to draw water; later she brings her people to meet Jesus; they invite Jesus to stay with them. This is a story about the Lord-as-bridegroom beckoning His church-as-bride to return to Him.

And "return" is the idea. This brings us to the most baffling part of the conversation. When she claims not to have a husband, Jesus agrees – and says she has had five husbands! Jewish and Samaritan women of this time were forbidden, by law, to marry a fourth time for any reason. A woman who married five

times would have been unheard of, let alone accepted in any Samaritan town. It would not matter whether she had been put away in divorce or whether her husbands had perished; no such woman would be welcome in society nor be able to convince anyone of anything.

She does not seem offended, and He does not call her to repentance or otherwise address her state of matrimony. Perhaps both Jesus and the woman know He isn't talking about her marriages, but Israel's marriages. Our reading from II Kings points out that the Samaritans, when brought to the land, kept their five cults to other gods and tried to add worship of Jehovah to their existing religions. Remember, this is the central claim against the Samaritans, both in the Prophets and from Jews in the New Testament. Perhaps her "five husbands" are these five cults, cults Israel and Samaria had previously. Jesus is not criticizing her for having married so many men; he is pointing out that Israel and Samaria have been polytheistic and idolatrous.

"And the one you have now is not your husband." Is the Lord asking her to consider whom she is talking to at the well? She has claimed Jacob as her ancestor and acknowledges later that she believes in the Messiah. Perhaps this symbolizes the Lord asking the church to formalize its marriage to Him.

What can all this mean for us? Remember that the Lord has asked us to consider His Word as Divine, not just informational. If we have sincerely considered what we know, the Lord is now asking us to consider what we love. When the Lord asks her about her husband, He is asking us: "What do you love most?"

Throughout the Word the imagery of marriage is used to describe the relationship of God to His people. We participate in the heavenly marriage of God and His church when we take the Lord's truth and live it in our lives. This is what He was offering as living water. When we see His truth as living truth, it will convict us, it will ask us to change our ways and repent. Anyone who has read the Word can see it does not agree much with our default or natural inclinations, and it challenges us to consider what we love and value the most.

Our response is: "I don't know what I love most." This is not having a husband. The Heavenly Doctrines tell us that discovering or cataloging our loves and affections is largely beyond us, but this is no excuse for consciously valuing anything more than the Lord.

Just like the cults of Israel and Sa-

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maria, we commit idolatry if we put anything above the Lord in our hearts. We are all guilty of this. The Lord points out that we have had five husbands: empty gods, shallow goals, false loves, and mixed-up priorities. As the Bridegroom comes to the well, He wants to know if His bride is ready for marriage. The Lord is asking us to re-commit to a life of repentance and proper priorities, to change who we are regardless of who we have been.

Have we shaped our days around petty victories or eternal principles? Does our satisfaction and behavior depend upon being liked or being kind? Do we offer sacrifices to power, security, and leisure or to the Lord and the joy of serving Him?

The conversation shifts surprisingly again. Rather than protest or agree or be offended or ask for forgiveness, the Samaritan woman declares Jesus to be a prophet. Remember that a prophet is not merely one who knows the future: he speaks the words of the Divine. By naming Him a prophet, she compares Jesus to Hosea and Amos and other prophets who have criticized Samaria.

She seems to understand the conversation was not about her particular marriages, and so she knows now that she speaks to a prophet who can answer her question. She asks this prophet, Jesus, whether the Lord wants people to worship in Jerusalem or on the nearby mountain. This is the central conflict, again, between Jews and Samaritans. North or south? City or mountain? Foreign or local site? It is amazing for a Samaritan woman to ask a Jewish prophet this question, and it symbolizes the third part of our opportunity to return to the Lord: worship and what we do.

We move from water to marriage and from marriage to worship. Having considered our intellectual relationship with Divine truth, and then our values and loves compared to the Lord, we now turn to what to do, how to worship, and the need for humility. The Heavenly Doctrines tell us that worship is affection and acknowledgment of the truth. (*Arcana Coelestia* 1326) If we have read the Word reverently and changed our priorities to love truth, what does worship – that affection and acknowledgment – look like?

For us, the choice she highlights seems to be between our own acquired and well-used but general truths (symbolized by the mountain at Shechem) (*Ibid.* 4388, 4707) and a more formal but artificial doctrinal system of the church (symbolized by the city Jerusalem) (*Ibid.* 402).

Does the Lord care whether we rely on our own general understanding that already informs our life, or whether we rely on the informed opinion outside ourselves, the perspective of our church and doctrine?

Here is another way to put the question, perhaps: once we see a living truth that prompts us to change our priorities and behavior, do we obey it the way it makes sense to us, or do we obey it the way the church explains it? Do we put it into practice immediately, or do we read and study further?

Imagine you have re-dedicated yourself to not bearing false witness. This is living water to you and you are resolved to return to the Lord and make this a priority because He says so. Worship is about life. How do you live this? Do “white lies” count? How about sharing our opinions: is that what honesty means? We can see this commandment as vital to our lives, we can feel passionate and convicted to follow it, and we can be confused as to how. Do you understand this commandment enough to live it, or should you ask someone else how?

The answer the Lord offers is surprising. Jesus does not give her a simple answer, either exonerating the Samaritans or supporting the Jews. He insists that she worships what she doesn't know and that “salvation is from the Jews.” (*John 4:22*) Does He favor Jerusalem?

When we ask the Lord whether we should obey Him through our own perspective or through a more rigorous though artificial understanding, the Lord points out two surprising things: first, everything comes through doctrine and the church, and second, it doesn't matter. The best perspective is the one that will soon come from obeying.

Let's look at this again. We fool ourselves if we insist that our thoughts and perspective are shaped apart from the world and people around us. This is why Jesus tells her, “You worship what you do not know, we worship what we know.” The Word is only ever understood according to doctrine (*Sacred Scripture 51*), and we shouldn't fool ourselves into thinking we have our own, unique insights that sprang up in us apart from what we have learned and been taught. We approach the Lord through His Word – and doctrine – not through our own isolated perspective and intuition.

But please do not miss the second, larger, message: it doesn't matter. True worship is in spirit and truth. The best way to understand, worship and live is the way that comes from a life of obedience putting good and truth together, and we can't start with that. The best perspective will be shaped by the truth after you do it.

In our example, if you want to understand “bearing false witness” spiritually, interiorly, specifically, you have to try following it. (*Arcana Coelestia 9818, Lord 49*) Yes, it will be a blend at first of our own perspective and that of the church, and yes, it will be imperfect, and perhaps you will change your approach every other day, but this is how we accept the living water and return to the Bridegroom.

After hearing this, the Samaritan woman remarks that this requires the Messiah. Jesus responds: “I am He, the one speaking to you.” She returns to her village and tells them about the prophet she met, clearly inspired. They believe her and come out and accept Jesus as the Savior of the world.

This shows us the only thing the woman does, and it is what we should do.

We should tell people about the amazing prophet. The Lord asks us to tell people what we have heard and seen. This week, find a way to tell someone about the prophet you have met and how His truth convicts and inspires you.

This conversation between the Lord and a Samaritan woman involves three topics: how we know the truth, how we love the truth, and how we live the truth. First, we need to see the Word as Divine truth and accept it because it is Divine. Second, we need to acknowledge that we have strayed from our God and come back to Him in our loves and priorities. Third, we need to let go of whether we are doing it right or doing it on our own and let Him create a new spirit within us that sees His truth from humble enlightenment. Finally, we need to tell others about what we have discovered and why it matters to us.

This shows us the only thing the woman does, and it is what we should do. We should tell people about the amazing prophet. The Lord asks us to tell people what we have heard and seen.

*How can I give you up, Ephraim?
How can I hand you over, O Israel?*

*How can I make you like Admah? How can I treat you like Zeboiim?
My heart recoils within me; my compassion grows warm and tender.
(Hosea 11:8)*

Amen.



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Hard Sayings: The Slow Growth of the Church

The Rev. Daniel Fitzpatrick

Lessons: Revelation 12; Apocalypse Explained 730; De Verbo 17

And 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. Then the woman fled into the wilderness where she has a place prepared by God, that they should feed her there one thousand two hundred and sixty days. (Revelation 12: 5,6)

We are a very small congregation in a small church. We have access to amazing teachings about heaven, hell, our dual lives as spirits and men, and the promise that we can happily live forever in the kingdom of heaven. Our church has existed for well over 200 years. And yet we remain small.

Generations of believers have lived their entire lives and never witnessed significant growth in our church's membership. Our doctrines are not easily received by many. Some do find our doctrines and join our organizations. But over the years as a church we do not seem to grow and seem doomed to remain forever an insignificant organization with amazing teachings.

Generations of believers have lived their entire lives and never witnessed significant growth in our church's membership. We do not seem to grow and seem doomed to remain forever an insignificant organization with amazing teachings.

What if I told you that in regard to the growth of our church we are right on schedule? Would you believe that the present state of the church is the best possible under the circumstances? How could this not be discouraging?

We want our church to grow. We want others to share and benefit from the truths now revealed to us. And while we can work to help the church grow, we cannot control its growth. We cannot force it to grow. The church is the Lord's and He alone controls its destiny.

As this is the case, we get ourselves into unnecessary distress when we lament the slow growth of the church. The Writings distinctly say that the church will at first be among only a few people. (See *Apocalypse Explained* 730) And the doctrines provide no timeframe for how long the church will be shared by only a few, nor do they define what a "few" might mean. So our expectations about the speed of our church's growth must always be guided by what the Lord intended to achieve when He established the New Church.

His purpose in establishing the New Church was to reveal Himself as a Man to all who would accept Him. With the new revelation nothing stands between individual people and the God of the Universe. But in order to make this possible, there had to be significant changes in the interior structure of the spiritual world.

The Lord came a second time to reopen the pathway for His love to reach us. Over centuries the human race had gradually lost sight of genuine truths and fallen into disorder. After death people who had not known genuine truths were easily persuaded by evil spirits there to promote false ideas among other spirits there, and in this way the influence of falsities and evils committed by those who knew only falsity began to block the channel for the Lord's influence among people on earth.

The human race on earth was in danger of being cut off from the source of its very life and perishing – not merely dying in mass numbers, but literally ceasing to exist. And the Lord from His infinite love would never allow that to happen. So, He came again to re-establish order in the spiritual world and establish a new heaven and a new church, where genuine truths would be clearly accessible and beyond the corrupting influence of the devil and his crew.

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What the Lord accomplished in this work is easy to underestimate. The Last Judgment was nothing short of a re-structuring of the spiritual world – a work that

had to be completed without violating human freedom and reason for all involved. By re-establishing the power of genuine truths, He stripped away evil spirits' ability to deceive anyone in the world of spirits. Evil now stood out as opposed to good, and as clearly destructive of human happiness.

Those who sought to live good lives now had the means to flee from evil and develop their inner character into heavenly forms. And gradually the good and the evil freely chose to separate from each other, the good moving upward toward heaven and the evil fleeing into hell to get away from the sphere of genuine love springing from revealed truth. And so the spiritual dam that had clogged the channel of the Lord's loving influx was removed.

This process of separating the good from the evil continues to this day. After death those who have tried to live by what they believe are further instructed and led toward heaven. Those who have consistently followed only their own lusts are confronted with the horror of the influence of their depraved loves on themselves and others, and flee from these sights to a place where their loves are not challenged. The difference today is that evil is no longer allowed to clog the pathway of spiritual influence between spirits and men, and subtly divert people's minds from seeing genuine truths.

Now that the pathway leading from the Lord Himself through the heavens and the world of spirits down to people here on earth has been permanently reopened, everyone is now free to see genuine truths for himself and to build a heavenly life on obeying these truths. We might expect that this would also open the way for our church to grow dramatically. But we know this is not so. The history of our church demonstrates that this is not the case.

Churches, like human beings, grow organically, that is, by following interior processes that involve human freedom and reason. Just as we cannot force a child to grow up, so we can't "make" a church grow faster than the interior processes allow. These inner processes involve individual people choosing to learn truths and then live by them, in the process shunning any actions that defy what truth teaches. This happens not quickly but over a lifetime.

Therefore the influence of those who, after death, find their way to heaven increases only gradually, as those who have lived good and honorable lives pass over to the spiritual realm. And as the church on earth depends on the influence of these angelic spirits, the earthly church cannot grow faster than this influence. In turn, these heavenly angelic spirits can only effectively influence people here on earth who consistently choose to look to the Lord, shun evil, and find ways to serve others.

If we want the church to grow, we can contribute to its growth by learning what the Word teaches and using the truths revealed there to form our lives in such a way that they are open to angelic influx. This is how the church on earth grows. And while we may fuss that the church among us is growing very

If we want the church to grow, we can contribute to its growth by learning what the Word teaches and using the truths revealed there to form our lives in such a way that they are open to angelic influx. This is how the church on earth grows.

slowly, our real concern should be whether our lives are inviting the influx necessary to allow it to grow here on earth. It won't grow apart from our own spiritual development. Church growth is inseparable from our own individual growth, for Providence works through people like you and me.

So we should not be surprised that our church grows slowly. In fact, we should be worried if it grows too quickly externally and becomes not a church that supports spiritual growth, but instead a religious support group that emphasizes social connections and services over spiritual development.

We were warned that the church would grow slowly. And the Writings explain why this is the case. It is the Lord's church among us, and it is designed to support His purposes. Our task is to align our lives with His purposes so that His

will may be done both in heaven and on earth, and that His church may one day grow to fill the whole world.

So we will need to wait patiently for His New Church to grow among us. But we must not wait passively. We must wait intelligently. As members of the church that possesses both the knowledge of the Lord as well as His Word, we are the lifeline between His heavenly kingdom and everyone on earth who seeks to live a good life.

We live in a spiritual wilderness now, where many cannot see genuine truth clearly and so can't live genuinely good lives. Our doctrines will often not be openly and warmly received, since they teach an entirely new way of thinking and living. It will be a struggle to bring the new ideas in our teachings to a world that desperately needs them, but rarely accepts them. But this is a struggle we must embrace, for there is no one else who can do what we have been given to do.

We may be few, but the Lord is on our side. He is watching over and protecting His church in ways we cannot imagine. Our role is to collaborate with Him and not worry about how His church is progressing. We are right on schedule, and our individual efforts to look to Him and shun the evils we find within ourselves will be the means of sustaining its progression. And while

we likely will not see our church grow to fill the whole earth in our brief lifetimes, we must act as if the church's successful growth depends on our efforts.

Because it does.

Amen.

It will be a struggle to bring the new ideas in our teachings to a world that desperately needs them, but rarely accepts them. But this is a struggle we must embrace, for there is no one else who can do what we have been given to do.

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FROM THE BISHOP'S OFFICE

Our Part: Living According to the Commandments

The Rt. Rev. Peter M. Buss Jr.

Those who have spent time in the New Church know that it is a faith that requires our engagement. There is no checkbox in this faith, no statement of belief that can lead us to rest assured that we are taken care of in terms of our salvation while we turn our attention elsewhere. It doesn't work that way. We have the process of regeneration with all that it entails – learning, shunning evils, figuring things out, and engaging in efforts to be useful.

Among my favorite teachings in the Writings is one about our lack of knowledge about the future. It comes to us in the work *Divine Providence*. It reminds us that “a desire to know the future is innate in all people,” but then states that this desire is not necessarily good (*n. 179*). The reason is that we need to trust in the Lord's providence, and we need to engage with our core human abilities of freedom and reason to “form conclusions about things to come,” and to ardently work toward the future that we hope for (*abid.*)

At the relative beginning of a new year, it is useful to focus our attention on what that means for us as individuals and as a church. A teaching that gives us guidance has to do with the essentials of salvation on our part. In addition to “acknowledging the Lord alone as the God of heaven and earth,” it says, “that people should live in accordance with the Ten Commandments.” (*Apocalypse*

Revealed 485; cf. n. 490)

What opens up before us in light of this teaching is a powerful list of things we can and should be focused on – not all at once, but certainly as an outline for living that will best allow the Lord to bless us.

It starts, of course, with the Lord. We learn, regarding the **First Commandment**: “You shall have no other gods before My face.” We read: “This commandment [means] that no one is to be loved above all except God, nor anything except what comes from God.” (*True Christian Religion 293*) An active part of our spiritual lives could be, then, to focus on what we love the most.

We read further: “What reigns universally with a person is that which is present in every idea of their thought and every desire of their will. . . . That which reigns universally within a person should be the Lord.” (*Arcana Coelestia 8865*) We could think of it this way: for religion to make any sense, we have to know who the Lord is; for us to see value in Divine revelation we have to know the Revelator; and if we are to accept the path of regeneration or spiritual rebirth, we need to worship the Savior who makes it all happen. This begs the question of what each of us could do to focus our attention more centrally on the Lord.

Fortunately, the next commandments help. Regarding the **Second Commandment** -- “You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain” – we learn that it not only calls us to use the Lord’s name respectfully in conversation. It extends to a love of what comes from Him, especially His teachings (*True Christian Religion 298*), and also to the qualities of the Lord that His name implies: mercy, love, wisdom, forgiveness, service, and the like. (*Apocalypse Explained 959:2*)

What does this look like in terms of our active obedience? It looks like examining our lives to see where we may be blaspheming or letting a spirit of derision enter into the ways we speak about God and the things of religion. It means remaining equally vigilant for ways in which we are failing to live according to the things we know that the Lord teaches. On the positive side, it looks like actions of mercy and compassion toward others. It sounds like conversations with friends about religion and the things of spiritual life.

Then there is the **Third Commandment**: “Remember the Sabbath Day to keep it holy.” We know this to be about worship of the Lord, and the value of taking time to observe this “day of instruction in Divine matters.” (*True Christian Religion 301*) We might reflect that all of us have our version of a longing to connect with our Creator by means of worship, making it more likely that we will have a sense of His presence and providence in all that life brings our way.

Of our part in that, we read: “It is common in all Divine worship for a person to first wish, desire, and pray, and for the Lord then to reply, instruct, and

effect.” (*Apocalypse Revealed* 376)

What can we think of, in terms of our proactive engagement in spiritual life by means of the **Fourth Commandment**: “Honor your father and your mother”? We learn that it is to give gratitude. For our earthly parents this means “obeying them, being attached to them, and showing gratitude for the kindnesses they do.” (*True Christian Religion* 305) This commandment in a deeper sense relates to “loving God and the church.” (*True Christian Religion* 306)

Honoring the Lord as our Heavenly Father can mean acknowledging that all of our blessings and even our abilities to do the things that we do, come from Him. Honoring the church as our spiritual mother can mean paying attention to the spiritual life that is fostered by the church, and being grateful for a spiritual community that supports us on the path to heaven.

Of course, there is also an opportunity to support the church with our time and treasure, doing our part to help it be as successful as it can be. I think too of the church’s enduring focus on providing worship services that can connect people with the Lord, with prayerful energy that we make them as accessible as possible.

In the framework of the Ten Commandments, we know what comes next – the “thou shalt not” commandments. There is the shunning of evils contained, as a mainstay of our spiritual lives, as well as the embracing of the opposite goodness that the Lord wishes to plant within us.

So, for example, we could focus on the spiritual issue presented by means of the **Fifth Commandment**: “You shall not murder.” We may know that it has to do with resisting any forms of revenge and hatred that take root in our hearts. (*Doctrine of Life* 67) Instead, we can work with the Lord to regard others from genuine friendship and charity (*Doctrine of Life* 69), and really work at “dealing kindly with our adversaries.” (*Doctrine of Life* 73) We could also support the church in its efforts to encourage respectful attitudes to all and to stand against forms of prejudice.

Under the **Sixth Commandment** – “You shall not commit adultery” – the prohibition is, generally speaking, about “behaving licentiously.” (*Doctrine of Life* 74) In addition to our steadfast efforts to resist “obscene acts” and “filthy thoughts,” we can feel called to our own version of “loving marriage” and “the chasteness of marriage.” (*Doctrine of Life* 75) We could also do our part to help the church share the vision of marriage that the Lord has revealed.

With the **Seventh Commandment** -- “You shall not steal” –comes an injunction around attribution. We do not take what does not belong to us, in terms of physical possessions as well as credit for other people’s good work. (*Doctrine of Life* 80) We honor the Lord for the successes and good things in our lives. We remain vigilant to any forms of guile and deceit that come along

with efforts to swindle and take from others. We focus on being people of honor and integrity who are striving with the Lord's help to be "pure in heart." (*Doctrine of Life* 83-84)

When it comes to the **Eighth Commandment** – "You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor" – we know there is a call to honesty instead of lying. Specifically, the misrepresentation is about someone else – their character or good name. (*Doctrine of Life* 87) How many of us can readily point to examples of slander or belittling of people who are on the opposite side of whatever ideological issue is at hand? Instead, we can feel called to love truth in all its forms – the truth about others and truth in the Lord's Word, as we strive to be "seekers of wisdom." (*See Doctrine of Life* 88-89)

Finally there are the two capstone commandments against coveting: The **Ninth and Tenth Commandments** -- "You shall not covet your neighbor's house. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife . . ." There is the general prohibition against our errant longings or desires to have what is forbidden. (*True Christian Religion* 327) In a deeper sense there is a call to examine ourselves for any forms of love of the world and love of self. (*Apocalypse Explained* 1022:3) Instead, there is a call to be content with our lot, and to feel blessed by the Lord with what we have without setting our heart on riches, or regarding ourselves as more worthy than others. (*Arcana Coelestia* 8478:3)

Returning to that challenge of the future that we began with, there is indeed much that we could feel concerned about – for ourselves and for our church. Yet in light of what we have explored, there is also a great deal to be grateful for. We have a God who is constantly working with us, even though He does not show us fully how it will all turn out. He also gives us great satisfaction in engaging in the things that are most important to us, helping us to "form conclusions about things to come" and ardently work toward the future that we hope for. (*Divine Providence* 179)

Our part is to "confess and acknowledge from the heart that the Lord is God of heaven and earth, whose humanity is Divine, [and to be] conjoined with Him by a life in accordance with the Ten Commandments." (*Apocalypse Revealed* 485) To the extent that this is our focus, as individuals and as a church, the Lord will lead us forward into the future, and we will be blessed.

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Our Traveling Bishops

Visits to Nigeria and Togo

The Rt. Rev. Peter M. Buss Jr.

I had the privilege of traveling to two West African countries recently, to support the work of the General Church there.

We have two church centers in Nigeria, with a third group in formation. The church headquarters are located in Yenagoa, the capital of Bayelsa State. There is also a church group in Okolobiri and another in Port Harcourt in River State.

The main reason I traveled there was to perform an ordination into the second degree of the Rev. Kuroakegha Ebute-Metta. While there, I also had the opportunity to perform 11 baptisms, lead a seminar on “The Internal Sense of Jesus’ Healing Miracles,” conduct Holy Supper, and lead in worship.

Our hosts had arranged for an official visit to the Governor’s offices, where I met with Deputy Governor, His Excellency Senator Lawrence Ewhrudjakpo. I presented books of the Heavenly Doctrine and received a wonderful etched-glass sculpture which now sits on display in my outer office. That visit was significant in its dialogue on the state of Christianity within Nigeria, and openness to hear about the New Church.

I was accompanied on this trip by our West African Regional Pastor, the Rev. Martin Kofi Gyamfi. We traveled next to Togoville, Togo, where Rev. Gyamfi presided over leadership meetings with all of the National Pastors within West Africa. These included: Rev. Segno-Kodjo Ayi (host), Rev. Ekow Eshun (Ghana), Rev. Sylvain Agnes (Ivory Coast), Rev. Guillaume Anato (Benin), Rev. Samuel Lompo (Burkina Faso), and Rev. Kuroakegha Ebute-Metta (Nigeria).

The leadership meetings included discussions of issues and opportunities within the subregion as well as doctrinal presentations and leadership per-

spectives from me.

The trip was tremendously inspiring, in terms of visits with people already connected with the New Church, the leadership engagement, and the general openness to religious life that exists within these countries. Please join me in wishing well to their continued efforts to establish the church in their areas.

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A Long Overdue Return to Cuba

The Rt. Rev. Bradley D. Heinrichs

During my time serving the church in Canada, I had the privilege to be the Bishop's Representative for the nascent New Church in Cuba. This made sense because Canada does not have any travel restrictions in place for visiting Cuba, and Cuba has long welcomed Canadians to their country as friends. Since I also have Canadian citizenship, I was able to travel freely back and forth to Cuba and visit the small church group we have in Havana.

Over the last 10 years, I have traveled to Cuba about twice a year. During those visits, I have witnessed many joys and sorrows, successes and trials. Just before I left Canada to move to the United States, I managed to visit the New Church group there in April of 2019. As I acclimated to my new job as an Assistant Bishop, I found it difficult to find the time to schedule a trip, so in my place, the Rev. Daniel Fitzpatrick and his wife Freya made some visits and have grown to love the congregation in Havana.

However, in March of 2020, as we all know, the Covid 19 pandemic shut down travel all around the world. As a result, I wasn't able to make a trip to visit Cuba until September 24, 2022, almost three and a half years since my last visit. It was wonderful to get reacquainted with everyone and I managed to get around and visit them in their homes and share a meal with them as we got caught up on each other's lives.

The sermon was titled, "*Tener Un Temor Santo De Dios*" – which translated means, "*Have a Holy Fear of God.*" This was followed by the baptism of three children and one adult. Then we celebrated by sharing a dinner and discussed a hope for the future that we can resume regular visits and continue translation work of the Heavenly Doctrine and New Church collateral works into Spanish.

Recently our translator Alina completed *The Moral Life* by Rev. Dr. Hugo Odhner, *You Can Believe* by the Rev. Grant Schnarr, and *Journey of Life* by the Rt. Rev. Tom Kline. She is currently working on my book, *As for Me and My House, We Will Serve the Lord*, aided by a computer assisted translation from

Steve David produced through *New Christian Bible Study*. The other exciting news for the group is that one of their former congregants, Daniel Calvo, has completed his bachelor's degree at Bryn Athyn College and is in his first year in the Theological School training to be a minister.

Our small Cuban group has been living in a country that is facing trying financial and political circumstances, and more than ever they treasure the commitment and spiritual support of the New Church.

As I think of their perseverance, I am reminded of these encouraging words from Scripture which the Lord gave to the early Christian Church of Philadelphia: "I know your works. See, I have set before you an open door, and no one can shut it; for you have a little strength, have kept My word, and have not denied My name. . . . Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world. . . . Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown. He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God." (*Revelation 3:8-12*)

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The Church in the Pacific Rim

The Rt. Rev. David Lindrooth

Covid restrictions over recent years have postponed many of the normal face-to-face church activities across the Pacific Rim, which are important for the spiritual practice of our General Church congregations. The autumn season brought easing of those restrictions almost everywhere. In November, Aven and I participated in in-person worship where I could officiate in Holy Supper, baptisms, two long-delayed ordinations, a postponed centenary celebration and many visits with our priests and church members across the region.

In Seoul, South Korea, we celebrated the ordination into the second degree of one of the pastors assisting in the Seoul Congregation, the Rev. Dong Ryong Yang. He is one of those rare people who, when you have a conversation with him, you get the sense that he is listening with such deep compassion that he can see into your soul. That is a precious quality for a pastor, and he, even at 65 years old, brings such depth of humanity to the congregation there.

Japan lies a plane journey of a couple hours to the east, across the Sea of Japan. It was a great privilege to have the Rev. Shiro Nagashima introduce us to

the church in Japan. The country has members of the church spread throughout the country, from the northern island of Hokkaido, all the way to the city Hiroshima and even further south. Tokyo has the largest gathering of New Church members, but they are spread across the large city.

On our Sunday in Japan, representatives from around the country gathered with us in Kyoto, the site of the ancient capital of Japan, for worship and the ordination of the Rev. Sachio Nakato into the first degree of the priesthood. The Rev. Dr. Nakato is a professor of International Studies at Ritsumeikan University in Kyoto. He has also taught in the United States at American University, their sister university. As an expert in International Relations with a focus on Asia, he brings unique and valuable perspective to the region's clergy.

Our next visit was to the Hurstville Society in a suburb of Sydney, Australia. There we joined with more than 50 church members and their pastor, the Rev. Todd Beiswenger, to celebrate more than 100 years of worship at their church. This celebration felt significant from the perspective of all the people who have made Hurstville their home church over the years.

It was moving to reflect on how deep an impact this one (relatively) remote congregation could have on our General Church over the years, with people who grew up in the congregation and started families in other countries around the world and now, they and their families are parts of other congregations all over the globe. One example is the current editor of *New Church Life*, who was born in Hurstville and spent part of his childhood there. I am still filled with reflection on how important congregations like this are in the uses they serve for their sister congregations in other countries.

Our visit ended in Perth (in Western Australia) celebrating with worship, Holy Supper and several baptisms. One baptism was of particular note, being a woman who recently moved from China and who has become a deep reader of the Heavenly Doctrine, reading more than 16 volumes in the last three years. She is deeply involved with a number of fast-growing online groups of Chinese people studying the Writings. These groups have well over 400 active participants, with more coming every day.

Witnessing this woman's deep faith in the New Church was moving. Seeing the window into the extensive network of people daily studying, discussing and translating the Heavenly Doctrine in Chinese is a compelling view of how the Lord is building His New Church on earth. I look forward to finding ways to support these groups in the near future.

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(See photos from all three of these episcopal visits on pages 56 and 57.)

Artfully Academic

Michelle Chapin



Jonathan Kline

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From art historian to administration, Bryn Athyn College Dean of Academics Jonathan Kline, Ph.D., discusses his care for students, the college's religious identity, and the current challenges and opportunities of the institution.

Jonathan Kline has an energy and affection for art history that is difficult to miss. His first role at Bryn Athyn College as an art history professor and department chair for the arts program allowed him to share this deep passion for his field with his students. To him, painters and sculptors aren't just individuals to admire; they're also comrades.

"When you spend time with Michelangelo and Raphael and Botticelli and my other friends, they become friends," he says. "And I have enjoyed their company for decades. I spend time with them every chance I get."

In his role as Dean of Academics, Jonathan splits his attention from beloved Italian Renaissance artwork to include another passion: helping shape a new era of New Church higher education. Overseeing the student academic experience is a responsibility he feels honored to take on. "My hope is that I can be good for the job here. I would like to be humble about that. There are reasons for this college that are beyond me."

For the Love of Art

It's no wonder Jonathan holds his love and expertise of art's beauty and history at such a core level. As a teenager, he spent summers working at Glencairn

Museum, surrounded by stunning artwork that had been illustrating stories and evoking emotions for centuries. As an undergrad at Temple University, his curiosity accelerated with professors who could enliven art by sharing social and historical contexts, and ways in which these works still matter today.

“The thing about art history,” he says, “is that you immerse yourself in works of the most exquisite beauty, and you get to play with ideas that are profound. You see the interaction of so many different disciplines. I look for the historical significance of how a work of art participates in history – doesn’t just reflect history but actively participates in how events unfold – and how a work of art can show us and show people hundreds of years ago the most complicated religious doctrines. When you stand in front of certain paintings by Botticelli or Raphael, or stand under Michelangelo’s ceiling, you really see Christian doctrine in pure form.”

Studying in Rome, first as an undergraduate and again as a grad student, Jonathan added to his expertise in art of the Italian Renaissance. He has taught at the University of Hartford and Temple University, where he simultaneously earned his doctoral degree. When a position became available in his hometown at Bryn Athyn College, he couldn’t help feeling it was meant to be. “We humbly look back at the workings of providence in awe. It is comforting to know that I was supposed to be here.”

Seeing Students as Potential Angels

Jonathan’s approach to education is simple yet profoundly beautiful. “At the heart of it, where I really like to come from, is a belief that each and every one of our students, from Swedenborgian doctrine, is a potential angel, and our duty is to help them think on a spiritual level. Inasmuch as we do that, we help them on an eternal path.”

He has seen this philosophy reflected in how deeply and genuinely his fellow faculty members care for students both in and out of the classroom. The kindness and dedication professors share is inspiring. “Those things go a long way in fostering a sense of support and a sense of belonging.”

This belief in his students’ heavenly potential grew from Jonathan’s upbringing-

Jonathan’s approach to education is simple yet profoundly beautiful. At the heart of it is a belief that each and every one of our students is a potential angel, and our duty is to help them think on a spiritual level. Inasmuch as we do that, we help them on an eternal path.

ing in the New Church, which he was able to expand when he first came to Bryn Athyn College. The Swedenborgian influence within the institution allowed him to interact differently with his own faith and explore those convictions alongside his students as they did the same. While career preparation is a very important goal of a college education, he appreciates that Bryn Athyn tends to this goal and extends it to help students focus on their spiritual lives as well.

The Role of Religion

Jonathan reflects on the ways other faith-based colleges have used art on their campuses to express aspects of their religious foundations. He sees opportunity for Bryn Athyn College to signal its own distinctive religious identity.

“I actually would like our college to appear more overtly religious,” he explains. “We are about an intellectual approach to the Divine and seeing a relationship between faith and charity. We are about a distinct religion. We are about the New Church. We also are fundamentally about an intellectual approach to one Divine and conjunction of faith and charity. I would love to see that represented on campus, artistically. I don’t know yet what that art would look like.”

Jonathan equates this vision for Bryn Athyn College to some of the awe-inspiring experiences he’s had as an art historian: “I once walked across the piazza of St. Peter’s Basilica in Rome and I was amazed. It’s monumental. The building is huge. The architecture is beyond human scale. And I was in awe of

this place dedicated to Catholicism. You can feel it when you’re there. And I remember thinking at the time, wondering to myself, will we be this?”

He gives credit to the Bryn Athyn Cathedral and the Historic District, which offer breathtakingly stunning interpretations of New Church doctrine and community. The College has a unique opportunity to celebrate that gathering of ideas, which he envisions can happen on a grand scale.

“It wouldn’t be St. Peter’s Basilica,” he admits. “It wouldn’t be a piazza. But somewhere down the line we can be a place where people from all over the world come because of this religion, on that kind of scale. And that’s the kind of

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vision we can have for the College.”

That is not to say that embracing a religious identity should in any way be exclusionary. “We have an obligation to our student body to welcome and celebrate diversity, and I mean diversity on so many levels. – including religious diversity. I think we need to celebrate our students for who they are and where they come from, and we need to welcome and value them for who they are and who they might become as themselves.”

Jonathan believes curriculum is an opportunity to do this, that the College can help highlight similarities between New Church doctrinal ideas and other Christian or non-Christian faiths. Drawing on *True Christian Religion* 571, he says: “If we have students from any different religion and we help them to begin to think on a spiritual level, then we’re making an impact that can be eternal. And that to me is the essence of New Church education. For students who come from other religions, I think what we’re doing here certainly applies to them and can help them in their paths.”

“We have students who come from any number of diverse backgrounds. I am so pleased that they want to study at our institution. We need to provide them a space that is safe and welcoming. I feel very passionate about that.”

A New Era

The quality and care of a Bryn Athyn education has remained steady, though the world and its students have changed significantly over the decades. Today’s students are concerned about finances, social life and their contributions to the world. Jonathan recognizes his role as Dean of Academics is to ensure that curricula stay both rigorous and relevant, while meeting students where they are and helping them get to where they need to be by graduation.

He notes: “College is a complex thing, a place of subtlety and nuance. We are a place where people can gather and think, and we’re a place where we can discuss complicated issues. And the issues that we face in the world are complicated.”

Faculty involvement is essential in complicated discussions, and the new Dean of Faculty, Marcy Latta, Ph.D., has been instrumental in ensuring smooth collaboration. “I could not do this without Marcy,” says Jonathan. “We work closely together. My obligation to the faculty is to work with them.” As a faculty member himself, he understands the weight of this role, advocating for the needs of the academic program while balancing his administrative responsibilities.

He feels the need to show students and prospective students the value of a religious, liberal arts education in today’s world. As the rising cost of a college education continues to appear in national news cycles, the return on investment is in question now more than ever. Yet he remains unwavering in his

confidence in the value of this investment.

“I am dedicated to both of those things, to the idea that college should be a good investment of your money and you should be able to get a job afterwards, but also that you should develop your way of thinking.”

Challenges Ahead

While he recognizes the challenges facing the College, Jonathan does not think the institution is doomed to failure. “Financial sustainability and enrollment growth are among the immediate priorities,” he says. “And I play a part in helping solve those. I need to work on retention of students from an academic side. I need to be sure that our academic programs are meeting students where they need to be met and to feed them in ways that they need to be fed so that they will be welcomed and encouraged and want to continue at Bryn Athyn College. And our teachers are wonderful. I’m not implying that we don’t do that already. The question is, how can we take something that we’re doing well and do it better?”

“The next couple years are going to be tough,” Jonathan admits. “I don’t think there’s any point in sugarcoating that. We need to get on firm financial footing. We need to increase enrollment.” But as aware as he is of present issues, he is also sure Bryn Athyn can overcome them. And while he admits he overuses the word “exquisite,” he cannot help but interject, “There really is potential for this college to be exquisite.”

His confidence in Bryn Athyn College’s ability to be a center of New Church education on a grand scale shows in his face, similar to the way he looks when recalling the feeling of crossing the piazza of St. Peter’s Basilica.

He smiles: “When you stand in Doering Center and you see the diversity of students – students from so many different backgrounds. They’re milling about before classes. You can see it there. When you see the students gathered and talking in Brickman over lunch, you can see it. There are little bits of that, absolutely. You see that here on our campus. It’s a little bit of that huge thing. If we have little bits of that here, why can’t we grow it? Foster that. Make it bigger and bigger.”

And amid all these efforts helping Bryn Athyn be all it can be, he still finds moments to revel with his companions, though lately his time in the classroom has been less than he’d like. He can’t stay away from his closest confidantes: “I do get to spend a little bit of time with my friends. With Botticelli. Raphael.”

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Marriage for Eternity?

Alisha Reid

Editors' note: This paper was written for the Rev. Dr. Ray Silverman's
Bryn Athyn College course, Religion and Marriage.
It is reprinted with permission.

*People who are in a state of truly conjugal love
look to eternity in their marriage
because eternity is inherent in this love.
– Conjugal Love 216*

Eternity can be a scary thought, especially when it is associated with terms like “forever,” “never ending,” or “trapped.” So, the thought of eternity in commitment to another individual can be daunting, especially when we have trouble committing to simple things in our day-to-day lives like spending time with friends or getting to bed at a reasonable hour.

We've probably all heard people in movies or in real life say something along the lines of: “Won't you get bored staying married to the same person forever?” Even as someone who believes in the eternity of marriage, I can still feel alarm bells going off when I think of doing anything for eternity. However, in contemplating this concept of being with the same person forever, an interaction between Christopher Robin and Winnie the Pooh began playing through my head.

Christopher Robin says to Winnie the Pooh: “Forever and ever is a very long time, Pooh.”

And in lyrical reply, Winnie the Pooh says: “Forever isn't long at all, Christopher, when I'm with you.”

While this may just be a sweet moment from a children's story, I think it speaks to something greater that is supported in the Writings: when you are with the right person, you want to be with them forever, and forever will not feel “long” in the way that so many of us fear it will be.

This sweet concept shown between Winnie the Pooh and Christopher Robin can also be applied to marriage. As is written in *Conjugal Love 216*: “People who are in a state of truly conjugal love look to eternity in their mar-

riage because eternity is inherent in this love.”

I like to think about relationships as friendships, but better. If someone were to ask me why I don't find the idea of being with the same person for the rest of my life daunting, I would simply say: “Have you ever had a best friend? A friend that you could literally hang out with for hours and hours and not get sick of each other or bored of their company?”

I would liken this phenomenon to a friendship soulmate. So, when it comes to your romantic soulmate you take friendship, but add the exciting elements of romance, and additional levels of intimacy and commitment. I like this idea especially because I believe that when a man and a woman fall in love and get married, they should be each other's very best friend.

Additionally, if you are getting married to someone and in the back of your mind you are thinking, Well, this isn't for forever after all, then you probably should not be getting married in the first place. When you are in love and working toward conjugal love with someone, the notion of committing to that person should be more exciting than it is scary. If you are not looking toward the long haul with the person you are marrying, then perhaps you are both not looking toward conjugal love. (*See Conjugal Love 216*)

I think part of the reason people are hesitant to committing to an eternal marriage is because they worry about enduring the relationship after the “magic” has worn off. They may think to themselves: How am I to stay committed when I'm no longer as into them as I once was?

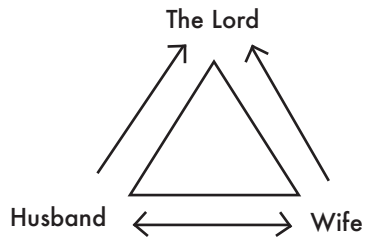
While I am no expert on the topic of relationships, from what I have read and the knowledge I've gained, I have formed some basic ideas about how to keep the love alive, the marriage interesting, and the relationship with one another strong.

One idea is to not rely on the other person in our relationship to make us happy and keep our life interesting. Instead of looking to our significant other to make us happy, we should be looking to the Lord as our source of true happiness and meaning.

Another idea is that we can keep our relationship interesting by making ourselves of interest; we should be developing ourselves into interesting, well-rounded people, with various hobbies and skills.

The last idea, and perhaps the most important, is that a couple together should be looking to the Lord and working on their individual relationship with Him. As the husband and wife grow closer to the Lord through keeping the commandments, they grow closer to each other. As is written in *Conjugal Love 534*: “For truly conjugal love with its delights comes solely from the Lord and is given to those who live according to His commandments”

Here is an illustration of this Truth.



The closer you grow to the Lord, the closer you grow to each other.



Alisha Reid, a 2022 graduate of Bryn Athyn College of the New Church, is the daughter of John and Naomi Scott Reid of Toronto, Canada.

Conjugal Love Study: Academy of the New Church Girls School

*Kira R. Shadegg
Principal, Academy Girls School*

In the spring of 2017, I reported in *New Church Life* on the completion of the study conducted by a group of Girls School faculty members on the study of Conjugal Love. This study, begun in 2010, was an effort to make the doctrine of conjugal love more accessible to the girls we teach.

In the fall of 2017, the Girls School faculty spent several meetings discussing ways in which each faculty member can implement this curriculum into her existing curriculum. The idea was that the doctrine of conjugal love should infill the entire curriculum across all grades and subject matter.

Those of us on the committee had a sense that this was already happening in many places in the curriculum. The faculty discussion formalized that observation. It was heartening to see the many ways the doctrine of conjugal love is presented throughout the Girls School curriculum.

Some of this is obvious, such as when the conjunction between the heart and lungs is taught in Human Anatomy and Physiology. It is more subtle in a co-ed math class when the teacher is encouraging true appreciation for the different ways that boys and girls go about solving a problem. Neither is “right” – both methods arrive at the correct answer – but isn’t it wonderful that we can think differently?

How does that extend to other aspects of life – such as social interactions? Developing respect for masculine wisdom and girls trusting in their own developing feminine wisdom is of vital importance to the faculty of the Girls School.

Every faculty member has this guidebook in her office or classroom. Every new faculty member is presented with a guidebook and the major points of the study are discussed with her during orientation meetings.

In the spring of 2018, a guidebook for parents was developed. This is much less comprehensive than – and only includes the highlights of – the faculty guidebook. It enables us to ensure that parents understand the reason behind our integrated curriculum.

This work was the vision of Susan Odhner, Girls School Principal from 2007 to 2016. A debt of gratitude is owed to Sue for her love and care for raising girls with the knowledge that the Lord loves them no matter what. Her deepest desire was that our girls grow into caring, compassionate, kind women, who are morally grounded and spiritually motivated.

I believe that the integration of the doctrine of conjugal love throughout our curriculum is Sue's legacy for our girls and she is to be commended for her vision.

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As for Me and My House, We Will Serve the Lord



**Parenting Principles from the Word
– Passing Your Faith to Your Children –**

Bradley D. Heinrichs

BOOK REVIEW

As For Me and My House, We will Serve the Lord

A new book by the Rt. Rev Bradley D. Heinrichs

Review by the Rev. Dr. Ray Silverman

Professor of Religion and English, Bryn Athyn College of the New Church

“What is the secret to raising children so that they grow up to love the Lord, read the Word, and become active members of the New Church, so that we all end up feeling part of the same spiritual family?” This is the question the Rt. Rev. Bradley Heinrichs raises in the introduction to his excellent book: *As For Me and My House, We Will Serve the Lord: Parenting Principles from the Word – Passing Your Faith to Your Children*.

In one form or another, this question comes up frequently for New Church parents who are concerned not only about the spiritual development of their children, but also about the future of the church. After all, if we fail to pass our faith on to our children, what will become of the church in the future?

For Bishop Heinrichs this question became one of the most important aspects of his ministry. As a young pastor, he noticed that some parents had remarkable success in passing on their love of the church to their children, while other parents were less successful. During his 20 years as Pastor of the Carmel New Church in Canada, where he also served as Principal of the Carmel New Church School, he continued to reflect on how parents could successfully pass their faith to their children.

Then, in 2019, when he was called to become an Assistant Bishop of the General Church, he was given the opportunity to focus more directly on this vital question. In his new position as Director of General Church Education, he dedicated himself to reviewing his own experiences as a child growing up in a New Church family, as a New Church pastor, and as the father of six children – all of this in the light of teachings from the Old Testament, the New Testament, and the Heavenly Doctrines of the New Church.

The result is a well-written, informative and inspiring book about the spiritual education of our children. It includes poignant, humorous and illustrative anecdotes that will keep you turning pages while providing important clues to what it means to be a New Church parent and how to be a New Church parent.

A brief review of some of the chapter titles should be enough to whet your interest.

- Help Load Up the Children With Remains
- Challenge the Wild Asses to Compel Themselves
- Put Them to Work, and Work Together
- Encourage Them to Persevere
- And, my favorite, “It’s a Family Thing—Make Use of the Grandparents

Even if you do not agree with every tip that Bishop Heinrichs offers, it should not be the speck in your eye that takes away from the power and beauty of this important and very timely book. Most of all, you will meet a man who is deeply in love with the Lord, with his wife, with his family, and with the people he has been called to serve. His humor will win you over, his dedication to service will earn your respect, his thoughtful insights will encourage spiritual reflection, and his practical advice will inspire action.

If enough people read this book and employ even 25 percent of the wisdom it contains, it will ensure the continued growth of our glorious church for generations to come. May we all learn to follow Joshua’s advice: “As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.” (*Joshua 24:15*)

Contact: Ray.Silverman@brynathyn.edu

*Another Review by the **Rev. Walter E. Orthwein**
Retired Pastor, Teacher and Spiritual Editor of New Church Life*

This gem of a book offers a simple but profound solution to the problem we have wrestled with for many years: how to impart the life and faith of the New Church to our children. Succeeding at that is the closest to home and most vital thing we can do to assure the survival and growth of the church in the future.

The writing style of Bishop Heinrichs is delightful: informal, conversational, lively, succinct and to the point – the very opposite of wordy, preachy or abstract. There are very striking pithy comments all through it. Ask your kids what they stand for, he says, and tell them: “if you don’t stand for something, you will fall for anything.”

The book is a treasure trove of down-to-earth practical tips for instilling virtue and cultivating the spiritual development of the children the Lord has given into our care. The points are driven home by many apt and powerful quotes from Scripture and the Writings of the New Church, as well as poignant lessons the author learned from his own mistakes as a sometimes rebellious child and teenager.

Here's a bit of wisdom I especially liked -- it's from chapter seven on teaching the ideals of marriage: "Help Them Be Realistic – They're Not Perfect and Neither are You." We shouldn't let our own past mistakes keep us from teaching the ideal to our children. How encouraging and helpful that advice is!

I think this book is destined to become a classic of New Church collateral literature that will be of great value for generations to come. Reading it gave me a strong sense of renewed hope for the future of the General Church. I only wish my wife and I had had the benefit of it when we were bringing up our own children. I recommend it most enthusiastically to all parents, and especially hope that from now on it will find its way into the hands of every young couple married in the church.

Contact: walter.orthwein@verizon.net

Purchase Options:

The best way to purchase a copy of *As for Me and My House, We Will Serve the Lord* is to email Bishop Brad Heinrichs at brad.heinrichs@newchurch.org and arrange to pick one up at Cairncrest or to have him bring some books on an episcopal visit.

The cost is \$15 for a single copy, or \$10 each if you buy two or more. They can also be purchased in the Bryn Athyn Cathedral bookstore during operating hours. Alternately, an e-book for Kindle can be purchased for \$4.95 through Amazon at https://www.amazon.com/House-Will-Serve-Lord-Principles-ebook/dp/B0BC96P5FP/ref=tmm_kin_swatch_0?_encoding=UTF8&qid=1670323655&sr=8-1.

You can also order the paperback through Amazon, but if you want it mailed overseas the costs could be prohibitive. Very shortly, an audiobook will also be available on Amazon.

Church News

Compiled by Bruce Henderson

TASK FORCE FOLLOW UP

On November 28, 2022, the Rt. Rev. Peter M. Buss Jr., Executive Bishop of the General Church, distributed by email throughout the church a seven-page “Response to the Open Letter Regarding LGBTQIA+” and a 14-page “Board-Clergy Task Force Report on the Open Letter on Requests to the General Church of the New Jerusalem Regarding LGBTQIA+ issues.”

The Bishop’s letter included five sections:

1. Personal acknowledgments, conclusions and commitments
2. The heart of the matter
3. A challenge and a blessing – we see things differently
4. Results of Review
5. Leaning on our values

The letter stated: “What do I aim to accomplish in this response? To underscore a message of welcome to all who wish to worship the Lord and strive to live a life according to His teachings within the General Church. To demonstrate where I believe we can grow and learn for the betterment of the church. To state transparently where I believe we cannot adopt changes requested within your petition. To talk from the heart about this subject that has caused such hurt and conflict within the church.”

Next steps include gathering input and feedback on these two documents by January 15, 2023, and a Task Force meeting with the General Church Board of Directors and representatives of the clergy to continue the process.

If you did not receive these two documents by email and would like to read them, please go to <https://newchurch.org/about/reports>. Scroll to the bot-

tom of the page: LGBTQIA+ Issue Task Force. Click on “Letter from Executive Bishop Peter Buss,” then click on “Task Force Report.” Any questions: Contact Marijka Bau-Madsen, Communications Director:

Marijke.Bau-Madsen@newchurch.org

ACADEMY BOARD OF TRUSTEES

(Highlights of October 8, 2022, meeting)

Chancellor

Rt. Rev. Peter M. Buss Jr.

With the Vice Chair and associated committees the Chancellor has been engaged in:

- The search for a new Bryn Athyn College President, to succeed **Brian Blair** in the 2023-24 school year
- The early stages of the College strategic planning process, working collaboratively with **Scott Brickman**, chair of the Bryn Athyn College Board Committee
- Response to non-compliance warnings from the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE)
- Working with the Association for Governing Boards to get the best governance structure for the Academy
- The Managing Director search process, with the upcoming retirement of **Jim Adams**, in conjunction with **Kyle Genzlinger**, chair of the Academy Secondary Schools Board Committee

Vice Chair

Charles Lindsay

A consultant from the Association of Governing Boards has been retained to study and make suggestions on ways to improve governance of the College and to bring it into compliance with MSCHE standards. The consultant was scheduled to visit the campus twice to interview Board and Corporation members.

Treasurer

Duane Hyatt

The stock market is down significantly, negatively impacting the Academy’s investment portfolio, but performance is in line with benchmarks.

Bryn Athyn College

Brian Blair, President

Enrollment targets were met for fall 2022 but enrollment of New Church students continues to decline.

Groundwork for the new strategic plan is underway, with key decisions left for the next President.

New “analytic tools” provide enhanced insight into the type of student who comes to the College: where they come from, why they leave, and what they do after leaving. These statistics show that students who regularly attend chapel have higher grade point averages. Branding the College as Christian faith based has been instrumental in attracting mission-fit students.

Academy Secondary Schools

James Adams, Managing Director

The Secondary Schools have a new admissions platform. A parent ambassador program has been activated. New tuition rates for FY 24 were approved with a 3% increase.

Academic performance testing has been changed to the STAR program and social-emotional learning assessments will be conducted with current students. Mental health challenges persist. A consultant has been retained to assist with curriculum, scheduling management and coordination.

ASIAN NEW CHURCH REPORT 2022

The Rev. John Jin, Regional Pastor for Asia

“The church is the Lord’s heaven on earth.” (Heaven and Hell 57)

Our mission in Asia has the goal of “becoming a human being by understanding and living the Lord’s teachings in the Heavenly Doctrine and being part of the Lord’s heavenly community to share it with our neighbors.” I would like to express my deepest gratitude to all of you who have given endless trust and support for helping the project run without any difficulties and with volunteer donations, prayers and encouragement that were sent even though there was no public fund raising due to the pandemic.

What’s New?

1. Asia New Church Revival Project

During the pandemic, Asia New Church Revival Project had no choice but to communicate with Asian pastors and church members only through non-contact methods, such as Zoom. However, things have improved, and I visited Asian countries from mid-October to mid-November, met face-to-face with them, and interacted with them through seminars and meetings. I asked: “How can I conduct the Revival Project more effectively?” We were able to think and discuss together, and as a result, the Asian Church, which had been depressed, regained confidence that “we can revive once again” and found concrete plans for how each of us would proceed.

The Asia New Church Revival Project’s focus is to “build a heavenly community in the member’s mind and church community.” We achieve this through the following means:

1. **Worship:** “Useful use” is melded into worship, helping church members to truly communicate with the Lord and gain freedom (peace) in the truth through worship.

2. **Affection of truth, good and use:** Through the study of the Word and love for neighbors in the church and spiritual fellowship, members recover the affection of truth, good and use.

3. **A caring church:** Let the internal church members form the center of the church, and with that influence, obey the Word, love the neighbor, and become a church of fellowship.

4. **A Church that becomes a disciple of the Lord:** “Go and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit; teaching them to observe all things whatever I have commanded you.” (*Matthew 28:19, 20*)

5. **A Church that prepares for the changing world in advance and leads it in the Lord’s way:** Today’s world is:

- (1) A world that has lost God and ignores spiritual things and worships only matter or the flesh.
- (2) A generation in which the standards of goodness and truth have disappeared and consequently gender identity, justice and morality have collapsed (neo-Communism, post-modernism).
- (3) An increasingly virtual world moving from the face-to-face society of the past to a non-face-to-face society and from the age of gaining knowledge through lectures and reading to the age of gaining knowledge through the Internet, such as YouTube and podcasts.

From now on, our church must face up to this reality, analyze it, and present concrete countermeasures.

6. The Asian New Church should develop from the existing Western-style church into a new model that takes into account the state of mind and religious background of Asians, for example, becoming a church that takes the early ancient church as a role model and puts charity first on the basis of the Heavenly Doctrine.

7. Based on this foundation, we should invite more people to the New Church, but especially focus on young people and Gentile missions.

The Korea New Church

Seoul New Church (the Rev. Soon C. Lee) is working as a model church for the Asia New Church Revival Project, devoted to the study of the living Word and Heavenly Doctrines for affection for truth, good and use.

The Rev. Dong Y. Yang is working on a new mission strategy using modern technology (cartoons, audiovisual materials, social networks, media, etc.)

The Rev Hyun J. Yang is working on evangelism to the newcomer, especially the young and the Gentiles through modern technology.

The Rev Seung G. Kim is working on church planting.

The Rev Gyu D. Yang is working on documenting the mission, and on the website.

The Theological School: The Rev Sachio Nakato graduated Korea Theological School and was ordained into the first degree in Kyoto, Japan, in November. **The Rev. Dong Y. Yang** was ordained into the second degree. Two are still training to become ministers and one for lay leadership.

Translation: The goal is to translate the entire body of the Heavenly Doctrine by 2035 through team translation and individual translation. This year the Korean New Church translated *Apocalypse Explained* volume 2, *Arcana Coelestia volume 1 and 2*, and *The Human Mind*.

Develop outreach material: We are also working on video, audio, live stream and blogs.

The Japan New Church

Tokyo New Church (the Rev. Shiro Matsumoto) is working as a model church for the Asia New Church Revival Project, developing a heavenly community to be a visiting church rather than a sitting-and-waiting church. For example, Sunday services are not only relayed across the country, but also discussions

are held and sermons are made into cartoons and sent to church members. The **Rev. Sachio Nakato** is working with young people, especially college students and gentile missions.

Build cell communities that have the characteristics of the New Church:

A group is centered on lay people with no external pressure. The Revs. Sakae Seich and John Jin participate in an online community. They meet once a month through GoToMeeting to study the Word and are contemplating how to apply it in real life. So far, things have been going well in a very free atmosphere. The participants formed a consensus that there would be great hope for the world in the future if a church like this was built, and they began to discuss how to develop it.

Translation: The Writings are constantly translated and published, and more readers are participating in this project. In particular, starting this year, we are working hard to digitize translated books so that more readers can read them freely.

The China New Church

Unfortunately, Chinese authorities are using telecommunications networks and other methods to block the church's mission. Therefore, I cannot report details.

Physical Church: Due to the Chinese authorities' zero-Corona policy and blockade, and their extreme religious suppression, church activities are currently extremely depressed.

The Theological School: Currently, five people are studying in the ministry course and one in the lay leadership course. Unfortunately, Chinese authorities are using telecommunications networks and other methods to block the church's mission. Particularly in April, public security monitored the activities of our New Church Theological Seminary very closely. We believe that protecting students comes first, so we decided to temporarily suspend the activities. Translation: Sister Liu and Tao finished a whole volume of Arcana Coelestia and other books.

Develop outreach material: We are working on video, audio, live stream, blogs, cartoons, etc.

Online Meetings: There is a Wednesday class, a Sunday class, and activities of

Overseas Chinese Residents (more than 300 people participate).

A heavenly community with young people and Gentiles (remnants): With young computer experts, they are working to develop our community for young people and gentiles.

A Closing Request

Although the Asia Mission faces many challenges, we are growing step by step with hope under the Divine mercy of the Lord. I'd like to make one request here: Our New Church members in China are especially in a very difficult situation as you know from the world news. Please pray for them.

GENERAL CHURCH EDUCATION

Rachel Glenn

General Church Education is developing a Treasury of New Church Children's Books, which we plan to publish in the coming year. This book will be a compilation of 15 of the smaller children's books printed in the 1990s and early 2000s. These have mostly been out of print for some time. By putting them into a larger hard-cover volume they will be preserved for today's children and future generations.

We are making minor improvements to the text and to the pictures and creating a harmonious layout for the many different sizes and types of original books. This volume focuses on books for very young children. Our plan is to produce subsequent volumes for older ages, as there are still many out-of-print story books to use.

The General Church has been asked to create some materials in large print to better serve members with some vision impairment. General Church Education is contributing to this endeavor with three sermon booklets. These sermons were published many years ago (in regular print size) as a pamphlet series called the *Senior New Churchman*. The titles are: *As We Grow Older*, *The Uses of Old Age* and *The Age of Wisdom*.

General Church Education sent out our annual Christmas gifts to families with young children in early December. This year, we reached out to pastors and society secretaries to find families that may be missing from the General Church database, as well as trying an initiative in conjunction with the Outreach Department to offer this program to families who have expressed interest in the church.

We send out two sets of gifts: about 280 to families with children ages 0-5 and more than 400 for families with children ages 6-10. This year's gifts

included different kinds of stickers to make scenes from the Christmas story, family talks, coloring pages, and ideas and links to further activities. We will also send out gifts at Easter and New Church Day as we have done for the past seven years.

General Church Education is excited to be planning a New Church Education Conference June 15-16, 2023, in Bryn Athyn for General Church Pre-K-8 teachers. Due to the covid pandemic and other factors it has been a long time since such a gathering has taken place. We are expecting some 80 teachers and administrators to attend. Watch for further announcements.

EXTENDED SERVICE

The New Church at Boynton Beach, Florida, is happy to announce that the **Rev. Lou Synnestvedt** has agreed to extend his pastorship for one more year through June 2024.

BOOKS, BOOKS AND MORE BOOKS

The Rev. Michael Gladish

Having been invited last year to join the General Church Publication Committee, one of the things I quickly discovered was an enormous cache of books already published by the Church over a period of many decades. These books – literally thousands of them – are new, never-used copies of such classics as *The Life of the Lord*, by **Bishop George de Charms**, *The Moral Life*, by the **Rev. Dr. Hugo Odhner**, *The Glorification*, by **Bishop N. D. Pendleton**, and hundreds more. Also included are fairly recent publications, such as *Freely Give and One Heart*, by the **Rev. Erik Buss**, many biographies of Swedenborg, and even some titles in the Spanish, Russian, Dutch and Latvian languages.

We have books published by the Swedenborg Scientific Association about Swedenborg's own scientific discoveries, and by Bryn Athyn College, such as **E. Bruce Glenn's** classic, *The Arts, An Affectional Ordering of Experience*, and the **Rev. Prescott Rogers'** commentary on *Divine Love and Wisdom*. Plus, we have a huge stock of books of the Writings themselves, from the *Spiritual Diary (aka Spiritual Experiences)* to all the new translations done by the **Rev. Bruce Rogers**.

Why should you know about this? Simply put, they are not doing anybody any good gathering dust in an attic or basement storage space. These are beautiful books, but sadly, there is only one bookstore in the world (apart from Amazon) currently selling from this inventory, and that is at the Cathedral in Bryn Athyn.

That store is obliged to sell at retail prices so that the society can pay its part-time staff. As a volunteer, however, I can offer most of these books at a nice discount, and either ship them at cost by “book rate” within the United States or send them with church members traveling to places outside the States. All monies raised in this way will be used to replenish the Publication Committee fund for future projects.

If this message intrigues you, call or write to me for more information and a complete inventory of what’s available. I would be delighted to correspond with you and try to meet your needs for excellent New Church doctrinal and collateral books. In fact, if you’d like to set up a little book center of your own to help distribute these books, I would especially like to hear from you.

One more thing: in the course of my investigations, I have also discovered hundreds of other used books of the Writings and collateral literature, which have been donated from various estates for re-distribution, for as little as \$1.00 each. These are all stored in the basement of the Swedenborg Library, in Bryn Athyn, and I can also procure these books and ship them at cost if you are interested. Just let me know what you need!



Contact Mike Gladish (301-461-3521)

or email mdgladish@gmail.com

Mike was ordained in 1973 (along with Tom Kline and Mark Carlson) and has served in pastoral roles in Australia, California, Toronto and western Canada, and most recently in Mitchellville, Maryland. He retired in 2019 and moved to Cairnwood Village in Bryn Athyn in September, 2021. He continues to serve as regional pastor for the southeastern United States

EPISCOPAL VISITS



Nigeria



West African Leadership



Havana Group



Jessica Baptism



Cuban Translator



Baptized

EPISCOPAL VISITS



Rev. Sachio
Nakato's ordination



Second degree ordination service for
Dong Yong Yang in Korea



Rev. Sachio Nakato , who
was ordained into the first
degree, with his wife



David and Aven Lindrooth visiting the
palace with Korean ministers



Rev. Yang and Korean ministers with their wives



Rev. Nakato and Japanese ministers
with members

Life Lines

Bruce M. Henderson and the Rev. Jeremy F. Simons

‘THE CHURCH OF THE GRAVEN IMAGE’

A recent Houses of Worship column in *The Wall Street Journal* – *The Church of the Sexual Revolution* – noted that churches of all denominations are struggling more with social and sexual issues these days than questions of doctrine. “What was once at the margins” – sexuality, gender and social issues – “is now at the center.”

A Methodist church in Florida, for example, recently featured a drag queen as a “special guest” at a children’s service who denounced capitalism and praised liberation theology. The pastor described this performer as “an angel in heels appearing to shepherds in the fields on the night shift, telling them that Good News had arrived on their doorstep.”

Last year a priest at the University of Notre Dame wore a Gay Pride stole while attending a “Coming Out Day Celebration.” Traditional Catholics are challenging a global “listening effort” promoted by Pope Francis as a veiled attempt to change long-standing church teachings. People are leaving “woke” churches for those holding to traditional beliefs and values.

One example: in early December 145 churches of the Northwest Texas Conference voted to leave the United Methodist Church over issues of same sex marriage and homosexuality. Many more congregations are expected to break away as tensions grow between liberal and conservative convictions. The General Church, with its challenges over sexuality and gender issues in the past year, is not immune to these pressures.

The *Journal* column noted: “Unlike earlier debates over, say, the incarnation or resurrection, new disagreements have wider social implications for Christians – and everyone else. Institutions that maintain traditionalist positions draw not simple ridicule from the wider world but widespread calls for punitive action against them.”

Among many reader responses was this: “To paraphrase C. S. Lewis: whatever it is, it is not Christian. If mankind is made in the image of God, then the most decisive way to violate the Second Commandment is to redefine mankind, the new self becoming the ultimate graven image. If you are anything you decide you are, then you are not what God decides you are. It is a long way from ‘know thyself’ to ‘invent thyself.’ I pray anarchy will not come in the wake of the deconstruction of everything, while bearing no ill will toward those deconstructing, whether they be on the right or left.”

(BMH)

SOWING THE SEEDS

While some people are opposing traditional Christian teachings, others are countering to uphold and promote what the Lord teaches.

One such effort is a \$100 million “He Gets Us” campaign – including videos and billboards – aimed at “redeeming Jesus’ brand from the damage done by His followers.”

One of the organizers says: “Our goal is to give voice to the pent-up energy of like-minded Jesus followers, those who are in the pews and those who aren’t, who are ready to reclaim the name of Jesus from those who abuse it to judge, harm and divide people.”

New Church men and women would agree with their goal of inspiring people to come to see Jesus (the Lord) as forever relevant in their lives – and that they will be known to Him “by the way they love each other.”

But it is not the “image” of Jesus that needs to be rehabilitated – like a soft drink brand. That image has not changed in 2,000 years – only the perception of those diverted by worldly issues. But it is encouraging to see people anywhere – of whatever faith -- seeking to reawaken a commitment to follow God, not mammon.

With efforts like this “He Gets Us” campaign – along with our own General Church Outreach and the *offTheLeftEye* videos of the Swedenborg Foundation that are connecting with people all over the world – we are all laborers in the Lord’s vineyard, sowing the seeds for His presence to grow and flower in a needy world.

(BMH)

GOD’S HEROES

For all the sincere people scattering seeds of faith and hoping for the best, there are the brave few who take great personal risk to spread the Word. One was Andrew van der Bijl, a Dutch missionary known as Brother Andrew, who smuggled Bibles behind the Iron Curtain when the Soviet Union was hostile to all religion. These were extremely dangerous missions, but he felt it was worth

risking his life to give hope to the hopeless.

He passed away recently after a long life of unheralded service. The obituary he deserved began this way: “It would start with a contact from a trusted source. A discreet introduction. Then a seemingly random encounter, perhaps in the street. Only once safely indoors, and out of sight, would Brother Andrew hand over the box he’d brought with him. His contacts choked back tears when they saw what was inside. ‘You know, years ago I knew that people in the West were praying for us,’ a Romanian Christian once told him, ‘but now for many years we have not heard from them. We’ve never been able to write letters, and it’s 13 years since we received one. It has come to us that we are forgotten, that nobody is thinking of us, nobody knows our need, nobody prays.’ As soon as (Brother Andrew) got home, he promised, he would tell so many people about the little Christian community in Romania (or Bulgaria, or Poland, or Russia – wherever he happened to be) that never again would they feel alone.”

There have been many such brave missionaries willing to risk their own lives to bring the Lord into the lives of people starved for Him. Brother Andrew was one who took it upon himself to be a messenger of hope.

Another was Dietrich Bonhoeffer, mentioned in the following Life Line by the Rev. Jeremy Simons. Bonhoeffer was a German Lutheran pastor, theologian and outspoken anti-Nazi dissident in World War II. He was arrested, sent to a concentration camp and executed just as the Nazi regime was collapsing. He still is venerated as a brave crusader for Christianity, who gave his life for his convictions.

Brother Andrew’s obituary continued: “He never ceased to be amazed by those he met. The people in Macedonia who were too scared to come to church unless it was dark, but come they did. The people in Bulgaria who would arrive at intervals so that at no time did it appear as if a group was gathering. It took an hour for 12 of them to assemble. A man named Petroff who spent all of his pension buying up cheap Bibles whenever he found them. Pages were often missing but he made them whole – all to give the finished work to a church that had no Bible.”

“The courage and common humanity of those he met would have touched anyone, not just the faithful. He knew he could stop at any moment and return to a quiet life in Holland. But he kept on carrying Bibles across borders – to Cuba, to Uganda, and then across the Middle East. Soon the task was too big for one man, and he founded Open Doors, a charity, to train a new generation of smugglers.”

Many of these countries have since opened their borders to missionaries and Christianity, but all of this occurred in most of our lifetimes, and the hunger is still out there for brave “smugglers.” Many of us remember the late Duncan Smith, who brought many copies of the Word and the Writings to

spiritually starved people in Russia and elsewhere.

One place where faith is still repressed is China. This vast land is an enormous threat to the world, not just for its military and economic aspirations, but because it is a godless nation, hostile to all religion, and thus without spiritual conscience. There – as in the formerly closed Romania, Bulgaria and Cuba – are underground churches where brave but terrified people dare to gather and worship. And there are courageous “Brother Andrews” willing to risk their lives to bring light into their lives.

One of them is a brave New Church minister in China whom we identify only as Timothy, for to publish his name would be to expose him to risk – along with his defiant congregations.

He and Brother Andrew and their fellow missionaries believe that a church must be a living thing – all the more so because it dares to shine a light of truth and hope for those desperate to feel life in their faith.

(BMH)

BONHOEFFER’S THEORY OF INTELLIGENCE

The famous theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer was a Lutheran pastor in Germany whose opposition to national policies in the 1930s and ’40s led to harassment, incarceration, and finally to his death in April of 1945. His writings and example have been an inspiration to oppressed people worldwide. He was also familiar with the works of Swedenborg and wrote similar things about intelligence.

The Heavenly Doctrine holds a beautiful and simple concept of intelligence:

Being able to provide arguments to support whatever you want is not intelligence; intelligence is being able to see that what is true is true and what is false is false and to provide arguments to support that. (True Christianity 334)

Also:

Being intelligent and wise does not consist in understanding a great number of worldly matters and being wise about them, but in understanding those that belong to heaven and willing them. (Arcana Coelestia 9803)

These concepts have things in common with Bonhoeffer’s views, and he writes compellingly about them in the context of authoritarianism. During his incarceration he wrote letters to family and friends, which were collected and published in 1951 under the title “*Letters and Papers from Prison.*” The quotes

below are thoughts from this work on the subject of intelligence and its opposite, under the following five topics:

1. A lack of intelligence is a more dangerous enemy of goodness than malice.

Bonhoeffer recognized the danger inherent in our obtuse nature:

While one may protest against evil; it can be exposed and prevented by the use of force, against stupidity we are defenseless. Neither protests nor the use of force accomplish anything here. Reasons fall on deaf ears. Facts that contradict a stupid person's prejudgment simply need not be believed and when they are irrefutable, they are just pushed aside as inconsequential, as incidental. In all this, the person is self-satisfied and, being easily irritated, becomes dangerous by going on the attack. For that reason, greater caution is called for when dealing with a stupid person than with a malicious one. If we want to know how to get the better of stupidity, we must seek to understand its nature. (Bonhoeffer)

While malice is certainly dangerous, the point here is that it can be exposed, and once exposed and identified it can be removed, as noted in *Divine Providence* 278: "Evils cannot be removed unless they appear." But the inability to recognize evil stymies this process. In that case a person is unmoved by reason, as in these passages:

Because they only take into consideration the factors that support their objections, they regard causes of the greatest usefulness, which ought to outweigh them, as nothing. (Spiritual Experiences 1240)

Their thoughts do not extend to any concern for matters that have greater purpose or that are vitally important. They were incapable of paying any attention to reasons offered to them because they persisted in holding on tenaciously to their own opinion. (Arcana Coelestia 5386)

As Bonhoeffer puts it, a person like this is "self-satisfied and, being easily irritated, becomes dangerous by going on the attack."

2. Stupidity is not an intellectual defect but a moral one.

This much is certain, stupidity is in essence not an intellectual defect but a moral one. There are human beings who are remarkably agile intellectually yet stupid, and others who are intellectually dull yet anything but stupid.

The impression one gains is not so much that stupidity is a congenital defect but that, under certain circumstances, people are made stupid or rather, they allow this to happen to them. (Bonhoeffer)

All of us are more or less intellectually talented, but intelligence is not the same thing as cleverness. The Heavenly Doctrine teaches this repeatedly:

The learned are sometimes far more stupid than those who have not possessed any skill in the use of factual knowledge. (Arcana Coelestia 4156)

Swedenborg writes:

I knew a person of average learning in the world, and after his death I saw and spoke with him in heaven. I clearly perceived then that he spoke as an angel, and that the things he said would be unintelligible to a natural person. The reason was that in the world he had applied the precepts of the Word to life and had worshiped the Lord, and so had been raised by the Lord into the third degree of love and wisdom. (Divine Love and Wisdom 239)

In other words, people are not born intelligent or stupid, but move toward one or the other by their life in the world. Circumstances and heredity play a role, but it is fundamentally a choice, or a matter of how we live.

3. The lack of intelligence is a social phenomenon.

People who live in solitude manifest this defect less frequently than individuals in groups. And so it would seem that stupidity is perhaps less a psychological than a sociological problem.

It becomes apparent that every strong upsurge of power, be it of a political or religious nature, infects a large part of humankind with stupidity. Almost as if this is a sociological-psychological law where the power of the one needs the stupidity of the other.

The process at work here is not that particular human capacities, such as intellect, suddenly fail. Instead, it seems that under the overwhelming impact of rising power, humans are deprived of their inner independence and, more or less consciously, give up an autonomous position. (Bonhoeffer)

The point here is that even though intelligence is a moral phenomenon, and therefore a matter of choice, we are strongly influenced by the society we live in. The “upsurge of power” he describes refers to the pressure exerted by popular thought and political power. Everyone is influenced by those around

them:

Interaction with evil people has this contagious effect, as you can clearly see from the following similar situations: As you spend time with thieves or pirates you eventually become like them. As you live among adulterous men and promiscuous women, eventually you think nothing of adultery. If you join a rebel group, eventually you think nothing of doing violence to anyone. (True Christianity 120)

But while everyone is influenced by others, this is especially true when we do not depend on the Lord and the Word but on those around us:

I have often been shown, too, that no one in hell thinks on his own but does so from others around him; that neither do those others think on their own, but do so from still others; and that thoughts and affections proceed in order from society to society, without anyone's knowing other than that they spring from himself. (Divine Providence 289)

This is less true of people who are led by the Lord and by the teachings of the Word, because they are less vulnerable to the political and social threats that accompany what Bonhoeffer calls an “upsurge of power.” Reliance on the Word gives a person independence and freedom of thought.

4. Freedom and independence are key aspects of intelligence.

The fact that the stupid person is often stubborn must not blind us from the fact that he is not independent. In conversation with him, one virtually feels that one is dealing not at all with him as a person, but with slogans, catchwords, and the like that have taken possession of him.

He is under a spell, blinded, misused, and is abused in his very being. Having thus become a mindless tool, the stupid person will also be capable of any evil – incapable of seeing that it is evil. (Bonhoeffer)

The “slogans” and “catchwords” he refers to are important signals of the lack of independence. These words change frequently and imply status, power, and insight for those who use them. They often blind us as to the true nature of what is being described. This can also be done through the use of academic terms that “describe a single lucid matter that is intelligible to almost everyone, even until no one understands it. (Or) when a judgment is reached by a series of conclusions from definitions of terms, and resulting conclusions –

which series when linked together display such things as can be understood by no one. (Spiritual Experiences (minor) 4578)

The point is that we are often intimidated and overwhelmed with these concepts, and yet stubbornly hold on to simplistic versions of them as long as they are understood to be powerful and widely held.

5. Intelligence comes with liberation.

Only an act of liberation, not instruction, can overcome stupidity. Here we must come to terms with the fact that in most cases a genuine internal liberation becomes possible only when external liberation has preceded it. Until then, we must abandon all attempts to convince the stupid person. (Bonhoeffer)

Bonhoeffer spoke about this in the context of political oppression, and therefore the liberation he refers to is political. The Heavenly Doctrine very much echoes his view on the value of political freedom. It speaks about the spiritual light that exists with nations who are free:

They owe this light to their freedom of speech and freedom of the press, and their consequent freedom of thought. (Among other peoples who do not have the same freedoms, that light is stifled because it does not have an outlet.) (True Christianity 807)

Preserving this freedom is immensely valuable to any nation. By itself, however, it does not prevent the kind of stupidity that Bonhoeffer and the Writings warn us about. He speaks of liberation. The Writings speak of the internal liberation that is called regeneration:

In the next life those who during their lifetime have been receiving the Lord's love toward the whole human race, and so those who have been receiving charity toward the neighbor, are granted intelligence and wisdom, and indescribable happiness. (Arcana Coelestia 4220)

(JFS)

YOU CAN TAKE IT WITH YOU

My all-time favorite bumper sticker is one I saw on an old wreck of a car years ago: "Don't let the car fool you. My treasure's in heaven."

One of the cliches in our consumer society is that "you can't take it with you." We spend our lives acquiring things: useful things, necessary things, frivolous things, things we collect and treasure, things we pass on as family heirlooms, things that will be treasured by our heirs, and things that will be thrown out or passed on through thrift shops. We enter the other world after

death with none of these material things – and want for nothing.

What we do take with us is our character, formed by what we choose to love. Turns out the Beatles had it right: “All you really need is love.” What we love defines who we are and determines our place in the spiritual world.

We are told not to lay up our treasures on earth, “Where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal,” but in heaven, where nothing corrupts and no one steals.

When a rich man in the Word asked what he must do to enter heaven, he was told: “If you want to be perfect, go, sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasures in heaven. And the young man went away sad, because he had great wealth.” (**Matthew 19:21,22**)

It is hard to let go of the things we have spent our lives acquiring – to figuratively sell all that we have – but that is what we do when we leave this world. The Lord is just asking us to prepare ourselves and keep our priorities straight.

We can take it all with us, where all that we love creates our home and destiny in the spiritual world – “our treasure in heaven.”

The bumper sticker had it just right.

(BMH)

INNOCENCE AWAKE

Amid the cultural freefall from all those “laying up their treasures on earth,” we lament especially the loss of innocence. We grieve for our children, assaulted by the sordid images that inundate their lives – even in textbooks and primary grades now. It is increasingly challenging to preserve the innocence of childhood, which is why more and more parents are fighting back.

But what of our own innocence? Is it completely overwhelmed in this “modern” world? Have we forgotten – even surrendered?

It is not a new question. When the disciples asked Jesus who is the greatest in heaven, He called a little child unto Him and said: “Verily I say unto you, unless you be converted and become as little children, you shall not enter the kingdom of heaven.” (*Matthew 18:3*)

He also told Nicodemus: “Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of heaven.” And when Nicodemus asked how a man could be born a second time, he was told: “Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.” (*John 3:3,5*)

So that’s the challenge – to tune out the siren songs of the world for the hymns of heaven. The hope the Lord gives us is that innocence is not dead but merely sleeping. It is always there to be awakened. He has blessed all of us with remains from childhood that stir and renew feelings of innocence – in glimpses of beauty all around us, in poignant truths we hear, in stories from the Word and tableaux scenes that connect with our souls.

This is how we are born again. This is how we become innocent enough – again – to be led by the Lord, out of a troubled world and into heaven.

(BMH)

LEST WE FORGET

Anyone who attended the Academy Secondary Schools and/or Bryn Athyn College remembers favorite teachers whose influence remains with them.

Teachers and coaches often are unaware of the impact of lessons they teach – sometimes beyond the classroom. Some years ago I reminded one of my old teachers about a powerful lesson he taught a group of boys about moral behavior following a brief hallway incident. He had no memory of it. I never forgot.

Most of those teachers have moved on to the spiritual world and live on in our memory: Bishop Pendleton, Bruce Glenn, Dick Gladish, Morna Hyatt, Stan Ebert, Bob Gladish, Ken Rose, Lyris Hyatt, Sig Synnestvedt . . . the list goes on. A few are still with us, may be rarely seen anymore, but deserve to be honored and remembered for the indelible marks they left on us.

One is Ron Nelson, whom we recognized last year after a special 90th birthday celebration with former students and athletes. Another is Don Fitzpatrick.

Don spent his whole career with the Academy – a beloved teacher in both the Secondary Schools and College, and a key administrator. He was known for his wisdom, his calm steadiness, his sense of humor, his complete dedication to New Church education. He is one of the giants we continue to build upon.

Don has been a widower for more than 20 years and is not often seen in public anymore. He still likes to be useful, as he is able, and is one of the valued proofreaders for *New Church Life* – a perfect outlet for his mastery of the English language.

Keep him in your memory, with gratitude. Remember his smile, his quiet chuckle, his wise words. Hear the echo from the past: “Truly he’s a son of the Academy.”

(BMH)

Announcements

ORDINATIONS

The priesthood, in the highest sense, is every function which the Lord performs as Savior, and whatever He performs as Savior is from His Divine Love. Because of this, the priesthood was representative of the Lord as to all the work of salvation from Divine Love. Therefore, all worship was of the office of the priest. (Arcana Coelestia 9809:2)

Nakato, Sachio - First Degree

– At Kyoto, Japan, November 6, 2022, Rt. Rev. David H. Lindrooth officiating.

Yang, Dong Ryong - Second Degree

– At Seoul, South Korea, October 30, 2022, Rt. Rev. David H. Lindrooth officiating.

BAPTISMS

The innocence of the Lord flows into angels of the third heaven, where all are in innocence of wisdom; passes on through the lower heavens, but only through the innocent affections of angels there; and so descends directly and indirectly into little children. (Conjugal Love 396)

Clauser, Jack Victor

– At Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania, November 27, 2022, Rev. Derek P. Elphick officiating.

Clauser, Reagan Eleanor

– At Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania, November 27, 2022 (born April 30, 2022), daughter of Jack and Emma Pitcairn Clauser, Rev. Derek P. Elphick officiating.

Lykins, Kennedy Anne

– At Rochester, Michigan, November 26, 2022 (born May 18, 2022), daughter of Robert and Catherine Steen Lykins, Rev. Steven P. Gunther officiating.

Pushkar, Andrei

– At Kitchener, Ontario, Canada, November 20, 2022, Rev. Mark B. Allais officiating.

Pushkar, Andrei, Jr.

– At Kitchener, Ontario, Canada, November 20, 2022 (born January 8, 2012), son of Andrei Pushkar and Angela Rimmer, Rev. Mark B. Allais officiating.

Pushkar, Audrey Marie

– At Kitchener, Ontario, Canada, November 20, 2022 (born July 18, 2010), daughter of Andrei Pushkar and Angela Rimmer, Rev. Mark B. Allais officiating.

Pushkar, Ayla Marie

– At Kitchener, Ontario, Canada, November 20, 2022 (born December 3, 2015), daughter of Andrei Pushkar and Angela Rimmer, Rev. Mark B. Allais officiating.

Pushkar, Alexander

– At Kitchener, Ontario, Canada, November 20, 2022 (born March 18, 2017), son of Andrei Pushkar and Angela Rimmer, Rev. Mark B. Allais officiating.

Sahoe, Monah Charlie

– At Phoenix, Arizona, November 27, 2022, Rev. Jean A. Atta officiating.

Smith, Felicity May

– At Kempton, Pennsylvania, December 4, 2022 (born August 29, 2022), daughter of Kenan and Kathleen Smith Smith, Rev. Brett D. Buick officiating.

Steen, River Thomas

– At Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania, November 19, 2022 (born November 11, 2022), son of David and Rachel Buss Steen, Rev. Erik J. Buss officiating.

Wilén, Edith Martha Salme

– At Stockholm, Sweden, April 23, 2022 (born December 11, 2021), daughter of Eric Sjödin and Sandra Wilén, Rev. Thomas X. Floyd officiating.

BETROTHAL

It is proper on earth for a priest to perform betrothals and to hear, receive, confirm and consecrate the consent. The consent is the essential element in marriage, and the rest of the things that follow are its formalities.

(Conjugal Love 21:4)

Lee-Kim, Jong Ui Lee

and Eun-kyoung Kim – At Toronto, Ontario, Canada, October 20, 2022, Rev. James P. Cooper officiating.

IN MEMORIAM

A person lives as a person after death. The Lord, who is Jehovah from eternity and the Creator of the universe, has provided that the condition of a person who conjoins himself with Him by living according to His commandments will be more blessed and happy after death than his (or her) condition before in the world. (Conjugal Love 28)

de Chazal, Dean Gaston

– October 4, 2022, of Dargle, Kwa-Zulu-Natal, South Africa. 61.

Hendricks, Anne Noelle Odhner

Alden – October 25, 2022, of Buckingham, Pennsylvania. 94.

Houghton, Kathleen Ann

Anderson – July 30, 2022, of Port Orchard, Washington. 72.

Lanyon, Virginia Dena Margaret

– November 6, 2022, of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. 80.

Mayer, Patrick Andrew Percy

– November 18, 2022, of Huntingdon Valley, Pennsylvania. 75.

Miller, Lyla Gutierrez

– October 19, 2022, of Jenkintown, Pennsylvania. 102.

Odhner, Greta Alden

– November 10, 2022, of Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania. 94.

Riffie, Gloria Ann Sudnick

– April 7, 2022, of Parma, Ohio. 80.

Robertson, Susan Ryan

– December 1, 2022, of Kempton, Pennsylvania. 94.

Simons, Julia Edgerton

– November 7, 2022, of Kempton, Pennsylvania. 67.



New Church

Consider it a gift before the end of the fiscal year, June 30. Please give locally to a congregation and to the General Church Annual Fund.

Your gift to the General Church Annual Fund. supports New Church Life, ministers and teachers, Outreach, online classes and church services among many other uses.

Make a gift at www.newchurch.org/donate
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General Church Advancement

PO Box 708

Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania 19009

USA

(memo line “annual fund” or name of the congregation)

Thank you!

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