

# MANY PATHS TO PEACE

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## ONE WAY or MANY?

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SPIRITUAL INTIMACY  
within  
RELIGIOUS DIVERSITY*



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

# WELCOME

What has tied my heart most intimately to the New Church approach to spirituality is the respect and regard for other religions.

**A**long with the vision of a loving God, what has tied my heart most intimately to the New Church approach to spirituality is the respect and regard for other religions. The New Church shows me a path in which God is so loving that He allows variety in religion so that wherever we are born, whatever events happen to us, we are provided with opportunities to follow a path of kindness to each other, to ourselves and ultimately to a connection with Him.

If you are looking for a common thread in all religions, look no further than the Ten Commandments and the work of Ray and Star Silverman in the book *Rise Above It* (an excerpt on p.4). Witness the humility of one woman's journey to reconcile her faith with her husband's and find greater joy and enlightenment on the way in Diane Geanuleas' story on p.8. The compassionate ideas in this magazine are grounded in an understanding of the Old and New Testaments as revealed in the Writings of the New Church; see how in a biblical story examined by Rev. Kenneth Alden on p.20.

My hope and prayer for you today is that wherever you are on your spiritual journey you come closer to being kind to yourself, those around you, and take a step toward knowing the loving Creator who provides each one of us a path to reach Him. A path so beautifully described in New Church teachings. . .

*Bronwen Henry*

Bronwen Henry  
General Church Outreach



"The Lord never judges anyone except from love, for He desires to raise all into heaven, and if it was possible, even to Himself."  
—SECRETS OF HEAVEN 2335:3

PRODUCTION TEAM  
EXECUTIVE EDITOR  
David Lindrooth  
EDITOR  
AND CREATIVE DESIGN  
Bronwen Henry  
GRAPHIC AND CREATIVE DESIGN  
Caroline Kline  
CONTRIBUTING EDITORS  
Abigail Smith  
SUBSCRIPTION MANAGER  
Midje Kerr  
PROOFREADER  
Abigail Smith

General Church Outreach  
A department of the General Church of the New Jerusalem

1100 Cathedral Road  
PO Box 743  
Bryn Athyn, PA 19009

1-877-411-HOPE (4673)  
www.newchurch.org  
questions@newchurch.org

For general information  
call 267-502-4911

To contribute an article or personal story, or to request this magazine for yourself or a friend, please contact the production team at [outreach@newchurch.org](mailto:outreach@newchurch.org) for more information.

cover photo by:  
Lukas Odhner

## ONE WAY OR MANY?

Why are there so many religions? What do they have in common? How are they united? *Ray and Star Silverman* respond to these questions in an excerpt from their best selling book.

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*Living Courageously:* getting started in spiritual growth

*Letting go:* dealing with fear and worry



# ONE WAY or Many?

*Have you ever wondered why there are so many religions, what they have in common, and how they are united?*

Here Ray and Star Silverman respond to the question:  
*Is there one way to religion or many?*

By Ray and Star Silverman

People tend to believe that their chosen path is the “one right way” or “the only true religion.” It would probably be more accurate for people to say that the particular religion or spiritual path they have chosen is the right one for them. When people feel strongly about their chosen way, even to the point where they are eager to recruit others, it is usually because their religion works for them in their lives. Like the various forms of music, it may suit their taste; like the many approaches to education, it may match their learning style. This is perhaps why there are many religions—each with its unique external forms, traditions, and Sacred Scriptures, but all leading to the same destination. Religion, then, like music, is adapted to different cultural backgrounds and various states of consciousness. Just as there is not “one right song” or “one right flower” or “one right tree,” there is not “one right religion.” Any religion that leads to God is “right” because, ultimately, this is the aim of religious life—to find a way that leads us away from selfishness and into the presence of the Divine.

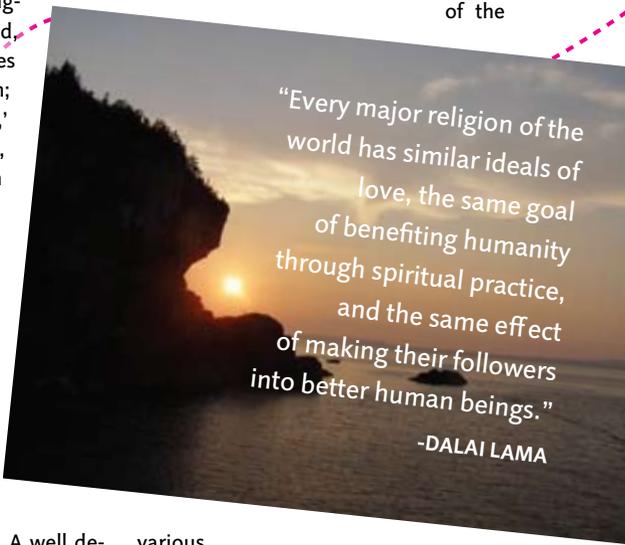
Whether we speak about the way to the presence of the Divine, the way to the Promised Land of Judaea-Christianity, or the way to the Pure Land of Buddhism we are speaking about the same thing. The roads may vary, but the destination remains the same—because the real destination is not in the world of time and space. It is the “Kingdom of God.” As Jesus said, “The Kingdom of God does not come with observation; nor will they say, ‘Here it is,’ or ‘There it is,’ for indeed, the Kingdom of God is within you” (Luke 17:21,22).

Still, even though the Kingdom of God is within us, we sometimes have difficulty discovering it on our own. So we may search for a particular religion, and try to find a reliable guide. This might be compared to going to a travel bureau for assistance and directions as we prepare for a journey. A well detailed, annotated “map” that describes the journey accurately is essential. In addition, a personal guide—minister, rabbi, guru, shaman, imam, etc.—can be most helpful. Because they have “been there,” they can help us make it over perilous terrain, and warn us of hidden dangers along the way.

They also know where we can find nourishment and springs of fresh water so that we can continue our journey. And they can recommend places where we

can find rest. A personal guide offers encouragement, helps us interpret the map, and offers gentle reminders when we misread it, forget to use it, or wander off the path.

The many religions of the world provide a wide variety of colorful maps for their followers. The Sacred Scriptures of the



“Every major religion of the world has similar ideals of love, the same goal of benefiting humanity through spiritual practice, and the same effect of making their followers into better human beings.”

-DALAI LAMA

various religions are really one map, and all the great religions, when understood more deeply, are really one religion. This is because they all teach the same fundamental message: There is One God, infinitely loving and wise, Who is leading each of us, at every moment, into all the love and wisdom we are willing to receive.

As the Dalai Lama has said, “Every major religion of the world has similar ideals of love, the same goal of benefiting



The Sacred Scriptures of the various religions are really one map, and all the great religions, when understood more deeply, are really one religion.



There is One God, infinitely loving and wise, Who is leading each of us, at every moment, into all the love and wisdom we are willing to receive.

photo by VERA JUNGHE

humanity through spiritual practice, and the same effect of making their followers into better human beings." In brief, every major religion seeks to aid its adherents in finding their way to the Kingdom of God.

So, the various religions do not have to be in conflict or even in competition with each other. They can be a wonderfully varied assortment of transportation modes and an exciting choice of forest trails, country roads and high-speed highways—all designed to take us to the same place. In the New Church, we have chosen the vehicle of Emanuel Swedenborg's teachings to take us there—especially the teaching that True Christianity consists in loving the Lord Jesus Christ

and living according to His commandments.

Whenever Swedenborg speaks about the Lord Jesus Christ, he is always referring to the Great God of all religions. This is the One True God of all people at all times. This is the One True God whose loving arms are so wide that they embrace all people in every faith. As the French novelist Honore de Balzac has written, "Swedenborg undoubtedly epitomizes all the religions—or rather the one religion of humanity." ●

This excerpt is adapted from *Rise Above It*, ©2005

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Filled with candid and inspiring journal entries and enriched by the teachings of the great religions, *Rise Above It* by Ray and Star Silverman invites you to enter into a life of ever increasing love, wisdom, and service.

Purchase a copy online today at [store.newchurch.org](http://store.newchurch.org)



Ray Silverman serves as chaplain and assistant professor at Bryn Athyn College [www.brynathyn.edu](http://www.brynathyn.edu).

Star Silverman continues to develop spiritual growth programs with a special emphasis on marriage. [www.riseaboveit.org](http://www.riseaboveit.org)

## Choosing a Spiritual Path



**Q** WHEN MANY PATHS LEAD TO PEACE, WHY WOULD ONE CHOOSE A NEW CHRISTIAN SPIRITUALITY?

**A** Spiritual growth is about relationships—your relationship with God and your relationships with other people. The New Church offers insight into a relationship with a loving, human God, the Lord Jesus Christ: the source of all true love.

The New Church clearly teaches steps that support individuals cultivating healthy relationships. Those steps involve self observation in the light of teachings such as the Ten Commandments; turning away from negative behaviors because they distance us from God and His life; beginning a new life; and constant prayer to Him because He knows perfectly how best to lift us out of these negative behaviors that only lead to isolation and loneliness.

As we walk out of our old life the Lord leads us into a new one that is blessed with the peace and contentment of heaven—a life that helps us to positively impact the lives of others. Part of the power of the New Christian spirituality is knowing that the Lord lived and walked among us as Jesus Christ. He modeled this life for us showing us how to love, serve and overcome adversity with compassionate wisdom.

By Rev. David Lindrooth

Chapter 8  
 The Union of Souls and Minds  
 Marriage, Which is the Meaning  
 the Lord's Words That They Are  
 No Longer Two, But One Flesh

From the kindness of a stranger, to falling in love, letting go and then accepting life's lessons, Diane Geanuleas shares how her life has been transformed by the message of the New Church.

I have lived a fortunate life, but I have rarely thought of it that way. Quite the opposite. When I was born to a teenage mother deserted by her husband, I was fortunate that we lived with her uncle and aunt who nurtured me in my most tender years. When at age three, we moved from their home never to see them again, we were lucky to stay for a time with my dear grandmother. Mom remarried.



Had the Lord provided the perfect husband to meet my exact spiritual needs, and had I, in ignorance, spent all those years resentful that he wasn't what I wanted, wasn't New Church?

At four, when I stood helplessly by as my gift from that uncle and aunt—a now-broken china doll named Annabelle—was thrown into the fiery coal furnace, I had my new baby sister to be a little mother to. At fifteen, when I returned from an uplifting week-long Catholic summer camp to hear my father say that my enthusiasm would be gone soon enough, I went on two years later to graduate at the top of my class.

By twenty-four, I had broken up with several boyfriends and was “searching for love in all the wrong places.” One evening I dropped into a Boston wine shop. A young man behind the counter said to me, “If I were going to get married, I’d want to marry a girl like you.” “Thank you,” I smiled. “No, no, I mean it,” he protested. “I know.”

“Wow, the Bible is all, if it is written like that,” I thought to myself.



article photos by DIANE GEANULEAS

I believed this man George, so in this first blush of new hope for one, life-long, loving marriage, I recalled the local Swedenbor-

gian bookstore I had once visited. Currently it was displaying, of all things, copies of a book entitled *Marriage Love!* I hurried to the shop a few days later, but couldn't afford the book. The clerk offered to give me a used copy.

Give me??? What kind of a bookstore gives you books you can't afford? These must be wonderful people.

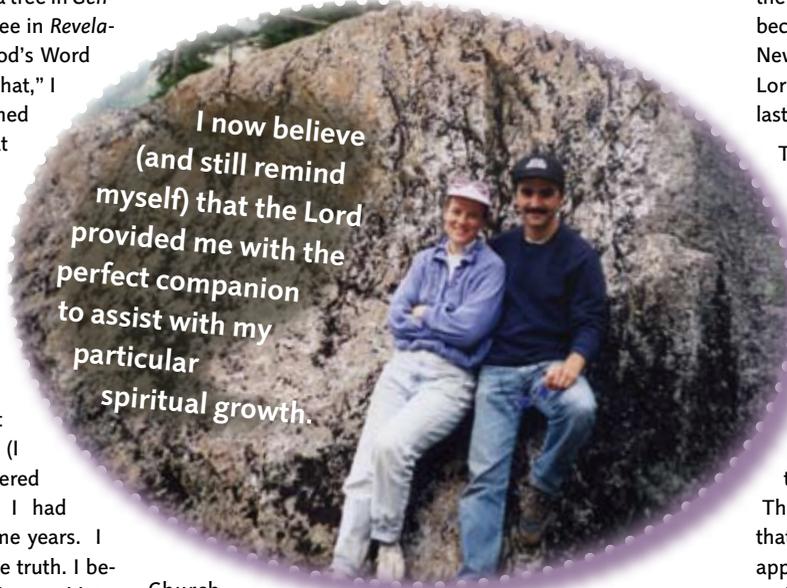
I took that precious volume home and explored the first chapter. It explained the Trinity as one God, and though I no longer believed in hell, it said we send ourselves to hell if hell is where we feel most at home.

I hurried back to this bookstore a week later, asking, “Does this Swedenborg have just a few good ideas, or is there a coherent system?” “Well, there's Corre-

spondences, meaning that a tree in *Genesis* means the same as a tree in *Revelation*.” “Wow, the Bible is God’s Word after all, if it is written like that,” I thought to myself. I questioned the clerk eagerly, “What about life after death? Were we real people, males and females?” “Yes, we lived together in married pairs—forever!”

Two quests in my life had come together. Because I had met George, I had sought out this book about marriage. It coincidentally (I say “providentially”) answered basic religious objections I had been wrestling with for some years. I knew *Marriage Love* told the truth. I began devouring dozens of pamphlets. I read sermons. I felt very fortunate in those days. Foundations were being laid for a true faith and a good marriage. George and I continued seeing and learning about each other, marrying very much in love four years later.

Then, with the Lord moving in his life, George started reading spiritual works that appealed to him, works that headed off in another direction from the New



I now believe (and still remind myself) that the Lord provided me with the perfect companion to assist with my particular spiritual growth.

I hung on to the marriage as we raised our children because I believed the Writings for the New Church were true, and in them the Lord showed me that marriages are to last throughout this life.

Church. My world fell apart. I could not change his mind no matter how much I prayed or argued. I knew George had to find his own way to the truth just as I had, but hadn’t I married my conjugal partner??? My soulmate? The one I read about in these books when we were falling in love? I let it discourage and poison our relationship. At times I could hardly stand my life. My body weight seesawed. I hung on to

the marriage as we raised our children because I believed the Writings for the New Church were true, and in them the Lord showed me that marriages are to last throughout this life.

Twenty years went by. Then we relocated from Seattle to Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania, the headquarters for the international New Church. I thought maybe now George would see how wonderful the church and the Writings were. But after seven years George knew he had to move back home. He wanted me to come with him if I wanted to, but he HAD to go. Dark turmoil enveloped me for months. Then in my despair, it dawned on me that this man with whom I had so many apparent surface differences really loved and cared for me, Diane. Had the Lord provided the perfect husband to meet my exact spiritual needs, and had I, in ignorance, spent all those years resentful that he wasn’t what I wanted, wasn’t New Church? George was always uncritical of me, a serious spiritual seeker, a supportive husband and father. He cherished the woman whose insides were still like that little girl who kept losing the things most precious to her, the little girl who was deprived of self-confidence with messages of “what makes you think you can do that?”

I now believe (and still remind myself) that the Lord provided me with the perfect companion to assist with my particular spiritual growth. My fortunate story

isn’t pretty. Only by trusting in the truth of the Writings for the New Church did I remain married to the man God intended for me. Any shortcomings in that regard are my own. Neither my loving husband nor my loving God is to blame. I am living a most fortunate life. ●

**WHAT IS YOUR STORY?**  
How has your life been impacted by living New Christian spirituality? Is there a spiritual practice or message that has transformed your relationships, work, or sense of peace and happiness? Share your story. Email [newchurchconnection@newchurch.org](mailto:newchurchconnection@newchurch.org).

# 3 STEPS to honoring the many paths to God

## WALK HUMBLY

“What does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.”

—MICAH 6:8

Only into a humble heart can the Divine flow;

because so far as a man is in humility, so far he is removed from Self, and thus from the love of self.

—NEW JERUSALEM AND ITS HEAVENLY DOCTRINE 129

“Religion is to do right. It is to love, it is to serve, it is to think, it is to be humble.”

—RALPH WALDO EMERSON

### APPLICATION

**Trust God** is working in the lives of other people in unique ways. Acknowledge the many things you do not know and remember that God’s plan is bigger than your own.

## LISTEN DEEPLY

“To listen well, is as powerful a means of influence as to talk well, and is as essential to all true conversation.”

—CHINESE PROVERB

“Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.”

—MATTHEW 5:43

### APPLICATION

**What does it look like** to love someone with whom you disagree? Perhaps it is listening deeply and with love. Strive to be present with people who are on a different path than you, listening deeply to their stories.

## LOOK *for* UNITY

“Every unity has its existence from variety, for a unity that is not the result of variety is not anything.”

—HEAVEN AND HELL 56

“So powerful is the light of unity that it can illuminate the whole earth.”

—BAHA’U’LLAH

### APPLICATION

**Look for goodness** in other religions. Honor what is good and beautiful in the spiritual journeys of those around you. Look for unity and connection.

REV. GÖRAN APPELGREN SHARES PERSPECTIVES FROM A NEW CHRISTIAN SPIRITUALITY ABOUT PARENTING, ETERNITY AND MORE.

# Life is full of QUESTIONS.



“No one has ever been predestined to hell, but all have been predestined to eternal life.”  
—Secrets of Heaven 6488

photo by ALINE BROWN

SHARE YOUR SPIRITUALITY BY SHOWING YOUR CHILDREN THAT THE LORD IS REAL TO YOU.

## Q HOW CAN I SHARE MY SPIRITUALITY WITH MY CHILDREN?

**a** The best answer is: show them by example. Nothing is a better teacher than your own behavior. Share your spirituality by showing your children that the Lord is real to you, that you have found support and consolation by turning to Him. Tell them why you visit the place of worship you do, how you say your prayers. Talk to other people about your faith when your children are around. You share your

spirituality by conveying a love for the Bible. Read the stories. Explain them on the level your children understand. Finally, follow your God by doing His commandments. This will definitely have an impact on them.

## Q IS HELL ETERNAL?

**a** Hell is not a punishment, nor is heaven a reward. . . . They are both a consequence of how we lived in this world. There are two things involved. One is order, the other is what

motivates a person. Order: imagine how it would be if suddenly a third of the ruling party in a country's parliament would change sides. The government would falter. There would be no stability. The other thing is that people who have used the full span of their lives to confirm their selfish attitude have no wish to change. You could say they are invited all the time to join the angels, but they will find it boring. They love being deceitful, cunning, cruel and other bad things. They made their choice and they don't want to change, and so hell will be eternal by their choice.

## Q COULD PEOPLE BE SAVED BEFORE CHRIST CAME TO EARTH?

**a** There is only One God. The Jehovah of the Old Testament is the God who came to earth as the Lord Jesus Christ. God has a special presence among people who recognize God as Jesus Christ, and God has revealed Himself to other people and other cultures around the world under different names. This question is almost like asking whether people in other religions are saved. The answer is a definite yes. People of all religions who worship their God and follow the commandments of that tradition will be saved. This is a perspective one can apply to those who lived before Christ. They were saved so far as they strove to-

ward living a righteous life according to the beliefs of their religion.

## Q CAN GOD SAVE PEOPLE WHO DENY HIS EXISTENCE?

**a** God loves all people. He does not get upset like we do when we are rejected. But in order to make His love real people have to do something in return. Think about a marriage. Suppose the woman puts a high value on being faithful. She knows fidelity will build trust and a lasting love. At the same time the husband does not see her love and care for him. He is unable to put his effort into the equation. No matter how much the wife tries there will not be a happy marriage.

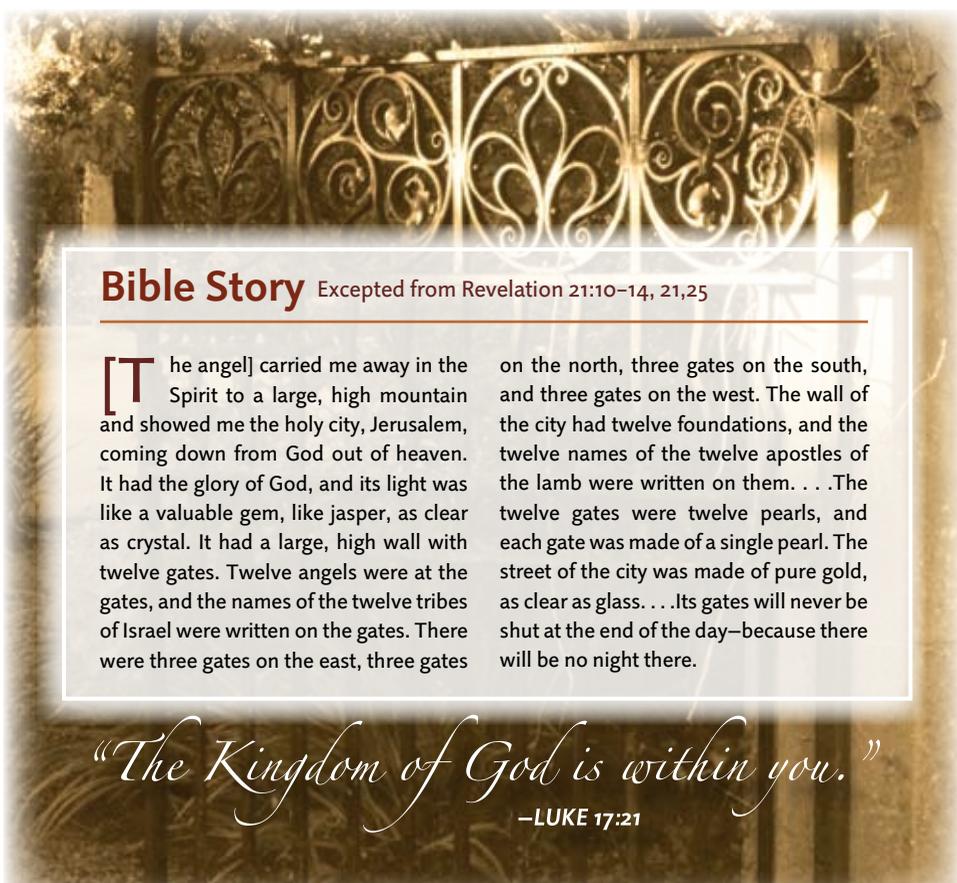
When “atheists” wake up on the other side there will have to be some kind of effort, some willingness to accept God as above themselves, to put their selfish qualities aside. Compare with the marriage again. In order to arrive at such a disposition “the atheist” would have to have some doubts about his conviction and definitely a good attitude toward his fellow human beings before he meets His Creator. ●



**Göran Appelgren** is the Pastor of the New Church in Stockholm, Sweden. For more information about this church go to [www.nyakyrkan.se](http://www.nyakyrkan.se).

# The Bible Says What?

Many stories from the Bible are understood at face value. Others are more difficult to follow. Consider this description from the book of Revelation, the final book in the Bible. It appears to describe the physical nature of a heavenly city. **Rev. Kenneth Alden** uses the insights provided in the Writings of the New Church to explore how the meaning of this story has more to do with our life and how we live than celestial architecture.

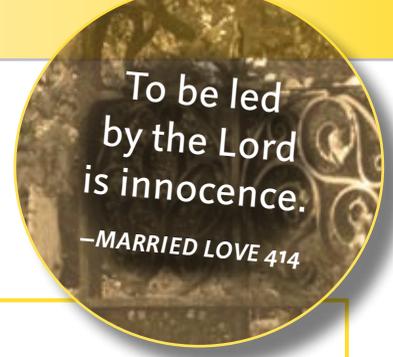


## Bible Story Excerpted from Revelation 21:10–14, 21,25

[The angel] carried me away in the Spirit to a large, high mountain and showed me the holy city, Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven. It had the glory of God, and its light was like a valuable gem, like jasper, as clear as crystal. It had a large, high wall with twelve gates. Twelve angels were at the gates, and the names of the twelve tribes of Israel were written on the gates. There were three gates on the east, three gates on the north, three gates on the south, and three gates on the west. The wall of the city had twelve foundations, and the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the lamb were written on them. . . .The twelve gates were twelve pearls, and each gate was made of a single pearl. The street of the city was made of pure gold, as clear as glass. . . .Its gates will never be shut at the end of the day—because there will be no night there.

*“The Kingdom of God is within you.”*  
—LUKE 17:21

photo by MIRIAM BLACOMON



## Going Deeper Insight —By Kenneth Alden

Readers of the Bible have long been inspired by the vision of “the holy city, New Jerusalem” with its golden streets, jeweled foundations, and pearly gates. To this day, interpretations of this account show that most people do not grasp the implications of what Jesus said elsewhere about His kingdom’s coming: “The kingdom of God does not come with observation; nor will they say, ‘See here!’ or ‘See there!’ For indeed, the kingdom of God is within you” (Luke 17:20–21). Let’s not look for a city to land on a piece of ground. Let’s look for God’s kingdom to nestle within us.

In the book *Apocalypse Revealed* Emanuel Swedenborg explains that the New Jerusalem means a newly established church because Jerusalem, (the Biblical center of worship), meant that body of believers who kept God’s commandments and did His will. Its protective wall means the literal sense of the Bible, for Jesus taught in a way that guarded His meaning from those who were wise in their own eyes, but revealed it to “babes”—those who follow God with child-like innocence (see Matthew 11:25, 13:10–17). For these,

there are many ways through the “wall” and into this new church.

The twelve gates stand for all the knowledge of truth and goodness that is found in the Bible. These gates were each a single pearl because this varied knowledge is singular in strengthening followers of God in their belief that Jesus Christ is God Himself, Creator and Savior. Each area of knowledge is a gate which is beautiful because of its acknowledgment of God. This is true whether we are touched by the Word’s teachings about the Lord’s leading or His power to deliver us from evil, about what it is to truly love and serve the neighbor or to be made one with our spouse, about how the Lord communicates through His Word or our place in heaven. Each gate is a point of entrance for those who, as a little child, put their hand in the Lord’s hand and do His will. ●



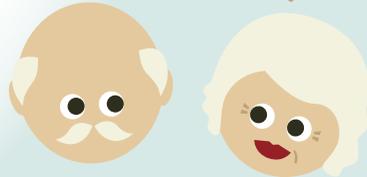
*Kenneth Alden is the Pastor at the New Church at Boynton Beach in Florida. For more info about this church go to [www.boyntonbeachnewchurch.org](http://www.boyntonbeachnewchurch.org)*

## Spiritual Intimacy with Religious Diversity

Building intimacy with someone who has a different outlook on the world can be challenging. But it is possible. *Rev. Frank Rose* provides concrete steps for couples with different faiths to bring spirituality into their relationship.

### realchallenges

*How can a couple work on strengthening their spiritual connection when they are of different religions?*



### Communication Starters for Couples

Imagine a situation in which both people agree to communicate, and give each other equal time to share. They might invite each other to finish statements like these:

- ✦ *These are some of the ideas of right and wrong that I grew up with. . .*
- ✦ *These are some of the things I would like to be remembered for after my death. . .*
- ✦ *These are the values that shape my life. . .*
- ✦ *Here are some of the ways I would like to make a difference in the world. . .*
- ✦ *Some of the goals I have for my personal growth are. . .*

### realsupport

There are many challenges in building a working relationship between two people in a marriage. In some ways the spiritual side may be easier to work on than the many practical challenges in marriage, and work on the spiritual level can give great rewards.

Arguments about religion between partners with different faiths, or no faith, don't usually work very well. What is needed is more a sharing of thoughts and feelings than a discussion.

The main idea is to generate dialogue about things that really matter to you and to listen to each other with the heart, without having to confront differences. This will do a lot to build up the spiritual side of your relationship.

Whatever is done, it is important to remember that spiritual life is very much a personal concern. We enter marriage as individuals and remain individuals, even though connected with one another. Each person in the relationship has a responsibility to work on his or her own development. It is possible to have one

person in the marriage working on personal spiritual issues, and not the other. The one who is doing the work is making an important contribution to the marriage, even though their partner might not be aware of it. This personal spiritual work does not depend on the other person being involved.

Other ways of building the spiritual side include working together on projects of value to others. A couple may have different ideas about religion, but they can agree that it is worthwhile to make a positive contribution to the world in which they live.

There is always prayer. If couples are not able to pray with each other, but can still pray for each other, this might be the greatest way of contributing to the spiritual side of their marriage. ●

*We enter marriage as individuals and remain individuals, even though connected with one another.*



**Frank Rose** is a retired Pastor, residing in Tucson, Arizona near Sunrise Chapel. For more information about this church go to [www.sunrisechapel.org](http://www.sunrisechapel.org)



# Many Paths lead to Heaven

You may have heard that people believe only the followers of their religion are saved. In the New Christian spirituality you will discover something new.

Rev. Chuck Blair explores this topic further.

There is a great deal of common sense wisdom in the world. In 2008, the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life reported that 70% of Americans believed that religions other than their own could lead to eternal life. The formal theology of many denominations in the United States, however, states that theirs is the sole path to heaven. Clearly a division exists between what people commonly believe and what mainline theology formally teaches.

The New Church embraces the idea that variety is perfection, that many paths lead to heaven provided one looks up to God, as they understand Him, for guidance, and looks out in service to one's neighbor.

It is an ecumenical approach toward salvation. Of course an ecumenical approach does not mean "anything goes." Divine Providence 101 (see pullout quote on p.21) also states that "If we do not give thought to the evils within us, that is, if we do not examine ourselves and then refrain from doing them, we wind up inevitably not knowing what evil is and then loving it because of the pleasure it offers." Pleasure in the end then, if it grows from a self-centered appetite, en-

slaves us. If however we employ a faith born of love to focus our lives, we can better serve the lives we touch, gaining the freedom in the end that God desires for all mankind.

One way to hold it can be seen in a quote by the former Miami Dolphins head coach, Don Shula. He wrote, "A river without banks is a puddle." An institutional Church, creed, or body gives humanity the "banks." Those edges channel our efforts, helping us to add definition to our efforts as we seek to serve.

As a result of this ecumenical approach the New Church holds several outlooks about other religions. First of all, a profound respect for other faiths. Secondly, the absence of tearing down the faith of another to extend faith in oneself.

70% of Americans believed that religions other than their own could lead to eternal life.

Thirdly, in the New Church salvation is seen as an individual choice, based on how one's intentions are lived out in life.

Salvation is not a matter of membership in a particular religious body or acknowledgement of one particular religious creed. Salvation is a matter of life.

Emanuel Swedenborg spoke of what such a world could be if all held deep respect for the beliefs of others while at the same time holding true to the heart of religion which is love. In speaking of a large former church he said that in this church,

"doctrinal and ritual matters differed, but still the church was one, because to them charity was the essential thing. Then the Lord's kingdom on earth was as it is in the heavens, for such is heaven. If it were so now, all would be governed by the Lord as one person; because they would be seen as members of one body, which, although not of similar form, nor of similar function, would all have connection to one heart. Then would each person say, in whatever doctrine and in whatever outward worship he or she might be, This is my brother or sister, I see that they worship the Lord, and they are a good person" (Secrets of Heaven 2385).

What a world that would be!

"In the spiritual world where we arrive after death, no one asks what our faith has been, or what our beliefs have been, only what our life has been, whether we were one kind of person or the other."  
—Emanuel Swedenborg, Divine Providence 101



Rev. Chuck Blair is an admissions officer and religion teacher at the Academy of the New Church Boy's School [www.ncss.org](http://www.ncss.org). He is also a chaplain for weddings at Cairnwood Mansion in Bryn Athyn, PA [www.newchurchwedding.com](http://www.newchurchwedding.com).

photo by BARRIE RIDGEWAY



## Congregations around the world

The New Church is a new Christianity that provides a clear path to happiness and addresses your 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 THE NEW CHURCH AT Bucleuch, Johannesburg, South Africa

The New Church Bucleuch is a culturally diverse congregation located within Johannesburg striving to help people experience the living presence of the one God and His passionate love for us and learn what it is to grow as a person. [www.thenewchurch.co.za](http://www.thenewchurch.co.za)

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...And Get Connected!

## 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.

Here are the core teachings of the New Church:

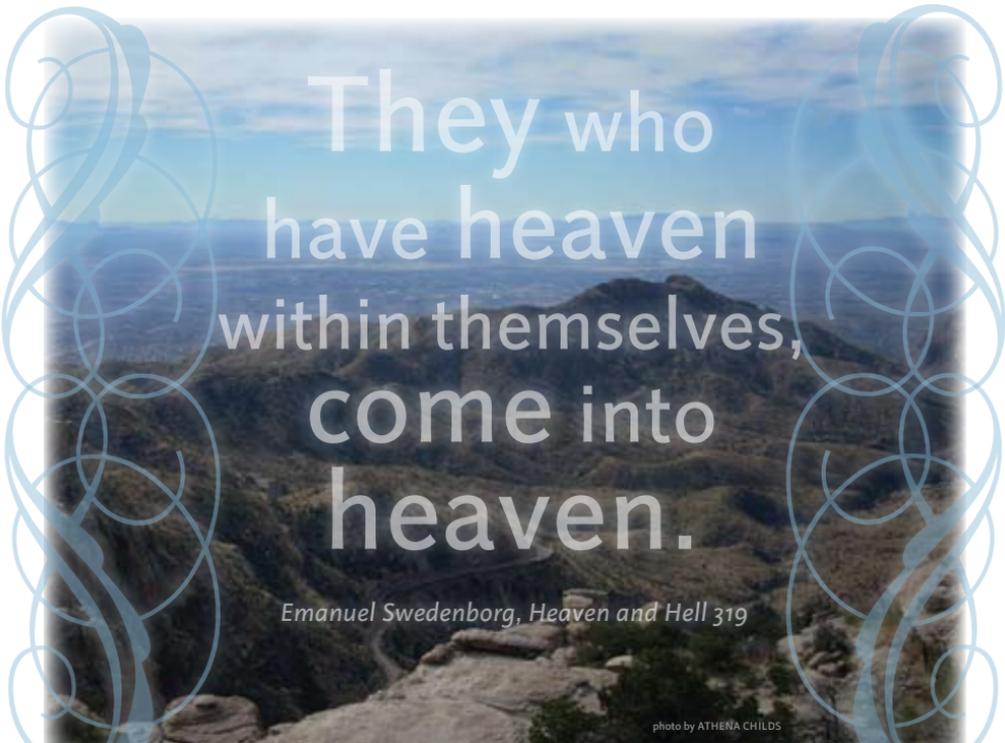
- There is one loving, personal God, and He is the Lord Jesus Christ. His providence is powerful and unending. God guides each person's spiritual path, from the smallest things up to the biggest things, and His angels are with us every moment.
- The Old and New Testaments have a deeper meaning, revealed 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, prayer, shunning evil, 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.

## About Swedenborg and Works Cited

Emanuel Swedenborg was an 18th century scientist and philosopher who continually studied the Word, later devoting his life to the revelation of the New Church. In the New Church we believe his later works are a divinely inspired revelation for the modern age, touching on all the different aspects of religion with a rational and common-sense approach. In this issue, the following works of Swedenborg are referenced: *Secrets of Heaven*, *New Jerusalem and Its Heavenly Doctrine*, *Heaven and Hell*, *Divine Providence*, and *Married Love*.

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They who  
have heaven  
within themselves,  
come into  
heaven.

*Emanuel Swedenborg, Heaven and Hell 319*