

NEW CHURCH *Life*

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

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2014



Our Unique Planet

Science suggests there may be as many as 40 billion earth-like planets in our galaxy. What makes ours unique is that this is where the Word is. See an article by the Rev. Stephen Cole, page 399.

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New Church Life

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

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IN THIS ISSUE

Among the estimated billions of planets in the solar system our earth stands alone. In an article on *Our Unique Planet* the Rev. Stephen D. Cole says: “The most important event in the history of the universe took place on our planet. Of all the worlds in creation, the Lord chose to be born on our earth.” Why? Because only here could the Word be written and preserved. (Page 399)

The Rev. Kenneth J. Alden offers a comprehensive report on the Council of the Clergy meetings in Bryn Athyn in June, including papers and discussion focused on the “women in the ministry” issue. Presentations also included General Church Outreach, the Academy Secondary Schools and Bryn Athyn College, and a joint session with the General Church Board of Directors. There will be follow-up to the “women in the ministry” study from Bishop Brian Keith in the November-December issue of *New Church Life*. (Page 405)

Many New Church groups are beginning the latest Journey Program this fall: *What Would Love Do?* The Rev. Erik J. Buss offers a complementary sermon, *Fishing on the Right Side of the Boat*, which speaks to how we should serve from love. “For us,” he says, “fishing on the right side means doing something from affection, doing it from love, not merely doing it because it is the right thing to do. It means reaching out to people because we want to help them, rather than out of a sense of duty.” (Page 422)

Sasha Silverman, Content Developer at General Church Outreach and co-author of the Journey Program with the Rev. John L. Odhner, describes what this series is all about in *Needs and Deeds*. The seven-week program is based on *Matthew* 25: 35-34, where Jesus speaks of serving “neighbors” who are hungry, thirsty, sick or in prison – and how to really love them. (Page 427)

We all feel burdened at times but the Rev. Eric H. Carswell offers hope in a sermon, *A Light Burden*. “We may all feel we have a right to be angry, depressed, discontent and bitter because circumstances give us ample justification,” he writes, but the Lord encourages us to feel otherwise. By following the Lord we can put off the heavy yoke the hells love to impose on us and instead “shoulder the light burden that He intends for us.” (Page 429)

The Rev. Coleman S. Glenn asks, *How Can We Believe?* It is all right to be a “doubting Thomas” but important to start from the “affirmative principle” – believing that something is true because the Lord says so in His Word, even if we don’t understand it yet. The way out of doubt, Mr. Glenn says, is to start living as if what the Lord says is true. “All that the Lord has spoken, we will do and hear.” The doing – and obeying – comes first; then we can hear, understand

and believe. (Page 433)

Bishop Brian W. Keith reports on an episcopal visit this summer to Kenya, where he says “the Lord is smiling on the Church,” after it weathered some hard times. He and his wife, Gretchen, plus a delegation from Helping Children in Crisis, saw happy orphans, teachers and administrators devoted to New Church education in their award-winning school, and hundreds of people participating in worship. (Page 438)

Introducing Our Ministers focuses on the Rev. Bradley D. Heinrichs, pastor of the Carmel New Church in Caryndale, Ontario, Canada, who was well-launched in a landscaping career when he got the call to plant spiritual seeds instead. He’s never looked back. (Page 443)

In a sermon, “*Do Not Worry About Tomorrow*,” Mr. Heinrichs says that when we are inclined to fret about worldly issues, we need to remember the Lord’s words in the Sermon on the Mount: “Consider the lilies of the field.” The angels “exist in a state of peace,” he says, “because they have an unwavering belief that the Lord will provide for them every day what they need.” The Lord can lead us into the same state of peace, if we but believe also. (Page 446)

The Rev. Dr. Reuben P. Bell, who is also a Doctor of Osteopathy, reviews the book by David Fuller, DO: *Osteopathy and Swedenborg*. Mr. Bell finds not only a fascinating history of osteopathy but a wonderful Swedenborgian perspective. “With careful documentation,” he says, “Fuller traces through all the common thread of Swedenborg’s causal system of spirit and nature. No newcomer to this topic, I nonetheless gained a new and global understanding of this impressive array of interactive influences.” (Page 452)

The Rev. Walter E. Orthwein reviews a new book by the Rev. Prescott A. Rogers, *The Triune Word*. This is a revision of the Theological School dissertation Mr. Rogers wrote in 1985. Its publication is made possible by his Academy Class of 1964 and will be presented at their 50th reunion this Charter Day. Mr. Orthwein says the book is a masterful collection of complex ideas presented “in a unified, engaging, easy-to-read style.” (Page 455)

The Rev. Alan Cowley, pastor of the Michael Church in London, England, sees great hope for the future of the Church in the kind of young people attending the annual British Academy Summer School. Other items in Church News include: plans for the annual Charter Day celebration in Bryn Athyn; the Colchester Society in England celebrating its 90th anniversary; the gift and installation of a new pipe organ – one of the finest in the world – in the Bryn Athyn Cathedral; the outlook for the new academic year in the Academy Secondary Schools; plans for next year’s women’s retreat – *Gathering Leaves* – in Cincinnati, Ohio; and four pages of beautiful photographs from around the Church. (Page 460)

Editorials

CHOOSE THIS DAY

When Adam and Eve were told they could eat of every tree in the Garden of Eden except for the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, they symbolized the life-defining choice that is extended to us every day: whether to obey or disobey the Lord.

The whole history of the world, and the very fabric of our culture, are written in the consequences of free choices. We see the fallout and the potential every day – from our own choices and those of others. And our lives – in this world and to eternity – are defined by the pattern of our choices, which forms our ruling love.

We make choices every day – some consciously, others unconsciously, many seemingly innocuous, but always guided by the principles we choose to honor. Most of those choices are focused on our natural lives, but within every one of them is a spiritual dimension as well. Some are big choices – marriage, family, career, faith. Others are reflected in how we choose to treat people in small moments, how we respond to challenging situations, how we fill our time, and what we choose to love in any moment.

Most of our choices seem entirely temporal – made for the moment and quickly overtaken. But no choice happens in a spiritual vacuum. Each takes its place in the continuum of providence, either turning us toward the Lord and heaven or away from Him and toward hell. This is what we are ultimately choosing throughout our lives: whether to love and follow the Lord by serving Him and our neighbor, or to reject Him by loving ourselves and the world.

This is not a choice to be put off to the distant future, when we are “ready.” It is a choice we are making throughout our lives, every day, but always with the opportunity to change and regenerate. It’s good to reflect on the choices we make each day – especially since we know that with them we are also choosing to associate with good or evil spirits in the other world where we are making our home. Consider this from *Apocalypse Revealed* 552:

It should be noted that every man, as to his affections and their resulting thoughts, is associated with his like in the world of spirits, and mediately through them, with those who are either in heaven or hell. Every man’s life depends upon that conjunction.

What makes us human is that we have been made free by the Lord to make our own choices. We live with the promise: “The truth shall make you free.” What we don’t always remember is what Jesus said to His followers immediately prior to that: “If you continue in My way, then you are My disciples indeed; and you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” (*John* 8: 31-32)

“*If you continue in my way.*” Here again the Lord is offering a choice – to follow Him and thereby to know the truth that they might be free. That is our choice also, but it is easy to confuse liberty and license. It can seem counterintuitive that real freedom lies in knowing and honoring the truth – not ignoring it and doing whatever we please. That may feel freeing, but real freedom means living within God’s order and obeying the Ten Commandments.

Where order is, the Lord is present, but where order is not, the Lord is not present.
(*New Jerusalem and Its Heavenly Doctrine* 279)

The most obvious example of knowing and obeying truth and living in order are the rules of the road. When we drive on the proper side of the road, stop at red lights, and observe speed limits, we are free to travel wherever we want. If we ignore the rules we invite chaos. So it is with our lives.

We educate our children to provide them with the knowledge and values to make good choices for their lives. With New Church education we take it a step further. In October in Bryn Athyn we celebrate the granting of the Charter to the Academy of the New Church in 1877 – and the continuing commitment of New Church education throughout the Academy and General Church schools. The mission of the Academy is to prepare students for lives of use in this world and the next. We educate these young people in the light of the Heavenly Doctrines so that they also may be comfortable and confident in making wise spiritual choices that are guided by Divine truth and lead them to heaven.

Among countless lessons in the Word are Moses trying to teach the Children of Israel to make good choices – and to learn the right lessons when they chose badly, such as when they turned away from God in favor of Baal. Finally he put it to them: “I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both you and your seed may live.” (*Deuteronomy* 30:19)

These people knew the blessings the Lord provided, and had suffered the “cursing” of their bad choices. Still they did not learn. And because we know that even though the stories of the Word are cast in ancient times, everything within it is really about our own lives, right now. We are the Children of Israel and Moses’ challenge is constantly before us as well.

So is the conviction of Joshua, who succeeded Moses in leading the Children of Israel into the Promised Land: “Choose for yourselves this day

whom you will serve,” he challenged them, and left no doubt what he was choosing: “As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.” (*Joshua* 24: 15)

That is our choice as well – every day.

(BMH)

WAR AND PEACE

World War I began 100 years ago, and there have been a number of interesting articles in observance of the anniversary. The gist of many of them is that the war turned out to be hellish and destructive beyond anything that those about to be swept up in it could imagine, and that we can still barely comprehend. It was supposed to be “the war to end all wars” – but it set the stage for World War II and sowed seeds of conflict which still bear their poisonous fruit today.

At the end of one article the writer recalled a conversation in which a famous editor was asked by a war correspondent: “Why *is* there so much war? Why do we do that?”

“Because something’s wrong with us,” the editor replied.

“It was the best definition of original sin I’d ever heard,” the reporter said. (The column, *The World the Great War Swept Away* by Peggy Noonan, appeared in the *Wall Street Journal* and is online).

The New Church does not believe in “original sin.” The idea that God holds people guilty for something the first humans did ages ago is untrue and portrays God as unjust. But erroneous as it is, “original sin” is an attempt to account for the very evident fact that there’s “something wrong with us” – some innate flaw in human nature which no natural cause can explain, and no natural remedy can cure.

The alternative to “original sin” which the Writings give us is the doctrine of “hereditary evil,” meaning we have an inherent tendency or inclination to disorder, which has become more and more deeply ingrained in human nature over countless centuries of “bad choices,” as people say today.

Perhaps the claim that there’s just plain “something wrong with us” seems defeatist and depressing, and it would be if there was nothing that could be done about it. But healing begins with a correct diagnosis of the disease. Healing will take time and effort, but the method to achieve it has been revealed.

Human efforts to end war, such as diplomacy and a strong defense force to deter aggressors, are necessary; but they do not get to the heart of the matter. The ultimate solution to the problem of war is a change in human nature itself.

“Well,” you might say, “that would take a miracle.” Yes, exactly. “With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.” (*Matthew* 19:26) The God who came to earth in the flesh and cast out the demons that possessed people’s bodies, has come again, as “the Spirit of truth,” to cast out the demons

of war that for so long have occupied our minds.

Notice that we're speaking of *God* – the Lord Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace – as our Hope; not “religion.” If we say religion is the answer, many will reply (and not without reason) that it obviously isn't, since war and religion have existed side by side from the beginning. In fact, religious disputes are often the cause of war.

Nevertheless, the truths of revelation are the means whereby God accomplishes our salvation, and “religion” is how we respond to those truths. The quality of the response varies, but our response (what we call “religion”) is a key element in delivering us from the hell of war.

What is needed today is a *new* and better response, a new religion. And this is what the Lord has provided for in the new revelation He has made of Himself in His second coming – the Heavenly Doctrine upon which the New Church is based.

This revelation is accommodated to the highest level of the natural mind, the rational mind – the faculty that connects the spiritual and the natural in us and makes us human, enabling us to bring the light of spiritual truth to bear upon the problems of natural life more fully than ever before.

The Lord, working through the spiritual-natural truths of the New Church, has greater power than ever before to regenerate us, and renew the image of God in people of the modern age whose thought has lapsed into naturalism. In this way, the Lord's presence is brought more fully into the world, to transform it, little by little, person by person; and thus restore the innocence and peace that was lost so long ago in Eden.

The only way to solve the problem of war is to solve the problem of man: to effect a change in the very nature of our humanity itself. This might sound like such an ambitious plan as to be no plan at all – but daunting as it may seem, it's the only truly realistic hope we have.

To expect it to happen overnight is unrealistic. “Peace now” is unrealistic. War has been a part of human life for eons, and the radical change in human nature required to stop it can only be accomplished gradually. The Lord in His providence works quietly from within, in countless ways we can't see, to change human hearts and minds. And one of the main ways providence works is through His Word.

The greatest “peace process” ever devised is the one we find in the Heavenly Doctrine: the process of regeneration. When we retreat to the upper room of our mind and meditate on the Word of God, pray to the Lord, examine ourselves, repent of our evils, learn to trust providence, and become more loving and charitable... our little personal religious practice may seem of small importance in the effort to bring peace to the war-weary world. In truth, though, this is where world peace must begin.

The real “war to end all wars” is a spiritual battle, mostly unnoticed by the world. But of all the wars raging on earth today, this inner war is by far the most critical, whether the world knows it or not. Victory will come one day, because the armies of heaven, and their Supreme Commander, will end it.

“The Lord is a Man of war.” (*Exodus 15:3*) Which is why He is also “the Prince of Peace,” who says: “Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.” (*Isaiah 9:6; John 14:27*)

(WEO)

NEW CHURCH VIRTUES: SPIRITUALITY

The New Church is supremely *spiritual* because its teachings offer the most comprehensive view of spiritual reality ever revealed; and they explain very fully the process by which we may transcend our natural state and become spiritual ourselves. And the Church forms communities in which we can share our delight in its teachings and support each other in living by them.

When we consider the subjects covered in the Writings we can see what a treasure trove of spirituality they are:

1. First of all, they reveal the Lord in His second coming as “the Spirit of truth” who guides us “into all truth.” (*John 16:13*) The worship based on this revelation is the highest expression of spirituality imaginable. To know and love the Lord is the greatest spiritual gift anyone can receive.
2. The Writings reveal the spiritual sense of the Word, hidden within the literal sense as its very soul. They don’t just reveal that the spiritual sense exists, but provide a broad and detailed exposition of it. In so doing, they open our eyes to perceive the spiritual reality that pervades all creation, and thus restore the spiritual dimension to the world around us. They heal what many have called the “disenchantment” of our modern, secular existence.
3. They reveal the spiritual world, telling us many new things about heaven and hell, as well as the in-between region which newly arrived spirits first inhabit as the quality of their inner self is gradually brought to light. And the practical use of knowing about the spiritual world is explained as we are shown how influences from it affect us even now in this world. The “angelic wisdom” the Writings reveal can open our minds to the light of heaven and bring us into a closer relationship with angels and good spirits.
4. They disclose the spiritual depths of human consciousness, giving us

a detailed view of the human mind: how it is structured, functions and evolves or devolves – becoming more open, or more closed, to the spiritual light of truth.

5. They teach us the laws of Divine providence and how it operates in our lives every moment to achieve the Lord's goal of preparing us for the eternal happiness of life in heaven.
6. And they include a whole book on the spiritual essence and purpose of marriage, in which we are given a view of it that can only be called heavenly, beautiful and inspiring. The view of marriage is "spiritual" to the nth degree, as well as eminently realistic and practical.
7. And throughout all the teachings of all the books we are shown that: "All religion relates to life, and the life of religion is to do good." (*Doctrine of Life 1*) Spirituality, in other words, is not an "add-on" or a separate special interest, but an integral part of human life. In fact, it is the most essential part, entering into the whole of life as blood from the heart courses through the whole body.

Spirituality is not just a hobby or side-interest or a matter of esoteric knowledge, but is the reception of LIFE from the Lord – and a loving, grateful, joyous response to this gift.

It is to facilitate and increase our reception of the gift of life that the Lord has always revealed His Word so that there would be a church on earth in which He is known and loved; and so that people may not remain merely natural but become spiritual. And now, in the Heavenly Doctrine of the New Jerusalem, we have the crown of all revelations, and resting upon it the crown of all the churches that have ever existed. There could be no greater manifestation of spirituality than this.

(WEO)

Our Unique Planet

The Rev. Stephen D. Cole

Saturday, February 13, 1965, was a big day at our house. My father, Dandridge Cole, was on national network TV, featured in a David Wolper documentary, “Way Out Men.” This was a series of interviews with men at the cutting edge, or perhaps the fringes, of science.

Among the others interviewed were Michael DeBakey, who was working toward heart transplant surgery, and John Lilly, who was attempting to communicate with dolphins.

My father’s field was the prediction of future developments in space travel. The other space scientist interviewed was astronomer Frank Drake, who had launched the first systematic search for evidence of extraterrestrial intelligence. Drake called his effort “Project Ozma,” which appealed to my father, himself a fan of L. Frank Baum’s Emerald City since his childhood.

My father passed away later that year, but Drake is still, after more than 50 years, pursuing the search for radio messages originating beyond the earth. After so much time with no success, the effort might seem futile. After all, how likely is it that there are others in the universe trying to communicate with us?

Frank Drake actually was also one of the first to try to spell out how to answer this question. The “Drake Equation” suggests that the number of civilizations in our galaxy which have the capacity for radio communication can be calculated as the product of a series of seven terms:

- The rate of star formation
- The fraction of stars with planets
- The number of planets per star that *can* support life
- The fraction of these that actually *do* develop life
- The fraction of these that develop *intelligent* life
- The fraction of these that develop radio technology
- The length of time that these civilizations broadcast their signals

The Fermi Paradox

With all these conditions, it might appear that the probable number would be small. And yet many have been optimistic because the number of stars in the

New Church doctrine not only allows for the existence of intelligent life elsewhere in the universe, it insists upon it.

galaxy is so great. Indeed, a recent estimate (Petigura, Eric A., Howard, Andrew W., Marcy, Geoffrey W. "Prevalence of Earth-size Planets Orbiting Sun-like Stars." *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, October 31, 2013) suggests that there may be as many as 40 billion earth-like planets in our galaxy.

So, the reasoning goes, even if the fraction of the 40 billion that have life is very small, and even if the fraction of these that have life intelligent enough to emit radio signals is even smaller, there should still be millions of planets in the galaxy broadcasting radio signals. Yet none has yet been detected. This brings us to the "Fermi Paradox."

Enrico Fermi won the Nobel Prize in physics in 1938 for his work in nuclear physics. Shortly after leaving Italy with his family to escape the fascists, he was drawn into America's Manhattan Project, becoming one of the leading theorists. After the war, Fermi continued with the scientific team at Los Alamos.

It was there, over a lunch during the summer of 1950, that the subject of flying saucers came up. With his companions at lunch he speculated as to whether flying saucers could exceed the speed of light. The conversation eventually turned to lighter matters, but then, out of the blue, Fermi asked: "Where is everybody?" (E. M. Jones. "Where is Everybody? An account of Fermi's question," *Physics Today*, August 1985, pp.11-13.)

Fermi had clearly brought together two things – a rough calculation along the lines of the Drake Equation, and the absence of any unmistakable evidence of extraterrestrial visitors – and enunciated a paradox: If the probability of advanced technological civilizations is as high as it seems it should be, then why haven't they been heard from?

Terrestrial Exceptionalism

There has been much discussion of the Fermi Paradox, especially over the last 30 years. Over that time, dozens of solutions have been suggested. (Stephen Webb. *If the Universe Is Teeming with Aliens... Where Is Everybody?* Praxis Publishing, 2002) Most of these involve challenging one or more of the factors in the Drake equation, such that the number of civilizations in the galaxy capable of radio communication is whittled down to earth alone. Many argue that either the probability of the origin of life or the probability of intelligent life evolving is vanishingly small, having happened only once.

Before the Copernican Revolution, most people believed that the earth was the center of the universe. After the heliocentric model was widely

adopted, however, earth lost its special place. As estimates of the size of the universe and the number of stars in the galaxy increased, the earth's relative significance further dwindled. And yet now a new terrestrial exceptionalism is rising.

Even if the earth is but a small planet on a thinly populated, far-flung arm of the Milky Way galaxy, it may nevertheless be unique in having a technologically sophisticated life form. Perhaps earth is special after all. So we see recent books with titles like *Rare earth: Why Complex Life is Uncommon in the Universe* (Peter Douglas Ward, Donald Brownlee. Springer Science & Business Media, 2000) and *The Privileged Planet: How Our Place in the Cosmos is Designed for Discovery* (Guillermo Gonzalez and Jay W. Richards, Regnery Publishing, 2004).

Earths in the Universe

New Church doctrine not only allows for the existence of intelligent life elsewhere in the universe, it insists upon it: "What would the human race on only one planet be, and what would the angelic heaven formed from it be for the Infinite Creator? For Him a thousand planets – no, tens of thousands – would not be enough." (*Arcana Coelestia* 9441)

The passage goes on to note, without endorsing the numbers: "The following calculation has been made. Supposing there were in the universe one million earths, and on every earth three hundred million men...."

A million inhabited planets – this is the sort of number that Fermi or Drake probably had in mind. But if there are this many homes for intelligent life, how can one answer Fermi's question? The term in the Drake Equation that needs to be examined is the probability of the development of technology.

Those who think the development of intelligent life very unlikely are apt to suppose that, given intelligent life, technological progress would be inevitable. Someone thinking from a New Church perspective would look at it the other way: intelligent life in the universe is common, but advanced technology is not. But why should this be?

Three Technological Revolutions

To reach the level of scientific knowledge and technological ability that has permitted radio communication, a long and gradual process of development

This brief history of technology on earth has been outlined for the sake of a comparison with the parallel spiritual history. . . . The spiritual history that unfolded on our planet happened nowhere else in the universe.

The most important event in the history of the universe took place on our planet. Of all the worlds in creation, the Lord chose to be born on our earth. How is it that our earth was singled out in this way?

has been necessary. But in the course of this progress, three dramatic and relatively rapid transitions took place. The first was the invention of writing.

Recorded history begins about 5,000 years ago with the invention of writing – the capacity to leave a permanent record for later generations. Writing also gave people the ability to send fixed communications to those at a distance, thus facilitating the growth of commerce. The other thing that goes with the dawn of writing and the dawn of history is the dawn of civilization.

“Civilization” refers literally, or at least etymologically, to the development of cities. And how are cities distinguished from towns or villages? One aspect, of correspondential import, is that cities are walled. But a more obvious connection with writing and commerce is that cities reflect and depend upon the division of labor.

People within cities specialize in certain crafts. Cities themselves may become the centers of certain industries, which then become the basis for trade with other cities. The organization of trade and of the cities themselves can only go so far without written records and communications.

Before cities, people lived in a tribal culture, either in villages, or leading a nomadic way of life. Not only does this seem to be the way of life of those of the Most Ancient Church; it seems to be pretty much what is reported of life on all the other earths in the universe of which we are given accounts. Elsewhere there apparently has not been the development of cities and commerce, let alone the technology that eventually can arise from them.

The next big step toward modern technology was the development among the Greeks of the 6th century BC of something recognizable as scientific thinking. The ancient Egyptians and Babylonians achieved some notable discoveries in astronomy, geometry and mathematics. But they remained focused on the practical aspects and not the theoretical and philosophical understanding of the scientific method that made possible later progress.

The third revolution occurred with the modern scientific era, beginning with Bacon, Galileo, Newton and the emergence of empirically based theorizing, and continuing into the industrial revolution of the 18th and 19th centuries. This clearly set the stage for communication by means of waves of electromagnetic radiation.

Three Spiritual Revolutions

This brief history of technology on earth has been outlined for the sake of a comparison with the parallel spiritual history. For the invention of writing happened in the era of the transition from the Most Ancient to the Ancient Church. The development of Greek philosophy and science prepared the way for the Lord's first advent and the establishment of the Christian Church. Finally, the modern scientific revolution set the stage for the second

advent, while industrialization, *per se*, is one of the most obvious developments of the new age ushered in with the New Church.

The spiritual history that unfolded on our planet happened nowhere else in the universe. The teachings of the New Church, although they promote the idea that there is intelligent life on millions of planets throughout the universe, nevertheless also enunciate a striking terrestrial exceptionalism. The Earth is unlike any other planet among the millions. And it is this special role in spiritual history that has brought about its technological development.

A Unique Role in the History of the Human Race

The most important event in the history of the universe took place on our planet. Of all the worlds in creation, the Lord chose to be born on our earth. How is it that our earth was singled out in this way? *Arcana Coelestia* 9351 gives us the answer:

The principal reason was for the sake of the Word, in that it could be written on our earth, and when written could then be published throughout the whole earth; and once published could be preserved for all posterity; and that thus it might be made manifest even to all in the other life that God had become a Man.

The remarkable implication of this is that, out of all the countless earths in the universe, there is no other world on which the people have the art of writing. And this unique distinction leads then to the even more important distinction of being the place, in all the universe, that the Lord made His first advent, and, as a further consequence, His second advent as well:

Since the Lord cannot manifest Himself in Person... it follows that He will do this by means of a man, who is able not only to receive these doctrines in his understanding but also to publish them by the press. (*True Christian Religion* 779)

The uniqueness of being the place where both of the Lord's advents have

The uniqueness of being the place where both of the Lord's advents have taken place is due to the uniqueness of having language in written form. But what accounts for this uniqueness?

taken place is due to the uniqueness of having language in written form. But what accounts for this uniqueness? How is it that nowhere else has writing developed? Here the testimony of the *Arcana*, just two paragraphs after the first passage quoted, may seem a little perplexing, in that it seems to bring us about in a circle:

That the Word could be written on our earth is because the art of writing has existed here from the most ancient time, first on wooden tablets, later on parchment, afterward on paper, and finally it could be published in print. *This has been provided by the Lord for the sake of the Word.* (*Arcana Coelestia* 9353) (emphasis added)

These passages seem to say that the Lord chose to be born on our earth because the account of His advent could be written here. But then the art of writing seems to have arisen, in the Lord's providence, in anticipation of His advent. Why could not the same have happened elsewhere? To break this seeming circularity, however, we need proceed but a few more paragraphs to *Arcana* 9360:

To the reasons already adduced may be added that the inhabitants, spirits and angels of our earth bear relation in the Grand Man to the external and bodily sense (see n. 9107), and the external and bodily sense is the ultimate, into which the interior things of life come to a close, and in which they rest as in their common receptacle (n. 5077, 9212, 9216). The case is similar with truth Divine in the letter, which is called "the Word," and which for this reason also has been given on this earth and not on another. And because the Lord is the Word, and is its first and its last, therefore in order that all things might come forth according to order, He also willed to be born on this earth, and to become the Word....

So both the provision of writing and the Lord's birth on this earth are consequences of what we might call a more fundamental reason: the nature of the human race as it exists on our planet. Apparently, more than any other place in the universe, our planet relates to the external and bodily sense of the Grand Man.

Thus the root distinction of our planet turns out to be a dubious one: being the most external, the most ultimate of all. This is why we have been given Divine Revelation in its most ultimate form. This is why the Lord assumed the Divine Natural in actuality among us. And although the distinction may be dubious, it did lead to the blessing of being those among whom this greatest of all miracles took place.



The Rev. Stephen D. Cole was ordained in 1977 and into the second degree in 1978. He has been a minister in Ohio, Detroit, Michigan, and San Diego, California. He is Assistant Professor of Religion and Philosophy in Bryn Athyn College of the New Church, and of Theology in the Theological School. He is also head of the Religion Major in the College. He and his wife, Jennifer (Smith), live in Bryn Athyn and have eight grown children. Contact: Stephen.Cole@brynathyn.edu

Report on the Council of the Clergy Meetings

Bryn Athyn, PA – June 24-28, 2014

The Rev. Kenneth J. Alden

As ministers prepared and gathered for the 2014 Council of the Clergy meetings, we had a sense that all eyes were on us. We would, of course, be considering general doctrinal presentations designed to facilitate ongoing development of the doctrine of the Church. We would, as always, have business to conduct as a Council. But this year the Church knew that we would be discussing “Women in the Ministry,” as the topic has come to be known.

The Rt. Rev. Brian W. Keith had said in the March-April issue of *New Church Life* (pp. 121-122) that the Council would be reappraising our practice of inaugurating men into the priesthood. He said ministers were being encouraged to re-examine what the Word says on this and related subjects so that our practice going forward may be based on our best understanding of the Word.

Accordingly, discussion of doctrinal papers on what the Word says about the nature of the priesthood and of the suitability of each sex for its uses was a much-anticipated feature of these meetings. With priests and lay people holding strong views on all sides of this issue, prayers for a charitable discourse set the tone for these meetings. What follows is a day-by-day summary of what took place.

MONDAY, JUNE 23

Although the meetings officially started on Tuesday, Bishop Keith and his assistant, the Rt. Rev. Peter M. Buss Jr., took the opportunity for face-to-face meetings with ministers whose usual method of giving counsel is by conference call. The Bishop’s Advisory Council, which gives counsel on career and employment matters, met in the morning; the West African National

Pastors met in the early afternoon; and the Bishop's Consistory, which gives counsel on a variety of matters pertaining to the life of the Church, met in the late afternoon.

That evening, Bishop and Mrs. Keith graciously opened their home to the clergy, ministerial candidates, and their wives. This proved to be a great venue for hearty greetings, animated conversation and friendly smiles as many ministers arrived from different parts of the world.

TUESDAY, JUNE 24

Once again, the Academy of the New Church Dining Hall housed our plenary and concurrent sessions, as well as our meals. Our first day began with a reading from *Psalm* 91 and a talk by Bishop Keith on the many uses of hope in the Church – hope of eternal life, hope in marriage, and especially hope in times of temptation.



The first order of business was to elect the Rev. Grant Odhner as Secretary of the Council of the Clergy

Our first order of business was to elect the Rev. Grant H. Odhner as Secretary of the Council of the Clergy, who then presented the following men, ordained since our last meetings in 2012, to be accepted as voting members of the Council: Alex Koami Adognon, Moïse Bab, Christopher A. Barber, Timothy Chou, Alan Cowley, Jiro Kamazawa, Lompo Oumpougula, Jea S. Park, Seich Sakae, Alphonse Téhé Zoho.

After their unanimous acceptance, the general membership status of Kurt Hy. Asplundh and Olaf Hauptman was recognized, as was the resignation of Mark Carlson and the removal of Nicks Marisa from membership.

Paper: “The Authority of the Heavenly Doctrines,” by the Rev. Jacob Borketey-Kwaku. He reminded us that the Word in its three-fold form is the authority for the Church, for when the Word leads, the Lord leads. A church is noble according to understanding and application of the Word but it is not a genuine church if it is not in genuine truths.

He briefly traced the history of how the Word was revealed in each of the five churches, and how each fell from being true to the Word. This took place when their senses led instead of the Lord; when they tried to solve their problems from themselves, rather than from the Word; when they corrupted the Word by applying it to exalt themselves; and when, after the Lord Himself had come on earth, they killed the acknowledgment of His Divinity and the life according to His commandments.

He said the truths which established the New Church are the Lord's, not Swedenborg's. He is the lamp. When we face issues, we ask if we are going to

the Word. If we are, we are led by the Lord. We should let the Word of the Writings speak with authority.

Report of the Executive Bishop. Bishop Keith affirmed his enjoyment of his job while acknowledging the difficulties which are a challenge in all jobs. He said there was lots of pain in cutting the budget, because this means we give up a lot in both uses and personnel. Our budget is half what it was five years ago.

Bishop Keith asked for feedback in several areas, including the episcopal newsletters to the clergy and the value of having General Assemblies. He asked if any congregation would like to sponsor an Assembly, presumably on a university campus. One respondent noted that 2020 will be the 250th anniversary of the Lord's sending out His disciples, as described in *True Christian Religion*. Another suggested that regional assemblies make more sense nowadays than international assemblies. Yet another pointed out that most organizations have large-scale conventions, and that without them, the organization suffers.

Discussion of a paper by Bishop Keith: "Once a Minister Always a Minister? Or Inaugurations and Separations from the Priesthood."

Bishop Keith said some of the difficult situations that, in providence, had been thrust upon him in his first year got him thinking about what ordination means. While the enlightenment given to a priest is from the Lord, inauguration into the priesthood is a recognition that a man is suited to the priestly office in the church organization. Where there is disorder, does a man's ability to represent the Lord go away? What are the implications for the church organization, and for the bishop who must respond to such disorders within the priesthood from time to time?

In discussion it was pointed out that ordination is from the Lord, but disorder can be cause for ceasing to recognize a man as a priest within the Church. Another speaker encouraged us to extend the connection between ordination and the office served such that when a priest ceases to serve in the office of one or another degree of the priesthood, he also ceases to use the stole associated with that degree. However this sentiment did not garner broad support. Yet another speaker noted that there is a gray area when it comes to what constitutes a disorder or disturbance of sufficient magnitude to warrant separating a priest.

Bishop Peter Buss Jr.'s report as Assistant to the Bishop: He highlighted the four categories into which his job can be grouped:

Oversight and support of the clergy, together with the Executive Bishop



Bishop Keith affirmed his enjoyment of his job while acknowledging the difficulties which are a challenge in all jobs



The Rev. David H. Lindrooth spoke about the potential for small groups to involve people with the Church and its doctrine in a new way,

Overseeing General Church Education, which currently takes a quarter of his time and next year will be allotted half his time

Providing an episcopal presence in the Church through world-wide travel and guest preaching in Bryn Athyn and the schools there

Administrative, such as scheduling traveling ministers or assisting with the coordination of the clergy meetings

During brief discussion, Bishop Keith thanked Bishop Buss for what he has brought to the office.

The Rev. David H. Lindrooth's report on General Church Outreach. He spoke first about the website upgrade at www.newchurch.org. He also spoke about the

potential for small groups to involve people with the Church and its doctrine in a new way, and recommended the workshop scheduled for the afternoon on this topic. Several people commented on the usefulness of the Journey Programs, even if they need adapting from their target audience of newcomers to a members audience in certain settings.

Before lunch, the four candidates for the ministry who were attending the meetings as invited guests were acknowledged: Brett Buick, Jared Buss, Joel Glenn and Judah Synnestvedt.



Bronwen Henry reported that New Church Outreach is experimenting with small groups as the way we "do church."

After lunch, we were offered a choice of a session by General Church Outreach on "Small Groups," or time for reading or conversation. The presenter for the Outreach team was Bronwen Henry, who collected a list of reasons why people came to this session and what they were hoping for. She reported that New Church Outreach is experimenting with small groups as the way we "do church."

General Church Outreach had arranged for a training seminar in California with an expert on small groups, and much of this session was drawn from that experience. Small groups are seen as a way to gather to look to the Lord, witness together, provide a network of support in times of need, and to serve. Several of the ministers who had attended the training in California commented on

their experience. Mrs. Henry stressed that while you do not have to be in a small group to be in the Church, it is a way in for many people.

Report by the Rev. Dr. Andrew M. T. Dibb, Dean of the Theological School; In 2014/15 there will be three students in their final year, a fourth taking a leave of absence, and two new students. A survey of students who went through during his tenure showed positive results.

Other theological training is being led by the Rev. John Jin in Korea, the Rev. Henry Joel Kouassi in Abijan, Côte d'Ivoire, and the Rev. Andrew J. Heilman is providing for theological training in Brazil and Cuba. Mr. Dibb thanked the Rev. Grant Odhner – the only other Theological School full-time faculty member – and the adjunct and core faculty. He appealed to ministers to continue to plant thoughts of the ministry in the minds of promising young men.

Bishop Keith's report as Chancellor of the Academy of the New Church:

The Secondary Schools received a glowing report from the accreditation committee, whose only criticism was that our salaries are too low and we should be taking our show on the road.

The College's admissions process continues to be refined so that the students admitted are a good fit with our mission. Glencairn Museum has been praised by a European expert in the field as probably doing a better job at displaying religious works than any museum in Europe. Cairnwood Estate has annual income from weddings, receptions, and other events that totals just under a million dollars.

The budget is the Academy's greatest worry and pressure, as budget cutting can be a real blow to morale. We project a balanced budget in 2017, after 10 years of deficit spending.

At the end of the business session, information on the members of the Council of the Clergy was provided for nominating men to fill five vacancies on the Bishop's Consistory, and to vote for two members to serve on the Membership Committee of the Council of the Clergy.

Seminar on Women: In the evening a number of ministers took up the invitation by a group of lay men and women to attend a seminar, "Exploring Gender and Ordination for the General Church." Its stated goals included summarizing and discussing "doctrinal studies and other works in support of women in the General Church ministry that have been completed by lay people and by women who are currently ordained in or training in other denominations as an alternative to General Church ordination."

This seminar was moderated by Al Lindsay from the Sarver, Pennsylvania, congregation. The featured speakers were Soni Werner, Julie Conaron, Jon and Karin Childs, and Roxanne Jungé. General discussion followed. Mr. Lindsay concluded with special thanks for so many ministers attending. The studies summarized were made available as handouts or on the Internet.

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 25

The Rev. Glenn "Mac" Frazier led worship with readings from *Mark* 9:38-41, *Luke* 9:49-54 and *Apocalypse Revealed* 599. He spoke to the desire to attest to the truth with all the power of calling down fire from heaven. The Lord forbade



Mr. Nicolier touched on the idea that the gentile state is a fertile one for the implantation of genuine truths.

His disciples consuming others in this way, and instead taught that even those who sin against us or who are our enemies must be loved. The many societies in heaven make one by love, even though their perspectives on truth differ. He encouraged us to remember that we are known to be the Lord's disciples if we love one another.

The Rev. Alain Nicolier's paper: "Is the Gentilisation of the World a Prerequisite for the Descent of the Holy City?" He said he had spent 33 years in Burgundy – where Catholicism once thrived – trying to get the doctrine across in the traditional way but with little success. So he moved to the Druidic Pyrenees in southern France and took a different approach.

Now, avoiding mention of his own religious background at his pamphlet table in the marketplace, he begins with the terminology and concepts people already have and brings light and order from the Writings into it, guiding them to the visible God – the Lord incarnate.

Mr. Nicolier touched on the central doctrine of his paper, which is that the gentile state is a fertile one for the implantation of genuine truths. There are truths among non-churched people, and spiritual life can be taught by means of their moral life, just as the angels do with people arriving in the spiritual world from gentile nations.

Membership: A proposal by the Membership Committee to amend its procedures was ratified. One significant change is that when the Bishop determines that a minister is not fit to serve in the priesthood because of disorder, the committee can now suspend council membership and its privileges until final membership status can be determined when the whole council meets.



Bishop Peter Buss Jr. set the stage for our discussion of the doctrine bearing on women in the General Church priesthood.

Discussion on Women in the Priesthood: Bishop Peter Buss Jr. set the stage for our discussion of the doctrine bearing on women in the General Church priesthood. He said there is a call for leadership by the priesthood over an issue facing the Church. Since there are many perspectives and deep-seated feelings, he encouraged continuing our personal preparation to come to these meetings with an affirmative attitude and a willingness to hear different perspectives and engage in open dialog.

He said that in determining our best understanding of the Word as a clergy, we need to converse in a way that allows us to hear what the consensus is, and not divide into camps. He reminded us that at these meetings we will not seek a particular conclusion or

take a vote, but afterward each minister will write a one-page summary of his best understanding of the doctrine to give to Bishop Keith.

This session was shared with the Rev. Jay Barry, who pre-circulated a paper, “Does Our Defense of the Male Intellect Form of the Clergy Injure the Affection of Truth?” Mr. Barry raised awareness that our pattern of communication about the suitability of the male mind for the uses of the clergy can injure women by giving, for example, the impression that men are superior. The difficulty for some women, he said, is that there is not one gender-specific reference in what the Writings say about the clergy form of use. His paper asked whether emphasizing the male intellect contributed to injuring the affection of truth.

After reviewing highlights of his paper, Mr. Barry introduced an exercise based on the story of the Lord healing Jairus’ daughter. He saw this story as a model for how the Lord deals with difficult situations in which the affection for truth appears to die.

The loss of the affection of truth, he said, is a much bigger issue than our tensions over the clergy, and the Church could be lost if we remain an all-male clergy and do not nurture the affection of truth, as also if we do admit women and fail to foster that affection. If we can preserve the affection of truth, the Lord will preserve this church. The exercise involved using the characters in the story to help us see our role in blocking or in cooperating with the Lord in His healing of the Church.

Following this exercise, Bishop Buss briefly reviewed some of the materials pre-circulated, including: “What We’re Hearing” – a document designed to acknowledge the range of lay perspectives that have been shared; a summary of a survey on the matter originated by some members of the Bryn Athyn Church; and links to lay studies on the subject. We took 30 minutes for small-group discussion,, followed by a few comments shared with the whole group.

Two papers on the representative function of priests: The Rev. Michael D. Gladish introduced his paper with key points, stating that the priesthood is still representative despite the abrogation of most other representatives, but now the priest must be in integrity in accord with the representation.

Priests represent the Lord, who came into the world as a male for reasons having to do with the characteristics of a male, and males can represent the form the Lord chose to take on. The representation of the priesthood is the good of the Lord’s love, but the job is to teach the truth, and this combination, he said, requires a male priesthood.

The primary function of the priesthood is to teach the truth, and this



Jay Barry's paper asked whether emphasizing the male intellect contributed to injuring the affection of truth.



The Rev. Michael D. Gladish stating that priests represent the Lord, and must be in integrity in accord with the representation.

involves a war against falsities. Since the masculine mind has a particular capacity for this war, it is his special responsibility, but of course, not without the support of women.

He concluded by highlighting some of his chief concerns. One is that we should have a doctrinal rather than a social focus so that there is doctrinal integrity in the Church – not to the neglect of people, but as a primary focus of a priest’s job. Another concern is for the objectivity which is a masculine trait brought to the priesthood.

The second paper, “Rethinking the Representative Nature of the Priesthood in the New Church,” was presented by the Rev. David Lindrooth. He said that our purpose as a church is a heaven from the human race – providing for a connection with the Lord Jesus Christ in His Divine Human. Priests are not intermediaries. Representatives were abrogated to promote a direct relationship with the Lord.

He said he thinks of the priest’s representative role as the least important part of the job. He also said that under the surface there is an apparent struggle about power. He hears a lot of concern about control when the reality is that we as priests have little control, and in any case, control should not be our motivation. To the degree people feel informed by what we are offering, we will be successful as pastors. He stressed the goal of people within the Church seeing the Lord for themselves in His Word.

Among the points touched on in discussion were: that men and women everywhere in the Word have different representations, where most consistently men represent the Lord, and women represent the church; that the difference in churches before vs. after the Lord’s advent is that we now have direct access to the Lord; that what is now represented by the priesthood is the Lord Jesus Christ, who made Himself visible in a masculine form; and that representation is about function, and when we do the job of teaching, we represent the Lord.

Business session: The Rev. James P. Cooper, past Secretary of the Council of the Clergy, had agreed to look into a mechanism for the Council to make decisions in the absence of plenary meetings. Sometimes questions that come up between meetings cannot easily be dealt with, simply because we lack a process to make inter-meeting decisions as a Council.

After much discussion, the Council agreed to give authority to the members of Consistory and Advisory, chaired by the Secretary of the Council of the Clergy, to make decisions regarding business of the Council between meetings. Such decisions could then be ratified or not at the next meeting of the full Council.



Dinner at Cairnwood, featured an expression of affection for Bishop and Mrs. Kline. The wives of the clergy gave Mrs. Kline a necklace, and for Bishop Kline the ministers commissioned a special ceramic bowl. There were toasts and a song played and sung by the Rev. Dr. Jonathan S. Rose.

A Tribute to the Klines: Later that afternoon, the sacrament of the Holy Supper was offered for clergy and wives at the Cathedral, with Bishop Peter Buss Jr. officiating. In the evening, dinner was enjoyed at Cairnwood, featuring an expression of affection for Bishop and Mrs. Kline, now in retirement. The wives of the clergy had earlier given Mrs. Kline a beautiful necklace.

The ministers told Bishop Kline of the ceramic bowl they had commissioned which would commemorate his aspiration for the New Church to be known as “the marriage church.” There were toasts and a song sung at Tom’s retirement, set to the tune of “Bad, Bad Leroy Brown” with a verse added for Nina, was played and sung by the Rev. Dr. Jonathan S. Rose.

THURSDAY, JUNE 26

The Rev. Christopher A. Barber led worship, reading from *Leviticus* 10:1-11 about the fire that consumed Nadab and Abihu when they offered incense with “strange” fire. Their demise is a warning of the separation from the Lord and loss of truth that happens when we do the uses of the church from any motive other than those which the Lord provides.

The Rev. Derrick Lumsden introduced his paper, “What’s the Use?” He proposed “that as we formulate doctrine, we intentionally and explicitly state our rational sight of the uses we see in the doctrine we are presenting.” Thus we need to include use as a valid and necessary part of our doctrinal presentation.

He said this approach would keep us focused on why a particular doctrinal discussion is happening, and help us share enlightenment more readily. Further, we can’t help but have some sight of use because we are beings of will and cannot see truth apart from our love.

Mr. Lumsden anticipated some possible objections to this approach, the first that it might encourage us to come at doctrinal study from a will that is corrupt, leading potentially to a flawed result. But use can be a safeguard, since the goal is something good. Another objection might be that we will not be

studying objectively. But a use outside ourselves encourages objectivity.

We broke into groups for half an hour to discuss a test-case subject, to see what it is like to apply a rational sight of use. In the discussions there was general affirmation for the idea of being more explicit about the use a study is looking to, and a suggestion was made that future program committees ask for such a statement from presenters.

The Rev. Solomon Keal's: "A Doctrinal Foundation for a Gender Inclusive Clergy in the General Church." This paper had been distributed in two parts, totaling 136 pages! Mr. Keal expressed the belief that the qualities needed for the priesthood are human, stressing that there is no mention of gender in the chapter on the priesthood in *The New Jerusalem and Its Heavenly Doctrine*.

He said that teaching truth and leading by it to the good of life is not gender specific. Throughout the works that Swedenborg himself published, he said, the teaching function is not gender exclusive. He also quoted *True Christian Religion* 589: "By lifting our intellect above the love that resides in our will, we are all capable of grasping those truths, saying them, teaching them, and preaching them."

Summarizing his second chapter, which dealt with what is said in the works left unpublished at Swedenborg's death, Mr. Keal said that mostly there is agreement with the published works, with some notable differences. He touched on several passages from *Spiritual Experiences* that speak about women teaching in churches and preaching, concluding that the thrust of those passages is to encourage women not to be like men, and to avoid evil.

His third chapter was on representation, which he said is not about person but function, and gender relates to person but doesn't play into function.

Chapter four was on enlightenment. He said everyone can be enlightened, and that this comes from love and from use. He asserted that both men and women can be elevated into the higher light and warmth of wisdom and love, including that of the priesthood.

Chapter five was on the marriage of good and truth which makes the Church and can be established in any individual. He asserted that *Conjugal Love* 125 is talking about a different process when it comes to the formation of the church in a couple. He asserted that it is inappropriate to apply passages relating to the interactions of husband and wife, to the use of the priesthood.

The final chapter was on men and women – both beautifully different but both human, having the same qualities of intellect and will. They can both be spouses, parents, prophets, shepherds and to this should be added, priests.

In the brief time available for discussion, Mr. Keal was thanked for his extensive research, and a few speakers pushed back on a variety of points. Further discussion of Mr. Keal's presentation took place in a later session.

The Rev. Grant Odhner: “Masculine Initiative in the Things of the Church.” His thesis was that both a masculine-only and a gender inclusive priesthood *can* be right for different bodies of the Church, but not for the *same* body, because you can’t have a point of view without a way to apply it.

He brought out several concepts from his 2007 paper, “Responding to the Lord’s Word: Approaching Revelation to be Led to the Lord,” since he saw it helping with the issues before us. He drew our attention to acquiring the doctrine of genuine truth, which is gathered from places where the spiritual sense lies bare in the literal sense. Here are found teachings about the Lord, faith in Him, and love toward the neighbor. These are general teachings which rule the rest.

Mr. Odhner then applied these teachings to our discussion and asked whether the doctrine of the priesthood, or the truths about the masculine and the feminine, or the truths about representation, are primary truths. He said that most of these things are “clothing” and “veilings” rather than the things concerning life and salvation that are bare.

He said the teachings about the masculine, the priesthood and representation suggest to him that the ideal is for men to be featured in those roles because of the nature of the masculine mind and what it can and must do for the human race. He also said that to these are added issues of freedom because men are forms of rationality, and need to be empowered, while women at their best want to see men use that freedom to acquire wisdom, love it, and bring it into their lives.

Workshops: Following lunch two workshops ran concurrently. One was offered by Dr. Saul Fisher, a psychologist on retainer by the General Church for its “employee assistance program.” He and a colleague co-led a session with the Rev. Brian D. Smith, It focusing on clergy burnout, and how to maintain health in that process.

The other session was offered by the Rev. Nathan F. Cole: “She is Mine, He is Mine: Courtship in the New Church.” Noting how accepted sex before marriage is these days, and how damaging it can be, he said he would like to see a social life designed to be supportive of marriage.

Discussion touched on such topics as preserving ideals, restoring those who have missed it, the value of stories for applying truths and creating a supportive culture, and the challenges of pursuing ideals and finding potential New Church partners in places outside Bryn Athyn.

The Rev. Kenneth J. Alden: “Gender and Serving in the Uses of the Priesthood: What Did the Lord Do, and Why?” He said his study attempts to draw on the Lord’s own actions to shed additional light on the subject of gender and ordination.

He observed that in the three churches prior to the Lord’s Advent, the

only examples of priests we have are male. With the Israelite church the Lord specified a male priesthood and we know of no statements He made to abrogate that. When the Lord was on earth He appointed only males as apostles to do the uses of the priesthood, nor was He constrained by culture to do so. Although He lifted women in the eyes of His hearers, the Lord did not ordain, appoint, or send women to teach or evangelize in the way He did the apostles.

Mr. Alden observed that although the Lord did not appoint people to the priesthood of the New Church, the people whom He sent throughout the whole spiritual world to proclaim the gospel of His Second Coming were the twelve disciples who followed Him in the world.

In looking at what the Writings say about gender and the priesthood in heaven, evidence was found only for male priests along with warnings against women preaching. The fact that angels wear only garments in keeping with their affections and that Swedenborg saw males wearing priestly garments, suggests that the affections belonging to the priesthood are masculine.

He concluded that we may look for the quality of the Lord's love and wisdom in the deeds that He has done, and that the doctrine on the male priesthood that has developed in the General Church from its beginning provides a full explanation of why the Lord did what He did.

In discussion it was pointed out that what the Lord did after His resurrection was still representative. One person spoke to the importance of taking an obvious reading of Scripture and the Writings and asking, is there any evidence indicating a female priesthood? Several people spoke to the divisions in the church around this issue and the difficulty of bringing people together on it.

Mr. Alden said he hoped people would find healing in their desire to have the Lord as the model for their lives. Having a male priesthood is not a matter of males defending their turf, based on understanding shaped by tradition, but of a sincere attempt to follow the Lord's teachings.

In the evening, clergy met for dinner in the Academy Secondary Schools dining hall, with no program. Clergy wives also had a dinner that evening.

FRIDAY, JUNE 27

The Rev. Jong-Ui Lee led worship, reading from *Exodus* 30 on the altar of incense. The detail about the kind of incense and fire that could be used shows the Lord's seriousness about what must be in worship. As priests, we must be motivated by a love that comes from the Lord and participate in His love for His people.

The Rev. Grant Odhner announced the results of balloting for the Membership Committee: Erik Buss and Kenneth Alden were re-elected.

The Rev. John L. Odhner: "Freedom in Marriage." In this paper he spoke

of how the greatest freedom is from conjugal love, and that it is heavenly freedom itself. With the Last Judgment, the Lord also brought a new state of freedom in spiritual things, while the teachings of the New Church are known to have inspired some who worked to abolish slavery.

He then spoke about some of the teachings of Paul which kept women in submission, such as making it important for a woman to keep her head covered or else have her hair shaved off. Paul's teaching that the man is the head of the woman is rejected by the Writings, yet it is something seen in Islam and other religions.

Mr. Odhner also associated what Paul and Peter taught about a woman being silent as an infringement on women's freedom, because it was coupled with exhortations for them to be submissive. He spoke of the heartbreaking amount of suffering women experience in the world today at the hands of the love of dominion. He saw this illustrated in the dragon's persecution of the woman clothed with the sun.

He said that if you search the Writings for what will bring healing and unity to the Church you will not find the Writings teaching that the solution is either to ordain women or to ordain only men. But if you take a stand against any putting of one person over another, that is a solution the Lord offers to us, and it is available here and now.

The Rev. David Roth: “**The Doctrine of Accommodation.**” He began with the thought that we can get off track in our ministry when we don't accommodate to our hearers, and illustrated failed accommodation with examples from marketing and personal experience.

The premise of his paper came from the teaching of *Divine Providence* 256; “A religion that is not accommodated is not accepted.” He asked, “Since the Lord wills the salvation of all, are we willing to accommodate to those who see the world differently than we do, for the sake of a heaven from the human race?”

He then applied the urgency of his question to his own pastoral work. In his part of the country, many perceive a church that is not ordaining women as a bigoted, sexist church. He said about 15 to 20 people had resigned over this issue. He concluded by reflecting on the benefit the doctrines of the New Church have been to people new to the Church, and the pain many feel when some cannot get past the fact that ordination is not open to women.

In discussion, many expressed sympathy for the hurt Mr. Roth described, with some reminding us of the many people in our own families who



The premise of Rev. David C. Roth's paper came from DP 256; “A religion that is not accommodated is not accepted.”

struggle to identify themselves with a church that does not ordain women. One reminded us that we accommodate in many ways all the time. Another reminded us of the hurt many women would feel if we *did* ordain women, and that accommodating at the loss of our integrity would not guarantee a gain in membership.

Yet another said that the reason homosexual marriage might be the next issue is because it is the same issue in many people's minds: freedom. Another paraphrased Mr. Roth as looking for a way for local congregations to make accommodations where the church as a whole cannot.

The remaining hour was opened to general discussion of any of the papers. Twenty-two people spoke. Several spoke to the need for the church to increase its respect for the voices of women in the everyday life of the church, regardless of structural changes like ordaining women. Some suggested adjoining uses or "ministries" other than priestly ones from the caring and helping professions.

Others drew attention to the need to affirm a place for men in today's churches which are increasingly populated by women. Others addressed the specter of the church being split over this issue, some expressing hope that this not happen, while others focusing on the need for boundaries and mutual respect.

Joint meeting with General Church Board: After lunch to which General Church Board members were invited, we spent the afternoon in a joint session between the clergy and the Board. The purpose was to provide an opportunity for interaction, and to consider the uses of the Church together as a precursor to a General Church strategic planning cycle.

Bishop Keith kicked off this joint session with a presentation on the state of the Church, its challenges and its opportunities. He reminded us of current and past mission statements. He showed how the central budget is used to support our mission. After several years of cuts, he said, we are really down to the bare bones of essential uses. He also suggested we may wish to discuss when uses ought to be administered locally as opposed to centrally.

Speaking to challenges, he noted that:

- Singles often have a hard time fitting into the life of the Church
- People who get into disorder tend to withdraw completely
- Financial contributions are not really seen as necessary or as a duty
- Many feel at a loss describing the Church to others
- The culture around us supports things antithetical to our principles, and we do not embrace church attendance as we once did

Turning to opportunities, Bishop Keith spoke of:

- The vision of the Lord we have been given
- The practical teachings about repentance, use and marriage we can share

- The technology by which we can have an impact
- The young people who are committed to spiritual development even if not regular church attenders
- Our New Church school system which can be leveraged for outreach
- The firm establishment of the use of outreach
- The value we place on marriage and conjugal love
- The opportunity we have to reach out with the truths the Lord has given in a secular world in which churches are not putting forth their falsities as they once did
- The stream of people around the world wishing to associate with the General Church

Following this introduction, pre-assigned small groups discussed, among other things, challenges and opportunities faced by the individual ministers in their work and by the Board members in theirs.

In the second session of the afternoon, the ways in which ministers benefit from central services were discussed. Finally, needs and opportunities that might be considered in a strategic plan were prioritized and groups reported back to the whole. The notes taken in each small group were turned in for further analysis and categorization. The plan is for the small groups to find ways to continue interacting during the coming year.

SATURDAY, JUNE 28

The Rev. Göran R. Appelgren: “From Love to Love.” He said the idea behind the paper is that we begin from love and end up with love, and in between is a lot of motion, emotion and messiness, at times, until we get back to where we are supposed to be. The main point, he said, is that if we recognize love as the prime force in our lives, the Church and the Word, we could relax and do our work better and with more ease, knowing the Lord is in charge, and we are His servants. Love is the beginning and the end, and we are servants in the middle.

Mr. Appelgren observed that everyone wants what “love” stands for. People are their love, and we should start with recognizing that “this is me” experience they have, walk with it, and lead it to a place closer to the Lord.

The Lord does His leading “little by little,” wanting His love to be received. The progress from love to love is shown in many places in the Word, such as Jacob’s departure from Esau, who represents love, and his return to him.

In our church and in the world we need to recognize the imperfections as



The Rev. Göran R. Appelgren pointed out that if we recognize love as the prime force in our lives, we could relax and do our work better and with more ease.

found where people are, see that they want to move from there to something better, believe they have the ability to think intelligently, and believe they can reach higher states. If we can do this, we can offer bread rather than stones when people ask for such goodness for their lives.

The discussion included both appreciation of the theme of love and caution that truth and judgment are necessary to deliver people from the evil loves in which people who are hurting find themselves.

The remainder of the session was given to business, including a moment of silent remembrance of the Rev. Jan Weiss and the Rev. Les Sheppard, who had departed this world since our last meetings. Feedback and volunteers were sought for the program committee for the following meetings.

Wrap-up: Bishop Buss led a wrap-up session, noting that Bishop Keith (who could not be present because he was presiding at a General Church Board meeting) had asked for ministers over the summer to send him a one-page synopsis of what they saw to be the key teachings bearing on the subject of gender and the priesthood. These will be collated and reflected upon in counsel with others, with the intention of ascertaining the collective understanding of the clergy and communicating that understanding to the Church.

(Editor's note: Bishop Keith plans to report on this process in the November-December issue of *New Church Life*.)

This session was for sharing closing thoughts and shared expectations of what gets done from here.

About 20 ministers spoke. One spoke at some length about how little time we actually spent during the meetings in trying to reconcile differing views on the subject of gender and ordination. He appealed for courage to really explore with one another these differing views so that we are not talking past each other and writing each other off.

Another expressed his sense that we all care about the women and men in this church but that we have different ideas of what it is to show care and concern.

A couple of ministers spoke to the disproportionate participation by women in the Church as evidence that we have a problem engaging the men of the Church.

Yet another echoed appreciation for the vital role women have played for the growth of the Church.

Another suggested that the Convention branch of the New Church has gone down the road we are considering, and has not been helped by it.

Several others expressed appreciation for Mr. Appelgren's paper, and one said that the early morning workshops on mindfulness, led by the Rev. Clark Echols, were a big help in remaining peaceful throughout the day.

Bishop Buss expressed gratitude to the presenters, program committee

and Secretary of the Council for putting this year's program together, and all the clergy for conducting themselves in a charitable manner. As for sharing the papers, this was not to be done without the author's permission, while authors were cautioned to make it clear that in publishing their papers, they were not to imply that they were speaking for the clergy as a whole.

The meetings concluded with worship, led by the Rev. Lawson M. Smith, who read a selection of passages from *Jeremiah*.

(Photos are courtesy of the Rev. Kenneth Alden.)



The Rev. Kenneth J. Alden is pastor of the Boynton Beach New Church in Florida and visiting pastor to Bonita Springs, Florida. He has served also in Mitchellville, Maryland, the Carmel Church in Kitchener, Ontario, Canada, and the Colchester New Church in England. He and his wife, Kim (Truax), live in Lake Worth, Florida, with their family.

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OUR NEW CHURCH VOCABULARY

Part of a continuing series developed by the Rev. W. Cairns Henderson, 1961-1966.

CHARITY

This is one of the most important and distinctive terms used in the Writings. In the world today, charity is thought of almost entirely in terms of private or organized relief of material want. According to the Writings, however, charity is not an action at all – although it has no reality unless it is ultimate in deeds.

Charity is to will well, and to do good works is to do well from willing well. In itself, charity is an internal affection which consists in a man's desiring from the heart, as the delight of his life, to do good to the neighbor, and this without thought of recompense; and its essence is to will well to the neighbor, to be affected with good, and to acknowledge good as the neighbor. The life of charity is to act sincerely, justly and faithfully in one's office. (See True Christian Religion 374; Doctrine of Faith 13; Arcana Coelestia 8033; New Jerusalem and its Heavenly Doctrine 101)

Fishing on the Right Side of the Boat

The Rev. Erik J. Buss

Lessons: *John 21; Apocalypse Explained 513:16;*
Arcana Coelestia 1838

How often have you felt totally alone, perhaps even while around other people? When someone who cares for you has hurt you, being around that person can be more lonely than being by yourself. Or being in a crowd, watching other people interacting, can be lonely.

At times, our lives are so busy that we crave a bit of alone time; but even then we wouldn't want to be alone too long. The point of life is being around people, interacting, making a difference, caring for them and feeling cared for.

One of the most profound experiences of loneliness comes when we feel that no one is looking out for us. It's as if we are on our own with no help. We have the sense that there's supposed to be someone looking out for us, someone should be caring for us, but there isn't. And when the Lord seems distant it gets even worse. It's as if He's in the boat sleeping while the storms of life rage around us.

Just after the Lord had been crucified was a time like that for His disciples. They had thrown their lot in with the Lord. They had given up everything for Him and had found meaning and companionship in His cause. Our story today talks about a mundane-seeming event that is actually profound – a reconnection with their God and through that with a purpose in life.

After the Lord died, Peter decided to go back to what he knew: fishing. The Lord had appeared twice since His resurrection to let him know that He still lived, but now Peter had to figure out what to do with his life. The Lord wasn't dead, but for a time the dream He had given was.

The story is really about Peter, and the ways he was touched, changed and given purpose. It is relevant to us because we can be like Peter. In the deeper, symbolic meaning of the story, Peter, meaning “rock,” is a symbol for our faith, our understanding of what is true and good. He was the one who said

first, “You are the Christ, the son of the living God.” He was also the one who so frequently interacted with the Lord. He took the lead as the intellect often does, especially during uncertainty.

Peter goes fishing and takes lots of others with him. He is out in a boat on water. Water symbolizes truth, and in this context, particularly the facts we know. A boat is our worldview or doctrine – the principles we use to forge our way through the mass of knowledge we have crammed into our heads.

Fish are those who know things. Reading from New Church teachings, fish symbolize “those people who are [immersed] in general truths, and are thus more attracted by what is natural than what is spiritual.” (*Apocalypse Revealed* 405) It’s that part of us that’s caught up in the everyday world. You know lots of things, but are in the middle of it all. You have no perspective, and don’t see what that truth means for your life. You don’t see how what you know connects to anything higher. These are just the things you are dealing with as you try to get through your day in a respectable manner.

We become fish-like when things are busy. We take truth in and act, but we don’t take time to reflect on it, or use it to connect to some higher purpose.

When we fish, spiritually speaking, we lift fish out of the water into a boat. That means we incorporate the Lord’s truth into the way we see the world; we lift those truths out of the din of daily life and view them from a higher point of view. Seen from the fish’s perspective this is not so good. It’s not always easy to lift our minds out of the everyday world up into something more spiritual. But from the fisherman’s perspective it’s a matter of life and death that we lift those fish up. If we aren’t learning new truths and applying them to our lives we are spiritually starving to death. Life becomes empty, like Peter’s was without the Lord present.

Peter fished all night and caught nothing. How often have all of us been in just that situation? We try hard to do the right thing. We try to figure out what to do, but there seems to be a disconnect between our spiritual values – the boat – and the rest of our lives. It’s a spiritual nighttime. We want to do the right thing but we don’t see our way clearly, and it does not seem to feed us.

After a time – too long for us – comes morning, a time when the Lord’s

For us, fishing on the right side means doing something from affection, doing it from love, not doing it merely because it is the right thing to do. It means reaching out to people because we want to help them, rather than out of a sense of duty.

The wonderful thing about this story is how dramatically it works. When we really pay attention to people, when we show them that they matter to us, we find that we can help change lives. And like Peter, suddenly we recognize the Lord in the picture.

presence is more obvious. We know intellectually that He's always present, but we don't feel it in hard times. He asks, "Children, have you any food?" Such an important question: Is your life working for you as it is? Is it feeding your spirit? Until we can really and truly say no, we can't change. In fact, until then we are likely to resent suggestions for change.

When they say no, He then tells them to cast the net on the right side of the boat. Now obviously the fish were not all swimming on one side of the boat. The Lord gave this command purely for its symbolic value. In New Church teaching, the right symbolizes coming from goodness and the left coming from truth. (*Arcana Coelestia* 10061) You can think of left-brain linear logic and right-brain intuitive whole-person thinking, if that helps, but it's deeper than that.

For us, fishing on the right side means doing something from affection, doing it from love, not doing it merely because it is the right thing to do. It means reaching out to people because we want to help them, rather than out of a sense of duty.

There's a lot to be said for doing things because they need doing. The saying, "Fake it till you make it," is very powerful and important. It keeps us alive in hard times. And in fact, that willingness to compel ourselves is what allows the Lord to change us from selfish into spiritual human beings. But that's not the focus for today. That is not what reconnects us with the Lord. We may be doing the right thing when we compel ourselves, just as Peter was doing the right thing when he fished all night, but it's not feeding our spirit by offering us a vision of and connection with our heavenly Father.

What does it look like to fish on the right side? I think it means focusing on process over content. Think of wanting to help someone: a child struggling with a problem, a friend fighting depression, someone whose marriage is in trouble, a friend who has lost a spouse or loved one. Helping someone on content is making sure he or she does it right – sort out the marriage, solve the problem, overcome depression, deal with the grief appropriately – and specifically sort it out the way you'd want that person to. By contrast, when

we help people with the process, we don't especially care whether they "pass the test," and especially if they pass the test in the way we would. We focus on helping them move along the path toward the Lord, with their whole lives.

Why do people change their character? It's not because any of us says something brilliant or true. They change because they have, within themselves, a desire to change. So when we try to help people, the first point of contact needs to be with their heart, and then their head. Once they want to change, once we have connected with their heart, then they might be open to being guided by the truth.

This does not mean that we love others in a mushy, vague sense. We need to be clear within ourselves that we are still fishing. We are serving others spiritually by helping bring them out of the water into the boat, just as those who love us do the same for us. We don't abandon our principles and act from kindness that looks like love but is not. We have to fish from the right side – reach out from love, be interested, and genuinely interact from compassion.

Perhaps this means just listening at first, or asking questions. Maybe the solution has nothing to do with the problem we see. The point is not that content – correct behavior – does not matter; it is critical. It's that if you do not convey love and trust in the person (and if you are not truly feeling it) you will not be able to help. And, if you do not respect people's free will enough to help them work it through as *they* see it, you won't help, but hurt. You may have the clearest sight in the world about their problem, but until they want to hear it, it's of no help.

The wonderful thing about this story is how dramatically it works. When we really pay attention to people, when we show them that they matter to us, we find that we can help change lives. And like Peter, suddenly we recognize the Lord in the picture.

Think about this: When we are fishing, we are helping others from love, and doing that does not mean that *they* see the Lord. The fish don't see the Lord; Peter did. It means that *we* see the Lord. The Lord's presence becomes living in us. And perhaps like Peter, we will want to be with the Lord right away.

Then the Lord feeds His disciples. When the disciples got to the shore, there was already a fire with fish on it. He told them to bring some of their

(Truth) has lasting value to the extent that we fish from the right side: reaching out to those we know, seeking to serve them from love, respecting their free will, looking to the good in them, and seeking to inspire them to use that truth appropriately.

fish also. This is symbolic of the fact that true feeding comes from the Lord's presence within us. Yes, we catch fish, but in reality, the fish – the spiritual food – was already there inside us. We simply had to create the space that could receive it.

We're not going to spend time on the end of the story except for one thing: The Lord goes through the "Do you love Me?" series of questions when Peter starts asking questions about John: what about him? The Lord responds, "If I will that he remain till I come, what is that to you? You follow Me." In other words, "Stop questioning and pondering about others. Your job is to use what you know. Go and do it. Treat other people with love."

To us the Lord could say, "Stop worrying about how effective others are. Stop worrying about the state of the world or of the church. Stop thinking about what you could do if you had more energy, money or joints that weren't sore. Learn to interact with everyone you see from love and compassion, using the truth you know."

Most people trying to live a spiritual life know lots of spiritual truth. At times we can see its beauty and power. But truth by itself is cold and lonely. It isolates us from others and from the Lord. If we stay with truth alone, or if we focus too much on truth, we'll end up discarding it as irrelevant. It has lasting value to the extent that we fish from the right side: reaching out to those we know, seeking to serve them from love, respecting their free will, looking to the good in them, and seeking to inspire them to use that truth appropriately.

"Then the King will say to those on His right hand, 'Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me.'

"Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsty and give You drink? When did we see You a stranger and take You in, or naked and clothe You? Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?'

"And the King will answer and say to them, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.'" (*Matthew 25: 34-40*)



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Needs and Deeds

Sasha Silverman

“Don’t be needy!”

Enter any counseling center or watch any relationship-oriented reality show, and at one point you’ll likely hear someone offering these sage words. It has become a readily offered panacea for those experiencing heartbreak or grief or longing.

Certainly there is some truth there. As we mature enough to care for ourselves, we need not expect another person to carry the burden of making us feel worthy, secure or happy. But what’s the difference between neediness and genuine need? When is it okay to ask others for help?

Just last night a friend called me. She felt excited about a guy she had started seeing, but he hadn’t contacted her all day. She wanted to hear from him, and she wanted to reach out to him, but she’d been told by others, “Just be cool.” So she said nothing, because she didn’t want to come across as “needy.”

I thought about that for a while. Yes, it’s great to rely on ourselves and find all the love we need inside of ourselves, but we’re not robots. We can’t just turn off our desires for love and companionship. We genuinely do need each other.

I remember a time when I was lying in bed in a cold sweat, unable to stand up or walk down the hall to get water. Just when I had begun to panic, wondering if I could make it through the night alone, my younger sister came over with my favorite Vietnamese noodle soup. Deep into the night she stayed with me, waiting until my fever broke, putting cool cloths on my head, and rubbing my feet. In the morning, my fever broke and I could easily take care of myself again. But just remembering her presence at that time of need still brings up feelings of love and gratitude.

Loving actions do that. They are relationship solidifiers – the glue. Because we need each other we grow together. Because my babies needed me, I bonded deeply with them. Because I needed the help and knowledge of my best teachers, I appreciated and respected them. Because my father had hip surgery, my siblings and I all took time away from our jobs and computers to visit him and connect with each other. All this giving and receiving and bonding is beautiful, and many would even say it’s what life is all about.

If you're interested in finding more ways to practice kindness, we welcome you to join us in our newest Journey Program, *What Would Love Do?*

As conscious beings, there are so many opportunities for us to help each other when needs arise. There's a profound story in the Bible (*Matthew 25:35-45*) where Jesus reminds His followers how to love others. He speaks of those who are hungry, thirsty and sick, who don't have enough clothes, or a place to call home, or are in prison. When we see these people and help them and care for them, He says, we are embodying the whole essence of the Bible: to love God and love each other.

While those raw physical needs still exist today, they remind us of needs that go even deeper. We all have experienced times of emotional fullness and emotional starvation.

We go through times when we're hungry for love and someone gives us the best hug. Or we're thirsty for knowledge and someone offers a wonderful bit of wisdom. Or we feel exposed and vulnerable and someone gives us just the right words that bring comfort and protection.

Remembering times we've been helped during a time of need is great incentive to pay it forward. When have others met your need with a good deed? Maybe they gave some advice that you've never forgotten. Maybe they helped you make a tough decision. Maybe they spent their whole day helping you move boxes to a new home. Maybe they forgave you. Maybe they really listened to you, and helped you feel understood. Maybe they allowed you to be yourself when you felt unworthy. Maybe they gave you a hug or a smile when you really needed it. How can you pass that gift on and help someone else feel the way you felt?

If you're interested in finding more ways to practice kindness we welcome you to join us in our newest Journey Program, *What Would Love Do?* It's a seven-week curriculum that you can do either alone or with a small group. The workbook offers ideas, inspiration and strategies for meeting needs with helpful deeds. For more information, visit www.newchurchjourney.org



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A Light Burden

The Rev. Eric H. Carswell

Lessons: *Psalm 42, Matthew 11:28-30, Heaven and Hell 533*

My yoke is easy, and My burden is light. (Matthew 11:30)

What is it like to carry an object that is almost too heavy for you? A heavy burden changes a person's perspective on everything around him and alters his goals. A person who is carrying a heavy load can easily find that he is primarily staring at the steps immediately in front of him, with his mind focused on the effort of each step and the pain of the weight he is carrying. All sorts of interesting sights and sounds may surround him, but he sees little of them and takes delight in even less. Not only is this true physically in this world, it is also true of someone who is carrying a heavy mental burden.

What produces a heavy mental burden? Some people envision that following the commandments of the Lord is a heavy burden and that being "good" is relatively unpleasant. How many jokes have we heard about how boring and dull heavenly life must be? Some people associate fun and real living with evil. Yet long before the first of these jokes was told, the Lord was trying to counteract this impression with the words: "My yoke is easy, and My burden is light." Consider the following from *Heaven and Hell 359*:

One person can live like another in outward form. As long as there is an inward acknowledgment of God and an intent to serve our neighbor, we can become rich, dine magnificently, live and dress as elegantly as is suitable for our social situation and role, enjoy pleasures and amusement, and meet our worldly obligations for the sake of our position and of our work and of the life of both mind and body. So we can see that it is not as hard to follow the path to heaven as many people believe. The only difficulty is finding the power to resist love for ourselves and love of the world and preventing those loves from taking control, since they are the source of all our evils. The fact that it is not so hard as people believe is what is meant by these words of the Lord: "Learn of Me that I am gentle and lowly of heart, and you will find rest for your souls: for My yoke is easy and My burden light." (*Matthew 11:29-30*) The reason the Lord's yoke is easy and his burden light is that to the extent that we resist the evils that well up from love for ourselves and the world, we are led by the Lord and not by ourselves. Then the Lord resists those things within us and removes them.

We may feel like we have a right to be angry, depressed, discontent and bitter because circumstances give us ample justification. In contrast, the Lord encourages us to see that we have a right not to be angry, depressed or discontent with our lot.

Getting to the point that we are led by the Lord and not by our natural heredity doesn't seem easy. Doing what comes spontaneously seems far easier than making an effort to do something different.

One psychologist tells the story of a young woman who was very troubled, partially because the way her family interacted with each other was unhealthy. He tried to help her see these destructive interactions and encourage her toward a healthy response.

Finally, the woman proudly described recognizing a problem arising at home, seeing its true quality, and reflecting on what she wanted to do in response. The psychologist

congratulated her and said that with some more practice she would be able to do this all the time.

The woman was horrified and said, "You mean I have to think this hard all the time?" It sounded like a tremendous burden to her. But from your perspective which would be worse: being driven by the unhealthy responses of people around you, or having your mind working on seeing what is real, true and good in those situations?

At first, anything that comes naturally seems to be easier. For example, which is less stressful: erupting with angry words when you lose your temper, or trying to respond in a constructive way to the situation?

For many people, lashing out may seem far easier. It can seem like a heavy burden to contain an angry response. But which is the greater burden: the result of lashing out at someone, or the result of an effort to respond more usefully?

Imagine a day spent lashing out over and over again. Now imagine one in which you tried to respond constructively to frustrations. How would you feel at the end of the first day, compared to the second? How would you look forward to the next day from those two different perspectives?

We may feel like we have a right to be angry, depressed, discontent and bitter because circumstances give us ample justification. In contrast, the Lord encourages us to see that we have a right not to be angry, depressed or discontent with our lot. He would like to lift the burden of these responses from us.

Consider some of the heavy thoughts and feelings the hellish influences in our lives would like us to carry:

- You got angry; this shows you're a bad person
- Making a mistake is a terrible thing
- If people knew what you were really like they wouldn't like you
- Bad things are likely to happen to you
- Other people cannot ever really be trusted; they will let you down
- Other people are getting more than you are
- You're trying but you'll never get it right
- Life in this world is all there is; when someone dies he or she is gone forever
- You are alone in a world that doesn't make sense

Compare these ideas and feelings to what the Lord would like us to have in our minds:

- Ask for the Lord's help
- The Lord loves you always
- Learn what the Lord teaches
- Try to act in loving and wise ways
- Even when you are not perfect the Lord will work to bring as much good from what you do and say as is possible
- The Lord is continually leading you toward greater happiness and usefulness
- The Lord cares more about where you are now than where you've been
- Turn away from things that would hurt you and others
- You will get to see loved ones who have died when you get to the next life

We will never change if we feel incapable of changing, or if we tell ourselves and others: "It's just the way I am. I've got a bad temper." If this fosters apathy toward change, it is not good.

We will never change if we feel incapable of changing, or if we tell ourselves and others: "It's just the way I am. I've got a bad temper." If this fosters apathy toward change, it is not good. The Lord has told us that we are all born with natural inclinations to think and will things that are harmful to others and ourselves. He has told us that everyone needs to undergo a fundamental change of heart and mind, in order to be truly happy.

We are not condemned because we are born natural, and in fact, the Lord doesn't condemn us even if we stay natural. He never condemns anyone. But if we don't consciously work to see our experience through the Lord's eyes and values, if we don't make conscious efforts to turn outside of ourselves, we will put ourselves beyond the Lord's ability to bring us happiness. We will be left with the heavy load that the hells would lay on us.

Consider the following from *Arcana Coelestia* 905:

The more present the Lord, the more free the person; that is, the more a person is in the love of good and truth, the more freely he acts. Such is the influx of the Lord through the angels. But on the other hand, the influx of hell through evil spirits is forcible, and impetuous, striving to dominate; for such spirits breathe nothing but the utter subjugation of each person, so that he may be nothing, and that they may be everything; and when they are everything the person is one of them, and scarcely even that, for in their eyes he is a mere nobody. Therefore when the Lord is liberating someone from their dominion and from their yoke there arises a combat; but when that person has been liberated, that is, regenerated, he, through the ministry of angels, is led by the Lord so gently that there is nothing whatever of yoke or of dominion, for he is led by means of his delights and his happiness, and is loved and esteemed. This is what the Lord teaches in *Matthew* 11:30: "My yoke is easy, and My burden is light," and is the reverse of a person's state when under the yoke of evil spirits, who, as just said, account each person as nothing, and, if they were able, would torment him every moment.

When we are caught up in the press of daily affairs and are responding almost instinctively to what happens, it is not easy for us to believe that the Lord offers us greater freedom. But if we open our eyes we will start to see the burden of our natural responses. We will be able to see the misery and slavery they entail.

May this give us hope and strength enough to turn to the Lord for help. May we learn from Him and daily try to put off the heavy yoke of the hells that tends to focus on what is wrong in past and present circumstances, blinding us to the beauty and love surrounding us.

May we put off the heavy yoke of the hells that gives us great pain. Instead we can take on the Lord's easy yoke and shoulder the light burden that He intends for us. Amen.



The Rev. Eric H. Carswell is pastor of the Bryn Athyn Church. He was ordained into the second degree in 1981 and throughout his career has been pastor of the Glenview and Pittsburgh societies and head of their schools, Dean of the Bryn Athyn College Theological School, and regional pastor for the Northeastern United States. Most recently he was Vice Chancellor of the Academy of the New Church and Bishop's Representative for Education for the Academy of the New Church and the General Church Schools. He and his wife, Donna (Zeitzi), live in

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How Can We Believe?

The Rev. Coleman S. Glenn

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Jesus said, “Blessed are they who have not seen, and have believed.”
(John 20:29)

The gospel of *John* records Jesus speaking these words to “doubting Thomas,” who only believed when he was able to see the risen Lord for himself. Today, almost 2,000 years from that event, we are the ones who, if we are to believe, must do so without seeing – at least not with our physical eyes. Can we do that?

Some things may seem fairly easy to believe: for example, that we ought to treat one another with respect, and even that there is an unseen force guiding the universe. But can we believe the specific and the miraculous: that the Lord Jesus Christ is God, and that He literally rose from the grave?

The belief that the risen Lord is the living God is a vital one. Jesus said, “Blessed are those who have believed,” and then even more strongly, “Unless you believe that I am, you shall die in your sins.” (*John* 8:24) This teaching is affirmed in the Doctrine of the New Church (e.g. *Arcana Coelestia* 10083) ¹.

If we want to have eternal life, we have to believe in the Lord. But what if we find ourselves besieged by doubts? How can we do anything about that? Can we *force* ourselves to believe? It can seem to be a hopeless situation, but the Lord gives us hope that we *can* believe. In Scripture and in the Doctrine of the New Church, He shows us how.

The first thing to know, if we want to have faith, is that our starting assumptions matter. If we start with the position that we will not believe anything unless it can be *proven* to us by physical evidence, we will never believe. *Arcana Coelestia* calls this “the negative principle.” If we want to believe, we need to begin with the affirmative principle: that even if we do not understand something yet, it is true because the Lord says so in His Word. Here is the description of these two principles from *Arcana Coelestia* 2568:

There are two principles; one of which leads to all folly and insanity, and the other to all intelligence and wisdom. The former principle is to deny all things, or to say

in the heart that we cannot believe them until we are convinced by what we can apprehend, or perceive by the senses; this is the principle that leads to all folly and insanity, and is to be called the negative principle. The other principle is to affirm the things which are of doctrine from the Word, or to think and believe within ourselves that they are true because the Lord has said them: this is the principle that leads to all intelligence and wisdom, and is to be called the affirmative principle.

There are illustrations throughout the Lord's Word that demonstrate the wisdom of this affirmative principle. The sixth chapter of *John* tells us that many of Jesus' followers left Him after He said, "Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you."

They called this a "hard saying," and because it made no sense to them, they walked away. But the twelve disciples remained, and when Jesus asked them why, Simon Peter replied, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life." (*John* 6:68)

Rather than rejecting the Lord because of sayings they found difficult to understand, they continued to follow Him, knowing that His words brought eternal life, no matter how difficult they might be to comprehend. And it is only because they took that affirmative stance that later they were able to understand something of what He meant.

Even when we have the affirmative principle, though, we will naturally have doubts. The passage quoted above goes on to describe people who have doubts before they accept that affirmative principle:

There are some who are in doubt before they deny, and there are some who are in doubt before they affirm. Those who are in doubt before they deny are those who incline to a life of evil; and when this life carries them away, then to the extent that they think of the matters in question, they deny them. But those who are in doubt before they affirm are those who incline to a life of good; and when they allow themselves to be bent to this by the Lord, then to the extent that they think about those things, so far they affirm.

What this tells us is that although we might think of our doubts as purely intellectual, the reality is they have much more to do with *the way we live* than we realize. We might say to ourselves: "How can I know if Jesus Christ really rose from the dead? How can I actually know that He is God, and that He has an influence on the world today?"

Our first instinct might be to think that the way to deal with those doubts is simply to collect enough evidence, weigh it rationally, and come to a conclusion based on pure logic – an intellectual exercise.

The problem, though, is that people don't actually work that way. Our desires and emotions have *far* more impact on our ability to assess data than we tend to think, and that's as true for a committed atheist as it is for a committed Christian. We might not see the connection, but whether or not we *want* the Lord to be God will have a huge impact on whether we'll accept or deny the

evidence that He is.

What that means is that if we're experiencing doubt, the way out of that doubt is not simply going to be trying to find more evidence. The way out is to *start living as if what the Lord says is true*. That means submitting our lives completely to Him and striving to obey His commandments. Once we have done this, once we start to notice the changes in our lives that this brings about, *then* we start to see the actual truth behind what we've been learning. We'll still have some doubt, but we'll also start to see the truth more clearly.

That seems backwards, but this really is the way it works. People over the years have noticed that when the Lord gave His commandments to the children of Israel, their response was not, "All that Jehovah has spoken, we will hear and do," but, "All that Jehovah has spoken, we will *do and hear*." (*Exodus 19:8*)

The *doing* comes first, and only after that, *because* they have obeyed, are the people truly able to hear and comprehend.

We see something similar throughout *John*. A major theme of that gospel is that only those who are in obedience to God will be able to recognize Jesus as Lord. So, *John 3:20-21* says: "For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God." It is doing the truth that allows us to come to the light.

And so, in addition to adopting the affirmative principle – "I will believe what the Word says because it is from God" – if we want to believe, we need to act in obedience to the Lord. This is summed up in the short book *Doctrine of Faith*:

If anyone should think within himself, or say to someone else, "Who is able to have the internal acknowledgment of truth which is faith? Not I"; let me tell him how he may have it: Shun evils as sins, and come to the Lord, and you will have as much of it as you desire. (*Faith 12*)

That passage speaks of the need to shun evils as sins if we want to come into real sight of the truth. Our love of evil clouds our ability to see the truth. But the passage also speaks of one other vital thing: the need to "come to the Lord." This is the other main thing we need if we want to have a sight of truth: we need to approach the Lord Jesus Christ directly as God, in thought and in prayer.

We might not see immediately why this is the case; and we can only completely understand it once we've actually done it. But the general reason is this: the Lord Jesus Christ is God in human form, and when we think of Him, talk to Him, pray to Him, follow Him, and obey Him, we are drawn into a conjunction with Him in a way that is impossible if we have a vague or distant idea of God as an impersonal force. In Jesus, we see the true, human face of

God.

True Christian Religion describes the vital importance of approaching the Lord specifically:

A person can only acquire by his own efforts natural faith, which is a firm belief that a thing is so because an authoritative person so declared it. He can also acquire only natural charity, which is working in someone's favor for the sake of some reward. These two contain man's self, and there is no life as yet from the Lord. Still a person by either of these prepares himself to receive the Lord. In so far as he prepares himself, so far does the Lord come in and make his natural faith spiritual, and likewise his charity, and so make both living. *These results follow when a person approaches the Lord as the God of heaven and earth.* (*True Christian Religion* 359, emphasis added)

The *Gospel of Mark* records a poignant example of the way this can look. A man brought his son to the Lord and told Him that the disciples had been unable to cast out the spirit that caused the son to foam at the mouth and become rigid. The father said to the Lord, "If You can do anything, have compassion on us and help us." The Lord replied, "If you can believe, all things are possible to him who believes." And "immediately the father of the child cried out and said with tears, 'Lord, I believe; help my unbelief!'" (*Mark* 9:24).

That can be our cry, our prayer: "Lord, part of me believes, but part of me doesn't – help me to have faith completely in You!" If we make that prayer to the Lord, while seeking to obey Him, He *will* answer our prayer and give us faith. It may not be immediate, but the Lord hears and answers those prayers directed to Him.

As we have seen, there are several things necessary for us to do if we want to have faith: adopt the affirmative principle, seek to obey the Word, and approach the Lord alone in thought and prayer. It is only *then* that we turn to the final part of coming to belief: looking at the facts and the evidence. Here is the conclusion to *Arcana Coelestia* 2568:

The more those who think from the negative principle consult rational things, knowledges, and philosophical things, the more do they cast and precipitate themselves into darkness, until at last they deny all things. On the other hand, those who think from an affirmative principle can confirm themselves by whatever rational things, by whatever knowledges, and whatever philosophical things they have at command; for all these are to them confirmatory, and give them a fuller idea of the matter.

What does this mean? It means that when we look for evidence from a place of skepticism, from a belief that only physical things are real, we will find a way to use that evidence to come up with physical explanations for things. But if we have that affirmative principle, we can see how that same evidence actually points to the truth of what the Lord says in His Word.

So to return to the specific case of the Lord's resurrection: We will never

find physical proof that satisfies someone with a negative frame of mind. There will always be a natural way to explain it away. But looking from an affirmative perspective, we can see that there is a whole host of evidence *confirming* that the Lord really did rise from the dead.

(By the way, although some internet commenters argue that Jesus was purely mythological, the vast majority of professional Biblical scholars, even agnostics and atheists, assert that Jesus actually existed, so I'm assuming that to be true in presenting the further evidence for His resurrection.)

There are hundreds of eyewitness accounts at the time of people independently seeing the risen Lord. There is the empty tomb. There is the assertion from Christians throughout the centuries that they have had a meaningful relationship with Him, and that they have experienced His Spirit in them².

All of those things can be explained away, but they can also confirm the truth *once we have experienced it ourselves in the reality of coming to know the Lord in our hearts and our minds*. And we come to know Him by speaking to Him, listening to Him, obeying Him, acting *from* Him to love others, and loving Him.

Once we have done this we turn to the worldly evidence, which only serves to confirm and expand what we already know to be true.



The Rev. Coleman S. Glenn became the assistant pastor of the New Church Westville in Durban, South Africa, on July 1, where he lives with his wife Anne Grace (Hurd) and their infant son, Samuel. Prior to that he had served as pastor to the Dawson Creek New Church in British Columbia, Canada. He maintains a blog at www.patheos.com/blogs/goodandtruth. Contact: coleman.glenn@gmail.com

Footnotes

1. The Doctrine of the New Church does state that those who have been ignorant of the Lord Jesus Christ and yet have lived lives of charity in accordance with whatever religion they have will be saved; but this is because they joyfully accept the Lord when they hear about Him. Those who already know about Him and reject Him cannot enter heaven because He is what makes heaven to be heaven; rejecting Him is rejecting heaven.
2. If you're interested in looking into this further there are several books that take a positive view of the historical evidence for the Lord's resurrection, e.g. *The Resurrection of Jesus: A New Historiographical Approach* by Michael R. Licona .

‘The Lord is Smiling on the Church in Kenya’

The Rt. Rev. Brian W. Keith

I had the pleasure of returning to Kenya in July to see how the Church has developed in the four years since my last trip. It was wonderful to see how the Rev. Samson Mogusu Abuga has led the Church and is creating a solid basis for the future. His church in Etor, located in the Kisii region of southwestern Kenya, now has a church building, an award-winning elementary school (the *Good News Preparatory School*, K-8, which he notes is “tomorrow’s church”), the beginnings of a manse, and an orphanage for more than 60 children (whom he terms “unfortunate angels”).

Traveling there was interesting as usual. Lost luggage in the London, England, Heathrow Airport; an interminable drive from Nairobi to Kisii, featuring hours stuck in traffic; automotive breakdowns; and baboons looking none too friendly along the side of the road. Fortunately, there is now a reasonably priced hotel within walking distance of the church property, which was very convenient and a welcome sight after the trip.

There was quite a group traveling to Kenya. Gretchen accompanied me, taking photos as usual and helping out with resources from General Church Education for the school and society. (If you would like to see pictures of the Church around the world, go to her Facebook page. For photos from this trip, see page 466.)

Kay Alden and Kathy Schrock were privately funded to make the trip, giving support to the teachers in the school and providing oversight for the orphanage. They led a teacher training seminar and brought many New Church resources for the school. Kay’s husband, Mark, and Kathy’s husband, Roger, joined them later, providing medical and construction expertise. The Helping Children in Crisis committee supported much of their trip. A more complete report on the orphanage and the HCIC committee will be in a future issue of the *Life*.

While there I preached in the Etor and Kiagware congregations. As usual, their singing was exuberant, joyous and extensive. During the first Sunday at Etor I inaugurated Fred Onsiro Ang’asa, Emanuel Wanjala Juma and George

Omusu Magero into the priesthood. (Notice the use of three names. That is because the third name means “son of ...,” whereas what we think of as the last name is found in the second place. This is why they will sometimes use one or the other depending upon circumstances. It’s very confusing for our data base!)

They had been trained by our Bryn Athyn College Theological School, both by distance learning and by the Revs. Lou Synnestvedt and Grant Odhner making several trips there.

Fred continues to teach in their elementary school. Emanuel and George also teach in the school, in addition to preaching responsibilities. Samson told me that he had prepared a few people by instruction for baptism during the service. I was a bit taken aback when 30 people came forward, most of whom were adults!

Also during the service I recognized Nehemiah Manyara Gwonda as a lay leader in the congregation. Nehemiah is a wise old gentleman who provides tremendous support for Samson and the congregation. (Samson enjoys quoting: “Where there are old men, there will be no trouble.”) Needless to say, it was a rather lengthy service!

There are now three congregations in Kenya: Etora with Samson as pastor; Kiagware, about a 45-minute drive away, with George as pastor; and the Masaai group which Emanuel visits regularly. Fred is working with a small group in Kuria in the far southwest corner of the country near Lake Victoria. He is helping it develop and hopes to move there as resident pastor in the future.

When I first visited in 2009, the Etora school had about 80 students and went up to the fourth grade. It was meeting in a fragile mud-and-stick building. Now, there are more than 240 students. (Those in classes any day vary because children periodically need to work on the family farms.) After graduating from the eighth grade students move on to resident high schools in the surrounding area.

There were celebrations in the school because the most recent standardized student test scores had again placed them at the top of the 60 elementary schools in the area. This is especially amazing considering the number of orphans enrolled with very limited education background, and their physical facility.

The school building is under construction, with only half of it under roof. The students are crowded into four classrooms with challenging noise levels. (When the roof is completed Samson expects more students to enroll.) But the teachers are dedicated, starting classes with worship at 7 a.m. daily. They even volunteer several hours on the weekends to help students catch up, who had no previous formal education.

A number of the teachers have joined the New Church and they want to use all the New Church curriculum that General Church Education can

provide. A major success story is that Kevin, a former orphan of Etoro and student at the school, is now one of the teachers.

The Etoro Church building is a newly constructed, temporary structure. It is made of wooden poles with metal sheeting attached for walls and roof. It is temporary because the termites gradually eat the wood and it will all have to be rebuilt. They hope for a permanent structure made of bricks, but know that will take some time. While their attendance is impressive, averaging around 100 adults (up from about 30 last trip) and more than 120 children weekly, most are farmers with little cash income.

During the week, I spent time with each of the classes in the school, met with the General Church Board in Kenya, visited the high schools the orphans attend, and had extensive meetings and classes with the clergy and others there.

Due to heavy rains, making the road to the Masaii group impassable, we were not able to travel there, nor could they to come to Kisii. We hope to meet with them in the future. (I should note, the climate in southwest Kenya is lovely. They are close to the equator, in a lush hilly region. Temperatures range from the low 60s to the lower 80s year round. The humidity is moderate. In the rainy season there are some powerful showers but they usually last for only a short portion of the day.)

The General Church Board of Kenya is functioning well. Comprised primarily of lay people, they have representatives from all the church groups in the country. They coordinate the Sunday School programs and youth groups, ensuring their New Church content. They also promote and support lay leaders and outreach or missionary efforts.

Almost everyone speaks English, which is taught in all the schools. But the most widely spoken language is Kiswahili, regardless of one's tribal tongue. They are translating the Writings into this language. They have just about completed the *Four Doctrines* and are seeking a means of publishing it for missionary purposes. Given the extensive Scriptural background of everyone there, and how many Scriptural quotes are used to demonstrate the truths of the Heavenly Doctrines, this is an ideal book for that purpose.

The Kiagware Church, where I preached on the second Sunday, is more of a wooden frame with branches placed on a lattice work for a roof. This made for an unusual distraction – preaching while avoiding the dead leaves hanging down. They are attempting to purchase the property so they can build something more permanent. The place was packed with about 50 adults and at least that many children. The local chief was present and wants to be baptized. He has been a supporter for several years.

All of this development is remarkable given the travesty that occurred more than two years ago. While I certainly do not relish bringing to mind this



devastating chapter in the history of the Church in Kenya, it is important to address it publically and to show that we are taking steps to guard against such disorders in the future.

What happened was that the Rev. Khalid Obiri Rangi, who was pastor in Riounde, about an hour from Etor, committed suicide. He apparently did this because he was HIV active and was accused of sexual impropriety with a minor. While the Kisii area is heavily populated, it is still a small town with everyone knowing about a scandal like this. This disorder was addressed at the well-attended funeral, when Samson spoke openly and extensively about New Church beliefs regarding marriage and the evils that attempt to destroy it.

The result was that the Riounde congregation collapsed. The orphanage closed suddenly and Samson rescued the children who otherwise would have lived on the streets. The land and buildings were registered in the names of individuals rather than the Church and thus were forfeited. A few of the people who wanted a continued connection with the New Church migrated to Etor.

As always, we look back and wonder what we might have done, or if we could have foreseen and prevented this. Several lay people from the United States spent months at a time there, and several had been trained to work in developing world areas and to look out for things like this. No one suspected anything.

We now have protections in place to lessen the chances of disorders of this nature happening again. For example, all clergy and other church employees take the General Church sexual abuse awareness training and observe all the

rules set forth in the General Church Child Protection Policy.

The property in Etorá is in the name of the Church and supervised by a lay board that handles all the money. The orphanage is being supported by the Helping Children in Crisis committee, which has an extensive Supervision and Accountability policy. They also have outside auditors who provide supervision, both of the treatment of the children and the church's finances. Granted, none of these measures can stop a determined sexual predator. But they will make it more difficult and discourages them from targeting this and other congregations.

Now, several years later, the Church in Kenya is recovering from this disaster, although damage to individuals will not be fully healed until the Lord can more directly care for them in the spiritual world. We have made what amends we can and trust that the Lord will care for all who were hurt. The bad publicity is subsiding.

People no longer wonder about attending the Etorá Church, or sending their children to school there, as witnessed by the adult baptisms and numbers in the school. Local chiefs and residents are supportive, which is essential where family and tribal connections form the background of human interactions.

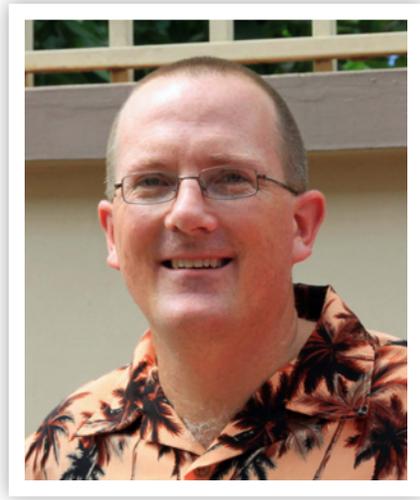
It was a blessing to return to this part of the world and see the Church flourishing in ways we did not think it could, given what had occurred. What stands out is the dedication of the people now in charge, the growing group of students and adults who are actively engaging in the life of the Church there, and the hope they have for the future.

We saw orphans who are happy, well clothed and fed. We saw teachers and administrators working above and beyond to provide New Church education. We saw hundreds of adults participating in worship, and many who have responded, requesting instruction and baptism. We marked the inauguration into the priesthood of well-trained and dedicated clergy to expand the work of the Church there.

The Lord appears to be smiling on the Church in Kenya, and we pray that He will continue to bless their efforts.



The Rt. Rev. Brian W. Keith is Executive Bishop and General Pastor of the General Church, Chancellor of the Academy of the New Church, and President of the General Church in Canada and in South Africa, and President of the General Church International. He and his wife, Gretchen (Umberger), live in Bryn Athyn.



The Rev. Bradley D. Heinrichs

From Landscaping to Planting Spiritual Seeds

Just when Brad Heinrichs was getting established in a landscaping career another seed started germinating: following his grandfather and father into the ministry.

That seed doubtless was planted long before he was aware of it.

Brad was born in Durban, Natal, South Africa, where his father, the Rev. Daniel W. Heinrichs, was pastor of the Westville Society. He moved with his family to Bryn Athyn, then to Lakewood, Ohio, Mitchellville, Maryland, and Miami and Boynton Beach, Florida. This gave him the opportunity to experience many different aspects of life in the New Church, from small circles to larger church groups with schools.

He attended the Washington New Church School grades 4 through 10, graduated from the Academy Boys School and completed one year at Bryn Athyn College. He then graduated from the University of Florida in 1989 with a degree in Landscape Architecture, supplemented with a minor in Horticulture.

He then spent seven years running a Landscape Design Build and Maintenance company, which he owned with his brother, Bob, and two partners, Mark Pennink and Andre Arrimour. He was well launched in his chosen career.



Left to right, back row: Deacon, Linnea, Denali, Cathy, Reyana and Brad. In front, Calvin and Joram. In the background, the Carmel New Church.

Then he was asked to serve on a committee to counsel the Bishop on who should replace his father, who was retiring as pastor of the Boynton Beach congregation. “During the meeting,” he remembers, “I kind of zoned out and clearly heard the Lord telling me that I should be doing this kind of work myself. After that, my wife and I decided to sell our share of the business and use the money to pursue theological training in Bryn Athyn.”

He entered the Bryn Athyn College Theological School in 1996, graduating three years later. Upon ordination he was sent to the Carmel New Church in Caryndale, Ontario, Canada, where he and his wife

Cathy (Stewart) and family have lived happily ever since. He was assistant to the pastor from 1999 to 2002, and pastor beginning in 2002. He also is Executive Vice President of the General Church in Canada, and the Bishop’s Representative for Cuba.

Among the major influences in his life pointing him toward the ministry were his father, Dan, and mother, Miriam (Mim), and their parents – the Rev. Henry and Ruona Heinrichs and Gilbert and Venita Smith. He is proud to say, “Their amazing dedication to the New Church has always been an inspiration in my life.”

Another huge influence in Theological School was the knowledge of the doctrines within the faculty which made him realize just how little he knew, despite being on track as a third-generation minister. “It inspired me,” he says, “to want to investigate the doctrines as thoroughly as possible.”

Having the opportunity to spend all 15 years of his career in the same congregation, he notes, “has been an amazing experience. The people at the Carmel New Church have taught me much and treated me well. It has been a wonderfully supportive community in which to raise a family.”

Traveling throughout Canada and serving various groups and circles has also made him “proud to call myself a Canadian.” He adds: “Recently serving

the nascent New Church groups in Cuba, and seeing their enthusiasm for the Heavenly Doctrines after hearing them for the first time, has really helped to reinvigorate my own affection for these life-changing teachings that we tend to take for granted.”

Brad and Cathy have six children: three girls (Linnea, Denali and Reyana) and three boys (Deacon, Calvin and Joram). They love to travel on long road trips through the United States and Canada. His personal interests include hiking, canoeing, backpacking, and photographing landscapes and wildlife.

Here is his favorite passage from the Writings:

There are therefore two principles; one of which leads to all folly and insanity, and the other to all intelligence and wisdom. The former principle is to deny all things, or to say in the heart that we cannot believe them until we are convinced by what we can apprehend, or perceive by the senses; this is the principle that leads to all folly and insanity, and is to be called the negative principle. The other principle is to affirm the things which are of doctrine from the Word, or to think and believe within ourselves that they are true because the Lord has said them: this is the principle that leads to all intelligence and wisdom, and is to be called the affirmative principle. (*Arcana Coelestia* 2568:4)

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OUR NEW CHURCH VOCABULARY

Part of a continuing series developed by the Rev. W. Cairns Henderson, 1961-1966.

CHASTITY

This term is included as one which has in the Writings a meaning different from that assigned to it in common usage. In that usage, chastity means continence, virginity, or celibacy, and is therefore a quality that is lost by marriage. This definition is unacceptable, both because it implies that the body is depraved and marriage impure and because it refers only to the body, whereas the Writings teach that chastity is essentially a state of the spirit.

As the terms are used in the Writings, chastity and unchastity are predicated of marriages and the things that belong to them. Conjugal love is said to be chastity itself, and the term describes the union of one man with one wife when both acknowledge the Lord and each confines their love to the other. Such a union is chaste because inmosty within it there is an aversion to adultery.

The distinction between chastity and unchastity is therefore much deeper than one as to bodily acts. Before marriage, chastity is a proper attitude toward marriage which influences the imagination as well as the conduct – one which looks earnestly to a chaste and eternal union and spurns what is opposed to it. (See *Conjugal Love* 139ff, 49e)

‘Do Not Worry About Tomorrow’

The Rev. Bradley D. Heinrichs

Lessons: *I Kings* 3: 5-15; *Matthew* 6: 24-34; *Arcana Coelestia* 8478

Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: 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. Now if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble. (*Matthew* 6:28-30,34)

Anxiety! It is something we have all encountered. So many children to clothe. More money going out than coming in. Job security. Car troubles. An aging house falling apart. The stock market plummeting. These are daily troubles we often spend a lot of anxious moments thinking about. And our level of anxiety about the future inevitably leads to stress.

So the Lord offers us these simple words: “*Consider the lilies of the field.*” Our gut reaction in a very stressful time might be: “Thanks for the advice, Lord, but considering the lilies right now isn’t going to help me much!”

But you know what? The most stressful times are when we need, more than ever, to take a break and consider those lilies. This poetic and simple message from the Lord can be incredibly profound and powerful if we will only give it our consideration.

So let’s take a moment to consider the lilies of the field. These plain, beautiful flowers neither toil nor spin and yet they grow. Why? Because the Lord takes care of them. The Divine order of His creation provides that there will be soil, rain and sunshine, so they can grow and flourish. Not every season provides a perfect combination of these elements, yet they grow and multiply over the years. After sustaining a year of drought, they come back all the stronger the next year. Eventually the rains come, and after drinking in the moisture they are revitalized.

They are simple plants with no eternal life, yet the Lord continually provides for them. So the question is asked: “*Will He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?*” The answer is simple: Yes!

The Lord always provides for the most beloved of His creation – human beings, you and I – even more perfectly than the lilies of the field. (See *Divine Providence* 332) Therefore the Lord urges us: “*Do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.*”

So why did the Lord say that “*even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these*”? It was for the plain reason that they existed so simply in the order of their creation. (See *Arcana Coelestia* 8480) Lilies do not care for tomorrow, nor do they worry about their past. They do not covet riches, honor, reputation and gain. They don’t fret over their appearance or where they will receive their nourishment. They exist peacefully, as just another part of the Lord’s wonderful creation.

Solomon’s glory consisted in man-made ideas and perceptions of what was glorious at that time: gold, palaces, a large harem, numerous children and military might. The beauty and glory of the lilies lay in their simplicity: they were content with God’s design for them.

It calls to mind the story of Jesus visiting the home of Mary and Martha. Martha was bustling about trying to be a good hostess, while Mary simply sat at the Lord’s feet and listened to His words. Martha was distracted by her domestic duties, and upset by Mary’s seemingly carefree attitude. Do you remember what the Lord said to her? “*Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things. But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her.*” (*Luke* 10:41-42)

Doesn’t the message of these words resonate with the Lord’s words to Solomon when He granted him to ask for whatever he wished. Solomon humbly asked for a wise and understanding heart.

The Lord said to him, “*Because you have asked this thing..., I have given you a wise and understanding heart..., and I have also given you what you have not asked: both riches and honor.*” A similar idea was expressed in our lesson from Matthew: “*Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.*”

The message is clear. Cares of the world, anxiety about the future, and worries over the past distract us from the essential order of our creation. Think of the order into which we were born. We did not worry about time and space. We did not care about riches or reputation. We were not anxious about the future or the past; the present moment was our universe.

We were in a state of innocence and peace. (See *Conjugal Love* 395; *Heaven and Hell* 278) We were created to become spiritual beings, innocent

angels of heaven. When we obsess and excessively fret about the things of this world, it robs us of any delight in the present, and of the eternal joy and peace that the Lord created us for.

So the Lord tells us that He will always provide for us if we seek after what is truly important, and instructs us not to “worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things.”

In fact, for the children of Israel the “concern for the morrow was not only forbidden, but also condemned.” (*Arcana Coelestia* 8478:2) This is why when they gathered their manna in the wilderness every day, they were commanded not to save any of it for the next morning, or it would breed worms and stink.

The lesson the Lord was teaching them was that He would provide for them every day what they would need. Just like clockwork, manna would be there in the morning and quails in the evening. When some did not trust or have faith that the Lord would provide for them, they would try to gather more than they needed for the present day.

This needless anxiety for the future resulted in the manna going rotten until they learned from experience that the Lord’s words were true. For every morning they would wake up and the manna from heaven would be there. So the simple prayer that the Lord asks us to make is: “Give us *this* day our daily bread.” (*Matthew* 6:11)

So is it possible to go anxiety-free in this world? Can we be in that celestial state of peace and contentment all the time? Sadly the answer is no, but that is not necessarily a bad thing. It depends on how you look at it.

In general, there are two types of temptations that produce anxiety – natural and spiritual. (See *Arcana Coelestia* 8164) Natural temptations usually cause us excessive anxiety and stress that for the most part are unhealthy and unproductive. Often our concerns over worldly things, money matters, reliable transportation and physical health are blown out of proportion and obscure our vision of what is really important.

Now because we live in a physical time-and-space world, these natural concerns cannot be completely avoided. The Writings note that it is orderly for us to make provision for our dependents, and to obtain resources for the future. (*Ibid.* 8478:2) After all, we can’t let the kids go hungry or freeze in the winter. We have to make mortgage payments and drive a safe vehicle. We have to strive for a better working environment and make enough money to live on.

So there will inevitably be times when we suffer natural temptations which involve misfortune and misery. But we must ask ourselves: Are these worldly concerns consuming all our time and energy? Are they constantly diverting us from the important things – spiritual things – like serving the Lord and our neighbor, taking good care of our marriages and raising our children properly?

There is a story of a management professor who took a jar and filled it

with rocks in front of his class. He asked, "Is it full?" The students said, "Yes!" Then he took small pebbles and shook them into the jar. "Is it full now?" Many still said, "Yes." Then he took sand and worked it into the jar. "Is it full now?" Finally, the students got the point and said, "Not yet."

Lastly, he topped off the jar with water and told them, "In life you have to make sure you make room for the big important things first, and then the medium size things, and lastly make room for the smaller, less important things. If you fill your life with the small things first, you will find you have no room left for the big things."

This in essence is the same lesson the Lord is trying to convey to us: "Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you." If we concentrate on the big important spiritual things that really matter, then all the other smaller details will eventually fall into place.

Even focusing on spiritual matters will not bring a continual state of peace on this earth. And believe it or not, that is a very good thing! We are all born with hereditary tendencies to do evil; this is why the Lord said we must be born again. During this process of being born again our tendency to delight in doing evil comes into conflict with our conscience, based on what we know to be good and true.

This is spiritual temptation, and it brings anxiety and despair. And this, we are told, is a good thing because if we did not have any anxiety about our secret tendencies toward evil, it would mean that we did not have a conscience and could not be reformed. (See *Arcana Coelestia* 2689; 5470)

Now, after battling through temptations and emerging victorious, we gradually come to a point where we realize that the Lord is always present as a perpetual shield for us, and that He is always there to lift us up when the going gets rough. (*Ibid.* 1787)

This is just like the man in the story of the "Footprints in the Sand" who eventually came to the realization that when there was only one set of footprints in the sand the Lord had not abandoned him but picked him up and carried him.

This is the state of perpetual comfort and peace that the angels are in. For they, through a life of experience, have come to acknowledge fully that indeed the Lord's words are true and that His promise made in Isaiah is sure: "I will guide you continually, and satisfy your soul in drought, and strengthen your bones. You shall be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters do not fail." (*Isaiah* 58:11)

So what stands in our way from obtaining this stress-free life of peace? One thing is that there is a certain group of nasty evil spirits called "*conscience mongers*." (*Arcana Coelestia* 5386) Their sole goal is to make you miserable! They do this by trying to overburden your conscience with trivial matters that

don't relate to eternal life or heavenly things. They try to fill up your jar with sand by constantly weighing you down with doubts and fears until you become paralyzed and unable to move forward.

Do you know what region of the body these little monsters correspond to? The stomach – right below the diaphragm. Listen to this fascinating teaching: “Herein also lies the reason why, when such feelings of anxiety take hold of the mind, the area around the stomach is tense and sometimes pain is felt there, and also why feelings of anxiety seem to surge up from there.” (*Ibid.* 5178) This explains why we use the expression of “having our stomach tied in knots.” And maybe it is why those under constant stress and anxiety can develop stomach ulcers.

So we must fight against these spirits and keep focused on the important things – the big rocks, the kingdom of God and His righteousness – and these evil characters will be banished and disappear, leaving us in a state of ease.

The second thing that keeps us from enjoying heavenly peace is anxiety about the future. We're told that “a longing to know the future is innate in most people” and that “nearly all are anxious to know whether they will come into heaven.” (*Divine Providence* 179; *Heaven and Hell* 478) But this anxiety has its origin in evil since at the heart of it is a lack of trust in God.

If we truly had faith and trusted that “the Lord governs all things and provides all things, and that He leads toward an end that is good,” then we would not worry about the future. (*Arcana Coelestia* 8455)

There is a fable of three trees that wonderfully illustrates this point: A long time ago there were three trees in the forest. They dreamed of what they would like to become in the future. The first tree wanted to become an elaborate treasure chest filled with gold. The second wanted to become a great ship serving kings and queens. The third tree wanted to be the tallest tree in the forest with its great branches reaching toward heaven, so that everyone would remember it as a symbol of our closeness to God.

A few weeks later lumberjacks came to the forest and their dreams were shattered. The first tree was cut up and made into a feed trough for animals. The second was made into a lowly fishing boat. The third tree was simply cut down and left in the lumberyard.

Time went by and then one day a man and woman came with a baby wrapped in swaddling clothes and laid Him in the manger. And the first tree realized that it was indeed holding the greatest treasure it could have hoped for.

Years went by, and the second tree was taking 13 men fishing, when a great storm arose. Suddenly, one of the men arose and said, “Peace, be still.” And the storm stopped. The second tree then recognized it was carrying the King of Kings on its humble deck.

A few years later, the third lonely tree unceremoniously had two of its great branches hammered together, and much to its horror had a Man nailed to it in crucifixion. And when it heard that Man cry out, “Father, into Your hands I commit My spirit,” it realized that it would forever be a great symbol of God’s closeness to us.

The moral of this story is that when you have anxiety for the future, always know that God has a plan for you. If you place your trust in Him, He will always provide for you. Each of the trees got what it wanted, and even more than it had ever dreamed, just not in the way it had imagined. Of how much more value are you than these trees or those lilies of the field? We don’t know what God’s plans are for us. We just know that His ways are not our ways; but His ways are always best.

So when you are in a state of anxiety, worrying about the future or regretting the past, when you find yourself getting caught up in worldly affairs and doubts start to overwhelm you, then remember these lessons. Keep yourself focused on eternal, heavenly things – the big rocks – and all the Lord’s blessings will be added unto you.

The angels exist in a state of peace because they have this unwavering belief that the Lord will provide for them every day what they need. (See *Arcana Coelestia* 2493) They are content in the present moment because they trust in the Lord. They have come to recognize that the Lord’s “Divine providence is overall, that it is present in the most minute details, and that people in the stream of providence are being carried along constantly toward happier things,” and into “a state of peace.” (*Ibid.* 8478:4).

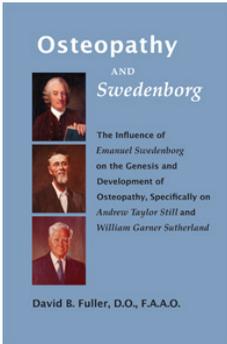
So the question is not whether it is true that the Lord will lead us into a state of peace, but whether we really believe it in our hearts and in our souls. And so the Lord assures us through the prophet Jeremiah:

Blessed is the man who trusts in the Jehovah, and whose hope is the Lord. For he shall be like a tree planted by the waters, which spreads out its roots by the river, and he will not fear when heat comes; for his leaf will be green, and he will not be anxious in the year of drought, nor will he cease from bearing fruit.

(*Jeremiah* 17:7-8)

Amen.

BOOK REVIEWS



Osteopathy and Swedenborg

By David Fuller, DO

*Reviewed by the
Rev. Reuben P. Bell, DO*

An important new book has emerged from the New Church community, and is becoming a standard for people of more than a single interest. *Osteopathy and Swedenborg*, by David Fuller, DO, is three welcome works in one: at long last a biography of Emanuel Swedenborg that does justice to his scientific genius; a coherent treatment of the origins and principles of the New Thought movement as the Swedenborgian phenomenon that it was; and a thoroughgoing treatment of osteopathy as the philosophical progeny of the two. For reading or reference, this book sets a new standard for scholarship in osteopathy's complex genealogy.

Osteopathy and Swedenborg is about a lot of things. It's about osteopathy, of course, as the name implies. And Swedenborg. And how the one owes its philosophical roots to the other. And it's about the American New Thought Movement as the crucible for osteopathy's formation. What we find in Fuller's comprehensive treatment of these things is an explanation for how osteopathy *must* have arisen from such a rich environment.

Because of its comprehensive scope, Dr. Fuller provides us a "site map" of sorts in the front matter of the book. In his "Advice to the Reader" he tells us,

This book is written for a wide range of readers: those with an interest in osteopathy, those with a background in Swedenborgian ideas, and those who are new to both.

I would add that if readers are well versed in Swedenborgiana, they will still learn new and important things. The same thing applies to osteopaths: we will learn new and important things as well, about the origins and principles of our profession. And the beauty is that newcomers to both will not be overloaded with too much to know. Such is Dr. Fuller's style.

We find that we are about to embark on a journey through Emanuel

Swedenborg's life and ideas – important, we are told, for the seminal principles of osteopathic origins and later, for major developments as well. And then we will explore this osteopathic history and its concepts, as they converge in a grand comparison, not of individuals, but of the overlapping paradigms that they share. Emanuel Swedenborg, A. T. Still, DO, and William Garner Sutherland, DO – all wrapped up in a new kind of medicine after 2,500 years of the same old thing.

But there is the rich history as well – a medium running through the book perhaps as important as the message itself – of spiritual and philosophical 19th century America. This was the struggle to put a pragmatic base under a metaphysical system of two worlds, mental healing and positive thinking, that could be put to use in people's lives.

“New Thought” it came to be called, and despite many excellent references that document this movement, Fuller does a masterful job of introducing the phenomenon in a concise but comprehensive way. New Thought as the cultural context for emerging osteopathy makes sense in Fuller's telling, because osteopathy is not just another system for the treatment of disease; it is a metaphysical philosophy of finding health.

Fuller leads us through the succession of philosophical systems that would ultimately produce osteopathy, from the Transcendentalists through phrenology and mesmerism and magnetic healing, to spiritualism (that misunderstood step-child of the New Church). He also takes us from the theistic evolutionary science of Alfred Russel Wallace through New Church minister Warren Felt Evans' “mental science,” to Phineas P. Quimby in Portland, Maine, whose “mental cure” was expropriated to form “Christian Science” of the present day.

With careful documentation, Fuller traces through all of these the common thread of Swedenborg's causal system of spirit into nature. No newcomer to this topic, I nonetheless gained from *Osteopathy and Swedenborg* a new and global understanding of this impressive array of interactive influences.

The history of osteopathic medicine is rich with the side-by-side progress of influences that came to form an evidence-based yet metaphysical medicine – axioms normally at odds if not at war. But as Fuller introduces us to osteopathy's founder, Andrew Taylor Still, frontier philosopher and Methodist preacher's son – both mechanic and “magnetic healer” – we see that it all somehow worked out, in his time and in his place, with that New Thought medium to carry things along.

Next we meet Dr. Sutherland, who took Still's medicine and art inward, to levels so subtle that only Swedenborg before had been able to circumscribe them. The “animation,” or inherent motion of the brain, as Swedenborg had called it, became for Sutherland the “Primary Respiratory Mechanism”

inherent in all the body's parts and linked in some way to the undulatory motion of life, flowing into living things. He extended Swedenborg's principles of cranial motion found in *The Cerebrum* (1738) and *The Brain* (1743) into an integrated system of "cranial osteopathy" still at work today in healing on many levels.

Osteopathy and Swedenborg is ostensibly a book for osteopaths: brisk sales to DOs from the United States, Canada and Europe bear this out; and there is a German translation in the works. But it is more.

In his history of osteopathy, Fuller takes us on a grand tour of unique American culture, and religious and medical history, in an effort to find the common thread of Swedenborg's leading along the way. This he does with the precision of an historian with a keen eye to detail and documentation. But what he gives us is no linear summary of people and events. We find not a line, but the real fabric of their complex interactions.

Along the way there are lots of details to be learned – of fascinating lives, radical ideas, powerful movements and passing fads. But what I came away with is an appreciation of this complex of cultural phenomena called osteopathy, that proved a unique American product.

Osteopathy and Swedenborg is clear and concise. It is not a polemic, but a methodical winnowing of a staggering volume of facts, connections and reasoned speculations into a coherent fabric of cultural history that lives. The Swedenborg Scientific Association is fortunate to have this book among its many classic titles.

If the New Thought Movement, rooted as it was in Swedenborg's theosophy, were to inspire a radically new paradigm of medicine, then that spiritual-natural paradigm would by default be osteopathy. In the apparent randomness of providence, Still and Sutherland became its facilitators. And because of the depth of the truth on which it is based, osteopathy continues to progress as a new kind of medicine in the world.

The Rev. Reuben P. Bell, DO, Fryeburg, Maine, is President of the Swedenborg Scientific Association. Contact: reubenpbell@gmail.com

Osteopathy and Swedenborg: The Influence of Emanuel Swedenborg on the Genesis and Development of Osteopathy, Specifically on Andrew Taylor Still and William Garner Sutherland ISBN: 978-0-910557-82-5, hardback – 607 pages, is published by the Swedenborg Scientific Association. It can be purchased at the Bryn Athyn Church Bookstore in the Cathedral, the bookstore online at <http://www.newchurchbooks.com>, Swedenborg Scientific Association website: Swedenborg-Philosophy.org, or Amazon.com. For a complete list of books on Amazon.com, search in the book section for "NCAP Swedenborg."

The Triune Word

By The Rev. Prescott A. Rogers

Reviewed by the Rev. Walter E. Orthwein

The Triune Word is a fine new book by the Rev. Prescott Rogers that should prove of great interest and use. Its purpose is to show how each one of the three written revelations we have is the Word, and how the three together (Old Testament, New Testament and the Writings) make a one.

For students and newcomers to the Church, the book will serve as a stimulating introduction to the doctrine of the Word, as well as the many related teachings which are brought into the discussion; and for long-time readers of the Writings the book will be a valuable review and reference manual.

It takes a real master of a subject to make a collection of complex ideas concerning it seem almost simple, and this is what Mr. Rogers has achieved. The book is so well organized and clearly written, and free from extraneous or superfluous material, that the reader might at first not realize the breadth and depth of understanding it represents. The book presents an extensive survey of information on various topics in a unified, engaging, easy-to-read form.

Published by the Bryn Athyn College Press, *The Triune Word* (171 pages) is a revision of the Theological School dissertation Mr. Rogers wrote in 1985. It is dedicated to the Academy of the New Church on behalf of the Class of 1964, which will celebrate the 50th anniversary of its graduation at Charter Day this year.

The book demonstrates that the three revelations in which we have the Word – the Old Testament, New Testament, and the Heavenly Doctrines of the New Church – together convey a single Divine message addressed to the natural level of the human mind on each of its three levels.

In the process of explaining and illustrating this premise, Mr. Rogers sheds light on many interesting subjects – historical, psychological and theological – which are viewed in relation to the main point of the book.

The chapter titles give an idea of the scope of the book: 1. Comparing and Contrasting the Three Revelations. 2. The Old Testament. 3. The New Testament. 4. The Heavenly Doctrines. 5. The Heavenly Doctrines as the Word and as Part of the Word. Plus an Introduction and Conclusion.

The topics commented on are too numerous to mention here, but among them are:

- Why we say “Word” instead of “Bible”
- Why the Word is identified with the Divine Human
- How Divine truth is accommodated to our natural minds
- The four styles of writing in the Old Testament
- Sensual elements, and genuine truths, in the Old Testament
- The difference between a representative church and a representative *of* a church
- The abolition of representative worship
- The quality of the early Christians
- The end of the Christian Church
- Rational truths and rational thought
- How the human mind is organized, and how the three degrees of the mind relate to the three heavens
- The ways in which the three revelations of the Word relate to different periods in human history
- Swedenborg and the Heavenly Doctrines
- The Word as the foundation of the Lord’s Church on earth
- Why the Writings are the Word as fully as the Old and New Testaments, and how they differ from those previous revelations

The Old Testament is a sensual revelation adapted to people who were merely natural. The previous revelation (the Ancient Word, now lost, except for a remnant at the beginning of the Old Testament) was of a spiritual quality, but by the time the Lord spoke to Moses on Mount Sinai the church had become so natural that the interior truths known to the ancients would have been profaned. Therefore, Mr. Rogers notes: “A different revelation had to occur. This is the internal meaning of the breaking of the first set of tables hewn by Jehovah and their being replaced by the second set hewn by Moses. – *Arcana Coelestia* 10603:2, 10453:31.” (p. 21)

Then, in comparing the New Testament with the Old, Mr. Rogers writes: “The essential difference is that, while the literal sense of the Old Testament presents exterior truths which belong only to the external sense of the Word and the external life of the church, the literal sense of the New Testament presents interior truths that have to do with the internal life of the church. It was in large part because the two peoples were different that the Lord taught them in two different ways. Whereas the Israelites and their contemporaries [in the ancient Near East] could not receive the revelation of interior truths, the Mediterranean peoples of the Classical Age could.” (p. 62)

I found Mr. Rogers’ treatment of the New Testament especially illuminating.

He gives it special attention because, as he notes, its significance in the whole scheme of revelation through the ages, and in relation to the progress of human thought, has not been as thoroughly explored in the New Church as the Old Testament and the more extensive exposition of it in the Writings.

He shows how the New Testament is an intermediate between the sensual style of the Old Testament and the rational style of the Heavenly Doctrines, and what an essential use that intermediate revelation serves.

“The Heavenly Doctrines,” Mr. Rogers observes, “speak less of the intermediates within any one heaven than of its exteriors or interiors. They deal much more with the Old Testament and the Heavenly Doctrines, both explicitly and implicitly, than with the New Testament. They also deal much less with the imaginative level of the mind than with either the sensuous or the rational level.” (p. 167) He goes on to explore the connection between the levels of the natural sense, the levels of the natural mind, and the three revelations.

The New Testament draws from the sensuous qualities of the Old Testament (in which concrete, natural things represent spiritual qualities) but throws an interior light onto them from a more internal perspective. In so doing, it especially appeals to the imaginative level of the natural mind, which stands between the exterior, sensual level (the focus of the Old Testament) and the interior, rational level (to which the Writings are addressed).

The three kinds of revelation we have in the triune Word are accommodated to the three levels of the natural mind. Each one, then, also has a special appeal to people of different ages (and stages of mental development): the sensuous thought of children is especially responsive to the Old Testament style; adolescents and young adults, still affected by the wonder of childhood but now beginning to think for themselves and be stirred by spiritual ideals, find the teaching of the New Testament especially touching; and mature adults, whose rational minds have been opened, find the teaching of the Heavenly Doctrines especially satisfying and helpful.

There is a helpful glossary of terms at the back of the book, and half a dozen illustrations in the text explaining successive, simultaneous and complex order, and the degrees of the human mind. There is no index, but the Table of Contents includes a substantial list of subheadings under each chapter title, which goes a long way to compensate for the lack of an index.

This book was a joy to read, and I think it is a valuable addition to the collateral literature of the New Church.

(This book is available at the Bryn Athyn Church Bookstore in the Cathedral: www.newchurchbooks.com)

Declarations of Faith and Purpose

THE REV. FRED ONSIRO ANG'ASA

Etoro, Kenya

By the grace of the living God, one God of the universe, Jehovah, who was and who is, I will be committing myself to His ministry. I first acknowledge and give honor to the church leadership, from the Bishop's office to the regional offices, for equipping and facilitating our priesthood classes.

I commit myself to be led by the Lord's Divine Providence and to act from and perform by the Lord's Threefold Word. I will continue learning from the Lord's Word, be prayerful, and seek opportunities to share the Lord's Word with my family, my country, the human race and the Church. I will invite them to look to the Lord and learn from heaven in the Lord's holy worship, as it was revealed to the servant of the Lord, Emanuel Swedenborg.

I will be committed to proclaim the good message about one God, the Word, heavenly marriage, the presence of heaven and hell from the human race, and the life of charity.

By the faith of the New Church, the Lord from eternity who is Jehovah came into the world to subjugate the hells and to glorify His human. Without this no mortal could have been saved, and those are saved who believe in Him. I commit myself to rest in hope, for the Lord will show me the path of life that I shall follow.

To my brothers and sisters I declare: Now it is permitted to enter with understanding into the mysteries of faith.

We all are because God is. May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with us all. Help me, Lord!

THE REV. EMMANUEL WANJALA JUMA

Etoro, Kenya

Bishop, all our church members and all our visitors, it is a historic day in our region that the Lord has prepared for us in His Church.

From your office you accepted to teach us as servants. You set aside time



General Church Ministers in Kenya and Lay Leader with Bishop Brian Keith: Samson, lay leader Nehemiah (third from left) and newly ordained George, Emanuel, and Fred.

and resources for us to access this education and knowledge with success.

I received a call to live in the Word and internal acknowledgment of truth from the Doctrine of the Lord, and to serve in the priesthood of the General Church of the New Jerusalem. I believe, not because everyone around me does, but because I love what the Lord teaches through the Heavenly Doctrine. It makes sense to me; it brings to me peace in my life and with a strong faith that I feel truly alive.

From the first promise (*Genesis 3:15*) the faith of love in the Lord who was to come effected conjunction.

My hope is that I will remain healthy and continue to learn and grow and serve the Lord's people and reach out to the unreached with new truths from the Word.

So help me Lord to be accepted in service, to lead your people to their good of life.

THE REV. GEORGE OMOSU MAGERO

Etoro, Kenya

I believe and affirm that the Lord Jesus Christ is God, creator of heaven and earth, one God, who was Jehovah from eternity and made Himself visible to the human race as man. He is the Savior and Redeemer of the world in whom all the fullness of Godhead dwells. He is my Lord and my God.

He combats with hell, and His victory over the evils made heaven possible to everyone by following Him without fear of hell and evil. Heaven is from the human race, if they choose it from freedom to love, and as they see evils as sins.

I believe that the essence of the Old Testament, New Testament and the Heavenly Doctrines are the love of God Himself.

I believe in the great commandments of loving God and charity to the neighbor as the most core teachings of the Heavenly Marriage.

I believe that serving as a priest in the New Church is not my merit as a person but God's love to serve His people and the Lord's Church upon the earth.

God help me. Amen.

Church News

Compiled by Bruce Henderson

A NEW SECRETARY OF THE GENERAL CHURCH

The Rt. Rev. Brian W. Keith

Alaine Fuller York has retired as Secretary of the General Church after more than 10 years of service. She was not only an extremely competent secretary but was a warm and friendly presence as the face of the General Church. She performed many behind-the-scenes tasks that enabled the Church to run smoothly. She also provided tremendous support for the General Church Board of Directors and to ministers and laypeople. Many thanks to her for her contributions.

Anita Fiske Halterman, who also performs administrative assistant duties in the Office of Outreach, has assumed this responsibility. We welcome her to the Secretary's office and look forward to working with her. Her contact information is: *Anita.Halterman@newchurch.org*, 267-502-4906

GENERAL CHURCH BOARD

At the Annual Meeting of the Members of the General Church Corporation of the New Jerusalem held June 28 in Bryn Athyn, six new members were elected to the Board of Directors and four were re-elected for a second term. Those elected, with their terms expiring in 2017, are:

Kay R. Alden*	Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania
Hugh R. Brown**	Kempton, Pennsylvania
Jake C. Brown*	Simsbury, Connecticut
Ian B. Carswell*	Chicago, Illinois
Mark O. Elder**	Rochester, Michigan
Gustav Fornander*	Stockholm, Sweden
Charlotte Gyllenhaal**	Glenview, Illinois
Mary Jane Jungé*	Cleveland, Ohio
Patrick Mayer*	Huntingdon Valley, Pennsylvania
Ronald K. Nelson**	Huntingdon Valley

Members whose terms expire in 2015:

Gregory L. Baker**	Huntingdon Valley
Amy C. Buick*	Jenkintown, Pennsylvania
Jennifer Pronesti*	Bryn Athyn
Frederick A. Fiedler**	Phoenix, Arizona
Jeffrey S. Jackson*	Austin, Texas
Peer M. Snoep*	Boca Raton, Florida
Dawn C. Wadsworth*	Marietta, Georgia
Thayer L. York**	Seattle, Washington

Members whose terms expire in 2016:

Justin C. Allen*	Bryn Athyn
Andrew R. Bruell**	Dunmow, Essex, England
Robert M. Dike**	Chamblee, Georgia
Charles H. Ebert***	Lafayette, Colorado
Darryl G. Hasen*	Scarsdale, New York
P. Blake Hill**	Toronto, Ontario, Canada
Lee Horigan**	Etobicoke, Ontario, Canada
Brent H. Hyatt*	Bowie, Maryland
Dain Kistner***	Huntingdon Valley
Daniel P. Martz*	Huntingdon Valley
David Norman**	McGregor, Texas

(*-First term; **-Second term; ***-Third term)

CHARTER DAY 2014

This Charter Day, October 10, celebrates the 137th anniversary of the granting of a Charter to the Academy of the New Church.

Among the special events, in a weekend filled with class reunions, Academy open houses and sporting events, are:

- The Charter Day service in the Cathedral Friday morning, with an address by the **Rev. Dr. Thane Glenn** of Bryn Athyn College
- The Theta Alpha luncheon Friday in Heilman Hall
- Bryn Athyn College Alumni Open House in the Brickman Center Friday evening
- A Charter Day Chili Cook-Off and Carnival at the Jungé Pavilion Saturday at noon
- The Charter Day banquet in the Asplundh Field House, featuring a multimedia presentation: *Achieving Our Mission: Preparing Our Students for a Useful Life*
- Mix-and-Mingle at Cairnwood starting at 9 p.m. Saturday for ages 21 and up

- The Annual Student Scholarship Golf Outing at Philmont Country Club

For complete and up-to-date information go to www.ancss.org/charterday or www.brynathyn.edu/charterday

HAPPY 90TH, COLCHESTER

The Colchester New Church in England marked the 90th anniversary of the dedication of its church building on August 17. The August *Newsletter of The New Church in Great Britain* quoted from a 1924 article in *New Church Life*:

“At last the great day arrived – August 17, 1924 – which had been fixed for the dedication of the little building erected by the Colchester Society. All during the past few months anxious eyes had watched the progress made by the builders and for a time it seemed that we should not be ready. But wonders were accomplished in the last few days and on the Saturday evening preceding the day set the whole society, with a number of visiting friends, seemed to find a special delight in helping to prepare the building for the service the next morning. Never has the society witnessed a scene of greater enthusiasm.

“On Sunday morning the Bishop delivered a sermon on *The Veils of the Temple* to a congregation of about 180. Afterwards dinner and tea were provided in a large marquee at the rear of the building.

“Nor must we omit the fact that the new building was erected by one of the oldest members of the Colchester Society, Mr. A. H. Appleton – the realization of a life-long ambition.”

Also from Colchester comes news that the current pastor, the **Rev. Howard A. Thompson**, successfully completed his 50-for-50 sponsored bicycle ride – covering 86 miles in four hours and 56 minutes. He donated his prize money of more than 750 pounds to the Church for outreach projects.

In the course of his ride, he passed through Finchingfield in Essex, which was to be part of the *Tour de France* route. Howard returned on July 7 to see the real thing – and was even glimpsed in the crowd on local television news.

CELEBRATION IN LONDON

Meanwhile in the Michael Church in London, its pastor, the **Rev. Alan Cowley**, was ordained into the second degree of the ministry by the **Rt. Rev. Peter M. Buss Jr.**

Welcomed at the service were representatives from the groups in Surrey, Sussex and Oxford, as well as the Colchester Society.

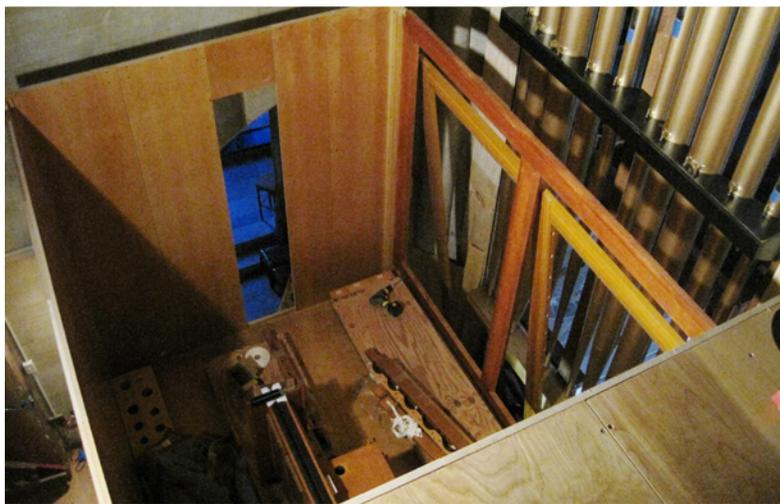
Alan and his wife, **Susan**, were presented with a grape vine and a monetary gift. Peter's wife **Teresa** also presented Susan with a beautiful carved angel in recognition of the invaluable support a minister's wife gives to her husband.

INSTALLATION OF THE NEW ORGAN IN THE CATHEDRAL



Windchests and reservoirs

Below: A peek into the great box. Those opening to the right will hold the shades, which the organist can open and close with a foot pedal.



Off-loading the organ



The final pipe approaches the nearly complete façade



Terry Schnarr, organist for the Cathedral

ANCSS SUMMER CAMP



The Green Team is ready for the annual "Olympics"



Lysandra DePadua

PHOTOS: ANNI GLOVER



The Purple Team Cheers on a teammate



Campers ready to participate



Rayna Synnstedt leads the "war cry"

TOOLS 4 LIFE CAMP



Date Night at Cairnwood Estate

PHOTOS: ANNI GLOVER



Networking Event at Glencairn



Kendall Hyatt and Jennifer Allen,
Camp Directors



Etiquette with Susan Asplundh

GLENCAIRN MEDIEVAL CAMP



Archery practice



Sophia Irwin, Chloe Swierczynski, Chyler Henderson, Paige Swierczynski



Ready for the big battle



Shield artwork



The naming ceremony

PHOTOS: SERENA SUTTON

SUMMER WORKSHOPS AT BRYN ATHYN



Blacksmithing



Glass Blowing



Stained Glass



Stone Carving



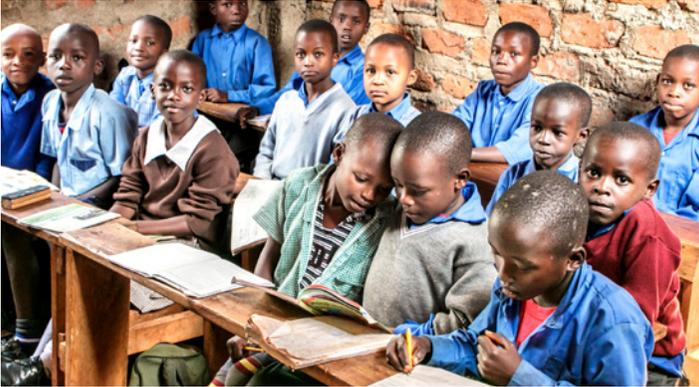
Glass Mosaics

PHOTOS: SERENA SUTTON

EPISCOPAL VISIT TO KENYA BY THE RT. REV. BRIAN W. KEITH



Bishop Brian Keith ordains George Magero



Students Crowded into half of a Classroom



Students in front of the school



Happy Children of Sacred Care Orphanage



Brian Keith, Kay Alden, Samson Mogusu Abuga, Mark Alden and Roger Schrock looking at the property purchased for building dormitories for the orphans

PHOTOS: GRETCHEN KEITH



BRITISH ACADEMY SUMMER SCHOOL

The Rev. Alan M. Cowley, Pastor of Michael Church, London

What an honor it is to serve at such a unique camp. Nowhere else in the world does something like the British Academy Summer School exist. This year we had 22 students (10 European, 12 American) and we organized around a theme we called “The Challenge.”

The challenge we focused on is a difficult one but I think it really speaks to current issues facing our young people, and perhaps you, too. The challenge is: How to be religious/spiritual in an increasingly secular world.

I won't go into all the details of what went on at BASS; there is just too much to cover. However, I would like to say how impressed I am with the students who came and made it such a fantastic two weeks.

There is a hunger and thirst among our young people that bodes extremely well for the future of the Lord's Church. These students have such a strong desire to make the world a better place, and to love their neighbors, and on top of that they have an affirmative attitude toward the Lord's guidance that nearly moves me to tears.

So among all of the concern for the future of the Church, and the fear that we are losing an entire generation of young people, there is a ray of hope, and I don't think it is limited to the 22 students at BASS.

Behind what seems to be a mass rejection of religion is actually a rejection of abusive and harmful man-made organizations. Behind the lack of church attendance and membership is a loud voice from people crying out for doctrine relevant to their lives and to their world.

Does this not bode well for the coming of the New Church!? If young people today are searching for something true, relevant, meaningful and loving, I would suggest that the Lord has things under control. Because what I see, whether they know it yet or not, are young people looking for the truths contained in the Word and the Heavenly Doctrine – truths unobscured by the



manipulative lens of power, and untainted by the dirty hands of greed.

So what can we do to foster our young people in their search for this kind of truth? BASS is a good start! But even more important is the example we set for them by living innocently for the Lord and unashamedly in the truths of the Second Coming.

Thank you everyone who helped make BASS 2014 such a success.



This painting is said to be the most realistic representation of American folk hero Johnny Appleseed and is part of the collection at the Johnny Appleseed Educational Center and Museum at Urbana University in Urbana, Ohio

PIONEER HERO

John Chapman, immortalized in American and Swedenborgian history as **Johnny Appleseed**, will be featured in a traveling exhibit aimed at “clearing up misconceptions about the folk hero and the real man behind the legend.”

Cheryl Ogden, director of the Johnny Appleseed Education Center and Museum at Urbana University in Ohio, said the exhibit is funded by an anonymous donation. “We want people around the country to know the real person,” she said, “not just the myths and the folklore. We want them to know John Chapman’s values of hard work, compassion and generosity.”

He was known, of course, for selling seeds and planting seeds for settlers, she said, but also was known to go barefoot after giving up his shoes to someone in need, and also “widely distributed religious tracts as a missionary of the Swedenborgian Church, a Christian faith embracing individualism and spiritual growth.”

Ogden said Chapman was good at anticipating where settlers would come and the apple seedlings he gave them were important because settlers needed to show improvement on homesteaded parcels to claim land grants.

He was “a simple man of simple pleasures,” who became an icon to settlers in “a new nation that needed folk heroes.”

Among the memorial markers to Johnny Appleseed is a statue in Cincinnati’s Spring Grove Cemetery, with a barefoot Chapman lifting a seedling with one hand while holding a book in the other – no doubt a book of the Writings.

Johnny Appleseed festivals are celebrated in several states – including Bryn Athyn and Sarver, Pennsylvania, among our New Church societies. An estimated 250,000 attended the Johnny Appleseed Festival in Fort Wayne,

Indiana, last year.

The new traveling exhibit won't be ready until next year, but will be interactive and will include a mobile app that will superimpose computer-generated images of Johnny Appleseed telling his own story.

A NEW PIPE ORGAN FOR THE CATHEDRAL

*Graham Bier, Director of Music,
Bryn Athyn Church*

Pipe organs have a long association with the Church. Each instrument is different, designed to suit the building and acoustics where it will spend its life. Letters from almost a century ago show that **Raymond Pitcairn** had a great concern for the design of a pipe organ for the Bryn Athyn Cathedral. Many of these letters were to and from the E. M. Skinner Organ Company, quickly becoming known as the foremost American organ builder of that time.

Plans for an instrument worthy of the building were approaching final drafts when the United States entered World War I and plans were put on hold. A “temporary” smaller organ was purchased from Skinner; although correspondence about replacing it with the original full-size plans continued, for various reasons, it never came to fruition.

This is by way of underlining the significance of the installation this summer of a restored 1920s Skinner organ in the Bryn Athyn Cathedral. In 2012, **Frederick Haas** proposed this organ as a gift through the Wyncote Foundation in memory of his mother, **Chara Aurora Cooper Haas**, a beloved member of the Bryn Athyn Church community. It includes pipes from three 1920s Skinner organs, as well as new 21st-century work by the organ builder Charles Kegg. This is a testament to Mr. Pitcairn's taste in organ builders and the quality of Skinner's work – and a link between our past and our future.

The woodwork for the façade was built by Historic Doors of Kempton, headed by **Stephen Hendricks**, and installed in June, while other improvements were made to the Cathedral such as reinforcing the organ loft floor.



Graham Bier, Director of Music, with the Cathedral's new pipe organ



Organ builder Charles Kegg

On August 3, a semi-trailer full of organ parts pulled into the Cathedral parking lot. Since then, the Kegg Pipe Organ Company has been working long hours to install this large instrument in the Cathedral. This follows a year of work restoring the 1920s pipes, reservoirs and wind chests in Kegg's shop in Ohio, as well as constructing several new ranks.

During the installation, we at the Cathedral have had a chance to see first-hand how an organ is assembled. Our instrument has 3,230 pipes, divided into 46 ranks. Each rank is an instrument type of its own, a set of pipes made out of different materials and to a different design than the others. There are whistle-like square and triangular wooden pipes, alongside metal pipes of varying shapes and alloys. Another type of pipe is the "reed," which has a metal tongue inside that vibrates like the reed of a clarinet. The largest pipe is the low C of the 32' Bourdon, and the smallest is the size of a pencil. The former is much more difficult to install than the latter!

To control volume, the pipes are enclosed in rooms with shutters on the front. The organist can open or close the shutters to make the pipes sound louder or softer. After the largest pipes were in place in the façade and against the back wall, one of the first steps in building the organ was to construct these rooms.

Next, the ductwork was put into place, bringing air up from the blower in the basement and distributing it to the wind chests that make up the floors of these rooms. Only then could the smaller pipes themselves be put in place.

Fine tuning an organ is a lengthy and delicate process, and is expected to take the month of September. We may start hearing it in services in October, but it will first be heard to full effect at the Dedication Service to take place on the evening of Friday, November 21. If you are able to be in Bryn Athyn that night, you are warmly invited to join us as we hear this new and historic instrument begin its life in service to the church.

(See photos of the installation on page 463. You can also view a full collection of photos on the Bryn Athyn Cathedral Facebook page.)

ACADEMY SECONDARY SCHOOLS

Jeremy Irwin, Sue Odhner — Principals

As of this writing in mid-August, the Academy of the New Church Secondary Schools expects to start the 2014-15 academic year with 100 students in the Girls School and 130 students in the Boys School, for a total of 230. The school year started with 204 students in 2012 and 224 students in 2013.

The bulk of the staff remains the same, but there are a few changes. **Cory Boyce** is taking a leave of absence to teach abroad in Italy. Although he will be sorely missed, we are all very happy that he is able to experience this wonderful

opportunity and wish him great success (and a speedy return). **Dylan Glenn**, who stepped in part way through the 2013-14 academic year to teach part time, is moving to full time and teaching a number of math courses, including AP Calculus.

After a number of years working as the assistant coach under Cory Boyce, **David Keith** is taking on the role as head Boys School soccer coach. **Donna Bostock** is stepping away from Instrumental Ensemble to better serve other important uses and **Simon Daum** is taking her place.

In Stuart Hall, **Ryan Glunz** is vacating the role of assistant housemaster after several years of hard work and valuable service; **Jesse Johnson** is filling the role moving forward.

Natasha Rhodes Keys becomes a full-time faculty member, working both in our yearly and spring ESL (English as a Second Language) Programs. She continues as the head of both departments. **Mary Heinrichs Williams** will be full time also, sharing her time between Education Support, ESL, and Spring ESL.

Amy Brickman Maddock brings her energy and optimism to her new role of co-teaching Senior Project with **Kyle Genzlinger**.

Our final staffing change is that **Emily Latta Klippenstein** is taking a maternity leave for first term. Emily and her husband **Ty** welcomed a new daughter in July. Congratulations to the Klippenstein family. **Cindy Hyatt Walker** has graciously agreed to fill in for Emily for the entire term, and as freshman girls Ancient History teacher. This assignment will not be a stretch for Cindy as she was the Ancient History teacher for many years. We are pleased that she is willing to take on this task.

One significant staff adjustment is not a change in personnel but in location. **Jim Adams**, Managing Director of the Secondary Schools, has vacated his office in Pitcairn Hall and moved into an office on the second floor of Benade Hall. Jim reports directly to the Board of Trustees, oversees the principals, and manages several important facets of operations, including some shared services. Jim's move to Benade Hall is both a financially responsible decision and also an opportunity for him to be closer to the daily action of the schools for which he works.

In an effort to be more proactively prepared for missed school time due to inclement weather and other such issues, we have made very small changes to the daily schedule, which over the course of an academic year add up to valuable time margins. We continue to work through some technical issues with the public address and security camera systems that were put into place last year, but overall these have been hugely helpful upgrades.

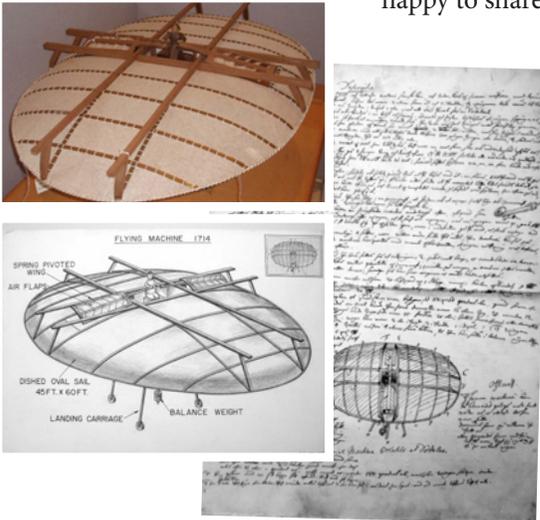
This summer, thanks to a very generous donation, we have been able to put air conditioning in our academic buildings. For those of you who have

been in our classrooms in August, early September, May and June, you know how incredibly important this project is for our students and staff.

Our annual ANC Summer Camp and Tools 4 Life camp were well attended and hugely successful. Campers had a fabulous time learning about the Academy, making friends and sharing meaningful experiences.

What makes ANC special is the students and staff choosing to make the mission part of their lives every day. Our mission is to prepare for principled and useful lives in this world and the next. We work very hard to help students find success on a daily basis and to be ready to succeed at whatever may come next in their lives. This means ensuring that we offer rigorous academics and varied extra-curriculars. But most importantly, we are helping students to prepare for their eternal home in heaven.

If you are in town, please visit campus. Come cheer on an athletic team, applaud our stage performers, or appreciate the student-produced art on display. We have a lot to be grateful for and we are happy to share with you.



SWEDENBORG’S FLYING MACHINE

The Rev. Dr. Erik E. Sandstrom, Director of Swedenborgiana for the Swedenborg Library, notes that this year is the 300th anniversary of Emanuel Swedenborg’s “flying machine.”

Pictured here are: a drawing in Swedenborg’s own hand, with his notes; a drawing made by **Gustav Genzlinger**; model made by Gustav for the

and a Smithsonian Air and Space Museum in Washington, DC.

Erik says Swedenborg entered his invention in the Daedalus Hyperoreus in 1716, but without his drawing. Erik also notes that the book, *Swedenborg’s 1714 Airplane: A Machine to Fly in the Air*, written by **Henry Soderberg** in 1988, is available in the Book Center at the Bryn Athyn Cathedral: www.newchurchbooks.com

FAREWELL AND WELCOME

Shakespeare had a phrase for it: “Welcome every smiles, and farewell goes out sighing.” The scene was played out this summer in Canada.

The Rev. Bradley D. Heinrichs, pastor of the Carmel New Church in Caryndale, Ontario, and executive vice president of the New Church in Canada, wrote a fond farewell to the **Rev. Coleman Glenn** in the July issue of the *New Church Canadian*:

“On behalf of the General Church in Canada, I would like to say goodbye to the Rev. Coleman Glenn, who has been serving Dawson Creek and Grande Prairie as their pastor, and to his wonderful wife, **Anne**.

“Your willingness to serve in this great country has been appreciated, and hopefully you will spread the good news of our country wherever you go. I also personally want to thank Coleman for his scholarship and dedication to the Heavenly Doctrines, and the way he has sought to bring sometimes lofty truths down to a practical and understandable level.

“I feel privileged to count Coleman and Anne as friends and will miss visiting them. So thanks to you both and safe travels.”

(Coleman, with Anne and their infant son, Samuel, took up his new duties in South Africa in July.)

Bradley adds: “Now that we are done saying the sad goodbyes, there is some exciting news for Canada. The **Rev. Ron Schnarr** will be coming to serve in Canada, stationed in Caryndale. He will spend most of his time doing work for the General Church in Canada, traveling to Dawson Creek, Grande Prairie and other locations to provide some relief for the current ministerial staff. Ron brings a real passion to his ministry and I think you will enjoy getting to know him.”

Ron is the son of the **Rev. Grant and Cathy (Cole) Schnarr**, grew up in Glenview, Illinois, then moved to Bryn Athyn, where he graduated from the Academy Boys School, Bryn Athyn College and its Theological School. He has been serving as a minister in the General Church for the past four years, working as an assistant pastor in Boulder, Colorado, visiting small groups in the Western United States, and teaching in the Academy Boys School.

Prior to Theological School he made numerous trips to Western Africa and made a documentary about the New Church there, *Bright Future*. He also taught outdoor survival skills one summer to children at a school based on Native American primitive skills.

NEW CHRISTIAN BIBLE STUDY PROJECT

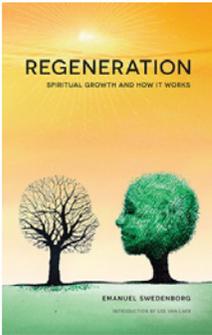
Steven David reports: “We’ve been hard at work on a major effort to find and make links of all of the cross-references between the Writings and the Old and New Testaments, as well as the internal cross-references within the Writings. It’s not perfect, and it’s not complete – but it sure is useful. We’ve deployed it at <http://www.newchristianbiblestudy.org>.

“Some of these links have existed in the project for a while, by virtue of

previous NewSearch work. Now, we've worked through the process of using more links that the Kempton Project has added in its work, and also parsing and using the painstaking work done by the late **Rev. Jan Weiss**, and his son, **Walter**, for earlier use in the GrandMan Search software.

“In some translations – the ones that GrandMan used – we now have internal links right in the text where they occur. For other translations, we have them at the sub-paragraph level, which is still close enough to make studying easy.

“We hope you will like it. It's one more step in building this core set of data for the New Christian Church, and for people who are interested in the Swedenborgian perspective.”



NEW BOOK ON REGENERATION

The Swedenborg Foundation has published *Regeneration: Spiritual Growth and How it Works*, combining the work of translators, the **Rev. Dr. Jonathan S. Rose**, **Lisa Hyatt Cooper** and the **Rev. Dr. George F. Dole**.

A press release from the Foundation states: “In this book Swedenborg reveals that we are born with selfish impulses and desires, and while we may learn to act ethically, we don't start growing as spiritual people until we transform our emotional side. First we decide to be more loving; then we consciously choose to act for the good of others. These external thoughts and actions gradually open us to a higher love, one that transforms our desires and ultimately our fundamental being – a process Swedenborg calls ‘regeneration.’”

In an Introduction, Lee van Laer, PhD, poetry editor for *Parabola* magazine, “exhibits how Swedenborg's approach harmonizes with modern thinkers such as G. I. Gurdjieff. This book provides an approach to spiritual growth that is relevant to all faith traditions.”

The book is available through the Swedenborg Foundation, www.swedenborg.org, and the Cathedral Book Center in Bryn Athyn, www.newchurchbooks.com.

CHANGES IN ADVANCEMENT

Early in the summer **Kaye Jungé Lermite** retired after many active and successful roles in the Development Office – now the Office of Advancement. **Judy Lopacki** departed when the office staffing was reorganized. Both were praised for their dedication, professionalism and the wonderful spirit they brought to serving the General Church, the Academy Secondary Schools and Bryn Athyn College.

During the summer, **Jessica O. Carswell**, Director for Institutional Advancement, announced three new hires:

Jennifer Azzarano is Communications Manager for advancement and marketing initiatives. Jennifer brings more than ten years of experience in higher education marketing and communications with strong writing and project management skills. Jennifer joins us having most recently worked at Burlington County College. She has her B.A. from Rowan University. Because this is a blended role serving Advancement and Bryn Athyn College, she will operate out of two offices – in Pitcairn Hall for Advancement and the Brickman Center for College Marketing.



Jennifer Azzarano, Christopher Dunn and Aimee Kerr

Christopher Dunn is the new Annual Giving Officer. This position is new and is closely aligned with the fundraising priorities for the Academy Secondary Schools, Bryn Athyn College, and the General Church. Chris manages the direct mail, e-mail campaigns, and individual donor solicitation for the annual funds for the Academy and General Church. Chris comes from Chestnut Hill College, where he received his B.A. and worked in admissions.

Aimee Kerr is the Stewardship Coordinator, a refocused position centered on developing deeper relationships with our donors through strategic touch points, including thank-you letters and receipts, donor recognition societies, special events, and communications. Aimee comes from the Philadelphia Orchestra, has her B.A. from Marymount University and expects to graduate this year from Drexel University with an M.S. in Arts Administration.

Among other moves occurring on campus this summer:

- The Office of Advancement moved to Pitcairn Hall and will soon be joined by the Finance Office this fall
- Consolidated Plant Operations has moved from Pitcairn Hall into the first floor of Benade Hall
- The Finance Office for the Academy and the General Church is moving from the Cairncrest Annex back to Pitcairn Hall

GATHERING LEAVES

The 2015 session of Gathering Leaves, a Swedenborgian women’s retreat, has been set for June 4-7 at the Transfiguration Spirituality Center in Cincinnati,

Ohio. It is hosted by the New Church of Montgomery in Cincinnati.

Gathering Leaves was formed in 2002 when women from the General Convention approached women in the General Church, the Lord's New Church, and the General Conference to join together. That brought about the first meeting at the Temenos Retreat Center in West Chester, Pennsylvania, under the theme of "Unity."

The 2015 session is "From Root to Fruit," based on *Secrets of Heaven* 348: "Deeds inspired by charity are alive. They are said to send roots below and yield fruit above."

The notice for this gathering reads: "We are gathering again to promote harmony among women who are associated with the various Swedenborgian organizations around the world. We acknowledge our common beliefs, explore our differences, develop respect for one another's contributions, create a healing atmosphere and celebrate our spiritual sisterhood. We promote charity and goodwill so we might say, 'No matter what form her doctrine and external form of worship take, this is my sister; I observe that she worships the Lord and is a good woman.'"

The Steering Committee for the event is: **Sue Ditmire** and **Gloria Toot**, co-chairs; **Susannah Currie**, **Roslyn Taylor**, **Jane Siebert**, **Julie Conaron** and **Joanna Hill**. For more information and to register please visit the website: <http://gatheringleaves.weebly.com/>

OUR NEW CHURCH VOCABULARY

Part of a continuing series developed by the Rev. W. Cairns Henderson, 1961-1966.

CHURCH

As used by itself in the Writings, this term refers to a spiritual organization, the unit of which is the individual human mind. The man who has the Word and understands it rightly, acknowledges the Divine of the Lord, learns truths out of the Word from Him, and lives a life of love and charity according to them, is a particular church; and the spiritual society formed by all such men is the church specific – a term not actually found in the Writings, but used with good authority.

Those who do not have the Word, but worship one God, obey His revealed will as they understand it, and live together in simple charity constitute the church universal; and these, together with the former, make up the church of the Lord or the universal church of the Lord. It is our belief that the church specific is not formed apart from the Writings. (See *Arcana Coelestia* 8152, 10,761; *Apocalypse Explained* 20; *Heaven and Hell* 328)

Life Lines

THE VISION OF THE ACADEMY

This Charter Day in Bryn Athyn (October 10) is the 137th anniversary of the founding of the Academy of the New Church. It is a time to honor the past – how far the Academy has come from the few students and buildings of its humble beginning; to appreciate the distinctive New Church education offered to so many more students today in the Secondary Schools and Bryn Athyn College; and to support the founding vision into the future as they continue to grow.

The dream of the Academy sprang from a meeting in a Pittsburgh restaurant in 1874, including William Henry Benade, Frank Ballou, Walter Childs and John Pitcairn. Speculating about their hopes then for what was to come – and is yet to be – brings to mind a similar vision.

An elderly man who had lived a very productive life had one more dream: establishing a university. But as he did so, idealism overtook reality. He assumed that the young men attending the college would be responsible and could govern themselves. He trusted in their good will and good judgment.

Well, the students lived down to their base instincts, not up to his expectations. They got drunk, skipped classes, didn't study, and chaos ensued. Desperate trustees called a special meeting and asked the founder to address the student body. This frail old man talked wistfully about his hopes and dreams, then tears welled in his eyes and he was unable to go on.

The students were chastened. A short time later the old man died. The college survived but he never got to see his dream fulfilled. Engraved on his tombstone are the simple words: "Thomas Jefferson – Author of the Declaration of Independence and Father of the University of Virginia."

Interestingly, Jefferson did not choose to be remembered as the third president of the United States, but for the free nation and the university that he helped to establish. He had no idea that his fledgling college would become one of the great universities of the world. But it was not an impossible dream because the power of his vision inspired others to make it come true.

As supporters of the Academy we are stewards of a dream even grander than Jefferson's, which we nurture with our own hopes, concerns and ideals.

Those four visionaries in Pittsburgh could not foresee what would become

of the Academy – in 137 years or on beyond its horizon.

The Academy exists between dream and destiny. We have come a long way from the original Cherry Street classrooms in Philadelphia to a sprawling campus in Bryn Athyn, but there are no guarantees about the future. It is up to all of us – administrators, teachers, alumni, parents, students, supporters – to keep faith with the vision and make the dream come true.

(BMH)

A THANKFUL HEART

A wise man wrote: If someone gave me a dish of sand and told me there were particles of iron in it, I might look for them with my eyes, and search for them with my clumsy fingers, and be unable to find them. But if I took a magnet and swept it through the sand, it would draw the almost invisible particles to itself and I would see the beauty of the hidden treasure that had been there all along.

An unthankful heart, like my clumsy fingers in the sand, fails to discover the goodness, beauty and myriad mercies hidden within the ordinary everyday experiences of our earthly lives.

But let a thankful heart sweep through the day, and as the magnet finds the iron in the sand, so will it find in every event some heavenly blessing. Only the iron in the Lord's sand is gold.

(This little parable was adapted from a volume, *Emblems*, by the New Church scientist and author Leo H. Grindon, published in London in 1869.)

(WEO)

THE GRASS ON YOUR SIDE OF THE FENCE IS GREENER THAN YOU THINK

There's something in human nature that causes us to be dissatisfied with what we have and to focus on the downside of our circumstances, while at the same time overestimating the happiness we think things beyond our reach would bring us.

The truth, if only we can learn to see it, is that the best things for us are those we already have. Is not the Lord in His providence leading us every moment closer to heaven, whatever our worldly circumstances might be? Are there not bits of gold to be found even while plodding through a stretch of dry sand?

Setting our hearts on worldly pleasures beyond our reach makes us indifferent to the spiritual gifts we've already received, in which case they are as good as lost – leaving us without a treasure on earth or in heaven!

Here is something you may have heard a hundred times, but it's always worth reflecting on anew: "Those who trust in the Divine (know that) all things

are moving toward an everlasting state of happiness, and that no matter what happens at any time to them, it contributes to that state.” (*Arcana Coelestia* 8478.3)

(WEO)

MYSTERY

“The most beautiful experience we can have is the mysterious. It is the fundamental emotion which stands at the cradle of true art and true science. Whoever does not know it and can no longer wonder, no longer marvel, is as good as dead, and his eyes are dimmed.” (Albert Einstein, *The World As I See It*)

I imagine a conversation between Einstein and Swedenborg on the subject of “mystery” would be interesting, should their paths happen to cross in the spiritual world. Perhaps they would meet outside the temple with the *Nunc Licet* inscription over the door, which Swedenborg interpreted as meaning: “Now it is permitted to enter with understanding into the mysteries of faith.” (*True Christian Religion* 508)

Would Einstein follow Swedenborg into the temple?

(WEO)

CARPE DIEM

Coincidentally, while writing the editorial, *Choose This Day*, (page 393) – about how we are choosing every day between heaven and hell – I heard about the suicide of much-loved comedian and actor Robin Williams. Much time has passed since then, but I hope these perspectives still resonate.

I often wonder about famous people when they enter the spiritual world. No doubt some are relieved to be free of the burdens of fame – just free to be themselves. And no doubt some, who have gotten all too used to being idolized and fawned over in this life, are surprised to find there is no VIP gate into heaven. Just being a rock star, a billionaire, or a Super Bowl winner won’t count for any special privilege.

They find that they, too, have been choosing heaven or hell all their lives – that it isn’t a choice that comes after death – and that they are suddenly just like everyone else.

Suicide always adds tragedy to grief, especially for those left to deal with pain and questions. But people who commit suicide likely are not in a rational frame of mind. We know that no one can be reformed in such a state. And surely we cannot judge.

Robin Williams is a good example. He was a gifted entertainer who devoted his life to making people happy, but sadly could not find happiness himself. One test of character is how we treat those who cannot help us, and

Williams was praised for always being kind – even and especially to the “little people” who serve others but are easily overlooked and underappreciated. He gave generously of his time, energy and talent to troops overseas and children in hospitals. But he made bad choices too. And even though he spread joy everywhere he went, he was tormented by depression. His upbeat persona belied a troubled life. If his death helps to shine a new light on depression that would be a gift to all who suffer this debilitating disease – and would be an illustration of the Lord’s providence, always bending bad situations toward good.

Suicide is always a tragedy, whether we know the victims and families or not. All we can hope is that those who were driven to it awaken to find themselves engulfed in the sphere of a loving, merciful God – and that families and friends will feel that healing love as well. Surely there is no escape in suicide. These people still must work through their issues, but with the best loving guidance anyone could hope for. Ultimately they will find their place in heaven or hell – the home they have chosen.

Meanwhile, one message we can take from Williams’ own life and death is the memorable mantra he offered his prep school class in the movie *Dead Poets Society*: “*Carpe diem*.” Seize the day. Seize every day, knowing that our choices and their consequences will play out to eternity.

(BMH)

WHAT DREAMS MAY COME

Robin Williams was not only a gifted comedian and actor who made us laugh; he also made us think. He could have lived off his early success in comedy, but showed himself to be a talented dramatic actor as well, exploring compelling issues about life and meaning in such films as *Awakenings*, *Patch Adams*, *Good Will Hunting* and *Good Morning, Vietnam*. One particularly significant movie – enjoying renewed attention after his death – is *What Dreams May Come*.

It is one of Hollywood’s most surprising and insightful depictions of life after death, and resonates especially with Williams actually experiencing now what he once imagined in the film – which must have been something of a *déjà vu* awakening. The movie is intensely spiritual and visually stunning. Swedenborg often describes the beauty of heaven as ineffable – beyond the power of words to describe – and these “dreams” depict scenes and color almost beyond imagination.

It also has haunting echoes in Williams’ own troubled life and death.

In the movie he and his wife are devastated when their son and daughter are killed in a car accident. Their marriage barely survives his wife’s depression, but they are able to move on together. Then he dies in another car crash.

We see him awakening in the spiritual world, not sure where he is or that

he has died. A spiritual guide introduces him to this new world – reminiscent of Virgil guiding Dante through Inferno, Purgatory and Paradise in *The Divine Comedy*.

Williams tries desperately to communicate with his devastated wife but cannot. He takes comfort in knowing that eventually she will join him in heaven. Meanwhile – with a note of irony that resonates today – his inconsolable wife commits suicide and winds up in hell.

Williams insists on being allowed to go into hell and risk his soul to save the woman he loves. He finds her there and tries to convince her of the truth he has found, so that she may be released from the darkness where she has imprisoned herself.

Who knows how much this experience both haunted Williams and gave him hope in his own depression, or how much it may help others to find that hope – to form an image of heaven and to find their way?

What dreams may come indeed.

(BMH)

WHAT WILL YOUR VERSE BE?

One of my favorite Robin Williams' role was the passionate English teacher he portrayed in *Dead Poets Society*, lighting a fire for poetry, beauty and the meaning of life in the privileged students of an elite prep school.

In one memorable scene, he stirs the boys' imaginations by telling them that we do not read and write poetry just because it is "cute," but because it is all about being part of the human race and the roiling passions played out on the stage of life.

He offers the inspiration: "The power of the play goes on. And you may contribute a verse."

And after letting the thought sink in, he challenges them: "What will your verse be?"

Everyone has favorite poems and verses that inspire, comfort and speak to longings of the soul. But how about verses in the Word? What would you contribute to "the power of the play"?

Here is one favorite familiar verse from the Word:

"He has shown you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God?" (*Micah 6: 8*)

And a less familiar verse from the Bible: "Let no evil talk come out of your mouth, but only what is useful for building up, as there is need, so that your words may give grace to those who hear." (*Ephesians 4: 29*)

(BMH)

EPITAPH

On the day that Robin Williams died, the obituary pages were filled with countless others who left the world that day, known only to family and friends, but no less loved and mourned.

It is worth remembering the words of Greek statesman Pericles: “What you leave behind is not what is engraved in stone monuments, but what is woven into the lives of others.”

(BMH)

THE AGNOSTIC FALLACY

Agnosticism sounds so sensible. After all, agnostics say, neither of the alternatives – belief in God or belief that there is no God (atheism) – can be proven. Theists and atheists alike claim to know something which is obviously unknowable. The only rational position is agnosticism because God (if there is a God) is by definition infinite and our minds are finite, and therefore incapable of grasping the Divine.

But the agnostic argument fails to take into account the fact that our Creator, who well knows our limitations and abilities, has gone to great lengths to make Himself knowable to us by revelations accommodated to our finite understanding. In fact, God created our minds for that purpose (knowing Him) above all else, and implanted in human nature an intuition that there is a God and a desire to know about Him.

Agnosticism is not just a neutral position on the question of God, but a choice not to accept the knowable form, which we call “the Word,” in which God has revealed Himself.

If God came to earth as a Man, would agnostics then be convinced? We know the answer because He did just that. Some were convinced, others were not. There is no way in which the Lord could make Himself knowable to us that would be convincing to those unwilling to believe in Him, except by destroying their free will and reason, and thus their very humanity.

(WEO)

NO EVIDENCE?

When people say there is no evidence for God, what they mean is no *scientific* evidence, as if nothing is real except what can be detected with an instrument. When they say there’s no *proof* of God they mean no evidence that can’t be interpreted in some other way. But evidence can always be interpreted in various ways. Rightly interpreted, all the facts of science are “proofs” (or confirmations) of the truth that there is a God.

Logic also leads to belief in God, provided it begins with valid premises.

And *all* reasoning rests upon some premises which are simply *assumed* as axiomatic or obvious. But even if there were no evidence, there is validity in the point made by the astronomer Carl Sagan regarding life on other planets: “Absence of evidence is not evidence of absence.” Sagan didn’t believe in God, but he did believe there was life elsewhere in the universe – yet both propositions are equally unproven scientifically.

(WEO)

THE GOD QUESTION CAN’T BE AVOIDED FOREVER

As human beings, we have the freedom to turn toward God, or away; as well as the means we need to make that choice (revelation and reason). Agnosticism is an attempt to sidestep a choice that cannot be avoided without harm.

The “God question” is not just theoretical, but existential. It comes down to how we order our lives. *Something* will govern the way we live. And in the end, it will be either the worship of God and obedience to His Word, or the worship of self and nature.

We can remain undecided for a long time, but to adopt agnosticism as a settled philosophical stance just doesn’t work. Sooner or later, if not in this world then in the next, “I don’t know” always turns into “yes” or “no.”

And Elijah came to all the people, and said, How long will you halt between two opinions? If the Lord be God, follow Him: but if Baal, then follow him. (*I Kings 18:21*)

No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon. (*Matthew 6:24*)

(WEO)

CONSIDER THE HEAVENS

In *Our Unique Planet* (page 399), the Rev. Stephen D. Cole says scientists estimate there may be as many as 40 billion planets like earth in our galaxy – just in our galaxy.

It is amazing to think that our earth is unique among these billions because this is where the Lord chose to be born, so that His Word might be written and preserved.

It is also mind-boggling to think of all the billions of people potentially out there, and all of the people who have ever lived on this earth now living on in heaven and hell and the world of spirits – and that they will never be filled.

The universe extends beyond our imagination, and the vastness of heaven and the spiritual world is beyond our comprehension. But despite these mind-numbing numbers we know that nothing and no one is beyond the Lord’s love

and protection.

When I consider Thy heavens, the work of Thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which Thou hast ordained; what is man that Thou art mindful of him? And the son of man, that Thou visitest him? O Lord, our Lord, how excellent is Thy name in all the earth. (*Psalms* 8: 3-6,9)

(BMH)

HARMONY IN VARIETY

What is truly amazing about the billions of people inhabiting the earth, the universe, heaven and hell, is that no two ever has been or ever will be the same. Each of us is unique and each of us contributes to the perfect harmony of the Lord's creation.

The Rev. Eric Carswell recently preached a sermon in the Bryn Athyn Cathedral on "The Blessings of Variety," which included two reassuring numbers from the Writings which we can take into our own lives.

The first describes the wonderful order that exists among people who are led by the Lord through their love of serving others:

If [charity was the essential thing among all people] all would be governed by the Lord as though they were one person; for they would be like the members and organs of one body which, though dissimilar in form and function, still related to one heart on which every single thing, everywhere varied in form, depended. Everyone would then say of another, no matter what form his doctrine and external worship take, this is my brother; I observe that he worships the Lord and is a good man. (*Arcana Coelestia* 2385:5)

The other speaks to the differences that exist among churches, and how they might all be brought together:

In the Christian world it is their doctrines that cause churches to be distinct and separate, and because of these they call themselves Roman Catholics, Lutherans, Calvinists or the Reformed and Evangelicals, among other names. It is solely by reason of their doctrines that they are called by these names. This situation would never exist if they were to make love to the Lord and charity toward the neighbor the chief thing of faith. In this case their doctrinal differences would be no more than shades of opinion concerning the mysteries of faith which truly Christian people would leave to individual conscience, and in their hearts would say that a person who is truly Christian when he lives as a Christian, that is, as the Lord teaches. If this were so all the different churches would become one, and all the disagreements which stem from doctrine alone would disappear. Indeed the hatred one person holds against another would be dispelled in an instant, and the Lord's kingdom on earth would come. (*Arcana Coelestia* 1799:4)

(BMH)

GHOSTS

Are ghosts real? Yes, according to New Church scientist Leo H. Grindon (*Life: Its Nature, Varieties and Phenomena, 1900*) What people call a “ghost” is simply the spiritual body of someone in the spiritual world appearing to someone in this world.

“Ghost” is just an old word for “spirit,” which in some languages, including Hebrew, is the same word as “breath” or “wind.” Remember how, when the Lord appeared to His disciples after His resurrection, He breathed upon them and said “receive ye the Holy Spirit.” Our word “gust,” as in “gust of wind,” comes from the same root as “ghost.”

We’re all ghosts, really, but covered with a body of flesh and blood, and this material covering is what people see. A person’s spiritual body can also be seen by others, but only through the eyes of their spiritual body. We all have such eyes, even during our lives in this world, but it is only rarely that someone’s spiritual eyes are opened to give a glimpse of the spiritual reality that’s all around us.

“Much as our material eyes enable us to see, they prevent our seeing inconceivably more,” Grindon says, noting that the light of the sun, while it makes our earth visible to us, at the same time conceals the thousands of stars that appear in the night sky.

The idea that for a spirit to be seen in our world it must assume something of a material nature that can reflect this world’s light is not true. What really happens is just the opposite, a change in us, namely, the opening of our spiritual sight.

There are several illustrations of this in the Bible. For example, when Elisha prayed that the young man’s (spiritual) eyes might be opened to see the multitude of chariots and horses of fire protecting them. (*II Kings 6:14-17*)

In the book of the prophet *Daniel*, he says: “I, Daniel, alone saw the vision, for the men that were with me saw not the vision.” (*Daniel 10:7*) And when the Lord was transfigured on the mountain, three of His disciples saw the spiritual bodies of Moses and Elijah. (*Matthew 17:1-3*)

The word “ghost” has a spooky ring to it, and the thought of seeing one is scary. This must be the case especially with people who are very natural-minded and think of the spiritual world as phantasmagorical or a far-away scary place populated by dead people.

But New Church people wouldn’t relish seeing a ghost either because they know that spirits who stick around this world tend not to be from the better class of spirits who have entered into the life in heaven.

But seeing an angel or the spirit of someone you love who has gone to the next world can be a happy experience. And it is not uncommon for old people as they near their own entrance into that world. Children, too, I think, may be

more open to it than grown-ups who are so immersed in the natural business of life in this world.

“Ghosts” are what we call spirits who are intrusive and unwelcome. But we *want* the spirits of people we have loved and who love us to be close to us, and they are. We don’t need to see them; we can feel their presence. They aren’t ghosts, but friends.

(WEO)

ASCENDING REVELATIONS AND CHURCHES

In his new book the Rev. Prescott Rogers explains why the New Church is called “the crown” of all the Lord’s special churches. The following excerpt is from the conclusion:

As the crown is the very top of the head, the New Church is the highest church in terms of the truths available to it.... There is an ascension of the nature of the truths from the Old Testament to the New Testament and then to the Heavenly Doctrines.

With the Heavenly Doctrines the Lord has finished His revelation to the world. There is no other part of the human mind to which He can appeal. As long as a person is in this world he uses his natural mind. The Old Testament appeals to the sensual of that mind, the New Testament appeals to its imaginative and the Heavenly Doctrines appeal to its rational. There will be no other revelation to the human race, and so there will never be another special church.

It is interesting to compare and contrast the last book written for the three revelations. The last book written for the Old Testament was *Daniel*, whose internal sense deals with the end of the Israelitish Church, and also with the end of the Christian Church. The last book of the New Testament is *Revelation*, whose internal sense deals with the end of the Christian Church and the rise of the New Church. The last work of the Heavenly Doctrines is the *True Christian Religion*, whose purpose is to present the most significant teachings of the spiritual sense of the Word for the New Church. It is not apocalyptic as are *Daniel* and *Revelation*, meaning that it does not tell of the end of one age and the beginning of a new age. In the *True Christian Religion* there is no prophecy of another church to replace the New Church.

The triune Word is the Word in its fullness and most complete form, by which the entire natural mind in its development is engaged. Just as the adult natural mind always needs and uses all three levels (the sensual, the imaginative and the rational), the New Church needs to increasingly understand and appreciate all three revelations, each for its own sake and all three together as a unity – a triunity. (*The Triune Word*, p. 170-171)

(WEO)



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