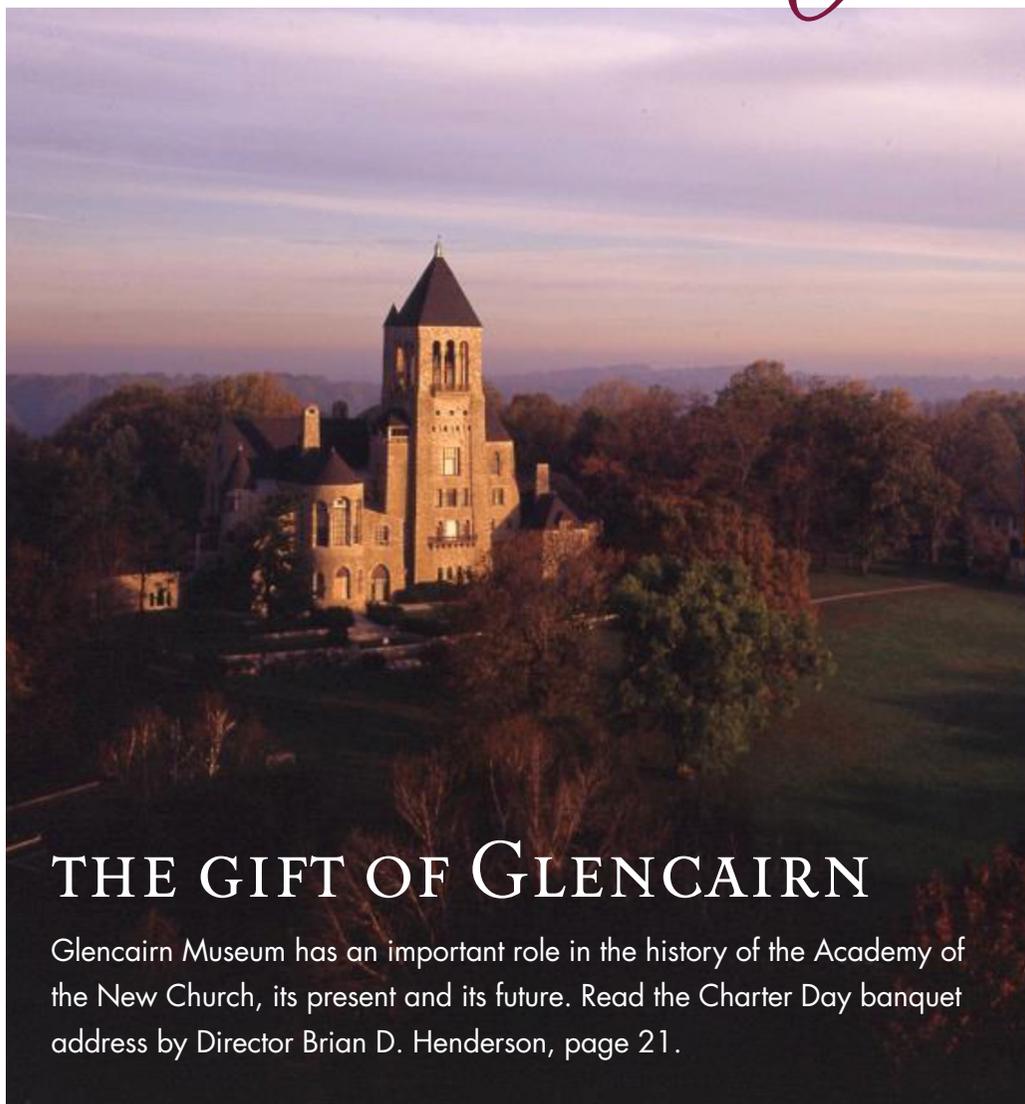


NEW CHURCH *Life*

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

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2014



THE GIFT OF GLENCAIRN

Glencairn Museum has an important role in the history of the Academy of the New Church, its present and its future. Read the Charter Day banquet address by Director Brian D. Henderson, page 21.

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

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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

In his Charter Day address in the Bryn Athyn Cathedral, Chancellor Brian W. Keith reviewed the history of the observance, why we celebrate it each year, and what it means for the Academy of the New Church. “The founders of the Academy,” he said, “had a vision from the Lord of what life could be – in this world and the world to come. They saw in the revelation to the New Church the Lord’s purpose in all creation, a heaven from the human race. This is why we are here – to support and promote a heavenly existence.” (Page 16)

At the Charter Day banquet, Brian D. Henderson, the new director of the Glencairn Museum, explained how the museum was part of the original vision of the Academy, how it enriches the Academy’s current mission, and how it is embracing the challenge to extend its reach as one of the preeminent religious museums in the world. Crispin Paine, a renowned authority on religious museums, visited Glencairn last year and said its goal of becoming a leader in the interpretation of religion is not just a dream but is within our reach. (Page 21)

As part of a series of sermons accompanying this year’s Journey campaign, *The Seven Practices of Peace*, the Rev. Dr. Ray Silverman preached a sermon in Bryn Athyn, *What Does it Mean to Be a Human Being?* The Journey relates to the seven days of creation, and this sermon focuses on the sixth day. This was when God said, “Let us make man in our own image,” and called this day not “good,” like the others, but “very good.” Why was that? (Page 29)

The new year is a good time to reflect on patterns in our lives and what we might like to work on changing. In a sermon, *Seeing Patterns*, the Rev. Eric H. Carswell uses the story of Ahab to illustrate whether or not we are willing to acknowledge our patterns and hear what the Lord is teaching us. (Ahab was not.) It is through such efforts to improve ourselves spiritually, he said, that we can commit ourselves “to the personal work that will help this year be a better year for us and for all those who come in contact with us.” (Page 35)

The Secondary Schools of the Academy of the New Church earned designation last year as a model school for the Gurian Institute, which studies differences in male and female brains and is a leading advocate of teaching to those differences. The Gurian Director visited the Academy last year and was most impressed with what is being done. Sue Odhner, Principal of the Girls School, updates that effort, as well as the continuing work on a comprehensive study of *Conjugal Love*, in the hope of making it “more relevant and hopeful to our girls.” In both areas, the Academy is demonstrating the distinctiveness at the heart of New Church education. (Page 40)

The Rev. Walter E. Orthwein writes: “Landscape paintings by the Rev. Frank S. Rose are proudly displayed on the walls of many New Church homes, churches and schools. Now, having retired from the pulpit in Tucson, he has found a whole new career as a painter and photographer of flowers and trees in Arizona.” He also gives lectures on nature and has a new blog that shares his artwork and his insights. (Page 45)

The graduation of four men from the Keugata Theological School in Kenya marks significant progress for the development of the Church there. Read inspiring messages from the Rev. Dr. Andrew M. T. Dibb and the Rev. Grant H. Odhner, who were involved in the instruction and ordination, and words of appreciation from valedictorian George Omosu Magero and the presiding pastor, the Rev. Samson Mogusu Abuga. (Page 47)

Rachel Buss, a Bryn Athyn College student who has been interning in the Office of Outreach, conducted an important and insightful study of the younger generation and their feelings about the Church. It poses some compelling challenges for older members to look at how we are coming across to them, and how we might get them to come back. (Page 54)

The Rev. Charles (Chuck) Blair looks at some of the challenges and controversies facing the Church and suggests that rather than resist change we should look for the opportunities it offers. (Page 59)

One man in the Rev. Mark Allais' Buccleuch congregation in South Africa was concerned that not enough men were involved in the Church. The result is a Leading Men program that challenges the men to step up. This has been encouragingly successful and stands as a model for other New Church congregations. (Page 61)

The U.S. Navy SEALs are inspiring, not only for their bravery and service to their country in the face of grave danger, but for their character and their code of conduct. Bonnie G. Frazier, whose niece is married to a SEAL, reflects on their "unswerving obedience to something higher than themselves," and wonders what our lives would be like if we could commit to the same kind of obedience to the Lord's Word. (Page 63)

The paper by the Rev. N. Bruce Rogers, *Gender and the Priesthood*, in the September-October 2013 *New Church Life*, has attracted a lot of attention from people on both sides of the issue. Along with several letters to the editors, Al Lindsay, a lawyer in western Pennsylvania and a former member of the General Church Board of Directors, offers a response. (Page 64)

Church News includes: announcement of a Presidential Search Committee to find a successor to Bryn Athyn College President Kristin King; an inspiring message from Dr. King to alumni about the state of the College and its students; the Academy Secondary Schools earning re-accreditation through 2020; pastoral moves in South Africa; a new Translation of *Spiritual Experiences*, and three new books from the Swedenborg Foundation; highlights of a busy year from the Church in Asia; and an interesting note from the Rev. George Dole on a manuscript which may bear the mark of one of Swedenborg's tears. (Page 71)

Late issues: Some readers received the November-December issue – which went into the mail in mid-November – several weeks late. Apparently this mailing was sidetracked by the Christmas volume. We regret this delay and will make every effort next year to get the issue in the mail well before the Christmas rush.

Editorials

‘INFLUENCED BY SWEDENBORG’

The list of famous people who have been “influenced by Swedenborg” is impressive, and New Church people have naturally been interested in documenting these cases.

The extent of the influence varies from person to person, of course. William Blake was certainly influenced by Swedenborg, but the influence was heavily distorted by Blake’s own poetic interpretation.

Emerson paid great tribute to Swedenborg’s genius in his work on *Representative Men*, but his view of Swedenborg as a “mystic” was not quite on the mark, and there were aspects of Swedenborg’s Writings he rejected.

John Chapman (Johnny Appleseed) and Helen Keller were very explicit and emphatic in their praise of Swedenborg’s theology. C.S. Lewis, on the other hand – some of whose ideas agree so much with certain teachings of the Writings that New Church readers can’t help but think that he *must* have been influenced by them – denied that he was.

But of all the thinkers influenced by Swedenborg, the *least* influenced was Swedenborg himself – at least as far as the essential spiritual truths that constitute the substance of his theological works are concerned.

Of course he drew upon his knowledge of science and philosophy, and his life experience generally, in illustrating the theological truths which were later revealed to him; but even that natural groundwork was laid down under the guidance of Divine providence in order to enable him to relate spiritual truths to corresponding natural truths later on in his theological period.

Swedenborg is usually ranked as one of the greatest geniuses who ever lived. While that is not irrelevant, it is not the main point. It was under the auspices of the Lord that his understanding of the order of nature was developed to such an extraordinary degree that it could serve as a foundation upon which spiritual truths could rest, and by which they could be confirmed. And his philosophic studies and habit of mind prepared him to receive and convey a distinctly new kind of revelation, addressed to the rational mind.

More important than Swedenborg’s intellect was the gift of humility he

was given at the culmination of his intellectual development and the dawn of his spiritual awakening.

He had discovered great things as a scientist, but, recognizing that scientists tend to give undue weight to their own discoveries, he chose, as a matter of principle, to concentrate on the discoveries of others rather than his own, in forming his scientific understanding of the world.

It was his victory over his pride of self-intelligence, and his willingness to submit the natural knowledge he had gained in such abundance to the winnowing and ordering influence of Divine truth, that made it possible for him to step into the role of revelator.

Influenced by Swedenborg? Not him. As the “servant of the Lord Jesus Christ,” as he identified himself on the title page of the *True Christian Religion*, he was inspired by only one Spirit, one Master – solemnly testifying that from the first day of his call, “I have not received anything whatever pertaining to the doctrines of that church from any angel, but from the Lord alone while I have read the Word.” (*True Christian Religion* 779)

(WEO)

LIFE AND THE CHURCH

Change is ever roiling the world – never more intensely than it is today. But as the late great college basketball coach and sage John Wooden was fond of counseling: “All progress is change – but not all change is progress.”

Our attitudes and values are constantly challenged by shifting and “evolving” views – from doctrine and science to political correctness and “the new normal.” The world seems adrift without moral or spiritual compass. Even the Church is not immune.

When and how to change – and progress – is the challenge. And everyone has opinions.

The General Church has been changing and evolving since its inception – not in basic doctrines but in practices. Church services are generally less formal and there is greater variety, from traditional to contemporary. For many years no one even considered allowing women on church boards. Now we would not have a board or council without women. Technology is changing the way we reach out to people. Attitudes are dividing on emerging issues.

The pressure for change is intensifying, and with that pressure comes a fundamental choice: where to bend, where to stand firm. To evangelize and grow the Church we must be able to adapt and accommodate to people’s needs, without compromising on doctrine and principles. In responding to pressures for change, we must strive always to be led by the Lord. But we are left in freedom, and reading of doctrine is open to interpretation and personal inclinations, so keeping the Church true to itself while satisfying both clergy

and laity is a daunting challenge.

Among current issues affecting the Church are: women in the ministry; homosexuality and gay marriage; the elements of the Holy Supper; bringing back young people and others who are disaffected; the decline of the Church in North America and growth internationally; and how to use technology most effectively.

Each of these issues has passionate and righteous voices on all sides, which makes leadership all the more challenging. What the process asks of all of us is looking to the Lord and focusing on doctrine, with a commitment to openness, freedom and charity.

New Church Life has a role to play. With anything we publish that may be considered controversial, we don't consider that the end of a conversation but the beginning. We always hope for constructive, positive dialogue, rooted in doctrine and charity. We will not shy away from controversy, but won't focus on an issue for the sake of controversy. We need to hear more from our clergy, helping us to focus on relevant teachings, but from concerned and thinking lay men and women as well. All voices are welcome as we search together for what the Lord is teaching us.

In the September-October 2013 issue we published a lengthy paper by the Rev. N. Bruce Rogers on *Gender and the Priesthood of the New Church in the 21st Century*. This is a hot-button issue in the Church, with strong opinions on both sides, and pressure for change. This was a good example of a minister's personal, in-depth study, presented not as the last word on the subject – as we saw it – but opening a forum for an exchange of doctrinally-based views. Response begins in this issue, and will continue. Such a process should be healthy for the Church, as long as it is framed in looking to the Lord and in personal kindness.

Also in this issue is a letter of concern about the growing pressure for homosexual marriage; an article about what young people in the Church are saying – and seeking; and a minister's thoughts on the opportunities present in change. We welcome constructive, doctrinal and charitable contributions on any of these subjects – and others – to help people make informed judgments and hopefully come to consensus that strengthens the Church.

Helping to frame our focus was a pre-Christmas sermon in the Bryn Athyn Cathedral by the Rev. Jeremy F. Simons on *Balaam and the Angel of the Lord*. Balak, King of Moab, wanted the prophet Balaam to curse Israel for him, but Balaam said he could only say what the Lord told him to say. This is a guide for all of us – not to look to ourselves for the answers to life's questions but to the Lord.

Balaam, the sermon points out, “is an extreme example of a tendency that is common to all of us, and which has bedeviled the Church from the

very beginning. We want to *bless* or *curse* the ideas and practices going on around us according to our own thoughts and feelings about them. Yet the Lord strictly warns us that it is not what *we* think that matters, but what He teaches in His Word.”

This is emphasized in *Apocalypse Revealed* 571: “It is blasphemy not to draw the doctrine of the Church from the Word, but to hatch it from one’s own intelligence. The reason is that the Church is founded on the Word and its character is such as its understanding of the Word.”

Mr. Simons said it is important for all of us to think about what we see as the source of religious truth in our lives. In the General Church we say that the Heavenly Doctrines, with the Old and New Testaments, are the Word of God. But, he cautions, “the thoughts of church members and ministers may often disagree with what the Word of God teaches, and so the way we go about resolving doctrinal issues in the Church is important.”

Here is an essential principle to keep in mind as we seek guidance: “The question is not what the people or the leadership think is right, but what the Lord teaches when fully understood – whether we like it or not. This is the question that we seek consensus about.”

Fully understanding what the Lord teaches is the humbling and everlasting quest of the Church and every individual in it as we look sincerely to be guided by His Word.

St. Augustine offered this perspective to guide our actions and our attitude: “In doubtful questions, liberty. In essentials, unity. In all things, charity.”

(BMH)

NEW CHURCH VIRTUES: HUMILITY

The virtue of humility comes to us in response to the truth that the Lord is Life itself and we are merely recipients of life from Him. He is the Divine Human from which our finite humanity is derived. Any goodness and wisdom we may possess – or rather, appear to possess – are received every moment from Him.

The truth of this is something we know (or should know) from Scripture, from doctrine, and, most deeply, from the Word as written on our hearts. Perceiving the reality of it is the essence of humility.

Lack of humility, on the other hand, is a sign of ignorance, or lack of understanding and acceptance, of this most fundamental reality concerning our own human condition. It is a sign of the self’s lack of self-awareness.

One of the many striking statements in the Writings about human nature and how we stand in relation to the Divine is in *Arcana Coelestia* 1093:

The Lord is as far from cursing anyone and being angry with him as heaven is from earth. Who can believe that the Lord, who is omniscient and omnipotent, and by His wisdom rules the universe, and is thus infinitely above all infirmities, is angry

with such wretched dust as men, who scarcely know anything of what they do, and can of themselves do nothing but evil?

“Wretched dust.” Perhaps this sounds like hyperbole, or overly dramatic, but it is simply a fact. This is what we are: wretched dust who of ourselves can do nothing but evil.

And yet, paradoxically, the glory of being human, the thing that raises us above all other animals, and above ourselves, is our ability to recognize how low we are in relation to God. “What is man that Thou art mindful of him? ... Thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honor.” (*Psalms 8:4-5*)

The wisdom that lifts us up from the dust and makes us human begins with humility. The Lord advised His disciples not to take the highest seat at the table, lest they be moved down, but to take the lowest seat and perhaps be invited to move up.

The highest angels, the ones the Writings call “celestial,” are the most humble and also the wisest. They not only know, perceive and acknowledge that of themselves they are nothing and the Lord everything, they *love* for that to be so, and contemplate the reality of it with joy.

In this world, though, we can be sure that whenever we gain a measure of humility the devil is standing by to remind us of how fine we are to be so humble, and get us to secretly pat ourselves on the back for it. Best not to focus on ourselves at all.

There is a beautiful admonition to be humble in these familiar words from the prophet Micah in the Old Testament: “He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?” (*Micah 6:8*) It doesn’t just say we should be humble, but to “walk humbly with thy God.” Genuine humility involves a relationship with God. And we notice in that verse that love of the neighbor (doing justly and loving mercy) is joined with walking humbly with God.

A humble recognition of our own “wretched” state instills in us an attitude of humility, mercy and forgiveness in our relations with other people. There is one Lord over all of us, in whose eyes we are all children, weak and helpless and prone to going astray, and to whom we are all equally accountable.

It is necessary for peace on earth for there to be a God before whose throne kings lay their crowns, and whose judgment is feared by presidents, generals and all those in positions of power, just as much as it is by the common man.

Not one of the tyrants and criminals who have inflicted such misery on the world throughout the ages was God-fearing or humble at heart. They were carried away by the love of self and the desire to be the greatest and dominate others.

The Lord, the King of kings, came down to earth, down to our level, and gave us an example of what it means to be “meek and lowly in heart.” Yet He also spoke with the greatest authority and acted with the greatest power. He taught His disciples humility, but also said they would do great things in His name. True humility and true greatness go hand in hand. But neither is something we can obtain on our own; both are gifts from the Lord.

Humility, like happiness, isn’t an end in itself, but a collateral good that comes to us when we take to heart the truth that the Lord is the only source of good. The main focus of a humble mind is not on how *low* we are, but on how *high* God is.

Humility opens our eyes to the ecstatic vision that inspired the Psalmist to proclaim: “O Lord our Lord, how excellent is Thy name in all the earth!” (*Psalm 8:1*)

(WEO)

Letters to the Editors

The Challenge to Protect Marriage

To The Editors:

The comments by the Rev. Walter E. Orthwein in his editorial, *New Church Virtues: Reverence* (under the subheading, *Reverence for Marriage, New Church Life*, page 447), are particularly pertinent to those living in the Australian Capital Territory (ACT), where I reside.

As I write this letter in late October, it is only a few days ago that the ACT Government passed a law to legalize same-sex marriage on the grounds that, with regard to love and choice of marriage partner, everyone is entitled to freedom of choice and equal treatment, regardless of gender. However, the Australian (federal) Government has jurisdiction over marriage, and under federal law, marriage is defined as the union of a man with a woman.

Almost immediately, the Australian Government challenged the ACT Government in the High Court in an attempt to repeal the ACT law, arguing that it conflicts with the Federal Marriage Act and is therefore unconstitutional. Since the challenge is made purely on constitutional grounds and not on religious or moral grounds, it cannot be assumed that it was made because of any opposition to same-sex marriage. The result of the challenge was expected to be known in December.

[On December 12, Heulwen Ridgway sent this update: “Today the High Court of Australia announced that it had struck down the ACT law which legalized same-sex marriage. The decision was unanimous and was made on the grounds that the ACT law conflicts with the federal Marriage Act and is therefore unconstitutional. The only way now to legalize same-sex marriage in Australia is by attempting to change the Federal Marriage Act through Federal Parliament. Meantime, the same-sex marriages that were contracted in the five-day window of opportunity before today’s announcement will be annulled.”]

This outcome of the High Court challenge in the ACT has important implications for the whole of Australia and, I believe, for the New Church also. If the Australian Government had lost the challenge, the ACT law

legalizing same-sex marriage would have stood, and same-sex couples from across Australia would have flooded into the Capital Territory to be married legally. It could also have set a precedent for the remaining states and territory, none of which currently allows same-sex marriage, to try or to try again to enact a similar law.

More importantly, such efforts to legalize same-sex marriage potentially impact the New Church. This is because a pillar doctrine of the New Church is that of true marriage, which is stated in a number of passages in the Writings, such as: "...true marriage is that of one man with one wife..." (*Arcana Coelestia* 385), and, "...there is no marriage except between one husband and one wife..." (*Heaven and Hell* 380.1)

These teachings are categorical and permit no deviation: there is true marriage and apart from that there is no marriage. Moreover, the reciprocal love of husband and wife and their striving for conjunction into a one, produces conjugal love. (See *Heaven and Hell* 369, *Conjugal Love* 37) So, legalizing same-sex marriage would increase the attack of the hells on true marriage and on its product, conjugal love.

In the past weeks I attended a church service of one of the largest Christian Protestant denominations. Doubtless because of the then imminent vote in the ACT Legislature and because of public interest, the priest devoted her entire sermon to the subject of marriage equality. She based her views on her conviction that Jesus had come to earth to save us, but first had to learn the ways of the world from his (definitely not His) human contacts.

According to her, under God's providence Jesus was led first to meet, and then to include, sinners, adulterers, wicked tax collectors, etc., in his ministry. He even learned to control his hot temper which, she said, was exhibited when he angrily threw people out of the temple who were only going about their business. From being an angry man, he learned to show only love.

So she said that if Jesus had learned from contact with the people around him to change his nature and show unqualified love, and to be inclusive of everyone, was not this a lesson to us to be inclusive likewise and show love and understanding toward same-sex couples and same-sex marriage? Also to see marriage equality as part of Jesus' instruction to love our neighbor as ourselves?

How sad to see the Word of the Lord so distorted but, of course, all heresies have arisen from that source. How sad, too, to see religion being used to spread the infection of the hells.

Certainly during the lead-up to the ACT vote, there were church leaders who argued publicly in favor of retaining the definition of marriage as the union of a man and a woman. But there was considerable public support for same-sex marriage and there was no general outcry against it from church-

goers or others. The law was passed almost effortlessly.

It is of great concern to me that in the space of just one generation, same-sex unions have gone from being an unacceptable and often illegal violation of the institution of marriage, to a union which is not only acceptable but is regarded by its very many supporters as simply a lifestyle choice.

Just a very few decades ago, the major challenge to marriage was heterosexual couples “living together” without the commitment of marriage. Now a worse threat to marriage has transpired, namely the acceptance of same-sex unions as just an ordinary, everyday lifestyle choice. It is hard to conceive of greater opposition to New Church values than that of same-sex unions becoming a legal and acceptable form of marriage.

Only the New Church knows that “conjugal love ... is the very plane of Divine influx” (*Heaven and Hell* 370, 371); that conjugal love is only possible in the marriage of one man with one woman; and that such a marriage descends from the union of the Divine and the Human in the Lord, and through the marriage of good and truth in heaven.

The New Church membership, small though it is, has a critical job to do in upholding the institution of marriage that descends from God out of heaven against this terrible attack of the hells.

What can the New Church do to uphold true marriage? Organize rallies to proclaim the right way? Letters to newspapers? Talk to people – especially our children? With the exception of that last, which will influence the next generation of New Church adults, I think that many forms of opposition might have some effect but suggest that it would be small.

The way that will have huge effect is to keep the sanctity and purity of true marriage in our minds and lives. This is not just another small way, just a little way within the silence of our minds, chipping away minutely at a seemingly gigantic evil. This way is an immense challenge to the hells because it brings the Lord and the whole of heaven, with the whole of the Lord’s infinite power, into action.

Although I think that the Lord and heaven will be in most opposition to same-sex marriage, I think that the presence will be stronger, more immediate, when the challenge is made by harnessing the strength of the Lord’s own directions to us. That is, that we should love the marriage that is between one man and one woman, that the partners should strive to unite in thought and will and in good and truth, strive to have a union that is holy, pure and clean, and strive to love the Lord supremely. Those who, like myself, are unmarried, are not exempt for we are to strive for those same ideals so that they will be actual in the spiritual world.

The Lord is asking us to put hearts, minds, souls and strength into regenerating to the celestial degree as the only way to attain the fullness of true

marriage and the fullness of conjugal love. Too great a task? Indeed, no small task! But the Lord is with us all the way and perhaps sustains us with what, to me, is one of the most beautiful promises in all of the Lord's revelation:

"...the delight of truly conjugal love not only endures to old age in the world, but after death becomes the delight of heaven and is there filled with an interior delight that grows more and more perfect to eternity." (*Heaven and Hell* 379)

Heulwen M. Ridgway
Canberra, Australia

Comments and Questions Through a Kitchen Window

To The Editors:

Re: *Gender and the Priesthood* by the Rev. N. Bruce Rogers, presented at the Council of the Clergy Meeting in Bryn Athyn, June, 2013, and published in the September-October issue of *New Church Life*, page 460.

We live in a time when we freely give attention and time to read a page or two. When it stretches to nine pages we begin to see tangents and wonder if the target has been lost through intellect.

The topic is an important one in our church today. Did the Council of the Clergy risk allowing the opposite view to be spoken? And discussion to follow?

Where did the idea come from that women called to the priesthood are doing it because they have that "right" and/or are "no different from men"? I have met three women in our church who have this calling and are following it. Not one of them made this choice as a "right." Not one made this choice to prove herself equal to or better than men. They are amazing people with amazing intellects. They teach and lead to the "goodness of life," which is what a priest does.

Does a woman see through different glasses? You bet. Where did we forget that male and female make one angel – each of equal value – contributing to God's intention?

It is my humble opinion that ministry and priesthood cannot be separated. The good shepherd must have both qualities – whether seen through a masculine or feminine lens.

This year there are no young men entering Theological School. Why? And women are told, "You can take the classes but don't expect a job in the New Church." Could it be that Theological School is not using its core in such a way that young people find it vital to life as they live it in the culture they breathe.

Where exactly in the Word or the Writings does it say that the priesthood

is for men only? A minister I greatly admire commits his life to translating the Writings and bringing them into the language of today. He cannot find this place.

To summarize: I am for wise and good people being able to travel the path God opens to them as New Church shepherds on earth. I am saddened that this is not a possibility today.

Zarah Blair
Sarver, Pennsylvania

Editor's note: I would like to offer a response to Mrs. Blair's question: "Did the Council of the Clergy risk allowing the opposite view (to Rev. Bruce Rogers' paper) to be spoken? And discussion to follow?"

The answer is yes. There were many comments on the paper generally and regarding various specific points. In addition, there were two other major presentations, including one in favor of women in the ministry – as I reported in the July-August 2013 issue of *New Church Life*.

So yes, there was a very full discussion of the topic, extending over three days, and everyone who wished to speak had plenty of opportunity to do so.

This was hardly taking a "risk"; this is the way the Council operates routinely. In fact, to speak of "allowing" opposing views is strange; they are expected as a matter of course. I can hardly imagine any freer discussions than those that take place in the Council of the Clergy.

I might note, also, that this topic has been discussed again and again in the Council and throughout the Church for many years. Just a few years ago the Council heard a number of papers and considered the question very thoroughly, and held a series of public meetings at which lay people, men and women, were invited to speak on the subject. At those meetings the Council members mainly listened. And now, I believe, at the meetings coming up in June, the Council is going to revisit the question yet again. (WEO)

The Gap Between Doctrine and Assumption

To The Editors:

The question of whether or not to include women as ordained ministers in the General Church of the New Jerusalem is a subject of great interest to many people I know. For that reason, I read the Rev. Bruce Rogers' paper, *Gender and the Priesthood*, looking for the doctrinal basis for our tradition of excluding women from the priesthood. I know that Mr. Rogers is a New Church scholar, and if anyone could pin down the reasoning behind this practice, he could.

After a long, historical introduction, he became specific in his section, “The Nature of the Priesthood.” OK. Here we go! We have definitions to clarify the question.

“Matters having to do with heaven are called ecclesiastical; those having to do with the world are called civil.” We must have officials to observe, reward and punish all that is done according to order or contrary to order. If this does not happen, the human race must perish. These officials are charged with keeping associations of people in order. And among the officials, there must be order. “Officials over these matters in human society which have to do with ecclesiastical matters are called priests, and their office is the priesthood.”

There we have it.

Have what? Nowhere in the passage, nor included in the definitions, does it state that the “officials” must be men. Nowhere.

Mr. Rogers goes on to draw conclusions as if the gender of the officials was clearly stated. It was not. The duties of the priest, “to teach and lead people through truths to goodness of life,” is certainly possible by both genders. And “to teach in accordance with the doctrines of their church from the Word and lead them to live according to that doctrine” is the goal of every Sunday School teacher I know, both male and female.

Here is where the definitions double back on themselves. If the “doctrine of the church” has been codified by the organized church to mean that only men may serve as priests, then anything that goes against *that* doctrine goes against “the doctrine of the church.” But that doctrine was based on an interpretation of what the gender of the “official” who governs the affairs of the Church must be. This is a self-fulfilling argument. It only stands on its own assumption, not on a clearly stated distinction as to the gender of an “official.”

I’m afraid Mr. Rogers fell prey to his own description of doctrinal arguments that are “characterized by lengthy and tortuous reasoning.” His own argument does not “begin with the Doctrines and then lead to a conclusion.” I’m afraid he began with the thesis that only men ought to be admitted into the clergy, and “the Doctrines were searched for support, no matter how tenuous.”

Thank you, Mr. Rogers. I have now formed an opinion on this matter. I do not know if women will make more effective ministers than men, or if the Church will grow more or less with them in the ranks of the clergy. It will probably depend on each individual called to the priesthood in our Church, as it does now with our men. I do know, however, that the Writings *do not* state that the officials who govern the associations of people having to do with ecclesiastical matters must be men.

I do not pretend to be a scholar, but if this is the most compelling argument for excluding women from the priesthood, I find it wanting. How can we exclude the talents of women called to this service on this basis? Please, say it isn't so.

Trish Lindsay
Sarver, Pennsylvania

An Appreciation

To The Editors:

Thank you for the wonderful September-October 2013 edition of *New Church Life*.

I particularly wish to thank the Rev. Bruce Rogers for his comprehensive and brilliant paper, *Gender and the Priesthood*.

Gloria Alden Smith
Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania

Charter Day – Its Celebration and Meaning

Rt. Rev. Brian W. Keith
Chancellor of the Academy of the New Church

Bryn Athyn Cathedral, October 18, 2013

You might wonder what you are doing here in the Cathedral this morning. Why did you have to get up (perhaps earlier than you had wanted), march over here, and engage in a worship service? And why do we plan all the rest of the events of this weekend?

The celebration of Charter Day has deep roots. Its precursor was Founder's Day – an annual banquet held on November 3rd, the date of the granting of the original legal charter for the Academy. Participants in the banquet were the 12 charter signatories, Academy Council members (like the Academy Board or Corporation today), Academy administrators and teachers – no students or alumni!

As the original founders began to enter the spiritual world, they extended the celebration to all those associated with the Academy. The first such event was held in 1917 – 97 years ago. That year November 3rd fell on a Saturday, and the students were invited to plan the event. See if any of this sounds familiar.

They began with a service in the Benade Hall Chapel and Bishop Emeritus W. F. Pendleton gave a talk on the meaning of Charter Day. Afterward they gathered on the triangle outside for a flag-raising ceremony. Those participating included, in addition to teachers and Corporation members, alumni and students from the Elementary School through the Theological School. (This tradition of including elementary school students continued into the 1950s.) After a picnic lunch, there were sports in the afternoon, and that evening there was entertainment and a dance.

Four years later, in 1921, when the Cathedral was completed, they moved the service here, as a symbol of the interconnection of the Academy and the Church. The students and faculty, followed by alumni and Board members, paraded two-by-two from Benade Hall, with the alumni bearing aloft their class banners. And the faculty and Board were even then seated in the choir

stalls on the chancel.

By 1929 the pattern was firmly established: the procession to the Cathedral Friday morning for the service, immediately afterward all gathering to sing class and Academy songs, a football game in the afternoon, banquet in the evening, a Saturday tea for all alumni and faculty to reminisce, and a dance that evening.

The only significant changes after that happened in the 1930s – moving the celebration to October for better weather, and switching the dance to Friday night and the banquet to Saturday night.

And yes, for those of you who wondered, since at least the 1950s the weekend of Charter Day has been determined *solely* by when we can schedule a home football game!

So, why do we do all this?

Is it an excuse, on a lovely October weekend, to hold an extended series of parties? Is it an excuse to bring back alumni so old friends can gather, and even stimulate some donations? Well, there are going to be many activities and parties, renewed acquaintances recounting endless humorous stories, and hopefully even financial contributions necessary to support this great endeavor.

But those reasons are secondary to why we are here today. We are here to remember and reconnect with our fundamental purpose, what really draws us together and why we have the Academy. And that purpose is embodied in the original Charter: “Propagating the Heavenly Doctrines of the New Jerusalem and establishing the New Church signified in the *Apocalypse* by the New Jerusalem.”

We exist so that the New Church can be embraced and then shared with everyone. From this stems all its other Charter purposes: “Promoting education in all of its various forms, educating young men for the ministry, publishing books, pamphlets and other printed matter, and establishing a library.”

For the founders of the Academy had a vision – a vision from the Lord. It was a vision of what life could be – both in this world and in the world to come. They saw in the revelation to the New Church the Lord’s purpose in all of creation, a heaven from the human race. This is why we are here – to support and promote a heavenly existence.

Yes, we are a set of schools, the Swedenborg Library, Cairnwood Estate and the Glencairn Museum. But all of these exist to establish the Lord’s

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The founders of the Academy had a vision from the Lord of what life could be – in this world and the world to come. They saw in the revelation to the New Church the Lord’s purpose in all of creation, a heaven from the human race. This is why we are here – to support and promote a heavenly existence.

Church on earth. As a previous Charter Day speaker from more than 70 years ago noted: “The Academy has, from its beginning, been intimately bound up in the life of the Church, and this so much so that to speak of the one is to imply the other.” (Nathaniel D. Pendleton, *New Church Life* 1931, page 68)

With the Old Testament charge to “teach [the laws and statutes] to your children and your grandchildren” (*Deuteronomy* 4:9), and the wealth of information on the development of the mind and the nature of learning in the teachings of the New Church, it is no wonder some of the earliest adherents envisioned a complete educational system that could bring together all spiritual and natural knowledge and share it with the world.

In the 1800s those who would become the Academy movement saw that Sunday Schools were of very limited

value in conveying and supporting this vision. And they saw that the piecemeal and inconsistent training clergy received, primarily under an apprenticeship program, was wholly inadequate to provide the church with clergy “skilled in the [Divine] law, wise and God-fearing.” (*New Jerusalem and its Heavenly Doctrine* 313)

On June 19, 1876, some of these dedicated adherents asked Bishop Benade, the leader of the group, to give a statement of purpose. In it Benade declared the Academy was:

to cultivate and promulgate a knowledge of those Divine revelations in their spiritual purity, and to engage in those uses of spiritual charity which have respect primarily to the growth and development of the Spiritual Church.

The provisions of our Charter grew out of this. And from this seed the “uses of spiritual charity,” as he put it, grew into these institutions.

A few months later they set up a coordinated curriculum for theological education, the first beginnings of this educational system.

The next year formal classes opened in Philadelphia for on-site instruction for the Theological School and College. By 1880 a library was being established

to preserve the original manuscripts of the Writings, New Church literature, and any other works which might prove useful to students studying in the schools. And they were actively engaged in publishing works for the New Church.

In 1881 the Boys School was founded. Three years later the Girls School was added. And, as the vision of New Church education encompassed all formal education, elementary schools quickly followed thereafter – three in the United States (Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Chicago), two in Canada (Kitchener, then called Berlin, and Toronto), and one in England (London). Then in 1897 the Academy moved to what would become its permanent base in Bryn Athyn.

All of this came about on the premise that the spiritual and the natural are inextricably bound together – neither one sufficient by itself. And they are interdependent. In the schools this can be seen in two fundamental ways. In the curriculum natural information and spiritual information are brought together. So we don't teach history, but the Lord's providence in history; not science and math, but the order of creation; and not English and literature, but the affectional ordering of experience from the Lord. Our academics need to be rigorous and thorough. But they also have to be intertwined with the spiritual. It is the two together that open and feed the rational mind. Thus the learning is both for this world, to be useful here, but, more importantly, for one's eternal life.

The second way this connection is seen is in the life that we promote. We do care about your academic achievement. You need facts and skills to be usefully employed in your natural life, and that will be a primary means by which you develop spiritually. But on a deeper level, this is what we care *most* about – your moral and spiritual life.

The whole point of learning and becoming useful is so that through it you can practice and internalize caring about your neighbors. It is that inner life, of gradually setting aside self-centeredness and too great an attraction for worldly things, that becomes “you” and will be “you” forever. Thus everything you learn here, everything you experience here, is for the purpose of you

The purpose of this educational process is to prepare and launch you on a heavenly path. It is to open up your minds so you can see the wonders of this world, the variety of human states, and how spiritual truths are present and make natural things alive.

becoming angels.

And be reminded that there were no angels created such from the beginning, but angels come from this human race. And the Lord's purpose is "a heaven consisting of people who have become or who are becoming angels." (*Divine Providence* 27) You are "becoming." Your time here is a starting point.

The purpose of this educational process is to prepare and launch you on a heavenly path. It is to open up your minds so you can see the wonders of this world, the variety of human states, and how spiritual truths are present and make natural things alive.

This means that if you leave this institution with an extensive amount of knowledge and don't see how the Lord is present and leading in it, the Academy has failed. If you leave this institution with skills but do not use them to benefit the world, the Academy has failed. And if you leave this institution self-centered and not caring about your fellow human beings, the Academy has failed.

I say the Academy has failed. But in the last analysis, it is really up to you. We can't, nor would we want to, force you to think or act in one specific way. We certainly will point the way, directing you to spiritual and natural information, and encouraging a life that leads to genuine good. This is our charge, seen in our Charter, to establish a New Church on earth. Then it is up to you.

We hope, no *trust*, that you will freely and rationally respond. You will use what you have been given to fulfil the Lord's purpose for you. As you do this, you become the Academy – one with our Charter purposes, one with our faculty and alumni, and one with the Lord: a heaven from the human race.



The Rt. Rev. Brian W. Keith is Executive Bishop of the General Church and Chancellor of the Academy of the New Church. He was ordained in 1976, into the second degree of the ministry in 1978, and into the third degree in 2004. He and his wife, Gretchen (Umberger), live in Bryn Athyn.

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Glencairn Museum:

Enriching the Academy's Mission ~ Embracing the Challenge to Extend Its Reach

Brian D. Henderson, Director of the Glencairn Museum

Charter Day Banquet Address – October 19, 2013

I am honored to have been asked to speak this evening as we celebrate the 136th anniversary of the granting of the Academy's Charter. Many of you are here this weekend for class reunions, reconnecting with classmates as you recall fond memories of the times spent together in school. Others have traveled to see old friends or to visit sons and daughters who are here in school. Still others are here simply to show their love and support for the Academy.

For all of us, our thoughts this weekend turn to the schools of the Academy – the Girls School, the Boys School, Bryn Athyn College and the Theological School. Charter Day provides us an opportunity to reconnect with and rededicate ourselves to the fundamental purpose and mission of the Academy.

Perhaps this begs the question, then: Why am I here this evening to speak about the Glencairn Museum? How does it relate to Charter Day? What exactly is its connection to the Academy's Charter, the mission of our schools, and the education our students receive? You might even be asking, "Are museums relevant in our modern technological world?" With smart phones, tablets and Google images, do people even still go to museums? Haven't museums themselves, like the objects they contain, become relics?

I learned some interesting statistics last week that indicate this is not the case. In the United Kingdom, for example, more than half of all adults visited a museum last year, far more than attended a professional sporting event. Statistics seem similar in Germany. In China, museums are being built at the rate of one a day. Last year 61 museums world-wide and ten in the United States received between one and ten million visitors.

OK, so maybe some people still do go to museums, but how does Glencairn Museum relate to Charter Day and the Academy's fundamental purpose? I hope to share a few thoughts with you this evening about:

- The place of a museum within the foundation of the Academy
- How the museum today enriches the education of our students
- How Glencairn is enthusiastically embracing the challenge to extend the reach of the Academy and its mission

The Academy received its legal charter on November 3, 1877. A Theological School was established in Philadelphia, and the following year a college was added, with a boys school to follow three years later, and a girls school in another three years (in 1884). Some of you may not be aware, however, that within two years of its founding, the Academy had established a museum – before either the boys or girls schools had opened its doors.

When the Academy officially opened in 1877, John Pitcairn and William Henry Benade, two men who had played such a significant role in the Academy's founding, were not in Philadelphia to witness it, having left the country on a tour of Europe, Egypt and the Holy Land.

While on this trip, they purchased more than 1,000 artifacts from the ancient world for the purpose, Benade wrote, of "the beginning of a Museum for the Academy."

Benade further wrote home that, "we shall need a museum," and that, "a good museum is a necessary adjunct of a good school." He believed that a museum could teach Academy students about ancient cultures from a New Church perspective, with a particular focus on religion and mythology.

The founders of the Academy had a vision for a comprehensive system of New Church education that taught students about the vital connection between the spiritual and natural worlds. For John Pitcairn and William Henry Benade, this vision included a museum. Perhaps this vision was influenced by other academies in relative proximity to their new Academy in Philadelphia, such as

the Academy of Fine Arts and the Academy of Natural Sciences – centers of learning and intellectual pursuit that included museums.

The Academy's Museum was initially housed in the parlor of Benade's home on Friedlander Street in Philadelphia. Over the next several decades, the school, and with it the museum, moved from place to place in Philadelphia.

The founders of the Academy had a vision for a comprehensive system of New Church education that taught students about the vital connection between the spiritual and natural worlds. For John Pitcairn and William Henry Benade, this vision included a museum.

After the Academy's move to Bryn Athyn, the museum was housed first within Benade Hall, and later moved to the top floor of the new Library in 1912. Falling into disuse by the late 1930s, the museum was revived in the early 1970s by a group of enthusiastic faculty, led by Aubrey Odhner.

The size, scope and quality of the museum was dramatically altered when Glencairn and its world-class collections were gifted to the Academy in 1980. When Glencairn Museum opened in 1982, the Academy's museum had been transformed from a collection of 1,000 objects to one of 10,000.

The Charter states that the Academy, "shall be for the purpose of ... promoting education in all of its various forms..." Today, more than ever, Glencairn Museum

serves as one of those forms of education for our students, enriching their classroom study of history, religion and art, and providing rich and varied opportunities for the development of career skills.

Last year alone Glencairn hosted more than 70 ANC Secondary Schools class trips, totaling more than 800 individual student visits. Students enrich their understanding of past cultures and religions by learning to "read" art and artifacts as expressions of beliefs and practices, and through hands-on activities. As one teacher attests, "There's nothing like seeing actual artifacts for making the study of ancient history more immediate and relevant ... for teenagers."

Freshmen visit the Egyptian and Ancient Near East galleries and try their hand at cuneiform writing. Sophomores make numerous trips as part of their study of medieval, Islamic and Renaissance society – tracing the development of Early Christian art; analyzing how Byzantine art inspired the mosaics in Glencairn; learning the Five Pillars of Islam; seeing beautiful, illuminated medieval manuscripts; immersing themselves in monastic life through interactive tours; trying their hand at a replica Gutenberg-style press, while learning how the Lord in His Providence allowed for the invention of the

'My work at Glencairn Museum has truly been one of the most crucial and formative experiences in my life. On a personal level, my interaction with the very diverse public that visits the museum has taught me tremendous leadership and communication skills, and effectively prepared me for a professional life.' – *A former intern*

press for the sake of the dissemination of His Word; and looking at stunning Renaissance tapestries.

Senior girls are treated to a medieval feast and present projects after completing their study of Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*. Art students studying stained glass see demonstrations of how both medieval and Bryn Athyn glass was blown, and use examples from Glencairn's stained glass collection as inspiration for their own created works of art.

College courses that integrate the Museum's collections into their curriculum range from Ancient, Early Christian and Medieval art history, to religion courses on the Pre-Christian Church and the Torah, to history courses in the classical world, Greek and Roman Religion and the Middle Ages, to a course on Bryn Athyn's National Historic Landmark District in which students do primary source research in the Glencairn Archives, which house the written records of the historic district, and a new course on archives theory.

One parent of a visiting school group wrote: 'This was the most educational and spiritually moving field trip I've ever been on.'

In Anthropology/History 211: *Artifacts, Archaeology and Museums* (part of Bryn Athyn College's new public history minor) students use the museum as their "laboratory" and hear from a number of Glencairn's staff

as guest lecturers on issues including collecting ethics, exhibitry design and object interpretation.

When I taught medieval history we used objects from the collections to gain a deeper understanding of how the medieval mind conceived of God and how they believed they were supposed to live their lives. What does it mean if we see God as the ultimate feudal lord, as the medieval Church depicted in this window, (see image on page 76), to whom we owe duties and obligations out of fear? Or an all-powerful, distant, vengeful judge, who seeks to damn us to hell if not for the protection of the Virgin Mary, as visually reinforced through this fresco? (See image on page 76.)

How do these views contrast with the idea of an all-loving, merciful Lord who wishes all of us freely to choose a life of good and an eternal life in heaven as presented in the Writings for the New Church? Are we to reject completely the natural world, retreating from it to wage spiritual battle against temptation, as was the ideal for the medieval monks who passed by this visual reminder several times each day? (See image on page 76.) How does this compare to what we are taught about living a life of charity and use?

Beyond enhancing classroom learning, the museum offers students of the Secondary Schools and College an opportunity to develop career skills. More than a dozen of these students teach children each summer as part of Glencairn's Medieval and Mythology camps, where children learn about the religious beliefs of the Middle Ages and the mythology of Mesopotamia, Egypt, Greece, Rome, Celtic and Native American culture.

Each year college history students lead hundreds of visitors on a pilgrimage tour through the museum during Glencairn's Medieval Festival, using objects from the collections to teach visitors of all ages about medieval religious beliefs. Meanwhile, art students teach visitors about medieval stained glass painting.

The Museum also offers internships, not only in museum education, where students teach elementary school groups, but in collections management, exhibitry, archives management, public relations, and even retail. Former high school volunteers and college interns are now some of our schools' faculty and museum staff, or are ministers and teachers in other New Church schools.

As one former intern attests, "My work at Glencairn Museum has truly been one of the most crucial and formative experiences in my life. On a personal level, my interaction with the very diverse public that visits the museum has taught me tremendous leadership and communication skills, and effectively prepared me for a professional life."

Glencairn Museum not only enriches the Academy's mission by deepening students' understanding of history, religion and art, or by offering opportunities for the development of career skills. The Museum is also enthusiastically embracing the challenge to extend the reach of the Academy's mission. Last year 15,000 people visited Glencairn Museum for a school program, public tour or event.

Nearly 3,500 of those visitors attended one of the Museum's four annual themed events. At the Sacred Arts Festival visitors watched artisans demonstrate arts directly related to the construction of the Cathedral and Glencairn, including glass blowing, stained glass painting and stone carving. They also experienced the creation of a Tibetan Buddhist sand mandala – a circular Buddhist representation of spiritual truths, patiently made from colored sand, grain by grain, before being poured into the pond at the Glencairn Retreat to symbolize the healing powers being spread through the waters around the world.

The Christmas Festival offers visitors the chance to explore works of art in the Glencairn collections depicting the Nativity, as well as to learn how the Pitcairn family celebrated Christmas in Glencairn as their home. The event is highlighted by dozens of Nativities that reveal how Christians around the world have adapted the Nativity scene to reflect their own national, regional and local cultures.

This year Glencairn has forged a partnership with Mepkin Abby in South Carolina, with whom we will be exchanging several dozen Nativities for our exhibition. This means that the nearly 8,000 visitors who visit Mepkin Abby's exhibition will be introduced to Glencairn Museum's Nativity collections.

Seven thousand visitors were introduced to the Museum's collections and mission through a guided tour. Each tour begins with an orientation video, which introduces visitors to the history of Bryn Athyn and the mission of the Museum. Visitors learn about our schools as they enjoy a spectacular view of both campuses from the tower, and learn about New Church beliefs both through the symbolism in Glencairn's chapel and the four decorative themes that appear throughout the building: Family, School, Nation and Church. It is through an explanation of these themes that visitors are introduced to the New Church concept of the neighbor, not only as an individual, but as increasingly larger communities of individuals.

The tour invites visitors to look at objects in the collections to see what they can tell us about religious beliefs and how people act from those beliefs, for these objects are the human expressions of faith over time. More important than seeing them merely as works of art or explaining how they were created, is seeing these objects as gateways through which we can seek to understand the religious beliefs of their creators and the ways in which they sought to act from those beliefs.

Today, Glencairn Museum is at the forefront of the museum world in its use of social media, which has resulted in an 11% increase in visitors in the last year and a 38% increase in tour visitors over the past six months. If you haven't done so already, consider "liking" us on Facebook, "following" us on Twitter, visiting our Tumblr blog, signing up to be one of more than 2,000 subscribers to our on-line newsletter, or watching one of the 11 videos on our YouTube channel. Recently staff members from the Michener Museum visited Glencairn to learn about our successful use of Groupon, through which we have sold more than 5,000 tour tickets in a six-month period.

Two recent surveys show that not only are increasing numbers of people coming to the Museum, but that they appreciate the mission of the Museum and the message they are receiving through their tour. On one survey 91% of visitors reported being "very interested" in what they learned, while 100% on another reported that they would recommend Glencairn to a friend. One parent of a visiting school group wrote: "This was the most educational and spiritually moving field trip I've ever been on."

Glencairn Museum's goal is to become recognized as a leader both regionally and nationally in the interpretation of religion. While at one time in the not-so-distant past that may have seemed a far-off dream, today that dream is coming closer to reality.

We have active relationships with the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Cloisters in New York, the Philadelphia Museum of Art, and the University of Pennsylvania Museum. We have hosted scholars from around the world. This past year we were one of five museums selected by the University of Pennsylvania to participate in its prestigious curatorial fellowship program, through which it funds a doctoral internship. This places Glencairn among the select company of the Barnes Foundation, The Philadelphia Museum of Art and the Rosenbach Museum and Library.

Last week we had the honor of hosting Crispin Paine, a leading authority on the interpretation of religious objects in museums and historic sites, whose publications have framed the new global conversation on how religious objects are treated in museums. It is worth noting that Paine's trip to the United States was limited to Yale University, where he was invited to speak, and Glencairn Museum, which he asked to visit.

While here he gave a talk to museum staff, faculty, students and others. Speaking to a recent trend in museums, he stated: "In the past, museums often changed the meaning of icons or statues of deities from sacred to aesthetic, or used them to declare the superiority of Western society, or simply as cultural and historical evidence. The last generation has seen ... curators recognizing that objects can only be understood within their original religious context. In recent years there has been an explosion of interest in the role religion plays in museums, with major exhibitions highlighting the religious, as well as the historical nature of objects."

While it may be a new trend in museums to give religious meaning back to religious objects, the Academy's Museum, from its establishment, has interpreted the objects in its collections as expressions of faith, used for the very purpose of understanding their religious meaning in their religious context.

The goal has always been to use objects better to understand the religious

Crispin Paine, a leading authority on religious museums, humbly suggested that our goal of becoming a leader in the interpretation of religion is not a dream, but is firmly within our reach. He noted that this is the oldest existing museum of multiple religions in the world, and that the quality and depth of our collections far surpass that of any other museum attempting to interpret the phenomena of religion today.

beliefs of other cultures throughout history, and to see how these cultures have received and responded to the Lord's influx. For while we are taught that the Lord's Church exists specifically where the Word is, where the Lord is known, and where Divine Truths are revealed, we are also taught that there is a union of heaven through the Word with people who are outside the Church, where the Word is not found. For the Lord's Church, whether specific or universal, is everywhere and exists with everyone who acknowledges a divine and lives a good life.

So why are museums so important? Speaking to this question and specifically to the power of objects, Paine said: "Objects have a unique power to speak to people, and do so on a quite different level to words, or even to images. That is why religious objects in museums must have an exceptional role and responsibility in the great cause of helping humankind to understand human motives."

After touring our collections and engaging in discussions of our mission and the ways in which we interpret our collections, Paine humbly suggested that our goal of becoming a leader in the interpretation of religion is not a dream, but rather is firmly within our reach.

He noted that the Academy's Museum is the oldest existing museum of multiple religions in the world, and that the quality and depth of our collections far surpass that of any other museum attempting to interpret the phenomena of religion today. Our challenge is to continue to implement new ways to share our collections, our interpretative approach, and most importantly our mission with the world.

The Academy's Museum has come a long way over the past 134 years, from the small collection in Benade's front parlor to a world-class museum, enriching the education of our students, providing an opportunity for them to gain career skills through volunteer opportunities and internships, and sharing our mission with thousands of visitors each year.

I hope you will agree with Benade's assertion as he sent home those first 1,000 artifacts in 1878 that, "A good museum is a necessary adjunct of a good school," and that it is serving today as a vital component within the founders' vision of a comprehensive system of New Church education.



Brian D. Henderson is Director of the Glencairn Museum and teaches History in Bryn Athyn College, where he has served in numerous roles, including Dean of Students. He and his wife, Becky (Rogers), live in Hatboro, Pennsylvania, and have two daughters – one in the Academy Girls School, one in Bryn Athyn College.

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What Does it Mean to Be a Human Being?

A Sermon by the Rev. Dr. Ray Silverman

Editor's note: This was the sixth in a series of seven sermons in the Bryn Athyn Cathedral in October and November accompanying the Journey campaign, The Seven Practices of Peace. Many New Church groups throughout the world also participated in the latter part of the year; others are doing so in the new year.

“And God created man in His own image” – Genesis 1:27

Today's focus is on the sixth day of creation. It is the day when God created animals and human beings. Our question is: “What does it mean to be a human being?”

First, though, we should review the previous five days, all of which represent specific stages in our spiritual development.

On the first day, or in the first stage of our new birth, God says, “Let there be light.” This is about our initial awakening to spiritual reality. It begins to dawn on us that there is something higher than mere natural life. There's something more to life than eating, sleeping and satisfying sensual desires. This is the light of the first day. *And God saw that it was good.*

On the second day of our spiritual rebirth we begin to distinguish between what is higher and what is lower. This distinction is represented by the waters above – these are our nobler thoughts and feelings – and the waters below, which are the thoughts and feelings mostly concerned with satisfying the needs of our lower self. *And God saw that it was good.*

On the third day, though, things begin to change. Not only do we begin to distinguish between what is higher and what is lower in us, but we also begin the work of spiritual cultivation, weeding out ignoble desires by shunning them, and strengthening good desires by acting on them. These are the tender herbs and grasses that now begin to sprout forth. *And God saw that it was good.*

On the fourth day we experience a deepening of our love, represented by the warmth of the sun, and the expansion of our faith, represented by the light of the moon. Numberless truths, like the stars, begin to shine in our mental universe, helping us to navigate our way through life. *And God saw that it was good.*

On the fifth day, the world is filled with birds and fish and “creeping things that the waters bring forth.” These living creatures represent the way love and faith continue to expand in our minds. We begin to realize that the good we do is not from ourselves, but from the Lord. This central truth enlivens everything we say and do. It is represented by the world teeming with new life, fish swimming in the sea, birds singing in trees, and eagles soaring through the sky. *And God saw that it was good.*

And then we come to **the sixth day** of our spiritual journey, the day on which God not only makes the animals but also human beings. And it is added that God makes human beings in His own image, “male and female He created them. Then God blessed them and said, ‘Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth

and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves on the earth’ . . . *and God saw that it was very good.*”

This morning’s focus is upon the sixth day, and especially on what it means to be made in the image of God. As it is written, “So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.” (*Genesis 1:27*) Up until this point everything that God made was good; but on this day it was *very good*.

Biblical commentators have come up with many ways of explaining why God might have declared this day to be “very good,” while all the others were simply

“good.” The most obvious explanation is that this was the day when God created the crown of His creation – human beings. Another explanation is that the creation of the world is like a painter working on a masterpiece. As he fills in each part of the canvas, he says to himself, “Oh, that’s good.” Finally, when it

What do the Writings of the New Church teach about the sixth day? Why is it so special that God would call it not just good, but very good? The answer lies in our understanding that this story is not about the literal creation of the physical world, but rather about the re-creation of the human spirit.

is all complete, he steps back, takes in the whole picture and says, “Oh, that’s very good.”

Others have conjectured that God was especially happy because this was the day that He was able to hand over all His work to man. Man was to have dominion over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, and over every living thing. God could finally take a break – and that was, for Him, very good!

But what do the Writings of the New Church teach about the sixth day? Why is it so special that God would call it not just good, but very good? The answer lies in our understanding that this story is not about the literal creation of the physical world, but rather

about the re-creation of the human spirit. All along, the story has been about the growth and development of a human being from the first glimmer of spiritual consciousness to fully awakened spirituality. Here’s how this process is described in the Writings:

The times and states of a person’s regeneration in general and in particular are divided into six, and are called the days of one’s creation. This is because a person, from being hardly human, gradually becomes fully human. In this way, little by little, a person attains to the sixth day, and becomes an image of God. (*Arcana Coelestia* 61)

In other passages, the Writings explain more fully what it means to become “an image of God.” The key is in understanding the words, “male and female He created them.” Spiritually understood the creation of “male” and “female” refers to the two potentialities that can make us fully human – our intellect (described as “male” in sacred symbolism) and our will (described as “female” in sacred symbolism). That which makes us human is this very maleness, our intellect, and this very femaleness, our will. Both of these capabilities – the will and the intellect – are present in each of us, ready to be developed.

A will that is truly human receives the good which is constantly flowing in from the Lord, and an intellect which is truly human receives the truth that is constantly flowing in from the Lord. It is only then that a marriage can take place in the human mind. This happens when the truth we have received

When God says, “Let **us** make man in **our** image,” He is speaking about the present moment. He is speaking about how He is working with the angels to give us a new spirit. . . . All of this is taking place in us *now* – to the extent that we cooperate with the Lord’s leading through the ministry of angels.

in the intellect is united with the will to live according to it. Whenever this happens, an internal marriage occurs. In the language of Sacred Scripture this miraculous moment is represented by the simple words, “Then God blessed them.”

It is noteworthy that this is the first blessing in the Word, and it is upon a marriage. Similarly, in the New Testament, the Lord’s first miracle is at a wedding. (*John* 2:1-11) He turns the water of natural life into the wine of spiritual life. In both cases, whether at a wedding in Cana, or in the story of creation, the Lord’s blessing upon marriage represents the miraculous way in which He brings about a spiritual marriage within each of us.

Once it is blessed, this internal marriage of will and intellect, goodness and truth, leads to new offspring. New life is generated, new thoughts and affections arise, new uses are imagined, and wonderful deeds are accomplished. No wonder this first blessing was immediately followed by the words, “be fruitful and multiply.”

As it is expressed in the Writings, “The most ancient people called the conjunction of intellect and will (or faith and love) a marriage.” Everything of good produced by that marriage they called “being fruitful – or fructifying,” and everything of truth, they called “multiplying.” (*Arcana Coelestia* 55)

Whenever this takes place in our mind – striving to unite the truth we have received in the intellect with the good we have received in our will – we will experience a great blessing. We will experience a greater influx of God’s glory and power, causing us to **be fruitful** in the good that we do and enabling us to **multiply** the truths that we understand. In that day, we shall surely exclaim, “It is very good!”

Let us return, then, to our initial question: What does it mean to be a human being? As we have seen, it means to make full use of our two most precious gifts: intellect and will. We could also say that it consists in using human reason (our intellect) and human freedom (our will) to make choices that are consistent with the Lord’s plan of creation. By doing so we gradually grow from being merely human to becoming truly human.

But there is more. Did you notice that the first time God spoke of making man He said, “Let **us** make man in **our** image, according to **our** likeness”?

How could this be? People often take this to mean that God was speaking with the angels before people were created, enlisting their support for this new project. The Writings of the New Church teach, however: “In all of heaven there is not a single angel who was created as such from the beginning. . . Rather, all angels in heaven are from the human race; they were people who, while on earth, lived in heavenly love and faith.” (*Heaven and Hell* 311)

So who was God speaking with? It could not have been with the angels, since they had not yet been created. Nor could it have been with the “Son” and

the “Holy Spirit,” for we know that God is One, and that there is no such thing as a trinity of persons. (*Lord 55*) In order to resolve this difficulty, it should be remembered that this story is not about physical creation – it’s about the regeneration or re-creation of the human spirit.

In other words, when God says, “Let **us** make man in **our** image,” He is speaking about the present moment. He is speaking about how He is working with the angels to give us a new spirit. As it is written in the prophets, “I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you.” (*Ezekiel 36:26*) “I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes.” (*Ibid. 36:27*)

All of this is taking place in us *now* – to the extent that we cooperate with the Lord’s leading through the ministry of angels. Slowly but surely the Lord is working through the angels to bring each of us into higher states of spiritual consciousness, saying: “Let *us* make man in *our* image.” Slowly but surely the Lord is helping us to identify all desires that are contrary to His will. Slowly but surely, the Lord is driving the cravings of our lower nature out of our hearts and minds so that new desires can arise. Slowly but surely, He is helping us to lose interest in satisfying selfish desires, while quietly encouraging us to develop a greater interest in the desires of the spirit. Slowly but surely, the Lord is helping us put off our animal nature so that we might put on a new nature that is truly human.

As we read in *True Christian Religion* 328: “So far as anyone indulges in the lusts of the flesh, he is a beast and a wild animal; but so far as he takes delight in the desires of the spirit, he is a human being and an angel.” This is what it means to become a human being.

In the deepest sense, though, when the Lord says, “Let us make man in our image,” He is not only speaking to the angels. He is also speaking to every one of us.

It is as if the Lord is saying to each of us, “You need to work with Me here. I want to give you everything that I have – all My love, all My wisdom, all My power for useful service. *All that I have is yours.* (See *Luke 15:31*) But you must receive it. You need to cooperate with Me if I am to make you into My image.”

It is as if the Lord is saying to each of us, “You need to work with Me here. I want to give you everything that I have – all My love, all My wisdom, all My power for useful service. *All that I have is yours.* But you must receive it. You need to cooperate with Me if I am to make you into My image.”

Develop your will, He says, by learning to love all people, even those who have hurt you and mistreated you. ***Make My will your own.*** Sharpen your intellect, He says, through studying My Word. ***Make My truth your own.*** Act as if you are doing all of this yourself, through your own power, He says, but believe that the power is from Me. ***Make My power your own.***

Trust in Me, He says, and do good, and I will put away all that is ignoble and unlovely in your heart. Instead, I will give you new desires, new thoughts, new dreams. I will give you the desires of your heart. (*Psalm 37:4*) I will make you a new person. Have I not said, “I make all things new”? (*Revelation 21.5*)

And then, looking directly into our eyes and into our heart, He says: “I will *operate* on your soul, and you can *cooperate* with Me by striving to keep My commandments. And then you will know what it means to be a human being.* And I guarantee that in the end it will be *very good.*”

So this week as we continue with the Journey Program our focus will be upon becoming more fully human, going forward with love in our hearts, and with a sure faith that the Lord is with us, leading us and blessing us, whispering: “Build your character upon the truths of My Word. Hear these sayings of Mine and do them. And then, when the rain descends, and the floods rise, and the winds of adversity assail you, you will stand firm, and in that day – the sixth day of your new creation – you will know with blessed assurance what it means to be truly human.” Amen

Lessons: *Genesis 1:24-31, Matthew 5:43-48, Arcana Coelestia 50:2, 3*

* I am indebted to Thomas A. King, author of *Allegories of Genesis* (1922), for this insight. King writes: “Here is the man of the world, absorbed in mere worldly things. He is in the human shape; he has attained to some degree of intellectual, moral and civil life; and God says to him: ‘I will operate upon your soul; you co-operate by keeping my commandments, and thus let us, I operating and you co-operating, make man – the spiritual man in you, who as he comes into power, will have dominion over all lower things, subduing and bringing them into order.’” Available at www.biblemeanings.info/Parables/King/Allegories_of_Genesis.htm



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Seeing Patterns

A Sermon for the New Year

The Rev. Eric H. Carswell

And Jehoshaphat said, "Is there not still a prophet of the LORD here, that we may inquire of Him?" So the king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, "There is still one man, Micaiah, the son of Imlah, by whom we may inquire of the LORD; but I hate him, because he does not prophesy good concerning me, but evil." (I Kings 22:7-8)

King Ahab is almost a comical figure, complaining about the bad news he always hears from a prophet of the Lord. The most amazing quality of his response is that he seems completely unaware of the fact that he is personally responsible for the evil prophecy that comes his way. Ahab noted that there was a clear pattern in what he heard, but it was not in his will to see that he could do anything about it.

Without patterns in life we could learn nothing. If there was no order to the world that our minds could recognize, we would be continuously overwhelmed with a clutter of sights, sounds, smells and senses of touch, and would be terribly limited in making any kind of choice. For example, what if sometimes the pews you're sitting in had no more strength than thin cardboard, or sometimes held you up as they do now? You would never know whether they were safe to sit on. What if sometimes your favorite kind of apple had its normal juicy flavor, but other times, without any change in appearance, it tasted wretched? Wouldn't you hesitate before biting into one?

In our relationships with other people the patterns aren't always as clear. We sometimes are greatly surprised by the responses that others give us when we say or do something. We can think we are making a perfectly innocuous comment only to have someone explode in anger at what we said. We can try to be helpful but instead only make a problem worse.

We just marked the end of one calendar year and the beginning of a new one. It is common for people to use this transition to reflect on what

has occurred in the past year. You can see reviews of the year in pictures and consider who has made particularly notable contributions. A person can also take stock of his or her own life over the past year and reflect on the patterns appearing within the events.

The Lord strongly encourages us to do this kind of reflection. Even if this time of the year may not seem opportune for such consideration, it is absolutely vital that we make time for recognizing the key patterns in our lives: patterns in what we care about and think about, patterns in what we say and do, and patterns in the results that our words and actions produce. If we don't see any patterns, we will not be learning much and will probably continue in habits that aren't good for ourselves, and aren't good for the people around us as well.

Ahab as a king represents the understanding part of our mind that directs the decisions we make and our perspective on what is most important. The Lord has given us the capability of freely reflecting on our spiritual and natural patterns of life. As stated in *Divine Providence* 278, we are given the capability of looking at these things because we have the possibility of higher and lower, or interior and exterior thought. From the higher or interior thought we can look at what is happening in the lower or more exterior plane of our minds. We can see that we are in good or bad moods, or that we are thinking more or less clearly than usual.

But by ourselves, all of this would not mean a tremendous amount because there are crucial patterns in life that natural observation does not give us. The prophet, Micaiah, whom Ahab viewed as a trouble-maker, represents truth from the Lord that must have its initial source in Divine revelation. Without Divine revelation there is much that we could not possibly know, as clearly stated in this passage from the Writings.

...without the Word no one would possess spiritual intelligence, which consists in having knowledge of a God, of heaven and hell, and of a life after death; nor would know anything whatever about the Lord, about faith in Him and love to Him, nor anything about redemption, by means of which nevertheless comes salvation. As the Lord also says to His disciples: "Without Me you can do nothing" (*John* 15:5); and to John: "A person can receive nothing except it be given him from heaven." (*John* 3:27) (*Doctrine of the Sacred Scripture* 114)

It is important for us to learn about the Lord and about what is true and good from the Word. But our knowledge is relatively useless unless we recognize how its description of what is real — and how the consequences of certain patterns of concern, thought, speech and action relate to our own lives. By ourselves we don't want to see these patterns in our own lives.

... from themselves people do not desire to understand anything but that which

comes from what is their own in their will, and also that it is not possible for them to do so unless there is some other source from which they may know it. From what is their own in their will people do not desire to understand anything except that which relates to themselves and to the world; everything above this is to them in thick darkness. (*Doctrine of the Sacred Scripture* 115)

Yet we have been clearly taught that above ourselves and the things of the natural world is a spiritual world that is actually more real and more lasting than this world. We have been clearly taught that our minds and spirits are constantly in the company of other spirits from that world. Without their presence we would have no thought, nor would we care about anything.

As we pursue our daily patterns of thought and action, we are strengthening ties to communities of those spirits. Our daily choices are spiritual investments in our eternal future. Some people are daily connecting themselves ever more clearly to communities of spirits which will guarantee that they will feel critical of others and be easily offended by even slight inconveniences that cross their path. Some are connecting themselves ever more clearly to communities of spirits that make it almost impossible for them to tell the truth to themselves and others; any troublesome event will be explained away or justified.

In major contrast, others are connecting themselves to communities who find their greatest delight in being of service to the people around them. Still others are connecting to communities who really care about understanding what is true because they know that this is the only way they will truly be able to follow the Lord. The single community in the next life, either in heaven or hell, that we connect ourselves to most closely by our daily choices will be the one in which we live to eternity after death.

How can we know what kind of communities we are connecting ourselves to? By reflecting on the patterns in our own lives from a knowledge of what is true.

People who reflect, or are able to reflect, upon the affections of good and truth in themselves, and also upon their delight and pleasure, will notice a strong inclination for [some affections] in preference to another; but without reflection these and the like things do not appear. (*Arcana Caelestia* 3980)

Ahab didn't want to see the patterns in his life that condemned some of his actions. He would prefer to listen to false prophets who promised wonderful things, but he could not escape the reality of the order that the Lord created. Whether he wanted to listen to it or not, the consequences of that order would influence his life.

Where will each of us find ourselves in the life after death? The Writings say that if we have a knowledge of how different good and evil loves correspond to different beautiful and ugly environments, then we can know what our lot

to eternity will be. This is described in the following passage from *Heaven and Hell*:

People who [have a knowledge of correspondences] can recognize and know their state after death provided they know their love and how it relates in its nature to the dominant love to which all love goes back.

However, people who are involved in self-love cannot know what their dominant love is because they love whatever is theirs and call their evils good. They also call false things true, the false notions that support them and that they use to rationalize their evils. If they were willing, though, they could still know [their dominant love] from other people who are wise, but these latter see what they themselves do not. This does not happen, though, in the case of people who are so enmeshed in their self-love that they have nothing but contempt for any teaching of the wise, and who see what they themselves do not see. This however, is impossible with those who are so enticed by the love of self that they spurn all teaching of the wise.

On the other hand, people who are in heavenly love do accept instruction and do see the evils into which they were born when they are led into them. They see them from truths because truths make evils obvious. Anyone can in fact see what is evil and the distortion it causes by seeing from the truth that arises from what is good; but no one can see what is good and true from an evil standpoint. This is because the false notions that arise from evil are darkness and correspond to it. So people who are caught up in false notions [concepts and prejudices], that arise from evil are like blind people who do not see things that are in the light, and they avoid them the way owls avoid daylight. (*Heaven and Hell* 487)

This quotation speaks about learning about oneself from people who are wise. Many of us talk with good friends, even a small group of them, who can help us get insight into what we have been thinking and doing. At times, all we need to do is try to explain our state of mind and how we react to the daily spiritual challenges we face. As soon as the vague and shadowy ideas in our thoughts get put in words, we often see them in a clearer light.

Whether we see things on our own or with the help of others, it is not enough just to acknowledge that we all have spiritual faults and flaws. This acknowledgment can be utterly worthless and is so described in the *True Christian Religion*:

Cannot anyone understand, from the reason given him, that the mere lip-confession of being a sinner is not repentance, or the recounting of various particulars in regard to it . . . ? For what is easier for a person when he is in trouble and agony, than to utter sighs and groans from his lungs and lips, and also to beat his breast and make himself guilty of all sins, and still not be conscious of any sin in himself? Do the diabolical horde who then occupy his loves, depart along with his sighs? Do they not rather hiss at those things, and remain in him as before, as in their own house? From this it is clear that such repentance is not what is meant in the Word; but repentance from evil works, as is said. (*True Christian Religion* 529)

Do you know what quality in your life you would most like to see improvement in over the next year? The Lord does not recommend that we take on too many issues at once. Nor does it work to take on a huge ill-defined issue such as, "I will be less selfish in the future." It is important that we focus on some specific situations in which we have seen a pattern of selfishness.

The Lord describes very clearly the steps we are to take if we are to improve spiritually:

The question therefore is: How ought a person to repent? And the reply is, Actually; that is to say, he must examine himself, recognize and acknowledge his sins, pray to the Lord, and begin a new life. Without examination repentance is not possible. But of what use is examination except that one may recognize his sins? And why should he recognize his sins, except that he may acknowledge that they are in him? And of what use are these three things, except that a person may confess his sins before the Lord, pray for help, and then begin a new life, which is the end sought? This is actual repentance. (*True Christian Religion* 530)

The Lord wants us to be truly happy. He wants us to have the joy of using the gifts and talents that He has given us to make the world around us a better place for others and for ourselves. He has given us His Word to help us learn what we must know if we are to make good decisions and follow Him ever more clearly in our lives. We need to learn from the Word and we need to use what we learn to reflect on the patterns in our concerns, thoughts, words and actions.

As we look to a new calendar year, may each of us commit ourselves to the personal work that will help this year be a better year for us and for all those who come in contact with us. Amen.

Lessons: *I Kings* 22:1-9, 15-18, *Divine Providence* 278



The Rev. Eric H. Carswell is pastor of the Bryn Athyn Church. He was ordained into the second degree in 1981. Throughout his career he has been pastor of the Glenview and Pittsburgh congregations 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 the Academy of the New Church and the

General Church Schools. He and his wife, Donna (Zeit), live in Huntingdon Valley, Pennsylvania.

Distinctiveness in the Academy Girls School: An Update

Susan O. Odhner

Principal, Academy of the New Church Girls School

I had the opportunity to write an article in the September-October 2012 *New Church Life – The Challenge of Making Conjugal Love Relevant in Today’s Classroom* – about what we are doing with the Gurian Institute and our *Conjugal Love* course for senior girls. Many good things are happening in both areas. We are moving forward and feel very blessed with what we have accomplished.

Gurian Institute

Two women from the Girls School faculty, Kira Schadeegg and Gail Cooper, attended the Gurian Institute Conference in Colorado in 2012, and became certified Gurian trainers. [The Gurian Institute studies differences in male and female brains and how teaching should be adapted to the distinctive learning styles of boys and girls.] This certification was an important condition for us to be designated as a Gurian model school, which allows us to train sister schools in our district.

The Executive Director from the Institute visited and observed our teachers a year ago. She got into every classroom to see if the teachers were using the Gurian strategies they had been taught. She was impressed and pleased with what we are doing.

We knew that while we had the Girls School deeply involved in this initiative, we needed the Boys School involved as well. In July of 2013, four men from the Boys School – Principal Jeremy Irwin, Kyle Genzlinger, Baird Kistner and Kevin Junge – attended the annual conference in Colorado, and three of them acquired certification.

We also received our Gurian Model School status in July, 2013. The



We know we have the theological teachings about the complementary nature of the sexes. Now we have the brain-based research to back up what we have always known.

Executive Director came back in October and presented our official plaque, which hangs in the Benade Hall foyer.

We are very, very proud of this certification. There are 2,000 Gurian Model Schools world-wide but only two in Philadelphia. One is the Academy of the New Church; the other is a Title One public school in West Philadelphia.

This, however, is not the end of the story. Now the work begins. This past August our two Girls School trainers spent a day with the faculty and staff at the Bryn Athyn Church School, providing professional development on Gurian techniques and strategies. It was a success.

Within several days our trainers had been asked to train faculty and staff for the Washington and Kempton New Church Schools. They came together for a day of training at the Academy, which was very well received. During this workshop we had both our Girls School and Boys School trainers involved, and it was truly wonderful to get both men's and women's perspectives on how boys and girls think and do things differently.

As the work begins in earnest, we need to get the word out that we are a Gurian model school and what that means. We are planning two events early in 2014. We will host an open house for consultants and Heads of Schools in our outlying community. We want them to see what we do, and how we do it. They will be observing classes, talking to administration, and getting first-hand proof that we are doing it right when it comes to single-sex education.

More than anything at this point, we need to get parents informed and

Last winter the Executive Director from the Gurian Institute visited and observed our teachers. She managed to get into every classroom to see if the teachers were using the Gurian strategies they had been taught. She was impressed and pleased with what we are doing.

involved. We are tentatively planning a parents' night, put on by our trainers, to inform and educate parents about how we are doing single-sex education. We will show them some of the strategies we are using, and more importantly teach them about the brain and why those small differences between girls and boys translate into big differences in how they learn. For those unable to attend this presentation, we will be filming it and posting it on our website – www.ancss.org.

While we need to educate parents, we also want our students to understand why we have changed things in the classroom. We need to show them the brain differences that are driving our classroom basics. The more people know about all this, the better informed we all will be.

Finally, we will be collecting and assessing the data to see if the Gurian strategies are making a difference for us. We have never been driven by data as a school, but we know we need this, and we

will find the tools to collect the data integral in making this initiative a success.

As a final note on this Gurian update I cannot say enough about the generosity of our donors. Without their support and ability to see the big picture, this never would have gotten off the ground. I am humbled by their involvement. We received a grant this year that enabled us to buy 100 high desks and 50 rocking chairs, which help our students get engaged and stay focused. Our classrooms are unconventional looking but the work is being done and our students are learning.

We know we have the theological teachings about the complementary nature of the sexes. Now we have the brain-based research to back up what we have always known and the way we teach our girls and boys.

Conjugal Love Study

We are still working on making *Conjugal Love* more relevant and hopeful for our girls. When we started this project we were looking specifically at the book. Over the last three years we have realized that this is a much bigger issue than just the needs of our senior girls. We want to keep in mind that we need to



We are in the business of helping to raise girls. Our desire is to help them grow into caring, compassionate, kind women, who are morally grounded and spiritually motivated.

help all girls, freshmen to seniors. Early in their high school career we should be laying the foundation for them so that when they become seniors they are ready to read *Conjugal Love* and hopefully find it relevant to their lives.

So far we have done quite a bit with our study. We have read *Conjugal Love*, as well as theses written by Kay Alden and Hilary Bryntesson for their Master's of Arts in Religious Studies (MARS) program. We have broken into groups and discussed *Conjugal Love* and these theses. We are working hard to focus on the most important aspects, boiling everything down to the basics.

Now we are reading *The Conjugal Culture*, written by Alaina Johns Mabaso.

This is a very important book, as it is written from the perspective of a former Girls School student. The book is honest and tough, and hopefully through reading it and with what we have learned, we can understand why some of our

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girls are disillusioned with what the New Church has to offer.

Once this is accomplished we will go back to *Conjugal Love* and the theses from Kay and Hilary. Our desire is to create a written work – keeping the Johns-Mabaso book in the back of our minds – that covers our goals:

- Weaving what we have learned into the curriculum
- Teaching and educating our faculty, both new and seasoned, what we need to teach all girls regarding *Conjugal Love*, having relationships, and the nature of their femininity
- On-going surveys; we need to know what is working and what isn't. These surveys would be administered one, five and 10 years out. We want what we are doing to make a difference. We need to know what works and what doesn't, and make changes where there is a need.

We in the Girls School are in the business of helping to raise girls. We want to help them grow into caring, compassionate, kind women, who are morally grounded and spiritually motivated. We want them to know early on that they can have a wonderful and fully working relationship with the Lord, and that He really is there for them. I believe we are on the right track, and that through this study and what comes out of it we can help our girls live lives that they can be proud of as fully functioning New Church women.



Sue Odhmer graduated from the Academy Girls School in 1973 and from Bryn Athyn College of the New Church – after raising her family – in 1995. She joined the Girls School faculty then, teaching history, English and The Formative Years. She has been Principal of the Girls School since 2007 and is working on her master's degree at Arcadia University. She and her husband, Greg, have four grown children and two grandchildren.

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A New Blog by the Rev. Frank S. Rose

Rev. Walter E. Orthwein

Landscape paintings by the Rev. Frank Rose are proudly displayed on the walls of many New Church homes, churches and schools. Now, having retired from the pulpit in Tucson, he has found a whole new career as a painter and photographer of flowers and trees in Arizona. He has also given a number of lectures on nature in Arizona. “It has really given me a lot of interest and satisfaction in my retirement,” he says.

Beautiful and interesting examples of Mr. Rose’s artwork may be viewed by visiting his new blog at: frankrose.com

The artwork is the fruit of careful observation while hiking in the mountains, canyons and deserts. Botanists in Arizona have found his records of the local plants to be unique and important scientifically, as well as artistically, and encouraged him to publish them. On his blog, the photographs and paintings are accompanied by scientific notes on the vegetation, as well as personal comments and warm human interest stories of meetings with fellow hikers and nature lovers.

“When we arrived in Tucson, 31 years ago,” Frank explains, “one of the things the small congregation did was to think of activities besides Sunday worship. We came up with a plan for church hikes, which we carried on, more or less once a week, for more than 20 years” – until many of the participants were forced to drop out for health reasons.

He explains in the preface to his first book, *Mountain Wildflowers of Southern Arizona*, that he originally set out to do watercolor paintings of all the flower species in the Catalina Mountains – the top of which is Mt. Lemmon, overlooking the city of Tucson.

“My wife and I have spent many vacations there. We hike in the morning, and then I do watercolors in the afternoon. One of the challenges of painting is deciding what to paint next, and that is when I decided to paint flowers.”

Later, Frank was invited to do watercolor paintings of the plants in the book, *Herbal Medicine of the American Southwest*, by Charlie Kane. He did

two paintings for each of the 100 species in the book, which took him a year.

Frank has gone on weekly plant walks with a group of fellow students of local plant life for about 13 years. After several years of painting, and then mostly photographing the plants, he decided to do a flower book – with the help of a botanical advisor – which was published by the Arizona Sonora Desert Museum in 2011. Then a book of Frank's photographs, *Mountain Trees of Southern Arizona*, was published last year.

“For a while I thought that I had published my last nature book, when Jim Verrier, a grass expert and one of my consultants for the first two books, approached me and asked if I would do a book about grasses with him.” This book should be ready for publication in 2015. Meanwhile, on his new blog, Frank will show his photographs and paintings, and tell his nature stories.

From Frank Rose's blog

– *On Stones and Grasses* – October, 27, 2013:



Natal Grass

One of my last finds turned out to be a grass introduced from South Africa, Natal grass (*Melinis repens*). This is one I have noticed for many years, since its pink and white flowering heads are so decorative and can be seen for several miles along the highway. One picture shows it all white. The close-up reveals the incredible beauty of the pink and white hairs and the little yellow flowers. Too bad it is an invasive plant. It is really quite lovely.”

Kenya Theological School Graduation

AUGUST 24, 2013

*Talks by the Rev. Dr. Andrew M. T. Dibb,
the Rev. Grant H. Odhner, Brother George Magero,
and the Rev. Samson Abuga*

**KEUGATA THEOLOGICAL SCHOOL
KISII, KENYA**

The Rev. Dr. Andrew M. T. Dibb

The graduation of four men from Keugata Theological School marks a significant point of progress in the development of the Church in Kenya. In 1993 I was asked to visit Kenya to investigate New Church activity there. I stayed for a week with the Rev. Patrick Magara, and on the final Sunday there, baptized 85 people. What I didn't know was that this would be the beginning of the New Church in that country. Among those baptized was a young man, Samson Abuga, and an older man, Nehemiah Gwonda.

At first the Church in Kenya developed slowly, and there were more than a few bumps in the road. We parted company from Mr. Magara after a while, and things looked like they might peter out. However, Samson remained steadfast, and it became evident that he and Khalid Obiri wanted to study for the ministry.

Working with the Rev. Geoffrey Childs and the Rev. Alfred Mbatha, we decided that the only way to train these two men was for them to go to South Africa for extended periods of six months or more for training. Their primary teacher in South Africa was Mr. Mbatha, who took them into his home and schooled them in the doctrines. However, all the ministers took their turn in teaching them, including Mr. Childs, and later the Revs. Christopher Smith and Chris Bown.

Their training took five or six years of visiting South Africa, but ended well

when they were ordained as ministers in the New Church in 2003 and sent back to Kenya to establish societies and plant the Church there.

After working to spread the Church in Nairobi for a few years, the Rev. Samson Abuga returned to his village, Etora, just outside Ogembo in Kisii. Over a period of time he established a congregation. A piece of land was purchased, and later a second adjoining piece, giving the church a sizeable lot with good main road frontage. On the land Samson built a church and classrooms for an elementary school. The number of children in the school grew, and the church thrived.

However, at the heart of Samson's plan for the Church in Kenya was a Theological School, which could train ministers locally. It is often very difficult for Kenyans to be granted visas to visit the United States – Samson himself has been consistently denied one – so a local school was the only solution.

During a visit to Kenya in 2010 we laid plans for the new Keugata Theological School, which would be under Mr. Abuga's direction in Kenya and my oversight from Bryn Athyn. Because most of the students were teachers, it was decided that we would hold classes in April and August, which would be taught by volunteers from the United States. This worked out for our school year in the United States as well. Two courses would be covered in each term, making it possible for the students to complete the entire program in three years.

We decided to use the standard curriculum of 12 courses that we use in distance training around the world. These are the most important courses taught at Bryn Athyn College Theological School, with the goal that all ministers trained for the ministry, anywhere in the world, will have done the same basic training and have covered the same doctrinal subjects.

Overall the program was successful. Although we started with more students than we finished with, those who stayed the course demonstrated commitment to the Church and a passion for the ministry. Since the graduation ceremony, three of the graduates have applied for and received recognition as candidates. The fourth student has been recognized as a lay leader.

At the moment there are no new students in Kenya, but I am confident that will not last for long. Once a reasonable pool of students develops there, we will begin the training process all over again. In the meantime, the New Church in Kenya is poised to grow and prosper under its very committed leadership.



The Rev. Dr. Andrew M. T. Dibb is Dean of the Bryn Athyn College Theological School and has served as a pastor in South Africa. He was ordained in 1984 and into the second degree in 1986. He and his wife, Cara (Glenn), live in Abington, Pennsylvania.

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GRADUATION DAY FOR THE FIRST CLASS FROM THE KEUGATA THEOLOGICAL SCHOOL, KENYA

The Rev. Grant H. Odhner

This summer I had the privilege of presiding at the graduation of the first group of students enrolled in the Keugata Theological School, hosted by the Etorā New Church in Kenya, under the leadership of the Rev. Samson Abuga. The graduates are: Fred Onsiro Ang'asa, Nehemiah Manyara Gwonda, Emanuel Wanjala Juma and George Omsu Magero.

This training and graduation mark historic steps for the New Church in East Africa. I wish I could convey how excited the graduates and Mr. Abuga were on the completion of this event.

These men took their education in the teachings of the New Church over a period of four years. This included visits from three tutors: the Rev. Louis Synnestvedt, the Rev. Dr. Andrew Dibb (who administered the instructional program), and myself.

Since a number of the students are teachers, these visits took place during school breaks in April and August. The sessions ran for two (sometimes three) weeks. Classes were held in the morning and ended with lunch. Lou visited three times, and stayed for longer periods. He also kept in contact with the students, and held some classes from a distance by Skype. Andy visited for one session, and held another via Skype. I visited twice. The graduation event capped off the last two-week session, which I taught.

The graduation ceremony took place on a Saturday, classes having finished the day before. Our two Kenyan congregations, Etorā and Kiagware, were invited. Transportation is very problematic, so adult attendance was not as abundant as it might have been – particularly from the Kiagware group, which is some distance from Etorā. There were perhaps 50 adults present, including graduates and staff. But with Etorā's 65 orphans on site, we had many children present. This was a joy!

The service was scheduled to take place at 10:30 a.m., but in Kenya things rarely (if ever) happen as scheduled. As noted, travelling is difficult and hardly anyone has a motorized vehicle. If they can afford it, people catch a Matatu (a taxi-van) or a Piki-piki (a motorcycle taxi). Picking up one of these may involve walking a long way to a main road. Many people simply walk – for miles! But this alone does not explain why things don't happen according to schedule. Fact is, people there are not governed by the clock; they come when they're ready to come.

So on the morning of the graduation, the adults arrived some time before the service began – about 11:30 or so. In the meantime, the orphans were hanging out outside of the church, where the ceremony would take place. This is the area where they play in their free time. They were having a good time.

In fact, because of the special event that was taking place, a generator had been fired up, and loud, spirited music was blasting the neighborhood. This is the custom in Africa: let everyone know that something good is happening!

A few groups of orphans were dancing – as only Africans can dance: body and soul! There was a bit of line dancing, with individual creativity. It was a real treat to watch.

Eventually the orphans were called into the church. (The church is a roofed structure with half-height walls, dirt floor and wooden benches.) There were a few adults at this point, but not many. Samson Abuga, the pastor, began to engage the children. I didn't understand what he was saying, but it was clear that he was having some fun with them.

At one point he was addressing individuals, getting some to say something to the group. There was laughter and merriment, perhaps some pleasant teasing going on. As it turns out, he was entertaining the children until more adults arrived, and the service could begin.

When all was ready, the service began. I gave a brief sermon, translated by Mr. Abuga. I spoke about the Lord challenging His disciples to feed the multitude, and how they were able to do so by identifying the few things that they could lay their hands on, and trusting in Him to multiply them to meet the need. (*John 6*)

The four graduates were called up to receive their certificates. I presented these with due pomp and ceremony, including handshakes from myself and Mr. Abuga. (Photos were taken at this point, which would not have been my choice, but that seemed to be the order of the day.)

When graduates were seated, a valedictory was given by head-student George Magero, who already serves as pastor of the Kiagware congregation as a candidate. Mr. Abuga responded to the valedictory with great passion. With a closing, the service was finished. (The valedictory and the response have been turned into English prose for this publication, capturing a bit of the spirit, perhaps, but undoubtedly not all of the content of the original speeches.)

But the day was not over. A feast was in the making. While it was receiving finishing touches, cases of soda were brought into the hall – Cola and Orange – a special treat! (I was delighted to see that every orphan received a bottle, and not just the adults, as often happens here.)

Within an hour following the feast I found Mr. Abuga and his graduates in his office, planning the future with renewed zeal. But enough talking! At my request, the gathering was mobilized for an outing. We traveled to the top of Sameta Hill, which rises just a mile or so to the east of Etorá. Most of the group walked; a very crowded van-load drove, arriving about the same time.

Sameta Hill is about 1,794 meters (5,886 feet) above sea level. It's only 130 meters or so higher than Etorá, nevertheless it has a spectacular 360-degree

view of the lush green hills of southeastern Kenya. The view includes some impressive peaks bordering Lake Victoria 40 miles to the west, and the hills of the Maasai region about the same distance to the south. It was a fitting way to cap an event that raised everyone's minds to another beautiful and hopeful view: the prospect of the spread of the New Church in East Africa.

(See photos on page 75.)



The Rev. Grant H. Odhner teaches Theology in the Bryn Athyn College Theological School. He is visiting pastor of the New York City Circle and chairs the General Church Publication Committee. He and his wife, Sarah (Bruell), live in Huntingdon Valley, Pennsylvania. *Grant.Odhner@brynathyn.edu*

STUDENT SPEECH AT THE GRADUATION OF THE FIRST CLASS FROM THE KEUGATA THEOLOGICAL SCHOOL

Brother George Omosu Magero

The Lord's coming is for forming a new heaven of those who have believed in Him. ... This Second Coming of the Lord is not in person but in the Word, which is from Him and is Himself. (*True Christian Religion* 773, 776)

The Theological School in Kenya opened its gates in 2009, when a group of 15 men began training for the New Church ministry. The Theological School's name is *Keugata* – which is a combination of three countries of East Africa: Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania.

The Theological School here is run from the directives of the Theological School in Bryn Athyn through its Dean, the Rev. Dr. Andrew M. T. Dibb. As the school progressed the enrollment dropped from the initial number of students due to personal reasons.

The Writings say that every man receives faith and charity “according to his form. Form here means the state of man as to love and wisdom together, and hence as to his affection for the good of charity and his perception of the truth of faith. ... God is one, indivisible, and the same from eternity to eternity; ... all variation arising from the subject in which He dwells.” (*Ibid.* 366)

The vision of beginning an on-going Theological School here started from conversations between brother Duncan Smith, brother Isaac Synnestvedt, and the Rev. Samson Mogusu Abuga in 2009 at the Etora New Church Society. Mr. Abuga has given leadership to instituting the training program and

administering the sessions. The theological training began with brother Louis Synnestvedt's visit to Kenya, followed by His Excellency Bishop Brian W. Keith, Rev. Dr. Andrew M. T. Dibb and Rev. Grant H. Odhner. Brother George Omosu Magero was elected the student leader of the Theological School.

Today, August 24, 2013, we have successfully marked four men who have finally completed their training courses, in spite of the many challenges they have undergone. We are very thankful to the General Church of the New Jerusalem, which has been very supportive of us, to the dedicated instructors who visited to offer courses, and to Mr. Abuga, who has hosted and administered all of the training sessions.

Also we take this golden opportunity to appreciate, congratulate and thank all our four students for their mutual participation. We look forward to the ongoing theological training of men who are moved to serve in the New Church ministry.

Thank you all for attending our graduation ceremony.

RESPONSE TO THE VALEDICTORY FOR THE FIRST GRADUATING CLASS FROM THE KEUGATA THEOLOGICAL SCHOOL, KENYA

The Rev. Samson Mogusu Abuga

Today is a great day for our Church in this region. Four of our students have finally made us and the whole Church proud. Today they are graduating from their theological training.

The Writings say:

[T]his Second Coming of the Lord is effected by means of a man, to whom He has manifested Himself in person, and whom He has filled with His spirit, to teach the doctrines of the New Church through the Word from Him. Since the Lord cannot manifest Himself in person, as shown just above, and nevertheless has foretold that He was to come and establish a new church, which is the New Jerusalem, 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. That the Lord manifested Himself before me, His servant, and sent me to this office, that He afterward opened the eyes of my spirit and thus introduced me into the spiritual world and granted me to see the heaven and the hells, and to talk with angels and spirits, and this now continuously for several years, I affirm in truth; as also that from the first day of that call I have not received anything whatever pertaining to the doctrines of that church from any angel, but from the Lord alone while I was reading the Word. (*True Christian Religion* 779)

The Lord revealed Himself from the Writings of His servant Emanuel

Swedenborg, which is His Second Coming on earth. Those of us who have received the Lord's call to serve Him in the New Church ministry have been manifested in Him. The Lord's presence is now upon you graduates as good servants who are going out to serve Him in His heavenly ministry of the New Church.

We are honored and humbled to thank the General Church Central Offices, the Dean of the Theological School of Bryn Athyn College of the New Church, all our responsible tutors, and the Keugata Theological School leadership for their mutual support to the success of this training.

We sincerely wish our four students good luck in their efforts and dedication, and in their services to the Lord's ministry. Let us forget the ups and downs that we experienced during your training period as we remain looking forward, and focus on the growth and fruitfulness of our Church.

It is our prayer to the Lord: "Grant, O Lord, that the truth of Your Word may be engraved in our hearts, and bear fruit to the salvation of our souls, and to the honor and glory of Your holy name, now and evermore. Amen."

What the Young People Are Saying

Rachel Buss

*Editor's note: This article originally appeared on
www.newchurchperspective.com and is reprinted with permission.*

For the past year I have been an intern with the General Church Office of Outreach. Last April we put on an Outreach Conference in Glenview, Illinois, with the focus of finding ways to reach out to the younger generation because so many young people today are just not interested in the Church.

Leading up to the conference I decided to do a survey of young people (between 18 and 35) who have some connection to the New Church. The survey got almost 300 responses that were enlightening, challenging, and showed how strongly young people feel about the Church, even if they are not coming to services. After reading the results multiple times there were five main themes that I picked out in the responses.

Mindset: I noticed in the responding comments that young people like the idea of new programs and different worship styles, but what they really want to change about the Church is the mindset of its members. What I mean by mindset is the way we think about the people in our Church and in the world, and the way we teach about the Writings.

One comment put it really well: “It is not the style of music or time of day that are keeping the Church’s current offerings from reaching today’s youth. It’s the doctrinal approach.” This does not mean change the Writings, but I think we can examine the way we are teaching them and the way we respond to the struggles and questions of the younger generation.

What I got from the survey was that young people want to be around other people who have a mindset of discussion and interaction with the truths, rather than one of teaching or of telling young people what the truth is. This is supported by David Kinnaman, President of the Barna Research Group, who wrote the book, *UnChristian: What a New Generation Really Thinks About Christianity – and Why it Matters*. In it he discusses the results from a huge

survey his group did of Christian young people.

He says: “Since [young people] are more likely to possess a nonlinear, fluid way of processing life, they are increasingly comfortable with subtlety, nuance, ambiguity and contradiction.” To me this speaks to the desire I noticed in the survey to have sincere, complex conversation about life, the doctrines, faith and all that good stuff.

Distance: The next topic mentioned by many young adults was that they live too far away from congregations to go to church regularly or be involved in activities. This is understandable in a small church, and hopefully as we grow that will change. But it is good to remember that there are people who are far away who would like to be included, and there are many ways we could reach out to them as a church. For example, send them the Church Newsletter or give them a call when there is a big event coming up.

I am always moved when Valentine’s Day comes around and many college students receive care packages from their home churches. Not every church does this but many do. I have seen my friends’ faces light up because they got a picture drawn by a third-grader back home, or a roll of quarters for laundry.

I also have been impressed by how many young adults have wanted to do online small groups, and how that offering has meant a lot to them. That kind of thoughtfulness can go a long way, and I think we could find other ways of giving the same feeling to young people.

Another factor that prevents young people from going to church or being involved is having new babies or young children. Many people mentioned this in the survey. I think it could be really useful to make sure we not only have Sunday School but also free babysitting at church events so that young couples are able to come.

For example, Lori Odhner has organized a Couple’s Night Out in the Bryn Athyn Church where parents get to have an evening away from their kids. Lori gets together a group of babysitters and then invites parents in the community to drop off their children for the evening, giving tired parents time to themselves.

Judgment: People in the Church being judgmental or discriminatory,

I noticed in the responding comments that young people like the idea of new programs and different worship styles, but what they really want to change about the Church is the mindset of its members.

especially about women in the ministry and homosexuality, came up often in the survey. This comment by one young adult represents what many others were saying: “I [would be] more likely to be involved in church activities if...women were equally involved in leadership and people of all sexual orientations, genders, races, etc., were welcomed as humans with beautiful variety and gifts to give.”

I am not going to talk about policy or theology; I want to focus on the *mindset* and the *way* General Church members talk about these topics. There were young people who took the survey and said they see the Church as

hating homosexuals, and as being sexist against women. From my experience, neither of these is true of what General Church people think, and certainly are not what the Writings teach. So what I think is so important to focus on is talking about homosexuals without contempt, and being clear that we do not condemn them to hell, and on being willing to listen to and participate in discussion about the sexes.

David Kinnaman got similar feedback in his survey and I appreciated the way he approached this issue: “Are we openly and honestly talking about sexual issues in our churches? Or are we hiding behind religious pretenses, pushing people away who have deep hurts and needs?”

If we can be open and talk about why we do or don't support these issues, that could go a long way toward having a community where we understand and respect each other.

Invitation: 75% of the survey takers said they would be energized about being involved in church activities. But many young adults also said they are rarely asked to be involved and that they don't feel that their ideas and personal experiences are being valued by the Church.

Some commenters felt they were only being asked to be involved “to fill a quota.” Young people said they really want to be personally invited to be part of an event or service because of talents they have. They want the inviter to care about them, and to want their perspective.

One young adult said: “I want to be welcome to bring some of myself to the activity and not just fill a dictated slot.”

A big part of young people leaving is that they do not feel necessary to the Church; the older people are more involved, wiser and wealthier, so there is

People in the Church being judgmental or discriminatory, especially about women in the ministry and homosexuality, came up often in the survey.

no need for them to stick around. Also, this generation does not want to be advertised to. Kinnaman points out why this is: “Today’s young people are the target of more advertising, media and marketing than any generation before. And their mindset is both incredibly savvy and unusually jaded.”

He adds that what young people really need and want is “to experience transparency in their leaders.” I think churches do not want to be part of the big bad world of marketing because realness is so important in a spiritual environment. So we need to be careful when inviting anyone, and especially

young people, that we are being personal, sincere and transparent. We could do more to seek out the younger generation as leaders and participants and show them that their perspective is very much needed in the Church.

Welcoming: The last thing is how we welcome people into the Church. More than 69% of the young adults who took this survey described New Church congregations as friendly, but there were also 36% who described them as exclusive, and 41% who described them as judgmental.

This paradox was summed up by a commenter: “I think that the congregations at times are super supportive, compassionate, friendly, etc., especially to people they know. But to someone just entering the Church, I think congregations can be overwhelming, exclusive and judgmental.”

This points to the need for congregation members to take it on themselves to be friendly and welcoming to newcomers.

Another person said: “Sometimes I think about this question: Is this the kind of church community I would want to welcome a new friend into? For example, if I were to meet my future spouse and be faced with introducing that person to my church congregation, do I feel that person would feel welcome? I think there is more I can do to create that kind of community. Young people have an especially important role in reaching out with open arms to create a welcoming atmosphere.”

I think another part of the need for being more welcoming is that young people want to know that people who have made mistakes, and really need the Lord’s love, are welcome at church; that we as General Church members would reach out to a person dealing with substance abuse, or that we would try to help someone who has broken his or her marriage with infidelity. Here again there needs to be a mindset that we are here to offer good and truth to the world, and not to be an exclusive community.

Another person said: “Sometimes I think about this question: Is this the kind of church community I would want to welcome a new friend into?”

I leave you with an appeal to listen to the voices of young people in your congregations, and especially to hear the emotion behind the words so that you can better understand where they are coming from.

These are the top five trends I noticed in the survey, and I have tried to represent as many of the responses as I can.

I want to leave you with one more thought: every time I read the survey results I am left feeling a little defensive. I really love the Church, so it is easy to feel that way when I hear someone talking about it negatively, or voicing an opinion that I see as uninformed, and my instinct is to jump in and correct that person. But through reading these results I was struck by the importance of *listening*.

On a human level, one of the best ways to make people feel safe and understood is just to *hear* what they have to say without attacking or defending. On an organizational level, it seems necessary to make some changes if we are going to grow, and a step in that process is to find out what

is in the hearts and minds of young people, even if it's hard to hear.

So I leave you with an appeal to listen to the voices of young people in your congregations, and especially to hear the emotion behind the words so that you can better understand where they are coming from.



Rachel Buss is a junior at Bryn Athyn College, majoring in Religion. She plans to get a master's degree in Psychology and become a counselor. She says she loves the New Church and cares deeply about getting young people involved. She has been interning in the Office of Outreach for a year and a half, and has worked with the Bryn Athyn Church to create opportunities for young people to get involved. She is a resident assistant in Glenn Hall, the dormitory for the Academy of the New Church Girls School.

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What is the Opportunity in Change?

The Rev. Charles E. (Chuck) Blair

How does one speak of change? How does one talk about it? Change is painful. It is much easier just to carry on as we have always done so. After all, the Church of our forefathers served many of us well.

The evidence is stark, not just for this General Church organization but for Christianity as a whole. Many congregations are aging, resources are contracting, engagement is flagging, and contributions are falling. The average congregation in the General Church is older, smaller, and facing an increasingly diminished financial future. This is not unique; the average age of an Anglican parishioner in the United States today is 62. Methodism, in terms of membership, has contracted for more than 10 straight years.

In a recent study, an outside group analyzing the demographics of the General Church noted that only 3% of the current membership is “new,” as measured by those who have been members for five or fewer years. With a 4% death rate, that 3% growth rate signifies 1% attrition per year.

A question: Is it time for us to engage candidly the painful truth that our Church as an organization finds itself in dire straits – in the same boat as much of organized religion? We can both engage the painful truth such questions bring to the fore, and at the same time maintain hope.

That hope centers around the fact that God’s will *is* creation. God’s will *is* change and growth and transformation, or to put it even more simply, resurrection and regeneration. As Swedenborg noted, “Maintenance *is* perpetual creation.”

We will, however, find ourselves unable to move either toward the necessary candor or the prayed-for hope unless we humbly put aside the fear-inducing divisions that move us into conflict and away from the critical collaboration that will point a way forward.

Many of us are tired of fear. Many tire of comments that unfortunately position those wanting change and advocating for it as somehow less New Church, less doctrinal, less religious. Those wanting change, it must be

assumed in a life-giving way, deeply love this church organization and carry an abiding hope for a brighter future, as much as those advocating more traditional approaches.

Imagine a church where:

1. We welcome and celebrate all voices, male and female, clergy and laity, young and old, liberal and conservative
2. The *modus operandi* is inspiring, engaged partnership
3. Service is lovingly rendered to outside communities, large and small
4. God is acknowledged as a life-giving presence shared among His full creation in His omniscience, omnipresence and omnipotence
5. His Word serves as the matrix for the Great Conversation

Imagine, in the end, a Church where we are no longer afraid.

We can choose to live in that re-imagined future. A simple story from this past September paints the picture. A group in our congregation became interested in creating a Fall Country Fair. They expanded the team to include the Academy of the New Church, Bryn Athyn College, and other local groups, such as the Bryn Athyn Church, a local Boy Scout Troup, numerous vendors, and even a local Irish Dance Team. (See photos of the dance team on page 78.)

What resulted was an event that drew more than 1,500 people on a beautiful fall afternoon.

With that openness to each other and to change, what did we discover? A lot of opportunity!



The Rev. Chuck Blair taught in public school in Pennsylvania and in the Boys School of the Academy of the New Church, where he was also the Housemaster of the boys dormitory, before entering the General Church ministry. He was ordained in 2006 and into the second degree in 2007. He is the Pastor of NewChurch LIVE and Chaplain of the Cairnwood Estate. He and his wife, Keene (Smith), live in Bryn Athyn with their four children.

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Stepping Up as Leading Men

The Rev. Mark B. Allais

Leading Men: Providing the opportunity for the men of our congregation to develop spiritually, grow personally and serve others while having fun.

The idea behind the Leading Men group came from an active member of our congregation. Over the years of coming to the New Church Buccleuch, Mark Langridge noticed that there were plenty of women who attended church with their children, but the men were not as regular or didn't attend at all.

The idea sprang out of an on-going discussion that we as a congregation have had for the last year and a half on how we can grow. Growth in numbers, yes, but more importantly growing in getting people actively involved in the life of our church, and growing in their spiritual walk with the Lord. After hearing the discussions about growing the church, Mark approached me with a suggestion: "Let's start a men's group."

We chatted about this new idea and decided to give it a try. In April we called all men together after church to test the waters. We had a very good response and interest in a men's group. We launched Leading Men later that month with the purpose of providing the opportunity for the men of our congregation to develop spiritually, grow personally, and serve others while having fun.

The name Leading Men can be taken in two ways – both of which we hope to support as a group. The first way of interpreting Leading Men is from the Lord's perspective. We want to learn from the Lord and be led by His Word in our lives, but also acknowledge that men are leading other men. The second interpretation is from the perspective of what we as a men's group can do and give to others.

It is our responsibility as men to lead our families to church, to the Word, and ultimately to the Lord. It is our responsibility as men to lead the next generation of young men by example, through being role models in the life of the church and leading through service.

Leading Men meets once a month. Our meetings are very casual, with time to catch up on what's happening. There is either a topic for discussion or one of the men gives a presentation of something of interest and benefit to

others, such as saving for retirement, communication skills, etc. In November we launched our Bible study component, following a topic through the Lord's Word, with some insight from the teachings for the New Church to guide our understanding.

Probably the most important aspect of Leading Men is for us to be active and visible in the life of the Church. Leading Men handed out flowers to all the ladies for Mother's Day, raised money for a water conservation project, and then through a number of work parties made the necessary reservoir repairs, installed the tank, pipes, pump, etc., and then handed out bottled water to the congregation as a show of thanks for support of the water project.

As Leading Men we enjoy getting involved in social functions and supporting the congregation through the all-important task of South African outdoor culture – cooking the meat.

We are still in the beginning stages of running this group, trying new things, seeing what works and what doesn't. It requires effort to get something new off the ground, but thanks to the dedicated core group of men who are leading the way, we look forward to getting more and more men involved who are *developing spiritually, growing personally and serving others – while having fun.*

(See photos on page 75.)



The Rev. Mark B. Allais is the pastor of the New Church Buccleuch in Johannesburg, South Africa, where he has served since 2010. He was ordained in 2009 and into the second degree in 2010. He and his wife, Karen (Mortlock), live in Buccleuch with their three daughters.

pastor@thenewchurch.co.za

The Inspiration of the Navy SEALs

Bonnie G. Frazier

We've heard a lot, lately, about the Navy SEALs, and many of us admire their skill, their bravery, and their dedication to service. In the recent past I've had the opportunity to spend a little time, socially, with some of these fine young men, and the experience has caused me to reflect on another, surprising, quality they seem to share.

They have about them a sphere of peace. At one level they're what you would expect – proud, fun-loving and indeed a little boisterous, but, beyond that, they exhibit a gentle peace that is hard to reconcile with what they have seen and what they have done. They are warriors, but they are neither hard nor rough. Instead they exude a sweet innocence that, I believe, is born of an unswerving obedience to something higher than themselves.

The Navy SEALs have a written code of conduct that they all subscribe to absolutely, some of which I quote below.

“My loyalty to Country and Team is beyond reproach. I humbly serve as a guardian to my fellow Americans, always ready to defend those who are unable to defend themselves. Brave men have fought and died building the proud tradition and feared reputation that I am bound to uphold. In the worst of conditions the legacy of my teammates steadies my resolve and silently guides my every deed. I will not fail.”

Having put obedience to this ethos above self-interest, they go forth to do what they must do.

Imagine what our lives would be like if we would commit to that kind of obedience to the Word of the Lord.

Women in the Clergy: A Response

Al Lindsay

The issue of women in the clergy is one of great moment for the General Church. This is due to the apparent dearth of applicants to our Theological School and the apparent enthusiasm for many women to enter the priesthood.

I think we have believed for some time that there has been a figurative sign at the entrance to the Theological School of the General Church which states: “No women need apply.” This issue has been brought into sharper focus by a paper published in your September/October 2013 issue, *Gender and the Priesthood*, by the Rev. N. Bruce Rogers. This paper appears to be an apology for the position which has apparently been taken by the clergy on this point. I am afraid I found it disappointing – no, disturbing.

Mr. Rogers commences his paper by stating that the New Christian Church is founded on the Heavenly Doctrines given through Emanuel Swedenborg and, as such, the Church is not free to alter, amend or change these doctrines. They are “immutable.” Thus, the issue of gender in the priesthood cannot be regarded as a cultural issue but rather a doctrinal issue. With this in mind, we would assume that we would be presented with a very clear statement from the Writings that women do not belong in the clergy.

The notion that any male, regardless of how mediocre in this particular endeavor, is superior to any female, regardless of how brilliant, is so counterintuitive that if we are to accept the position of the clergy, we must look for a very clear and convincing statement in the Writings: “No ladies allowed in the pulpit.” One could only assume that Mr. Rogers, a renowned scholar of the doctrines, would produce that clear and convincing point.

None was forthcoming in his paper.

It is apparent, from the paper, that while the Writings have much to say about the role of the male and the female in marriage, they give us precious little guidance when it comes to whether women should be priests.

While at the outset of his paper, Mr. Rogers states that gender in the priesthood cannot be regarded as a cultural issue, but rather a doctrinal issue,

he then paradoxically dives into the various cultural shifts which have occurred in the last 40 years to evaluate the desire of women to be priests. It appears his point is that the heart of the cultural revolution was a rejection of authority which, apparently, has manifested itself in destruction and hedonism.

What does this have to do with the question of women in the ministry? He argues that as a result of the cultural revolution, in our now “politically correct” culture, there remains an echo of the earlier rejection of authority. Perhaps it is “the legacy of the flower children and their radical allies.”

While I admit that the cultural revolution of the last 40 years has resulted in a rejection of authority, this has not all been negative, as suggested by Mr. Rogers. What I saw in the 1960s and ‘70s was the rejection of authority for authority’s own sake. I note that in summarizing it, he fails to discuss the most significant aspect of that revolution, the Civil Rights movement. The most heinous aspect of discrimination by race in this country was that it was sanctioned by the government, its institutions and its laws – our authority.

Mr. Rogers makes sweeping generalizations about men and women, both according to what the doctrines state and what he perceives is our culture. There is, of course, nothing unusual about dividing the human race into classifications or classes and then assigning certain self-perceived attributes to those classes. We separate the human race into classes based on such things as gender, age, nationality, education and financial resources. Indeed, we separate persons concerning whether they take global warming seriously or not.

Assigning attributes to these classes, based on our self-perceived experiences and knowledge, is a short-hand way to avoid seriously analyzing a particular member of that class’s abilities and character. Of course, some of these attributes have merit. I can state with some authority that men are not worth much when it comes to having babies or nursing them. But beyond that, our opinions about these classifications have little validity. When we use the broad-sweeping conclusions about a particular class, and then determine whether a particular member of that class, based on these conclusions, can perform a function, the whole process becomes very sticky.

When we make decisions about the abilities of a particular class to perform a particular function, such as women in the clergy, we are failing to take into account a number of significant factors. First of all, we are natural men and our intellects are limited to that extent. We are fallible. For this reason we should tread very carefully on an issue as significant as to whether approximately half of the human race should be barred from a particular vocation.

Making decisions based on our general views of the attributes of a class, also fails to take into account the infinite variety of attributes of members within that class. Our Lord has made us very different, one from another, down to the very cells in our body. Indeed it is this infinite variety which makes our

relationship with other human beings so exquisitely delightful.

Furthermore, we must make a very careful analysis of the task at hand of what it means to be a pastor, a minister or a member of the clergy. What exactly do we expect from our priests in the context of a New Church society at this time? One cannot help but conclude from this paper that the only function of the clergy is to provide “the official teaching of the Doctrine of Truths” of the Church. I think most of us expect a lot more. We are looking for ministers, leaders of the laity, and indeed, administrators. Can women, along with providing “the official teaching of the Doctrine of Truths,” handle these functions? I think so.

Finally, we must acknowledge that we cannot predict the future. When we state what the future of the Church will be – to what extent, for example, it will grow, with or without women on the clergy – we are just as likely to be wrong as right, no matter how smart we think we are.

Of all the generalizations made by Mr. Rogers, the most disturbing is about the motivation of these women. Of course, as a natural man, I am not able to ascertain their motivations with precision. Maybe, however, these women are motivated with a deep burning love for the doctrines of the Church, the Word of the Lord. Maybe, just maybe, they have a burning desire to spread the Good News to the rest of the world.

At the outset, I framed the issue of women in the clergy as to whether any woman, regardless of how brilliant, and, indeed, how motivated, is inferior to any man, regardless of how mediocre. But this really misses the point, doesn't it? The real issue is whether any woman, regardless of how brilliant and motivated, is inferior to no priest at all.

You see, I am a member of a New Church society where regular worship services are held, which has a church building, fully paid for, a manse, fully paid for, and which has been financially self-sufficient for several years. Yet, we have no pastor. Why? We have been informed by the church leadership that there is simply none available. Furthermore, there are no male candidates entering the Theological School.

Mr. Rogers concludes his paper by stating that to the degree that the Church adopts the ideas and mores of the popular culture in opposition to its doctrines, it gradually ceases to be a church in fact and becomes just another secular institution. And, he goes on, little by little, through generations, the Church becomes no longer what it once was, but something manufactured out of the minds of men.

The suggestion, of course, is that admitting women to the clergy would be in opposition to the Church doctrines, a point which has not been shown, and that it would be merely yielding to the ideas and mores of the popular culture of our time. This broad statement is made, without any examination

of whether the exclusion of women from the priesthood was not a product of doctrine but merely adopted from the mores and culture of another time, a time when women were routinely excluded from many professions.

There is a certain irony in Mr. Rogers' reference to the Scribes and Pharisees of the Jewish church, whose leaders began teaching as doctrines the commandments of men. In *Heaven and Hell* 365 Swedenborg explains what is meant by the rich and the poor in the New Testament. That is, he explains who is meant by the rich of whom the Lord said, "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the Kingdom of God." (*Matthew* 19:24)

In the spiritual meaning of the Word, "the rich" means people who are amply supplied with understandings of what is true and good, that is, people in the church where the Word is. "The poor" means people who lack these understandings but who long for them, or people outside the church, where the Word is not found.

The rich person dressed in purple and fine linen who was cast into hell, means the Jewish nation. Because they had the Word and were therefore amply supplied with understandings of what is good and true, they are called "rich." The garments of purple actually mean understandings of what is good, and the fine linen means understandings of what is true. The poor person who was lying in the gateway and who longed to feast on the crumbs that were falling from the rich person's table, who was carried up into heaven by angels, means the non-Jews who did not have understandings of what is good and true but who still longed for them. (*Luke* 16:19, 31)

I find missing in Mr. Rogers' paper any sense of urgency in spreading the doctrines of our Church.

When I speak of urgency, perhaps some of these women who we, without solid doctrinal foundation, exclude from the clergy, will be instrumental in sharing some of the crumbs which are falling from our table with those poor persons who long to feast on them. We can't claim to have doctrines which are vital to the spiritual welfare of all mankind, and yet be indifferent to whether all mankind knows of their existence.

In closing, I must confess that I wonder where the clergy in our Church places some of the towering female intellects in the history of our Church, such as Hester Barclay, Helen Keller, Lydia Child and Anita Dole.

Hester Barclay was the first convert to the New Church in the Western Hemisphere. A ward of Francis Bailey, a Philadelphia printer, she attended a lecture on Swedenborg's Writings by James Glen in 1784 and was smitten. She led a New Church reading circle in Philadelphia and in Bedford, Pennsylvania, where she later settled. She was instrumental in the conversion of John Young, an early prominent judge in Westmoreland County, Pennsylvania, to the New Church. Judge John Young introduced John Chapman ("Johnny Appleseed"), our most significant missionary, to the Writings and supplied him with books

to distribute in the Ohio Territory.

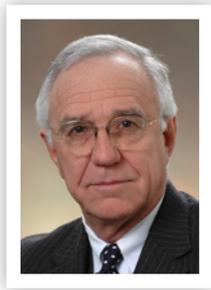
So convinced was Hester Barclay of the efficacy of the Writings, and their potential broad-based appeal at that time, she assumed that our dating system would be based on the Second Coming of Jesus Christ, as it was for the First Advent. Therefore, her tombstone, in Bedford, Pennsylvania, reads: “Here lies the body of Hester Barclay, Who changed her mode of existence, Early in the morning on the first day of the week, February 28, 1796-40” – marking the Second Coming from 1756.

Hester’s fellow traveler, Judge John Young, was instrumental in founding a New Church congregation on the North Side of Pittsburgh in Allegheny City. Because that New Church congregation existed, several Swedenborgian families from Scotland immigrated to Pittsburgh. These families included the Carnegie family and the Morrison sisters: Annie Aitken, Katherine Hogan and Margaret Carnegie. Katherine Hogan shared *True Christian Religion* with Alexander Pitcairn, who shared it with his brothers Robert and John Sr. John, his wife and seven children, were all baptized by the Rev. David Powell soon after their discovery of the New Church in Allegheny City.

If there were no Hester Barclay to share the teachings of the New Church so eagerly, there may never have been a General Church, a Bryn Athyn Cathedral, and an Academy – or the publication of *New Church Life*.

When I go to Church, I am not seeking a scholarly dissertation on some very fine doctrinal point which will challenge my intellect. Like the two travelers on the road to Emmaus who encountered the Lord after He had risen, when the Scriptures are opened to me, I want my heart to burn.

To those who cannot fathom hearing a woman speak to them about the Scriptures, I ask, have you heard any of the women in question speak recently? If not, I highly recommend it. It may change your opinion. It sure changed mine.



Al Lindsay is a lawyer in Sarver, Pennsylvania, where he lives with his wife, Trish (Waddell). He is a member of the Sower’s Chapel, the New Church congregation in adjacent Freeport, and has been a member of the General Church Board of Directors.

What is the Future of Theta Alpha International?

A Proposal

Dear Members of Theta Alpha:

Theta Alpha has been in existence since 1904 – nearly 110 years! This is a wonderful achievement of which we can be proud. During this time it has flourished, supporting New Church education both in the Academy and around the world in many forms and uses.

At our October 2013 annual meeting on Charter Day, attended by approximately 140 members, concerns for the future of the organization were presented. This letter is to inform you of these concerns and of the proposal for Theta Alpha's future. Among the concerns are:

- The sharp decline in membership
- The increasing age of members
- The lack of a president, vice president, *Journal* editor, and three members at-large, and our inability to find women to fill these key leadership positions
- The number of women who are working today, with no time to volunteer to serve on committees
- Former major uses of Theta Alpha (for example, the religion lessons that were sent out to isolated members) have been taken over by other New Church organizations
- The major changes in technology/communication that enable women to connect around the world through social networking
- The ability of families to access and download instantly, through New Church Vineyard, wonderful sermons, children's talks and projects to educate themselves and their children in the doctrines of the Church

We believe women still strongly support the idea of New Church education, the principal use of Theta Alpha International, but life has changed

and we need to move forward. So, it is with great sadness that the Executive Committee feels the need to present this to you. We would like you to know that we have been searching for more than a year for solutions to prevent Theta Alpha from closing down, but the fact is we can't continue much longer under the present conditions.

Therefore we put before the membership the following proposal:

“We will continue with the current uses of Theta Alpha International for 2013-14 until the Charter Day meeting in October 2014, at which time we will either: a) present proposed changes for going forward, or b) present a proposal to dissolve the organization.”

The final proposal would be voted on by attendees at the meeting. Notice of the proposal will be circulated three months prior to the meeting, as stipulated in the bylaws.

Thanking you for your support,
Theta Alpha Executive Committee

Church News

Compiled by Bruce Henderson

BRYN ATHYN COLLEGE PRESIDENTIAL SEARCH

The following committee has been formed to search for the next President of Bryn Athyn College of the New Church. This person will succeed **Dr. Kristin King**, who will be stepping down at the end of June, 2014:

Dr. Phil Feerrar – Academy Board member

Susan B. McGrath – Academy Board member

Lael Odhner – Academy Board member

Jill Brickman – Academy Corporation member and previous Board Vice Chair

George Cooper – Academy Corporation member; previous Board member and Secretary

Dr. Martha Gyllenhaal – College Faculty representative

Dr. Dan Synnestvedt – College Faculty representative

Jim Adams – Managing Director of the Secondary Schools; non-voting

Charlie Cole – Academy Board Vice Chair; *ex officio* member

Rt. Rev. Brian W. Keith – Academy Chancellor and Chair of the Committee

Any counsel will be gratefully received. Please contact anyone on the committee, or Bishop Keith's office (Brian.Keith@newchurch.org).

THE LIFE OF THE COLLEGE

Within a December 2013 letter to alumni, Bryn Athyn College President **Dr. Kristin King** said:

“Spiritual inquiry and practice infuse a Bryn Athyn College education with meaning. Students vigorously explore outreach and service learning. Intellectual and campus life remain anchored in New Church teachings and values, devoted to intellectual inquiry and freedom. In higher education, at

its best, enrichment and advancement come when multiple perspectives are brought into respectful and mutually enlightening dialogue. This fostering of intellectual dialogue and cultural appreciation has been important throughout history. It takes on new importance, however, in a world where political and cultural strife so pervasively undermine stability and values.

“At the College this year, students from 18 states and 12 nations, and from many backgrounds, economic classes, races and religions are studying the Word, applying it to their fields of study and lives, and engaging with faculty and one another on the big questions about meaning and purpose. They are learning, questioning, doubting, striving, recommitting and becoming transformed. It’s called New Church higher education. It demands best efforts and better selves, and it makes lasting truths relevant in a changing world. Our students are moving through our halls and out into the world with profound experiences and teachings, and the helpful chiseling down of ego that allows each of us to discover a hidden and more human form. As we become more fully human individuals, we are better able to fill our role in the grand human and the eternal scheme.

“When our students graduate they carry with them powerful experiences and the conviction that *how* they live matters; that they are born to develop their unique talents, minds and loves; and that working with others to build the Greater Good *is* the New Jerusalem descending.”

ANC SECONDARY SCHOOLS EARN ACCREDITATION

Jim Adams, Managing Director, Academy Secondary Schools

At the Middle States Association meeting on October 3, 2013, its commission voted to award the Academy Secondary Schools re-accreditation, effective December 1, 2013 to December 1, 2020.

We had a very successful visit with the MSA Accreditation Team, which was on our campus April 8-13 to evaluate the schools. Here are some highlights from their visit:

- The team clearly recognized the “family atmosphere” in our school.
- They found that the atmosphere and day-to-day operations occur in an environment that promotes mutual respect and dedication to the academic and extra-curricular life of the schools.
- Our teachers were recognized as true professionals and role models for our students.
- The team was genuinely impressed by the friendly nature and demeanor of our students. “All students look you in the eye, shake your hand, and they are well-mannered, mature and confident.”
- It was clear to them that our students recognize and appreciate that

their teachers truly care about them.

- Also, that our students see their teachers as mentors, father/mother figures and living role models for all that ANCSS stands for.
- They remarked that it is evident we are preparing our students for a principled and useful life in this world and the next.
- They acknowledged that the administrative structure is working well.
- The team stated that we have superb, well-maintained buildings and grounds.

They were impressed with how we integrate religion into every class and how our students not only learn about but apply and live our religion on a daily basis.

They acknowledged that the time our coaches, teachers and staff spend with our students outside of class is priceless.

The team unanimously recommended re-accreditation to the Middle States Commission.

The accreditation process for the schools was chaired by faculty member **Erik Odhner** (Boys School Class of 1974).

I want to acknowledge all of the work that Erik, Principals **Jeremy Irwin** and **Sue Odhner**, faculty, staff and students did to prepare for this visit and for the outstanding outcome.

We are very fortunate to have all of our wonderful faculty and staff providing an excellent New Church education for our students.

Girls School Repeats as Field Hockey Champs

The Academy of the New Church Girls School field hockey team won the Friends School League championship for the second consecutive year, beating Germantown Friends School 1-0.

In the November 1 showdown, ANC dominated in the second half, with more possession time and more shots on goal than GFS. Finally, about halfway through, sophomore midfielder **Kyla Rogers** – not once, but twice – rebounded her own shot and confidently scored the only goal of the game.

With GFS down, ANC kept possession, stayed fearless and unified, and used every player to win the match.

Junior goal keeper **Heather Schauder** recorded another shutout in her first championship game. Seniors **Samantha Elsing**, **Myrta Asplundh** and **Cheyenne Asplundh** were very proud to close out their ANC careers with back-to-back championships – the first for a girls sport in the league. (See a photo of the happy championship team, page 78.)

PASTORAL MOVES IN AFRICA

Rt. Rev. Brian W. Keith

- **The Rev. Edward Akotey** has become the first resident pastor for the Nteso congregation in Ghana.
- **The Rev. Jake Maseko** has retired from the active ministry. The Diepkloof Society, near Johannesburg, South Africa, is being served by theological school students studying for the priesthood.
- **The Rev. Alfred Mbatha** has retired from the active ministry. He was pastor of the Impaphala Society, north of Durban, South Africa.
- **The Rev. Phila Xaba** has been called as pastor of the Impaphala Society. The Alexandra Society, near Johannesburg where Phila was pastor, is being served by theological school students.
- **The Rev. Malcolm Smith** has been called as pastor of the Westville Society in Durban, South Africa. He will assume this office July 1, 2014.
- **The Rev. Coleman Glenn** has been called as associate pastor to the Westville Society. He will assume this office July 1, 2014. The Dawson Creek Society, where Coleman has been serving, is working with the General Church in Canada and the Bishop's Office about future services.

A NEW TRANSLATION

After a hiatus of 11 years, the fourth volume of *Spiritual Experiences* (paragraphs 4545 to 6110½) has been completed by the **Rev. Kurt Nemitz**. This completes the mammoth work, begun by the **Rev. J. Durban Odhner**, of producing a fresh edition of the Latin manuscript and translating it into English.

This new edition includes material written by Swedenborg that was not in the previous edition – material which he had included in his own index to his spiritual experiences. Mr. Odhner was called to the spiritual world before he could finish the translation, and Mr. Nemitz was called on to finish the work.

This is an exciting new edition of Swedenborg's personal journal. It was titled *The Spiritual Diary* by its first translators, with good reason. But its newly discovered name, *Spiritual Experiences* – Swedenborg's name for it – is a perfect description of its contents. It is a goldmine of experiences of the amazing world of the human spirit.

This book is an unending resource for spiritual psychologists and anyone who wishes to understand more intimately the workings of the human mind – both good and evil – and of the spiritual world. And it gives advanced students of Swedenborg's published theological writings a rare look behind the scenes



The magnificent view from Semeta Hill to the east of Etoro in Kenya



The group gathered on Semeta Hill, Kenya



The Kenya Theological School graduates, left to right: The Revs. Fred O. Ang'asa, Nehemiah M. Gwonda, Emanuel W. Juma and George O. Magero

LEADING MEN



The “Leading Men” at the New Church Buccleuch, involved in what Pastor Mark Allais describes as “the all-important task of South African outdoor culture – cooking the meat.” (See his report on page 61)

GLENCAIRN MUSEUM: ENRICHING THE ACADEMY'S MISSION
 ~ EMBRACING THE CHALLENGE TO EXTEND ITS REACH

These photographs helped to illustrate Brian Henderson's Charter Day banquet address on the Glencairn Museum and its role with the Academy's mission. (Page 21)



Brian Henderson standing in front of Bishop Benade's former home at 110 Friedlander Street in Philadelphia, which housed the first museum collection for the Academy.



God depicted as the supreme feudal lord in stained glass



A temptation of Christ relief, with Jesus being tempted by the devil



A Last Judgment fresco depicting an angry god, with souls being protected by Mary



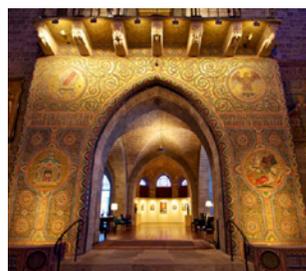
Activities at Glencairn Museum



The Great Hall of Glencairn from above, looking down on the sand mandala (Photo by Ed Gyllenhaal)



Sophisticated outreach includes Facebook, Twitter and Tumblr



The arch in the Great Hall



Members of a local Irish dance team who performed at the Country Fair in Bryn Athyn in September. The Fair was jointly sponsored by NewChurch LIVE, Bryn Athyn College, Bryn Athyn Church and a local Boy Scout troop.



This is the painting of a familiar Maine scene done by art teacher Keith Gruber to hang in the Academy Girls School in loving memory of Melina (Lindy) Nemitz.



The Academy Girls School field hockey team celebrates its second consecutive league championship.



Becca Uber and Dustin Synnestvedt are part of a group of Bryn Athyn College students who helped create stained glass angel panels for the town of Newtown, Connecticut, in memory of the tragic shooting of students and staff at Sandy Hook elementary school in December 2012.

at some of his source materials and experiences.

It is available from the Bryn Athyn Church Cathedral Bookstore, www.newchurchbooks.com, and from www.amazon.com.

SWEDENBORG FOUNDATION: THREE NEW BOOKS

The Swedenborg Foundation has three new books available:

- *Our Life After Death: A Firsthand Account from 18th Century Scientist and Seer Emanuel Swedenborg* translated by the **Rev. Dr. George F. Dole**, with an Introduction by **Kenneth Ring**
- *Emanuel Swedenborg – Exploring a “World Memory”*: Context, Content, Contribution, edited by **Karl Grandin**
- *The Lives of Angels* – Translated by the **Rev. Dr. George F. Dole** and **Lisa Hyatt Cooper**, with an Introduction by the **Rev. Grant R. Schnarr**

Our Life After Death: A Firsthand Account from 18th Century Scientist and Seer Emanuel Swedenborg

A press release from the Foundation says *Our Life After Death* “describes the process of crossing into the afterlife.” It is a collection of passages from *Heaven and Hell* that follows “the soul’s journey from the moment of death through the stages of self-discovery in the world of spirits.”

Swedenborg is quoted as saying “that it is not God who judges or sentences souls to heaven or hell, but that it is we who judge ourselves.” The press release notes that “in this book Swedenborg reveals the process by which we confront who we were on earth, discover our true selves, and through that knowledge find our eternal homes in the afterlife.”

The book includes an introduction by **Dr. Kenneth Ring**, professor emeritus of psychology at the University of Connecticut and a researcher of near-death experiences. His introduction “draws parallels between Swedenborg’s observations and those of millions of people who have had near-death experiences. This book provides a brief but thought-provoking introduction to Swedenborg’s vision of the afterlife for those who want to delve deeper into this fascinating subject.”

George Dole is a retired minister in the General Convention and lives in Bath, Maine. He has done translations for the New Century Editions of *Heaven and Hell*, *Divine Love and Wisdom* and *Divine Providence*, and is the author of *Freedom and Evil*, *Sorting Things Out* and *A Book About Us*.

Kenneth Ring is co-founder and past president of the International Association for Near-Death Studies and is the founding editor of the *Journal of Near-Death Studies*. He is also the author of *Life and Death, Heading Toward Omega* and *The Omega Project*.

Emanuel Swedenborg – Exploring a “World Memory”: Context, Content, Contribution

The book, *Exploring a “World Memory,”* presents scholarly papers from a symposium hosted by the institution that awards the Nobel Prize. These papers examine “Swedenborg’s contributions to science, religion, literature and the visual arts” and “represent a unique collection of insights into Swedenborg’s lasting impact.”

The Foundation notes that “Emanuel Swedenborg has been called a scientist, a seer, a visionary and a philosopher, and his theological writings have been an inspiration for countless people worldwide. To celebrate the designation by UNESCO of Swedenborg’s archived works as a ‘world memory,’ the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences organized its international ‘World Memory’ symposium to explore the historical context in which Swedenborg worked, and his lasting contributions to world culture.”

The book is divided into three sections:

Content describes Swedenborg’s thought, “from his use of spheres in his scientific writings to his views on sexuality and marriage, to analyses of his theological writings.”

Context explores his times, putting Swedenborg in the context of 18th century philosophy and looking at the organization of the earliest Swedenborgian church.

Contribution considers his influence on philosophy and the arts, from Ralph Waldo Emerson and Czeslaw Milocz to Elizabeth Barrett Browning and William James.

Among the papers presented at the symposium from people familiar to General Church readers were:

- **Rev. Dr. Jonathan S. Rose:** *Differences in Content, Terminology and Approach Within Swedenborg’s Theological Latin Corpus*
- **Dr. Jane Williams-Hogan:** *The Swedish Lutheran Contribution to the Work “Married Love”*
- **The Rev. Gören Appelgren:** *The Genesis of The New Church – The Emergence of Different Denominations Within the New Church*
- **Dr. Devin Zuber:** *Radical Correspondences: Emerson, Swedenborg and Environmental Poetics*
- **Dr. Sylvia Montgomery Shaw:** *Art’s Fiery Finger: Use and Passion in the Swedenborgian Poetics of Elizabeth Barrett Browning and William Dean Howells*

The Lives of Angels

A press release describes *The Lives of Angels* as “a unique , thought-provoking vision of heaven and its inhabitants.

“For decades after his experience of spiritual awakening, scientist and theologian Emanuel Swedenborg visited the afterlife and wrote firsthand accounts of what he saw there. Scattered throughout his writings are descriptions of how angels live – their homes, their communities, and even their romantic relationships. *The Lives of Angels* brings his most striking insights into these heavenly beings together in one compact volume.

“The introduction by Grant Schnarr helps readers dip their toes into Swedenborg’s spiritual world, framing (his) vivid, compelling recollections of things seen and heard in other realms.”

All three books are available from the Swedenborg Foundation, www.swedenborg.com and the Bryn Athyn Cathedral Book Room, www.newchurchbooks.com, e-mail bookstore@newchurch.org.

ASIAN CONNECTIONS

Notes from the year-end contribution letter sent out by The Philadelphia Korean New Church, based in Bryn Athyn, with the **Rev. Jon Jin** as pastor:

Philadelphia Korean New Church

During the past two years the church has faced several challenges, including several families leaving the congregation. The letter notes, “Retrospectively, however, this crisis has helped transform our church, and wonderful things are happening.” This includes a new worship format, with a simplified service, more singing, and focusing on practical messages for life. The church is also offering doctrinal and emotional support to the California group, which is growing and planning to start a café church. “They hope to serve the community by helping people heal emotionally and spiritually in a welcoming space.”

Asian Mission

The number of people involved in the Asian Mission is growing. The first regional clergy meetings were held in Asia last April, including more than 20 ministers, theologs and group leaders from Asia, Australia, New Zealand and the United States. A highlight was the ordination of the Rev. Timothy Chou – the first ordained New Church minister in China – by the Rt. Rev. Brian W. Keith.

China

Timothy had contacted the General Church in 2008 after he read *Heaven and Hell*, plus other books of the Writings. He really loved New Church teachings

and wanted to become a General Church member with his wife. A few years later he started a correspondence course with the Theological School.

The year-end letter notes, "He and his wife loved to do charity work and wanted to help the poorest area children in China get a good education. They took on the work of caring for and educating 17 junior high school students in their home, including weekend classes on New Church teachings. They took no salary. This kind of charity was astounding to the Chinese people."

Mr. Jin visited in April and baptized 13 of the students into the New Church. He asked the children what they want to be when they grow up.

"These days, most Chinese children would say they want a luxurious life. But seven of them said they want to be teachers." They said they want to go back to their home towns "and start a school, like Timothy did."

Timothy's plan this year is to bring in another 20 children. Last year the Asian Mission supported his work with \$12,000, but after the baptisms he asked: "Please don't support this mission monetarily. We have modest support from the Chinese here. We would rather have you support us by translating the Heavenly Doctrines into Chinese."

They are translating *True Christian Religion, Heaven and Hell, Arcana Coelestia, Divine Providence* and *Light in My Darkness*.

Mr. Jin visited a book store in a Buddhist temple in China, supported by donors and volunteers, where all books, education and even lodging are free. Timothy's church decided to translate 2,000 copies of *Heaven and Hell* and distribute them to this book store. Mr. Jin says, "We look forward to seeing what the result may be."

Korea

In the Korean New Church Theological School, five students will graduate this spring. Three will be ministers and two will be missionaries (lay leaders) who will serve in new New Church groups.

This past year Koreans translated and published *The Four Doctrines*. This work was supported by the Asplundh Foundation. They are working on *Divine Providence, Apocalypse Explained, Apocalypse Revealed* and *Arcana Coelestia*.

Japan

The Church in Japan is engaged in outreach efforts and translation. The Rev. Shiro Matsumo served in Tokyo, then moved north to Hokkaido, and serves other areas as well. He is dedicating himself wholeheartedly to helping the New Church grow in Japan.

The Rev. Jiro Kumazawa is serving the Tokyo group. There is also a Kyoto group growing without a minister. Thankfully, Japan will get an additional minister this year.

Support

If you would like to support the work of the Philadelphia Korean New Church in its local and international efforts, you may send a check to the Philadelphia Korean New Church, Hwa Y. Lee, Treasurer, 537 Anne Street, Huntingdon Valley, PA 19006, or contribute through the Office of Advancement, Box 708, Bryn Athyn, PA 19009.

Hwa Y. Lee, Treasurer
 537 Anne Street
 Huntingdon Valley, PA 19006

BUILDING BRIDGES IN BRYN ATHYN

The Board of Trustees of the Swedenborg House of Studies of General Convention had its autumn meetings in Bryn Athyn, including guests from the General Church and The Lord's New Church.

The session included tours of the Bryn Athyn Cathedral and Glencairn Museum, and a devotional service at The Lord's New Church Chapel.

Among those invited to speak to the trustees from the General Church were:

The Rev. Dr. Andrew M. T. Dibb, Dean of the Bryn Athyn College Theological School, presenting an overview of theological education in the General Church.

Dr. Jane Williams-Hogan, Director of the Master of Arts in Religious Studies at Bryn Athyn College, who described the program. She and the **Rev. Dr. Jim Lawrence**, head of the Swedenborg House of Studies program, discussed ways their courses might be shared to the benefit of both institutions.

The Rev. Chuck Blair, pastor of NewChurch LIVE, described how this service is "doing church differently." Board members felt that his "energy and sense of commitment to pastoring the people of God in this way is inspiring."

Many of the Board members expressed appreciation for the warm reception they received in Bryn Athyn and for the opportunities to "build bridges between our congregations."

JOIN NEW CHURCH CHALLENGE

New Church Challenge was organized more than 20 years ago to serve those in the Church with disabilities. We have more than 200 members. This is an invitation to join us in embracing and supporting a special group of people in the Church.

If you have a family member or a friend with a mental or physical challenge, or if you are interested in how the Church can help people with disabilities, you should join *New Church Challenge*. We need you.

To learn more, talk to any of our board members listed below. You can join by sending \$5.00 to our Treasurer, **Les Alden**, at Box 277, Bryn Athyn Church, Bryn Athyn, PA 19009. (Checks should be made out to: *New Church Challenge*. Any additional financial support would be welcome at this time of our annual appeal.)

Rob Andrews

Rev. Kurt Ho. Asplundh

Brian Blair

Bill Buick

Jody Hyatt

Ivan Maddock

Robin Morey

Tony Rose

Glynn Schauder

Rev. Phil Schnarr

Lisa Weiss

IN MEMORY OF LINDY NEMITZ



More than four years ago when **Melinda (Lindy) Nemitz** died in a tragic accident in Bryn Athyn, talk began about an appropriate way to honor her in the Academy Girls School, where she worked for many years as an assistant to Principals **Margaret Gladish** and **Sue Odhner**. She was loved there by faculty and students for her warm smile and friendly, helpful ways, and the Girls School has been looking for a way to honor her memory and her indomitable spirit.

Sue said that among Lindy's happiest memories were the years she and her young family spent in Maine. A perfect scene was found to evoke those Maine memories. The result is a beautiful painting (see the image on page 78) by **Keith Gruber**, art teacher in the Secondary Schools. This painting has been hung in the Girls School, just outside the third floor office that Lindy brightened during her years in Benade Hall, with a plaque: "In loving memory of Lindy Nemitz."

Classmates of Lindy (1962) and her husband, the **Rev. Kurt Nemitz** (1956) have been raising money for this memorial for Lindy and for the Girls School Growth Fund, in Lindy's memory.

Anyone who would like to support this effort may send a check to the Office of Advancement, Box 708, Bryn Athyn, PA 19009, payable to the Academy of the New Church, with "Lindy Nemitz Memorial Gift" in the memo line. Contributions are tax deductible and will be warmly appreciated.

BRYN ATHYN CATHEDRAL DIRECTOR

The Rev. Eric H. Carswell, Pastor, Bryn Athyn Church

I am happy to announce that I have appointed **Stephen Morley** to fill the role of Interim Cathedral Director, effective January 1, 2014.

Stephen has already had a small part-time role at the Cathedral helping with its educational program. He has also been working in a semi-retired role for the Glencairn Museum. With his new appointment, Stephen is substantially reducing his Glencairn Museum hours and increasing his Cathedral hours. **Brian Henderson** [who succeeded Stephen as Director of the Glencairn Museum] has been consulted on this transition and is strongly supportive of it.

I am deeply grateful for the warm presence and effective work **Jim Adams** has done through the first half of this fiscal year at the Cathedral. With the limited hours he had to spend on this role, he did a great job of supporting the staff, providing direction for all that supports the regular services and activities at the Cathedral, and also moving a number of significant projects forward.

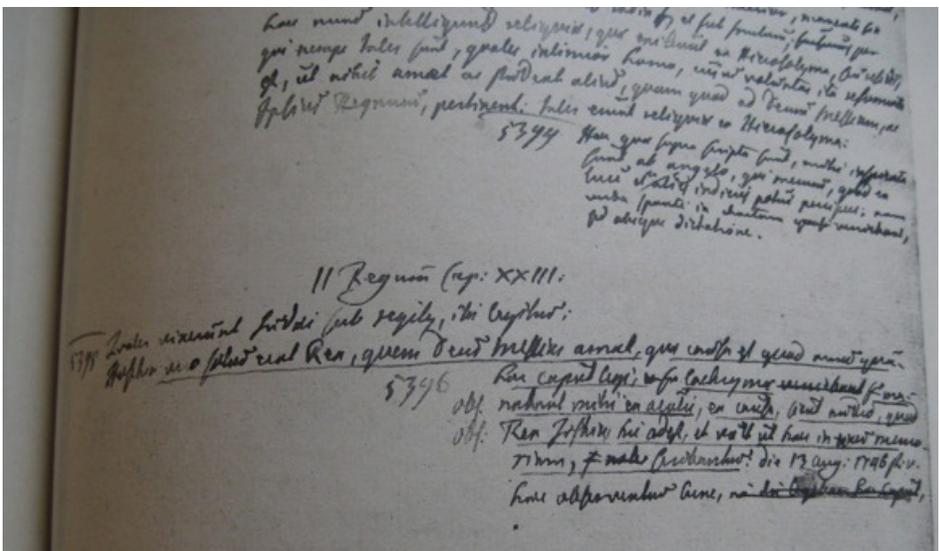
Jim has agreed to continue providing some project support as a member of the Bryn Athyn Church Board Cathedral Oversight Committee.

TEARS OF SWEDENBORG?

The Rev. Dr. George F. Dole

In *The Word Explained*, Swedenborg covered the books of *Genesis* and *Exodus* in detail. He dealt next with *Joshua*, *Judges*, *First* and *Second Samuel*, and *First* and *Second Kings* much more summarily. In the case of *Second Kings*, in fact, he treated only *Isaiah* prophecy to *Hezekiah* from Chapter 19, and concluded with a brief note on Chapter 23 – the chapter that deals with Josiah’s restoration of the temple and his death in battle – with an unexpected glimpse of the author at work. Acton renders this latter as follows:

6328. Here is told the kind of life lived by the Jews under the kings. *Josiah was the only king whom God Messiah loved. This is the reason why now, after[the*



Latin is quum, "when"] reading this chapter, tears ran from my eyes, because, as I hear, king Josiah is now present, and desires that these words be written in memory of him. 13 August 1746, Old Style. The above should be well observed.

In the photograph of the phototype on the previous page, I would call attention to the blot on the word *legebam* in the last line. It may be that one of Swedenborg's tears left its mark.

FROM THE ROAD

From reports of the Rev. Robert H. P. Cole as a traveling minister:

North Ohio

From Bryn Athyn, Los Angeles, Chicago, Glenview, Kempton and Pittsburgh, New Church people have been coming back to Akron, Cleveland, Canton and Mansfield, among other North Ohio cities and towns. New Church people and Broadview guests filled the beautiful Cleveland Swedenborgian Chapel for the Christmas service in December. Regular services are held there every month. I visit the Circle four times a year, conducting worship services and doctrinal classes.

Some interesting past history includes **Edwin Asplundh's** help, when PPG chairman, in forming the Akron-Barberton group. **Dr. Robert M. Cole's** development of Freon for the DuPont Company led to modern refrigeration and air-conditioning. (E. I. DuPont was, in fact, a New Churchman.) In his Sandusky laboratory for the American Crayon Company my dad (Dr. Cole), also invented synthetic mustard oil for the medical profession.

Charles Gyllenhaal once entertained another famous Illinois-Californian, Ronald Reagan, at his Cleveland home.

Tampa Bay

Today's Tampa Bay Group consists of a loyal core of General Church and Academy people, as well as representative people from Nova, General Convention and General Conference, plus neighbor visitors. These usually include the **Acton, Barnitz, Odhner, Bostock, Horgan, Daly, Brown, Gushea, Cole, Leezer, Potts and Smith** families and others.

On Palm Sunday 35 people attended the festival services and dinner at the home of **William Leezer** in Largo. Worship services, doctrinal classes, luncheons, recreation, discussion groups and Feasts of Charity continue on an occasional basis.

The West Coast Florida New Church Center now welcomes all New Church visitors and interested readers of the Writings. The area someday may be a Circle, including Tampa, St. Petersburg, Bradenton, Lakeland, Largo, Sarasota and western areas of Orlando.

DAILY READINGS

Each year the **Rt. Rev. Brian W. Keith** prepares a schedule of daily readings. If you would like a copy of the readings for 2014, please contact General Church Secretary **Alaine F. York**:

Box 743, Bryn Athyn, PA 19009
Alaine.York@newchurch.org
 267-502-4998

CORRECTED ANNUAL REPORT

In the Annual Report of the Secretary of the General Church of the New Jerusalem in the November-December 2013 issue of *New Church Life*, some of the numbers were reported incorrectly. Here are the correct numbers:

Between July 1, 2012, and June 30, 2013, 115 members were received into the General Church. During the year the Secretary’s office received notice of the deaths of 59 members

Membership, July 1, 2012	5318
New Members	115
Deceased Members	59
Resignations	6
Membership, June 30, 2013	5368

CORRECTIONS AND ADDITIONS

Re: the November-December 2013 article, *Seven Publications in Seven Months*, by the **Rev. John Elliott**: *New Church Lifeline* is a publication of the General Conference of the New Church, not the Swedenborg Society, and the editor is **Alan Misson**.

Richard Lines, Secretary of the Swedenborg Society, notes that Mr. Elliot’s article did refer to several current and forthcoming translations of the Swedenborg Society. Mr. Elliott was President of the Society from 2006 to 2009, and Vice President from 2009 to 2013. He is still active as a translator and editor for the Society, and is a member of its Advisory and Revision Board.

Mr. Elliot says that “most of my working time in my so-called years of retirement is spent editing and translating the Writings,” but as an ordained minister of the General Conference, he still leads some services of worship and writes occasional articles for *Lifeline*.

He notes that there is also a quarterly publication produced by the Swedenborg Society for its members – *Things Seen and Heard* – edited by **Patrick Johnson**.

Life Lines

POWER CORRUPTS?

We are all too familiar with the admonition that “power corrupts – and absolute power corrupts absolutely.” We see all too many examples – from politics to big business to family dynamics – of people letting power go to their heads in negative ways.

But Lord Acton actually said in 1887 that “Power *tends* to corrupt; absolute power corrupts absolutely.”

It is like the biblical warning often misstated as “money is the root of all evil.” *I Timothy* 6:10 actually says: “The *love* of money is the root of all evil.”

So power and money, in and of themselves, are not corrupting unless we let them rule our lives and loves. It always comes down to our free choices.

Shakespeare says in *Measure for Measure*: “O, it is excellent to have a giant’s strength; but it is tyrannous to use it like a giant.”

This is followed a few lines later with: “But man, proud man, drest in a little brief authority, most ignorant of what he’s most assured, his glassy essence, like an angry ape, plays such fantastic tricks before high heaven as make the angels weep.”

We see what happens when men or women, “drest in a little brief authority” – in a position of power, however small or large – can “make the angels weep” by squandering opportunities to use that power for good. Those who choose to exercise power with charity and benevolence make the angels sing.

Such people see power not as a way to dominate others but as an extension of love and an opportunity to serve. Remember the wave of love that rose up throughout the world in response to the 9/11 terrorism. That was power. It could not bring back the 3,000 lives lost or the Twin Trade Towers, but it restored hope.

The greatest power in this world and the next offers the greatest hope of all – the loving power of the Lord: “Thine is the kingdom, *thine is the power*, thine is the glory.”

That is the life-giving power of love. That is the model for all of us.

(BMH)

SELFLESSNESS

The great paradox of human existence is that we do not exist. That is, we have no existence of our own because we have no *being* of our own. There's nothing in us to exist, except what is from the Lord with us. (Human evil is nothing in itself, but only a distortion of good – although its effects are real enough.)

“I AM,” the Lord said to Moses at the burning bush. (*Exodus 3:20*) It's the meaning of “Jehovah.” That name contains within it the profound truth that everything that exists comes from God: all life, all being, all substance, all humanity. “We are because God is.” (*Divine Providence 46e*)

The angels have an even greater sense of possessing life in themselves than we do, and yet, at the same time, the greatest perception that they do not, that they live every moment from the Lord. They know that the cosmic rule repeated several times in the Writings – that “subsistence is perpetual creation” – applies to *them*. Which is why they are always young, and their world is always new. “Behold, I make all things new.” (*Revelation 21:5*)

The mystic idea is that our own personality and sense of selfhood must be annihilated if we are to merge with the Divine. And it's true that our natural self, our imaginary self, must die. But the truth is that the closer we are conjoined with the Lord, the greater will be our feeling of having life in ourselves. Our unique personality will not be dissolved into the infinite, but enhanced and sharpened by being conjoined with its infinite source. The derivative is strengthened, not destroyed, by closer association with that from which it is derived.

We have no real *proprium*, no “own,” of our own; only the appearance of one. Our selfhood, our so-called *proprium*, consists of that appearance. In losing that, we lose nothing, and find everything. “For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it.” (*Matthew 16:25*)

(WEO)

THE CURSE, THE BLESSING – AND THE CHOICE

Pope Francis set off a bit of a controversy in December with his first encyclical – *Joy of the Gospel* – which lamented the languishing poor of the world and that we are not doing enough for them. Few would argue with that. We all need to be doing what we can for those in need. What troubled some people was that the pope targeted free-market capitalism – or at least the abuse of it – as the cause.

He criticized “a deified market” that celebrates materialism and “a crude, naïve trust in the goodness of those wielding economic power.” Indeed, some of those wielding economic power are not motivated by goodness – but some

are. In nations that are not free those wielding economic power are not serving “the common good,” and inflict horrific injustices upon their people. Economic systems cannot be tarred with one brush. But the pope was right when he said, “We do not live better when we flee, hide, refuse to share, stop giving and lock ourselves up in our own comforts. Such a life is nothing less than slow suicide.” This is not the pathway to heaven.

Capitalism itself is neither good nor evil. It is what we choose to do with it that defines it. Capitalism is a system rooted in freedom, and there is both curse and blessing in that. When we are free, we can choose good or evil. Plenty of both has been done under the banner of capitalism.

There is no doubt that people have been exploited and victimized by the greed and profiteering that give capitalism a bad name. This is what the pope called “the globalization of indifference” toward the poor and exploited. These are evil choices.

But nations and leaders also have taken advantage of capitalism to help free people from poverty, to create economic systems that create opportunities for individuals to succeed, to encourage innovations in industry and health care, and to give charitably to those in need.

As with power, it comes down to our free choices. The pope did call business “a noble vocation” and rejected “the welfare mentality” of those who avoid being useful. And he warned that without a commitment to human dignity, virtue and a charitable approach to use, capitalism can invite materialism, selfishness and greed. There is more charity and goodwill in businessmen and -women throughout the world than many people realize, but it is overshadowed by greed and exploitation. The challenge within freedom is always to encourage people to make better choices for the good of all.

Consider the hope and the challenge offered by the Rev. Dr. Reuben Bell in a sermon preached in the Boston Society when he was its pastor: “What would happen to business practices in this nation if businessmen and -women were to discover and apply the New Church doctrine of charity in the work they do every day? . . . The business culture would be magnified to infinity, and very good things would happen.”

(BMH)

THE DEMAND FOR SAND

This common natural material is so full of benefits for human life that we might say sand has a built in urge to be of use to us. And it actually does.

There seems to be no limit to sand’s uses. It can be packed into bags to make a dike. It flows in an hourglass to mark time. It is used in abrasives from sandpaper to sand blasters. It is used to make glass. For ages before glass was

invented the main ingredient was right under people's feet – in the sand. Silicon, found in sand, is used to make microchips for computers. The invention of the semiconductor created a whole new industry and revolutionized the world.

And now another new sand-based industry has emerged: “frac sand” – used in the hydraulic fracturing process (“fracking”) to get oil and natural gas out of rock. Thousands of tons of sand may be used for one oil or gas well, and the demand has tripled in the past three years, creating a new billion-dollar frac-sand industry. (The potential environmental damage of this new drilling technique has made it controversial. Nevertheless, it is an interesting new use for sand).

And sand's usefulness is not limited to the physical plane. Its various properties give us a basis for understanding certain mental or spiritual conditions, as we can see from the parable the Lord told about the man who built his house on sand instead of a rock.

All created things, from their Divine origin, have within them a *conatus* to bring forth forms of use, and ultimately, in one way or another, to serve human life. “Even sand emits an exhalation such that it assists in producing something further.” (*Divine Love and Wisdom* 172)

There's a demand for sand because sand demands to be used. Without human ingenuity, that demand would be unmet; sand's potential would be wasted. Sand's hidden usefulness implies users able to find it.

One more proof that the world was created by a Human God for the sake of human beings.

(WEO)

DOGMA VERSUS DOCTRINE

The words “dogma” and “doctrine” are somewhat interchangeable, but there is a subtle shade of difference in the meaning of the words, which makes having the two terms helpful in distinguishing between two kinds of belief.

“Dogma” suggests something that is believed externally, arbitrarily, because some authority has told you to believe it, not because it is understood.

“Doctrine,” on the other hand, is a teaching that is believed internally, rationally and freely. A doctrine is not an isolated item on a checklist, but an essential component of a whole system of belief.

We could compare each genuine doctrine of the Church to an organ in the human body, an indispensable part of a whole, whose validity and importance comes from its use to the whole. Like the structure of the human body, the Heavenly Doctrine of the New Jerusalem comes from God and is a unified whole.

Dogmas, though, are more like articles of clothing. They may fit the reality (or supposed reality) they're meant to represent reasonably well, but they're

never as essential and living as the truths of genuine doctrine are.

Part of the difference between dogma and doctrine is the way in which they are presented and taught. Dogmas, obviously, are “dogmatic.” Doctrines *may* be stated dogmatically (in which case they become dogmas); and dogmas *may* be taught with an appeal to reason and understanding (in which case they take on something of the quality of doctrine).

The New Church does not have dogmas; it has doctrines, which are taught with respect for an individual’s free will, reason and conscience. Or at least they should be – if they ever are not, then the way they are being taught is contrary to the whole spirit of the Church.

(WEO)

PROTECTING OBSCENITY – BUT NOT PRAYER

A recent letter writer to *The Wall Street Journal* noted: “The [United States] Supreme Court is considering . . . whether prayers before meetings of public officials, led most often by Christians, amount to an unconstitutional government endorsement of religion.

“A same-day book review of Whitney Strub’s *Obscenity Rules* describes the Supreme Court’s snaking path to protection of obscenity as a First Amendment right. Mr. Strub presents the obscenity legal battle as one between sophisticated liberal minds supporting free expression and repressive conservative minds that are closed and moralistic.”

The letter writer cited several instances of “protected” artistic expression, funded by the taxpayer-supported National Endowment for the Arts, such as “The Holy Virgin Mary” – a Madonna adorned with elephant dung and sexually explicit photos.

He concluded: “If sophisticated liberal minds dictate that Christians accept (and pay for) deeply offensive, anti-Christian imagery, it seems reasonable that atheists and Wiccans could cover their ears during brief legislative prayers reflecting beliefs held by the majority of Americans. To rule that our founders favored protection of pornography but not public prayer is patently absurd.” Amen.

(BMH)

SOPHISTICATED MINDS

“Sophisticated minds” generally are considered intellectual, worldly-wise, above the thinking of the common man.

Indeed, educated, sophisticated people help us to understand and appreciate art, music and literature. There is nothing wrong with sophistication – in its place.

But sophistication often is used to imply wisdom. Many “sophisticates”

considered themselves – and often are held up as – deep thinkers about faith, religion and philosophy.

Prominent atheists such as Christopher Hitchens are hailed for their intellect and the persuasive way they have “figured things out.” They are so intellectual and “progressive” in their thinking that they don’t need God. They are above the “crutches” the rest of us need.

We are shown in the Writings that many such people, celebrated on this earth for their learning and sophistication, come to be fools in the spiritual world because they are incapable and unwilling to see and understand truth.

They have no idea of what true wisdom is: “You have reached wisdom when you no longer have any concern about understanding what is good and true, but are motivated by and living what is true and good; for this is wisdom.” (*Arcana Coelestia* 10225)

To be “sophisticated” is to be “worldly-wise” – but not necessarily to be wise.

(BMH)

LINCOLN AND HIS FAITH

November marked the 150th anniversary of Abraham Lincoln’s iconic Gettysburg Address, and his birthday is honored in the United States on February 12. When Lincoln was leaving his native Springfield, Illinois, to assume the presidency in 1861 – with the nation on the brink of civil war – he acknowledged in his Farewell Address that he faced a task “greater than that which rested on [George] Washington.”

But he was confident because: “Without the assistance of that Divine Being who ever attended him, I cannot succeed. But with that assistance I cannot fail. Trusting in Him who can go with me, and remain with you, and be everywhere for good, let us confidently hope that all will yet be well.”

When he was presented with a Bible in 1864, just months before his assassination, he said: “In regard to this Great Book, I have but to say, it is the best gift God has given to man. All the good the Savior gave to the world was communicated through this book.”

Lincoln was never hailed as being sophisticated. He was loved for being wise. And he was wise because he knew where wisdom came from.

(BMH)

THE MOST IMPORTANT CONSIDERATION

Does the wish by some in the Church to ordain women represent the influence of the culture around us in the world today? Or, is the fact that the General Church in its beginning chose to institute an all-male priesthood simply a

reflection of the culture that prevailed in the world around it at that time?

It is hard to imagine that any of us is immune to being influenced by the wider culture's assumptions and opinions, not to mention our own inclinations. But we do have at our disposal the means for considering things more objectively: namely, the doctrines upon which our church was founded.

Can we agree that the most important question in any discussion of church policy is: what do the Writings have to say on the subject? If we can agree on that, then we at least have a common ground for resolving conflicts and possibly holding the organization together.

(WEO)

BUT DO THE WRITINGS SAY ANYTHING?

The Writings have much to say about the nature and use of the priesthood, and they also have much to say about the nature of the masculine and the feminine, and the fact that there are uses appropriate to each. In light of this, how can it be said that the Writings have little or nothing to say about women in the priesthood?

For the sake of a comparison, consider that nowhere in the Writings do we find a direct statement that slavery is wrong. But when we consider the whole body of teaching about human life – including how essential human freedom is, and how evil the love of dominion is – the lesson to be drawn from the doctrines regarding slavery is obvious. It certainly was to the New Churchmen who became leaders of the anti-slavery movement.

The shortage of explicit statements on a particular subject doesn't mean the doctrines of the Church have little or nothing to say about it.

(WEO)

KILLING JESUS

Bill O'Reilly emphasizes that *Killing Jesus*, the number one best-seller he wrote with Martin Dugard, is a book of history, not theology. Indeed, it educates readers about the Roman and religious leaders of the time, along with the culture, events and all the roiling political tensions, without shedding much light on the meaning of it all. But millions of readers are finding that this historical perspective enhances and strengthens their faith, and that's a positive.

As with their previous best-sellers, *Killing Lincoln* and *Killing Kennedy*, this book focuses just on historical context – what led to the crucifixion and the days afterwards. As with any recounting of history, it is not perfect, but it does give insight into the moral depravity of the Roman Empire and the corruption among the high priests of the temple. As such, it shows why it was necessary for God to come down on earth to subdue the hells and make Himself visible to us, although the book deliberately does not get into this – leaving that to

churches and theologians.

While O'Reilly is known best as a television commentator with strong political views – which may attract some readers and repel others – there is none of that in this book. It is straight and respectful history.

But there are real gaps for religious readers to fill in – especially those in the New Church with a deeper understanding from revealed truth about the symbolism and the rich meaning in the events for our lives. A bit off-putting at times is the authors' speculation about what Jesus was thinking and feeling. There is real appreciation for – and something to be learned about – the role and courage of the disciples as they went forth to spread the Word after the crucifixion. They knew they were putting their lives in jeopardy for planting the seeds of Christianity that so threatened the power of Rome, and all were brutally murdered.

The fact that the book is enormously popular is encouraging. That speaks to a hunger to know more about the life and death of Jesus, which can help to bring people to a closer relationship with the Lord. The hope is also that this will make many people more open to explore and to seek the spiritual meanings within this defining story of Christianity.

One nice touch is that the book is dedicated, “To all those who love their neighbors as themselves.”

(BMH)

CHARITY'S TWIN

Repentance, which begins with self-examination, is inward looking, while charity looks outward to others. They may therefore seem to be quite separate aspects of religion, but actually are closely linked.

When we consider our own errors and are engaged in repenting of them, what interest can we have in condemning others for theirs? Will we not, rather, be filled with a sense of being in the same boat with everyone else? We're all in different parts of the boat, but all equally in need of salvation.

“If You, Lord, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand?” (*Psalms* 130:3) The implied answer is obvious: no one.

(WEO)

SPEAK LIKE AN ANGEL

Among the many beautiful descriptions in the Writings about life in heaven is the speech of angels. In this world we hear – and speak ourselves – many different kinds of speech: sometimes kind, loving, inclusive, thoughtful, caring – but also angry, harsh, frustrated, accusing, excluding.

In *Secrets of Heaven* 1759 we read: “Spirits who are midway between

heavenly and spiritual have a sweet kind of language that flows along like the gentlest of breezes, caressing the listening ear and softening the actual words. The reason for the fluidity and charm of their speech is that the heavenly goodness present in their thoughts has the same qualities, and that there is no discrepancy between their words and their thoughts. All sweet-sounding harmony in the other life comes from goodness and charity.”

Swedenborg tells of a spirit new to the spiritual world who was used to confrontation and speaking from anger, and expected the same in return, but was reduced to tears by angels speaking to him instead from pure love.

That is the power of love. That is the model for our own speech. Swedenborg also says that the best way to become an angel in heaven is to work at being an angel on earth. Let it start simply with how we speak to each other.

(BMH)



Christmas Day 2013: Toronto was suffering through a massive power outage due to a severe ice storm and related damage. Temperatures were below freezing. The Olivet church held its morning church celebration without heat, light or organ. And what a joyful service it was. Pastor Jim Cooper commented that the Lord was born in a stable, not such a comfortable place to be, either. We sang carols with piano accompaniment from an iPod. Afterwards, someone called for a photo and Kathlyn Gatti took the one below on her iPhone. Jim and Karen Cooper are three rows back on the right aisle. He's still in his robes. There were about 70 in the congregation and more spirit in that service than any other in memory.

– *Stephen Morley*