

# NEW CHURCH *Life*

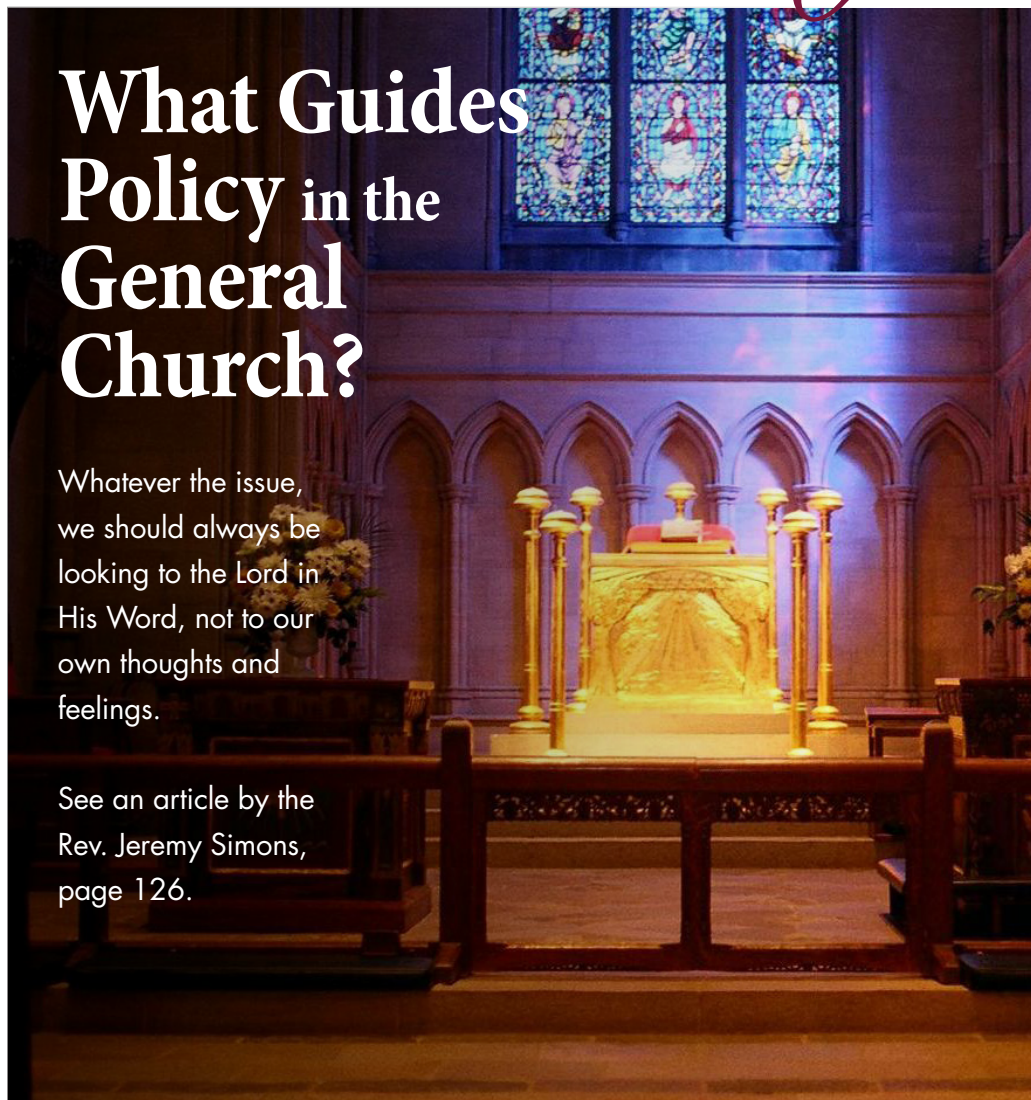
A bimonthly magazine devoted to the teachings revealed through Emanuel Swedenborg, as they apply to life.

**MARCH/APRIL 2014**

## What Guides Policy in the General Church?

Whatever the issue, we should always be looking to the Lord in His Word, not to our own thoughts and feelings.

See an article by the Rev. Jeremy Simons, page 126.



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

NEW CHURCH LIFE (USPS 378-180)

PUBLISHED BIMONTHLY BY

THE GENERAL CHURCH OF THE NEW JERUSALEM

Bruce Henderson, Editor

Rev. Walter Orthwein, Spiritual Editor

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

Postmaster: Send address changes to: New Church Life, PO Box 708, Bryn Athyn, PA 19009

e-mail: [datacenter@anc-gc.org](mailto:datacenter@anc-gc.org)

# New Church Life

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

- 101 In this Issue
- 104 Editorials: *Death With Dignity: Reflections on Good Friday • Stirring Things Up at Easter • New Church Virtues: Prudence and Trust in Providence*
- 111 Letters to the Editors
- 121 The Priesthood and Gender: The Clergy Process for Reappraisal –  
*The Rt. Rev. Brian W. Keith*
- 123 Easter Message: ‘That Which Reigns Universally’ –  
*The Rt. Rev. Peter M. Buss Jr.*
- 126 Not Going Beyond What God has Spoken: What Guides Policy in the General Church? – *The Rev. Jeremy F. Simons*
- 131 ‘For He is Risen’ – *A Sermon by the Rev. Bradley D. Heinrichs*
- 137 Boynton Beach Retreat – *Bruce Henderson*
- 149 Boynton Beach Retreat Banquet Address: Bryn Athyn College –  
*Dr. Kristin King, President*
- 161 Introducing Our Ministers: Focusing on the ‘Big Picture’ in Religion –  
*The Rev. Barry C. Halterman*
- 165 Palm Sunday: A Different Kind of Kingdom, a Different Kind of King –  
*A Sermon by the Rev. Barry C. Halterman*
- 173 A Search for the Truth – *Doug Webber*
- 177 Another Way to Look at Women in the Priesthood –  
*The Rev. Robert S. Jungé*
- 181 My Ministry of Care – *Tryn Rose Seley*
- 186 General Church Education: 80,000 and Counting... – *Rachel Glenn*
- 189 Church News
- 206 Life Lines
- 210 Announcements

# NEW CHURCH AUDIO

## RECENT LISTINGS

### *Moses to Joshua: Transition to Fighting Truth*

Sermon – The Rt. Rev. Alfred Acton II

### *The Causes of Stress and Some Solutions*

Sermon – The Rev. David C. Roth

### *The Spiritual Significance of Palm Sunday*

Sermon – The Rev. Daniel W. Heinrichs

### *He Set His Face to Go to Jerusalem*

Sermon – The Rev. Jeremy F. Simons

Easter sermons and classes available online:

**[www.newchurchaudio.org](http://www.newchurchaudio.org)**

More recordings will be added to our website thanks to private donations. To support this effort please contact us.

Connect on Twitter and Facebook

**[www.facebook.com/NewChurchAudio](https://www.facebook.com/NewChurchAudio)**

New Church Audio

P.O. Box 752, Road, Bryn Athyn, PA 19009

267-502-4981

**E-mail: [newchurchaudio@newchurch.org](mailto:newchurchaudio@newchurch.org)**

## IN THIS ISSUE

The Rt. Rev Brian W. Keith, Executive Bishop of the General Church, presents a process for the Council of the Clergy meetings this June in Bryn Athyn: *The Priesthood and Gender: The Clergy Process for Reappraisal*. This includes: study of the Word prior to the meetings; sharing with clergy of themes from various presentations and social media discussions; presentations at the meetings on both sides of the women-in-the-priesthood issue; processing clergy responses to develop a consensus; and reporting the findings to the Church at large, with the goal of bringing some resolution to the question, rather than leaving it open-ended. (Page 121)

This issue also includes a number of letters in response to the paper published in the September-October 2013 issue by the Rev. N. Bruce Rogers, *Gender and the Priesthood of the New Church in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*; responses to criticisms of that paper; a response from Mr. Rogers himself; and an article by the Rev. Robert S. Jungé with a new way to look at the issue. We believe we have given a fair balance of the many views on both sides of this active debate, and while we still have several lengthy articles from both perspectives, we will hold off on any further presentations until the process for the Council of the Clergy plays out in June. (Page 111)

The Rt. Rev. Peter M. Buss Jr. offers an Easter message, *That Which Reigns Universally*. The words, “I am the LORD your God,” which introduce the Ten Commandments, reign in every truth that follows, and must reign as the central organizing force in our lives. This is the same God who rose on Easter Sunday as our Regenerator and Savior – to the extent that we allow Him to “reign universally” within us. (Page 123)

What should guide the policy of the General Church in all issues – including the current debate over women in the priesthood? The Rev. Jeremy F. Simons uses the story of Balaam to say that we must always look to the Word and what God teaches – not to our own thinking. “The question is not what the people or the leadership think is right,” he writes, “but what the Word teaches when fully understood – whether we like it or not. This is the question we look for consensus about.” (Page 126)

The Rev. Bradley D. Heinrichs, pastor of the Carmel New Church in Kitchener, Ontario, Canada, offers an Easter sermon, *For He is Risen*. “Let us teach all nations,” he writes, “our friends, our neighbors, the wonderful truths we have been given in the Writings, which will help them to gain a clearer idea of God, to be nearer to Him, and more perfectly to worship Him in His

Divine Human. Let us dispel the darkness and confusion about three gods and loudly proclaim the good news that ‘the Lord God Jesus Christ reigns, whose kingdom shall be for ages and ages.’” (Page 131)

This year’s Boynton Beach Retreat in Florida – formerly known as Eldergarten – featured three excellent presentations: Dr. Wendy Closterman on *Ancient Greek and Roman Religion*; Dr. James de Maine on *End-of-Life Issues and Medical Ethics*; and the Rev. Dr. Jonathan S. Rose on *Swedenborg, Scripture, and What the New Church is Going to be Like*. Much of their material is available at [www.newchurchboyntonbeach.org](http://www.newchurchboyntonbeach.org). You can read a summary of all three presentations, beginning on page 137.

Dr. Kristin King, President of Bryn Athyn College of the New Church, gave the banquet address at the Retreat, focusing on three aspects of the College: developments at the College; the context of higher education in America; and the mission and future of the College. It is a clear-eyed assessment of the many challenges the College is facing, but optimistic about a bright future. (Page 149)

*Introducing our Ministers* focuses on the Rev. Barry C. Halterman, chaplain and religion teacher in the Academy Secondary Schools, who was studying for a career in finance at Temple University when he took a course of Comparative Religions that changed his life. Now he loves teaching New Church theology and comparative religions – finding where the distinctions are and the common ground. (Page 161) We are happy to include a timely sermon by Barry: *Palm Sunday: A Different Kind of Kingdom, A Different Kind of King*. (Page 165)

Doug Webber, a software architect and consultant in New Jersey, tells the fascinating story of how he came to discover Swedenborg and the Writings – stimulated by haunting questions and curiosity, and having to overcome his own doubts. He convinced himself that this was Divine truth, and counsels: “Do not take the truths that you know for granted. Try to live them, for they become life changing. They have great value, and many are still seeking for the answers.” (Page 173)

The Rev. Robert S. Jungé offers *Another Way to Look at Women in the Priesthood* by focusing on a sequence of 22 quotes from *Conjugal Love* on the distinctiveness of the male and the female. “It is my hope,” he writes, “that careful reflection on the order of (these) teachings will be helpful in letting the Lord form how we think regarding the fundamental difference between men and women, as I believe this is the key to making a wise decision regarding women in the priesthood.” (Page 177)

Tryn Rose Seley writes from Scottsdale, Arizona, about *My Ministry of Care* – the work she does as an Alzheimer’s caregiver, with inspirations from the Word and the Writings that guide and inspire her passion. (Page 181)

Rachel Glenn of General Church Education – formerly the Office of Education – tells about the exciting work going on in serving General Church Schools, families and interested people throughout the world: *81,000 and Counting...* This refers to the department's online video channel and its success in reaching out with 35 in-house videos, viewed more than 80,000 times so far in 122 countries. And this is just the beginning of exciting new possibilities. (Page 186)

Church News includes a report on the February meeting of the General Church Board of Directors, with positive financial progress; exciting development with the New Church in Cuba; plans for serving Dawson Creek and Grande Prairie in Western Canada, after their pastor moves on to serve in South Africa; and news about summer camps at the Academy and in Canada. (Page 189)

# Editorials

## DEATH WITH DIGNITY? REFLECTIONS ON GOOD FRIDAY

In the New Church we are not fixated on the Lord's crucifixion because we do not believe that His death on the cross constituted the whole of redemption. We believe it was the last of the temptations by means of which He subjugated the hells and glorified His Human nature. And it was those accomplishments, not His death itself, that redeemed us.

But His death, and the manner of it, was an integral part of the process, and there is much to be learned from it. The fact that He was "a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief," the fact that He suffered and died, as we do, enables us to see Him as a God of compassion who can empathize with our suffering and with whom we can identify.

After His resurrection, just before ascending into heaven, He said: "I am with you always." And we can believe it because we know that whatever states of despair befall us, He has already gone through them. No human pain is unexplored territory, but one whose terrors have been confronted and conquered, and are now perpetually held in check by His presence. "If I make my bed in hell, behold, Thou art there."

Ours is a God who knows what it is to suffer and go through the valley of the shadow of death. And He was more *alone* in that valley than anyone else ever is. We always have Him with us, while He "trode the winepress alone." The Divine was always present with Him, but in the depths of His Human despair He felt forsaken by God, as He cried out on the cross.

There was more to His suffering than His own pain and death. It was not God's failure to save Him that tormented Him as He died on the cross, but His own (apparent) failure, as God incarnate, to save others, the sheep of His own flock. The appalling, humiliating, excruciating way in which He died physically was on top of the spiritual anguish He felt.

"Death with dignity" was not His lot, but it could have been. The Lord *chose* to submit to a death that was anything but dignified. As He told one of His companions in Gethsemane who drew his sword to resist on the night He was arrested: "Put your sword in its place .... Do you think that I cannot now



pray to My Father, and He will provide Me with more than twelve legions of angels? But then how could the Scriptures be fulfilled, that it must happen thus?" (*Matthew 26:52-54*)

No, there was no "death with dignity" for Him, because He knew it was necessary for events to unfold as they did. The Scriptures must be fulfilled, the Word must be obeyed. "It was for this cause that I came into the world." He came – not just to die, though that was the ultimate act required to complete His mission – but to submit absolutely and completely to the Divine order which He had come into the world to embody and represent for all people.

The Word had been treated spiritually just as the prophets who proclaimed it had been treated physically, and as He, the Word made flesh, the prophet of all prophets, was now to be treated.

Like a lamb led to slaughter, He submitted. He refused to put His Human will above the Divine will. The Lord inwardly *was* God, and could thus "play God" without *playing*, but He refused to do this, for the sake of what His suffering and death, and then resurrection, represented.

The Lord's crucifixion itself was extremely contrary to the larger order of human life – surely it was not God's will – and yet it had to be permitted for the sake of preserving that very order, and thus the human race.

The Lord had demonstrated His power over death at the tomb of Lazarus. His refusal to use that power prematurely (before His glorification was complete) to escape crucifixion was an act of supernatural heroism. That submission of the Human to the Divine, that trust in Divine providence that He held onto even through His final agony, gave His death infinitely more dignity than if He had refused to drink from the bitter cup that had been placed before Him.

But what of us? The fate of mankind does not rest with us. Or does it? In a certain sense it does. Our choices certainly affect the quality of our own individual humanity; and since we are all bound together in society, what each of us does influences how truly human the whole society is.

One of the main lessons we can take away from contemplating the way the Lord died is the importance of acquiescing to the Divine order of human life; of "playing the hand you've been dealt," rather than to play God and take our life into our own hands.

The Lord did not want to go through the horrible ordeal that awaited Him. In Gethsemane, He prayed: "O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me. Nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will." (*Matthew 26:39*) All of us, on our deathbeds, can find strength in that prayer.

Dignity comes from within, not from comfortable surroundings and a composed demeanor. It comes not so much from being in control of ourselves and the conditions around us, as from *being* controlled by the love of what is

good and true, putting our lives in the Lord's hands, and trusting in His power to bring us safely through the valley we walk through with Him.

Whatever human dignity we have comes from the Lord, and no matter how undignified, embarrassing and humiliating our lot may ever be physically, His presence will comfort and sustain us from within – giving us the strength to follow the example He gave us with His dying breath: “Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit.” (*Luke 23:46*)

*Footnote:* These are brave words, written in a moment of calm, not in a state of fear and pain. But it is good, while in a calm and rational state, to contemplate choices we might face in a desperate situation when it is hard to think clearly. I am not suggesting that we should not avail ourselves of powerful pain medications, but that a previously adopted philosophy of leaving our ultimate fate in God's hands can strengthen us in the midst of despair and anguish. "Hard cases make bad law." What we want to avoid, as a society, is a philosophy that says we can and should control every aspect of life and death, leaving nothing to providence.

(WEO)

### **STIRRING THINGS UP AT EASTER**

Easter, like every other story in the Word, is ultimately about our own lives and our relationship with the Lord. The week leading up to the crucifixion began with confrontation and ended with hope. We aren't meant to be onlookers, watching from the safe distance of 2,000 years. We are part of the drama.

The confrontation began after Jesus entered Jerusalem and purged the temple. The Romans and high priests felt their power threatened. When they saw “the wonderful things that He did, and the children crying out in the temple and saying, ‘Hosanna to the Son of David!’ they were indignant,” (*Matthew 21:15*) and openly challenged Him.

They took Him to Pilate, accusing Him of “perverting the nation, and forbidding to pay taxes to Caesar, saying that He Himself is Christ, a King.” But when Pilate found no fault in Him, “they were the more fierce, saying, ‘He stirs up the people, teaching through all Judea, beginning from Galilee to this place.’” (*Luke 23: 1-4*)

Yes, Jesus was stirring up the people, rousing them – and us – from spiritual lethargy. It is something God still does to help us regenerate and be led to heaven. That requires “stirring things up” within us as we face our challenges. We know He is always with us, working through the conscience built on the remains He has implanted in us, and inspiring us to repent and do what we know is right.

This sets up a clash of good and bad feelings, leaving us with a choice:

Which do we embrace? This is what was “stirred up” in the people of Jerusalem: some still wanted to follow Jesus; others were out to destroy Him. It is all relevant because we face the same stirring and the same choice. It is not as stark and dramatic as what led to the crucifixion, but we are choosing all the time whether we will follow the Lord or put ourselves first and turn away from Him.

It was while eating the Passover with His disciples the night before the crucifixion that Jesus was betrayed by Judas. It is fair to ask: How could anyone who had followed Jesus as one of His disciples turn on Him so suddenly and so completely? And why did God allow it? It is because He loves us enough, of course, to give us free will – even the freedom to go against His will. Judas felt free to decide for himself what to do, and thus became the ultimate symbol of what not to do.

It is significant that Jesus did not stop Judas from what he was about to do, but did make him think about it – so much so that after Jesus was crucified Judas flung away the silver he was paid and hung himself in shame. We are also asked to think about what we are doing – to examine ourselves at this compelling time of year and do what we can to make better choices to become better people.

It is also a time to recognize how the Lord works with us. He doesn't stop us from acting against His will, but He does ask us to stop and reflect on the love and wisdom involved in choosing to follow Him. As repulsive as the betrayal is to us, we may all have a bit of Judas in us whenever we turn away from the Lord, often without even thinking about it. But He never turns His back on us. He is always reaching out to the “better angels” within us and raising us up.

Indeed, He offered that hope during the Passover, just after Judas had sealed His fate; but He still included Judas in His invitation: “Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, ‘Drink from it, all of you. For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remissions of sins. But I say to you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I will drink with you in My Father’s kingdom.’” (*Matthew 26: 27-29*)

He also said to His disciples that night – and says to us each day: “A new commandment I give unto you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love one for another.” (*John 13: 34*)

Even though Jesus knew that His life on earth was coming to an end, He was talking – is talking – about new life. This is the life that comes with springtime – the life that comes to all of us when we put aside our own lives and are willing to be “born again.”

After His resurrection, He spoke again to His disciples and “breathed on

them and said to them, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit.’” (*John* 20: 22)

Swedenborg explains: “Newness of life occurs when what is spiritual flows in from the internal and acts from within on what is in the natural.” (*Secrets of Heaven* 5972) And: “Breathing on (or into) was a sign that represented the imparting of life through faith and love, as also in *Genesis* 2:7, ‘Jehovah breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul.’”

God created the world, He created us, and He is perpetually creating – breathing life into us and into His Church. We are always growing, with new life from all that we learn, and the Church that God is building within each of us has new life breathed into it as well. By “stirring things up,” He continually “makes all things new.” That is why we associate Easter with newness – a new season, new opportunities, and new appreciation for the way the Lord is constantly with us in our lives.

He is risen that we may be also.

(BMH)

## **NEW CHURCH VIRTUES:**

### **PRUDENCE AND TRUST IN PROVIDENCE**

Prudence was one of the classical virtues of old, and a virtue it remains – but it should be joined with another virtue: trust in Divine providence. Otherwise, even if it brings success on the natural plane of life, it can easily be turned to the service of evil.

In other words, we can be too smart for our own good. “For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?” (*Matthew* 16:26)

Our needs as human beings are complex, both natural and spiritual, and we must exercise prudence in the management of our lives. We need to acquire knowledge, think carefully and plan for the future – but always recognizing that the future we should plan for extends beyond our lives in this world. That which seems expedient here and now may prove not to be for the best in the long run.

The ideal, then, is to be prudent both spiritually as well as naturally. Truly human intelligence includes the acknowledgment of God and Divine order. Prudence is a virtue when we use it to *cooperate* with providence rather than as an *alternative* to being led by the Lord.

Our intelligence itself is a gift of the Divine, and would not exist for a moment if the life from God that sustains it were withdrawn. It is inspired and guided by the love and wisdom flowing into our minds from the Lord. Prudence itself, therefore – when properly used – is a work of Divine providence. “That which is called providence in God is called prudence in man.” (*Divine Providence* 201.3)

In our modern age, though, there is a tendency to place supreme value upon human reason and beneficence, and to dismiss the idea of revelation and providence as fantasy. Science and technology, with all their wonders and powers, seem to have at last fulfilled the ancient promise of the serpent: “You shall be as gods.” (*Genesis* 3:5)

Those who have made themselves blind by refusing to believe anything they do not perceive with the physical senses .... were in former times called “serpents belonging to the tree of knowledge.” For they reasoned much from things as perceived by the senses and from the resulting illusions which man accepts and believes all too easily – and by such reasoning they led very many astray. (*Arcana Coelestia* 2588.9)

It is true, many have been led astray. The “brave new world” has arrived. Ancient taboos have fallen. The boundaries separating the sacred from the profane have been erased. Nothing is off limits. Abortion. Suicide. No-fault divorce. Same-sex marriage. The invention of new “genders.” Human prudence in the 21<sup>st</sup> century knows no bounds – except those mandated by human prudence itself.

Prudence is useful when governed by first principles drawn from the Word of God, but dangerous and destructive when not. Not everything we want or find convenient and can do is something we *should* do. Recognizing this is especially important now, in this age of unprecedented scientific knowledge, technological ability and individual autonomy.

An important use of prudence, therefore, is to recognize its own limits. If we do not, we will succumb to the temptation to use it in the service of the love of self, “the deadliest enemy of God and of Divine providence.” (*Divine Providence* 210)

When human intelligence alone is relied upon to bring success and happiness, or used to deny the existence of God and providence, that very intelligence actually becomes the means of stripping us of the most vital protections and benefits of human life, the ones bestowed by the Lord by means of His Word and providential leading.

We can see how self-defeating human intelligence can become when misused in this way by considering the modern view of the mind: its very existence (as anything other than a function of the physical brain) is now denied – by the mind itself!

Ironically, this development (the belief that the mind is nothing) seems to agree with the truth of this statement: “Man’s own prudence is nothing, it only appears to be something, as it should.” (*Divine Providence* 191) But the key word is “own” – the prudence that makes one with providence is, by virtue of that oneness, *something*. It is the Lord’s with us, although it appears, as if it were our own.

The great truth about human prudence is this: Real and lasting peace

and happiness cannot be obtained by our own prudence; they come from the spiritual well-being only the Lord can provide. Genuine human intelligence and His wisdom, our prudence and His providence, are forever yoked together. “Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.” (*Matthew 11:29*)

But who can know these things? Jesus said: “I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and prudent and have revealed them to babes.” (*Matthew 24:25*)

(WEO)

# Letters to the Editors

## *Response from the Rev. N. Bruce Rogers*

To The Editors:

So as not to weary the reader with unnecessary repetition, let me reply with this one response to the letters submitted by Zarah Blair and Trish Lindsay and to the article by Al Lindsay (January-February 2014 *New Church Life*). All three write from Sarver, Pennsylvania, on the same theme in answer to my previous article, *Gender and the Priesthood of the New Church*, in which I concluded that priests ought to be male.

Before commenting on the substance of their submissions, I must say that I was nonplussed to have my piece labeled tedious and tortuous. Tedious, perhaps, to minds not liking my line of thought, but hardly too convoluted or too complex for ready comprehension. In other words, not tortuous. I think most fair-minded readers would agree that the line of thought was both straightforward and easy to understand, whether appreciated or not.

I was also surprised to have it suggested that I began with my conclusion and then searched the doctrines for support. In actuality I began my study of the doctrine regarding the priesthood back in the late 1960s. It was the subject of my senior thesis for graduation from the Theological School, a thesis that has been consulted by a number of my colleagues since. This predated any issue of gender in priesthood, and I entertained no thought of it at the time.

Then, in the late 1980s and early '90s, I translated the book *Conjugal Love* from the Latin, published also as *Married Love*. In consequence I can say that I have read the book word for word, line for line, number for number. Again, I entertained no thought at the time of gender in the priesthood. However, I did become intimately familiar with the whole tenor of the doctrine regarding the sexes.

It was from this background and vantage that I saw the question of gender in the priesthood. Not as a cultural matter, but as a doctrinal one – one that I was given to see, not from some previously held position,

but as one arising from my close experience with the pertinent doctrines. Mr. Lindsay is a long-time lawyer. I am sure he will agree that questions of legality ought to be settled on the basis of the law. I am hoping he will concede that, by the same token, questions of church policy and practice ought to be settled on the basis of the doctrine.

Regarding the substance of the Sarver writers' submissions in support of the ordination of women, I find in them no argument from doctrine. Rather they once again reflect a cultural view, combined with a unique plea for the ordination of women so as to increase the number of priests and make possible for them the benefit of priestly services, something they say they lack at the present time.

I regret that the Sarver group's local society in Freeport has no pastor, and I grant that their contentions may have a certain appeal; but cultural views and a shortage of priests are not suitable arguments to be imposed on the policy and practice of the Church, founded as it is on what it views as revealed doctrine. As I said in my article, the Church exists to transform the world, not to be transformed by the world.

The Sarver writers completely ignore the teaching that the Church is formed in the wife through the husband. Yet that teaching lies at the heart of the matter. They also suffer a classic logical error in arguing that since priests are to be ministers also, therefore people called to ministry ought to be priests. That is like saying that since all mothers are women, all women must therefore be mothers.

The truth is that all people of all ages and both genders are called to minister to their fellow human beings, individually and in organized groups. These are important and indispensable ministries. But this calling is not the same as a calling to the priesthood.

The Rev. N. Bruce Rogers  
Huntingdon Valley, Pennsylvania

### *In the Context of Swedenborg's Times*

To The Editors:

Regarding the letters from Zarah Blair and Trish Lindsay and the article by Al Lindsay (all from Sarver, Pennsylvania), published in the January-February issue of *New Church Life*, in response to the paper, *Gender and the Priesthood*, by the Rev. N. Bruce Rogers in the September-October, 2013, issue:

All three writers seemed surprised and upset that Bruce wrote his paper based on comprehensive study of several major and pertinent doctrinal



areas, but did not cite any number in the Writings that specifically stated, “only men can be priests,” or “all priests must be men.”

I believe that we need to look at the absence of such a statement from the perspective of the historical period in which Swedenborg lived. For instance, Swedenborg was born in 1688, but the Industrial Revolution did not begin until the late 18th century. As a result, although we wish we could find clear statements in the Writings about child labor laws, we can’t because abuse of children in factories was not yet an issue. The same could be said for legalized abortion and same-sex marriage. They, too, were not yet issues that would have needed to be addressed.

The case is similar with the issue regarding the priesthood. Except for one small sect of one religion (the Anabaptists), women did not preach or publish during Swedenborg’s lifetime. There were nuns, of course, among the Catholics. And there were a few prophetesses who spoke to small groups of religious women. But throughout Europe, *no* women were *priests*. There was, therefore, no need to specify an all-male priesthood. The ordination of women was not an issue, nor would it have been anticipated.

Swedenborg wrote down the truths that would be important in defining the purposes and activities of a priest and in recognizing a call to the priesthood. These truths, together with the truth that the Church is received by a wife through her husband, are the truths Bruce wrote about in his paper. To Swedenborg, a male priesthood simply would have been a “given.”

Kirsten R. Rogers  
Huntingdon Valley, Pennsylvania

### *Looking to What The Word Teaches*

To The Editors:

I thought the article by the Rev. N. Bruce Rogers on women in the ministry was very fair and articulate. He tried to look at all sides of the issue fairly, and present them in the light of what the three-fold Word has to say on the subject.

I know there are many strong feelings on both sides of this issue. I have been slowly reading my way through the Heavenly Doctrines and have to say that I agree with all that Mr. Rogers had to say. From what I have read, the Writings of the New Church seem to teach that women should not be ministers. What I mean is that women should not be the leaders in deriving doctrine from the Word.

I have heard that many people were angry with the article or did not like

it. This saddens me quite a bit – not that people have a different view, but that it seems there is a fight brewing. There seems to be no tolerance for varying points of view.

I tried to have a conversation with some people about this topic. This seems to be impossible. I got a very strong push back. I could not finish my thought before being interrupted. A flood of feelings came at me. In short, no conversation took place. They communicated their feelings to me and I communicated nothing to them.

Men and women are made differently in every way. The Writings are clear on this. One is not more human than the other. They are both needed. The bodily differences between men and women correspond to the difference in their souls. Men are in the form of the understanding, since this predominates with them. Women are in the form of love and affections, for these predominate with them. Men think from the understanding and women think from their affections. Both of these ways of thinking are important to the human experience.

Deriving doctrine from the Word is primarily a function of the understanding, not the will. I am not saying that women are incapable of deriving doctrine. But because they think from affection they are not as able to do it with the same clarity as men. Men are more interested in ideas drawn from the Word, while women are better at taking those ideas and putting them into action or use. Men have their heads in the clouds and women are more down to earth.

As Mr. Rogers said, it is fine to have women ministering to people, but drawing doctrine from the Word is a masculine use. Men and women need to work together. This does not mean doing the same job, but that the talents of each should be used in harmony, like a choir. Women should not be singing bass and men should not be singing soprano. But we can sing together.

I have worked in many jobs. Sometimes I have tried to do the work that others do. When I do that I am often frustrated. Why does it take the expert less time and effort? I found the answer is that the expert has the right tools for the job. If men are given certain talents or tools, and women other talents or tools by the Lord, shouldn't we follow His will? Is this not what innocence is?

If my comments have hurt or offended anyone I offer my humblest apology. I am just trying as best as I can to understand the issue. It's possible I am wrong, but from all that I have read I don't think so. I do believe that this argument must start and end with the three-fold Word. And in my quest to find the real truth this is how I see it.

The question of women in the ministry is extremely important and is one that will define the General Church. Doctrine derived from the Word is the one and only gateway into heaven. If it is derived primarily from our affections

then it will be flawed and the General Church will fail, just as other churches that adopted false ideas have failed.

Brian Gunther  
Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania

### *Distinct and Complementary Roles*

To The Editors:

I appreciated Bruce Rogers' insightful paper on women and the clergy. The topic was an issue in Swedenborg's day, and has recurred numerous times in the history of the organized New Church, as it has in the rest of Christianity. I enjoyed Mr. Rogers' description of the way that the issue has taken on its current form in our culture today.

His central point is that men and women are different, that these differences lead them to take on different but complementary roles, and that this is especially important with regard to the clergy and church. I especially loved his emphasis that men and women need to work together, not doing the same thing but taking on complementary roles, and that this is what makes for real harmony. The distinction that he points out between priesthood and ministry is, I think, the long-term solution to this debate.

There are other points that Mr. Rogers did not dwell on that can be usefully added to this discussion.

One is that *Arcana Coelestia* 8994 quotes, without attribution, Paul's words prohibiting a female clergy in Timothy 2: 11,12, and *I Corinthians* 14: 4,35, when it says: "This is why those of old said that women must keep silent in the Church." That reason has to do with what "is in keeping with Divine order," and what spiritually perceptive people like [as noted in the *Arcana* number]: "Those who are spiritually perceptive have a liking for women with an affection for truths, but not for women who concentrate on gaining knowledge."

The context makes it clear that it is talking about religious, not secular knowledge, and the reference to Paul's words shows that it is talking about the role of the clergy. Interestingly, this may explain why women head pastors are scarce, even though popular opinion supports the ordination of women. Currently this is seen as an issue of justice and equal rights, but in the long run the question may be settled by the simple fact of what "spiritually perceptive people" like.

Another point is that *Conjugal Love* 125, on which Mr. Rogers bases much of his argument, is scathingly critical of situations where a husband does not show leadership in the things of wisdom. "If the reverse takes place it is not according to order." The implication is not just that it is better for men to

do this, but that it is problematic when they do not and when the role is taken on by women.

Lastly, Mr. Rogers' paper did not include references to any of the unpublished works, because there are often questions about their authority, specifically around this issue. Most of the clergy, however, do accept their authority and have used them freely in sermons and classes from the beginning of the Church. Passages from these works make the same points that Mr. Rogers does, but with added emphasis. Three examples:

*Spiritual Experiences* 436 is critical of those who "go forth into the field of understanding and recognize [truth], but being drawn by their desire, fall back into opposing it." This can apply to both men and women, but the passage states that "this is especially applicable to women, in whom desires normally take precedence, when they join in like men in matters regarding the doctrines of faith." This tendency is disastrous to the clergy, whose legitimacy depends on their willingness to base their thinking on the Word, not their own ideas.

*Spiritual Experiences* 4940 tells a story in which he observes a woman leading a prayer after a worship service in the spiritual world. He then goes out of his way to lecture the group about the role of women in the church, to which she takes such offense that she attempts to murder him. It is a striking example of how strongly Swedenborg feels about this issue.

*Spiritual Experiences* 5936, which Swedenborg titled, "*Women who preach*," is the one that has long been quoted to resolve this question in the Church. Although its strong language is often mocked, the gravity of its assertion that women who preach become intellectually "crazy" and "sensual in the last degree" – meaning they eventually believe nothing except the evidence of their senses – shouldn't be ignored. Some dismiss this passage as being about women who preach like men rather than like women, but this seems like an obvious attempt to evade its clear meaning.

The argument is the same whether we accept these teachings from the unpublished works or not. The important thing, as Mr. Rogers says, is that we look to the Word to resolve this question. The Word carefully lays out what the clergy is and what it is supposed to do.

The role of exploring and teaching doctrine can be dangerous territory. Many passages explain that celestial people did not and do not speak about doctrine, but that it is necessary for the people of the spiritual church. (See *Heaven and Hell* 214; *Heavenly Doctrine* 121, 140). Again, as Mr. Rogers stated, we need to be careful to follow the teachings of the Word and not be guided by popular opinion.

Rev. Jeremy F. Simons  
Chaplain, Bryn Athyn Cathedral

## *The Context of Swedenborg's Words*

To The Editors:

It is occasionally stated that *Spiritual Diary 5936*, which explicitly speaks against preaching by women, and warns against the often unseen but serious injury to the feminine mind that may result from this, is not authoritative because it was not published by Swedenborg. But we should remember that this particular passage was written after the Last Judgment had occurred, after the whole of the *Arcana Coelestia* had been written and published, and after the publication of *The New Jerusalem And Its Heavenly Doctrine*, *Heaven and Hell*, *The Last Judgment*, *Earths In the Universe*, and *The White Horse*.

*Spiritual Diary 5936* is not from early in the book, but was written well into Swedenborg's revelatory period. It came after the doctrine relating to the feminine and masculine had been rather fully developed, and presented in published and unpublished works alike – apparently including the long and beautiful explanation of marriage in *Apocalypse Explained*.

Rev. Willard L. D. Heinrichs  
Longmont, Colorado

## *The Duties of Citizenship*

To The Editors:

In the January-February issue of *New Church Life*, Heulwen Ridgway cries out, "What can the New Church do to uphold true marriage?" The answer in a democracy is to vote against politicians who promote same-sex marriage and who even castigate those who stand strong for true marriage.

But it is not only same-sex marriage. Our whole culture is saying, "Evil is good and good is evil."

The New Church will not grow and thrive unless we recognize evil. We should pay close attention to what candidates say and stand for, how they vote and what they do. We also need to know which candidates are true to God, the Ten Commandments, Christian morals and law.

The New Church has a duty to stand for what is right and good – even in politics. Good government is essential to the happiness and welfare of the people.

Some people think politics is dirty and that we should not talk about it in public. But politics is how we choose our leaders. We learn the truth by talking together and listening to others. We need to talk about politics and listen to both sides.

Charis P. Cole  
Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania

## *A Crown and a Garland*

To The Editors:

Re: the Rev. Dr. Thane P. Glenn's article, *The Crown of All Churches – What Does That Mean?* (*New Church Life* November/December 2012):

According to *Potts Concordance*, “garland,” when mentioned in the New Word, is a translation of the Latin word “*sertum*.” There are very few references to garland in the *Concordance: Arcana Coelestia* 1629, 2296, *Conjugal Love* 137, 293, 461 and *True Christian Religion* 570, 62. They all come from the Latin “*sertum*.”

On the other hand, all the “crown” references come from the Latin “*corona*” or “*coronare*.” There can be no doubt that they refer to a true crown, not a garland.

This is fairly specific and it is extremely doubtful that Swedenborg would have used “*corona*” to mean “garland,” given that when he meant a “garland” he used the word “*sertum*.”

It seems clear from even basic research that when the Word talks about a crown it is not talking about a garland.

The many references in the Bible and the New Word make it clear that a crown is what kings wore, made from gold. It is clearly not a garland. Further, we need to look at what a crown means spiritually.

*Arcana Coelestia* 3350 says, “by representation (in the spiritual world) they formed a golden crown gemmed with diamonds around the Lord’s head.”

*Arcana Coelestia* 9930 is worth studying in its entirety. It gives the meaning of, “*And thou shalt make a plate of pure gold*.” It is specific that a crown is meant, not a garland. A “plate of pure gold” represents enlightenment from the Lord’s Divine Good, and enlightenment in the heavens is wisdom and intelligence from the Divine truth proceeding from the Lord.

This number explains that it is also known as the “plate of the crown of Holiness,” for a crown represents Divine good. It was also known as the crown of holiness. A crown representing the Divine good from which is Divine Truth is evident from the crown of kings, for kings represent the Lord in respect to Divine Truth.

*Arcana Coelestia* 9930.10 refers to *Revelation* 4: 4,10: the golden crowns on their heads represented wisdom from the Divine, therefore they cast them before Him that was sitting on the throne. Section 11 says that as the good of wisdom is acquired by means of temptation combats, crowns were assigned to those who fought against evils and falsities and overcame. For this reason the crowns of martyrdom were badges of command from the Lord over evils and thus denote the goods of wisdom.

There is a spiritual meaning to a true crown which has nothing to do with

a garland.

*Arcana Coelestia* 9931 says “and grave upon it with the engraving of a signet.” Can’t do that on a garland!

In *Apocalypse Revealed* 300, “A crown was given him ... In ancient times kings wore crowns in battle.” This is in the context of overcoming temptations and going forth to conquer. Is this not what the crown of churches is all about?

*Conjugal Love* 786: The New Church is the crown of all churches.

It is clear from all the references that none but a king’s golden crown is meant, not a garland. But what is also most important is the spiritual meaning of a crown.

It is clear that we would be falsifying the New Word if we changed the translation from “crown” to “garland.” From the meaning of “crown” the New Church has to be the crown of churches, not the garland of churches.

It is all too easy for us in our unregenerate states to try to make the New Word fit our natural inclinations and perceptions rather than try to make them coincide with the Word.

There is the thought in the idea of substituting “garland” for “crown” that we should be inclusive and practice charity, embracing all.

Charity is not a matter of living in a nice warm environment with all other religions. Charity is our own spiritual state, and the spin-off from that is that we live amicably with everyone. But we must love only the spiritual good in others; that does not mean accepting their religious beliefs. It is a wonderful idea that we can live on earth as if we are one universal church, but that is not the reality of our unregenerate world. This is earth, not heaven.

Yes, if we all lived in true charity the doctrinal differences would only be of degree. Yes, there is the number that says if we all live in love to the Lord we will all be of His universal church, but these statements refer to heaven.

Those who have confirmed themselves in falsehoods will be in hell. Those who have believed falsely from ignorance are shown the ways of the new heaven, and if they accept them they live in heaven. But on earth this is not the case.

We have no idea who is going to be saved. All we know is that some people are believing in falsity through their religions. To be in a garland with them means that we are accepting their falsities, not standing firm on ours.

We should also remember that the New Word does not suggest inclusiveness on this earth for it shows the falsities of other religions. It shows that we should avoid them. In fact, it shows clearly that there should be exclusiveness. The reality is, that has to be so if we are to aspire to be truly New Church; to belong to the crown of churches. Nor should we confuse that crown of churches with organizations and doctrines formed by men. I think that proponents of “garland” are confusing the meaning of a spiritual church

with a man-made organization.

It is essential that we look on the beliefs of others with charity, but there is natural charity and spiritual charity, the latter being a state of our own regeneration. We should not become garlanded with religions which are in falsities.

The statement that the New Church is the crown of churches is a description of the conjunction of man with the Lord God Jesus Christ in His Glorified Divine Human. The genuine New Church is the individual who has regenerated into the new heaven. It is about seeing and loving the Lord in His glorified Divine Human. The New Church – the crown of churches – must not be translated into “garland of churches,” for such a description is about organizations and people on earth. Spiritually, it would be falsifying the meaning and representation of the Lord and the crown of churches.

Canberra, Australia



# The Priesthood and Gender: The Clergy Process for Reappraisal

*The Rt. Rev. Brian W. Keith*

Many of you know that there is a range of perspectives within the Church on our practice of only inaugurating men into the priesthood of the General Church. In recent months, debates on this practice have increased, as evidenced in the pages of *New Church Life*, on social media forums, and in discussions around the Church.

This and many other questions arising in the Church can be brought usefully before the Council of the Clergy for its review. The purpose of this announcement is to describe the process that I have asked the Clergy to go through relative to the question of the priesthood and gender.

The first thing to note is that our approach is to return to the teachings of the Word for guidance. As the Writings note: “The church is a church from the Lord through the Word.” (*Apocalypse Revealed* 44<sup>1</sup>) And, “the Lord speaks with the person of the church in no other way than through the Word.” (*Arcana Coelestia* 10290:2, 10355:5; *Apocalypse Revealed* 576) This application regarding a male priesthood has been based on our best understanding of the teachings of the Word. However, we should be willing to reexamine any understanding of doctrine or its application by a return to the Word.

Our process for examining this question revolves around the plenary Council of the Clergy Meetings in June.

## **Before the meetings:**

Clergy members have been encouraged to return to the Word, review all the collateral literature they can, and turn to the Lord in prayer.

A subcommittee of the clergy is in process of attempting to extract leading

---

<sup>1</sup> See also *Apocalypse Revealed* 740:2; *Arcana Coelestia* 9406:2, 10707e, 10251; *Sacred Scripture* 77; *Apocalypse Explained* 764; *True Christian Religion* 354

themes and issues from various presentations and social media discussions of the topic. This will then be shared with all clergy prior to the meetings in June.

**At the meetings:**

There will be presentations both favoring our current practice and arguing for a change. We envision up to two days of meeting time related to these presentations and discussion of them.

**After the meetings:**

When clergy members have had time to hear, reflect and pray, I will ask each one to submit a synopsis of his best understanding of the teachings of the Word on this topic, and the applications that flow from that understanding.

I will process these clergy responses with a small group of clergy advisors, aiming to determine authentically the consensus of the clergy on this subject.

I will then report these findings to the Church at large. The goal is to bring some resolution to the question, instead of leaving it open-ended.

It is useful to note that clergy already have started reexamining this issue. At a number of the regional clergy meetings held last year the topic was considered, with numerous presentations on the subject. It is also true that a number of clergy members have been engaged with the people they serve, listening and providing relevant teachings to feed the discussion.

I recognize that gender and the priesthood is a subject of passion for many people, and that those passions exist on different sides of the issue. I ask for your patience as we go through the process outlined above, and look forward to communicating its results in due course.

# ‘That Which Reigns Universally’

*An Easter Message by the Rt. Rev. Peter M. Buss Jr.*

There is a New Church teaching that draws our attention to the very first thing written down in the ancient Scriptures – what we now call the Old Testament. It calls us to consider, not the creation story, but the Ten Commandments, specifically the words, “I am the LORD your God.” It says: “This is the first truth to be stated by the Lord from Mount Sinai because it must be present, *reigning universally* in each and every truth that follows.” (Emphasis added, *Arcana Coelestia* 8864:3)

Why is it important to note that the first thing said in the Word relates to the Lord? It is because of the concept of what “reigns universally” in our lives. We read: “What reigns universally with people is that which is present in every idea of their thought and every desire of their will, consequently which constitutes their actual mind or life.” (*Ibid.* 8865)

What we’re talking about is the central organizing force of our lives – the goal to which our minds turn with enduring consistency. Lots of things can “reign universally” within us: we could be motivated to be successful in a worldly sense, or we could be driven by a deep quest for happiness. But this teaching speaks clearly of what should be our central focus: “That which reigns universally with a person should be the Lord.” (*Ibid.*)

Why is it important for the Lord to “reign universally” in our lives? The answer lies in what can happen for us when we see the Lord as the central organizing force of our lives. He can be the One who brings us true success. He can lead us to experience lasting happiness. We recognize that for religion to make sense, we have to know who the Lord is. For us to see value in the Word we have to know the Revelator – then it can be a divinely authoritative guide for us. If we are to accept the path of regeneration or spiritual rebirth, we need to cooperate with the Savior who makes it all happen.

Let’s turn, then, to three images of the Lord presenting Himself to us, each of which can be seen as a calling to let Him “reign universally” within us. The first one we’ve already mentioned – the Lord appearing on Mount Sinai.

But notice what He says when He first introduces Himself to us: “I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.” (*Exodus* 20: 2) He wants to release us from suffering.

We recognize, of course, that this presentation of the Lord is dramatic and powerful, inducing fear in many people as it did the ancient Israelites. Seen interiorly, however, we see the Lord demonstrating in dramatic fashion His existence and power.

A deep truth about this presentation of the Lord is that it forecast His coming into the world to complete the work of “redeeming the human race and delivering them from hell.” (*Arcana Coelestia* 8864) As He released the Israelites from bondage in Egypt, so He has the power to release us from the destructive forces of evil that would lead us to focus exclusively on ourselves. Our part is to obey His command: “You shall have no other gods before My face.” (*Exodus* 20: 3)

As happened with the people at that time, can we capture some of the awe that comes from recognizing our God as the omnipotent Creator of the universe, who has the power to remove any form of spiritual oppression from our lives? Can we seek for a mindset that holds firmly to the dictate, “All that the Lord has spoken, we will do.” (*Ibid.* 24: 3, 7)

Fast forward to the second image of the Lord, this time after His resurrection. “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations...” (*Matthew* 28: 18-19)

These words appear at the very end of the *Gospel of Matthew*, and stand, as it were, as the culmination of the story – the triumphant conclusion of the life and teaching of the Lord on earth. He rose as testimony to the victory He had won over all of hell, and as a declaration that order had been restored in His kingdom. But what a vastly different picture we get of our Lord in this story.

He is not on top of Mt. Sinai amidst lightning, thunder and a thick black cloud. He is not commanding fear in all that He says. Instead we receive a picture of our loving Lord Jesus Christ, who returned to the people who were closest to Him, to take away their fear, and inspire them for the work He had in store for them.

So many people, when they view the New Testament, embrace the loving, present, long-suffering images of the Lord. They are willing to heed His example of forgiveness and devotion to the welfare of others. They can hear His voice teaching them things they need to know to live a heaven-oriented life. They can turn to Him in prayer with their deepest hurts and hopes, believing that He knows all and wants to help.

The beauty of the New Church message is that it's the same God who appeared on Mount Sinai. By His life on earth, He re-introduced Himself to His people, showing another slice of His many divine qualities. Interiorly, then,

there's the same call to allow Him to "reign universally" within us, but now the reason for doing so is not based on fear, not only borne out of a sense of His awesome power. It also comes from an awareness that this is a God who knows our personal struggles, and is with us in the daily events that come before us.

Which brings us to the third image of the Lord. It comes in *True Christian Religion*, interestingly in the context of explaining the First Commandment given on Mount Sinai. It talks of a man, in this case a husband and father, "seeing a picture of one Divine Person whose head was surrounded with rays of heavenly light," with the inscription: "This is our God – our Creator, Redeemer, and Regenerator in one, and therefore our Savior." (No. 296)

It ends with a telling question: "Would not a wise man kiss such a picture and take it home next to his heart, so that his own mind, and those of his wife, children and household, might be uplifted by looking at it?" (*Ibid.*)

The vision of the Lord presented in the teachings of the New Church is truly inspiring. He is the Creator – the One who appeared on Mount Sinai to demonstrate His great power. He is the Redeemer – the One who rose on Easter Sunday as a culmination of His work on earth. He is the One who can be our Regenerator and Savior, to the extent that we allow Him to "reign universally" within us.

His goal is to lead us to reach the point where we are so taken with His goodness and majesty, so clear that He is the source of every genuine blessing that we experience, so focused on His path for us, that we hold Him close to our hearts, and share our sense of His goodness with those we love.

# Not Going Beyond what God Has Spoken:

## What Guides Policy in the General Church?

*Adapted from a Sermon by the Rev. Jeremy F. Simons*

*And Balaam said to Balak, "Look, I have come to you! Now, have I any power at all to say anything? The word that God puts in my mouth, that I must speak." (Numbers 22:38)*

**I**n the story of Balaam and Balak in *Numbers* 22-24, Balaam repeatedly tells the Moabite king that he can say nothing more or less than what the Lord tells him to say. Balak's desire to have Balaam curse the Israelites, and Balaam's desire to receive the rich rewards that Balak has promised him for doing so, are frustrated by this inconvenient situation.

The point is that a true prophet can speak only from the Lord, not from his own heart. So even a wicked prophet like Balaam could accurately deliver the Lord's message. The words were not from Balaam but from God.

### **Our own intelligence**

Balaam is an extreme example of a tendency that is common to all of us, and which has bedeviled the Church from the very beginning. We want to "bless" or "curse," to approve or disapprove, or to encourage or discourage, the ideas and practices going on around us, according to our own thoughts and feelings about them. Yet the Lord strictly warns us that when it comes to religious doctrine it is not what *we* think that matters, but what He teaches in His Word.

This concept was brought home to me when I was a college student writing papers for a topics course. Our teacher emphasized that he did not care what our opinions were on these topics. All he cared about was how well we could substantiate our statements by accurate and current quotes, and references from reliable sources.

Carrying this idea into the realm of religion, the teachers in the Theological School make it similarly clear that what a minister teaches must be accurately based on a well-informed understanding of the Word, not on his own opinions.

Despite this instruction it is hard to avoid being guided by our self-will rather than an objective view of the teachings.

Jeremiah the prophet railed against this tendency:

Both prophet and priest practice hypocrisy. They strengthen the hands of the evil. They speak a vision of their own heart, not from the mouth of Jehovah. (*Jeremiah 23:11,14,16*)

Jesus made a similar criticism of church leaders:

You have made the Word of God of no effect by your tradition. Hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy about you, saying: "In vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men." (*Matthew 15:6-9*)

The Heavenly Doctrines emphasize this point:

It is blasphemy not to draw the doctrine of the church from the Word, but to hatch it from one's own intelligence. The reason is that the church is founded on the Word and its character is such as its understanding of the Word. (*Apocalypse Revealed 571*)

A true worship of God has its origin in things of the Word and not at all in those of self-intelligence... If you have fashioned such things as are to constitute the worship of God, and they are not products of the Word but of self-intelligence, no worship exists. (*Arcana Coelestia 8943*)

In one instance Swedenborg observed that some preachers in the spiritual world were let go after preaching about faith alone:

I have heard several reasons why those preachers are deprived of their priestly status. People gave me the following as the primary reason: "They shape their sermons to conform with their own earthly light and therefore their own spirit rather than with the Word and therefore the spirit of God. Yes, they do begin their sermons by quoting the Word, but they merely touch these quotes to their lips, and go no further because the quotes do not taste good to them. Instead they soon select some tasty idea of their own." (*True Christian Religion 810*)

In the story of Balaam, the prophet definitely wished to select some tasty idea of his own. We are told in the Heavenly Doctrine that as he traveled with his donkey from Syria to meet Balak, "he continually thought upon the use of enchantments for destroying the sons of Israel." (*Apocalypse Explained 140*)

Because of these thoughts the Angel of the Lord came and blocked his path – an apparition seen clearly by his donkey, but not by Balaam. When the donkey moved out of the way, and finally would go no farther, Balaam was enraged and beat her. In the story this caused her to open her mouth and remonstrate with him, after which the Angel also showed himself and said: "Only the word that I speak to you, that you shall speak." We have this explanation:

By the female donkey that Balaam rode is meant, in the spiritual sense of the Word, the enlightened intellect. The angel with the drawn sword signifies Divine

We want to “bless” or “curse,” approve or disapprove, encourage or discourage, according to our own thoughts and feelings. Yet the Lord strictly warns us that when it comes to religious doctrine it is not what we think that matters, but what He teaches in His Word.

truth enlightening and combating against falsity. Therefore that “she turned aside three times out of the way” means that the understanding when enlightened did not agree with the thought of the soothsayer. (*Apocalypse Explained* 140)

### **What is an *enlightened* understanding?**

Our understanding when enlightened does not necessarily agree with our thought. The teachings of the Word often do not agree with our thoughts, or with points of view that are popular at any given time. An intellect that is “*enlightened*,” as this passage says, is one that is guided by the Word, not by the person’s own thoughts or popular views.

The role of the intellect is to hear the Word, while the role of the will is to do it. (*Arcana Coelestia* 44)

We often think that a person who is enlightened is one who thinks brilliantly and imaginatively, but the teaching here is that enlightenment is about the willingness and ability to understand and believe the Word.

It is important for every person to think about what he or she sees as the source of religious truth in one’s life. Christianity has traditionally relied on the teachings of the Old and New Testaments as the Word of God. The New Church accepts the truths of the Heavenly Doctrines as well. The General Church of the New Jerusalem is founded on the idea that these Doctrines are also the Word of God.

The thoughts of church members and ministers may often disagree with what the Word of God teaches, and so it is important how we go about resolving doctrinal issues.

In *True Christian Religion* Swedenborg is critical of the Christian practice of putting doctrine to a vote at councils:

O reader of mine, put your trust in the holy Word rather than in councils, and turn to the Lord and you will be enlightened. The Lord is the Word. That is, the divine truth itself is there. (*True Christianity* 634)

My friend, do not put your trust in any council. Put your trust in the Lord’s Word, which is high above councils. (*Ibid.* 489)



How much trust should we put in councils when they do not use the door to enter the sheepfold? Instead they “climb up some other way,” as the Lord says in *John* 10:1, 9. The debating at those councils was like the walking of a blind person by day or a sighted person by night, each of whom fails to see a great pit before falling into it. Instead, my friend, as you approach the Word, go to the God of the Word and enter the sheepfold of the church through the door. Then you will be enlightened. (*True Christianity* 177)

The way to resolve doctrinal issues then is to “*properly examine*” the Word, something that the ecumenical councils often failed to do. We read:

The Council of Nicaea introduced the idea of three divine persons from eternity for the reason that it had not properly examined the Word. (*True Christianity* 633)

This is why the practice in the General Church is not to vote on any doctrinal issue but to attempt to examine the Word properly – not relying on one or two proof passages but reconciling *all* the relevant passages so as to see the question more clearly. We read:

One truth does not make good firm but many truths do so. For one truth unconnected to others does not confirm it only a number together, because from one truth it is possible to see another. One by itself does not give any form to good, and so does not manifest any essential quality possessed by good; but many in a connected series do so. (*Arcana Coelestia* 4197)

The question, then, is not what the people or the leadership think is right, but what the Word teaches when fully understood – whether we like it or not. This is the question that we look for consensus about.

When Balaam failed to curse Israel, but blessed them instead, Balak was enraged: Flee to your place. I said I would greatly honor you, but in fact, the Lord has kept you back from honor. (*Numbers* 24:10)

### **Kept back from honor**

It is almost humorous to read Balak saying that the Lord kept Balaam back from honor. Who cares about any honors that Balak might have conferred? But honor and reputation are often no laughing matter in people’s lives. It takes courage to think and believe things that run counter to popular thought. In the *Sermon on the Mount* the Lord says:

The question, then, is not what the people or the leadership think is right, but what the Word teaches when fully understood – whether we like it or not. This is the question that we look for consensus about.

Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. (*Matthew 5:11*)

We often think that we live in an age and in a country where persecution for religious beliefs is rare. Yet it happens all too frequently, especially as religious beliefs of all kinds give way to an increasingly secularized society in North America and Europe. Religious beliefs are increasingly seen as harsh, discriminatory and judgmental, and those who hold them can be vilified. Arguments against religious beliefs, and in favor of popular ideas, are often made quite convincingly by very intelligent people. We read:

The intelligent are ruled by desires for high position and monetary gain, and consequently by self-love and love of the world, more than the simple are. They also have a greater ability to justify evils and the falsities resulting from those loves by the use of factual knowledge, which the intelligent possess more abundantly than the simple do. (*Arcana Coelestia 10492*)

This ability to justify evils also has the effect of condemning the innocent and intimidating people who believe what the Word teaches.

But Balaam's answer to Balak was unmoving:

Did I not also speak to your messengers whom you sent to me, saying, "If Balak were to give me his house full of silver and gold, I could not go beyond the word of the Lord, to do good or bad of my own will. What the Lord says, that I must speak." (*Numbers 24:12*)

Balaam's prophecy of a star coming out of Jacob is about the Lord's coming as Divine Truth to bring order to a disordered world, and to bring love and peace to a world in conflict. This was Balaam's true mission in making the journey from Syria to Moab. His words remind us that the love for one another that will bring peace to this world is something that we need to learn from the Lord Himself. We learn it by being guided by His Word. Unlike Balaam we will not hear His voice directly, but we will hear it if we have ears to hear. Jesus said:

My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand. (*John 10:27*)



**The Rev. Jeremy F. Simons** is semi-retired and serves as the Chaplain of the Bryn Athyn Cathedral. Most recently he served as pastor of Bryn Athyn Church, and has served also in Glenview, Illinois, and Kempton, Pennsylvania. He and his wife, Allyn (Edmonds), live in Bryn Athyn. Contact: [Jeremy.Simons@brynathynchurch.org](mailto:Jeremy.Simons@brynathynchurch.org)

# ‘For He is Risen’

*The Rev. Bradley D. Heinrichs*

Editor’s note: This sermon was preached in Cuba on Palm Sunday, 2013

*But the angel answered and said to the women, “Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here; for He is risen, as He said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay.” (Matthew 28:5-6)*

Imagine the despair these two women felt as they went to the tomb of Jesus to anoint His body. Their lives must have been shattered, thinking that the man who had triumphantly ridden into Jerusalem as the long-awaited Messiah and Savior was now dead. Picture their fear and confusion when they saw the angel sitting on the stone by the entrance to the sepulcher. Think of the great joy and comfort they must have felt when they heard those words: “*He is risen as He said.*”

These words from the New Testament are some of the most well known in the Christian world today. Yet very few seem to have any real understanding of the impact this has had on the spiritual welfare of the human race as a whole, and on each of us individually. What do these few precious words mean to us?

In the New Church, we are supposed to have the clearest picture of the true meaning of the Lord’s resurrection in modern day Christianity – and yet, maybe even we fail to reflect as deeply as we should upon this momentous event. Do we perhaps fail to appreciate fully the teachings we have in the Writings, which give us the answers to the questions so many people can only grasp at blindly in the dark?

Have we indeed failed to carry out the Lord’s commission to His disciples when He said: “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you.” (*Matthew 28:18-20*)

At Easter it is customary for us to celebrate the Lord’s resurrection and glorification. It is a time when we give thanks and praise to the Lord for the greatest of all miracles that has ever been performed – the resurrection of His

glorified Human from the grave. This was a miracle that actually saved the human race from being choked to death in the stranglehold of the hells.

Let's take a closer look at what the Lord accomplished by means of glorifying His Human and making it Divine, and how this miracle performed 2000 years ago still serves as the means for our salvation.

The Writings for the New Church tell us that, "the Lord came into the world chiefly for these two purposes – to remove hell from angels and from man, and to glorify His Human." (*True Christian Religion* 579:1) The first of these reasons was to remove the hells, because they had gained so much power that they had infiltrated even as far as the spiritual heaven.

In the process of their assault on the heavens they had also managed to gain control of the world of spirits, and as a result were almost able to completely block out any communication between the Lord and people on earth. The situation was so grave before the Lord was born on earth that we are told, "a total damnation threatened the whole human race, and even the angels of heaven could not have long continued to exist in their integrity." (*Ibid.*)

This is an amazing statement. Imagine for a moment what this truth implies.

It implies that none of us would be here today if the Lord had not come to earth and conquered the hells – for the whole human race would have perished. None of us would have had the delight and privilege of knowing our parents, grandparents and relatives because neither they nor we would have existed.

We would have missed out on the delights of conjugal love with our partner and the joy of raising our children. We would never have seen the beauty of nature nor had the satisfaction of being useful to others. When we consider the love we never would have experienced, we can appreciate even more fully the debt of thanks we owe to our Lord and Savior.

In theological terms, the Lord's conquering of the hells and the salvation of the human race is called redemption. The New Church, however, has a vision of redemption that is markedly different than the idea that modern Christianity holds. The Writings describe four clear phases that the Lord implemented to accomplish this redemption.

The first phase was the "separation of the evil from the good, and the elevation of the good to Himself into heaven, and the removal of the evil from Himself into hell." This first step is known as the Last Judgment – and by it, the hells were put back in their proper place where they could no longer infest the good.

The second phase was the "coordination of all things in the heavens, and the subordination of all things in hell, by which...the new heaven and the

new hell” were formed.

The third phase of redemption was “a revelation of truths out of the new heaven, and thereby the raising up and establishment of a new church on earth.”

The fourth and final phase of redemption was that the Lord, from His Divine power working through these means, could regenerate and thereby save every one of us. (*Coronis* 21) Think about this fourth step. The whole reason the Lord came to earth was to save us. His infinite love for our salvation was what drove the Lord. His compassion for us sustained Him in His most bitter trials and combats against the hells.

But note: the Lord’s coming to earth and conquering the hells did not mean that everyone was instantaneously saved. It meant that everyone could be saved, because all were now freed from the power of the hells. Each person could choose now in complete freedom to follow the Lord, to repent of his or her evils, and to undertake the process of regeneration.

This concept of what the Lord’s redemption accomplished is a far cry from what official Christian theology teaches today. The following passage shows a stark contrast between these two ideas: “It is believed by most persons within the church that the Lord came into world in order to reconcile the Father by the passion of the cross, and that afterward those might be accepted for whom He should intercede, and also that He released man from damnation by His having alone fulfilled the law, which otherwise would have condemned every one; and thus that all would be saved who held this faith with confidence and trust.” (*Arcana Coelestia* 10659:2)

Here we see the great error in theology of the typical Christian view concerning the Lord’s redemption and salvation of the human race. It doesn’t see it as an act which restored the equilibrium between heaven and hell; an act which allowed us once again to have the freedom to choose between good and evil. It does not understand that redemption or salvation is a process, which happens gradually as we live a life according to the truths of His Word.

This typical Christian viewpoint sees redemption as Jesus being sent by His angry Father to be a blood sacrifice for all the past, present and future sins of the human race. It states that by this blood sacrifice all our sins were miraculously imputed to Jesus, and that God was then moved to mercy on account of His Son’s suffering.

Consequently, it claims we were saved by this vicarious atonement and freed from the burden of obeying the Law. In short, we have the contrast between the life-long process of redemption and instantaneous salvation clearly defined.

This confused view of redemption leads to an even more grievous

falsity concerning the process of the Lord's glorification. Because Jesus is viewed as some sort of mediator between an angry God and His wayward creation, people are prone to fall into the trap of viewing God as more than one person.

The idea of how we view God brings us to the heart of our text – the risen Lord. For our concept of the nature of the Lord's resurrection has a direct bearing on whether we are envisioning one God or more than one God. If we view Jesus as a Divine intercessor or sacrificial lamb for the Father, who rose from the grave, then we can have no other image in our minds than of two Gods.

We can see no further than the literal sense of the Scriptures where it says that after His resurrection, "the Son of Man will sit on the right hand of the power of God." (*Luke 22:69*) We can form no other picture than that of two Gods sitting side by side on thrones, consulting about the state of affairs in the world, and in heaven and hell.

However, if we view the trinity of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit as the soul, body and activity of the Lord, then we truly have the image in our minds of God as one person. The Writings plainly tell us that "the union of the Father and Son, that is, of the Divine and the Human in the Lord, is like the union of soul and body." (*True Christian Religion* 98)

This concept is further clarified in the *Doctrine of the Lord* where we are taught that the Lord was conceived of Jehovah or the Father. This means that as to His soul He was Divine. But He was also born of the virgin Mary, so that as to His body He was merely finite – full of all our human weaknesses and tendencies toward evil.

During the course of His life in the world, the hells relentlessly attacked these human weaknesses. However, by means of continual combats and victories over the hells, the Lord gradually was able to put off everything merely human from Mary, and free Himself from those finite limitations. Then in the final stage of His glorification He "put on a Human that was Divine" and rose from the grave. (*Doctrine of the Lord* 59) This glorified Human is the risen Lord that we see, love and worship today.

Thus, when the Lord rose on the third day, He fulfilled the prophesy He made to the Jews: "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. [For] He was speaking of the temple of His body." (*John 2:19,21*)

And so when Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to the tomb, the angel of the Lord said to them: "Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here; for He is risen, as He said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay." (*Matthew 28:5-6*)

Near the end of our story, Jesus, now in His glorified Human, met the 11 disciples and they fell down and worshipped Him. He told them, "All power

has been given to Me in heaven and on the earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.” (*Matthew* 28:18-19)

His power to save us is contained in His Divine Human because the Lord, in the process of glorifying that Human, experienced every temptation and conquered every evil desire that we will ever face. So now the Lord can more effectively relate to us than ever before, and be more closely present with us by means of His Divine Human. This is part of the meaning of “the Word became flesh and dwelt among us.” (*John* 1:14)

Now the Writings point out that in the phrase – “All power has been given to Me in heaven and on the earth” – the Lord specifically uses the singular “Me” before He instructs His disciples to baptize in the name of “the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.” The purpose of this was to demonstrate that His Divine Human and the Divine Proceeding are one and inseparable from the Father. Therefore, we are told that no one can be accepted into heaven other than those who acknowledge the Lord as to His Divine Human and worship Him as one God. (*Arcana Coelestia* 10067)

This is why it is so important that we have a correct view of the Lord as one God – the Lord Jesus Christ. In fact, we are told that “all who come into heaven have their place allotted them there, and thence eternal joy, according to their idea of God.” (*Apocalypse Revealed* 224:7)

The significance of this truth – that we all have our place assigned after death according to our idea of God – gives a special sense of urgency to the Lord’s final commission to His disciples: “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you.” (*Matthew* 28:19-20)

In the New Church, Easter is a celebration of the Lord’s life! We don’t focus on His death on the cross, thinking that His sacrifice has miraculously atoned for our sins and appeased His angry Father. Rather we turn our thoughts to His resurrection and glorification. We worship and praise Him for freeing us from the power of the hells, for rolling away the stone of falsity that blocks our sight of His Divine Human, and for enabling us to be to be more closely conjoined to Him in heaven than ever before. (cf. *Apocalypse Explained* 400:14)

But as we take such great comfort and joy in knowing that “He is risen as He said” and that, “All power has been given to [Him] in heaven and on the earth,” let us not forget His commission to us: “Go and baptize the nations, teaching them to observe all the things I have commanded you.”

Let us teach the nations – our friends, our neighbors – the wonderful truths we are given in the Writings, which will help them to gain a clearer

idea of God, to be nearer to Him, and more perfectly to worship Him in His Divine Human. Let us dispel the darkness and confusion of three Gods and loudly proclaim the good news that “the Lord God Jesus Christ reigns, whose kingdom shall be for ages and ages.” (*True Christian Religion* 791) Amen.

Lessons: *John* 2:13-22, *Matthew* 28:1-20, *Apocalypse Explained* 400:14



**The Rev. Bradley D. Heinrichs** is pastor of the Carmel New Church in Kitchener, Ontario, Canada, principal of the Carmel New Church School, Executive Vice President of the General Church in Canada, and Chairman of Swedenborg Incorporated. He was ordained in 1999 and into the second degree in 2000. He lives with his wife, Catherine (Stewart), and family in Kitchener. Contact: [pastor@carmelnewchurch.org](mailto:pastor@carmelnewchurch.org)



# Boynton Beach Retreat

*Bruce Henderson*

**T**he Boynton Beach Retreat in South Florida has a new name but the same lively spirit and distinctive mission. It was founded in 1995 by the **Rev. Fred Schnarr** as *Eldergarten* – designed for “students” in “the age of wisdom.” Now it is casting a wider net as a Retreat, but with the same appeal: three inspiring presentations, an impressive banquet address, and lots of good socializing with New Church friends.

The Retreat attracted a record 130 people from 17 states and Canada to the Duncan Center in Delray Beach, January 20-23. And even though the locals complained of the “cold” – temperatures “dropping” into the 60s and 70s – many of the attendees were happy to retreat from the Arctic vortex gripping the north for any of that Florida sunshine.

This year’s program – with summaries below – included:

- A question-and-answer session with the **Rt. Rev. Brian W. Keith** on the Church and the Academy
- **Dr. Wendy Closterman** on *Ancient Greek and Roman Religion*
- **Dr. James de Maine** on *End-of-Life Issues and Medical Ethics*
- **The Rev. Dr. Jonathan S. Rose** on *Swedenborg, Scripture, and what the New Church is Going to be Like*

**Dr. Kristin King**, President of Bryn Athyn College of the New Church, gave the banquet address about developments at the College, the context of higher education in America, and the mission and future of the College. Her address is published on page 149.

## **WELL REPRESENTED**

The 130 attendees at the Boynton Beach Retreat hailed from 17 states:

California  
Colorado  
Connecticut  
Florida  
Georgia  
Illinois  
Louisiana  
Massachusetts  
Maryland  
Michigan  
North Carolina  
Ohio  
Oregon  
Pennsylvania  
South Carolina  
Utah  
Washington  
– plus Ontario, Canada



## THE RT. REV. BRIAN W. KEITH

### *The Church and Academy*

Bishop Keith felt that in his first year as Executive Bishop it was important to establish himself also as Chancellor of the Academy of the New Church, so he has cut back on his international travel. His new assistant, the **Rt. Rev. Peter M. Buss Jr.**, has almost no international experience, so has been getting to know the Church in South and West Africa, Australia, Sweden, and Korea/Asia.

He said the Academy Secondary Schools and Bryn Athyn College have been working through challenging times but are on track for budgetary stability. (He didn't say much about the College since Dr. King would be addressing that in her banquet address.)

Glencairn Museum, the public face of the Academy, just had a glowing review from a world expert on religious museums. It hosts thousands of visitors each year, from grade school through college and all ages of the public. It is an incredible resource for the Academy and what it does for our schools "is phenomenal."

The Secondary Schools were just reaccredited, with a very favorable response from the Middle States Association. Its visiting team was "blown away by our students" and wondered why we aren't advertising ourselves better to the world.

The Bishop assured that everything in the College and Secondary Schools is mission driven.

The General Church also has lots of challenges but good things happening as well.

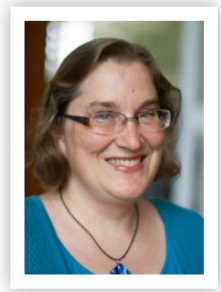
More and more congregations are becoming financially independent and the Healthy Church Match is helping to increase endowment in those with schools so they don't have to depend on grants from the General Church.

It has not been easy to cut back on programs, but the General Church budget has been cut in half – from \$9 million a few years ago to \$4.5 million today. Contributions, however, remain flat and we could close more gaps if members gave more. We always encourage members to support their societies first but not to forget the Academy and the General Church.

Internationally, the situation in Kenya is improving. The congregation in Riounde has fallen apart with the death of its pastor. However, the Rev. Samson Abuga in Etora is doing heroic work. He added the abandoned children from Riounde's orphanage to his own. A new group established in the United States, Helping Children in Crisis, is providing financial help.

**DR. WENDY CLOSTERMAN*****Ancient Greek and Roman Religion***

Wendy is an associate professor of History and Greek at Bryn Athyn College of the New Church. She lives with her husband, Michael Pigg, and daughter in Jenkintown, Pennsylvania. Contact: *Wendy.Closterman@brynathyn.edu*



The period she focused on was generally the 8<sup>th</sup> century to the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC.

The ancient Greeks spread from the Greek mainland into Southern Italy, Sicily, North Africa and Turkey, while the Roman Empire extended through much of present-day Europe, up into England, as well as across North Africa and into the Middle East.

Why should we study these people, she asked? In learning from their experiences we cultivate skills for our own spiritual lives. Regeneration is a human process that involves understanding ourselves and others. In addition, most early Christians had been Greek or Roman pagans. Pagan religion was governed internally more by practice and tradition than beliefs.

According to New Church concepts, she said, the Lord establishes His Church with people who live good lives, and always provides that anyone may be saved. She included three numbers explaining this (*Heaven and Hell* 57, *Divine Providence* 328.1 and 328.8) in a handout. (See the insert for information about handouts and other resources available at [www.newchurchboyntonbeach.org](http://www.newchurchboyntonbeach.org).)

Wendy said that every ancient history course she teaches at Bryn Athyn College gets into concepts of humanity and the history of churches cited in the Writings, which includes a judgment at the end of each and the planting of a new church.

What is notable about Greek and Roman religion is that there were no churches to join, few vocational priests, no doctrines and no set beliefs to which everyone had to adhere. Religion was embedded in life and culture, defined by practices and tradition. Different beliefs were tolerated, but not non-participation in rituals, such as animal sacrifice.

There were many gods for every aspect of life, such as agriculture, marriage and justice. Athletic and dramatic performances were offered as gifts to the gods. These gods communicated with humans through omens, such as the activity of birds or the reading of organs in sacrificed animals. And gods did not die; only humans died.

Greek and Roman approaches to divine-human relationships were described as *Charis* (Greek) and *Pietas* (Roman). *Charis* was at the core of Greeks' relationship with the gods. It relates to joy and kindness, gratitude and respect, and an on-going relationship between gods and humans. *Pietas* – from

**RESOURCES FROM THE RETREAT**

Handouts from the presenters are posted at [www.newchurchboyntonbeach.org](http://www.newchurchboyntonbeach.org). Click on "Resources," then "Boynton Beach Retreat." Included are:

- A handout from Dr. Wendy Closterman on Greek and Roman Religion
- Handouts from Dr. Jim de Maine on: Making your own health care choices; an article on *Choices* by the Rev. Daniel Goodenough; *On Helixes* from the Writings; the *Placebo Phenomenon*; and *Language Clarifying a Living Will*
- PowerPoint presentations by Dr. de Maine on: Advance Planning and End-of-Life Choices; Medical Ethics; and Ethical Wills

which we get our word piety – was all about duty, loyalty and devotion. It let people know what they should do for the gods, the state and their families.

Animal sacrifice, with ornate ritual, was central in both cultures. It was their way of making connections with their many gods. It did not survive into Christianity.

There were many gods in both cultures – and they were always adding more. Gods multiplied through their own families. And they were all about exerting power, not setting moral examples through their behavior. Nevertheless, they asked for moral behavior from

humans. Zeus, for instance, was a notorious philanderer, but also oversaw justice and oath-keeping.

The gods communicated through prophecies and oracles. At Delphi, the oracle was always a woman.

The Greeks and Romans sought guidance from the gods for their lives on earth – not for the afterlife. Whatever the afterlife held in store, it was usually considered a bleak, forbidding place. What mattered was life of the moment and they believed their communication with the gods helped things go better in their daily lives.

The Romans, for example, felt their empire was so successful because they were good at the traditions that were their religion. They even deified emperors – if these rulers were deemed to have been good – after their deaths. The notorious Caligula was one who tried to proclaim himself a god in his lifetime, but that was too much for the people to accept.

Tremendously valuable to historians was a Roman garrison town – Dura Europas – in the eastern empire. It was defeated by enemies in the third century A.D. and abandoned intact. This has been a gold mine for archeologists, including its temples and synagogue, and the first archaeologically identifiable Christian house-church.

As Christianity was taking root, its followers were persecuted by the Romans because they did not sacrifice. This was threatening to the pagan point of view. What Christians believed wasn't the problem. It was what they did – or didn't do – that was seen as undermining the empire. Paganism, with

its ritual sacrifices, extended well into the Christian era.

One element of Christianity new to the pagan mind was the New Testament emphasis that faith and belief matter in life, such as the teaching: “If you continue in My Word, you are My disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.” (*John 8: 31-32*)

Becoming disciples of God may have been an attractive new concept to some people – a new way to build a relationship with Him. It may also have been appealing that we should love one another – to love as God loves – as a means of forging a relationship with God.

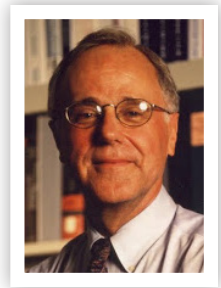
The pagans’ gods did not die but Jesus did, which gave new emphasis to the afterlife. This offered a whole new, powerful and compelling way to think about God.

From our New Church perspective, Wendy said, Christianity was not just a new religion but a new model for applying religion to life and giving it meaning.

## DR. JAMES DE MAINE

### *End of Life and Medical Ethics*

Dr. de Maine recently retired after a 32-year career in pulmonary and critical care, and is also emeritus clinical professor of medicine at the University of Washington. He attended the Academy College (now Bryn Athyn College) for two years in the late 1950s, and earned his medical degree from the University of Pennsylvania. When he was in training, he said, Intensive Care Units (ICUs) did not yet exist. There have been tremendous changes in medicine – and medical ethics – in his career. He practiced in Seattle, Washington, where he still lives with his wife, Lourdes. He has often been involved in end-of-life and ethical issues, and getting people to think and talk about them. This has led to an ongoing blog, which refers to his New Church faith: [www.endoflifeblog.com](http://www.endoflifeblog.com) Contact: [jimdemaine@comcast.net](mailto:jimdemaine@comcast.net).



Jim noted that throughout his career – and throughout the field of medicine – the questions basically have stayed the same but the answers keep changing. This is largely due to continuing advances in technology, which can prolong life – but also prolong death. Doctors and other health care professionals need to think beyond what they can do to what they should do: what is the best thing to do in any given circumstance. Patients and their families are critical to the process and need to be prepared for these tough choices.

He said that 70% of deaths in ICU occur with the withdrawal of life support, but that families often have not had a discussion about what to do in such circumstances. We put a lot more thought and preparation into childbirth than death. It is always best to have end-of-life discussions before it becomes

a crisis decision. It is important for family members to know our wishes and to establish who will speak for us if we can't speak for ourselves – as often happens.

He cited *Heaven and Hell* 443, 446 and 447 about when death occurs, but it's often complicated. For example, viable brain cells still can be harvested up to four hours after death.

There are several websites than can help people understand the issues involved, and which provide fertile ground for discussions about death – and life after death:

- [www.theconversationproject.org](http://www.theconversationproject.org)
- [www.deathoverdinner.org](http://www.deathoverdinner.org)
- [www.deathcafe.org](http://www.deathcafe.org)
- [www.afterlifeconference.org](http://www.afterlifeconference.org)

The latter is an annual conference in Portland, Oregon. The next, in June, will include Dr. Eben Alexander, author of *Proof of Heaven*, who is also scheduled to speak in Bryn Athyn on April 6. That event also includes several related symposiums in Bryn Athyn College.

Jim distributed an invaluable four-page form, *Making Your Own Health Care Choices*, available on the Boynton Beach New Church website, which he said everyone should fill out. Also on the website is a 1991 Charter Day address by the Rev. Daniel Goodenough with a New Church perspective on *Choices*.

We are making choices every moment of our lives – from our loves – and how our life ends should be part of that choosing process.

Advance care planning includes:

- Rights and responsibilities
- Decisions about life-sustaining treatment
- How to inform health care professionals about your preferences
- Making sure your preferences are honored

More than half of us, he said, will not be able to speak for ourselves at the last stages of our lives, so who do we want to speak for us? What do we want them to know, and to say? We need to be clear about exactly what we want, communicate this with our families, and provide good documentation. Copies should go to our families, lawyer and health care team. Advance care planning may be our last, best gift to our families.

About 1% of the population suffers a sudden death; the rest of us will decline slowly. The more everyone knows about what quality of life and procedures are acceptable to us, the easier it will be for everyone.

There are generally three pathways for the sick and dying: life-prolonging care, limited medical care and comfort care. It is important to understand the differences and the options. Most people do not want a lot of tubes and

machines artificially prolonging life, but simple comfort or palliative care aimed at relieving symptoms and controlling pain.

In addition to a living will and designated power of attorney, Jim recommended a Physician Order for Life-Sustaining Treatment form (POLST), which is honored by 911 responders and follows you to the hospital. Many, but not all, states now have POLST legislation. This form is most appropriate when in the last year of life. It is filled out in consultation with your doctor and signed by both of you. The form should be prominently displayed in case 911 is called, plus copies should be given to your doctor, lawyer and family.

### **Medical Ethics**

Given the amazing advances in medical technology, physicians have more and more things they *can* do, and increasingly hard questions about what they *should* do – what is the right thing to do.

Medical ethics – all those decisions about the right thing to do – has become a framework for modern medical practice. Kidney dialysis was the medical development that first drove the formation of Ethics Committees in hospitals. Now every hospital has a Medical Ethics Committee or consultant.

At Jim's hospital in Seattle, committee members read through its principles at every meeting, using them as a basis in developing standard methodologies. As with the Hippocratic Oath, the aim of bioethics is still: what is the least harm?

Jim expressed gratitude to Bishop Alfred Acton (present at the Retreat) for providing him with spiritual principles from the Writings. These take precedence over moral laws, and should help to guide the best possible decisions.

Clinical ethics are critical to such relatively modern issues as abortion, AIDS, organ transplants and premature babies. Ethical considerations include: determining the right thing to do; honoring personal moral and religious values, as well as professional principles; patient rights; the law; and such values as virtue, honesty, integrity and respect.

### **Ethical or Spiritual Wills**

This is a relatively new consideration: What legacy do you want to leave to your loved ones, and what values do you want to pass on?

Jim read an example – a letter written by his mother to his father, found after she had passed away, which beautifully expressed her love for him and their family, and her hopes for them. It is a treasured last gift from her. (See an excerpt in *Life Lines*, page 202.)

We pass on a lot of our possessions through wills. A spiritual will is a wonderful and incredibly meaningful gift to a spouse and family. Some people even leave videos now – a powerful and personal way to pass on a legacy.

Jim pointed out that any good in us comes only from the Lord and that He is implanting remains throughout our lives. (See *Arcana Coelestia* 561) But through the examples we set in the way we live our lives, and through what we love, we can help the Lord implant those remains. Those cherished remains implanted in us are what we can pass on in a spiritual will.

Estate planners like to point out that we tend to spend more care and time buying a car or home than in deciding what we will leave to our families – through both natural and spiritual wills. These wills are the best – and most enduring gifts – with which we can bless forever those we love.

Following are examples Jim provided of a lawyer's language for a Living Will, and further thoughts added by a patient – the kind of personal feeling you might want to add to your own instructions:

### **A Lawyer's Language**

If at any time I should be diagnosed in writing to be in a terminal condition by the attending physician, or in a permanent unconscious condition by two physicians, and where the application of life-sustaining treatment would serve only to artificially prolong the process of my dying, I direct that such treatment be withheld or withdrawn, and that I be permitted to die naturally.

I understand by using this form that a terminal condition means an incurable and irreversible condition caused by injury, disease, or illness that would within reasonable medical judgment cause death within a reasonable period of time in accordance with accepted medical standards, and where the application of life-sustaining treatment would serve only to prolong the process of dying.

I further understand in using this form that a permanent unconscious condition means an incurable and irreversible condition in which I am medically assessed within reasonable medical judgment as having no reasonable probability of recovery from an irreversible coma or a persistent vegetative state.

### **A Patient's Added Language**

I have a firm belief that God created me, that there is a natural cycle of life, that death is inevitable, and that dying should be peaceful, comfortable, at home, if possible, and without tubes, artificial nutrition and ventilator support. If I cannot carry out self-care, do not have my usual mental faculties, or have an incurable disease or intractable pain, please treat me with the best care for comfort, but not invasive life support care.

It is quite acceptable to withhold fluid and nutrition from me and treat me with a morphine drip as part of this care for comfort, letting nature take its course. I have no wish to be a burden to my loved ones, or to spend resources and energy on heroic efforts to prolong my life when my life is at an end. Only



in the acute situation (i.e. trauma) would I want heroic life support to try to get me back to my present state of good health.

My worst nightmare is to spend my days in a nursing home with a feeding tube. Quality, not quantity, of earthly life is more important.

## REV. DR. JONATHAN S. ROSE

### *Swedenborg, Scripture, and What the New Church Is Going to Be Like*

#### Swedenborg and the Bible

What was the nature of Swedenborg's call and his transition into spiritual experiences? What role did the Word play in that transition?

Some people think Swedenborg had a 15-minute interview with the Lord, and from that moment on his whole life was changed. Yet Swedenborg gives one date (1745) for his call shortly after the fact; then another (1744) during his later years; and an even earlier date (1743) toward the end of his life.

The Rev. R. L. Tafel pondered this mystery, and came up with a theory of multiple phases, with key turning points along the way. Jonathan distributed a handout on the *Five Phases of Swedenborg's Spiritual Awakening*, giving Tafel's theory, with his own additional thoughts.

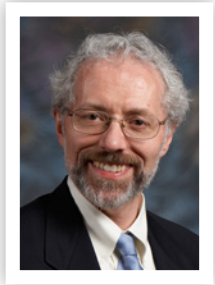
Phase 1 was "Dreams and a Swoon," beginning with a swoon in 1736; this phase lasted for a little more than seven years.

Phase 2 was "preternatural sleep" and the first appearance to Swedenborg of the Lord, perhaps in a dream.

In phase 3, the Lord appeared to him after he had taken the Holy Supper. His interaction with spirits began and he was granted permission to move into a palace in heaven. He wrote *Worship and Love of God*, based loosely on early *Genesis*.

In phase 4, his "continuous speech" with angels began and he launched into intense study of the Word. He was still seeing the Word through a Lutheran lens, but the more he studied, the more his understanding changed.

In phase 5 he became the Revelator, when "a change of state" helped him to know not only what the Word was saying but what it meant. It was 17 months into this phase that he began writing *Arcana Coelestia*. Although the Lord had appeared to him a few times in person, through the agency of the Word, the Lord was able to be with him constantly. This phase lasted the remaining 24



Jonathan Rose, a noted Latin and Greek scholar, is Series Editor for the *New Century Edition* of the Writings for the Swedenborg Foundation. He leads a popular weekly Bible study in Bryn Athyn, streamed live online. He and his wife, Dr. Kristin King, live in Bryn Athyn. Contact: [jsrose@digitalwave.com](mailto:jsrose@digitalwave.com)

years and eight months of his life.

Swedenborg had grown up as a Lutheran, with a bishop for a father, and in a culture where both parents were expected to teach the Bible to their children and servants – at every dinner. Swedenborg had also gone to church regularly. He was very familiar with the Bible.

But during his spiritual awakening, the Word became important to him in a whole new way. No one around him was having the type of experiences he was having, but the Word showed that Isaiah and Ezekiel and John on the Isle of Patmos had gone through something similar.

In conclusion, Swedenborg's call or spiritual awakening was a long, multiphase process with two key ingredients: the Word and spiritual experiences. The Word taught him to understand his spiritual experiences and his spiritual experiences taught him to understand the Word.

### **A Whole New Prioritization of the Parts of the Bible**

The Hebrew canon divides what we know as the Old Testament into three segments of differing value: The *Torah* (or the *Five Books of Moses*); the Prophets (including the historical works); and the Writings. Of these, the *Torah* has the highest priority. One is to read the Prophets in the light of the *Torah*, and read the Writings in the light of the Prophets.

Much of the preaching and teaching in the organized New Church focuses (for good reasons) on the historical parts of the Old and New Testaments: *Genesis* through *2 Kings*, and the *Four Gospels*. What parts of the Old and New Testaments do the Writings quote the most? We would think the answer must be *Genesis*, *Exodus* and *Revelation*, since there are many volumes devoted to just those three books. But there is another part that is of great, if perhaps unrecognized, importance.

A handout divided the Bible into eight sections:

- The five *Books of Moses* – the *Torah*
- (Other) Historical Books (*Joshua* through *2 Kings*)
- *Job* “and the Rest” (*Ruth* through *Song of Solomon* – not considered to have a continuous internal sense)
- The Psalms
- The Prophets (*Isaiah* through *Malachi*)
- The Gospels (*Matthew*, *Mark*, *Luke*, *John*)
- *Acts* and *Epistles* (*Acts* through *Jude*)
- *Revelation*

Jonathan then distributed a handout showing how much the Writings quote from these sections (according to *Searle's Index*). By far the most quotes are from the Prophets, even though the Writings say they can be very obscure.

Similarly in the *Apocalypse Revealed*, with its more than 6,000 biblical

citations, those from the Prophets are more than double the next closest – the Gospels. And in another handout on which part of the Bible is the source of the first extract in a given number in the first volume of the *Arcana*, the Prophets have 61 percent – far more than any other section of the Bible. This suggests that the *Arcana* is actually an exposition of *Genesis* and *Exodus in the light of the Prophets*.

Jonathan said this suggests a new prioritization of the Word. The Prophets and *Revelation* are the primary works for the New Church. Yes, it is easier to understand the story of David and Goliath, but it is important that we get into the Prophets, he said – to read and love them, and “do the heavy lifting” to understand them.

In fact, *Last Judgment* 60 suggests that the reason Swedenborg had his spiritual experiences was to keep the *Book of Revelation* from being rejected. It is all about the Word.

## Acts and Epistles

Swedenborg says that these are good books for the Church but we tend to treat them as though they are not, and prefer to talk of the Word, not the Bible.

This is based on some strong statements in the Writings – that they have no internal sense and are not the Word. (See *Secrets of Heaven* 10325) But there are also numbers such as *True Christianity* 154.1, stating that “the Lord filled the writers of the *Epistles* with His Holy Spirit.”

Jonathan had a handout with 20 numbers both negative and positive toward the *Acts* and *Epistles* – with the negatives coming in Swedenborg’s early phase, 1749-1763, and the positives in his second phase, 1764-1771. In fact, toward the end of Swedenborg’s life he referred to them in *Coronis* as “the Apostolic Word.”

Swedenborg, Jonathan said, was dealing with the Protestant view that the *Epistles of Paul* were of the highest priority, while the Gospels were more for Sunday school. The *Arcana*, the first of the Writings, never quotes the *Epistles*, which bothered people in Swedenborg’s time.

There are a lot of quotes from the *Acts* and *Epistles*, however, in Swedenborg’s final work, *True Christian Religion*, which concludes with three such quotes. The dividing line seems to be 1764, when *Divine Providence* began citing them.

Jonathan presented a paper on the *Acts and Epistles* to the Council of the Clergy last year, and he freely refers to them in his Bible study class. In fact, he

## WORLDWIDE BIBLE STUDY

People throughout the world are tuning in to a live Bible Study with the Rev. Dr. Jonathan Rose, Wednesday evenings at 7:30 p.m. EST/DST.

The link to the live-stream broadcast: [www.ustream.TV/channel/nunclitcetbiblestudy](http://www.ustream.TV/channel/nunclitcetbiblestudy)

There is also a Facebook page: [www.facebook.com/SpiritAndLifeBibleStudy](http://www.facebook.com/SpiritAndLifeBibleStudy)

says, a lot of the core terminology of the New Church – shunning evils as sins, regeneration, the as of self, and use – comes from the *Acts and Epistles*. It is of great importance to read them in the light of the Prophets, the Gospels, and the *Book of Revelation*; and we must be forewarned that they contain some difficult material. But Swedenborg never said we should not read them. We should be reading them, along with the rest of the Word.

“The more I study the *Acts and Epistles*,” Jonathan said, “the better I understand the Writings.”

### **What the New Church is Going to be Like**

The Writings are all about the New Church and its teachings, but what do they tell us about what the Church will actually be like?

There are occasional mentions, such as in *Arcana Coelestia* 2417, that in the New Church the Lord will restore the doctrine of charity, which was primary in the Ancient Church. But there is not much presented about what the Church will really be like.

Finally, the last chapter of the last published theological work, *True Christian Religion*, takes up the subjects of the consummation of the age, the Second Coming, and the New Church descending from heaven. The work formally ends with number 790. It is surprising, then, that the reader has to wait until number 789 to hear anything about what the New Church is going to be like. And when we finally get there, we are simply told to read the Prophets. A few passages from the Prophets are quoted with virtually no explanation; and then in number 790, a few passages from the *Book of Revelation* are added, again with virtually no explanation.

Jonathan suggests that Swedenborg seems to be saying that if we just read the Prophets and *Revelation* we will know all we need to know.

He then turned to the Prophets and *Revelation* to see what they teach us about the New Church. He summarized some teachings with quotations: It will last forever and will never be replaced. It will involve universal knowledge of the Lord, and an intense sense of His presence. Love of the Lord and love of the neighbor will be key. It will be vast and multid denominational; it will include people from all over the world, drawn from other religions and walks of life. It will be impervious to hell. And however close to the Lord it is at any given time, in the future it will become even closer to the Lord: “Of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end.” (*Isaiah* 9:7)

Futuristic novels and movies are almost always negative – filled with violence, chaos and foreboding. But the Lord is telling us that there will be “no end” to His glorious kingdom, that it will be always increasing.

And this, Jonathan said, is the future of the New Church. “This is a start, and the spark has thankfully been kept alive through a long and difficult winter. But we are barely on the verge of getting going. And the future is unbelievably bright.”

# Boynton Beach Retreat Banquet Address

## Bryn Athyn College

*Dr. Kristin King, President*

**T**hank you for this opportunity to speak to you about Bryn Athyn College. I want to focus my talk on three areas:

1. Developments at the College
2. The context of higher education in America
3. Mission and the future

As many of you know, the College has been in a growth effort for the past eight years. After 130 years of focusing on the already-baptized, the College has widened its reach in the 21<sup>st</sup> century to include all students who show genuine interest in the New Church mission and have the capacity to engage with the academics. We also are developing strategies by which growth strengthens rather than depletes the financial bottom line. We do not give away the education any more: a) cannot afford to, and b) do not need to. The education is worth paying for.

Our financial models are entirely different now than they were even four years ago. Historically, student revenue covered less than 15% of operations. By the end of our current strategic plan (2017) student revenue will cover 55% of operations. We are halfway through our plan, and well over halfway to this goal.

The financial plan depends not just on student revenue but on other revenue and broad-based giving. The College has been blessed past and present by the extraordinary generosity of a relatively small number of donors, but the future depends on broader support. While I miss the peaceful days of having an endowment payout that covered 80% of operations, we live in a new era. If we are to *thrive* going forward, we will need the financial and moral support of the many people who have benefited from or value New Church education.

We have 260 students enrolled, plus eight students in graduate programs.

I believe we have made the case, and we will keep making it, that the *right kind* of growth strengthens mission, and that devoted New Church faculty members should be listened to when they attest to the quality of the New Church education taking place in their classrooms.

Fifty seniors will graduate in May — our largest class ever. We are heartened by the energy, passion and competence of this graduating class.

Along with growth in enrollment, faculty credentials have been strengthened. There have always been great teachers at the College. But *as a body* the core faculty is better credentialed than ever before, and more conversant with best practices and innovations in their fields.

With its beautiful new buildings, the College campus has stature fitting the quality of its education. Some architectural features of these new buildings echo aspects of Bryn Athyn's Historic District: Cathedral, Glencairn, Cairnwood and Cairncrest. These features of the new buildings include archways, roof line and color, stained glass, stone and wood.

The echoing of architectural style is important not just for aesthetic purposes of tying one side of Huntingdon Pike with the other, but for symbolic purposes of tying the vision of the last century with this one. The College emphasizes its cultural roots and spiritual foundation. As educators we are interested not only in *recovering* a sense of place and purpose – the founding structures and vision – but also bringing those things *forward*, into living expressions for a new generation.

In terms of financial challenges, the College continues to reduce operating deficits (down from \$8.5 million in 2010 to \$2.5 million this year, with a projected \$1.5 million for next year). We have turned an important corner, for instance, in terms of net tuition revenue. These are the actual dollars that come in after subtracting institutional aid. A few years ago we were bringing in \$6,000 average net tuition per student; this year we are bringing in \$11,500. There are many examples of belt tightening in financial operations; in this and other ways, a lot has changed.

Of course change brings tension, especially in educational or religious institutions, which tend to be keepers of tradition. Compounding the tension around change, the College's building campaign came at a time when financial markets were crumbling, as was some stakeholder confidence. In some areas

Church membership is tapering off in areas, and many of our baptized members under 40 are disaffected and disengaged from the organized church. I don't mean to sound grim, only to point out that in most scenarios it is the *church* that populates its affiliated college, not the reverse.

we are still struggling with the aftermath. Finally, nothing has stirred *more* unrest than the divided view of whether growth at the College strengthens mission, or weakens it.

I believe we have made the case, and we will keep making it, that the *right kind* of growth strengthens mission, and that devoted New Church faculty members should be listened to when they attest to the quality of the New Church education taking place in their classrooms. The New Church faculty are the front line in preserving mission.

The College mission is to educate in the light of the Word. The mission is to strengthen students' intellectual, moral, civil and spiritual life. Outcomes data, as well as personal testimonies from students, families, faculty and employers, tell us the mission is flourishing. It is not *perfect* in every expression and effort, but it is alive and well in general.

In my view, the quality of education at the College has never been stronger, nor more focused on the mission of sharing heavenly teachings in an academic setting. In fact, last October (2013) I brought to campus the foremost expert on American religious colleges and secularization. Robert Benne has spent decades studying why some Christian colleges lose their mission and others do not. I asked Dr. Benne to study the College and identify where he saw us drifting from our mission.

His assessment? Bryn Athyn College is overwhelmingly focused on mission, so much so, that he called us *orthodox*. While the word "orthodox" is not entirely comforting, Dr. Benne was stunned by the integrity of our curricular focus on mission and by our emphasis on and monitoring of moral behavior on campus. We are successfully fostering "clean living" in a way that many campuses do not.

Not everyone supports the College's efforts to grow. It would be unrealistic to expect that, given the polarity of views in our church on most issues. But let me address one particular expression of anxiety that I have encountered repeatedly. Some people feel that the College should accept only

The College should be measured by how well it is achieving its mission, engaging students with New Church teachings in ways that deepen their humanity and their ability to bless others.

students already familiar and on board with the General Church, or only students who will later join the General Church.

Although increasing the enrollment in the Church is a welcome and desired outcome, I want to be clear that the College's primary focus is to engage students with New Church teachings in the context of higher education and campus life.

Students join the *College* community for four years to study liberal arts and learn about New Church teachings, in a New Church environment. They sign up for a college experience. If they do join the General Church...wonderful. But we should remember that growing numbers of our own

baptized young people do not join our church, or *any* church for that matter.

To the extent that the General Church (and other Swedenborgian branches) successfully increase membership through birth or through attracting newcomers, the College will have a ready pool of students to draw upon, as do most denominational colleges. If this pool were large enough, the College could rely on these students alone and not reach beyond them. But we do not have that luxury.

Church membership is tapering off in areas, and many of our baptized members under 40 are disaffected and disengaged from the organized church. I don't mean to sound grim, only to point out that in most scenarios it is the *church* that populates its affiliated college, not the reverse.

The College has an extraordinary challenge in having such a small pool of church members to draw upon. Certainly religious colleges strengthen the faith of many students who attend, and some previously unaffiliated students *will* join the mother church, but it would be unfortunate to tie Bryn Athyn College's success *too narrowly* to a head count of students who join the General Church during or after their sojourn on campus.

The College should be measured instead by how well it is achieving its mission, engaging students with New Church teachings in ways that deepen their humanity and their ability to bless others. By students I include those affiliated with the Church – as many as we can get – as well as those who are coming upon these teachings for the first time.

I respect the passion and desire to protect the strengths of the past. We all want that. And if we did not have New Church theology, there would be no reason at all to have Bryn Athyn College. That said, the College serves the



Church best when it is allowed to thrive *as a college* devoted to New Church teachings.

It needs to be (and is) a place of discovery and creativity, where New Church teachings enlighten the disciplines, and where scholarship and study uncover new perspectives, new readings and new applications. The College serves the Church as a vital intellectual center where professors and clergy work in partnership, teaching students and exploring the rich intersections of New Church theology and academic fields.

Let's please remember that one of the first places Swedenborg sent his books, hot off the press, were to the *universities* of Europe (Sweden, Holland, Germany, France and Spain, as well as England and Scotland). He wanted these ideas, this new revelation, handled and discussed in intellectual centers. He expected tension and debate. And he hoped that from those intellectual centers these new ideas would find their way into the world.

Writing to his friend Dr. Beyer in February 1767, Swedenborg responded to the question of how *soon* the New Church should be expected. He said that the Lord is preparing a New Heaven, that from this heaven the New Jerusalem is coming down, and that in the world, "the Universities in Christendom are now first being instructed." (*Letters and Memorials*, Acton, Vol. 2, 631)

The Academy Charter, 110 years later, references this New Jerusalem as the church that is to be fostered. The New Church or New Jerusalem referenced in the Charter is a transcendent, far-reaching concept. The Writings frequently describe "the Church" as an *internal* state, the presence of the Lord in the individual, the marriage of good and truth. We want the organized, external church to grow in numbers – absolutely! But there are additional ways for the College to support the New Jerusalem coming down, additional ways to share the teachings with people from many backgrounds.

## Higher Education in America

Before I talk in detail about developments at the College, I want to give some context about the background of higher education in America, specifically liberal arts education, and about current *challenges* in higher education, especially in the last decade.

Bryn Athyn College, a liberal arts religious institution, is part of the fabric of higher education in America in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It is important to grasp the contours of this landscape and how it evolved.

The first institutions in this country were liberal arts colleges, aligned with Christian denominations. Their purpose was to educate the sons of the affluent for leadership in society and the church. Though small in size, these liberal arts colleges dominated for more than 200 years, until the end of the Civil War. They were the only game in town.

In the most general terms, *liberal arts* study means broad exposure to a variety of disciplines and skills, rather than specific vocational training. This form of study educates the whole person for lifelong learning and civic contribution. More specifically, the term *liberal arts* comes from Latin “*liber*,” or “free.” It was the education for the privileged who were not tied to manual labor but *free* to pursue the life of the mind.

Over time, liberal arts education stopped applying to an elite class. Quite the opposite. This education has become a most powerful American concept and tool for freeing all students, regardless of class or background, into a more fully educated, developed, human self, that can act responsibly and productively in a democratic society. Liberal arts study develops citizens who can keep up with the changes of society and workplaces, while carrying forward the knowledge, values and culture on which society is built.

The American Dream relies on education and the belief that education builds opportunity and a better or happier future for our children. (Originally a better future, or the pursuit of happiness, was not narrowly defined as earning capacity, or what one could *get*. What mattered instead was what one could *give*. What mattered was one’s capacity to *contribute* to the greater good, to be moral, productive, engaged citizens who know and do the right thing.)

The first college in what would become the United States opened its doors in 1638: Harvard. It boasted a handful of students, a cow yard, and 400 books. Not to oversimplify the past, Harvard had significant governance issues from the beginning. Within a year of opening, Nathaniel Eaton, President, was charged with assault for beating a tutor. Mrs. Eaton was accused of serving too little beer and adulterating the students’ food. The Eatons fled the scene, with most of the endowment. Harvard had to close for a full academic year.

From those humble beginnings higher education in America has grown to 4,400 institutions serving 20 million students. These 4,400 institutions fall into five categories:

**1. Prestigious Research Institutions** (200, or about 5% of the institutions).

These are the Yales, Princetons, Cornells, Stanfords, etc.

Highly competitive

Have the largest budgets, biggest endowments, and most federal money for research.

**2. Comprehensive or “Metropolitan” Universities** (700)

Mostly public, large enrollment, not highly selective

Evolved from technical schools and teaching colleges

Have added a lot of vocational degrees

**3. Four-year Colleges (1,000)**

Mainly private, nonprofit

Generally fewer than 2,000 students

Traditionally religious, though few remain such

Liberal arts focus, but increasingly supplemented with vocational tracks

Fierce competition with state-subsidized publics due to lower tuition

**4. Community Colleges (1,000)**

Two-year schools, publicly supported

40% of undergraduate enrollment (7 million students)

Focus vocational training or transfer to a four-year college (70% indicate; 20% do it)

Generally poor quality and high dropout rate

**5. For-Profit Institutions (largest group, 1,400, a third of all institutions)**

Vocational emphasis -- certificates or training programs

Geared to working adults; online

High dropout rates and debt

Source of much of the criticism about return on investment

These five categories convey the complexity of the landscape of higher education. There is tremendous variety among the categories, but also within them.

Each category has strengths and weaknesses. There is legitimate criticism for particular problems in particular categories. However, people too easily lump all the criticism together and blame all higher education for all problems. We need to do a better job of distinguishing what *specific* problems we are lamenting; where they exist; and how they can be addressed.

For instance, to pick on two types of institutions, the community colleges and for-profits account for more than half of higher education institutions and well over 60% of the student population. They use staggering amounts of public funds (taxpayer money) but score abysmally on graduation and employment rates, learning outcomes, student satisfaction and student debt. There are exceptions, of course, but not enough. Too many students leave these institutions with oppressive debt, few of the promised skills, and no job. This is a poor return on investment, and the public *should* be concerned about the money that funds these programs.

By way of contrast, four-year private colleges more than hold their own in terms of return on investment, and Bryn Athyn College particularly so. If we expand the concept of educational *value* to include much more than a first paycheck, to include things like lifelong learning, civic engagement,

productivity and a sense of well-being, then liberal arts colleges stack up well.

Private liberal arts colleges are actually doing an impressive job of delivering value, in lots of ways. Here are seven:

- 1. Graduation rate:** students are more likely to graduate in four years from a private college than in six years from a public university.
- 2. Earning power:** On average, a college degree garners \$1 million more over a lifetime than does a high school diploma.
- 3. Intellectual and creative development:** liberal arts study allows one to furnish one's mind; develop talents and interests; realize a *human* return on investment.
- 4. Affordable tuition:** For all the outcry about rising tuition, *real* tuition (the amount after institutional aid is subtracted) has gone down at four-year private colleges over the past five years.
- 5. Manageable Debt:** One in three private college students graduates with no debt at all. Average debt for a college graduate is \$27,000, which equates to a modest car payment. A car will wear out in 10 years; a college education appreciates over a lifetime.
- 6. Sense of well-being.** Throughout their lives, college graduates report high levels of satisfaction with their college experience, and high levels of well-being in general (based on results from Gallup polls for 50 years).
- 7. Ability to contribute to the common good.** Admittedly, the "common good" can be an abstract concept, but speaking in practical terms, college graduates are reliable tax payers and informed participants in society. Compared to those who do not go to college, college graduates use less federal resources, vote more, and volunteer more.

So, if some categories of institution are doing an obviously poor job of accomplishing what they promise, and other categories are doing a good job of delivering *more* than they promise, why is there so much *undifferentiated* criticism these days about the value of higher education?

In large part there is heightened concern and scrutiny because of financial crises, desperation about unemployment, and alarm over America's lost standing in education worldwide, and this in spite of a lot of public money poured into education. America lags behind in testing, is losing ground in STEM (science, technology, engineering, math), and has very poor completion

rates.

Of 100 ninth graders in our country, 70 will graduate high school, 44 will go to college, and 20 will graduate in a timely way. As a nation we are becoming less educated, in comparison both to other developed countries and to our own demographic. For the first time the younger generation in America is less educated than the older generation.

The problems are real. We should be alarmed about deterioration in the quality of education, wherever it occurs, at whatever level. The answer, however, is not to launch criticism indiscriminately but to support

those schools that are part of the solution – schools like Bryn Athyn College that have low debt, high quality education, affordable tuition, practical skills, strong liberal arts, career mentoring, strong employment record, and a values-based education second to none.

[The banquet version of the talk transitioned here to a PowerPoint related to the *campus* as a concept of physical, intellectual and social space, with 80 slides.]

## Spiritual Campus

How do we talk about the spiritual dimension of Bryn Athyn College? It is the most important part of what we do *and* the most difficult to quantify and assess.

Many things contribute to the spiritual campus:

- It is the effort that faculty put *in* to teach their disciplines from New Church perspectives.
- It is a curriculum and student life based in moral/civil/spiritual perspectives and values.
- It is what students get *out* of courses, and assignments, and discussions.
- It is the connections they make as they study truth, handle it, turn it this way and that to find its applications in their life (like the figure of the angel Swedenborg saw in the *Nunc Licet* temple with a sword

The spiritual campus is the light in students' faces as they begin to see how separate facts become bodies of knowledge, become understanding – those “aha” moments when something catches fire. The spiritual campus is the glimpses of wisdom when knowing, loving and doing come together.

turning in all directions). Constant movement, infinite possibilities, as long as we face the Lord. *Nunc Licet*. Now it is permitted to enter with understanding into the mysteries of faith.

Let's take a brief humility break here and acknowledge that none of us (even those who have studied the Writings for 50 or 60 years) has a full

understanding of the mysteries of faith. How much less so these students of 18 or 20 years old, some of whom are coming upon these teachings for the first time? But *Nunc Licet* nonetheless. These students are at least *entering*, at least crossing a threshold with their minds. And what better place to use one's intellect to cross into spiritual territory, into spiritual campus, than at a New Church college?

The belief that every student is born for eternal usefulness in heaven creates an educational environment based on respect, confidence and rigorous expectations. We treat our students as angels in the making.

The spiritual campus is the light in students' faces as they begin to see how separate facts

become bodies of knowledge, become understanding – those “aha” moments when something catches fire. The spiritual campus is the glimpses of wisdom when knowing, loving and doing come together.

The spiritual campus is all the service and charity that takes place, on and off campus, as well as the attitudes of compassion, respect and appreciation for others. Any good liberal arts college in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is engaging in this sort of thing – service, civility, compassion and citizenship – and we should celebrate this powerful common ground with other institutions.

Yet there are *distinctions* and *enhancements* worth celebrating. At the College we see our students as eternal beings who have already begun building their homes in the other world, whether they know it or not. We emphasize their spiritual development, both for the short term and the very long term.

We believe that what they do here and now, what they learn and *how* they perform, matters tremendously, not just in terms of career and the natural lifespan, but in terms of the grand human and eternity. The belief that every student is born for eternal usefulness in heaven creates an educational environment based on respect, confidence and rigorous expectations. We treat our students as angels in the making.

Our spiritual campus is *everywhere* that Bryn Athyn College graduates

(our alumni) are living engaged lives and doing good things for the right reasons. It extends into heaven where alumni are networking and community building in ways that escape our understanding but touch our hearts as we all endeavor to be part of the New Jerusalem.

## The Mission of the College

I began this talk by referencing the mission of the College and the contention over whether growth was strengthening or weakening mission. I don't think there are simple ways to ease that tension. Intelligent, passionate, devoted New Church people disagree on this and other issues. But let me say something about missions in general and ours in particular.

Mission statements develop over time. The College updated the wording of its mission several times in the past 20 years, not because we got it wrong, but because we are defining more carefully *how* we stay educationally and spiritually pertinent in a changing world.

Mission statements are supposed to evolve, especially in an educational institution. One of the conditions of the College's accreditation is that we keep the mission updated, making sure it reflects the aspirations and specific goals of the institution.

We continue to emphasize the three-fold Word but have added language to reflect *how* we accomplish this education at the college level. If we are going to have a New Church college, we need to have quality education to support the integration of these priceless teachings.

Of course, nothing says we *must* have a college, much less a liberal arts one. It is not specifically named in the Academy's 1877 Charter, after all. Neither are the Secondary Schools, the Theological School, or the General Church, much less Glencairn or Cairnwood. What is called for is:

- Propagating the Heavenly Doctrines (and establishing the New Church)
- Promoting Education in all its forms
- Educating young men for the ministry
- Publishing books, pamphlets, and other printed matter
- Establishing a library

The Charter of the Academy requires interpretation. Not "anything goes," certainly, but honest engagement with how we will continue to honor and enact it over time. We have clearly felt free to interpret so far:

- We have taken "publishing printed matter" to include e-texts, websites, video.
- We have taken "education in all its forms" to mean New Church education, of a few specific types.
- We have taken "educating young men for the ministry" to mean men

of any age and the ministry to mean the General Church priesthood. (Interestingly, the General Church did not exist at the time of the Charter. All but one of the founders were members of Convention. Their view of the New Church that was to be established certainly included more than the two extant organizations at the time: Conference and Convention.)

In time those who follow us will make other interpretations of what the Charter permits; they will revise and update the mission statements, hopefully in an orderly and fruitful way that will stay true to the core purpose. There is, after all, a Core or Charter Purpose that predates the Charter of the Academy. The core purpose of creation is a heaven from the human race.

At the College we do everything we can to support this core purpose. We do this, at *this* point in time, by

- Striving ourselves to be regenerating people and effective teachers
- Seeking and supporting every baptized or New Church-affiliated student we can find
- Seeking and supporting all newcomers who express genuine interest in the mission
- Engaging in research to open new ways of thinking about Revelation and applying it to life
- Asking tough questions and modeling civil debate, especially regarding doctrinal differences
- Remaining humble that we do not have all the answers. At times we get off track and need to make course corrections.
- Praying for insight to help the institution inspire new generations
- Striving, finally, to keep in mind and in practice the features of the *Nunc Licet* temple: transparent walls, the Word at the center of the sanctuary, an angel guardian; a sword turning in all directions to represent multiple applications of truth; and an invitation over the door to come in and study.



**Dr. Kristin King** is President of Bryn Athyn College of the New Church and associate professor of English. She earned her bachelor's degree at William and Mary, and her master's and PhD at Boston University, where she taught English Literature before coming to Bryn Athyn College. She will step down as President of the College in June and return to teaching. She and her husband, the Rev. Dr. Jonathan S. Rose, live in Bryn Athyn. Contact: [Kristin.King@brynathyn.edu](mailto:Kristin.King@brynathyn.edu)





## The Rev. Barry C. Halterman

*Focusing on the ‘Big Picture’ in Religion*

**W**hen Barry Halterman attended chapel in the Academy Boys School as a senior in 1981-82 did he have any idea that one day he would be up on that stage, leading the service? Probably not.

He was a good student and a good athlete – football, basketball and baseball. He earned an academic scholarship to college. And as a senior he was the quarterback and defensive end on a storied ANC team that not only went undefeated but only gave up 6 points all year.

He was born, raised and educated in Bryn Athyn and says: “While I was moderately interested in religion in high school, it wasn’t a subject I thought I would pursue in any way in college, let alone think about as a career.”

Barry went to Temple University in Philadelphia as a Business and Finance major – assuming he would go into banking, the stock market or some money-and-numbers related field.

During his sophomore year he found he wasn’t enjoying those courses as much as he thought he would, and made a fateful decision – to take a course in comparative religions. Then, he says, “My whole direction started to change.”

“With a background in the more universal approach to religion in the New Church,” he notes, “I found I really enjoyed seeing the big picture of religion and seeing what the Lord had given to other religions and cultures.

“I decided I wanted to learn a lot more about religion around the world, but I was also interested in learning New Church theology in more depth as well.”

Looking for a way to pursue both, he transferred to Bryn Athyn College for an undergraduate degree in Religion, then figured he would go back to Temple for a Master’s and possibly a PhD in Religion.

“But the more I pursued religion at Bryn Athyn College, the more I wanted to teach both New Church Theology and Comparative Religion to both New Church and non-New Church people, because I felt the cross-pollination of New Church and world religious thought would be beneficial to our modern world.”

The Rev. Prescott Rogers was a positive influence in both areas, as he had similar interests and background in world religions.

“I wanted to teach the big picture of religion in an academic setting, but I didn’t want just to teach religion as a bunch of fascinating ideas. I tried to figure out how to do both – teaching religion and pastoring – and have been working to do both ever since.”

But the process took a while. While attending Bryn Athyn College Barry kept up his love of sports, coaching basketball for seventh- and eighth-graders at the Bryn Athyn Church School, and JV baseball in the Academy Boys School. After graduating from the College, he moved to Glenview, Illinois, to marry his high school sweetheart, Anita Fiske.

Like so many ministers who developed special talents while in school, he worked in home improvement and remodeling during summers when in school, then full time for a year-and-a-half before returning to Temple to pursue a Master’s in Comparative Religion. Then it was back to the Bryn Athyn College Theological School for three years to earn his Master of Divinity degree and begin his career as a New Church minister.

His first assignment after his ordination in 1994 was assistant to the pastor in Toronto, Canada. He worked part time in the Olivet Church there, traveled to various small groups across Canada (from Montreal to Vancouver Island, and various places in between), and ran the semi-independent Canadian outreach organization, *Information Swedenborg, Inc.*

After a few years he became the assistant pastor. He enjoyed working in the school and with teen groups in the society and at Maple Leaf Academy, a popular New Church summer camp for teens. He says, “I loved working with kids and teens, and my experiences there helped me greatly in my later move to the Academy of the New Church Religion Department.”

As Director of Information Swedenborg, Inc., he was responsible for creating, editing and publishing the bi-monthly *ISI News*; helped create and maintain its website; wrote feature articles for the newsletter; planned and executed outreach activities, including public lectures, workshops, booths at book fairs, advertising in book review magazines, and selling books wholesale to independent book



The Halterman family, left to right: Kendra, Anita, Barry, Blake, Erik and Eden.

stores; and answered e-mail and telephone inquiries.

“This was a great experience,” he says, “for helping to bring New Church thought to a new group of readers and thinkers.” He gave public lectures at libraries and universities on *Swedenborg*, *Swedenborg and Buddhism*, *Swedenborg and the History of Religion*, and *Swedenborg and Near Death Experiences*.

In 2004 he was invited to join the Religion Department at the Academy of the New Church, “which I eagerly accepted as a chance to further my love of teaching and working with teens.”

He is now the department head and chaplain for the Secondary Schools. He teaches New Church Religion to all levels, and Comparative Religion. As chaplain he is responsible for managing the daily chapel program, including oversight of topics, recruiting and managing volunteer chapel ministers, leading chapel 40-50 times a year, plus providing counseling and pastoral leadership in any school crisis.

As department head he is responsible for overseeing the religion teachers, including support and assessment, managing curriculum review and development, and participating in monthly Department Head/Curriculum Committee meetings. He also plays a key role in admissions, through presentations at open houses for potential students, and presenting the *New Church Overview* sessions as part of the Academy’s admissions process.

He also keeps a hand in athletics as an assistant basketball coach for the past 10 years, and has been an unofficial “back-up pastor” at New Church LIVE, preaching several times a year.

Barry has presented a number of papers, including: a three-part series on *Buddhism in New Church Perspective* at Bryn Athyn College; another public three-part series, *One God, Many Religions: Why?* in Toronto; *Swedenborg: Buddha of the North* at the University of Victoria in British Columbia, Canada; *Tibetan Buddhism and the New Church* in Bryn Athyn; and a General Church Assembly address in Bryn Athyn in 2011, *A New Church for a New World*.

“One of my favorite career experiences,” he says, “was joining two international scholars on a panel presentation of *The Dharma of Emanuel*

Swedenborg at the 1996 Conference of the Society for Buddhist Christian Studies held at DePaul University in Chicago, Illinois. There was a good discussion about using Swedenborg as a bridge between Christian and Buddhist thought. The Dalai Lama was at the conference to give the keynote address. Seeing and hearing his talk was “an important and powerful experience.” (“Unfortunately,” Barry adds, “he did not come to our presentation. I guess the world is not ready yet for a New Church-Buddhist Dalai Lama.”)

Barry and Anita have four children, Erik, Kendra, Eden and Blake – all involved in New Church education. He still loves sports – watching, playing and coaching. And he loves hiking and bird watching with his family.

Some of his favorite passages from the Sacred Scriptures and the Heavenly Doctrines “are those that help me see the big picture and show how the Lord is leading all types of people. I think it is important to see what the Lord is giving to others so we can better see what the Lord has given us through the teachings of the New Church, and how we can use them to help us all fit together in the Lord.”

Some of his favorites are:

“He who is not against us is on our side.” (*Luke 9:50*)

“People who are not Christian but accept one God and live by some type of kindness toward other people according to their religion share a common bond with Christians. No one who believes in God and lives a good life is condemned. So you can see that the Lord’s religion is everywhere in the whole world.” (*New Jerusalem and its Heavenly Doctrine 244*)

Barry feels that another particularly interesting one in terms of comparative religions is:

“When a religion has been implanted in a nation, the Lord leads that nation according to the precepts and dogmas of its own religion.” (*Divine Providence 254*)

“It is fascinating to me to learn what is out there in others’ faiths,” he notes, “and to see more specifically how the Lord leads all people, not just Christians, to heaven.”

Barry says he “especially enjoys the Academy’s focus on reaching out to potential students and families who might be interested in being part of the ANC educational experience. I have also enjoyed ANC’s developing partnership with NewChurch LIVE and the Rev. Chuck Blair, and with our long-time partner – the Bryn Athyn Church – in working to bring our new students and families into our schools, and into the greater life of the New Church.

“We know we have so much to offer people through ANC and all the various facets of the Bryn Athyn community, and we are greatly strengthened by what they add to our community. This is a great place to be right now. The future is bright if we keep moving forward.”

# Palm Sunday: A Different Kind of Kingdom, A Different Kind of King

*The Rev. Barry C. Halterman*

Jesus answered, “My Kingdom is not of this world. If My Kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My Kingdom is not from here.” (John 18:36)

The story of Palm Sunday contains tremendous excitement. This was the moment that the Lord’s disciples had been waiting for, the time when the Lord was actually going to enter Jerusalem, take control, and rule with a new kind of leadership and a new kind of religion. They also seemed to think that they would be the people who would be ruling with the Lord. All the other people – who had heard so much about Jesus and all the miracles He had done – were buzzing with excitement as the famous teacher and healer was riding into Jerusalem.

To our modern culture the Lord riding on a donkey may seem a more humble entrance than riding on a large horse, or some other more regal entrance, but in the culture of their day this actually was a royal entrance. As the Lord rode into Jerusalem, the people laid their garments beside His path and cut down palm branches to line the way for the Lord. It was a wonderful and beautiful scene that showed their humility and their desire to have the Lord lead them.

They shouted out, “Hosanna,” which means “save us.” They saw Him coming to throw off the Roman Empire, to throw off Roman rule, to throw off all the oppression of foreign power. They saw Him coming to give them their country back, to give them their rule back, and to give them – at least in some people’s minds – their religion back.

It was an amazing and exciting scene. This scene and this excitement is a good way to start our Easter week, as we also feel the excitement and the wonder of the Lord coming in and actually being in charge of our lives and our world.

We tend to look for Him to be a king the way we want Him to be a king, and to rule the way we want Him to rule. Rather than go back to the Word and see what kind of a king the Lord actually is and how He actually rules, we try to control that message ourselves.

What would it look like if the Lord really was king of this world? What would the kingdoms of this world look like if He were in charge? One problem for the people back then, and similarly for us today, is that we tend to define the Lord as a king in our own way. We tend to look for Him to be a king the way we want Him to be a king, and we tend to look for Him to rule the kind of kingdom that we want Him

to rule. Rather than go back to the Word and see what kind of a king the Lord actually is and how He actually rules, we try to control that message ourselves.

What kind of king is the Lord? And what kind of kingdom are we really looking at here? When He was talking to Pilate the Lord said, "You say rightly that I am a king." (*John 18:37*) But He also said, "My Kingdom is not of this world. If My Kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My Kingdom is not from here." (*John 18:36*)

If the Lord's Kingdom is not on earth, where is it? Surely, His Kingdom is in heaven. As New Church Christians, we understand that. All Christians get it: the Lord is ruling heaven; He is the king of heaven. But calling the Lord the King of Heaven can lead to a misconception. It can make it seem that the Lord is only the king of the afterlife, not this life, and that His Kingdom will only really be realized after death. But isn't the Lord somehow king of this world as well? Doesn't His ruling heaven affect us all right now?

While the Lord's Kingdom is "not of this world," that doesn't mean it has nothing to do with this world. Take a look at what the Lord says in *Luke 17:20-21*: "Now when He was asked by the Pharisees when the Kingdom of God would come, He answered them and said, 'The Kingdom of God does not come with observation; nor will they say, 'See here!' or 'See there!' For indeed the Kingdom of God is within you.'"

That changes the whole concept dramatically. Clearly the Lord's Kingdom is not just some earthly kingdom, nor is it simply in a place called heaven that we go to when we die. The Lord's Kingdom is not really connected to a specific place, earthly or heavenly, at all. The Kingdom of God exists inside us, in our spirit, and it is something that is alive and accessible within us right now.

As we go through the Easter week story, we can see that the Lord is trying to change the appearance that people have. The appearance is that the Lord is coming to be some kind of earthly ruler who will set up an earthly Utopia. But you can't just see His Kingdom "here" or "there." It does not just exist in one country and not in another.

The Kingdom of God is truly within us. It is something we can take with us everywhere we go, no matter where we are. Nor is it something we have to wait for until we die. Surely the fullness of the Lord's Kingdom does exist in heaven, but how much of it can exist in us now? How much can it exist in this world?

The Heavenly Doctrines give us good definitions of what the Kingdom is here in this world: "By the Kingdom of God, in the universal sense, is meant 'the universal heaven;' in a sense less universal, 'the true church of the Lord;' and in a particular sense, 'everyone who is of the true faith, or who is regenerated by a life of faith.'" (*Secrets of Heaven* 29)

The Lord's Kingdom is the universal heaven. It is on this earth as the true church of the Lord with everyone who follows that true faith. In a more particular way it is with those who are regenerated by a life according to that faith. We read that "a person who has been regenerated has the Kingdom of God within him and becomes in image the Kingdom of God or heaven." (*Ibid.* 5212)

So where is the Kingdom of God? It doesn't come with observation. The Lord is not coming to set it up on earth, at least not in a physical way. It's not going to come some place "out there" at all. It is all coming through us! The way the Lord's Kingdom comes on earth is through each of us! The Lord is the King of heaven and heaven can be experienced inside of us right now.

"The Kingdom of God is within you." What a radical statement. It is one that apparently the people at that time weren't even able to comprehend. This is one reason why the Lord said He would have to come again so we could be led into a deeper understanding of His teachings and a deeper level of belief. He said He was going to come and not speak in parable or figurative language anymore. (*John* 16:25) He would send the Spirit of Truth that would lead us into all truth. (*Ibid.* 16:13)

So to think of the Lord's Kingdom as something that exists inside of us

The Lord's Kingdom is not really connected to a specific place, earthly or heavenly. It exists inside us, in our spirit, and it is something that is alive and accessible within us right now.

is a revolutionary way of looking at it. It is a much more universal view and it makes the Kingdom much more accessible right now. If we start to see the Kingdom in us, and start to see it existing in other people, we see that the Kingdom can be in anyone, anywhere, any time.

How does the Lord rule as a king in that kingdom within? Surely He doesn't rule like any earthly king. What are some things earthly kings do? They make laws. They have the power to enforce their laws and, in combination with judicial systems, to judge us. They fight wars and protect their citizens. Are these things that the Lord does as king? Well, not in an earthly way. He is not the one making earthly laws for us. He is not exercising power on earth that we can see, at least not in any physical way. But the Lord does every single one of these things that an earthly king does.

The Lord makes laws. The wonderful thing about the Lord's laws is they only really follow two simple principles: love of the Lord and love of the neighbor. When Jesus was asked about the commandments, He said you should love the Lord your God with all your heart and your neighbor as yourself. Those are the two commandments that everything else hangs on. He says all the Law and the Prophets (everything in the Old Testament) are simply about those two things. (See *Matthew 22:37-40*)

All of the Lord's laws are about love. Everything He says is about love. When we look at kings and ruling and laws, sometimes we separate those things from love. In fact, we read earlier about the priestly function being about love, and the kingly function being about truth, and how they tend to be seen as somewhat separate. But that passage from *True Christianity* 114 went on to say they are both together in redemption. Love and truth are both together in the work the Lord is doing for us all the time.

Sometimes it is hard to see how those things fit together. When we see laws of truth, judgment and order, it is sometimes hard to see the love behind them. In our church communities and in the world at large we are constantly battling over truth and love and how they fit together. Well, they always fit together.

There is no law that the Lord has ever made that isn't about love. There isn't anything that the Lord has ever loved that doesn't have His laws of order that help bring it out. We are all created from love and for love. Everything the Lord says is from love and for love. Love and truth are amazing in that they are completely intertwined in all that they do. Seeing the Lord as King, then, is seeing those laws of love and making them the ruling principles in our lives.

We need to make them the principles of life not simply because we have to follow them to avoid the consequences but because they are the way we love each other. The more we do what the Lord says, the more love is brought out into the world. The Lord says He gives His commandments to us so our joy



may be full. (*John 15:11*) It's all about joy. The Lord's laws are all about joy.

The connection between laws and love is difficult to see in our world today when we tend to emphasize one or the other and not truly bring them together. We can see it in the Palm Sunday story when the people are looking for an earthly kind of leadership, with earthly kinds of laws and an earthly kind of king. They are not able to see what the Lord is really leading to. It is not even until Easter morning when they start to see that the Lord was talking about something way bigger, way deeper, way more important than simply taking

over Jerusalem. He is talking about laws of the universe! These are the laws that exist within us. These are the laws of love come alive.

So the Lord does make laws and He has all the power to enforce them. He has the power to do whatever He wants. And the wonderful thing is, His power again is all about love. Everything the Lord does is for love, so He would never abuse His power. He would never act like an earthly king might and exercise His power in dictatorial ways. His laws are truly about making love come alive for people.

One of His laws is that our free will must be preserved. We will never be forced to love what the Lord wants us to love. We will never be forced to love at all. The Lord's laws are all about leaving us in free will. Again, this is not about an earthly king with earthly laws and earthly exercise of power. This is way beyond that. This is about the rulership of our spirit, about what goes on within us. It is about laws that bring out love. It is about laws that preserve free will within us. It is about exercising power through order in order to bring about love.

The Lord does judge us as well, but the earthly idea of judging will throw us off. The Lord does not judge to condemn or punish. He said He did not come on earth to condemn but to save. (*John 3:17*)

Everything the Lord teaches is about our salvation. Everything He teaches

To think of the Lord's Kingdom as something that exists inside of us is revolutionary. It is a much more universal view and it makes the Kingdom much more accessible right now. If we start to see the Kingdom in us and start to see it existing in other people, we see that the Kingdom can be in anyone, anywhere, any time.

The more we do what the Lord says, the more love is brought out into the world. The Lord says He gives His commandments to us so our joy may be full. The Lord's laws are all about joy.

is about having us change and follow Him. Everything He teaches is about us learning how to love and embody that love better in our lives. That is what regeneration is – regenerating our loves, learning how to love better. He is the judge of right and wrong, good and evil, and through His teachings we judge our lives and learn to change.

The Lord fights enemies and protects us too, but again, not in an external or earthly way. When we look within ourselves, anyone who has ever struggled with anything knows that there are greater forces going on than

any one of us can handle. We know that unless the Lord is present with us, fighting for us, we will not win those inner battles. That is what temptation and struggle are all about.

When we are faced with spiritual struggles we need to allow the Lord to be king in our lives and allow the Lord's way to come in. If we ask for His help and strive to follow His path we let Him defend us. The Lord is only present in what is good and true from Him. When we seek to have that embodied in our lives the Lord is truly the king within, and He is able to fight and protect us from harm in cooperation with our free-will response to His leading. So, again, is the Lord a king? Absolutely!

We are integral parts of the Lord's Kingdom. The Lord created human beings from love and for love. *True Christianity* 43 talks about three aspects of the Lord's love: love is always going out toward others, seeking to connect with others, and seeking to make others happy from oneself. That is what the Lord is doing every day. He is continually creating things outside of Himself. He strives to make a connection with all that He creates.

For what reason? To share His love with us and make us happy. That is the whole reason we exist. Every one of His laws, every one of His kingly principles, is about that. They all teach about love going out toward others, connecting with others in love, and creating happiness through His laws.

If that is what the Lord is doing for us, that is what we are meant to be doing for each other: reaching out toward others, learning how to connect with them, and striving to make them happy. The way we do that is to allow the Lord to be king of our lives. We allow the Lord's truth to lead and guide. We allow the Lord's truth to show us what love is all about.

When we look at the symbolism of the Palm Sunday story we can see

more about how we are to respond to the Lord as king and how we can be part of His Kingdom. The Lord is riding on a young donkey that has never been ridden before. The donkey or colt represents our natural mind, and in particular our rational mind. Our mind, the donkey, is the vehicle and the Lord is the driver. Our mind is the vehicle we use to travel through the world, the way we understand the world, the way we think about it, the way we move through life.

What if the Lord was really the driver in our lives? We could still be the engine that makes the vehicle go, but what if the Lord was the driver? What if we, in freedom, said, "Lord please drive this vehicle for me. Drive my heart, drive my mind, drive my life." What would that look like? Our mind needs to be like a young donkey that has never been ridden before. It needs to be a fresh, innocent mind, a mind that is motivated by obedience, submission, humility and a willingness to follow the Lord's lead.

The garments and clothing they spread along the Lord's path also represent something about ourselves. What we are wearing right now says something about us – about the way we interact with the world and want to be perceived by the world. Our thoughts and ideas, the truths we have made our own, are represented through those garments.

Are we willing to lay down our ideas and the truths we have learned and let them be a border and pathway lining the way for the Lord to come in and be king in our lives? Similarly, the palm branches represent the truths of faith we use in our lives. Are we willing to lay those down for the Lord? Are we willing to say, "These things we have learned from your Word and are trying to live by, can we give them back to you? Can these be a pathway for you to ride in and help rule our lives?"

Going back to free will, it is important to see that the Lord will never force us to accept His leadership. The Lord doesn't do things against our will. He doesn't do things *to* us at all. He does things *for* us. He does things *in* us. He does things *with* us. He does things *through* us – but always according to our free-will submission to His leading.

We are the key piece in the entire Kingdom of God on earth, really. The Lord's truth is the pathway that describes it all, but we as human beings help create that Kingdom of God on earth. The Lord wants us to be part of it. He created us to be part of it. He created us to receive what He is giving, to connect with Him and with each other and then to live by it in happiness. That is the Kingdom of God. It is inside every single one of us all the time.

So we can use the story of Palm Sunday to help remind us of our purpose in life and how the Lord fits in. Our goal is to strive continually to be part of the Kingdom of God.

We don't wait until we die to be part of it. We don't try to force it on the

outside world or try to create it from the outside in at all. We need to have it inside us first. We need to embody the principles of love that He teaches, to be motivated by the stirrings of love that are inside of all of us, and to live by them. That is the Kingdom of God.

As we lay down all those things of our heart, mind and life before the Lord, we are showing our humility and acceptance of the Lord as King. We are saying, "Lord, we understand and want the Kingdom that You are teaching. We want to be part of it. Please help us be part of it and have Your teachings be a guide in our lives. Help us see the love that is behind each and every truth that You teach."

As we let the Lord rule in our lives and become king, truly the Kingdom of God will be coming on earth. It will be coming through us and we will be part of it. May the story of Palm Sunday inspire you as you go through Easter week to see truly how you can be part of the Lord's Kingdom, accepting the Lord's love and truth into your life, and letting the Lord be king. Amen

Lessons: *Zechariah 9:9; Luke 19:28-42; John 18:33-38; True Christianity*  
114

**The Rev. Barry C. Halterman** was ordained in 1994 and into the second degree in 1996. He teaches and serves as Chaplain and Head of the Religion Department in the Academy of the New Church Secondary Schools. He previously served as assistant pastor in the Olivet Church and School in Toronto, Canada. He and his wife, Anita (Fiske), live in Bryn Athyn. Contact: [Barry.Halterman@ancss.org](mailto:Barry.Halterman@ancss.org)

# A Search for the Truth

*Doug Webber*

Editor's note: This article appeared originally on [www.newchurchperspective.com](http://www.newchurchperspective.com) and is reprinted with permission.

Christianity has been corrupted over the centuries by false doctrines and traditions. As it is now, much of it is based on false premises: there is a tritheistic definition of God, where He is divided between three persons; many are taught they just have to believe and do nothing; many do not believe in an afterlife and await some future resurrection; and there is no logical foundation for defining what portions of Scripture are Divinely inspired or not.

The church is divided. Anyone who examines this will see the problem, and most churches are unable to address it. The end result is that many have left the church. They either become a “spiritual independent,” or a secular materialist, or if they keep looking will be tempted by other false ideologies or religions. This is what I discovered when I first started asking questions and not accepting to believe things blindly. There is a lot of darkness and uncertainty out there.

Those who follow the theology of the New Church experience none of this spiritual uncertainty: the new revelation explains the doctrines of Christianity in a logical and rational manner, and explains where the major denominations have erred.

However, for those who are unaware of the revelations given to Emanuel Swedenborg, when one begins to see the problems with Christianity it can lead to doubt, uncertainty, and even outright denial. And this does not just apply to the congregations; it applies even to ministers who secretly harbor these doubts.

I went through this period of doubtful searching for many years, and at times it was very distressful. When I was 12, I had been a Christian for a while, but when I asked the question, “Exactly how did Jesus Christ save humanity?” I did not receive an answer. The theology of salvation by vicarious atonement not only did not make any sense, it was irrational and immoral. So at that time I opened the Bible, and came up with a similar doctrine to what is

Few will take the step that what they know or believe might be wrong – a willingness to admit that what we know or do is wrong is distressful. But it is a necessary step in order to reach the truth.

taught in the New Church – how Jesus conquered sin until the Holy Spirit became available to humanity. It was not as detailed as what Swedenborg describes, but enough of it is there in the New Testament.

Later, I looked at the closed Bible on the shelf, and thought: I better start reading it more to determine if what the church is teaching is correct. I had at one time decided to read the entire Bible, but when I hit the book of *Leviticus*, I thought: “This has got to be the most incredibly boring book I have ever read.” This book was weird – why

such detail in how to sacrifice an animal?

I then skipped to the *Book of Revelation*, and fell in love with its symbolic imagery. But as I started to look at the Bible, the first problem I addressed was how do we prove this is Divinely inspired? I wanted a strong logical and rational foundation. If you ask the Catholic Church, they will say, “Because we told you so.” That is what we know as a logical error – an “argument from authority” (*argumentum ab auctoritate*). I knew the Bible was not completely correct, as the apostle Jude made a scriptural quote from the apocryphal *Book of Enoch*. This was not a problem I could completely solve.

At this point, I thought: let’s move on and try to prove the existence of God. That was a bigger problem. Where to start? The problem was with any logical proof; you must begin with a set of assumptions that can never be proven. Those assumptions must be taken based on “faith.” So, I decided, let’s start with a proof that has some physical or witness evidence.

There are two things that modern science denies: there is no such thing as prophesy, where one knows the future, and there is no such thing as the afterlife. I would periodically scan bookstores, diving into the New Age section. I had also gathered books on ancient symbolism. Here my research had a bit of success.

There is documented proof that periodically some people have had visions of the future. Ordinary people have precognitive dreams every day. For the afterlife, I discovered the Near Death Experience (NDE), and research in this is ongoing. One of the books was *Life After Life*, by Raymond Moody, M.D. And in a brief chapter, he mentioned this person I had never heard of, Emanuel Swedenborg, who had described the NDE in the 18th century.

At that time there was no internet. So I made a mental note to check

up on this person when I had access to a bigger library. Around this time I had also started to keep a journal of dreams. In one dream, I had asked God just to show me what was the real truth. I was in darkness, and a door began to open. Behind the door a tremendous light was beginning to shine through, and behind that, I felt, was heaven. But just as the door began to open, I awoke.

I began to question myself: with all the divisions within the Christian Church, where is the “one true” church? Why in the past two millennia has there been no revelation? A trinity of three persons was an obvious error. And the thought came to me: all people assume that the religion they were born in is the one truth, and they do not question it.

So I decided not to make that assumption. Instead, I decided to assume that most everything I knew was false, and to search for the truth wherever it led me. It led to me leaving the church, and several years of searching, and there were many, many dead ends and disappointments. I was no longer willing to box my mind in with teachings for which we did not know the validity.

This is a hard step to take: we all like to think we know everything, that we are always right. Few will take the step that what they know or believe might be wrong – a willingness to admit that what we know or do is wrong is distressful. But it is a necessary step in order to reach the truth. To a certain extent, I would say it is always healthy to maintain a certain sense of agnosticism and not be so fixed on a particular mindset.

This uncertain search continued until the day I was in a university library and remembered that reference to Swedenborg. I decided to look him up and pick up his book. To my amazement, the list of books went on for several pages in the library catalog. One, *True Christian Religion*, was readily available so I decided to pick that one up and start reading it.

I thought, for sure, as with many New Age religions, that Swedenborg was going to say that Jesus Christ was just a “good teacher” of some sort. Once he made that error I was going to close that book. To my surprise, not only did he declare that Jesus was Jehovah in human form, but he also solved the problem of the Trinity.

I was totally shocked. It is very hard for me to describe that moment, for a great weight had been lifted. There was also sadness, because for many years

My reaction was that this book (*True Christian Religion*) is worth more to me than its weight in gold. I felt that I had discovered a great treasure, something kept secret from many.

I did not properly acknowledge Jesus for who He was – because without this knowledge, people pray to the Father for the sake of the Son, sort of bypassing Jesus. It reminded me of the passage, “They shall look on Him whom they pierced.” (*John 19:37*)

A host of other issues were resolved, and after further research, there was just no conceivable way he (Swedenborg) thought of this on his own. He was being guided to reveal these spiritual truths, to show us who God is: it is important to love, for He is love itself, and came to us in human form.

And that was just the beginning. I have encountered many other surprises along the way. I know people who still have visions and dreams similar to what Swedenborg describes, but they typically keep this private. The symbolism that Swedenborg describes is universal, and I often use it to interpret dreams.

After I began to study Swedenborg I had another dream: I saw a doorway in front of me. I then heard a booming voice: WELCOME MY CHILD, TO THE MIRROR OF TRUTH. The doorway then changed into a full-length mirror, and I saw a true reflection of myself. The mirror shimmered and turned into liquid, and I walked right through it. Behind the mirror was a huge labyrinth of stone walls, with many passageways and directions. On the walls were endless passages of writing – different letters, which I thought were from the Bible, revealing certain secrets. As I started to read the letters I then awoke. I have been wandering in the labyrinth ever since.

My point is: do not take the truths that you know for granted. Try to live them, for then they become life changing. They have great value, and many are still seeking for these answers. Share with others. Many will reject them, but here and there a light bulb will turn on for those who are ready.



**Doug Webber** is an Information Technology Director for a U.S. financial company, and has been a software architect and consultant for 20 years, specializing in business rule engines and middleware technologies. He has a degree in Near Eastern Studies from the University of California-Berkeley, where he studied ancient Akkadian and Sumerian, as well as another degree in Software Engineering. He is the author of the book, *The Decoded Prophecies of Nostradamus*,

and in 1994 appeared as a subject matter expert on the CBS documentary, *Mysteries of the Ancient World*. He has published the entire works of Emanuel Swedenborg in a digital e-book, *The Divine Revelation of the New Jerusalem*, where all the references are hyperlinked for easy reference (standard edition: [amzn.com/B008GHMPSO](http://amzn.com/B008GHMPSO), expanded edition: [amzn.com/B00AMLPHHO](http://amzn.com/B00AMLPHHO)). His blog on spiritual topics can be found at <http://dream-prophecy.blogspot.com/>. He is working on a new translation of the *Psalms* to correct mistranslations. He lives in New Jersey with his wife and three children. Contact: [theodore.webber@gmail.com](mailto:theodore.webber@gmail.com)



# Another Way to Look at Women in the Priesthood

*The Rev. Robert S. Jungé*

As a rational revelation the Writings are not only Divine in regard to the content, but also Divine in the very format in which that content is organized and presented. The very structure of the Writings reflects step-by-step reasoning, beginning from first principles, the chief of which is the Lord Himself.

The following list of paragraph headings from *Conjugal Love* is selected to demonstrate that its very format reveals the truth that conjugal love makes one more perfectly in proportion as the partners who enter into it are distinct from one another and yet are united. For simplicity's sake the entries have been selected to carry this thread. But the order has been retained to reflect the Divinely inspired logical progression. Those who wish can check the full list in the table of contents. The hope is to let the line of reasoning that the Lord has provided speak for itself.

1. "Man lives as a man after death." (28)
2. "A male is then a male and a female a female." (32)
3. "None come into this love, and can be in it but those who come to the Lord and love the truths and do the goods of the church." (70)
4. "Good and truth are the universals of creation, and thence they are in all created things; but they are in created subjects according to the form of each." (84)
5. "There is no solitary good, nor solitary truth, but that everywhere they are conjoined." (87)
6. "In the subjects of the animal kingdom the truth of good, or truth from good is the masculine; and the good of truth from that, or good from that truth is feminine." (90)
7. "From the influx of good and truth from the Lord there is the love of

- the sex, and there is conjugal love.” (92)
8. “The male and female were created to be the very form of the marriage of good and truth.” (100)
  9. “Two married partners are that form in their inmosts, and hence in the things that follow therefrom, according as the interiors of their mind are opened.” (101)
  10. “From the marriage of good and truth which proceeds and flows in from the Lord, man receives truth, and to this the Lord conjoins good; and that thus the church is formed with man by the Lord.” (122)
  11. “The Word is the medium of conjunction; because it is from the Lord, and thus is the Lord.” (128)
  12. “The church is from the Lord, and is with those who come to Him, and live according to His commandments.” (129)
  13. “Chastity arises through the total renunciation of scortations from religion.” (147)
  14. “There is inherent in each sex, by creation, the faculty and the inclination whereby they are able and desire to be conjoined as one.” (157)
  15. “The will of the wife conjoins itself with the understanding of the man; and hence the understanding of the man with the will of the wife.” (159)
  16. “Conjunction is inspired into the man by the wife according to her love; and is received by the man according to his wisdom.” (161)
  17. “Conjunction of the wife with the rational wisdom of the husband is effected from within; but with his moral wisdom from without.” (163)
  18. “For the sake of this conjunction as an end, to the wife is given a perception of the husband’s affections, and also consummate prudence in moderating them.” (166)
  19. “This perception is the wisdom of the wife; it cannot be with the man; and the rational wisdom of the man cannot be with the wife.” (168)
  20. “There are duties proper to the man, and duties proper to the wife; and the wife cannot enter into the duties proper to the man, nor the man into the duties proper to the wife, and rightly perform them.” (174)
  21. “These duties also, according to mutual aid, conjoin the two into one;

and at the same time make one house.” (176)

22. “Married partners according to the above-mentioned conjunctions, become one man more and more.” (177)

It is my hope that careful reflection on the order of the above teachings will be helpful in letting the Lord form how we think regarding the fundamental difference between men and women, as I believe this is the key to making a wise decision regarding women in the priesthood. My own reflections follow.

Male and female are the very form of the marriage of good and truth, and the more the distinction is preserved the more perfect will be the state of our marriages. It is therefore imperative that the difference between the sexes be upheld in society at large, the church, and individual marriages in order to sustain conjugal love itself.

Early in the line of reasoning we find the statement, “Nothing whatever is alike in them; and yet in every least thing there is what is conjunctive.” (Conjugal Love 33) The conjunction is according to the form of each, and each differs as to affection, application, manners and form. (Ibid. 90-91) Whether the distinction is expressed in terms of good and truth or love and wisdom, the whole line of the reasoning leads to clearly distinguishable applications or uses.

The statement that “the rational wisdom of the man cannot be with his wife” is an integral part of the overall argument distinguishing the unique wisdom of both. The argument continues by helping us see, “What is meant by the rational wisdom of men.” Then is listed, “knowledge, intelligence, and wisdom; and in particular rationality, genius, learning, sagacity.” They then develop the definition to include knowledges associated with a number of public professions and jobs, including the clergy, all of which exist today. (Ibid. 163)

But the line of thought does not stop there. Later we read that the one partner cannot enter into the duties/offices of the other “and rightly perform them.” (Ibid. 175) It is all one logical piece of cloth.

The cultural, economic, educational and other circumstances where we find ourselves today may be far from what is described here. That is perhaps not surprising, for conjugal love itself is rare and scarcely known. I believe the Lord will understand if we find that we cannot fully comply with what is prescribed here. He bends us. He does not break us. Nevertheless, the life of our homes and our church depends upon our sincerest effort to follow the Lord’s leading, even if it is high and we feel we cannot attain it.

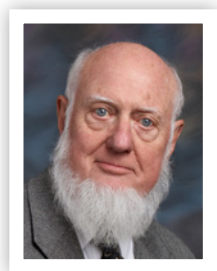
Making distinctions necessary to conjugal love itself should not be thought of as denying or discriminating against women, but rather as a way to enhance the eternal happiness of both women and men.

Women have an awesome spiritual role. Consider this: “The reason why the inspiration or insinuation of love is from the wives into men is that with men there is nothing of conjugal love, nor even of the love of the sex, but only with wives and women.” (Ibid. 161)

Then consider what that insinuation of conjugal love involves: “True conjugal love in its first essence is love to the Lord.” (Apocalypse Explained 995:2) “As true conjugal love in its first essence is love to the Lord from the Lord it is also innocence.” (Ibid. 996:2) “Since conjugal love in its first essence is love to the Lord from the Lord, and thus is innocence, conjugal love is also peace, such as the angels in the heavens have.” (Ibid. 997:4)

All of these things – conjugal love, love to the Lord, innocence and peace – are insinuated into men by means of a perception which is the wisdom of wives – a wisdom which “cannot be with the man.” (Conjugal Love 168)

Perhaps we have a lot to learn about the spiritual side of domestic uses, and the respect we should have for it.



**The Rev. Robert S. Jungé** has been a minister of the General Church for almost 60 years. He has been pastor in Denver, Colorado, and founding pastor of the Ivyland (Pennsylvania) New Church and the Kempton (Pennsylvania) New Church. He has also been Secretary of the General Church, Principal of the Bryn Athyn Church School, instructor at the Academy of the New Church, and Dean of the Theological School. He has also been visiting pastor in many areas,

from the western United States and central Pennsylvania to West Africa, Japan and Korea. He lives in retirement in Kempton and looks forward to being reunited with his wife, Vera (Pitcairn), who has been in the other world for 34 years. Contact: [revjunge@ptd.net](mailto:revjunge@ptd.net)

# My Ministry of Care

*Tryn Rose Seley*

**T**hrough my experiences as a caregiver, Activities Coordinator and professional musician in private homes and live-in communities, and as Special Programs Coordinator at the Alzheimer's Association in Denver, Colorado, over the last decade, I have learned a great deal about applying my beliefs in the service of and care for those with Alzheimer's and related dementias.

Dementia is the umbrella term for symptoms of memory loss, disorientation and general loss of daily functions and abilities. According to the Alzheimer's Association estimates, Alzheimer's accounts for 60-80% of all dementias, with 5-10% of those cases in the "Younger Onset" realm – under age 65.<sup>1</sup>

Dementia is like saying the garden has flowers in it, and the specific kinds of dementias are like daisies, dahlias or daffodils.<sup>2</sup> Although Alzheimer's constitutes a large portion of dementias, it's a diagnosis of elimination, the last on the list of causes of dementia.

This being true, it's very important to learn about one's health issues, for outward symptoms may be the result of heart problems, high blood pressure, or infections that, once treated, can eliminate Alzheimer's from the list of possible causes of dementia, and a person may regain great quality of life.

My religious beliefs have informed and amplified my ability to connect to people with dementia with positive energy, love, understanding and support. I'll share some of my favorite Bible passages and words from Emanuel Swedenborg here, which have led me in my work.

*(1) "Consider the lilies of the field; they neither toil nor spin, and yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these." (Matthew 6: 28, 29)*

---

1 Alzheimer's Association website: [www.alz.org](http://www.alz.org)

2 Amelia Schafer, Supervisor and colleague at the Alzheimer's Association, Colorado Chapter. Thanks for the illustrative example distinguishing 'dementia' from 'Alzheimer's'.

I read this passage at my brother Martin's funeral service in 1979. His memorial stone in Michigan holds this quote, and I carry it with me with love and appreciation for him. Today, it inspires me to remember that even if a person can't say what he wants, it doesn't mean he doesn't want anything. Martin couldn't speak clearly in a way I could understand, but he could pull my hair and turn my face toward his to get my attention. Though I didn't like it much as a child, it was, in fact, his way of communicating with me.

With those who have Alzheimer's, I know they have things to communicate, and if I can discover what the message is, or use my best guess and move forward with support and encouragement, life is more satisfying for me and for them.

I have spent my life's work appreciating those who need a bridge, a lift, a hand to communicate who they are and what they want. With preschool-age children and younger, with people who can't speak or walk or live independently, with many elders and their families, my response is the same: to respect and value a person as he or she is.

(2) *"Go and do likewise." (Luke 10:37)*

The story of the Good Samaritan inspires me to serve those who need serving. Ray and Star Silverman, in their *Rise Above It* study of the Ten Commandments, impressed me deeply in the class I took years ago, with their emphasis on the Fourth Commandment: "Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long upon the land which the Lord your God has given you." (*Exodus 20:12*)

I love and respect my parents, but many people have challenging family relationships, for understandable reasons. Regardless of the stories, the line was held for all of us in the class to find a way to connect, to forgive, not to be harmed further, but to release any pain and resentment for the sake of our own healing.

In the live-in communities where I worked, mostly the relationships were good between family members, but sometimes it came to light that this person I was caring for didn't have the best relationships with children or spouse, and that there was not forgiveness for those hard times between them. If I had challenges as their caregiver, I recalled what the Samaritan did for the man who was ostensibly his enemy.

When a person has dementia, finishing his or her life here, I can do my best to make the day go well, sometimes by giving space, sometimes by engaging the person in good choices, always with hope that his or her life experiences will sort out for the best.

To avoid further harm to oneself, one can get more support, through private caregivers in the home, Hospice groups, a best friend or family member to provide respite. Either way, I found the Good Samaritan story helpful for me – for supporting the life of a family member or one I care for as a professional – to have peace within myself.

*(3) “If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there your hand shall lead me, and Your right hand shall hold me. If I say, ‘Surely the darkness shall fall on me, even the night shall be light about me...’” (Psalm 139: 9-11)*

Psalm 139 reminds me that the Lord’s support is always available to me. As a caregiver, I strive to be available to those I care for, in gentle, unseen, or cheerful and outgoing ways, depending on that person’s state.

I stopped by a gem shop recently in Arizona, and met a young woman who did spiritual readings for people there. Tammy (name changed) shared a story about her mom, who had some form of dementia.

Tammy sometimes met with great resistance when she tried to help her mom bathe, dress or eat well, or get involved in conversation. She soon realized that these times of resistance came when her mother was spending time in the spiritual world, trying to finish her time on earth. When she “came back,” she apologized to Tammy for her belligerence.

Tammy realized her mom was fine, even if it didn’t look like it to her, and that she needed to let her mom go. She did, and the resistance eased, from both sides. When Tammy’s mom died, she knew she was content, with no more tug of war between worlds.

We may imagine those with dementia are in darkness, because they can’t always share what’s going on for them. This story brings many experiences back to me as a caregiver, that I didn’t always get to see what was going on for a person, but I knew things were indeed going on, for that person’s highest good. That allowed me to have patience, empathy and give space when the person needed it.

*(4) Turning the other cheek, going the second mile, giving to him who asks you... (Matthew 5:38-42)*

Caregiving takes a lot of energy, is stressful, full of constant, difficult decisions on behalf of the ones I care for. From one of my early trainings, the director of the live-in community where I worked said, “If you can repeat the same thing to a person with Alzheimer’s 18 times, and on the 19th time get a little weary of saying it, then this field of support is for you.” I knew it was right for me.

(5) *“You are the light of the world, (and put that light) on a lampstand, (where it) gives light to all who are in the house.” (Matthew 5: 14-15)*

If I have energy, interest and inspiration to give people who need it, I need to give it. That’s what gets me out of bed every day, with good will in my heart and willingness to serve a person in every way. Every person on this journey needs this kind of support: the person with dementia, the family, friends, spouse, professional caregivers who joined our community to give more support when a person couldn’t eat or drink or get out of bed unassisted anymore. I am thankful that I have spiritual resources to draw on that filled my cup to do this work. It was a good way to spend time for me, and for those I served.

(6) *“During our spiritual tests, we are apparently left completely alone, although in fact we are not alone - at those times God is most intimately present at our deepest level, giving us support.” (True Christian Religion 126)*

You may know the famous *Footsteps* poem, written by Mary Stevenson in 1936. This came to mind when I read this quote. When a person needs full care to get through the day, that is what caregivers provide, “carrying” the person when needed, even if that person doesn’t recognize the efforts.<sup>33</sup>

(7) *The Lord’s Divine Providence has as its end a heaven from the human race. (Divine Providence 27)*

This belief has given me the countenance of respect, patience, empathy, encouragement and positive energy toward helping people finish their lives on earth, regarding them as angels in the making, no matter what external appearances suggest. I also believe that they get to become themselves again in the next realm, free from the diseases that makes them forget who they are, as Tammy’s story illustrates.

---

3 One night I dreamt I was walking along the beach with the Lord. Many scenes from my life flashed across the sky. In each scene I noticed footprints in the sand. Sometimes there were two sets of footprints, other times there were one set of footprints. This bothered me because I noticed that during the low periods of my life, when I was suffering from anguish, sorrow or defeat, I could see only one set of footprints.

So I said to the Lord, “You promised me Lord, that if I followed you, you would walk with me always. But I have noticed that during the most trying periods of my life there have been only one set of footprints in the sand. Why, when I needed you most, you have not been there for me?”

The Lord replied, “The times when you have seen only one set of footprints, is when I carried you.”  
*Footsteps* by Mary Stevenson, 1936



(8) *Angelic life consists in useful service and in good deeds of charity. (Secrets of Heaven 454)*

My approach to care is all about the usefulness that a person wants to be engaged in, even when dementia clouds the mind and efforts. If people are “still here,” they want to know what they love, what they’ve done, who they are. The key to my enjoyment and inspiration as a caregiver is learning about people’s careers, values, goals and achievements in their lifetimes, and celebrating these elements of their lives in the form of stories, song lyrics and other ways. It brings life back to life, for everyone.



**Tryn Rose Seley** is a gardener, photographer and author of *15 Minutes of Fame: One Photo Does Wonders to Bring You Both Back to Solid Ground*. It is available on her website, [caregiverheart.com](http://caregiverheart.com), or on Amazon for Kindle, and Barnes and Noble for Nook. Please contact her directly for a printed copy. Tryn lives in Scottsdale, Arizona. Contacts: [trynrose@gmail.com](mailto:trynrose@gmail.com); [facebook.com/caregiverheart](https://www.facebook.com/caregiverheart), <https://twitter.com/trynrose>, [www.linkedin.com/in/trynrose](http://www.linkedin.com/in/trynrose)

# General Church Education: 80,000 and Counting...

*Rachel Glenn*

I work for General Church Education (previously the Office of Education), as the coordinator for Religious Educational Programs. Our team includes Gretchen Keith, Janet Lockard and Sarah Odhner, under the priestly leadership of the Rt. Rev. Peter M. Buss Jr. We develop and distribute materials for Sunday school, home religion lessons and the general public. (Other people in our department focus on materials and support for General Church schools. Bishop Buss supports both.)

I want to let you know about one of our recent projects to offer New Church education programs to the world.

In January 2012, we launched an online video channel ([www.youtube.com/ncsundayschools](http://www.youtube.com/ncsundayschools)) and started to produce our own videos. This was the brainchild of Sarah Odhner, who recognized that online videos are becoming an increasingly important part of 21<sup>st</sup> century education. We have continued to grow both our audience and our offerings: 35 videos viewed more than 80,000 times in 122 countries. We have also added closed captioning to some of the videos. This not only serves anyone who is hearing impaired, but once closed captioning is entered in English, it can be automatically translated into most languages, better serving a world-wide audience.

Our videos fall into four main types:

1. Illustrated stories from the Word
2. Direct instruction on New Church concepts
3. Songs about Biblical stories or religious ideas
4. Project and activity how-tos. One Sunday school teacher told us, “I particularly appreciate the variety of materials.”

Many of the first videos we worked on were in conjunction with a series of Sunday school lessons on the story of Joseph. The Religious Education Programs team produced a number of these in-house, and thanks to a special

donation we were able to hire Curtis and Matthew Childs to develop two videos aimed at teens: *Joseph's Brothers in Your Head* and *It Doesn't Work without Benjamin*. They teach specifically New Church ideas about the internal sense of the stories in the Word and how it illuminates our own lives. Together, they have been viewed more than 2,000 times.

One of our other videos for the Joseph series was called *Forgiveness Experiment*, ([www.bitly.com/ForgivenessExperiment](http://www.bitly.com/ForgivenessExperiment)) which introduced New Church ideas about sin, and how forgiveness works. This has been quite popular with a variety of ages, being viewed 2,290 times. Last year, while working on a series of Sunday school lessons on the story of creation, we developed similar "object lesson" activities including a water experiment, ([www.bitly.com/CleaningSelfishThoughts](http://www.bitly.com/CleaningSelfishThoughts)) which demonstrates the idea of cleaning selfish and untrue thoughts from our minds; and *Light and Darkness Experiment*, ([www.bitly.com/LightAndDarkness](http://www.bitly.com/LightAndDarkness)) demonstrating the separation of light and darkness in the creation story, and the distinction between spiritual thoughts and natural thoughts.

After the initial push to develop the videos related to the Joseph story, we quickly realized that the YouTube channel could also be an effective way to share materials that we already had repurposed as videos.

Janet Lockard embraced this opportunity, creating several videos for young children from illustrated stories from the Word that had been part of our old Early Childhood Religion Program. On one of these, *The Call of Samuel*, ([www.bitly.com/TheCallOfSamuel](http://www.bitly.com/TheCallOfSamuel)) elicited a comment: "I love this; hoping to use it for Sunday school lessons, but...we don't have internet or anything in our church. Is there any way we could use it, please?" Happily, we were able to explain that all the videos can be downloaded to laptops or tablets, and then shown without internet connection.

We were lucky enough to have two different sets of illustrations for this story so we made a second video using the song, *The Lord Calls Samuel*, ([www.bitly.com/TheLordCallsSamuel](http://www.bitly.com/TheLordCallsSamuel)) by John and Lori Odhner. Not surprisingly, songs make popular videos. We have been blessed to be able to use some songs by New Church composers, including Christine Taylor and Hildegard and Warren David.

The most frequently watched video developed to accompany the Creation Sunday School lessons this past year was the *Seven Days of Creation* ([www.bitly.com/GCED7DaysOfCreation](http://www.bitly.com/GCED7DaysOfCreation)). While the song is very simple for young children, we are pleased that it seems to be enjoyed by all ages. As one person wrote: "The Day One video is just so fantastic! The New Church of Phoenix used it to open their Journey program, showing it to children and adults alike during their worship service. The response was amazing. It touched people emotionally."

One of the most delightful things about working on these videos has been

involving different volunteers in the work as narrators, singers, actors and set creators. Several local children have participated and really enjoyed feeling useful and needed by their church. We have also purposely involved a variety of adult readers and narrators. The volunteers get excited about helping with projects, and we love having these connections. We are very grateful to all those who have shared their talents with us, and so with the world beyond.

It is not necessary to be local to be involved in this work. As well as putting up our own videos, YouTube allows us to link to and “favorite” other videos we believe are valuable for our audience. If you have videos you think might be useful – of religious songs or stories, Sunday school classes, etc. – we would be interested in hearing from you.

Among our most popular videos are those with readings (by our volunteers) taken directly from the Word and illustrated with felt dolls, made mostly by Gretchen Glover, who is also skilled at posing the figures for the photographs that make up the videos’ visuals. So far, we have been using these to make holiday videos, for Christmas ([www.bitly.com/JesusIsBorn](http://www.bitly.com/JesusIsBorn); [www.bitly.com/TheWiseMen](http://www.bitly.com/TheWiseMen)), Easter ([www.bitly.com/JesusRidesIntoJerusalem](http://www.bitly.com/JesusRidesIntoJerusalem)), and New Church Day ([www.bitly.com/WomanClothedWithSun](http://www.bitly.com/WomanClothedWithSun)).

This past Christmas we experimented with online advertising, which drew more than 20,000 views in December and early January. It is exciting to think about the people we are reaching, including a viewer who left this comment: “I just love this animation. It is so captivating and realistically follows Scripture and the feel of the story. Well done!”

This quote, along with one from a General Church minister – “It’s cute and reverent” – perfectly captured our goal in developing these videos: to reach people with messages from the Lord’s Word communicated with great affection. Indeed, the videos are a new media experiment, but they are not a new purpose. Our core goal in developing materials remains what it has always been: to teach children about the Lord and His Word in the light of our New Church teachings.

Making every one of our 35 videos has been a learning process, both challenging and delightful. Sarah and Janet continue to explore new techniques and technologies to incorporate into the videos now in development.

If you have not yet seen any of our General Church Education videos, we encourage you to take a look and let us know what you think. If you have already enjoyed the videos, you might wish to become a “subscriber” to the channel. Being a subscriber requires only an e-mail address and means you will be notified whenever a new video is added to our channel.

The next video, coming in April, will celebrate the story of the Lord’s resurrection on Easter morning.

To contact Rachel Glenn: 267-502-4959, [rachel.glenn@newchurch.org](mailto:rachel.glenn@newchurch.org)

# Church News

*Compiled by Bruce Henderson*

## **GENERAL CHURCH BOARD**

**Bishops' Office:** The Rt. Rev. Brian Keith reported at the February 7-8 meeting of the Board of Directors that a balanced budget is within sight. Great strides have been taken to eliminate the deficit, which has limited our ability to consider any new uses. Bishop Keith estimates that he is spending 25-30% of his time as Chancellor of the Academy.

**The Rt. Rev. Peter Buss Jr.** is focusing on developing relationships among the clergy and with General Church schools. He is devoting much of his attention to oversight of the clergy, international travel (recently returned from Australia), and supporting connections with young people.

**Budget:** Executive Director David Frazier presented a 10-year overview of the budget, with positive trends. Operating income increased from \$5 million in 2004 to a high of \$7.4 million in 2009, and has since declined to about \$4.5 million. Overall expenses also increased from \$4.9 million in 2004 to \$9.4 million in 2010, and have decreased to approximately \$5 million in 2014. The operating deficit peaked at \$3.4 million in 2010.

The proposed budget for 2014-2015 was approved with income projected at \$4.6 million and expenses at \$4.8 million. Through a lot of diligent work and tough decisions, the deficits that have plagued the budget for several years are finally disappearing. The deficit for the coming fiscal year has been reduced to \$180,000.

**Outreach:** The framework for all *newchurch.org* web pages, plus support for local websites, are no longer supported by the developer, so they must be rebuilt in a new environment. Converting and upgrading all General Church and congregational websites is estimated to take up to two years and cost more than \$200,000. This will be paid out of restricted capital funds.

The Board reviewed church plants, some of which are achieving their targets, while others are struggling. There was extended discussion about the relative use of church plants and other outreach efforts, such as web advertising.

**THE NEW CHURCH IN CUBA**

*Excerpts from a report by Douglas Calvo Gainza, courtesy of David Simpson, Toronto*

During the “Seven Year War” in 1762 the British Army attacked and seized Havana. At this time Emanuel Swedenborg also was revealing the spiritual sense of the Word. Now Swedenborg’s Writings have come to Cuba.

Cubans’ interest in Swedenborg dates from the Independence War against Spain, when José Martí, a national hero in Cuba, mentioned him twice in his voluminous legacy. Throughout the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, a monthly newspaper was published in Spain and distributed in Cuba, with the collaboration of a native Swedenborgian. During the 1950s interest grew and significant individuals arose in the Cuban Swedenborgian movement.

With the triumph of the Cuban Revolution in 1959, the development of Swedenborgianism on the island was abruptly checked. But Cuban-Americans like Ray Guiu, who directed a Swedenborgian bookstore in Boston for decades, and resident intellectuals like writer José Lezama Lima, kept the movement alive.

Today Cuba is an impoverished country but change is occurring and new ideas are finding fertile ground. The father of modern Swedenborgianism in Cuba is undoubtedly **David Simpson** in Toronto, who created a website and published many New Church materials in Spanish. This was the beginning of opening up new contacts.

A team was organized which has translated *Divine Providence* and is working on many other books of the Writings. There has also been a significant contribution from an anonymous donor in Canada to help with the translation of *Heaven and Hell*.

Under the auspices of Dr. Adolfo Ham, one of the most relevant personalities on Cuban spirituality, two international conferences on Theology and Religious Science were held in 2013 and 2014, which were well attended by students and the general public. These included presentations by the **Revs. Göran Appelgren , David Lindrooth, Bradley Heinrichs, Kurt Nemitz** and **Dr. Anders Hallengren** of Sweden. (Gören, David and Kurt also have performed several baptisms in Cuba.)

These symposiums in an officially permitted and respected institution are starting to attract the attention of Cubans from various religious origins, and several people are increasingly interested in the teachings of the New Church. There is already talk of a third conference to keep the momentum going.

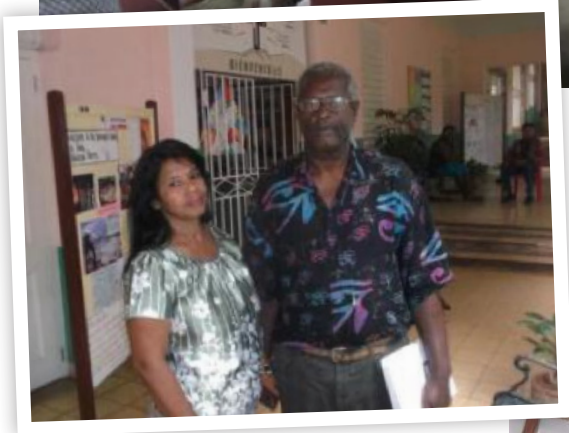
“Let us hope,” the report states, “that (all) this will redound to a better acquaintance of the Hispanic-speaking nations with the revelation that the Lord of the Universe gave to mankind three centuries ago, through a man who is already being welcomed as a pleasant guest in several Cuban homes and hearts.”



First New Church baptisms in Havana, January 11, 2013, by the Rev. David Lindrooth, left, and the Rev. Göran Appelgren.



Dr. Anders Hallengren of Stockholm lectured on Swedenborg in Saint Geronimo University, the oldest Institution of higher education in Cuba



Pastor Esteban Valdés Sánchez and his wife Ela Maritza Céspedes



Reverend Göran Appelgren and Reverend Kurt Nemitz performing the Baptismal Liturgy

**BOYNTON BEACH RETREAT**

This year's Boynton Beach Retreat in Florida – formerly known as Eldergarten – featured excellent presentations by Dr. Wendy Closterman, Dr. James de Maine, and the Rev. Dr. Jonathan S. Rose. A summary of the presentations starts on on page 137.



Bruce Henderson



Dr. Wendy Closterman



Dr. Jim de Maine



Robert Heinrichs



Karen Lehne leads a Tai Chi class during a break



Retreat banquet



Tom and Rita Steen, the Rev. Dan Heinrichs



ANC Class of 1956: Rear, left to right: Bruce Henderson, Jim deMaine, Bob Brickman, Roger Echols, David Stebbing. Front: Gail Brickman, Janice Roscoe, Gale Arnoux, Bob Heinrichs, Nancy Wyncoll, Corinne Echols, Phyllis Thomas



Tony Pearson, Forrest and Peggy Dristy, Barbara Pearson



Rev. Dr. Jonathan Rose



Boat cruise on the Intercoastal Waterway



Boat cruise on the Intercoastal Waterway



The Retreat in session. Who do you recognize?



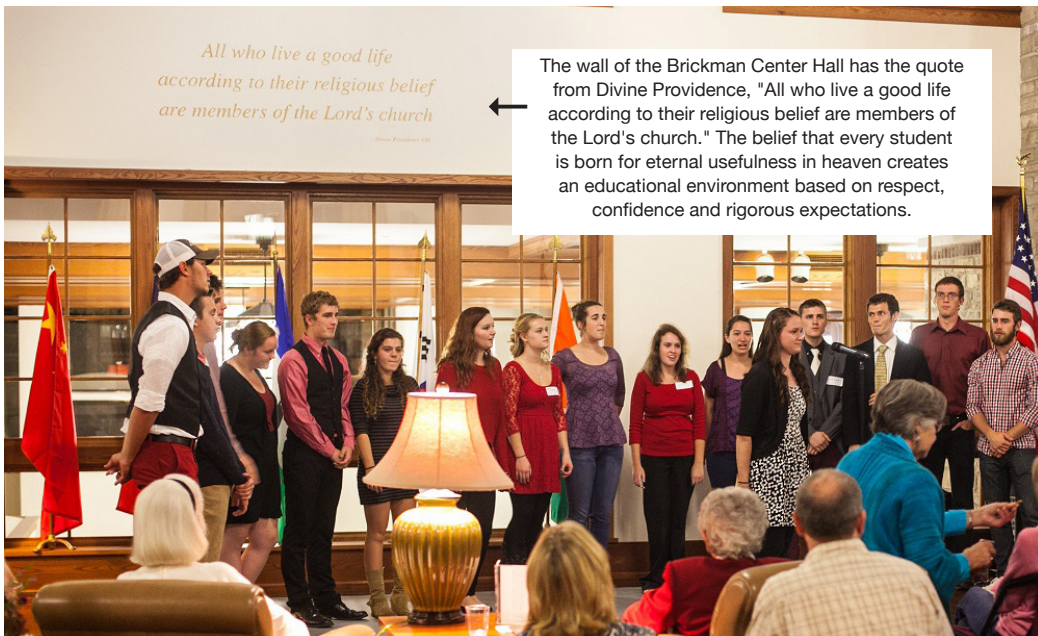
Bill Radcliffe and Sylvia Gladish



PHOTO CREDITS: Candace Fraze and the Rev. Kenneth Alden

**BOYNTON BEACH RETREAT BANQUET ADDRESS**

Dr. Kristin King, President of Bryn Athyn College of the New Church, gave the banquet address at the Boynton Beach Retreat, focusing on three aspects of the College: developments at the College; the context of higher education in America; and the mission and future of the College. (Page 149)



The wall of the Brickman Center Hall has the quote from Divine Providence, "All who live a good life according to their religious belief are members of the Lord's church." The belief that every student is born for eternal usefulness in heaven creates an educational environment based on respect, confidence and rigorous expectations.

**President King highlighted a number of things that contribute to the spiritual campus:**



The effort that faculty put in to teach their disciplines from New Church perspectives.



A curriculum and student life based in moral/civil/spiritual perspectives and values.



What students get out of courses, and assignments, and discussions.



President King asked Robert Benne, the foremost expert on American religious colleges and secularization, to study the College and identify where he saw it drifting from the mission. Dr. Benne has spent decades studying why some Christian colleges lose their mission and others do not.

His assessment: Bryn Athyn College is overwhelmingly focused on its mission. Dr. Benne was stunned by the integrity of the college's curricular focus on mission and by the emphasis on and monitoring of moral behavior on campus. He said the college is successfully fostering "clean living" in a way that many campuses do not.

## A TRIBUTE TO GLENCAIRN MUSEUM



Crispin Paine

Last year, Crispin Paine, Honorary Lecturer at the Institute of Archaeology at University College London in the United Kingdom, visited the Glencairn Museum in Bryn Athyn. He is one of the foremost authorities in the world on the interpretation of religious objects in museums. He was highly complimentary of the Glencairn Museum and said its goal of becoming a leader in the interpretation of religion is firmly within reach.

After lecturing at Yale University last fall, he spent several days at Glencairn, where he consulted with the museum staff and addressed a group of Bryn Athyn College students and faculty. Glencairn staff also accompanied him as he toured several local museums, including the National Christmas Center & Museum and the Biblical Tabernacle Reproduction at the Mennonite Information Center.

He shares his thoughts in a fascinating essay, *Glencairn Leads the Way! Religion in Museums*, which you can read in the Glencairn Museum News at [www.glencairnmuseum.org](http://www.glencairnmuseum.org).

It begins with: “The Academy of the New Church, a Swedenborgian educational institution, founded what seems to have been the first ever museum of religion – at least museum in the modern sense. The museum of religion in Glencairn traces its origins to 1878, when leading New Church members John Pitcairn and William Benade set out on their Middle East and European travels, from which they were to return with a collection of artifacts for the Academy’s museum.”

The article concludes with: “Too often, museums don’t let the religious role and significance of their objects show. They treat them as art, or history, or sometimes science, and their fascinating back story is suppressed. It was because I got so interested in the way museums change the meaning of the objects they acquire that last year I published *Religious Objects in Museums: Private Lives and Public Duties*. In this short book I try to uncover the various different roles religious objects can take on when they come into a museum.

“I’m not suggesting there’s anything wrong with this – simply that it would be valuable for museums *also* to help visitors understand their *religious* meanings – as Glencairn does.”

## HOPE FOR DAWSON CREEK

**The Rev. Brad Heinrichs**, Executive Vice President for the General Church in Canada, reported in the January issue of the *New Church Canadian* on a recent

visit to the Dawson Creek Society and Grande Prairie in Western Canada. The people there have enjoyed having the **Rev. Coleman Glenn** as their pastor, with his wife, **Anne**, and infant son, **Samuel**, and are sorry to be losing them this summer to serve in South Africa.

Brad notes: "I made a commitment to them that I would visit them once a month after Coleman leaves, and promised that the G.C.I.C. would do its very best to provide them two services a month. They were very grateful for the support of the G.C.I.C. and felt this would provide them some sense of continuity. However, obviously their long-term hope would be to have a resident pastor again in the near future.

"I think it is vital to the health of the New Church in Western Canada to have a resident pastor. We have a gradually growing group in Vancouver as well that is also served from the East, but they would benefit from having more regular visits."

**Bishop Brian Keith** is visiting Dawson Creek and Grande Prairie in March to meet with the people and get a first-hand sense of their needs.

## SUMMER CAMPS

### ANC Summer Camp

The popular Academy of the New Church Summer Camp for 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> graders will be held July 6–12. Some 150 students from all across North America are expected to attend. They will learn about the Academy and the New Church religion, while engaged in a host of activities designed to bring them together in an atmosphere of fun and friendship. This year pictures again will be posted throughout the week on the ANC Summer Camp 2014 facebook page, to help parents keep up with their children's activities. Information, including the registration form, online registration, lists of academic and recreational classes, and health forms, is available at [www.ancss.org](http://www.ancss.org). Contact: Director **Keene Blair**, 267-502-5527 or [keene.blair@ancss.org](mailto:keene.blair@ancss.org).

### Tools 4 Life Camp

Registration is open for this year's Tools 4 Life camp for those just completing their sophomore and junior years of high school. The camp is designed to help teenagers gain the tools and confidence to take the next step after high school. The experience includes excursions into the world of college, networking, career, community service and life skills. Last year's activities for the 54 students attending included a visit to Monmouth University for a campus tour, helping out with Hurricane Sandy relief on the beaches of New Jersey, and attending a performance of *Wicked* at Philadelphia's Academy of Music. This year's camp is July 13 – 19. Students may register online at [www.ancss.org](http://www.ancss.org).

For information e-mail [tools4life@ancss.org](mailto:tools4life@ancss.org) or telephone Co-Director **Kendall Hyatt** at 215-805-6783.

### **Performing Arts Camp**

The ANC performing Arts Camp – June 18-27 – offers an exciting theatrical experience for 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders, culminating in a performance of Disney Juniors’ *The Little Mermaid* on June 28 in the Mitchell performing Arts Center on the ANC campus. A professional group of teachers will lead children through the process of blocking, vocal production, choreography and character development. The camp will foster imagination, creativity and practical performance skills, as well as provide a positive experience for making new friends. Registration is open online at [www.ancss.org](http://www.ancss.org). For more information, contact **Sarah Waelchli** at 267-502-2678 or [sarah.waelchli@ancss.org](mailto:sarah.waelchli@ancss.org).

### **Medieval Summer Camp**

Students who are 9, 10, or 11 years old are invited to Glencairn Museum to experience life in the Middle Ages during the week of June 16–20 or 23–27. Participants will celebrate medieval times by participating in activities that include cooking, crafts, boar hunts, sword play, and archery. For more information, or to register, contact **Leah Smith** at 267-502-2993 or [leah.smith@glencairnmuseum.org](mailto:leah.smith@glencairnmuseum.org)

### **Living Waters Family Camp**

This camp, launched last year, is designed for grandparents, parents and children to worship, learn, pray and play together. This year’s theme is *Understanding the Lord’s Divine Providence*. The dates are July 10-13. **The Rev. Brad Heinrichs**, Director, says: “These family camps provide a fantastic opportunity for the Lord to store up some cross-generational New Church remains. Every good church camp has the Lord at the center of it, and the opportunity to learn about Him from His Word and to worship Him with thankful praise.” The camp – called the Hidden Valley Christian Camp – is located near Paisley, Ontario, on the Saugeen River ([www.hvccamp.ca](http://www.hvccamp.ca)), 20 kilometers from Lake Huron. Scholarships are available from the General Church in Canada. For anyone who would like to attend, or for more information, contact **Brad Heinrichs** at [pastor@carmelnewchurch.org](mailto:pastor@carmelnewchurch.org) or 519-748-5802.

### **Maple Leaf Academy**

This New Church camp for teenagers will be held June 25 to July 2 at the Upper Canada Camp in Palgrave, Ontario, Canada. For information contact the Director, **Stephanie Kuhl**: [gci.c.mapleleafcamp@gmail.com](mailto:gci.c.mapleleafcamp@gmail.com) or 519-895-1891.

# Life Lines

## WINTER OF OUR DISCONTENT

Folks throughout much of the United States and Canada suffered through a hard winter, with a relentless succession of storms and the prolonged bone-chilling cold of an “Arctic vortex”.

Olivet Church members in Toronto, Canada, celebrated a frigid, dark Christmas as a week-long power outage doused holiday lights – but not holiday spirit – across a wide region. Much of Bryn Athyn lost power in single-digit temperatures for four days or more in early February. It helped us all appreciate the ruggedness of ancestors who knew nothing of the comforts of electric lights, central heating and indoor plumbing that we so take for granted.

By the time you are reading this the worst of the winter is just a repressed memory, overtaken by the coming of spring. But while it lasted, it was a grim experience.

With other “snow birds,” my wife and I escaped in the midst of the misery for a respite week of Florida sunshine at the Boynton Beach Retreat, where the locals were also complaining of the cold – 60-70 degrees!

One of the presenters, the Rev. Dr. Jonathan Rose, talked in part about the *Acts* and *Epistles*, and how we should pay more attention to them in the Church.

Well, I did my part. What came to mind immediately was this alluring promise from the *Song of Solomon* 2: 11,12:

*“For lo, the winter is past,  
The rain [snow!] is over and gone.  
The flowers appear on the earth;  
The time of the singing of birds has come,  
And the voice of the turtle  
Is heard in the land.”*

I have no idea what “the voice of the turtle” sounds like, but if it is anything like the spring peepers chirping that “the winter is past” and spring is finally here, it’s the sweetest song many of us will ever hear.

(BMH)

**“LOVE IS THE LIFE OF MAN”**

So reads the opening line of Swedenborg’s book on creation, *Divine Love and Wisdom*. How strange that a book on the origin of the universe begins, not with the Big Bang, but with a statement about love.

“Know then thyself, presume not God to scan. The proper study of mankind is man,” says Alexander Pope in his poem, *An Essay On Man*. But the story of mankind begins with God, and it encompasses *everything*: the world of nature without, and the world of spirit within.

Every rock, leaf, animal, field, ocean, cloud and star speaks of God; as do all the corresponding states of affection and thought that unfold within us.

As a great Victorian English New Church botanist put it: “Man is nature concentrated; nature is man diffused.” (Leo H. Grindon – see below).

Nature, in its diffuse, oblique, subtle way, testifies to the Divine love and wisdom – in other words, Humanity – of the Creator, in whose image we also are made.

It is love that forms the core of our being, and it is for the sake of receiving love in ever greater abundance that the Lord continues forming us throughout our lives. The process of our creation – which corresponds to, and continues, and completes the creation of the universe – never ends; it just moves ever more inward, as our spirit is brought more and more into harmony with the same Divine order that surrounds us in nature.

“Love is the life of man.” The whole of creation is a laboratory in which the proposition is demonstrated in countless ways. And each one of us is living proof of it.

(WEO)

**CREATION**

The scientist studies its structure  
and feels a sense of awe.

The philosopher ponders its meaning,  
and the source of its elegant laws.

The poet praises its beauty,  
as only poets can.

And all with the eye of faith,  
perceive it was made for man.

(WEO)

**LEO H. GRINDON**

I identified him as a botanist, which he was (and a renowned one), but based on what I’ve read of him, I really want to say botanist-zoologist-philologist-

philosopher-theologian-educator-artist-writer and poet; at least he had the soul of a poet, in my opinion. I know little about him, though. (Was he related to the Rev. Thomas Hartley?)

Leopold Hartley Grindon (1818-1904) was a most erudite English scholar of the old school, and a deep thinker of the New Church, who enriched the impressive body of New Church collateral literature with such books as *Life, Its Nature, Varieties and Phenomena*. I've read that one, and at least one other, *The Sexuality of Plants*, and found them wonderful.

He lived in Manchester, England. I assume he was a member of the Church, which was very strong in Manchester. In 1856, referring to the book mentioned above (*Life, etc.*), the London Swedenborg Society (in its *New Churchman* magazine) said: "We have never had a better work written in illustration of the philosophy of the New Church. It is full of varied and curious information, drawn from the most multifarious sources."

"Multifarious sources" indeed! The breadth of Grindon's knowledge is amazing, matched only by the depth of his insights. "The learned," as we know, don't come off too well in the Writings, but more like Grindon would give them a good name.

(WEO)

### IS THERE A RELIGIOUS DOCTOR IN THE HOUSE?

New Church doctors – and those of any religion – walk a fine line at times about sharing their faith with their patients. Sometimes it can help, even in an indirect way. Some patients and families may welcome the comfort, others not at all. So doctors have to be careful about mixing their faith with their practice.

Dr. Jim de Maine, who spoke about end-of-life issues and medical ethics at the Boynton Beach Retreat in January, (see a summary of his presentation on page 141), told of one doctor who asked his patients and their families to pray with him, which clearly crossed a line.

But Jim's own ethics and principles from his New Church faith are deeply imbedded in who he is, whether or not his patients and their families ever knew what guided the way he treated them.

Working for Group Health Cooperative in Seattle for 32 years he helped to develop a practical program, "Your Life, Your Choices," which is offered to all patients (and their families) at age 65. He also blogs regularly at [www.endoflifeblog.com](http://www.endoflifeblog.com), which he calls "a personal, hopefully educational experience." It surely is that, and he invites readers to comment.

I highly recommend his blog as worthwhile reading. It includes such topics as:

*Cancer: How Much Time Will You Give Me?*



*Allowing a Patient to Die – Yes or No?*

*Helping a Patient Die – Death With Dignity*

*What's a 'Good Death'?* (With links to three interviews on National Public Radio)

Of particular interest is *Religion and the Doctor*, where Jim talks about Swedenborg, Raymond Moody's *Life After Life*, Helen Keller, and Dr. Eben Alexander's *Proof of Heaven*.

"My education along these lines," he writes, "was when I attended Bryn Athyn College for two years. I was immersed in studies of Plato, Aristotle and others right up through the Age of Enlightenment, including Swedenborg. The emphasis was that there are two capabilities that make us uniquely human: freedom and rationality. We were charged to apply learning wisely to life – heady stuff for a 20-year-old.

"So does any of this carry over to medical practice? Since we are all in some sense spiritual beings as well as natural beings, it seems logical for a physician to deal with the whole person, particularly around the time of crisis or death. I'm not one who thinks a chosen few have the 'inside path' or die easier than atheists. I had some confirmed non-believers in my care who died comfortably believing 'that was that.' They appeared to be good people who had led good lives.

"But others want to talk, are afraid, or have regrets. All hospitals now have chaplains. Many ministers, rabbis, imams and priests make frequent hospital and nursing home visits. Doctors, of course, need to respect all beliefs and understand boundaries. Although I loved having philosophical and religious discussion with patients, I always tried to approach it from their interest and comfort zone."

Spiritual beliefs, he writes, can and should be "an important part of the conversation when we communicate our choices about end-of-life care and also as we are nearing the end of our lives. I encouraged my students, interns and residents to become comfortable with this and not to avoid exploring these areas. Healing and caring can occur on many levels."

Another of Jim's blogs is a tribute to his father, Dr. Phil de Maine: *Dad's Old-School Medical Practice*. Jim lovingly describes his father's devotion to his patients, and as a young boy he often accompanied him on house calls.

"As Dad aged," he writes, "he decided to drop OB so his practice gradually became geriatrics and nursing home rounding. He kept this up until his mid-70s. He'd make social calls for his patients in the hospital, go to memorial services, and even be a speaker at the request of a few families. One thing he never forgot to do was to send a letter of condolence to the families. In his 90s he ended up in an electric wheelchair in a nursing home due to crippling spinal stenosis. Several former patients were also there. Dad would go by, chat

and pat them on the arm. He never quit making rounds.”

And in his own way, neither has Jim.

(BMH)

### **THE HEALING POWER OF ‘I’M SORRY’**

Another of Jim de Maine’s blogs also comes out of his medical practice but resonates on every level of life: *Sorry Seems to be the Hardest Word*.

He starts out quoting an Elton John song: “It’s sad, so sad. Why can’t we talk it over? Oh, it seems to me that sorry seems to be the hardest word.”

The blog focuses on mistakes in medicine, which can range from minor and embarrassing to fatal and mortifying. They are always hard to deal with – “humiliating and devastating,” Jim says. But they have to be addressed and he has found that “fessing up is the best thing to do, from a legal standpoint and certainly from the moral view.”

“But believe me,” he adds, “it’s not easy when you’d rather hide. When one patient died after a procedure I probably shouldn’t have attempted because he was so sick, I sat down with the family and explained the whole sequence. The son had lots of questions, but then looked reflective and said, ‘It must be hard being a doctor sometimes. Look, it’s OK. Dad was going nowhere and he’s in a better place now.’ Basically, he let me off the hook.”

Jim has found that having open, honest and contrite discussions with patients and families – and to apologize – is always the best course. And not only for doctors, but for all of us, whatever the situation.

There is a lot of potential for healing in just saying, “I’m sorry,” or “I forgive you.”

As we are taught to pray each day: “Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.”

(BMH)

### **A LAST, LOVING GIFT**

Much of Jim de Maine’s presentation had to do with practical end-of-life issues – living wills, advanced care directives, Physician Order for Life-Sustaining Treatment – all to help with end-of-life care and decisions.

But he also spoke about the concept of a spiritual will: what legacy and values we want to pass on to our loved ones. Much of that is accomplished by the way we live our lives, by the character we have formed, and the influence we have had on the lives of others.

Jim mentioned one thoughtful, loving touch that many people are starting to do: leaving letters and even videos with personal messages to supplement old family albums. He told of the joy his father and their family experienced

when a letter was discovered after his mother, Nan, had died. She had written it at a time when death was not imminent, and wrote on the envelope: “In case something happens to me.”

Jim read this very touching letter, to smiles and tears throughout the Duncan Center. Its very personal, loving message said in part:

“Should something happen to me, I do not want you to grieve – we have so much to be thankful for, so many happy memories, so much more than our share. The Lord has been good to us, and He will help you now. Look forward – there is still so much to be done. . . . Please forgive a very sentimental mother for having to write this, but love must overflow into words, inadequate as they are. Grow strong, stay friends, love one another. God be gracious unto you and bless you.”

How thoughtful and caring she was to anticipate their loss and to leave such a lasting and loving “legacy” for them.

As we do our responsible estate planning to make sure that our loved ones are properly taken care of, let’s pay some attention as well to our spiritual wills – the love and lessons we also leave behind.

Our character is the only thing we take with us from this world. It is also the only important thing we leave behind.

(BMH)

### “NO MAN IS AN ISLAND”

We live in a culture of extreme individualism, manifested in various ways, including the “in your face” manner in which people often speak and dress and behave in public. The widely publicized crude behavior of a number of young celebrities illustrates the point.

Independent thought and self-reliance are good, but a complete lack of regard for public opinion and the feelings of others is not.

It is often said that what a person does is nobody else’s business as long as it isn’t harming anyone else. But what’s missing from this picture is that we’re all tied together in the fabric of society, consisting of interwoven uses. We aren’t solitary creatures, but social, and no one finds real happiness in isolation from others.

There is truth to the old saying about one rotten apple spoiling the whole barrel. The spiritual condition of each individual has an effect on the whole community.

Externally enforced collectivism, or conformity compelled by “political correctness,” are not the answer. What is needed is for individuals, freely and rationally, to recognize their responsibility toward others, restrain themselves, and practice charity.

“Man is born not for the sake of himself but for the sake of others; that is, he is born not to live for himself alone but for others; otherwise there could be no cohesive society, nor any good therein.” (*True Christian Religion* 406)

(WEO)

### **A THOUGHT ON THE TEN COMMANDMENTS**

The Lord wants us to be happy. And yet in the Ten Commandments He forbids certain things that people obviously think would make them happy (or there would be no need to forbid them). Is there a contradiction here? No, it's just that there are different kinds of happiness, heavenly and infernal, and we have to choose one or the other.

Choosing the lower kind of happiness separates us from the higher, deeper, longer-lasting kind. The Lord wants people to be *really* happy, and forever, not just temporarily. This is why He forbids certain things, and why it is wise for us to take the prohibitions seriously.

(WEO)

### **PREPARING A PLACE FOR US**

It is the nature of love to wish to give of its own to others, to make them happy and be united with them. The Lord's love is Divine, and there is no limit to His desire to be with us and give us the happiness of heaven.

But in order to do this, He must first make us *capable* of being in His presence and receiving the happiness of heaven. This is why all that business about temptation combats, building up a conscience, repentance, reformation and regeneration is necessary.

In the process, during those times when we are wandering in the desert or lost in the wilderness, it may seem that the Lord has forgotten about us and left. But that's just an appearance.

“I go to prepare a place for you,” the Lord told His disciples shortly before His death. Whether we say He prepares a place in heaven for us, or prepares a place in us for heaven, it is the same thing; “for the kingdom of God is within you,” as He said another time. (*Luke 17:21*)

(WEO)

### **THE SEARCH FOR TRUTH**

How many of us born into the Church wonder at times if we would have sought it out on our own, and embraced the teachings of the new revelation? I always admire the people who have done so – especially those who fought doctrinal concepts that challenged their faith, but came to see and appreciate that this truth is from the Lord alone.

Such is Doug Webber's fascinating story on page 173, *A Search for Truth*. It recounts his own determination to seek answers to haunting questions about God and faith, and how he found them in the Writings of Swedenborg. But it was not an epiphany. He had to work at it.

He came to the Writings with both hope and doubt, piqued by curiosity about this man he had heard of, Emanuel Swedenborg. As he started to read *True Christian Religion* – his introduction to the Writings – he says: "I thought, for sure, as with many New Age religions, that Swedenborg was going to say that Jesus Christ was just a 'good teacher' of some sort. Once he made that error I was going to close that book. To my surprise, not only did he declare that Jesus was Jehovah in human form, but he also solved the problem of the Trinity."

All of this resonates with a wonderful little book, *The Bible That Was Lost and Is Found*, written by John Bigelow in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century.

Bigelow was a prominent journalist, lawyer and statesman. Among a long list of accomplishments, he had taken on the corruption of Boss Tweed in New York City, was the United States ambassador in Paris, and helped to establish the New York Public Library.

During his travels as a newspaper editor, he was stranded for several weeks on the island of Haiti during an outbreak of yellow fever and cholera. There was just one other man in his hotel – a Danish lawyer named Mr. Kjerulff. Bigelow was a devoted reader of the Bible. As the two men sat together in the hotel lobby, Bigelow complained out loud while reading *Genesis 12*, where Abram, an honorable man, tells his wife to lie and say that she was his sister.

His Danish friend asked if he had ever read Swedenborg. He handed Bigelow the first volume of *Arcana Coelestia*, pointing him to the description of the internal sense of this passage.

Bigelow recognized immediately that there was something special here and began reading everything of Swedenborg's that he could get his hands on. But he was also skeptical, "expecting to drop the book as soon as I came to something – and I did not in the least doubt I soon should – that would be so absurd, or improbable, or illogical, as would justify me, without rudeness, in returning the book to my Danish friend with thanks."

But, he confessed, "Although I understood imperfectly what I read, I did not find what I was looking for; I found nothing that I could point to with confidence and say, 'There, you see, your man Swedenborg must have been either a fool or an imposter, if not both.'" And the more he read, the more he became convinced that this could not be the product of a mortal mind; it had to be Divine revelation.

The experiences of Mr. Bigelow and Mr. Webber, and so many good New Church people we know, should inspire us with the charge of the Great

Commission to go forth and “teach all nations” – to share all this wonderful truth with a needy world.

As Mr. Webber says: “Do not take the truths that you know for granted. Try to live them, for then they become life changing. They have great value, and many are still seeking these answers. Share with others. Many will reject them, but here and there a light bulb will turn on for those who are ready.”

(BMH)

### **A CHURCH THAT INTERESTS MEN**

One of the things that sets the General Church apart is the degree to which men are involved in it. It is very common for congregations in other churches to wish more men would show an interest in the life of the Church.

A main reason our church is of interest to men is its focus on doctrine and the intellectual content of sermons and classes. In many churches the same old message of “God loves you,” “be nice” and “have faith” (with no explanation of what faith is or how to have it) is repeated endlessly, along with appeals for money. There is little to challenge the intellect, and the masculine mind wants something to *think* about. Men love truth.

This is not to say that women do not love truth, but they approach it in a different way. The difference is distinct, but subtle; and of course there is infinite variety among individuals. But in general, the love of truth in women tends to be less abstract and more practical or use-oriented than in men. Women especially love truth *in men*, and need men to love it for their sake. Assuming the men are sincere and decent individuals, to have more of them in the Church is a blessing for women – as well as for the men, of course.

(WEO)

### **WHY WOMEN LOVE THE CHURCH**

Women represent love and the will, and love is steadfast and true. This is represented in the Old Testament by the fact that Judah, the southern kingdom, which represents the will, remained loyal to the Lord after Israel, the northern kingdom, representing the intellect, was carried away captive. We can see the same pattern in the Gospels in that it was the women who came to the Lord’s tomb on Easter morning after the men had all run away.

Love seeks wisdom to be joined with it. Women (forms of love) look to men (forms of wisdom); and more particularly, a woman seeks one special man whose wisdom will exactly complement her love.

One reason women love the Church, I think, is that the Church provides men with the spiritual and moral truths that make up the rational wisdom that women hope to find in men.

(WEO)

**THE ORDER OF MARRIAGE APPLIES TO THE CHURCH ALSO**

It is said by some that the teachings in *Conjugal Love* about men and women – and how they relate – apply only to marriage, and have no bearing upon such questions as women in the priesthood.

But the way a husband and wife relate in marriage represents something much more general. The order of conjugal love that governs marriage is a universal order that enters into everything (or at least everything that is in order).

Individual marriages are the most particular and intense manifestation of the Divine marriage of good and truth that pervades all creation – and which makes the Church.

“Marriage represents the marriage of good and truth, that is, the heavenly marriage, and consequently the church also, for the church is a church from the marriage of good and truth; and when the church is in this marriage it makes one with heaven, which is the heavenly marriage itself.” (*Arcana Coelestia* 4835.3)

Marriage and the Church, therefore, are inextricably bound together and are products of the same Divine order. “In the internal sense by the conjugal is meant what is of the church; for the church is the marriage of good and truth.” (*Ibid.* 4731)

In light of such teachings, it makes perfect sense to apply statements about how men and women relate to each other in marriage to how they relate to each other in the life of the Church.

(WEO)

**AN EXAMPLE**

We can see that the teachings about *marriage* have a more general application from places in the Writings in which it is said that *husbands and wives* relate to each other as they do because *men and women* generally relate to each other in that way. (See *Arcana Coelestia* 8994; *Conjugal Love* 165, 168, 223, and elsewhere)

The nature of the particular relationship (marriage) is illustrated and confirmed by the broader principle governing the general relationship between men and women, and vice versa. The same teaching about how the sexes differ and relate to each other is given in regard to husbands and wives, to men and women generally, and more abstractly to the quality of “the masculine” itself and “the feminine” itself and how they relate.

Notice in *Conjugal Love* 168, for example, that the way husbands and wives relate “follows from the difference between the masculine and the feminine.” The order of the specific relationship (husband and wife) is determined by the

more general order that exists between masculine and feminine.

At the beginning, the passage speaks about a man and wife: “the wife’s wisdom is not possible with the man,” and vice versa. Then the teaching broadens to an observation about the masculine and feminine natures generally: “It is masculine to perceive from the understanding, and feminine to perceive from love,” and so on. Then at the end the focus switches back to a marriage relationship and reiterates that “the wife’s wisdom is not possible with the man, nor the man’s rational wisdom with the wife; nor is man’s moral wisdom possible with women so far as it partakes of his rational wisdom.”

There may be differences of opinion on *how* all this applies to the question of women in the priesthood, but the fact that it *does* apply – or at least that it is not irrelevant to the conversation – seems clear.

(WEO)

### THE NOAH CHALLENGE

Hollywood loves a good story – especially one that lends itself to spectacular special effects and promises box-office appeal. So another biblical epic, *Noah*, was scheduled to open in American theaters on March 28.

With a cast led by Russell Crowe, Jennifer Connelly, Anthony Hopkins and Emma Watson, plus all the apocalyptic scenes of rain and floods that Hollywood can muster, it’s a film that surely will be seen by millions.

Some faith-based groups already are protesting that the script is not true to the familiar story in *Genesis* – that Hollywood takes its usual liberties with the Bible. The director, Darren Aronofsky, insists he has paid close attention to detail, including the precise dimensions of the ark. He says it’s the themes that really matter – “hope, second chances and family.”

The story of Noah – along with the seven days of creation – have always been problematic for thinking Christians. They wonder: How could Noah’s family and all those animals survive with just one small window for ventilation in the ark? Why didn’t that 40-day flood actually rid the earth of sin and evil? And if only Noah’s family was spared in this flood, where did all the families and generations since come from?

Well, it is promising that Hollywood is willing to invest \$125 million in another biblical film, and that there is apparent hunger among the masses for understanding this great mystery. But it is also an opportunity for New Church response.

Some 30 years ago, the Rev. Douglas Taylor, then assistant pastor in Bryn Athyn, had an article published on the editorial page of *The Philadelphia Inquirer* with the provocative headline, *Why Noah’s Ark Won’t Be Found*. It was written in response to an article about an archaeologist who claimed the



remains of the ark, then being sought in the region of Mt. Ararat, would never be found because it never existed – that the story is just a myth.

Mr. Taylor took advantage of the opportunity to introduce Emanuel Swedenborg, the idea that the first 11 chapters of *Genesis* are parables, and that he was prepared by God to reveal the hidden internal sense of the Noah story and the rest of the Bible.

He then described that spiritual meaning of Noah and the Ark. He has since written a book about New Church theology, *A Religion That Makes Sense*, and said in his *Philadelphia Inquirer* article: “Whatever else we may think of Swedenborg’s interpretation of this story, it makes much more sense than taking it literally.”

He was straightforward about concepts such as “the science of correspondences,” without coming on too strong, and invited readers to look at biblical mysteries with a whole new sense of their deeper meaning.

No doubt we will see a range of “experts” on television and the Internet giving their interpretations of what *Noah* – the film and the biblical story – really means. Let’s hope also that some New Church ministers and lay members rise to the challenge as effectively as Doug Taylor did 30 years ago.

(BMH)

### **WHO’LL THROW THE PENALTY FLAG?**

As this issue of *New Church Life* was going to press there was a report that the National Football League in the United States is considering imposing a penalty of 15 yards for any player caught saying a particularly vile racial slur. However you feel about that proposal, homosexual slurs, and the relentless stream of four-letter words coursing through the entertainment media, it is particularly disheartening that no one raises any objection at all to the constant taking of the Lord’s name in vain.

The Ten Commandments, the foundation for the laws of civilized society, are unequivocal: “Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him innocent that taketh his name in vain.”

That sure sounds a lot more serious than a 15-yard penalty.

(BMH)