

SEVEN YEARS IN PRINT

new church | connection

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a difference!



New Church Connection explores the connection between religion and life. Every issue features content that highlights the personal nature of spirituality, providing applicable ideas to support your journey with insights from the New Church (Swedenborgian) faith.

Connecting you
with a New Christian spirituality
for everyday life

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At times I have been complacent about what is most important in life. But then something happens and I'm hurled back (against my will) into remembering what is truly vital. As marriages fall apart around me, as loved ones are lost at too early an age, as unemployment crops up again and again, as another cancer diagnosis arrives, I'm constantly reminded how important it is to live well in all circumstances. And the truth is I just don't know how to live well from my own means. I need a higher source of inspiration. Whether it comes directly from God's Word, through a friend offering mentoring or support, from an article or podcast, or the rare but treasured moments of deep inner peace possible only in solitude, I need the help. I need the insights. I need the message of hope that is at the heart of so many religions and that is so beautifully articulated in New Christianity. I need this message for my life, for my family, for my community, for my church, for the world. Do you feel the same way?

Over the last seven years we have featured content on life after death, relationships, fear, worry, happiness, peace, addiction, grief, and more. Have any of these topics helped you on your path? Have you shared an issue of this magazine with a friend and felt in some small way you have offered a morsel of peace amidst a hurricane of distress? If you have, I invite you to give back. Against all my insecurities and self doubt, I am inviting you to contribute to this magazine. Yes, financially. Even if it is just 1 dollar, 1 rand, 1 euro. Stand up for this cause. Your contribution gives this publication fuel. It makes it possible to ship it around the world to those who could not get it otherwise. Your contribution makes the quality possible, it removes barriers to people hearing this life-giving message of hope.

You will see on p.12 & 13 a variety of ways you can get involved beyond monetary. And I challenge you today to search your heart and see if one of those ways might include a donation to keep this work going.

With humility, gratitude, and hope for the future,

Bronwen Henry

Bronwen Henry



It has recently come to my attention that the funds that have made this publication available in the past are not certain for the future. And so it is with humility, that I am reminded to ask you to join me in the effort to fund this magazine. The work that goes into this publication in print and online reaches thousands of people each year.

Your donation of a story, photography, art, ideas, and funds help make this publication the quality New Church material that it is. If exploring the application of New Christian spirituality in everyday life has touched you directly or you have shared it with a friend or loved one, I invite you to take action today. My hope is that every reader who

is touched by
this publication
will respond and get
involved.

Get involved.
Donate today!

(see page 12-13 for details)

- ✿ share your story
- ✿ share your photography or artwork
- ✿ share your ideas (fill out the reader survey)

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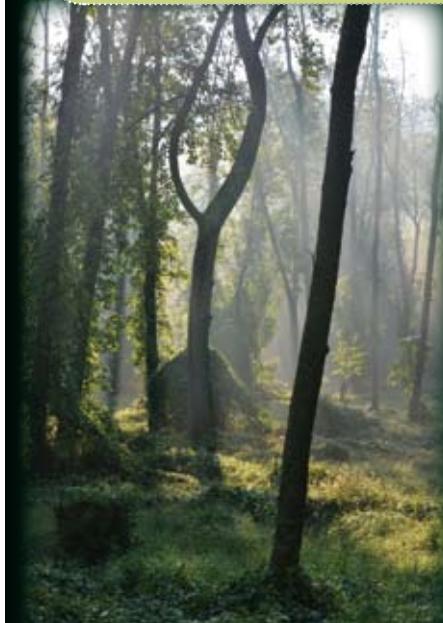


photo by JOY FEERRAR

83 locations distribute multiple copies.

Highlights

from "Changing Lives"

Over the years, we have heard amazing stories of hardship, happiness, and faith from individuals from around the world exploring the New Church. These remind us that in each moment of our lives—from the struggles of the loss of a loved one or wrestling with an addiction, to the bliss of finding a warm and welcoming community or deciding to marry the person you've fallen in love with—the Lord is constantly working to draw each of us closer to Him.

Here are a few excerpts from past "Changing Lives" articles.



Seunghee Lee

ISSUE 1, 2009

"I learned that in order to love others, I needed to learn how to love myself. And loving myself meant being good to myself by knowing the truth and turning my heart toward love. By doing this, I began to learn how to share love and goodness with others. That's the most important thing."



Louis B. King

ISSUE 2, 2006

"For as many years as I can remember, my wife, Freya read the Word to me first thing in bed in the morning. She read aloud from her set, making copious notes in the margins. Now, as I continue to read each morning, I use her books and am overwhelmed by the doctrinal clarity, perception and compassion for humanity her notations reveal. There is no doubt in my mind and heart that we are still reading the Word together."



Deno Brannon

ISSUE 3, 2010

"Several years ago, I was having a spiritual battle. I prayed to the Lord, saying, 'Please help me understand what's keeping me from loving You.' I said that prayer for months.... My anger with the Lord had been keeping me from loving Him. The truth was, He had never left me."

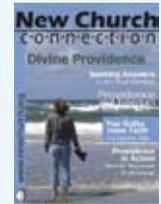




Jeff

Issue 1, 2011

“Jeff began searching for answers once again. The old longing for a satisfying faith began to hover in his mind. During this time, he gave up his life the way it had been and began to search for a new way to live. The Lord was guiding him, although he wasn't aware of it.”



Aisha

Issue 1, 2005

“The most unique thing I've found in the church is the teaching on God the Father meaning Divine Love, God the Son meaning the truth which is the Will of God, and then the Holy Spirit meaning useful service. When I heard this teaching I thought, “This means a lot to me, it is an inner opening.” It made more sense to me than three Gods. When you believe there are three Gods, how are you going to worship them? When you believe



God is love and that love is abundantly shared toward all humanity, then it's easier to believe these simple truths and live according to them.

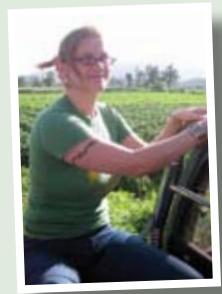
This church is the only church in the whole world that teaches these things. I find understanding the basis of this church makes me want to know more about it.”



Hannah

Issue 2, 2011

“No matter who you are, whether you're a junkie on the street or a member of a church community, have a compassionate understanding of who you are and where you came from. To separate ourselves based on where we came from or how much money we make is the opposite of charity. If we have this community to offer to the world, it is the opposite of charity not to offer it.”



What Is Your Story?

How has your life been impacted by living New Christian spirituality?

Send us *your story*, or see pg. 12 for more ways to get involved.

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Visit
www.newchurchconnection.org
to read past issues
of New Church Connection

Life is full of QUESTIONS

About Giving

Making a difference can show up on many different levels. Here David Lindrooth responds to some questions that arise when one considers the biblical principles behind giving.

Q IS IT REALLY MORE DIFFICULT FOR A WEALTHY PERSON TO GET TO HEAVEN?

a There is a story in the Bible where a rich young ruler asks Jesus if he is saved. The man walks away after Jesus tells him to “sell all you have and give to the poor” (Matt 19:16-25). New Church theology points out that it isn’t really the wealth itself, but how one uses wealth that is the issue. In the story, the rich young ruler symbolizes a person who sets his heart on the accumulation of wealth. A person who thinks true happiness depends on material possessions is mistaken. Such happiness is short lived. Rather, true happiness relies on using that wealth to help others.

Q THE BIBLE SAYS: “GIVE AND IT WILL BE GIVEN TO YOU” (LUKE 6:38). DOES THIS MEAN I WILL BECOME RICH IF I AM GENEROUS?

a Practicing generosity will not necessarily make a person wealthy. However, that does not mean that generosity is not a spiritually valuable practice. Studies have shown that a person’s feelings of wealth is connected to set giving patterns rather than the quantity of wealth that they have saved. If you want to experience feeling wealthy, then give. This reflects a spiritual principle. If you wish to experience the life flowing in from heaven you must live a life that is directed toward serving others. That is one reason why Jesus says: “freely you have received, freely give” (Matt 10:8).

Freely you have received, freely give.

—Matthew 10:8

Q DOES IT MATTER WHO OR WHAT CAUSE I GIVE TO AS LONG AS I GIVE?

a Yes. The Bible says: “What man is there among you who, if his son asks for bread will give him a stone?” (Matt 7:9). We are taught to exercise judgment when giving. We are also taught that there is deeper value to supporting spiritual services when compared to more external services. A person who contributes meaningfully to a church can be supporting the eternal happiness of another. And being able to promote happiness in a person’s life that will last to eternity is a very powerful contribution!

Serve the Lord with gladness

—Psalm 100:2

SHARE YOUR QUESTIONS ABOUT LIFE. Email questions@newchurch.org. Mention “New Church Connection”.



David Lindrooth is director of General Church Outreach, in Bryn Athyn, PA. Email him at david.lindrooth@newchurch.org.

6,805 people read articles online multiple times over the last year.

Q HOW MUCH SHOULD I GIVE?

a The Bible speaks of giving the first tenth that a person receives in income as one’s tithe back to the Lord. However that is not a hard and fast rule. The stories about tithing are about the need to recognize that everything we have that is worth anything is a gift from the Lord. Still, many today do tithe (give 1/10 of their income to their church) as a way of marking an intention to give spiritually to God’s Church, while also giving to the church in this natural world. The Bible offers wonderful reminders of giving: “A good man out of the treasure of his heart brings forth good things” (Matt. 12:35) and “Serve the Lord with gladness” (Psalm 100:2). Giving should be a joyful experience. A friend of mine once quipped: “Don’t give until it hurts, give until it feels good!” That advice reflects the reality of increased joy when one is serving others.

20 Ways You Can Make a Difference

For more ideas, visit
newchurchconnection.org

CARING FOR YOUR CHURCH

Loving our neighbor is a way we can express love to the Lord. "You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. A second is equally important: Love your neighbor as yourself" (Matthew 22:37-39).

Caring for Your Spirituality

Serving as an example of the Lord's love encourages others to do the same.

1. Join or lead a spiritual growth group.
2. Read from sacred text on a daily basis.
3. Make a conscious effort to stop a bad habit, asking the Lord for help.
4. Practice active patience, especially when others around you are upset and frustrated.

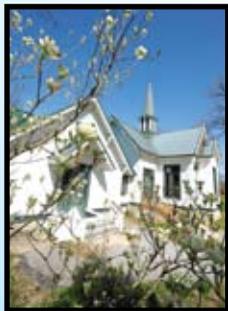


photo by CLARK ECHOLS



photo by BURGANDY SMITH

Caring for Other Individuals

The Bible repeatedly reminds us to serve those outside of ourselves.

5. Be an active listener when talking with a friend or your spouse. Don't just think of "what can I say next?"
6. Invite a friend to church. Better yet, pick them up and go together.
7. Share a favorite quote from the Word with a friend.
8. Invite a friend to church. Better yet, pick them up and go together.



Caring for Your Local Community

The neighbor extends beyond those near to us and to those we do not yet know.

9. Do good for others without expecting reciprocation.
10. Bring a meal to someone in need.
11. Do your work with integrity and try to go the extra mile.
12. Clean up a local park or roadside.



photo by BRONWEN HENRY

Caring for Your Country

Loving our country is more than merely the nationality we belong to; it extends to people in a bigger variety of communities, backgrounds, and cultures.

13. Care for environment: be conscious of waste; recycle and pick up litter.
14. Pray for peace.
15. Honor those serving your country.
16. Fulfill your civic responsibilities willingly and cheerfully.

Compiled by Michelle Chapin, Anita Halterman, Bronwen Henry, and Burgandy Alden Smith



photo by BRONWEN HENRY

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new church connection

\$3.03 cost per issue of developing, printing and shipping.

Caring Church

Loving the church means loving heaven and all those striving to become better individuals.

17. Pray for your church and the leaders of it.
18. Volunteer at your local church to be an ambassador for local community outreach.
19. Go without something (your weekly coffee, going to a movie, etc) and donate that amount to your church instead.
20. Share your journey with another.

Caring for the Lord's Kingdom

"The Lord's kingdom is the neighbor that is to be loved in the highest degree, because the Lord's kingdom means the church throughout the world.... and also all in heaven. Those who love the Lord's kingdom love the Lord above all things, and are consequently in love to God more than others, because the church in the heavens and on earth is the body of the Lord, for those who are in it are in the Lord and the Lord in them."

-True Christianity 416

photo by ALISON COLE



We invite you to show your support for this publication by sending in your response today!

Use the envelope provided or go online to www.newchurchconnection.org.



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37,000+ online readers yearly.



Tell Your Story

Every issue features people whose lives have been impacted by New Church theology and community. We invite you to share an anecdote or story of how bringing New Church theology into your life has had a positive impact. Submit your own story.



Share Your Photography or Artwork

New Church Connection features stunning photography and artwork from around the world. The donated photos and paintings add beauty, and help to make this publication excellent. If you have a love and talent for art, and would like to share your work in this publication, contact us today.



Make a Donation Today

New Church Connection presents New Church theology in a simple and practical manner. Your donation will help make the continuation of this publication possible, and help extend its reach to people around the world who would not otherwise receive it. We invite you to make a contribution today, any amount, to show your support for this effort.



Give Your Input

We'd love to hear from you, your ideas for topics, features, the online version and how to make them better. Write some of your ideas on the envelope provided and send them in today, or go online and give your opinion on our reader survey.

This magazine provides content to www.newchurch.org that serves tens of thousands of people every year.

1200 print subscriptions



83 locations distribute multiple copies



13,000+ print copies distributed yearly



Over 37,000 people per year read NCC online (and growing)!



6,805 people read NCC online multiple times over the last year.



3,139 people read NCC online 5 or more times over the last year.



2,361 people read NCC online 9 or more times over the last year.

1,862 people read NCC online 15 or more times over the last year.



1,420 people read NCC online 26 or more times over the last year.



982 people read NCC online 50 or more times over the last year.



Over 100 people read NCC online each day.



Over 68,000 articles were read online over the last year.



NCC was read online in 57 languages over the last year.



NCC was read online in 125 countries over the last year.

Finding Happiness

by Rev. John Odhner

True happiness doesn't come from getting whatever we think we want. The Lord shares happiness with us when we serve someone outside ourselves, which is a form of serving God. Then happiness can flow like a current of electricity when a circuit is complete.

Lots of people are looking for happiness. In the United States the pursuit of happiness is enshrined in the Declaration of Independence as a God-given inalienable right. And isn't it something that everyone wants? Don't we all avoid things that make us sad or angry and gravitate towards things that make us happy?



It doesn't take a long time listening to modern media to find many offers of things that promise to make you happy. Some vendors promise the best-tasting food and drink. You know, like "Coca-Cola—open happiness?" Or maybe it will be a fast car, the right mouthwash, a vacation in the islands, or even the right politician in office.

The Writings of the New Church tell a story of a number of people who died

and went to heaven—or rather, what they understood was heaven. Angels asked them what they thought would make them happy in heaven forever. After some discussion, their answers fell into six categories, something like these:

"I would be eternally happy if I had high rank and wealth. Don't we get to be kings with Christ in heaven?"

"Nothing would make me happier

"Love is feeling the joy of another as joy in oneself"

—Divine Love and Wisdom 47

than worshipping and glorifying God every day to eternity."

"For me, its sunshine, flowers and trees—being in God's nature."

"I would rather spend my time connecting with friends, talking about whatever is on our minds."

"Me? I never get tired of partying. Eat, drink and be merry!"

"I have to be around happy people. Negative people depress me. Cheerful, positive people lift me up."

Hearing these answers, the angels guided people from each group to the "heaven" of their dreams. The people who wanted partying found themselves at an outdoor festival with non-stop entertainment, tables crowded with food, sitting with famous people. They ate all they wanted, listened to the music and watched the shows, then ate some more. After three days of this, they were partied out. The smell of food made them nauseous and they desperately wanted to leave.

The people who wanted just to worship God were taken to a temple with a perpetual Sabbath, listening to sermons, praying, talking about holy

matters. At first the worship seemed beautiful and joyful, but after three days they were either falling asleep during the sermons or breaking the doors down to get out.

Similar things happened to all the other groups. They had all found things that might make them happy for a while, but not for very long. In every case, the things they expected would make them happy were things outside themselves—their environment, the people, the food or the experience. What they discovered is that as long as you are looking for something outside of yourself to make you happy, it will never be more than a temporary distraction. Real happiness does not come in through your five senses, nor as a result of experiences or people around you. Real happiness comes from God into your soul, and from there flows into your heart and mind, finally energizing your body. We might not realize this because we can't feel the happiness flowing in. It doesn't come through our senses so we don't sense it. Furthermore, sometimes it doesn't flow in, and we don't feel happy, except for the temporary distractions of outward experiences.

God has lots of happiness to share

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16,437 print issues distributed in the last 12 months.

with us. Jesus said, "These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full" (John 15:11). God always wants to pour happiness in to our lives, but there are two things that stop the happiness from getting through. The first is that the pipeline might be clogged up. There may be too much garbage in the way, such as resentment, worry, fear, hatred, anger, contempt and negativity. We won't feel true happiness until we let go of some of those negative emotions, generally result from selfishness and materialism, caring more about our feelings of pleasure than about the feelings of other people.

The other thing that stops the happiness from flowing in is that it doesn't have any place to go. If you look at your sink at home, there is a relatively infinite supply of water in the pipe leading to the faucet in your sink, but most of the time the faucet is shut off, so the water doesn't flow. The water can only flow into the faucet when it can flow out of the faucet. Likewise, God can only influence us in a way that makes us happy if that influence is moving through us to other people to affect them in the same way.

Another analogy is electricity. It won't flow through a light bulb or motor unless the circuit is complete. The electricity can't flow into the motor or light bulb unless it can also flow out. There are trillions of trillions of electrons in a small piece of wire, but they don't give

God has lots of
happiness to
share with us.

any energy to the motor unless they are moving.

The way happiness flows from us to other people is through the things we do for them—acts of service, good deeds and honest work. A salesperson who does a good job of finding people what they need will make many people happy. A doctor who heals people, a banker who keeps money safe or a teacher who really helps students learn will all do their part to make the community a happy place.

One definition of love is "feeling the joy of another as joy in oneself" (*Divine Love and Wisdom* 47). When your focus is on the joy of another person, then the circuit is complete. Love and happiness can then flow into you from the Lord and out of you to another person. The more it is flowing, the more power it has. If you try to just hold on to it and not share it, it is like trying to hold on to the electrons in the light bulb instead of keeping them flowing.

The way happiness flows from us to other people is through the things we do for them—acts of service, good deeds and honest work. A salesperson who does a good job of finding people what they need will make many people happy. A doctor who heals people, a banker who keeps money safe



Real happiness comes
from God into your soul and
from there flows into your
heart and mind.

or a teacher who really helps students learn will all do their part to make the community a happy place. In any family, group or organization, the services people provide to care for each other are what makes things go better for everyone. So if you want happiness, keep asking, How can I help? How can I participate? How can I be of use? Where can I plug in and complete the circuit? How can I bring more integrity and compassion into my workplace? What will make the customer's life better? Where can I make a difference?" ●



The Rev. John Odhner is content developer for General Church Outreach. For more information, visit www.newchurch.org.

1,420 people read articles online 26 or more times over the last year.

Share your six word summaries on our Facebook page!
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Learning, living, loving, growing, following God.

-ANONYMOUS, NEW MEXICO

There is only one life, God's.

-ETHAN MCCARDELL, WASHINGTON

It is a Path to Follow.

-DAVID CHILDS, PENNSYLVANIA

I choose where I end up.

-CHARA DAUM, PENNSYLVANIA

Open and willing to accept diversity.

- ANITA CHAVES, MASSACHUSETTS

Religion that makes sense to me.

-ANONYMOUS, PENNSYLVANIA

Freedom-giving truths inspiring authentic love.

-BURGANDY SMITH, PENNSYLVANIA

Guidance on the road of life.

-ARIANNA VOIGHT-CHERNA, PENNSYLVANIA

Open up Christianity. Light for All.

-ANNA WOOFENDEN, INDIANA

Unconditional Love and Truth from God.

-MICHELLE CHAPIN, PENNSYLVANIA

Love the Lord and my neighbor.

-ANONYMOUS, PENNSYLVANIA

The New Church in 6 Words

How would you sum up what the New Church means to you in only six words?

Here's how a few Connection readers responded to the challenge:

Hope, love, truth, use, charity, eternal-happiness.

-LISA CHILDS, PENNSYLVANIA

Care for my eternal happiness.

-ANONYMOUS, SOUTH AFRICA

I'm learning how to be loving!

-DAVID LINDROOTH, PENNSYLVANIA

It is knowing what is important.

-LOUISE LORIA HANEL, NEW YORK

Place where spiritual healing can occur.

-KAYE LERMITTE, PENNSYLVANIA

Understanding that God's message is merciful!

-GWENDA COWLEY, PENNSYLVANIA

Repent, reform, regenerate, know, live, LOVE.

-JOHN ROBERT GWYNN, CALIFORNIA

Reminders about the Lord's nature: mercy.

KENDALL AYERS, PENNSYLVANIA

Influx, Love, Spirit, Wisdom, Proprium, Multi-dimensional.

-ANONYMOUS, OHIO

I understand you and love you.

-SASHA SILVERMAN, PENNSYLVANIA

One God. Many Paths. Hope Eternal.

-BRONWEN MAYER HENRY, PENNSYLVANIA

Christianity as lifestyle, not a club.

-CHUCK BLAIR, PENNSYLVANIA

Individually, with a partner, or in a small group, use this study guide to get you into the Gospel of Luke and explore the lessons and beauty within.

Get some friends together and discuss these readings as a group. What insights did you have? What challenged you? What surprised you? What do you want to explore further?

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Connection was read online in 57 languages over the last year.

Reading from Luke

in the month of December

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Jesus is Born

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Prepare the Way

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Overcoming in Temptation

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Disciples and Paralysis

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Sabbath Revision and Enemies

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Happy Christmas

Reflection Questions

3 Questions to ask yourself: *(Journal if you wish!)*

- **What?** (What does it say? Summarize/ Paraphrase the reading)
- **So What?** (What significance does that have to you?)
- **Now What?** (How do you respond to the message in the reading? What does it call you to do or not do? Say or not say? Be or not be?)

Compiled by Bronwen Henry





Congregations around the world

The New Church is a new Christianity that provides a clear path to eternal happiness and addresses many questions about God, love, and life after death. The teachings are immediately practical and deeply spiritual. The New Church is based on the teachings of the Bible as illuminated in the Writings of Emanuel Swedenborg.

The New Church (General Church of the New Jerusalem) has congregations around the world. All people are welcome to join in worship and participate in the life and community of the church.



FOCUS ON NEW WAY CHURCH Austin, Texas, USA

New Way Church is a new and growing congregation with a clear and strong mission: to help the people of Austin, Texas grow closer to the Lord God Jesus Christ in his second coming by means of local, relevant, healthy church communities. Its ongoing purpose is to be a community of fellowship that worships the Lord God Jesus Christ in His Divine Human, studies and declares the truths of faith found in His Word, and uses those truths to lead to and pursue lives of good in service to others. With regularly updated podcasts and website there are many ways to join in the services in person or from a distance. Come as you are, and bring a friend!

Find out more at <http://newwayaustin.org/>



photos by MAC FRAZIER

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...and Get Connected!

About Swedenborg and Works Cited

Emanuel Swedenborg was an 18th-century scientist and philosopher who continually studied the Word. Late in Swedenborg's life, the Lord called him to receive revelation for a new church. The New Church teaches that these Writings are divinely inspired revelation for the modern age—heavenly doctrines touching on many aspects of religion with a rational and merciful approach.

In this issue the following works of Swedenborg are referenced: *Divine Love and Wisdom*, and *True Christianity*.

New Church TEACHINGS

The perspectives in this magazine are based on the teachings of the New Church found in the Old and New Testaments and the Theological Writings of Emanuel Swedenborg.

Core teachings of the New Church:

- There is one loving, personal God, and He is the Lord Jesus Christ. His providence is powerful and unending. God guides each person's spiritual path, from the smallest things up to the biggest things, and His angels are with us every moment.
- The Old and New Testaments have a deeper meaning, revealed in the Writings of Emanuel Swedenborg, which help people lead happy and useful lives to eternity.
- Spiritual growth is a process. Through recognizing our sins, praying, shunning evils, and living a new life, we are transformed and united more closely with God.
- All religions have goodness in them. People of every faith are saved if they live sincerely according to their religion.
- Each of us continues life as a complete person immediately after the death of the body.
- While people are free to choose to live in hell, God wants everyone to live with Him in heaven to eternity.
- Marriage can last forever, for God blesses people with a special love in marriage that goes on after death, even to eternity.



photo by JOY FEERRAR

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We are not born for
our own sake;
we are born for the
sake of others.

-True Christianity 406



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