

NEW CHURCH *Life*

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

MARCH/APRIL 2016



The Final Victory Over Hell

The Rev. James P. Cooper explains the Lord's final victory over hell with His crucifixion and resurrection – and what it means to our lives. (Page 123) In this Easter window, Christ is meeting with Mary after His resurrection.

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 a sermon on “The Final Victory Over Hell” the Rev. James P. Cooper describes how the Lord “removed hell from mankind by breaking its power” over us and giving us another path to choose by teaching us the way to heaven. But all of this doesn’t mean anything if we don’t put these teachings to use in our daily lives. (Page 123)

In a sermon on “The Eternity of Marriage,” the Rev. Brett D. Buick says, “Just as the Pharisees sought to destroy the definition of marriage 2,000 years ago, the hells are at work today trying to do the same thing.” And the Lord’s message to the Pharisees about the sacredness of marriage is the same as it is for us today. “It is a message for all time and all challenges to marriage.” (Page 129)

This year’s Boynton Beach Retreat fell into a natural theme of past, present and future. Dr. Martha Gyllenhaal took a look back to “Art and Religion in History,” especially from a New Church perspective. The Rev. Mark D. Pendleton focused on where we are today with a program he has developed using the steps of regeneration to “Begin a New Life.” Curtis Childs provided a glimpse into the future with videos he is producing for the Swedenborg Foundation which are attracting a following all over the world and offer hope for the spread of the Church. (Page 135)

Brian Blair, the new President of Bryn Athyn College, gave the banquet address at the Boynton Beach Retreat on the current state of the College and ambitious plans for growth and development. “It is indeed exciting,” he said, “to see how a culture and environment are being developed where students begin to appreciate what is special about Bryn Athyn College as well as the Bryn Athyn community.” (Page 143)

In a memorial address for B. Reade Genzlinger, who died in a plane crash in January, the Rev. Kurt Hy. Asplundh noted the qualities that served him in this life and will serve him in the spiritual world as well: caring devotion to others, calm dependability, intellectual curiosity and good judgment. In his service to the Church, Academy, community, organizations and family he was the epitome of the good and faithful servant. (Page 149)

The Rev. Kenneth J. Alden writes about “A Stumbling Block to Sharing Our Faith” – the warning that we are not to add anything to the Word of the Lord. “Are we violating the Lord’s law,” he asks, “in accepting the theological writings of Emanuel Swedenborg as Divine revelation?” But he offers six points

“that offer assurance that our faith is not misplaced.” (Page 157)

Nadine Rogers uses her experiences of living in Nepal for perspective on building our relationship with God: “The Right Guy for the Bad Times, Or the Plastic Bag Diet.” Yes, life can be messy and filled with disappointments but God knows “that underneath all of that is one of the people He planned for since time began, whom He waited for with eager anticipation, whom He lit a star for in heaven.” (Page 160)

Introducing Our Ministers focuses on the Rev. Nathan F. Cole, assistant to the pastor of the Carmel Church in Kitchener, Ontario, Canada. He grew up the son of a minister so the ministry was always in the back on his mind growing up. But among many part-time jobs it was serving as an educational intern at Glencairn Museum in Bryn Athyn, where he gave tours and helped teach children, that the seed was really planted. (Page 167) In a sermon about Exodus of the Children of Israel from bondage in Egypt, Nathan shows how those trials – and eventual deliverance – relate to our own lives: “It Gets Worse Before It Gets Better.” (Page 170)

The Rev. Derrick Lumsden, pastor of the Sower’s Chapel in Sarver, Pennsylvania, offers some thoughts on leadership from a New Church perspective. Leadership, he says, comes down to influence on others – for good or evil. The Lord is the ultimate leader, influencing us through influx. We can all benefit from studying leadership, with the Lord as our model. (Page 173)

Church News (page 175) includes:

The latest in minister moves around the Church

- A report on the February meeting of the General Church Board, including an update on the strategic planning process
- An informal report from Bishop Brian Keith at the Boynton Beach Retreat on the state of the Church
- A report on General Church Education open houses in Bryn Athyn, designed to reach out to interested people with updates on New Church education throughout the Church
- A report from Bishop Peter Buss Jr. on an episcopal visit to India in the fall, including pictures
- Information on summer camps in Bryn Athyn
- Featured speakers for this year’s Book Expo in Bryn Athyn
- Information about regional clergy meetings throughout the Church this year

Cover: This Easter window scene of Christ meeting with Mary after His resurrection was designed by Winfred Hyatt for Glencairn in the 1930s. Our thanks to Glencairn Museum for providing this image from its collection.

Editorials

HOW CAN WE BELIEVE IN THE LORD'S RESURRECTION?

We are told in the Heavenly Doctrine that the Lord, after dying on the cross, came back to life – not just in the spiritual world as all people do on the third day after their body dies, but with the body He had in this world. “A spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see I have.” (*Luke 24:39*)

As Christians this is what we believe, and as New Church people this belief is bolstered by the comprehensive and rational explanation we have of the whole process of glorification the Lord went through during His life in the world. His Resurrection was the completion of that process and must be understood in that context.

But still, it is mind-boggling – so what does it really mean when we say we believe in it?

First of all, it is a *miracle*, and must be considered as such. In fact, it was the culmination of a series of miracles, beginning with the Lord's miraculous conception and birth. If you believe in the Virgin Birth, in the miracles of healing, and the others – turning water to wine, multiplying the loaves and the fishes, walking on water, the raising of Lazarus from the tomb – then belief in the Lord's Resurrection is not quite such a stretch. If Jesus was Divine, then miracles are to be expected.

The point is: the Resurrection is an integral part of the whole view of Jesus as God. The alternative idea is that He was simply a good man, a wise teacher, a charismatic preacher, a political revolutionary or social reformer – in which case He is not worshiped as Divine, and the Resurrection is a moot point.

Real Christianity, though, is the worship of the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Savior, and since miracles are what God does, they are part and parcel of the Christian religion. If we believe the Lord can save us from hell and raise us up into eternal life in heaven, then surely we can believe that He could overrule His own death. Miracles, by definition, are beyond natural “proof,” but the ability to know of things beyond the natural is an essential part of what it means to be human.

Consider also that there are different *kinds* of belief. For example: that

Abraham Lincoln was President during the Civil War; that Toronto is about 500 miles from Philadelphia; that $E=mc^2$; that government should be by consent of the people; and that your spouse loves you.

The first of those beliefs is a matter of historical record. The next one is a natural fact that we could check for ourselves by driving from one city to the other. $E=mc^2$ is an arcane scientific theorem which is beyond the comprehension of most people, so our belief that it is true rests upon the authority of scientists who tell us it is. The belief about government is a philosophical belief, supported by reason and experience, although it can also be argued against. So we see there are various grounds for believing something, including: history, scientific evidence, authoritative opinion and philosophical principles.

But the most important item on my list of beliefs, the one that would matter the most to a person – believing in your spouse’s love – is the least susceptible to objective or scientific proof. Religious beliefs are like that: they are not conclusions arrived at by means of facts or natural reasoning (though facts and logic can confirm them), but they matter very much.

Religious belief is not just believing that an event actually happened as claimed, or of agreeing with a certain creed or set of doctrines – but it affects the *will*. It is a *heartfelt* belief. So the question is not just *whether* we believe in the Lord’s Resurrection, but the degree to which that belief touches our heart, enters into our thought, and affects how we live.

The most powerful truths are seen by the eye of love. For example: people don’t fight to the death just for the *idea* of liberty but for the *love* of it, from which the idea arose in the first place.

Knowing something from our own inner experience produces a deeper and more living kind of belief than believing something theoretically or even from external evidence. Believing in the Lord’s Resurrection just as something that happened long ago in history, or as a powerful myth, is inconsequential compared to *experiential* knowledge of it as a reality within ourselves, in the here and now.

But how can we come into such a state, so that the Lord’s Resurrection is something we see to be true from an inner conviction, from love?

First of all: “Those who acknowledge the Lord and love to lead a life in keeping with His commandments are enlightened when they read the Word – for the Lord flows into a person’s life and from this into his belief, but not into a person’s belief separate from his life.” (*Arcana Coelestia* 10659)

Reflect on the story of the Lord’s last few days of earthly life. The fickleness of the crowd. Judas’s betrayal. Peter’s denial. Pilate’s skepticism and willingness to compromise his belief in the innocence of Jesus. The disciples’ fear and despair. Thomas’s doubt. The women whose devotion brought them to the

tomb in the darkness before the dawn, when hope seemed gone. All of these are mirrors in which we see . . . ourselves.

The Lord's story is our story writ large. As He took up His cross, so we must take up ours. His Resurrection is our resurrection.

"On the first day of the week Mary Magdalene came to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw that the stone had been taken away . . ." She ran and told Simon Peter and John, and they came and looked, then returned home. "But Mary stood outside by the tomb weeping . . ." (*John 20:11*)

The Lord whom she loved had been killed, she had come to care for His body and now even that was gone. And His disciples were gone, and there was nothing she could do but stand there, alone, weeping by the empty tomb.

Only it was not empty, and she was not alone. "She stooped down and looked into the tomb, and she saw two angels in white sitting, one at the head and the other at the foot, where the body of Jesus had lain." And then as the light of morning filled the sky above her, the Light of Life dispelled the darkness within her, and she turned and He spoke her name. "Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning." (*Psalms 30:5*)

"Morning," we are told in the Heavenly Doctrine, stands for the coming of the Lord and His kingdom, and the rise of a new church, and on a personal level, when a person is being regenerated and spiritually renewed. It is "morning" spiritually for us whenever love and faith flow into our minds and bring the warmth and light of heaven into our lives. This is the Resurrection of the Lord in us. "He rises daily, indeed every single moment, in the minds of regenerate persons." (*Arcana Coelestia 2405*)

Then, far from being a dark, cold, inert historical fact, or a dry and dusty doctrine carved out of the letter of the Word, the Lord's Resurrection becomes a present reality and a living truth: warm, moving, beautiful, full of reassurance and hope. It is the dawn of a new day.

"I am the resurrection, and the life," He said.

"Because I live, you shall live also," He said.

"I am with you always," He said.

The more we take these words to heart and are moved by the eternal love behind them, the more clearly we will not just believe but know that they are true. And the glory of the Lord will arise upon us, and our soul will rise with it.

His Resurrection is our resurrection.

(WEO)

OUR WALK TO EMMAUS

The great gift of the revealed internal sense of the Word is not only that we can come to know the Lord there but to see and understand how everything in the Word speaks to our own lives. The Easter story has its obvious and enduring promise of salvation and eternal life – but so much more.

How much of ourselves can we see in this story? And how much can we learn and apply to our lives?

It is easy to identify with the happy throngs welcoming Jesus Christ as their king on Palm Sunday. In their eyes He had come to deliver them from the hated Romans – in their eyes, a natural king. It took less than a week for them to realize that their vision was different from His and for their roiling voices to turn from “Hallelujah!” to “Crucify Him!” What happened? And how does that relate to us?

We assume – like Peter – that we would never deny the Lord. But Peter did – three times. All of the disciples who followed Jesus abandoned Him in His time of need. Whether confused, afraid, unsure, they did not stand with Him. Peter denied even that He knew Him – and then was ashamed.

How often might we feel inspired – by a sermon, a moment of reflection, reading the Word, experiencing a glorious sunrise – only to be sucked back into the demands and drama of “the real world”? How often do we turn away from the Lord – even unconsciously? The disciples surely were not crying out “Crucify Him,” but they did shrink from the evil surging around them, and we may know the feeling.

It is as though they had not been listening or really understood what the Lord had been teaching them. It was after His crucifixion and resurrection that two of His disciples – and through them all of us – came to know and understand the Lord on the Road to Emmaus, and to find real meaning in their lives.

When they set off on their walk to Emmaus, they were distraught. They had seen their Lord crucified. He was gone from their lives. They were sad, confused and suddenly unsure about their lives. The Lord had been preparing them for this, but they did not understand. And so they turned away from Jerusalem – away from lives that had been centered on the Lord – for a forlorn journey. They had no idea what they were looking for, or what they would find.

The risen Lord joined them but they did not recognize Him and were stunned that this stranger could not know what had just happened over this dark weekend. As they revealed themselves to Him, He revealed Himself to them. And He admonished them: “O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?” And then, “beginning at Moses and

all of the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.” (*Luke 24:25-27*)

Suddenly they were able to see with new eyes. They had a new attitude and wanted to understand. And now so it can be for us when we read the Word. It takes a sincere desire to know divine truth for its own sake for us to be open to being taught by the Lord. That is our walk to Emmaus.

After the Lord had taught them and was gone from their sight, they marveled: “Did not our hearts burn within us while He talked with us on the road, and while He opened the Scriptures to us?” (*Ibid. 24:32*)

We know that all of the Word teaches love of the Lord and love of the neighbor. It is that simple. And it is that profound. From this springs the life of charity – the life of religion: to be kind and useful in our lives. From this springs trust in the Lord – His love and His providence – that we can “walk through the valley of the shadow of death and fear no evil,” because He is always with us. That is the love to be burning within us.

And so we have a kinship with these two disciples wandering somewhat aimlessly on the Road to Emmaus. They knew where they were headed but not really where they were going. Surely at times we resonate with their emptiness and frustration, their doubt and confusion, their lack of direction. The Lord came to them as He comes to us, to put aside our foolish ways and to find our goal in life – by following Him.

(BMH)

‘WHAT’S WRONG WITH IT’

Popular culture today places little value on protecting the innocence of children, and modern communication makes them aware of many disorderly things which they are not able to understand or judge rightly.

Moreover, the media (including the extremely influential social media) routinely portray disorder in an unrealistic light as normal, benign, and even something to celebrate. The oppressive and morally skewed culture of political correctness is pervasive, and the sad and painful consequences of the “new morality” are either ignored or made out to be the fault of an uncaring society.

Let’s face it: our children’s minds are being formed in a toxic spiritual environment, opposed, in some important respects at least, to the order of heaven. They have much more in the way of factual information about subjects formerly considered delicate and private than previous generations of children had, but less in the way of a commonly accepted moral framework within which such subjects should be considered.

The Lord, in His providence and by means of His Word, and by means of the Church when it is true to the Word, works to place a spiritual shield around

children, but they can't help but be influenced by false ideas, false reasoning and harmful attitudes that make it harder for them to find and stay on "the strait and narrow" path of life. How can they "know the truth" which will make them free in a culture that sees truth as each individual's personal construct?

This state of things has made the job of parents today even more difficult. They are faced with having to answer questions about things they wish their children had never heard of, and can't imagine how to talk to a child about; things they know are wrong but the wrongness of which they would be hard pressed to explain to a child – such as abortion, homosexuality, and now the transgender issue.

The inappropriateness and extreme difficulty of speaking to children about such matters means that most of what they hear about them (which is a lot) comes from the shameless world of popular entertainment, the "values free education" offered by public schools, or advocacy groups dedicated to promoting a "new normal."

"What's wrong with it?" the child asks. And it is very likely that the idea has already been instilled in the child's mind that there is nothing wrong with it, and that anyone who says so is judgmental, mean-spirited and bigoted. So it's a loaded question, especially if it comes from one in the "Ishmael rational" state of mind in which adolescents often are – just looking for harsh judgmentalism that they can . . . judge harshly.

The difficulty parents face is just a more intense version of the dilemma all those who value traditional morality face: either keep silent, and thus appear to give tacit approval to things they know are wrong and harmful, or have a big scarlet letter H for "Hater" placed upon them. We've come full circle: society used to condemn adultery, now it condemns those who condemn adultery.

The irony is that things once considered unmentionable, but which are now talked about constantly, still cannot be freely discussed, for several reasons. Partly it is because there is a natural and proper reluctance to speak explicitly about unpleasant subjects. How can you discuss a topic like abortion, for instance, with a child; or, for that matter, with an adult who refuses to consider it as anything other than a "right," and automatically condemns any proposed limitation upon it as representing a "war on women"? How can society ever arrive at clarity on the rightness or wrongness of something that is only spoken of in euphemisms and vague generalities such as "reproductive health"?

Furthermore, many (or most) people have friends or family members who are or have been involved in a disorder, and they love those people, and love and value their good qualities, and do not want to appear to condemn them, or add to their troubles. In fact, no one of good will wants to add to the pain of anyone who is laboring under the burden of a disorder.

At the same time the proponents of “progress” are demanding that traditional moral restraints be reconsidered, the culture of political correctness won’t tolerate any real debate. There is only one “correct” viewpoint, and any deviation from it is heresy.

And thus the conversation tends to be one-sided, with the forceful demand for “change” and “progress” being met only by silence or a simple assertion that “it’s not right” without any explanation of *why* it is not right. Children need more when they ask: “what’s wrong with it?”

So, what can parents tell their children? First of all: that there *is* such a thing as right and wrong, and that the ability to tell the difference is what distinguishes humans from beasts. Even this most basic truth needs to be clearly taught and explained and defended.

And how do we know the difference between right and wrong? Because the Lord has told us in His *Word*, beginning with the *Ten Commandments*. And because, if we take the teachings of the Word to heart, we will develop a genuine *conscience*, an inner voice that will tell us that certain things are right and others are wrong.

We aren’t born with a true conscience, it has to be acquired – not from sitcoms or MTV or pop psychologists, but from our Creator, from whom all life and human goodness flow.

And we can explain to children and young people that “wrong” is not just an abstract concept or arbitrary category, but means things which are *harmful*, things that cause sadness and pain, because they are contrary to the genuine order of human life, the order of heaven, established by the Lord out of His Divine love for us.

We can see what is right and wrong by observing the *consequences* of different ways of acting. “You shall know them by their fruits.” (*Matthew 7:16*) Over the centuries, people have learned from experience what brings life and happiness, and what brings death and misery. Genuine morality is mentally and physically healthy and life-affirming and life-enhancing and life-creating.

The only reason the Lord forbids anything is because it will diminish our humanity and bring sadness upon us. If it were immediately obvious to us in our natural state what these things are, we would not have to be taught. And if we were not attracted to them, there would be no need to forbid them.

The fact that someone desires something does not mean it is good; if all human desires were good there would be no sin, no temptation, no need for repentance and to be “born again” spiritually. Human life would be easy. But it is not easy. The path of life that leads to heaven does not come naturally to anyone. “If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.” (*Matthew 16:24*) But that path, the path of real human progress, is the one path that many – in the name of “progress!” – fail to honor,

and dismiss as obsolete.

We cannot control our loves, but we *can* control our actions; and when we compel ourselves to do what is right, and not do what is wrong, the Lord will purify and elevate our loves. “Act precedes, willing follows.” (*Arcana Coelestia* 4353.3) Desires contrary to the life of heaven will not disappear overnight, and may never be completely vanquished in this world, but those “who endure to the end shall be saved.” (*Matthew 10:22*)

The problem is not as simple as choosing between love and hate, but learning *what* we should love and *what* we should hate. It is not people we are against, but behavior that *hurts* people, and ideas that foment such behavior. One example is the Lord, who came, not to condemn, but to “call sinners to repentance.” (*John 3:17, 8:11; Matthew 9:13; Luke 5:32*)

If we love the goodness which is in people from the Lord (and there is some in everyone), then the *way* to love them is to help them preserve and nurture that goodness, and not condone or encourage acts which are opposed to it. It could be pointed out that this is the way loving parents relate to their own children – by helping them develop good habits and discouraging them from getting into bad ones.

The principle of “love the sinner, hate the sin” (often ridiculed today) is one most people observe in regard to themselves. We all love ourselves, but not *everything* about ourselves. We know we’re far from perfect, and we also know that the solution to this universal human problem is not simply to start calling what is wrong “right” – that only compounds the problem.

The necessity of “shunning evils as sins” is a universal law of human life; it applies to everyone. And as everyone knows, it isn’t easy. It is an internal struggle, the combat of temptation, a war with ourselves. We are able to fight against our own lower nature because we have been given the human faculties of liberty and rationality. We have been given the faculty of conscience, and, in the Word, the truths needed to develop that faculty.

It could also be pointed out to the children: “you have parents and teachers to help you learn what is good and true, and guide you in doing it, as well as a community of people, the Church, to support you in this work. Moreover, you have unseen friends with you, angelic spirits, who delight in helping people in this world find the path that leads to heaven and stay on it. They inspire good affections and thoughts, and thus open our eyes to see what is good and true, what is productive and happy. Listen to them!”

On the other hand – and this is also an important reality of human life that must not be ignored – there are evil spirits who delight in tempting people, confusing people, numbing their conscience, and leading them away from the goodness, beauty and joy of heaven. When the angels remind us of the Lord’s message, “cease to do evil, learn to do well” (*Isaiah 1:16-17*), the evil spirits

are quick to counter it with the lie that “there is no right and wrong, it’s just a matter of individual preference.”

The truth is, we have to *learn* to do well, and this begins with ceasing to do evil. This is the purpose of our lives in this world. The world we’re living in now, sorting out what is right and wrong, is a training ground for life in heaven. It is the battlefield on which our souls are tested so that we might “choose life” and enter into the peace of heaven.

Surrender is not an option. Simply to just accept the natural character you were born with, with its inclinations toward disorders of various kinds, as the *real you*, amounts to turning your back on the potential every human being has to become an angel.

Each person has his own cross to bear, and no two are exactly the same. We have not walked in anyone else’s shoes. We should not condemn anyone for a particular weakness that happens not to be one of the ones we ourselves have had to deal with. We have all fallen short of the perfection the Lord seeks for us, and none of us “deserves” the happiness He seeks to give us.

The Lord loves everyone, condemns no one, punishes no one. But at the same time, and for the very reason that He does love everyone and wants everyone to be happy, He forbids things which, however much some might find them desirable or convenient, are harmful to people’s souls and bodies, and to human society generally.

There are many things children need to be taught. And the sooner the better, while they are in a receptive state of innocence, and before their minds have been flooded with falsities that will have to be unlearned.

Today especially, they need to be taught the spiritual truths concerning marriage, which are set forth with such clarity and in such detail in the book *Conjugal Love*.

The simplest and most effective way of responding to the question -- “what’s wrong with it?” – is to explain what is *right*. This is the primary and most important thing. If children are thoroughly schooled in what is right, then when they hear some alternative idea being proposed, and the question “what’s wrong with it?” arises, they will already have the answer in their minds.

(WEO)

Letters to the Editors

The Lord's Prayer: What is in Our Words and in Our Hearts

To The Editors:

Thank you for the November/December 2015 issue of *New Church Life*, with its range of interesting contents.

The Rev. Dr. Ray Silverman's *As in Heaven, So Upon the Earth* raised some interesting points concerning the prayer laid down by our Lord Himself as a pattern for our praying. It has always been a tricky matter for the New Church to know how to help visitors unfamiliar with our wording of the Lord's Prayer. One way to avoid awkwardness has been to have leaflets (alongside worship books) available to guide visitors through our services. Today, PowerPoint technology means we are able to project words on to a screen, enabling visitors more easily to join in if they wish.

I am never too concerned if visitors use the version of the Lord's Prayer which is familiar to them. Indeed, on occasions such as weddings or funerals, with large numbers of visitors, I may draw attention to our version but tell visitors they are welcome to pray the words they are used to. When I find myself attending a ceremony at another denomination, I join in with their version of the Lord's Prayer, knowing, as Mr. Silverman points out, that it is what is in my mind and on my heart that is important to the Lord.

There are, of course, several other points in this prayer where our New Church version differs from many others:

- In the very first sentence, our prayer is addressed to our Father in the "heavens" – plural because the original Greek is plural, and because of our teachings concerning the heavens.
- We pray for our "debts" to be forgiven, as we forgive our "debtors," often translated this way in Matthew's Gospel.
- At the end of the prayer, we conclude with "... the kingdom, the power

and the glory, forever,” with a singular translation of the final Greek word.

All these are worthy of discussion so that we understand the reasons behind our translation.

I expect Mr. Silverman knows that the New Church version of the Lord’s Prayer predates the formation of the General Church, going back to the early days of The General Conference of the New Church in Britain. It was in the late 1700s and early 1800s that the pioneer readers of Swedenborg’s Writings began to meet for worship, and wished their rituals to be in accordance with the Heavenly Doctrines.

Those early New Church scholars came to an agreement on an accurate translation of the Greek form of the Lord’s Prayer, which became standard across the fledgling conference of New Church congregations in Britain. It was incorporated into early liturgies, and later “exported” to the English-speaking world.

Your readers may be interested to see the following translation of the Lord’s Prayer included in Robert Hindmarsh’s 1813 *The Liturgy for the New Church*:

Our Father, who art in the heavens, sanctified be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so upon earth. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we also forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ages. Amen. (Matthew 6:9-13)

The critical thing is for us to remind one another from time to time of the reasons underlying why we do things in particular ways, so that our worship may indeed be filled with the glory of God.

The Rev. Bruce R. Jarvis
Seaburn
Sunderland
United Kingdom

What is the Church not Growing?

To The Editors:

In the November/December 2015 issue of *New Church Life* on page 560 there was a letter to the editors, “Our Loss,” by Peter Boericke. According to this

letter the Church has stopped growing and has actually lost members. He mentioned that there were 19 resignations in the year ending June 30, 2015.

It seems from this letter that many resigned in part because of the Church's policy of not letting women become priests. Many in the Church seem to think that if we do not let women into the priesthood the Church cannot survive.

It seems that the more Church has tried to grow the less it grows. Could it be that this is because the Church has been willing to abandon the truth in its attempt to grow? If the Church abandons the truth, then even if it did grow would any good come of it? Is there anything special about the General Church once the truth is gone or is profaned by being mixing it with falsity?

It seems that I have seen statistics showing that churches that have **not** allowed women into the ministry actually do better at keeping members. It also seems to me that part of the reason we have not seen a decline in the General Church sooner is that many people who were in more liberal branches of the New Church – allowing women to be priests and in favor of same-sex marriages – left and came to the General Church. Now that these Churches are declining fewer people are coming to the General Church from this source. Were the people leaving these other branches of the New Church in part because they did not want women in the ministry?

Whatever the numbers reveal I think there will be some who will back away from the General Church if it accepts women in the ministry. It may be that those who want women to be priests are doing more talking than those who do not, but it may not be a majority of the people in the Church who want women priests.

Even if it is a majority, should Church policy on women in the ministry – or any church policy for that matter – be decided by popular vote instead of sound argument from the Writings? I think that when we look at what the Writing say about women's uses and women who preach it is hard to see how having women in the ministry can be justified. Just because people want something it does not make it right.

Women do not belong in the priesthood, but it is not just women that are mistranslating Scripture. It seems there are also ministers in the Church who have twisted the truth and then point to numbers from the Writings that they claim gives them authority to “develop doctrine.”

Priests have been responsible for heresies in other churches but priests in the New Church are also capable of producing heresies. Perhaps the arguments for women in the ministry would lose much of their power if the ministers who assert their right to develop doctrine cared more about the truth.

Edward (Ned) Cole
Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania

Jesus, Islam's Greatest Prophet

To The Editors:

In my recent article, "Islam, Swedenborg and the Heavenly Doctrines," one of the questions discussed was whether or not Muslims "acknowledge the Lord as the Greatest Prophet," (*De Verbo* 17) and consider Him "to be greater than Mohammed." (*Divine Providence* 255) The following quote raised doubts about the accuracy of the Heavenly Doctrines' statements:

We believe in Allah and what has been revealed to Abraham and Ishmael and Isaac and Jacob and the Descendants and what was given to Moses and Jesus and what was given to the prophets from their Lord. We make no distinction among any of them. (Quran 2:136)

The assumption appears to have been that the word "*distinction*" is referring to distinction in rank among the prophets. This is not correct. Arberry in his translation uses the word, "*division*," which gives us quite a different meaning. Here is the verse that immediately precedes the one shown above:

And they (the Jews and Christians) say, "Be Jews or Christians, then you will be rightly guided. Say, No, but we follow the religion of Abraham, the upright, and he was not of the idolaters." (Quran 2:135)

What the Quran is saying is that, unlike Judaism and Christianity, Islam presents the unified, undivided message of all of God's prophets, not just some of them. This view is supported by Islamic scholars and by the following quote from the Quran:

As for those who ignore Allah and His messengers, and want to make a distinction (division) between them, saying, "We believe in some but not in others," seeking a middle way, they are really disbelievers. (4:150, 15)

The following is a quote from the Quran that indicates Islam actually does recognize a distinction in rank among the prophets:

These are the verses of Allah which we recite unto you (Oh Mohammed), in truth. And indeed, you are one of the messengers. These messengers we endowed with gifts, some excelling others; to some of them Allah spoke, and some of them he exalted in rank: to Jesus the son of Mary we gave clear signs and strengthened him with the Holy Spirit. (2: 252, 253)

This verse clearly states that some prophets did excel others and were exalted over others, and it certainly appears to say that Jesus excelled Mohammed.

The Quran, from Gabriel's annunciation to Mary to the time of Jesus being raised up bodily to God and His return on the Day of Judgment, testifies to the many miracles of Jesus, including healing the deaf, the restoration of sight to

the blind and the raising to life of the dead. There is no question that a Muslim reading the Quran could come to the conclusion that Jesus is the Greatest Prophet of Islam.

If anyone would like a complete list of quotes from the Quran on this subject or the others that were discussed, they can contact me at *benjaminpendleton@gmail.com*.

Ben Pendleton
Kempton, Pennsylvania

OUR NEW CHURCH VOCABULARY

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

EVIL

We tend to think in terms of certain words and actions, especially those forbidden in the second table of the Decalogue, or the lusts from which they come. But these are only the ultimate forms in which evil expresses itself. Evil, regarded in itself, is disjunction from good and disunion from God, and opposition to the Lord and to heaven. It is to desire to be led by self and not by the Lord, and to deny and will to destroy all that the Lord seeks to build.

Note that evil is the opposite of truly human good, not of the Divine good; wherefore the Lord has power over evil, although man has none of himself.

Note also that evil is not just the absence of good, as cold is the absence of heat; the teaching is that while evil is nothing in comparison with good, it is nothing in itself. (See *Arcana Coelestia* 4997, 6874; *Divine Providence* 279; *Conjugal Love* 444)

The Final Victory Over Hell

A Holy Supper Address by the Rev. James P. Cooper

Lessons: Isaiah 53:1-12; Mark 15:25-47; 16:1-8, Doctrine of Faith 34

Do not be alarmed. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He is risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid Him. (Mark 16:6)

Jesus Christ, as we know Him from the New Testament, was a very pleasant person. He seldom appeared angry (and even then it was zeal, not anger), He was loyal to His friends, He was patient, He knew all kinds of amazing things, and was very good at teaching them different ways. He might even remind us of that teacher who seemed to take a special interest in our progress at school, who knew how to reach us, and who also knew how to inspire us to make that extra effort and produce work that was above our usual standard. As a man of the world, as an example to others, the Lord has had a profound effect on the lives of hundreds of millions of people who have come to know of Him through their study of the Gospels.

It is because the Lord presented Himself in such a way during His life in the world that we approach Easter with such mixed feelings; feelings of joy for the risen Lord and the battle won, mixed with feelings of sadness that it had to be done in this way.

It is much the same as the way people feel when a war is over – the ecstatic delight that the horror is finally over, colored by the numbness and the sadness of all the tragedy that had gone before.

We have to face the fact that evil is a part of life in the natural world. We cannot wish it away. We have to face it squarely and deal with it according to the rules that the Lord has given us. There is only one way to savor the delight of victory, and that is to conquer in temptation.

We are gathered today to savor the delight of the Lord's victory over hell, not only because He won the victory and we are on His "side," but also because through His victory over hell He has brought an order into the spiritual world which means that forevermore, everyone's battles against hell will be that much easier.

The battles that the Lord fought against hell during His time in the world

It was the Lord's Divine Purpose from the very beginning that this battle should be fought and won in the natural world, for only by so doing could the Lord bring the evils that men had introduced into the world under such bonds as to allow men to live in the world in spiritual freedom and eventually come to heaven.

could not be avoided, for it was His purpose and intent to face the hells in the natural world, the only arena where they could be permitted to approach closely enough to Him actually to have some effect. As we read in our lesson, it is a matter of the universal Christian faith that "the Lord from eternity, who is Jehovah, came into the world to subjugate the hells and to glorify His Human; and without this no mortal could have been saved." (*Faith* 34)

In other words, it was the Lord's Divine Purpose from the very beginning that this battle should be fought and won in the natural world, for only by so doing could the Lord bring the evils that men had introduced into the world under such bonds as to allow men to live in the world in spiritual freedom and eventually come to heaven.

In order to understand and appreciate this, we also must have a correct understanding of who Jesus really was, and why it was necessary for Him to come into the world. The heavenly doctrines of the New Church give us five key thoughts to lead us into a true understanding of the real meaning of the miracle of Easter morning.

First, we are told that it is a universal of faith that "God is one in Person and in Essence in whom there is a Trinity, and that the Lord is that God." (*Faith* 35) This idea is basic to our whole understanding of the nature of God, for it is essential that we know that Jesus Christ, the Teacher who walked on earth and was crucified, was in fact the Jehovah God of the Old Testament.

This is clearly what He Himself taught, and what was the faith of the Christian Church for more than 300 years, until the leaders of the Christian Church invented the doctrine of the trinity of persons and voted to adopt it in order to end a long-standing doctrinal argument.

The second article of faith is that "no mortal could have been saved unless the Lord had come into the world." (*Ibid.*) Until the Lord revealed the spiritual history of the world through the Writings of Emanuel Swedenborg, no one could have known the full meaning of this statement. No one could have

known the spiritual danger the human race faced.

The human race, originally created as celestial, pastoral people, had descended, through a series of cycles, to the point where, in spite of the fact that it had achieved the heights of thought and government established by the Greeks and Romans, it had in fact sunk to the very depths of spiritual deprivation.

Men in those days could achieve great economic and political power, but they had turned entirely away from spiritual things. They had become so

full of the natural world that they were no longer able to recognize spiritual truths when they arrived in the spiritual world after death. This meant that evil spirits easily were able to deceive them, and lead otherwise decent folks into a form of slavery in false heavens. This was only possible because those people entering the spiritual world from earth were so ignorant of spiritual things.

It was getting so bad that unless the Lord had done something to inspire the world with some spiritual ideas and ideals the human race simply would have expired under the weight of its own love of the world because it would no longer have had any way of receiving spiritual life.

The third point is that as the Lord recognized this spiritual situation as it developed, He knew that He would eventually have to take on the natural degree which men loved so much, present Himself to them before their natural eyes, and speak into their natural ears and so inspire them to think about and act from spiritual truths once again.

At the same time, by taking on the natural degree itself by taking on a physical body, the Lord deliberately put Himself in a position to receive the assaults of hell, and “it is a universal of faith that He came into the world to remove hell from man; that He removed it by combats against it and by victories over it; and that He thus subjugated it, and reduced it to order and under obedience to Himself.” (*Ibid.*)

He removed hell from mankind by breaking its power over men. He broke its power by giving mankind another path to choose, by teaching them the way to heaven. He also broke its power by receiving one by one the temptation of each society of hell and resisting it, turning it away, and throwing it back into its proper place in hell.

As a result of these battles, the so-called false heavens were destroyed

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The final point is that all of this means nothing if we don't use it in our daily lives, in our day-to-day dealings with others, for "the universal of the Christian faith on man's part is that he should believe in the Lord. In the simplest possible terms, if we say we believe something, but we do not live according to it, then we don't really believe it."

and those who had been held captive in them were set free to learn the truth (if they wished to) and to find their way to their eternal spiritual homes. The power of hell was broken, and the evil spirits no longer had the power to reach out and "possess" the mind of a man in the world or a new spirit in the spiritual world as they had once had. The power of hell was broken. It was now subject to the government of the Lord once again.

Perhaps it would be useful to mention that hell only got out of control in the first place because of the Lord's intense desire that everything we do be of our own free choice. Therefore, as long as it was still possible for those who wished to go to heaven to do so, the Lord allowed evil to grow and grow in the world because that was what the human race wanted for itself. It was only when the human race had brought itself to the point of total destruction that the Lord stepped in to restore spiritual order.

We can think of it in terms of an adult supervising a large group of children in a playground. Quarrelling is a normal part of the way children interact with each other, and a wise adult allows a certain amount of disorder to go on so that the children can learn to deal with their own problems in their own ways. But if the quarrelling becomes so extensive that the children cannot possibly control it, then it is necessary for the adult to step in, make some judgments, and restore order.

The essential point of this illustration is that we understand that both letting the quarrelling go on at first, and later stepping in, are actions representing the adults' great love for the children, but that love is showing itself in different ways under different circumstances. And so the Lord's great love for the human race shows itself to us in different ways under different circumstances.

The fourth doctrinal point is that "the Lord came into the world to glorify His Human." This is very important because unless we remember this

point we can get a very negative feeling about Easter – that all the Lord did was to come to repair the mistakes that we had made.

In fact, from the very beginning, the Lord had foreseen the need to have a Human through which He could communicate with the Church on earth. Until He had His own human, when the Lord wished to speak to men on earth, He had to “borrow” the spiritual body of an angel. The angel would seem to himself to go to sleep, and the Lord would flow in and appear in the angel’s form. Then, when their spiritual eyes were opened, Jehovah God could present Himself to men in the world. This is the way that He spoke to Moses and the prophets.

But the Lord wished to have direct communication instead of through representatives, and so He waited until the human race had reached the natural degree, and then He took on that degree to present Himself before men in the world directly. Having taken on the natural plane – that is, a physical body – the Lord then proceeded to incorporate it into the Divine Itself in such a way that all that was evil or corrupt was put off and rejected, but that which could be purified was made Divine.

The result was that He rose, unlike any other man, with that which with man rots in the grave. The Lord had acquired for Himself a spiritual body through which He could communicate with men. He no longer needed to have an intermediary angel to do this work for Him. Swedenborg was with some people who had known the Lord in the world when He appeared in the sun of heaven. They testified that the face they saw there was that of man they had known in the world.

The fifth and final point is that all of this means nothing if we don’t use it in our daily lives, in our day-to-day dealings with others, for “the universal of the Christian faith on man’s part is that he should believe in the Lord. For by believing in Him conjunction with Him is effected and this is the means of salvation. To believe in Him is to trust that He will save: and because no one can have such trust but he who lives a good life, therefore, this also is meant by believing in Him.” (*Ibid.*) In the simplest possible terms, if we say we believe something, but we do not live according to it, then we don’t really believe it.

Let us resolve, then, to live according to His principles, to be kind toward one another, to think about other people’s feelings before we act or speak, to do everything we can to use the things which He has taken such great care to provide for us.

Of course, that is the real purpose of His resurrection; that by maintaining a state of spiritual order and equilibrium He creates a sphere in which each of us is free to do what we think is best.

He has fought with the hells and brought them under control so that they cannot infest our minds unless we specifically invite them to. He has taught us by word and example what kind of life we ought to live. He has provided us with every tool and opportunity that we might need. And then He patiently waits, as a friend, to see what we will do.

Let us resolve, then, to live according to His principles, to be kind toward one another, to think about other people's feelings before we act or speak, to do everything we can to use the things which He has taken such great care to provide for us.

Amen.



The Rev. James P. Cooper retired last year as pastor of the Olivet New Church in Toronto, Canada, where he was also regional pastor for Canada and Secretary for the General Council of the Clergy. He had previously served in Bryn Athyn; Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; Durban, South Africa; and the Washington New Church in Mitchellville, Maryland. He and his wife, Karen (Jorgenson), live in Etobicoke, Ontario, Canada. Contact: Rev.james.cooper@gmail.com

The Eternity of Marriage

The Rev. Brett D. Buick

*Lessons: Genesis 1:27, 2:24; Matthew 19:4-6; Conjugal Love 32, 33,
229*

“What, therefore, God has joined together, let not man put asunder.” (Matthew 19:6)

This morning we are going to spend some time going back to the basics. We are going to go to the Word and back to the basics on marriage. And we are going to do this the same way the Lord did it on earth when He was challenged by the Pharisees regarding the nature of marriage. Just as the Pharisees sought to destroy the Lord’s definition of marriage more than 2,000 years ago, the hells are at work today trying to do the same thing.

“The Pharisees came to Him, tempting Him” we read in *Matthew*. They asked Him, “Is it lawful for a man to send away his wife for every cause?” They were referring to a law in *Deuteronomy* regarding divorce and trying to use it to make marriage basically meaningless. They were trying to get the Lord to bless what they were doing with marriage in their culture.

The Lord responded to their quest for a loophole big enough to destroy the institution of marriage, saying: “Have you not read that He who made [them] from the beginning made them male and female?” And “On this account shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and the two shall be one flesh. Wherefore they are no longer two, but one flesh. What, therefore, God has joined together, let not man put asunder.” (*Matthew* 19: 4-6)

When we, like the Pharisees, look around us and are tempted to ask the Lord to make marriage conform to what is actually going on in the world, the Lord responds the very same way. This is the Lord’s message for *us, today*, regarding marriage. This message was not just for the Pharisees who were playing legal games with the Lord. It is a message for all time and all challenges to marriage.

The Lord explains what marriage is in the Gospels because He wants more than anything to join together each one of us with a partner in an eternal marriage of one man with one wife. And if we let Him, He will lead every one

The Lord explains what marriage is in the Gospels because He wants more than anything to join together each one of us with a partner in an eternal marriage of one man with one wife.

of us into a conjugal union, a marriage, which will last forever in heaven. As He explained in the Gospels, He has wanted this from the beginning, and He works to make this happen for every human being who will ever be born, if they are willing.

So now we are going to look into what exactly it is that the Lord wants to *join together* and what we need to do in order not to *put it asunder*.

The Lord teaches us what it is that He wants to join together in the very first chapter of *Genesis*. We learn early on in the Sacred Scripture that, “God created man in His [own] image, in the

image of God He created him; male and female He created them.” (*Genesis* 1:27) Then, in the very next chapter of the Word we learn that, “Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave to his wife, and they shall be one flesh.” (*Ibid.*: 2:24)

When Jesus was teaching the Pharisees about marriage in *Matthew*, He was referring to these passages from *Genesis* because He was explaining to them the fundamental nature of marriage. His answer went beyond their specific question. The Lord was explaining what marriage is from the beginning.

It is man and woman that the Lord joins together. We can see this through the very first human pair in the Word – Adam and Eve. And in the New Testament the Lord brings forward this ancient definition of marriage and reminds the Pharisees where it came from. They knew He was quoting from *Genesis*.

But now, in the Lord’s Second Coming He explains to us in detail why it is male and female that are joined together in marriage and why it has been so from the beginning.

The Lord teaches us in *Conjugal Love* that, “since a person lives as a man after death, and man is male and female, and the masculine is one and the feminine another, and they are so different that one cannot be changed into the other, it follows that after death the male lives as a male and the female as a female.” (*Conjugal Love* 32)

The Lord underscores this truth repeating that “the masculine cannot be changed into the feminine, nor the feminine into the masculine, and that therefore after death the male is a male and the female is a female.” (*Ibid.*) We learn that this is true even down to every cell of the body. For the Lord

teaches that “in the male the masculine is masculine in every part of his body even the most minute; and also in every idea of his thought, and in every least impulse of his affection. And so is the feminine in the female. And as one cannot therefore be changed into the other, it follows that after death the male is a male and the female is a female.” (*Ibid.* 33)

This distinction between the sexes is a prerequisite for conjugal love. It is the complementary differences between male and female which come together to form a more perfect whole to eternity.

We all know that men and women are different, and perhaps we have even noticed this with children. In *Conjugal Love* the Lord, through Swedenborg, confirms these observations about the differences between men and women that we can see in children from an early age:

How much, from very birth, the nature of men differs from that of women has been made very manifest to me by the sight of boys and girls in their gatherings. Several times from my window I have observed them, in an open place in a great city, where more than twenty came together every day. The boys, according to their innate disposition, played together by making a great noise, shouting, fighting, beating, and throwing stones at each other; while the girls sat quietly at the doors of the houses, some playing with infants, some dressing their dolls, some piecing together bits of linen, some kissing each other. And, what astonished me, they yet looked with pleased eyes upon the boys who were so boisterous. (*Conjugal Love* 218)

These early signs of differences between male and female mature with a woman to the point where she perceives especially from love, and with a man to the point where he perceives especially from his intellect or understanding. (*Ibid.* 168) The complete union of these two distinct strengths is possible only in a marriage. We are taught that this union works like the heat and light of the sun:

For understanding is of light, and love is of heat; and things that are of light are plainly seen, and things of love are felt. From these considerations it is manifest that, on account of the universal difference that exists between the masculine and the feminine, the wisdom of the wife cannot be with the man, nor the wisdom of the man with the wife. (*Ibid.* 168)

This distinction between the sexes is a prerequisite for conjugal love. It is the complementary differences between male and female which come together to form a more perfect whole to eternity.

These beautiful teachings are being attacked today just as they were more than 2,000 years ago when Pharisees “tempted” the Lord as it says in *Matthew*. As a result there is great confusion, and for some, tremendous pain associated with these truths. But they have not changed.

We are further taught that because they receive the special warmth of love, women are vessels of conjugal love from the Lord and it is only through women that men have any inclination to marriage. (*Ibid.* 223) Society, in fact, depends upon this civilizing feminine function.

After Swedenborg observed the children from his window that we read in one of the lessons, he was then, through the Lord’s Holy Spirit, able to see, “what a man’s intellect in its development would be like without conjunction with feminine love and eventually conjugal love.” (*Ibid.* 218) When feminine love is absent from a man’s upbringing and socialization he is not pleasant to be around – think of the boys throwing stones. This gift to the human race through women is the parent love of all loves and the inspiration for every use.

On the other hand, the Lord brings something special to the world through masculinity too. Through the light of heaven that a man especially receives, a woman can perceive with love beyond what she directly feels. The masculine influence in the world seems to allow love to reach even further by shining light into darkness, by lighting the path for love to follow. (*Ibid.* 168)

It is these complementary differences in men and women that make the special love in marriage possible. It is these complementary differences that unite masculine and feminine souls, masculine and feminine minds and masculine and feminine bodies. (*Ibid.* 179) This union of soul, mind and body continues to eternity in a cycle whereby a husband becomes more and more a husband and a wife more and more a wife. (*Ibid.* 200)

But these beautiful teachings are being attacked today just as they were more than 2,000 years ago when Pharisees “tempted” the Lord as it says in *Matthew*. As a result there is great confusion, and for some, tremendous pain associated with these truths. But they have not changed. That is why the Lord referred to *Genesis* and explained that what He was teaching about marriage was true “from the beginning,” true from the very first moment of the creation

of the human race. And because the Lord delivered the clear message He did then, when we read the Word today we can still hear the Lord's timeless response to the Pharisees: "What, therefore, God has joined together, let not man put asunder." (*Matthew*19:6)

What the Lord joins together eternally in marriage is one man and one woman. This is a promise from the Lord. He promises that if we follow His lead while we are here on earth, even if the destination of an eternal marriage seems painfully unattainable, that pain will only be temporary. If we keep eternity in view, He will bless us with this the love that contains "all joys and delights from the first to the last." (*Conjugal Love* 68). Because the Lord created us male and female, He promises us that we can each find that person to whom we will be married forever, that person whom we will cleave to, that person who we will want to be close to for eternity.

To this end the Lord teaches us: "In the case of people who after preparation are introduced into heaven, marriage is provided with a partner whose soul inclines to union with the soul of the other, to the point that they do not wish to lead two lives but one." (*Ibid.* 50) The Lord will provide an eternal partner in marriage for each one of us. He is working in His Divine Providence every moment to help each one of us live a life that leads to heaven so we can be married there to eternity.

The Divine Providence of the Lord concerning marriages and in marriages is most particular and most universal; because all the delights of heaven stream forth from the delights of conjugal love, as sweet waters from the flow of a fountain. And therefore it is provided that conjugal pairs be born, and that they be continually educated for their marriage under the Lord's auspices, the boy and the girl not knowing it. (*Ibid.* 229)

This is the Lord's promise to each one of us whether we think we have found our conjugal partner or not, and this is the promise the New Church offers to the world.

We read that "following His Advent the Lord will revive conjugal love, such as it was among ancient peoples. For conjugal love comes only from the Lord, and it is found in people who are made spiritual by Him through His Word." (*Ibid.* 81)

Right now anyone can start preparing for an eternal marriage. Right now anyone can begin to receive the Lord's promise of conjugal love by working on being made spiritual by the Lord through the Word.

Being made spiritual by the Lord through His Word simply means living the truth of the Lord's Word. It means repenting of the evils we commit and it means living a life of charity. Then we will be made spiritual by the Lord through the Word and we will be on a path to a conjugal future.

This is what the Lord wants for us more than anything else – a marriage

in heaven to eternity, a marriage where we experience “innocence, peace, tranquility, inmost friendship, complete trust, a mutual desire of the mind and heart to do the other every good; also, as a result of all these, bliss, felicity, delight, pleasure, and, owing to an eternal enjoyment of states like this, the happiness of heaven.” (*Ibid.* 180)

When the Pharisees come tempting, say the Lord’s words to them: “What, therefore, God has joined together, let not man put asunder.” (*Matthew* 19:6)
Amen.



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OUR NEW CHURCH VOCABULARY

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EXINANITION

This term refers to the Lord on earth and His state of humiliation before the Father when in a state of truth and seemingly separated from the Divine. Thus it was a state of His human consciousness. (See *Doctrine of the Lord* 35)

BOYNTON BEACH RETREAT 2016

Yesterday: Art and
Religion in History

Today: The Process of
Beginning a New Life

Tomorrow: Swedenborg Now
Starring on YouTube

Bruce Henderson

This year's program at the Boynton Beach Retreat – January 18-22 in Florida – was not planned as a theme but fell into a natural progression.

Dr. Martha Gyllenhaal, associate professor of Art and Art History and Head of the Art Department at Bryn Athyn College, offered a look back: the changing images of Christ in early Christian art; how the Catholic Church used art to bring people back to the church; Swedenborg's influence on two 19th century artists; and what students are doing with art in Bryn Athyn College.

The Rev. Mark D. Pendleton, newly confirmed as the pastor of the Glenview New Church, shifted the focus to the present where we are trying to build better lives through regeneration. He presented the framework of a process he has developed – and taken throughout the Church – on using the steps of regeneration to “Begin a New Life.”

Curtis Childs took a more futuristic view of an exciting new internet

program he is leading for the Swedenborg Foundation. His weekly YouTube videos, “*Off the Left Eye*,” are amazingly effective in spreading knowledge of Swedenborg and his teachings throughout the world.

Dr. Martha Gyllenhaal: Art and History

Throughout history, art and religion have gone hand in hand, leaving a series of images that reflect how people view God and relate to Him. The earliest images of Christ consistently depict him as a young (beardless) shepherd holding and feeding His flock. But in 325, just 12 years after he officially established Christianity, Constantine convened the Council of Nicaea which questioned the nature of Christ and His relation to God the Father.

Images of Christ then began to take on a variety of forms. Orthodox Christians who saw Him as co-ruler with God the Father depicted Him on a throne while Arians, who believed He was not divine, depicted Him as vulnerable and much less regal. (Not surprising, emperors preferred to use the former type of image in the churches they commissioned!) Martha showed examples of these changing images of Christ from Ravenna, Italy, where churches, mausoleums and baptisteries are covered with mosaics depicting Christ in a variety of ways.

Throughout Europe, Christianity followed the expanding Roman Empire but when the empire contracted, people on the periphery were left without the protection of Roman law and Christian culture. In this pagan environment Irish monks protected their sacred manuscripts from destruction and profanation, not only by hiding them from marauding Vikings, but by writing them in a type of hard-to-decipher Christian shorthand. Yet, the exquisite interlace designs on pagan metalwork impressed these scribes and they

adapted them to produce spectacular embellishments in their manuscripts. The Chi Rho page (Christ’s name) in the *Book of Kells*, now in Dublin, is an exquisite example of their labors.

In her second session Martha showed how the Catholic Church convened the Council of Trent in an effort to counter the inroads of Protestantism. They made sweeping internal reforms, completely shifting the function of art from teaching people, to persuading them. Gone was the traditional, classic art of the Renaissance, replaced with the much

(Martha) has been involved in New Church education for 39 years and says the last four in the College have been the most exciting – so much so that she never wants to retire.

more emotionally charged and robust Baroque style. For example, Renaissance art – typified by Michelangelo’s sculpture – shows *David* as serene, calm and controlled as he thinks about slaying Goliath. In contrast, Bernini’s Baroque-style sculpture shows a dynamic and powerful David in the act of slinging the stone. Viewers standing in front of the sculpture feel like the stone is coming toward them.

At the end of her talk Martha was pleased that almost everyone in the audience was won over to the Baroque (which is her field of study). But she also noted that the Writings speak negatively of the Council of Trent and its proclamations on appealing to people’s emotions rather than to their rationality.

The two 19th-century artists she focused on who were influenced by Swedenborg were the demure John Flaxman and the intense William Blake.

Flaxman was a quiet sensitive soul who shunned controversy, and was also a reader of Swedenborg. In keeping with the well-educated men of his day he went on the Grand Tour (Venice, Rome, Florence) and became a wonderful sculptor and artist. Among his works are pieces based on the Lord’s Prayer and sketches illustrating Swedenborg’s Memorable Relations. His drawings often include numbers in the corner, which reference the Writings, although there is no written record of why he did this or how many illustrations to the Writings he may have done – challenging research questions for New Church art historians.

William Blake is almost the opposite of Flaxman in temperament and style. He is better known for his poems than his paintings, such as “Tyger, Tyger, burning bright,” and “Little Lamb Who Made Thee?” Unlike Flaxman he did not sojourn in Italy but made a name for himself as an engraver of artworks done by other artists. From this tedious copying he nonetheless developed a vivid and highly original painting technique.

Although scholars are divided on the extent and nature of Swedenborg’s influence on Blake’s work, his copies of the Writings have notations in the margins and his painting *Vision of the Last Judgment* seems to incorporate the Swedenborg notion of the form of heaven as the Grand Man. Martha noted that the Glencairn Museum in Bryn Athyn has a collection of files on artists who were inspired by Swedenborg.

Martha’s Wednesday talk was about Bryn Athyn College students and the interdisciplinary art major where they combine art with another area of study. She has been involved in New Church education for 39 years and says the last four in the College have been the most exciting – so much so that she never wants to retire. She loves the opportunity to bring the light of the Writings into her teaching of art and that because of the diversity in the College, “I see miracles happen every day.”

Some of those miracles show up in the students' capstone experience, which involves a paper or project based on months of research, from books, scholarly articles and the Writings. Among some of the examples she cited:

- Medieval and New Church Conventions on the Soul's Substance
- Images of the Woman Clothed With the Sun
- The Underrated Value of Comics and Cartoons: Instilling Moral Virtues in Young People (accompanied by an illustrated original comic book)
- The Use of Villains in Children's Art (accompanied by three sculptures of villains)
- Evolution of Heroes in 18th-Century Painting
- As in Heaven, So Upon the Earth: The Rise and Fall of Each of the Five Churches (accompanied by a fully choreographed dance recital)

The Rev. Mark D. Pendleton: Begin a New Life

Mark's program is built on the four steps of repentance in the Writings. The seeds of the program were planted for him in high school, but it was years later that he plunged into the study that defines this piece of his life's work. He has personally worked the process for more than 10 years and is still discovering its benefits. Of the many benefits he's experienced, his three favorite are:

- Getting to the real core of your being
- Experiencing a sense of closeness and connection with the Lord
- Hope

Mark's every practice and experience of this process has ended with a sense of hope.

He has created a thorough outline, plus a set of worksheets that allow people to go through the process either in writing or on a computer/electronic device. The program can be used individually or within a group context. All of

it is available for free on his website, www.BeginaNewLife.info (capitals not needed).

Mark believes that this process, given to Emanuel Swedenborg by a voice from heaven, is "the most powerful force for change in existence."

The four basic steps of repentance, given in *True Christianity* 528 are:

- Examine yourself.
- Recognize and acknowledge your sins.

Mark believes that this (Begin a New Life) process, given to Emanuel Swedenborg by a voice from heaven, is "the most powerful force for change in existence."

- Pray to the Lord. (This one, he said, is easily forgotten.)
- Begin a new life.

Two of these universal steps (step 2 and step 4) are expanded by the voice from heaven (*True Christianity* 567.5) to include sub-steps. This increases the total number of steps to as many as 10. But regardless of how many steps there are, the real question is, “Do we live them?”

Mark walked everyone through the steps and said, “I want to get people excited about this process, especially in terms of what it can do to help people throughout the world.” His own excitement is infectious.

As an example of self-examination he suggested looking at how we deal with such frustrations as driving in traffic. What are we doing, saying, thinking, intending, and (at the core of our native will) desiring? The real goals of the process are discovering where we are, being honest with ourselves, and praying to the Lord to be led by His will, not our own.

Mark suggested – as we often hear with self-examination – that we focus on just one sin at a time, maybe two at most. And prayer – talking with the Lord and appealing for help and power – is most important. Something may be making our lives a living hell, and unless we turn to the Lord for help and power in resisting it, it will tend to get the better of us – eventually if not right away. It’s a process that takes humility.

“The process of repentance,” he says, “includes elements of knocking down and building up” – knocking down old patterns and building up new ones. Both phases are important. If we’re caught up just in the “tear down” phase of the process, that can lead to depression – to giving up and losing hope. Beginning a new life means moving forward from “knocking down” into “building up.” It’s what gives us a sense of hope.

The final step of the process comes down to abstaining from evil, living a new life, and ultimately, not wanting or willing the evil because it is a sin against God. When we act from heaven and not from hell, the Lord implants a desire to do what is good, and that goodness has the power to drive out the desire and will of evil.

What Mark likes about the process is its basic simplicity, but also how profoundly effective it is. It can help people with everything from minor, unwanted habits to the worst addictions. He sees it as a wonderful tool for whatever we are working on in our lives.

He sees this program as just one of many good things the New Church is offering to the world, including: Curtis Childs’ videos for the Swedenborg Foundation, the Journey programs and Daily Inspiration available on the New Church’s international website, the Rise Above It website, the Caring for Marriage website, the New Christian Bible Study website, the Rev. Dr. Jonathan Rose’s Bible study program, live streaming of Bryn Athyn Cathedral

and NewChurch LIVE services on the internet, etc. We have so much to offer the world – and it’s all available to people for free. But it all comes at a cost, and it all needs support.

Mark’s “Begin a New Life” program is having an impact around the globe. Among testimonies he has received:

- “This process really *works*. It gets me there.”
- “I’ve gotten more from this process in the first two months of using it than from thousands of hours of counseling.”
- “I believe this process is the salvation of marriage.”

The website – www.BeginaNewLife.info (capitals not needed) – has been online since April 2013. It can be used individually, as a program for small groups, for weekend or morning retreats, and as an ongoing support group.

As of April 18, 2015 the program is being pumped throughout the world, with the help of a grant from Google for advertising—\$10,000 dollars a month for the life of the *BNL* non-profit organization. Mark identifies 39 target audiences and says the website is averaging 300 hits a day. Since its outset in 2013 there have been more than 200,000 sessions on the site, reaching people in more than 8,500 cities and 224 of 226 countries recognized by Google. And since January 2015, the worksheets have been accessed almost 6,000 times; 180 in the past week alone.

This is just one more way that personal initiative and new technology are helping people connect with the Lord and begin a new life.

Curtis Childs: Swedenborg and YouTube

Curtis says he grew up feeling that reading the Writings put his mind in a special light, that Swedenborg was “really cool,” and that the teachings in the Writings offer us all a way to get through life. His challenge was how to make everyone familiar with the Writings and Swedenborg without becoming a minister himself.

Out of that has developed his highly popular one-hour “Off The Left Eye” videos produced by the Swedenborg Foundation.

More than 10,000 people are tuning in to watch these videos – either live or from archives – and that audience is growing rapidly. He sees this as a massive reading group, with people all over the world tuning into Swedenborg and the teachings from the Lord.

The question that motivates him is whether these interactions are just superficial or meaningful – and if they are not meaningful, what’s the point? But they get immediate feedback while each session is running, and that has been overwhelmingly positive. People are saying such things as: “Thank you for being a positive influence in my life”; “This is what I have been searching

for”; and, “There is no way to put into words what all your work has meant to us.”

People are finding common ground through Swedenborg and “something’s happening.” Weekly attendance for the videos is averaging 10,000 and this past December 2.4 million minutes were watched. Curtis sees this as at something of a tipping point. “We expect to get much bigger very quickly.”

They try to create a welcoming environment. “The main work we do,” he said, “is removing barriers to Swedenborg.” They even have done a program on “Was Swedenborg Crazy?” – demonstrating that he was not.

They also take advantage of opportunities to link to Bryn Athyn College, the Glencairn Museum, and other New Church resources.

They do get negative comments from atheists, fundamentalists and others, but the negative comments tend to be superficial while the positives focus on life-changing experiences. What keeps people coming, he said, is a positive tone that is welcoming and opens a door.

That Monday night Curtis had the experience of watching a prerecorded session for the first time – usually they are live – and was able to track the number watching and see their “live chat” comments.

YouTube creates a social network community. It is also the second largest search engine – after Google – and so is a good way to connect with people looking for spiritual answers. He says there is a huge conversation on YouTube about religion, and they want Swedenborg to be a part of it. “There is a huge chasm to be filled.”

As Swedenborg described his awakening into the spiritual world as “an uncovering rolled off his left eye,” the mission of these videos is to uncover spiritual truth. So far more than four million people at least have been exposed to the website and videos.

With his brother, Matthew, who is also employed by the Foundation and provides the graphics for the videos, they have produced pithy “Swedenborg Minutes,” such as “What are Heaven and Hell?”

Their formats are becoming more in-depth and professional. Links they provide to suggested videos have been very successful. And the appeal

(Curtis) is very optimistic about the future, feeling that we are on a new frontier and that “we could make Swedenborg a household name within 10 years.” The challenge is how to take advantage of each new level of opportunity.

is broadly spread among age groups, gender and nationalities. All of these programs are free but come at a cost so there is always a low-key appeal for support and a “click to donate” button.

Curtis actually got his start with the Foundation by creating a Heaven and Hell link on its Facebook page, which has also been hugely successful. It is averaging a million “reaches” a week – meaning that many people at least are getting it up on a screen.

He sees a challenge now in harnessing their audience so that they can continue to serve it effectively as it expands. They are always looking for new pathways to introduce Swedenborg and the teachings of the Writings and says, “We need to be nimble enough to keep up with changes in the internet.”

“Ten years from now we won’t be doing the same thing, but what will it be? We don’t know but we want to be on the forefront.”

Meanwhile, as with Mark Pendleton’s “Begin a New Life” series, he knows that what they are doing is having a positive impact. Among a great many testimonials are:

- “I get chills watching and listening to these videos.”
- “You are serving humanity in a marvelous way.”
- “Your videos help me feel better.”

Curtis uses the image of a forest canopy to project their hopes for the future – of a new seedling growing and breaking through the canopy to thrive above it. These videos, he feels, are elevating people’s minds and he wants Swedenborg to be that emerging tree. The potential is unlimited.

Asked about how we can do the same thing for our own people – especially those who find reading the doctrines difficult – he said this approach should apply to everyone, as both outreach and in-reach. He noted that the Rev. Grant Schnarr invites him to show his videos to the “Rookie Religion” class in Bryn Athyn College – which is its most popular course.

He is very optimistic about the future, feeling that we are on a new frontier and that “we could make Swedenborg a household name within 10 years.” The challenge is how to take advantage of each new level of opportunity.

He encouraged everyone at the Retreat to join the Swedenborg Foundation and its Facebook page, and help to spread the word about these videos and other offerings.

“We are always doing the best we can,” he said. “But we are always looking to improve.”

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The State of Bryn Athyn College A Perspective from the New President



Boynton Beach Retreat Banquet Address

Brian Blair, President, Bryn Athyn College

I would like to give you an update on Bryn Athyn College and the progress we are making to deliver a college education supported by New Church principles and thought. The College is making this education available both to young people who grew up in the New Church as well as those who are being introduced to the New Church faith for the first time. It is indeed exciting to see how a culture and environment are being developed where students begin to appreciate what is special about Bryn Athyn College as well the Bryn Athyn community.

I also believe it would be helpful to share what I have witnessed since I took office this past July as the most recent president of Bryn Athyn College.

The College is blessed with an outstanding faculty and staff who are extremely talented, highly motivated and passionate about bringing our mission forward. I can't begin to tell you how much I enjoy going to work every day. What a privilege it is to work with such inspiring individuals. I think

what stands out when you meet the people who work in the College from faculty to support staff is the positive attitude that is exhibited along with a spirit of love and caring for our students.

We can see how this culture is reflected in the students' appreciation on how they value their experience at Bryn Athyn College. I would like to highlight a few examples:

- At the end of every academic year we ask the students to fill out a survey on their experience at the College and what they most value about their education. I might also add that we conduct surveys at the end of each term that ask the students to rate the course and the professor who taught the course.
- The number one value point that students raised about Bryn Athyn College is the quality of academic instruction they received. For a small college, that is a very important attribute for us to obtain because academics is what college is all about. Bryn Athyn College competes for students in a market that has more than 60 other colleges and universities. Having programs that are recognized for academic quality, we think, is a key success factor and points to the fact that we are on the right track.
- The next attribute I want to mention closely follows the previous point. Last fall I had a group of student-athletes who were picked at random to speak to some Academy Corporation members about their experiences at the College in terms of academics and the athletic department. There was no pre-screening nor rehearsed answers that these students went through prior to coming into the board room. In fact they were not quite sure why they had been summoned.

What they shared with us was a memorable experience. Twelve students came to visit us. We asked them about life at the College with follow-on questions about athletics and school work which they answered with a positive response. But then one student stopped me and said, "You are not asking us one of the most important questions." Not knowing what was coming next, I told him to raise the question and he immediately followed with the answer.

The question you should first ask was, "How do you feel about your professors and advisors?" The response was, "The faculty really, really cares about us. They will make themselves available to help us anytime of the day, evening or weekends. They will even give us their home or cell phone numbers to reach them. The faculty do not try to make courses

easier but they will do whatever is reasonable to help us learn the subject.” Every single student in that board room voiced the same opinion with great enthusiasm. There were two students who transferred to Bryn Athyn College, one from a large state university and another from a smaller state school who went on to praise the faculty further for their accessibility and support by mentioning they never got such help at their previous schools.

The students went on to say they felt like they had a friend for life with faculty members. Again, they felt Bryn Athyn College was special in this respect.

I was so glad there were other Corporation members in the room because I am not sure you would believe this experience if I did not have other witnesses to verify the event.

- As I mentioned, we also conduct surveys on courses at the end of each term. I think you might be surprised what course is rated the highest in terms of student satisfaction and interest. With so many courses offered you may think it might be a wide varying answer. The answer is Religion 101 – also known as Rookie Religion – which is required of all students who have not had any formal instruction about the principles of the New Church faith.
- The surveys completed at the end of the course show that students for the most part are pleased to be introduced to the introductory concepts of faith. For many students, this is the first time they have received any formal religious instruction and the experience is new for them. In no way do I want to imply we have a pipeline of converts lining up to join the Church, but it is an important first step to introducing the faith. The College is blessed to have several outstanding clergy faculty members such as the Rev. Dr. Thane Glenn, the Rev. Dr. Ray Silverman and the Rev. Grant Schnarr, who do a great job of making this academic material relevant to the students’ lives. Core teachings on love, marriage love,

The College in general has gained experience and continues to refine how to teach about the New Church faith. Young adults are actually more open than you might think to new thoughts and concepts about religion.

The College must take great care to prepare students for a career and a life-long use. We believe we can also make career choices more meaningful if we add a sense of spirituality to the careers our young people plan to pursue.

truth, heaven and hell, are several of the subjects these students have a keen interest in.

- The College in general has gained experience and continues to refine how to teach about the New Church faith. The sessions conducted earlier today [at the Retreat] by Dr. Martha Gyllenhaal and Curtis Childs showed evidence of how the Church can be received by people with diverse backgrounds. Young adults are actually more open than you might think to new thoughts and concepts about religion. I have personally had discussions with students – particularly upperclassmen – who go out of their way to tell me

how much they love the College and its environment. Many of these students will also say they are members of another faith but they like this “Swedenborg stuff.” Both the faculty and I believe that the Lord leads all through providence and Bryn Athyn College for many will be the first step in their religious journey.

- I would like to refer to a section in our Mission Statement where we state that the College has a special opportunity to introduce religious intellectual thought by:

“Pairing our courses into the intellectual inquiry of a strong liberal arts education with spiritual inquiry rooted in the teachings of the New Church. Students will explore this perspective in their religion courses, and also see it reflected in every other course they take.”

This is indeed a process where we need to work continually to get better but we must pause to see the progress made and the promise for future success.

The Vision for the College

The College must take great care to prepare students for a career and a life-long use. We believe we can also make career choices more meaningful if we add a sense of spirituality to the careers our young people plan to pursue. The

College is in the process of expanding its academic programs and also enhancing existing ones. I would like to highlight a few:

Nursing

This past year, Bryn Athyn College has started a nursing program in partnership with Jefferson University. Students can apply for admittance in the nursing program and are eligible for dual enrollment. The nursing students complete their liberal arts and required science studies during the first two years at Bryn Athyn College. They receive an Associate Degree and then move to Jefferson to complete their final two years of nursing studies and receive a bachelor of science in nursing from Jefferson. Nursing is a career built around caring for others and spiritual purpose is an attribute we look forward to exploring with our nursing students.

Business

This is the first year Bryn Athyn College has started a business major degree. We believe there are many opportunities to introduce sound business ethics from a New Church perspective. There are also plans to introduce the values associated with quality metrics within business operations and interaction with customers. These types of practices are closely aligned with teachings on order and predictable outcomes associated with serving fellow human beings by doing the right thing for employees, customers and vendors.

Education

The College was originally founded with one of its objectives to educate and train future New Church teachers. The mission of teaching has not changed but there are constantly changing requirements as well as new discoveries that may enable a teacher to reach the child who struggles in the classroom.

The state of education in the United States is not headed in a positive direction. National statistics continue to show a declining level of performance,

The College is committed to becoming recognized as an admired academic institution where a student can receive an excellent education. We also are confident that we can introduce our faith to young people who hopefully will grow to appreciate both the natural as well as spiritual foundation we provide them.

particularly when compared on an international scale. We have to do a better job with teacher training and preparation. The College is undergoing a review of how our curriculum can be further enhanced to produce highly effective teachers. More details will be forthcoming later this year.

Communications

Since taking office, I have heard from many alumni that they would like to receive more informative communications on what is going on with the College. We have taken steps to respond to these suggestions. This past month we published our inaugural edition of the *Bryn Athyn College Alumni Magazine*. We will publish this periodical three times a year.

We also plan to leverage today's internet technologies with live streaming of events and talks. Pendleton Hall is being rewired so that via the internet we can deliver chapel talks, faculty presentations and college events to members of our community. Announcements of this new capability will be made later this year.

The College is committed to becoming recognized as an admired academic institution where a student can receive an excellent education. We also are confident that we can introduce our faith to young people who hopefully will grow to appreciate both the natural as well as spiritual foundation we provide them. We welcome you to visit us anytime. We are proud about what we offer and greatly appreciate the support and sacrifice so many have made to make Bryn Athyn College a wonderful New Church institution.

Contact: Brian.Blair@brynathyn.edu

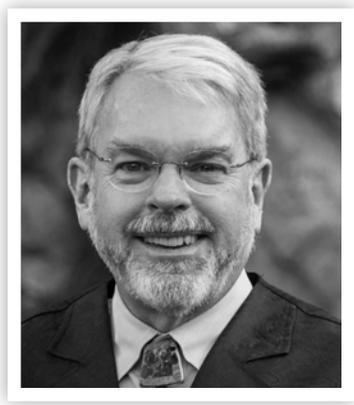
OUR NEW CHURCH VOCABULARY

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

FACULTY

This is a term used of certain things with which man is endowed by the Lord. Thus we read of the faculties of liberty and rationality, of loving and becoming wise. In every instance what is meant is a potential that may or may not be developed, or may be developed in part. Faculties do not become man's own, but are adjoined to the Lord continually, and it is in their right exercise that the Lord dwells with man. (See *Divine Love and Wisdom* 30, 240)

Memorial Address for B. Reade Genzlinger



The Rev. Kurt Hyland Asplundh

Bryn Athyn Cathedral – January 10, 2016

The doctrines of the New Church describe a spiritual world where life after death in the natural world continues and flourishes. Instead of the physical, material substances that are the basis of this natural world, the basis, the basic stuff, of the spiritual world are the spiritual qualities that we learn and that we live by during our life here. Things like:

- Caring and devotion to others
- Calm dependability
- Intellectual curiosity
- Good judgment

Spiritual qualities like these become actual, solid realities and make up the new world that we enter on our passing from this one.

The appearance, the shape and form and characteristics of these spiritual things is similar, the doctrines teach, to the kinds of things that we have here in the natural world that we make good use of and that bring happiness to those around us. A garden is the example given in one description. Another passage

Heaven, it could be said,
is where what we love
is real. So if they were
used by someone in this
life as a way of showing
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and of bringing joy
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to find that there are
Almost Perfect Oatmeal
Cookies, Gravely
tractors and Piper Cub
airplanes in heaven.

goes on to say that these spiritually substantial objects in that world “are sensed [there] just as vividly as things are for us on earth, in fact far more clearly, more crisply, and more perceptibly . . . [and that therefore] the appearances that arise in heaven . . . are called *real appearances* because they do actually come into being.” (*Heaven and Hell* 175)

Heaven, it could be said, is where what we love is real. So if they were used by someone in this life as a way of showing love and care for others and of bringing joy to life, we should not be at all surprised to find that there are Almost Perfect Oatmeal Cookies, Gravely tractors and Piper Cub airplanes in heaven.

We turn our thoughts and our love today to Reade Genzlinger, who has passed from this life, and to his family: to his wife, Lynn (Pitcairn), and to their children and

grandchildren: Kyle, Aurelle, Aria and Deryn; Nina and Kirk; Lane, Simma and Isla; Teryn, Derek, Dexter and Hazel; and Owen; and to Reade’s siblings: Leslie, Stacy, Eric and Kent. Reade’s family and all of us, too, have lost something of great magnitude. May we all find strength and peace in the love that we share together and in the love and respect that we all have for Reade.

What we have lost in this world is Reade’s unique embodiment of many, many exemplary and superb human qualities. As we struggle with this tremendous loss and the grief and pain it brings, it may be over time that a source of strength and peace for us will be our memory of these characteristics that we saw and felt in Reade. And what could be suggested is that it’s not just memories that we have of Reade’s spirit and spiritual qualities: in a very real and substantial way they still very much exist and are still being embodied in the spiritual world, which is very near to us, and they still exist all around us in this world, too.

Already this past week, many of Reade’s qualities have been talked about and cherished. After this service we will have the chance to hear about and savor many more. We will always have an appreciation for Reade and who he was and who he is.

For now, though, we will reflect especially on just three qualities of Reade's. We can picture that these are three among many that the Lord has led Reade into in this life and that the Lord is now leading Reade onward into, even more, in the life to come. They are:

- Reade's keen intellect
- His calm and patient reliability
- His devotion to the well-being of those in his life, from clients in business to his own family

Bryce Reade Genzlinger was born August 22, 1954, the oldest child of Bryce and Doris Genzlinger. He was born at Abington Hospital, the same hospital where just a little earlier that summer Michael and Geneva Pitcairn had welcomed the birth of a daughter . . . but more on her later.

In Reade's growing up years, the Genzlinger family moved several times. By the time Reade was in seventh and eighth grade, they were living in Puerto Rico, where memories include outings on the family sailboat. His siblings and other friends remember the Reade of that time (who would have been about 13) as a more-than-competent sailor.

The sailboat may have had an outboard motor but that didn't mean it worked reliably, so on returning to the harbor, with father Bryce at the helm, it fell to young Reade to get it all timed just right, lowering the sail as they approached the slip, leaping off the boat onto the dock and tying the boat off, all the while assigning appropriately doable tasks to his younger siblings.

For those who know Reade, it's probably not hard to picture a scene like this, competently and efficiently handled. Reade always had a keen, inquisitive mind, able to figure out a good way, and then the right way and eventually the best way to do things. Lynn still has a clear picture in her mind from 30 some years ago, looking out the window of their home in Horsham, of Reade, sitting outside in the summer heat, studying intently to qualify for a pilot's license. Once he had passed, the very next day he took Lynn and Kyle (still an infant in the car seat strapped into the plane) up for a ride.

When someone expressed surprise that Lynn would let Reade take her and their baby up in an airplane so soon after first qualifying, she said it never occurred to her to question whether Reade knew what he was doing. He was always so careful and so exacting in his approach to things. He was a perfectionist who didn't expect perfection out of others but only himself.

A batch of "Reade's Almost Perfect Oatmeal Cookies" are to be baked at 347° for 13½ minutes. An attorney associated with Reade in business in recent



A color blow up of the photo of Reade Genzlinger's beloved Super Cub was displayed below the pulpit during his memorial address.

years shared these words: “Reade was meticulous with details and his thinking was always sound [and] well-reasoned . . . He readily impressed others with . . . his accurate and sagacious judgment.”

Speaking of sagacity or wisdom, a principle of doctrine comes to mind: “To know effects from causes,” we read, “is to be wise.” (*Divine Love and Wisdom* 115) As a spiritual quality, wisdom is not just knowing a bunch of stuff; it’s knowing how effects are derived from causes; knowing how and why things are the way they are and how and why they got that way. This description of wisdom sounds a lot like Reade. He did know a bunch of stuff, and if you looked in his shed or in his garage, you’d see that he also had a bunch of stuff. But any of us would be hard-pressed to find something that Reade knew or that he kept that he couldn’t tell you the use of, original or improvised.

One last facet of Reade’s keen and curious mind is the joy he got out of helping others find things out the same way he did. With what he knew and with the expertise he had, it probably would have been the easy way most of the time just to say, “Look, do this and this and this and you’ll get the result you want.” But instead, he loved to help people see for themselves what the situation was, to see what their options were and then he would let them have the delight of making and benefitting from their own decisions. And watching that happen would be even more delightful for Reade.

This brings us to the second of the three qualities we are reflecting on: Reade’s steady and unhurried, calm and patient approach to problem-solving and getting things done. A young friend of the family once asked Reade how he knew so much about so many things. Reade’s answer was simple, compelling and emblematic of his character. “When people talk to me, I listen.”

An aviation friend of Reade’s who lives in New Zealand shared this story:

Reade and I participated in an Around New Zealand Air Race some seven years ago. It involved about 35 planes and 95 aircrew, lasted the better part of two weeks and overflew both islands as we took in most major spots to see in this beautiful country.

The days were pretty much full on with flight planning, navigation and the logistics of feeding and housing and fueling all these planes and all these people in so many spots in a limited time. It would be a challenge for a stranger from another country. . . unless, of course, you are Reade Genzlinger.

Reade’s easy going nature and astoundingly thorough knowledge of aviation and aviation history opened all sorts of doors with the other contestants. A skilled raconteur, he kept the groups entertained and always with a smile and a chuckle when a point or punchline was made.

I could not have asked for a better copilot or friend.

“Reade’s easy going nature . . .” No matter who is talking about Reade and

no matter which of any of the varied arenas of life they may have known him from, words like “easy going,” “calm” and “patient” seem to keep coming up.

Owen also told a flying story that beautifully captures how valuable those even-keeled qualities were in Reade and what a difference they made in the lives of those around him. It was Owen’s first flight in a Piper Cub. While Reade was around front to do the necessary hand start on the Cub’s propeller, young Owen sat in the cockpit not even tall enough to reach the pedals.

Once Reade got the engine turned over, with the throttle set a little above idle, the plane started slowly rolling forward. Owen remembers it as “a couple of seconds of ACK!” But then Reade, calmly of course, stepped back and around, reached into the cockpit and set the throttle back to idle.

Later, when they were in the air, Reade let Owen take the stick. Owen thought he was holding it steady but the plane slowly started to ascend. He wasn’t sure if Reade was noticing what was happening and he wasn’t sure what to do. But then Reade, with no hurry at all, reached out, re-set the stick and they leveled off. Owen remembers those two little moments as containing a permanent and immeasurably valuable life lesson that he learned from the calm and competent response of his Pop. “Oh, you just solve the problem.”

Before turning our attention to the last of the three qualities (Reade’s devotion to the well-being of the people in his life, particularly his family), we should catch up a little on his biography. After a couple of years in Puerto Rico, the Genzlinger family moved back to Bryn Athyn in time for Reade to attend all four years at the Academy Boys School. He’s remembered there as a football quarterback, baseball captain and senior class president, described by the class advisor, Dave Roscoe, as someone he was going to miss because “the eggheads and the jocks both like him.”

He’s also remembered by the end of sophomore year as Lynn Pitcairn’s boyfriend. After graduating from the Academy in 1973, Reade and Lynn both went to the University of Delaware and on December 30, 1976, Reade and Lynn were married here in the Cathedral.

After earning his degree from Delaware a year later, Reade began a work career that continued until about 1988, when he left a job and worked for about a year as a laborer under the contractor who was restoring what became Reade and Lynn’s family home at the bottom of Waverly Lane. Of course Reade looked back on that as a great year where he learned a whole new set of skills and learned where everything was and how it worked in his house.

After that year, Reade co-founded the Cairnwood Cooperative Corporation, where he served with his keen intellect and calm demeanor until the present.

A phone call was placed this past Friday afternoon to another aviation friend of Reade’s out in Alpine, Wyoming. He was asked to share any

For all that he accomplished, for all he was interested in and for all the skills and talents he had, it seems it was clear to anyone who knew him that it was the people in his life that mattered the most to Reade.

reminiscences he might have about what it was about flying that Reade loved so much. He mentioned the liberating and in-the-moment feeling of the wheels leaving the ground and of lifting into the air. But what he really wanted to talk about was the respect he had for Reade as a “loving family man,” a “proud and doting grandfather” and for his “integrity and true honesty.”

He doesn’t consider himself an aviation friend of Reade’s; he considers himself a family friend first. He even said that what the two of them most appreciated together about airplanes is that they’re “time machines,” allowing one to get quickly from one place to another, to show up for the people in

one’s life, which is what really matters.

The attorney quoted earlier, who wrote in an email about Reade’s sound judgment and thoughtful decision-making, followed that up with this:

More than anything, Reade was a family man. It is hard to imagine anyone more devoted to family than Reade. Reade and Lynn were obviously fashioned by the hand of God for one another, and theirs was a union that was blessed with love and understanding and mutual caring. Reade and Lynn doted on their beautiful and accomplished children and children-in-law, and were simply entranced by their grandchildren. Reade’s life was enhanced by the love of a wonderful family that, in so many ways, will carry on his memory and his abiding values.

For all that he accomplished, for all he was interested in and for all the skills and talents he had, it seems it was clear to anyone who knew him that it was the people in his life that mattered the most to Reade. And with his calm, easy-going way, the way he’d watch and listen, paying attention to the details, it’s no surprise that some of the most consistent and meaningful ways that Reade showed his love and care for people was in often small, behind-the-scenes and we might even say unspectacular ways. But it always made a difference because it was Reade who was doing it.

If Reade picked your name in a Christmas Pollyanna, you would end up with a thoughtful, carefully chosen gift. And receiving that nice gift might bring you a lot of joy, but not as much joy as he would get having given it to you. At gatherings of friends or family, Reade loved to be busy in the kitchen, cooking food, and he would be so excited if you liked it and would want to share

with you every detail of its preparation, meticulously documented.

Reade would tell made-up stories to the kids up at Tonche about his buddy, Max, including way-too-complex details about Max's vehicles. He told those stories, that is, at least for as long as he could stay awake. More recently, when he'd call someone in the family and leave a voicemail, he'd always be sure to mention the time of the call, "your time," and where he was in the country – Bryn Athyn, Wyoming or elsewhere – as if to say, "Whenever it is, wherever I am, I'm thinking about you."

When the kids were in college and home on break, he'd top off the washer fluid and check their tire pressure before they'd head back to school. And as they were finding their way in the world as adults, Reade helped all he could in his small, subtle ways and sometimes, when the situation called for it, in take-charge and precisely effective ways. And beyond all this, Reade the most excellent grandpa is a whole new chapter of his story.

A close friend observed that Reade and Lynn together were "consummate parents, totally calm, relaxed but in control." Lynn herself says that she and Reade just always seemed somehow to be in sync, with only a rare exception or two, always agreeing about raising the kids or any other decisions that they would make. Kyle made it a point the other day, as a family meeting was winding down, to say that while Reade may not always have been the most forceful disciplinarian in the household, there was one thing it was clear that he would not allow: no disrespect of Mama.

It is countless small examples of love and care like these that all put together build a wonderful family, a wonderful marriage and the wonderful life of a wonderful man. It is these moments of precious love, innocence and peace that the Lord most carefully and most ardently protects. These are what live forever in the spiritual world and in our hearts and minds here. Reade lives in the spiritual world, and we can be lifted up by the hope that we will be with him again and all of these things will still be true of him.

All of these things, too, are what make this loss of Reade's life on earth so sad and difficult to bear. There is no way to minimize it. We can, though, as we carry on with heavy hearts, continue to love and admire Reade. We can offer love and strength to his family and close friends. We can honor his

It is countless small examples of love and care like these that all put together build a wonderful family, a wonderful marriage and the wonderful life of a wonderful man.

life by ourselves living with the integrity, the wisdom, the patience and good judgment and with the devoted care that were embodied and are embodied in the life of Reade Genzlinger.

You have seen . . . says the Lord, how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to Myself. (Exodus 19:4)

(For another tribute to Reade Genzlinger, see Life Lines, page 198.)

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OUR NEW CHURCH VOCABULARY

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FAITH

Here we have a term to which the Writings give a radically different meaning from that which it has in Christian theology. Faith, they teach, is neither an intellectual, historical acceptance of the passion and merits of Christ nor a blind assent to that which transcends the understanding, and it differs in quality from the commitment (*fiducia*) which Luther himself preferred to mere assent.

Faith is an internal acknowledgment and affection: an internal acknowledgment of truth from sight and understanding of it, and an internal affection of truth from willing the truth because it is true; and it consists in desiring from the heart to know what is good and true for the sake of life. It is therefore inseparable from life and is one with the good of charity.

Indeed we are taught the understanding of good is what is principally called the truth of faith, and that faith is the operation of the Lord alone through the charity in a man. There are various compounds that should be briefly noted. Thus historical faith is that which rests upon human authorities; persuasive faith is belief for the sake of selfish or worldly ends; and spurious faith is that in which falsities are mixed with truths. (See *Faith* 1; *Heavenly Doctrines* 112; *Arcana Coelestia* 36, 1162 2954, 4605, 8034; *Doctrine of Life* 36; *Apocalypse Revealed* 655)

A Stumbling Block to Sharing Our Faith

The Rev. Kenneth J. Alden

(Note: This article originally appeared in *The New Church Voice of Florida*.)

Among the doubts that may cross our minds when we attempt to share our faith is whether we appear to be selling tainted goods. Many Christians have heard what it says at the end of the book of *Revelation*: “If anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book; and if anyone takes away from the words of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life.” (*Revelation* 22:18-19) Even if our listeners don’t voice it, we may wonder if they have closed their minds, thinking, “You and this Swedenborg are adding books to the Bible!”

Adding to the Bible is a serious concern. It is spiritual death to have other gods than the Lord. Accepting the product of man’s own intelligence as having Divine authority would be the same as having some other god. If our listener is cautious about accepting what Swedenborg penned, lest they be adding to the Bible, that is a good thing. We should be concerned about this issue, too.

Are we violating the Lord’s law in accepting the theological writings of Emanuel Swedenborg as Divine revelation? Is it enough to acknowledge that everything in those Writings leads us to acknowledge the Lord Jesus Christ as our only God and to keep His commandments as the law of religion? Is the way they satisfy our thirst for truth with systematic, rational doctrines that make sense like no other theology sufficient to quiet our fear of adding books to the Bible? Here are six points that offer reassurance that our faith is not misplaced.

First, we should know that all of the Bible was penned by men. All written Divine revelation was recorded in this way. Even when He spoke from Mount Sinai, or taught His twelve disciples from His own mouth, the Lord had His Word written by men at His command and by His inspiration.

Second, we should recall that the book we call “the Bible” was gathered over time. At first there was the *Law of Moses*. Later came the *Prophets* and

Psalms. Later still, the *Gospels* were written, and after them, the *Book of Revelation*. Each of these additions to the Bible was written on its own scroll.

One of the issues faced by both Jews and Christians concerned which scrolls belonged in their “canon” or collection of holy books. Even today, the Catholic Bible contains books that the Protestant Bible does not. On what basis do one or both churches have confidence that they did not add books that don’t belong or take away books that do? Is it simply that they bound the *Book of Revelation* as the last one in their collection?

A third point is that the Lord warned against adding to His revelation long before the vast majority of the Bible was written. When there were only the five scrolls comprising “The Law,” Moses wrote: “You shall not add to the word which I command you, nor take anything from it, that you may keep the commandments of Jehovah your God which I command you.” (*Deuteronomy* 4:2. See also 12:32) All the *Prophets*, the *Psalms*, and the whole of the New Testament, including the *Book of Revelation’s* warning against adding to the book, came after Moses forbade the people to add to what he had commanded.

Following the above points, **the fourth thing** we should observe is that there is no restriction against God adding to His revelation at any time. This He has always done through people, as we have seen.

Fifth, the Lord said quite plainly that He had many more things to say which would wait until “the Spirit of Truth” came. This implies additional revelation which was to coincide with His Second Coming, for He said of the coming of the Spirit of Truth: “I will come to you,” and “I will no longer speak to you in parables, but I will tell you plainly about the Father.” (See *John* 14:16-18; 16:5-25, emphasis added)

Sixth, what Swedenborg wrote, he does not claim as his own. Rather he states again and again that he wrote what he did at the Lord’s command. For example, in the preface to *Apocalypse Revealed* – which provides the spiritual meaning of the very book in which the warning about adding to “this book” appears – Swedenborg wrote:

Everyone can see that the *Book of Revelation* cannot possibly be explained except by the Lord alone, for every single word in it contains arcana – arcana which never would be known without a singular enlightenment and thus revelation. Consequently it has pleased the Lord to open for me the sight of my spirit and teach me. Do not suppose therefore that I have acquired anything there on my own, or from any angel, but from the Lord alone.

The Lord also said through the angel to John, “Do not seal the words of the prophecy of this book” (*Revelation* 22:10), which means that they are to be presented to view. (*Apocalypse Revealed*, preface)

These six points show that it does not violate the prohibition against adding to the Bible for the Lord to reveal the things that He promised by

means of a man He inspired for that purpose, and for us to acknowledge that it is equally a Divine revelation as the Bible we already have. Setting those doubts aside, we can return to our acknowledgment of the truth and goodness of this revelation which leads to the Lord alone and to life according to His commandments, and have confidence that our faith in those Writings is not faith in Swedenborg, but faith in the Lord.



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The Right Guy for the Bad Times, Or The Plastic Bag Diet

Nadine Rogers

When we are looking for a life partner we usually are looking for someone who is exciting to be with, makes us feel special, makes us laugh, makes us happy. I was always convinced that happiness would come wrapped up in scintillating conversation, and if that wasn't happening I assumed something was wrong with the relationship. A lot of potential relationships were probably jettisoned a little prematurely when my date failed to keep me intellectually dazzled. We want the good times.

However, I've come to believe that it's actually far more important how partners behave toward each other in bad times. Being the right person in the bad times trumps being the right person in the good times.

Why?

1. It is impossible to sustain constant euphoria, novel experiences, exciting adventures and scintillating conversation. No one has enough money, energy, or fund of knowledge to keep it going forever.
2. Lots of bad things happen in this life. We can't avoid this. Illness and death, natural disasters, job loss, poverty, loneliness, misunderstandings, fights, unfairness, corruption and injustice are all impossibly tangled up in our everyday lives. Smooth sailing is a myth. As much as we wish it weren't true, disruption of the status quo *is* the status quo.
3. Hard times, in general, are the times in which we grow the most, and this growth is often uncomfortable but exceedingly important. Therefore we need someone who is going to allow us to grow, help us to grow, and not cause worsened trauma or leave us to flounder around by ourselves.

After a 10-year bilingual relationship, I have to say there's not a whole lot of scintillation going on from either of us. I still love a meaningful conversation with my husband, but what really makes me feel connected and loved and cared for are knowing I can call him just to say, "I'm feeling sad so I wanted to hear your voice," or knowing he can witness me ranting in hyperbole and still think better about me afterwards than I will think of myself, or seeing genuine

sorrow in his eyes when mine are filled with tears. And I'm pretty sure my husband is not in this because I'm dazzling him either.

Our relationship with God is somewhat similar. Some people are lucky to have experiences where they feel close to God, feel inspired, feel loved and excited about their spiritual life. Those are wonderful things and I wish them for all of you. I'm also a little bit jealous of those who have them. But in reality, and not just in a sour grapes way, I think they are like those scintillating conversations I was always after – occasional at best and not enough to build the whole relationship around. Why? For the same reasons using peak experiences as a benchmark doesn't work with our human relationships:

1. It is not sustainable. If you have any doubt about this, read the beginning of *Conjugal Love*, where people get to experience what they imagined heaven would be like. By the end of their experiences, they all are clawing at the door trying to get out of their false paradises.
2. Life is largely neutral, with a liberal sprinkling of heinous problems.
3. The hard times are the times of growth. It is when we need the closest guidance and the greatest strength, the most encouragement and the deepest comfort. That's when we really need God.

So even though it is lovely and useful to have a view of a magnificent and benevolent God during the times of peace and plenty, in my experience those moments are a lot like getting an ice cream sundae as a treat once in a while. Most of the time we are learning how to eat the vegetables that are good for us but taste boring or even bad, or recovering from the things we shove in our mouths that we aren't supposed to eat at all. Unfortunately, a lot of our lives are spent in the equivalent of severe gastric distress from ingestion of emotional and spiritual garbage.

Sometimes that garbage is stuff that was dumped on you when you had no choice or wisdom to know there were other options. Here in Kathmandu, where the cow is considered sacred but the bulls are not useful for milk, baby bulls are led away from their mothers and let loose in the city. They can be seen sitting on heaps of garbage eating plastic bags, because they were wrested from their mothers and no longer had the option of milk, nor the experience of elder cows to teach them what are proper foods.

In a similar way, some of us have been abandoned when we needed guidance or worse yet, forced to take in harmful messages in the form of indifference, neglect, belittlement or abuse. Messages that said, "You're worthless, you're despicable, I hate you." If we grow up taking in that kind of garbage, you can imagine we will need a God who will help us undo those kinds of thoughts and heal us from the damage it has done to us.

Some of the garbage we eat is stuff we do to ourselves. We know alcohol

So what does the Bible tell us about God in the bad times? Even a very precursory search in a concordance using a few key words such as “brokenhearted” and “heal” generates a huge list of passages that deal with the subject.

or drugs are dangerous, especially given some of our family backgrounds and genetic predispositions, but we just want to try it. We just want some fun. Or we know we are supposed to be kind and welcoming but we shun the kid who smells funny or has that ridiculous haircut or wears his pants too high, because we like the feeling of being included in the cool crowd. Or we lord it over our younger siblings, maybe throwing in some punches or dagger-like words, because we like the feeling of power over something.

Often the two kinds of garbage eating are connected. We need the high feelings of euphoria or belonging or power because it masks, although

usually poorly and temporarily at best, the terrible feelings we drag around all the time. Unfortunately, trying to stop feeling like a jerk by acting like a jerk is probably not going to have the desired effect of making us something different. That’s where God comes in. We need someone to show us something is out there besides rotting garbage and plastic bags. Since most of what we know is the garbage pile, we need a helping hand to show us the way. We need the Right Guy for the bad times.

So what does the Bible tell us about God in the bad times? Even a very precursory search in a concordance using a few key words such as “brokenhearted” and “heal” generates a huge list of passages that deal with the subject. Here are just a few:

“The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those crushed in spirit.” (*Psalms* 34:20)

“He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds.” (*Psalms* 147:3)

“The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me, because the Lord has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from the darkness for the prisoners, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn, and provide for those who grieve in Zion – to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair.” (*Isaiah* 61:1-3)

“He does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our

iniquities. For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is His love for those who fear Him; as far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us. As a father has compassion on his children, so the Lord has compassion on those who fear Him; for He knows how we are formed, He remembers that we are dust.” (*Psalms* 103:10)

“I waited patiently for the Lord, He turned to me and heard my cry. He lifted me out of the slimy pit, out of the mud and mire; He set my feet on a rock and gave me a firm place to stand. He put a new song in my mouth, a hymn of praise to our God.” (*Psalms* 40:1-3)

“I have seen your tears; I will heal you.” (*2 Kings* 20:4)

Healing us is not just offering a little tissue when we have a slight sniffle. We would love our illnesses to be tiny scratches that need Band-Aids, or a fever that leaves us a pallid, pathetic creature stretched out on a chaise lounge, inspiring tenderness and motherly love and a cool cloth placed on the brow. More often, the kinds of illness we need healing from are far more messy.

Think about yourself at your most paranoid, most selfish, most mean. We are more like projectile vomiting, explosive diarrhea and oozing pus, sloughing skin that a vitamin deficient toxic diet of garbage will cause. What’s worse is that we are contagious. Our oozing wounds spread to those we are around, in the form of the same indifference, neglect, belittlement or abuse that we experienced. And some of us aren’t cute little kids that just need more frequent diaper changes. We are full-grown adults who are spurting vomit and waste all over the place. Because although at one point the garbage may have been fed to us, at another point we started to choose to eat it, too.

And yet, God touches those leprous, dripping stumps. He lets the woman who leaves a 12-year trail of blood behind her touch His robes. He’ll even bear the stench of a rotting Lazarus dead in the tomb four days to heal us. Yes, He suffers the little children to come to Him, but what is far more wondrous is that He also welcomes the image-conscious, scaredy-cat Pharisee sneaking up to Him in the middle of the night.

Being rescued and healed doesn’t always occur in an obviously miraculous fashion. It *is* miraculous, but rarely instantaneous and usually without an accompanying magic show. Think about Noah’s rescue: 40 days and nights of rain on a boat full of seasick and stir crazy animals. I am sure there were some days Noah thought it might have been better just to drown along with the wicked.

Of course, this is illustrating our own minds. The wicked part must die, and this is a harrowing process since that wicked part is very much enmeshed with the rest of us, and the separation process often feels like a crazy menagerie of wild animals lurching around in a tempest-tossed wooden boat.

An obvious example is addiction. Anyone who has had an addiction will

What we see as the possible end, God sees as part of the love story. He has been writing since the beginning of creation. The best part of the love story, in some ways, because it is where we finally become aware that we are in the story.

tell you that while pleasure and relief may be what started them on their drug of choice, not being able to handle the process of stopping it is what kept them addicted for so long. Once a person is used to a drug, stopping it causes an array of withdrawal symptoms that can include nausea, body aches, diarrhea, seizures, depression, fear and boredom with everyday life. Facing any kind of inner problem has a spiritual equivalent of withdrawal.

We may even wonder if there will be someone left if all these vices and neuroses and membership cards to the jerk club are wrested away from us. Sometimes we may think to ourselves, “This is what salvation looks like?

Shouldn't it feel better? Should it really be this messy? Shouldn't I be more excited about this?” Because getting off the garbage pile is scary. Maybe the worst part is having to face just how awful we've become, just how toxic we are from eating all that garbage.

This is not an easy thing to face. In fact, we tend to avoid it at all costs, armoring ourselves with logical excuses, self-righteous narcissistic rage, or a good old pair of proverbial blinders. That's why, for a lot of us, we have to experience worse and worse consequences of our toxicity until we no longer can ignore them.

Again using the addiction model, this is what is called hitting rock bottom. The bottom of the pit, so low we can't go anywhere lower. God loves rock bottom. While we see it as the ultimate expression of our inner filth, God views it as us finally loosening our grip on the filth we've been clinging to for dear life. God *loves* rock bottom. In fact, He is orchestrating ways to get us there.

One of my favorite verses is in *Hosea* when God speaks of the wayward Israel with these words: “I am now going to woo her; I will lead her into the desert and speak tenderly to her.” Woo us into a desert? How many of us would be eager to go on a date to a wasteland with a prospect of dying of starvation, thirst, sunstroke or snake bite?

But what we see as the possible end, God sees as part of the love story. He has been writing since the beginning of creation. The best part of the love story, in some ways, because it is where we finally become aware that we are in the story. We might not like the desert. It's hot and dry and prickly. But

sometimes that's the only place we can start to say, "I think I need something real to eat. I think I need some water. Another plastic bag is just not going to cut it this time." And then who is there to lead us to the rock in the wilderness that miraculously spouts water? The Right Guy in the bad times.

The Bible is chock full of stories about surviving the wilderness. Moses strikes a rock and water appears. He throws a stick in a stagnant pool and it becomes drinkable. Manna falls from heaven for 40 years of wandering around in the Sinai Peninsula until the Israelites are willing to say, "We're ready to try out something different."

Joseph stores up seven years of grain to keep Egypt and the surrounding peoples, including his father and brothers, alive in the seven-year famine. Ravens feed Elijah in the wilderness. Both Elijah and Elisha are fed by miracles in the homes of widows during times of famine. Jesus Himself goes into the wilderness and fasts for 40 days, wrestling with the devil. These stories occur over and over because this is the story of each of us discovering that it has gotten bad enough to know nothing short of a miracle is going to make a difference, and then when we are ready for a miracle, the Miracle Man is right there.

Those miracles, as I said, seldom look like miracles. They can look like the person in the cubicle next to ours asking if we want to go out for a cup of coffee. They can look like a neighbor telling us she will watch the kids because we look a little frazzled. It can look like the baby still kissing our cheek and wrapping her arms around our neck even after a screaming fit – ours, not the baby's.

It can look like the inside of a psychiatric ward or a prison cell for some people. It might look like an AA meeting. It can look like walking into an adult literacy class. It can look like buying a pair of walking shoes and deciding to start taking care of your body. It can look like buying the homeless guy a sandwich or showing up at a peace rally or adopting a shelter dog. It almost certainly will involve other plastic-bag-eating toxic people wandering around in the wilderness, because God knows that helping each other is one of the best ways to get us out of garbage diet mentality.

He loves us enough, thinks well enough of us, and trusts us enough to help these others of His precious creations. We may look askance at ourselves and others and think, "This is the rescue posse You sent? This is who is supposed to lead us out of the desert?" And God smiles, spreads out His arms and says. "Yes! Isn't it fabulous?" Because truly, really, that's how God views us.

Yes, He sees the vomit and diarrhea, but He knows that underneath all of that is one of the people He planned for since time began, whom He waited for with eager anticipation, whom He lit a star in heaven for when He

(God) is happy to sit with us when we're too tired to do anything, steady us when the room seems to be spinning, hand us a cup of clean water, and let us rest our weary head on His shoulder.

showed Abraham all his descendants, which are all of us.¹ So we aren't really up for scintillating conversation. God doesn't care. He's happy to sit with us when we're too tired to do anything, steady us when the room seems to be spinning, hand us a cup of clean water, and let us rest our weary head on His shoulder.

“Come unto Me, all you who are weary and heavily burdened, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn of Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.” (*Matthew 11:28-30*)



Nadine Rogers is a psychiatrist living in Kathmandu, Nepal, where she and her husband, Rajendra Budhethoki, are raising 12 children – 10 orphans and two biological – in the New Life Children's Home. This is the orphanage founded by her brother, Kent, and supported by the Loving Arms Mission. Contact: nrogersmd@gmail.com

¹ This is a reference to a song by Rich Mullins, *Sometimes By Step*, which includes the line, “Sometimes I think of Abraham, how one star he saw was lit just for me.”

The Rev. Nathan F. Cole



Leading Tours Leads to the Ministry

The Rev. Nathan Field Cole grew up as the son of the Rev. Stephen and Jennifer Cole, and was used to moving around the Church, so thoughts of becoming a minister were always on his mind. But so was becoming a zoo keeper.

It wasn't until he was in college that he thought seriously about the ministry and set his path. Now he is assistant to the pastor of the Carmel New Church in Kitchener, Ontario, Canada, where he lives with his wife, Vera (King) and their six children: Otto, Eleora, Jasher, Corin, Marek and Aiona.

Being raised in a minister's large family and moving about every six or seven years, he was able to see and experience living in or visiting most of the societies in North America before moving to Bryn Athyn for College and Theological School.

He was born in Cincinnati, Ohio, then moved to Michigan and attended Oak Arbor Elementary School from first to fifth Grade. Then the family moved to San Diego, California, where he was home schooled, taking history and science classes with other home-school families.

While living in California he worked part time in a pet store that specialized in exotic birds. He enjoyed learning about parrots and the zoo keeper side of things, as well as customer service. Later in college he worked in a wood-working and cabinetry shop. He likes to joke that both of his first jobs were dusty and hazardous to fingers.

A highlight of the wood-working job was getting to restore some of the teak doors for the Bryn Athyn Cathedral. Also in College he got a job as an educational intern at Glencairn Museum where he loved doing tours and teaching children during the summer festivals. He was able to continue as a graduate intern for a year while deciding what to do after college.

Meanwhile any assumptions that he would grow up to be a minister like his father competed with various other ideas: zoo keeper, math teacher, soldier, computer programmer.

He enjoyed programming in college but was quickly convinced by the “Dot-Com-Crash” in the ‘90s that this would not be a sure-fire road to success. That forced him to think about what he would actually enjoy doing as a career.

“I have always enjoyed learning stories from the Word and reading the Heavenly Doctrine,” he says, “but my experience teaching and leading tours at Glencairn helped me realize that I really enjoyed teaching about religion. In my junior year in college I realized I wanted to pursue the ministry and started switching my classes from a strict math/computer science focus to Theological School prerequisites.”

While in Theological School he did his candidacy in Toronto. Since his graduation and ordination in 2009 he has been working at the Carmel New Church in Kitchener, so his whole career so far has been in Canada.

“I enjoy serving here,” he says, “since I get to teach and interact with people of all ages, including small children in our K-10 school and up to adult study classes.” He has also been a visiting pastor for Toronto, Dawson Creek and Grande Prairie, Ottawa, Parry Sound, Montreal and London (Ontario) circles and groups.

“One rewarding project I have been involved in running is our youth weekends. Canada sponsors two New Church Teen Weekends each year



The Cole Family

for 7-12th grade youth in Canada and the Midwest. It is really fun to interact with these young people who are positive about the Church and interested in learning about the Heavenly Teachings.

“I do have to give credit to the other ministers who helped get them going: the Revs. Coleman Glenn and Calvin Odhner, as well as the Canadian and Midwestern

pastors who continue to make it happen, also the local volunteers and chaperones, and especially the teens who bring an affirmative attitude to these events.”

Nathan continues to enjoy birds and exploring the natural world, “although my stage of life doesn’t allow me to pursue raising birds. I enjoy Medieval and Biblical archaeology and love finding historically accurate reproductions to bring to classes or use in children’s talks.”

In his pet-shop working days he raised exotic birds in his back yard and at one point had more than 50 birds of various species.

Nathan enjoys his busy home life with his wife, Vera, and six children. Some of his focus in ministry has been on exploring the doctrines of conjugal love and family. He feels he has found practical insights and inspiration in his home life to bring to his teaching.

His favorite passage from the Writings is:

“Following His Advent the Lord will revive conjugal love, such as it was among ancient peoples. For conjugal love comes only from the Lord, and it is found in people who are made spiritual by Him through His Word.” (*Conjugal Love 81*)

Contact: nfcole@gmail.com

It Gets Worse Before It Gets Better

A Sermon by the Rev. Nathan Cole

Lessons: Exodus 5:1-6;14-23; Mark 1:9-3; Arcana Coelestia 7163

And Moses returned to Jehovah, and said, "Lord, why hast Thou done evil to this people? Why is it that Thou hast sent me?"

If you are familiar with the story of the Exodus, you will know how the Children of Israel eventually escaped from Egypt but that it was not an easy escape. They had been slaves for so many years to the point that it seems they didn't seem to consider leaving on their own. Moses had to convince the people that they should leave and that the Lord would help them.

But the first thing Moses asks is to be allowed to lead the people out of Egypt to worship Jehovah. Now in the literal story it seems like Moses isn't asking for Pharaoh actually to let them go but just to leave for a few days. Still Pharaoh immediately punishes the people with harder work, and then beatings when they don't complete the work quickly enough.

This has the opposite effect of the initial goal of escaping to follow the Lord; the people rebel against Moses and the Lord in response to this added hardship. The continued refrain for the rest of the book of *Exodus* is the people complaining that they ever left Egypt.

Unfortunately this is a warning about what happens when we try to get out of some evil. It gets worse before it gets better. As depressing as that sounds, we also know that no matter how bad things get, once we start fighting, we can eventually escape to the promised land.

Is it always darkest before the dawn? Whether that saying is actually true it does relate to this spiritual fact. When we try to fight an evil it usually appears worse and worse the harder we try. Like Moses or the Children of Israel we might be inclined to complain to the Lord as things get worse when we try to do the right thing. But it is not the Lord's fault. There are multiple facets to this dynamic. The first is something of an illusion. It seems like evil gets worse when we try to shun it because it doesn't fully appear until we recognize that it is evil.

All evils are born delightful; because man is born into the love of himself, and that love makes all things delightful that are of his proprium, thus whatever he wills

and whatever he thinks; and everyone remains till death in the delights that are inrooted by birth, unless they are subdued; and they are not subdued unless they are regarded as sweet drugs that kill, or as flowers apparently beautiful that carry poison in them; thus unless the delights of evil are regarded as deadly, and this until at length they become undelightful. (Charity 2)

This means that as long as we are in evils we think of them as good – or at least mild – because part of us is enjoying them. When we choose to try to resist or leave that evil – because the Word teaches it is wrong – we begin to recognize it for what it is. Still, when we first start, we don't have the full picture of how bad it is. This can lead to the impression that things are worse because we are trying to resist when it is really just that we are seeing the evil for what it is.

Another part of this illusion is that chains of bondage are not restrictive if you are happy being a slave.

As a person wills and commits evil he advances into infernal societies more and more interiorly and also more and more deeply. Hence also the delight of evil increases, and so occupies his thoughts that at last he feels nothing more pleasant. He who has advanced more interiorly and deeply into infernal societies becomes as if he were bound with chains. So long as he lives in the world, however, he does not feel his chains, for they are as if made from soft wool or from fine threads of silk, and he loves them as they give him pleasure; but after death, instead of being soft they become hard, and instead of being pleasant they become galling. (*Divine Providence* 296)

This is a picture of what happens after death which should help us want to shun evils while we still are alive, but it also shows us what happens when we do try to shun those evils. If we want to experience the joys of being free from slavery we will need to break those chains.

Unfortunately there is also a reality to the feeling that a problem gets worse when we try to fight it. Like the Children of Israel, we have somebody who is enslaving us. *“Jesus answered them, Amen, Amen, I say to you that everyone doing sin is the servant of sin.”* (John 8:34)

Our taskmasters are the spiritual Egyptians which are falsities inspired by the hells. Like the Pharaoh, those hells are enjoying or benefiting from us being in evil. One of the main reasons evil spirits enjoy attacking us is that when we do evil it is a service to them. The evil that we do is a greater delight to them than anything they are permitted to do personally. They are already bound with chains and so cannot do all that we can. They experience a great amount of vicarious pleasure in our evils, so they don't want to give us up the moment we want them to leave. And they also enjoy seeing us as slaves.

Their pleasure is also what makes something delightful to us. This is why with addictions there can be something more than just a physical problem. It can be very hard mentally to quit a smoking or any drinking or drug problem. But because there is a physical component, (that makes it hard), there is also a

physical solution that we can work on by avoiding those substances.

Much harder to deal with are the mental processes that are where the true problem lies. So while they may lack the more outward ties to a chemical substance, addictions like gambling, violence or pornography can be even harder evils to face. The hells involved in these evils don't want us to get free. It seems like our own mind is against us and they encourage that idea. It is hard to realize it, but we don't need to enjoy those things because we are receiving that enjoyment from hell. It is their enjoyment and only becomes ours if we continue to choose it. Part of the solution is being faced with how bad they really are. We might be able to identify evils as greed, anger and lust, but we need to realize that they are directly tied to theft, murder and adultery.

We need to realize that the hells are trying to keep us there by any means they can. If they make it hard for us to change we might give up on trying, or blame the Lord for hurting us when we want to quit.

This is the basis of Moses' complaint, when he was trying to help the Children of Israel, that it seemed like he only made it worse for them. This dynamic seems contrary to the Lord's love and providence, but we come to the third reason why evil gets worse when we try to fight it. It is actually from the Lord's providence. Why would this seeming punishment be what the Lord wants?

When we first decide to fight an evil or escape from its power, we usually turn to our own strength. Maybe we only are trying to make our lives happier or more manageable. Maybe we think we have the power to conquer evil on our own. These approaches won't work. The hells are not afraid of us or our power. When the Pharaoh finally let the people go it was not because they asked or threatened, but because of the Lord's power. If you think about the path of the Children of Israel, it was not until they celebrated the Passover that they were able to go free. That festival represented the Holy Supper and spiritual conjunction with the Lord. When we fight against hell for our own reasons or from our own strength we can't help but fail, or even make things worse.

If we are able to turn to the Lord, recognize evils as sins against Him, and ask for His help we can't help but win. The hells are terrified of the Lord and His strength. Once they see that we are holding to the Lord, they will not only let us escape from evil but will flee from us. This is the Lord's goal for us that we have this complete safety, so everything in His providence is leading us to shun evils as sins against Him and putting all our trust in Him and not ourselves.

Jesus said: *"These things have I spoken to you, that in Me you might have peace; in the world you shall have affliction; but have confidence, I have overcome the world."* (John 16:33)

Amen.

What Is Leadership from a New Church Perspective?

The Rev. Derrick A. M. Lumsden

(**Note:** This originally appeared in the February 2016 newsletter of the Sower's Chapel in Sarver, Pennsylvania.)

One of the best secular definitions of leadership I know of is from John Maxwell, who says that “Leadership is influence – nothing more, nothing less.” (*Irrefutable Laws of Leadership*)

I like this definition of leadership because it is not position specific. Nor is it narrow in its focus. It allows for both good leaders and bad leaders. It allows for leaders from the front, back or middle. Anyone who influences others is a leader. It means that parents, teachers and friends; bosses, co-workers and church members; and all types of family are all leaders. Leaders are people who would like to influence the actions and thinking of others.

From this definition the study of leadership then becomes about how to influence. And hopefully, if you are a good Christian, how to influence others positively with appropriate means. For example, someone complaining or nagging can influence an outcome to a good end, but the means are destructive. Learning about leadership is learning how to affect others to a good outcome with positive means.

The teachings for the New Church offer us a further understanding of leadership. The Lord leads us. Understanding His leadership will teach us more about the foundation of how all leadership works.

The Lord leads a person by influx and teaches him by enlightenment. The Lord leads a person by influx because to be led and also to flow in are expressions applied to love and the will; and He teaches a person by enlightenment because to be taught and to be enlightened are properly expressions applied to wisdom and the intellect.

Anyone who influences others is a leader. . . . Leaders are people who would like to influence the actions and thinking of others.

The teachings for the New Church offer us a further understanding of leadership. The Lord leads us. Understanding His leadership will teach us more about the foundation of how all leadership works.

People know that every person is led of himself by his love, and by other people in accordance with it, and not by his intellect. He is led by his intellect and in accordance with it only when his love or will forms it; and when this is the case, it can be said also of the intellect that it is led, though even then it is not the intellect that is led, but the will from which it springs. (*Divine Providence* 165)

“The Lord leads by influx.” Influx has come into English as another word: influence. The Lord leads by influence. The Lord does not do this to control us but to influence us to a good life, a life of heaven. He influences us through love or our will. He is constantly trying to influence us through our better

angels. He stirs up our love for Him and for our neighbors to lead us to live a heavenly life. He also teaches us through enlightenment and His Word, and when that teaching touches our hearts, it is also His leadership.

We do not have the same ability to flow into people’s hearts that the Lord does. But we do have the ability to influence people’s hearts. Often the content of what we say is directed to influence someone’s thinking. But there are times when we need to address our words to their hearts. And even apart from directing the content of communication to someone’s heart, the tone of voice, body language and many other factors affect the heart, regardless of the content of what we are saying.

Leadership is a study that can help you in all social endeavors. The tools of leadership can help you in your personal life and in all professions in which you need to influence someone else.

The study of leadership is also important for us as a church. If we would like to influence people to consider a New Church perspective or attend our church, the study of leadership can support that goal.



The Rev. Derrick A. M. Lumsden is pastor of the Sower’s Chapel congregation in Sarver, Pennsylvania, where he lives with his wife, Eden (King) and their four children. He had previously served in South Africa. Contact: derrick.lumsden@gmail.com

Church News

Compiled by Bruce Henderson

MINISTER MOVES

The **Rev. Alan Cowley** has been called as the next pastor of the Boynton Beach New Church in Florida, effective July 1. He has been pastor of the Michael Church in London, England, for the past three years.

The Rev. Ethan McCardell has been called as the next pastor of the Michael Church, effective July 1. He has been pastor of the Light for Life church plant in Seattle, Washington, for the past eight years.

In a Facebook posting in early March he said that leaving the Light for Life Church was a difficult decision but that the future of the church “looks bright.” He said: “We have become a stable and consistent worshipping and serving community which the General Church is committed to continue supporting.”

The Rev. Mac Frazier has been called as the assistant pastor of the Glenview New Church.

The Rt. Rev. Brian W. Keith noted: “Mac will be leaving the church plant in Austin (Texas) and we will be terminating this project. Mac had begun this church plant in 2010. He set clear goals and has worked assiduously toward them. Unfortunately, the number of participants and financial support have not met those goals, nor do we see any way for them to be met, or any viable goals, at any time in the future.

“This was an experiment and like any experiment it can fail. We knew that when it was set up. But there are already some positives from this. A number of people had their spiritual lives enriched by the services provided by the New



Rev. Alan Cowley



Rev. Ethan McCardell



Rev. Mac Frazier

Way Church of Austin, and some were introduced to the New Church. This experiment demonstrates that we are willing to try things that might make a difference.

“The decision to close the New Way Church also indicates we can make a tough decision, even though it did benefit some people. And we are learning from it to help us in the future. We should congratulate Mac for his dedicated efforts.”

GENERAL CHURCH BOARD

At their February 5-6 winter meeting in Bryn Athyn the General Church Board of Directors gave extensive consideration to a draft of the proposed strategic plan. There was strong endorsement of the plan and a determination to move forward with it.

The mission of the plan is “to help people live a heavenly life through the teachings of the Lord God Jesus Christ in His Second Coming.”

The overarching theme of the plan is greater engagement with that mission throughout the Church. There are six primary strands to the plan:

- **Education:** The goal is to equip children and young people for regeneration and eternal life.
- **Outreach:** The goal is to reach out with the truths of the New Church and welcome new people into the life of the Church.
- **Participation:** The goal is to provide avenues for greater participation in the life of the Church.
- **Communication:** The goal is to develop a plan to promote the purposes and values of the General Church and to seek interactive counsel in bringing them to life.
- **Professional Development:** The goal is to develop, engage and retain highly qualified talent with the capacity to advance the Church’s mission.
- **International:** The goal is to support the development of the Church internationally.

Many suggestions were made for improvements to the plan as the strategic planning committee continues its work.

In his report **Bishop Brian Keith** noted that a non-ordination Master of Divinity track in the Theological School is looking less likely due to finances and the potential level of interest.

The General Church is advertising for two positions in the Office of Advancement – for annual fund solicitation and donor relations. Meanwhile, several board members volunteered to make phone calls – to thank donors for their support and to encourage giving toward their passions in the Church.

It was noted that communication is lacking and sorely needed throughout

the Church – not just from Advancement but also from the Administration.

There was good news with the budget, including a surplus of almost \$300,000 through the first six months of the 2015-16 fiscal year. Among the factors were better than expected annual fund results, including several major gifts, and the fact that the Advancement staff has not yet been replaced.

BOYNTON BEACH RETREAT: BISHOP'S REPORT



At an informal session after lunch during the Boynton Beach Retreat, January 18-21, in Florida, the **Rt. Rev. Brian W. Keith** gave a brief report and answered questions as Executive Bishop of the Church and Chancellor of the Academy of the New Church.

Since **Brian Blair**, President of Bryn Athyn College, would be speaking at the banquet later that week (see his address on page 143), Bishop Keith said little about the College except that it is moving toward a balanced budget after many lean years. It has already maxed out dormitory space and will be building two new dormitories to be ready for the 2016-17 school year, paid for by a private donation.

The Secondary Schools also are close to a balanced budget, after much hard work.

Glencairn Museum is getting national and international attention for its collection of religious artifacts. A scholar in England says it is the best museum of its kind in the United States. The Christmas Nativities display, featuring nativities from all over the world, was so successful that Glencairn had to double its tours.

Cairnwood Estate has been wrestling with the potential issue of same-sex weddings, with an eye toward minimizing legal risks while preserving our doctrinal beliefs. The unanimous decision of the Cairnwood Board was to discontinue all weddings, but not receptions and other events.

In the General Church, Bishop Keith said, many of our congregations are going strong. There is not as much growth because small families are becoming the norm, and many couples are not marrying until after age 30. After years of cutting staff and budgets, the General Church is able to start adding programs again.

In the international church, the Ivory Coast is doing well, with a growing Theological School. The Church is growing in Nigeria and Burkina Faso, but these are dangerous countries. Progress is being made in India, Korea, Japan and China.

Thanks to contributions to Children in Crisis – which can be made

through the Church – all 67 children in the orphanage in Kenya are sponsored. Their goal is to build dormitories for boys and girls and an eating pavilion.

The traditional congregations in South Africa – Durban and Johannesburg – are doing well. There are real challenges in the Zulu congregations.

We are being very careful with what we expend in Africa, which could become a New Church Diocese in the future.

There is potential for church growth in Cuba, under the leadership of the **Rev. Brad Heinrichs**.

General Church Outreach is “scattering seeds” though the internet and following up with inquiries. It is also establishing small group models to build community and is working to get more church services online.

GENERAL CHURCH EDUCATION OPEN HOUSE

Rt. Rev. Peter M. Buss Jr.

General Church Education is the department in the central offices devoted to supporting schools and producing religious educational materials for use in homes and Sunday Schools. We held two successful Open House events on January 13 and 15. The purpose of these events was to reach out to people who have shown interest in our activities in an effort to further inform them of what we are up to.

The invitation list consisted of Board Education Committee members, Bryn Athyn Church School faculty, attendees at recent General Church Education events, people who have met with our staff on education-related topics, and a few others.

About 115 invitations went out, representing about 150 people. We had approximately 25 people at each event – a pretty good response rate for two work-day afternoon slots. At the events **Rachel Glenn** and I highlighted our three major focal points over the next five years:

1. Generate renewed commitment to the use of New Church education by promoting scholarship, communicating relevance and gathering people together to focus on it.
2. Update and develop New Church educational materials and make them more readily available.
3. Provide professional development and support for teachers, staff and Sunday School leaders.

As for generating renewed commitment to the use, this happens in large part through presentations and gatherings. For example, a digest of the article I published last year in *New Church Life* is being reprinted in the *Theta Alpha Journal* this spring. And **Scott Daum** also has prepared a new in-service

presentation for school faculties called “The Admonition of the Lord” (focused on discipline or correctional guidance).

Enthusiasm around New Church education also happens by gathering people together in various groupings to talk about the use and its applications. These open house sessions are examples. We also hope to sponsor an Ed Council session in the next couple of years. The more gatherings, the more reason there will be for fresh research and pertinent conversation about the use itself.

Focusing on #2, General Church Education continues to generate a steady stream of high-quality materials for use in homes and Sunday Schools, plus updated curricula for use in schools. Our primary strategy for improving access to this growing library of resources is a significantly updated web-presence. Sites to date would be classified as “information” sites, helping people know where our schools are, or a little about what New Church education is, or how to obtain some of our materials.

We hope to add a comprehensive “tool” feature to our new site, allowing people to find what they are looking for efficiently in our substantial library of resources. We are well into the design phase, working with a local website company. Money for this work has come from donations, and from capital dollars allocated toward the Vineyard portion of the newchurch.org refresh project. We are actively raising additional money to complete the project.

Item #3 has a two-fold focus. The first is to improve our Teacher Career System, with more robust offerings for teacher professional development. **Rebekah Russell** has been hired to assist Scott Daum in this work. She has been devoting part of her time to General Church education work from Glenview where she has lived, and joined our staff full time in March.

It was a privilege to share some of these ideas with the people gathered at these open house sessions, and to respond to their questions. We also welcome responses from readers who wish to know more about our efforts. Please feel free to contact us at any time at gced@newchurch.org.

VISIT TO INDIA

Rt. Rev. Peter M. Buss Jr.

Teresa and I experienced a new area of the Church at the end of October 2015. We traveled to India to participate in a two-day New Church seminar – the sixth of its kind in that country.

The Rev. Peter Devassy is our one General Church pastor there. He invited me to present on the internal sense of the days of creation. **The Rev. Göran Appelgren**, also in attendance, joined me in a different session to answer

participant questions about the beliefs of the New Church. These quickly got to the heart of the matter, with considerations of marriage in heaven, the Second Coming, and the oneness of God. About 50 people were in attendance, some of whom participate in worship activities with Peter, and others coming to see what the New Church is all about.

During the week we were there, I had the privilege of ordaining Peter into the second degree of the priesthood, as well as performing two baptisms and a confirmation.

The two baptisms represent a neat story. A woman named **Vinitha Mary** was baptized together with her daughter. Vinitha is the wife of **Alex Thomas**, a young man who discovered the Writings, and was himself baptized in the Pittsburgh New Church while on assignment for work in that city.

Not only did the Church gain two new converts, but Alex has decided to begin training for the ministry. It will take him a number of years via our distance learning program through the Theological School, but he will be a great addition to the priesthood when his studies are complete.

The rest of the trip consisted of visiting with the various people in India who have come in contact with the New Church, and considering with Peter and Göran the next steps for the Church there. We look forward to returning one day to visit with these new friends and to see their progress.

(See photos on page 185.)

SUMMER CAMPS

Glencairn Museum's Medieval Summer Camp returns this June: Session I (June 20 – 24) Session II (June 27 – July 1) | Daily 8:45 a.m. – 12:45 p.m.

Campers age 9, 10 and 11 are invited to join us as we step back in time and spend a fun and adventurous week exploring Medieval life. Overseen by the King and Queen and their lords and ladies, each day is packed with activities such as archery, crafts, boar hunts, cooking, sword play and more.

To request a registration brochure or to reserve a spot please call 267.502.2990, or email info@glencairnmuseum.org. For more information please contact Christine McDonald at 267.502.2995 or christine.mcdonald@glencairnmuseum.org.

Academy Summer Camp is open to all young people currently in eighth and ninth grades to come and spend a week learning more about the New Church and the Academy of the New Church Secondary Schools. It will run from July 10 to 16.

The camp offers interesting classes and games to keep things fun, plus a different social activity each evening. Students get a taste of dorm life, meet some of the regular faculty, and get to know potential future classmates.

The cost of the week is \$400. Payment can be split in half, and can be paid by check or online through Paypal.

All information, including class descriptions, registration and health forms is available at www.ancss.org. Please note that health forms must be mailed separately to the nurse due to regulations. Feel free to call with any questions: **Keene Blair**, Director, 267-229-5527.

Tools 4 Life, a camp for juniors and seniors, will be offered July 17-23 at the Academy of the New Church. Students may sign up online at www.ancss.org/tools. For further information contact the director, **Ali Smetanick Childs**, at 267-502-4931 or ali.smetanick.childs@gmail.com.

Tools 4 Life is a career and life skills camp designed to help teenagers gain the tools and confidence for the next steps after high school. It offers a unique opportunity for students to learn and grow through a variety of experiences.

The theme this year is *Dare to Prepare Your Heart*, based on the Parable of the Sower. The goal is to educate and feed bodies, minds and souls with spiritually healthy nutrition in order to be successful in life.

BOOK EXPO

For the annual Bryn Athyn College Book Expo on April 9 (see the ad on page 203), here is further information about the speakers and their topics:

Dr. Soni Werner: *Conscience: Forensic Psychology*

This e-book is about preventing crime, intervening once it begins, and rehabilitating criminals after they have been incarcerated. It summarizes some of the latest research in neuroscience on the criminal brain and research studies on forensic psychology. The conscience is viewed from a Swedenborgian perspective.

Dr. Reuben Bell: *Intelligent Default*

Natural forms are not “designed,” nor do they appear by accident. Every organic form is a “default setting,” as it were, established according to parameters inherent in matter, in response to environmental conditions, but dependent on reciprocal, functional interaction with a spiritual cause as well. These parameters are analogically reflective of the human form, manifesting itself in continual creation, by means of processes described by Swedenborg’s doctrines of Degrees, Forms and Correspondence. Evolution of new forms and adaptation of existing forms to changing conditions, occur in the crucible of the “randomness” of nature, into which, at its inmost level, flows the template of divine human form.

Steve David: *Huh? What's this basket still doing here, covering our lamp?*

There are a couple of billion people who are trying (or used to try) to read the Word [Bible] – but without enough light. In the New Church, we've got that light, but there's this inadvertent basket over it. We've tried to get rid of it, but it keeps hanging around. How can we get break through?

Dr. Kristin King: *Gardens of Heaven and Earth*

This title plays on the idea both of location and of content: gardens *in* heaven and *on* earth, but also gardens made *of* heaven (or what the Writings call “substance”) and gardens made *of* earth (or matter). The talk will focus on some connections between **textual** gardens in the revelatory language of correspondences, and earthly gardens in history and our own backyards.

Dr. Jane Williams-Hogan: *The Call of Charismatic Books: Swedenborg, Artists, Writers, and Spiritual Seekers*

This talk will discuss the Writings as “charismatic” books and also the impact of one artist, one writer, one seeker: American Landscape painter, George Inness (1825-1894), Argentinian writer, Jorge Luis Borges (1899-1986), and American humanitarian and spiritual seeker, Helen Keller (1880-1968).

REGIONAL CLERGY MEETINGS

The General Church has conducted a number of regional clergy meetings this year, which provide more intimate small group sessions and also save on the expense of bringing all ministers to Bryn Athyn for plenary clergy meetings. At these sessions participants are invited to present doctrinal papers, and the groups are small enough for lively discussions.

Meetings held this year include:

U.S. East Coast Regional Meetings in Kempton, Pennsylvania, February 15-18. Attendees included:

- **The Rt. Rev. Brian Keith**, Bryn Athyn
- **The Revs. Lawson Smith, Andrew Heilman and Brett Buick**, Kempton
- **The Revs. Michael Gladish, Brian Smith and Michael Ferrell**, Mitchellville, Maryland
- **The Rev. Matthew Genzlinger**, Boston, Massachusetts
- **The Rev. Calvin Odhner**, Atlanta, Georgia
- **The Rev. Kenneth Alden**, Boynton Beach, Florida
- **The Rev. Ryan Sandstrom**, Ivyland, Pennsylvania
- **Candidate Elmo Acton**, Bryn Athyn

- **The Revs. Robert Junge, Lou Synnestvedt, Christopher Smith and Daniel Heinrichs**, retired.

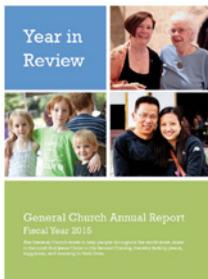
Great Lakes/Canadian Regional Clergy Meetings, Oak Arbor, Rochester, Michigan, February 15-17. Attendees included:

- **The Rt. Rev. Peter M. Buss Jr.**, Bryn Athyn
- **The Revs. Derek Elphick and Joel Glenn**, Oak Arbor
- **The Rev. Pearce Frazier**, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
- **The Rev. Derrick Lumsden**, Sarver, Pennsylvania
- **The Revs. Mark Pendleton and Mac Frazier**, Glenview, Illinois
- **The Revs. Michael Cowley and Jared Buss**, Olivet Church, Toronto, Canada
- **The Revs. Brad Heinrichs, Nathan Cole and Ron Schnarr**, Carmel Church, Kitchener, Ontario, Canada
- **The Revs. Jim Cooper, Chris Bown and Kurt Nemitz**, retired.

U.S. Western Regional Clergy Meetings, San Diego, California, March 1-3. Attendees included:

- **The Rt. Rev. Brian Keith**, Bryn Athyn
- **The Rev. David Roth**, Boulder, Colorado
- **The Rev. Mark Perry**, San Diego, California
- **The Rev. Garry Walsh**, Phoenix, Arizona
- **The Rev. Nathan Gladish**, Tucson, Arizona
- **The Rev. Jean Atta**, Los Angeles, California
- **The Rev. David Lindrooth**, Bryn Athyn
- **The Revs. Frank Rose and Daniel Goodenough**, retired.

Five other regional meetings are planned: European Regional Meetings in Stockholm in April; Asian Regional Meetings in Tokyo in May; Bryn Athyn Regional Meetings in June; West African Regional Meetings in Togo in August; and South African/Kenyan Regional Meetings in Westville in August.



NEW PUBLICATIONS

The General Church has produced a 14-page Annual Report for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2015. It was sent as a PDF attachment to known email addresses in the Church early in February. To view or download a copy of the report, go to www.newchurch.org/about/annual-report.



Bryn Athyn College has produced the first of a scheduled three-times-a-year Alumni Magazine, which was sent to all alumni early in the year. If you would like to see a copy of the impressive publication, go to www.brynathyn.edu, click on Alumni and Friends, and where the cover is displayed “click to read the latest issue.”



Left to right: translator Pastor P.G. George, Rt. Rev. Peter M. Buss Jr., Rev. Peter Devassy, and Rev. Göran Appelgren



Left to right: Mary, Teresa, Seena, and Sheila



The Rt. Rev. Peter M. Buss Jr., baptizing Winona Thomas, with parents Alex and Vinithia. (Vinithia also was baptized.)



Some of the seminar participants



The group on break



Scott Daum



Bob Brickman and Bob Smith



Head table



1960 reunion: Peggy Braun, Carol Henderson, Cindy Walker, Ronnie Sands



Bob and Karen Heinrichs



Banquet emcee George McCurdy

PHOTOS: KEN ALDEN



Drawbridge closing behind boat



Curtis Childs



Along the Intercoastal Waterway



Martha Gyllenhaal



Mark Pendleton



Shar Junge, Janet Farrell, and Chara Daum



Banquet speaker Brian Blair



A full house for the banquet



Passing exotic homes on Intercoastal Waterway



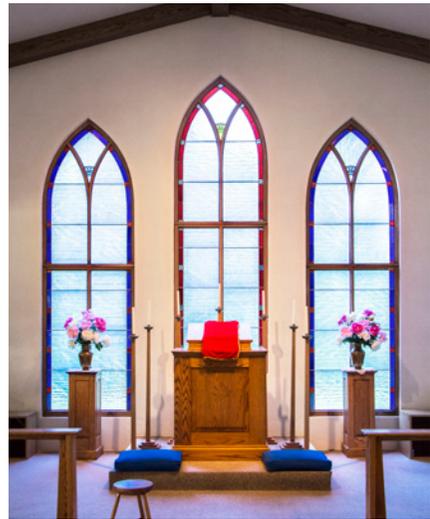
Olivet New Church interior



Olivet New Church altar



New Church of Phoenix stained glass window



The Sower's Chapel Church chancel



New Church of Phoenix interior

Life Lines

WHAT HATH GOD WROUGHT?

We know that one of the reasons the Lord was born on earth is because the written word was here and so His Word could be published and preserved. But for centuries that meant mostly monks transcribing and illustrating a Bible that was largely unknown and unread by the masses.

With the invention of the printing press and publication of the Gutenberg Bible in 1440, suddenly the way was open for mass communication. But it was not until 1604 that King James commissioned the standard version of the Bible, specifically meant to be read by the people.

It was also the printing press that made it possible for Emanuel Swedenborg in the 18th century to publish the new revelation given through him by the Lord.

In 1884 when Samuel Morse opened a new channel of communication with a telegraph message from the Supreme Court chambers in Washington, DC, to the Baltimore & Ohio railroad depot in Baltimore, Maryland, he chose for this first ever message transmitted over a wire a quotation from *Numbers* 23:23: “What hath God wrought?”

It is a question worth pondering as the internet and social media have opened pathways for communication on a scale Gutenberg, Swedenborg and Morse never could have imagined. A lot of that communication is self-absorbed and worldly; much of it is incredibly useful and easy to access. The internet, in the Lord’s providence, also is opening incredible opportunities to connect people with the Writings and with the Lord. An estimated 1 billion people throughout the world are on the Internet. Imagine the possibilities!

Within a decade of Morse’s humble question from Scripture, 20,000 miles of telegraph cable crisscrossed the United States and helped to spur rapid expansion across the country. And as the internet instantly connects people and ideas all over the world, we are just beginning to tap into mind-boggling opportunities to extend the reach of the New Church and the Lord’s revelation to anyone with an iPhone, a laptop, and an inquiring mind.

In their presentations at the Boynton Beach Retreat (summarized beginning on page 135), the Rev. Mark Pendleton and Curtis Childs got people very excited about the way they are tapping into this potential. Mark is doing

it with his “Begin a New Life” series on regeneration, which is reaching people within the Church but many, many more beyond. And Curtis’s videos for the Swedenborg Foundation are so successful that he honestly hopes to make Swedenborg and the Writings household words within the next 10 years – and increasingly relevant to countless lives.

Curtis says “there is a huge conversation about religion on YouTube and we want to be a part of it.” Who knew? To a lot of people, YouTube is just a lot of videos of cute kittens, puppies and grandchildren. But Swedenborg “going viral”!

This is all heady stuff. Add in all the outreach programs and individual efforts going on in the Church and it’s easy to see why Curtis and others are buzzing about the spread of the New Church being at a tipping point, with horizons even the internet cannot contain.

“What hath God wrought” indeed. And what can we do – as a church, as individuals – to use what we have been given to “go forth and teach all nations” about the Lord and His Word?

(BMH)

FREELY GIVEN

What animated Mark and Curtis in their presentations is that there are “a lot of good things coming out of the New Church” that can help people in their lives – help to heal their pain and give them hope.

Mark says, “We have something to give the world,” and should not hold back.

Curtis feels something incredible is happening with the way people all over the world are responding to Swedenborg and the Writings – how they are searching for truth and finding answers. He can barely contain his excitement.

They also acknowledged all the many things the General Church and caring members are giving to the world – from Journey programs and the New Christian Bible Study website, to the Daily Inspiration, Caring for Marriage Moats, live-streamed services, *New Church Life* online, and many more. These are all, of course, provided free of charge – within the Church and beyond – with no strings attached. But there is real value, and that should be acknowledged.

The programs and videos Mark and Curtis are providing, for instance, are offered free but have real costs associated with them. They do make soft-sell appeals for support – a “click to donate” button – and hopefully many people are responding. But if all of these efforts are to have the success people like Mark and Curtis dream of, they deserve our own thanks and support.

We have something of a culture in our Church – echoed throughout the

world – of accepting “free stuff” without recognizing our own obligations to support those benefits.

Hopefully someday we will be reflecting on “What hath God wrought?” as we see such programs growing and spreading the influence of the Church. And hopefully we will also be able to feel the satisfaction of knowing, “Yes, I supported these efforts.”

(BMH)

THE INEVITABILITY OF SPRING

Look out the window on a cold, wintry day late in February and the sky is grey, the ground is frozen, the trees are leafless. But you know that all this is about to change. There’s no question about it, it *is* going to happen, as it always does. Within a few weeks the sun will shine brighter in a sky of blue, the ground will thaw, fresh green leaves will unfold, and a chorus of birds will greet the dawn.

The changing of the seasons is inevitable. This is true of nature and of the human spirit. They are both governed by the same Divine Order, the natural world mirroring the spiritual. As the earth goes through cycles in its relation to the sun, so we, spiritually, go through alternations of state in relation to the Lord. “Seed time and harvest, cold and heat, winter and summer, day and night shall not cease.” (*Genesis 8:22*)

There is a message of hope in this for the Church as well as for individuals. Winter states are never permanent. Spring will come, as it always has. And the sign that a new season of spiritual warmth and light is approaching is a resurgence of charity.

“Now learn a parable from the fig tree. When her branch has become tender, and puts forth leaves, you know that summer is near.” (*Mark 13:28*) A fig tree, with its low, wide-spreading branches and sweet fruit full of little seeds, is an emblem of natural charity. Its leaves are the truths that teach us to be charitable; its fruits are good deeds; and the seeds they contain are the innumerable insights that inspire further spiritual growth and multiply the effects of charity in the world.

The growth of the New Church on earth is in its beginning stages, in a state of early spring. The sun is still relatively low in the sky, the light is weak, patches of snow remain. Much damage from the winter that came upon the previous church will have to be repaired. But the world is turning, and even though we still hold our coat tight around us in the cool air we sense a new warmth in the sunlight touching our face; a new concern for charity shining into the world from the new heaven. The spiritual climate is changing. And on the tree of charity, buds are beginning to open.

There are still outbreaks of inclement weather, and chilly gusts of falsity

bend the branches and cause the new leaves to tremble. But even though false reasoning and cloudy judgment continue to result in some harmful errors, we can see that there were good intentions behind them. And as the rational truths of the New Church continue to unfold, a more spiritual, enlightened form of charity will emerge.

Winter's days are numbered. Spring is in the air. Summer is on the way.

(WEO)

THE CHANGING SEASONS OF THE SOUL

In the course of our regeneration, we go through alternating states of spiritual "summer" and "winter." In this way we learn the difference between the happy state of heaven (the warmth of love and the light of truth from the Lord), and how sad it is when these qualities are lacking from our lives, as is the case when the loves of self and the world turn us away from the Lord and heaven.

In heaven it is always springtime because there is an equal balance of warmth and light, goodness and truth. So we might think that in heaven we will no longer go through changes of state as in this world. But we will continue to experience such changes, though in milder form, as we are brought ever more deeply into the perfect happiness of heaven forever.

"In the next life these changes are like those of summer and winter in temperate regions, and of day and night in springtime." (*Arcana Coelestia* 935.2)

(WEO)

JOINING HEAT WITH LIGHT

More on springtime from *True Christian Religion* 774:

The Lord's presence is unceasing with every person, both the evil and the good, for without His presence no one lives; but He comes (more closely) only to those who receive Him, that is, who believe in Him and keep His commandments.

The Lord's unceasing presence causes us to become rational, and gives us the ability to become spiritual. This is effected by the light that goes forth from the Lord as the sun in the spiritual world, and that we receive in our understanding; that light is truth, and by means of it we have rationality. But the Lord approaches more closely to those who join heat with that light, that is, love with truth. For the heat that goes forth from the spiritual sun is love to God and love toward the neighbor.

The mere presence of the Lord, and the consequent enlightenment of the understanding, may be likened to the presence of solar light in the world. Unless this light is joined with heat all things on earth become desolate (as in winter).

But the coming of the Lord may be likened to the coming of heat, which takes place in spring, when heat joins itself with light, the earth is softened, and seeds sprout and bring forth fruit. Such is the parallelism between the spiritual things which are the environment of man's spirit, and the natural things which are the environment of his body.

(WEO)

BEYOND EMMAUS: ANOTHER EASTER JOURNEY

One of the great classics of literature – and an enduring allegory of the Easter story – is Dante Alighieri's *The Divine Comedy*. This is the tale – told in beguiling free-form verse – of Dante's tour through the Inferno, Purgatory and Paradise, beginning on Good Friday and culminating on Easter Sunday.

This 700-year-old masterpiece was revolutionary on two fronts. It was written in the vernacular of commoners, not in the traditional Latin so inaccessible to them, and was regularly chanted and passed on by the masses. Indeed, Dante encouraged the people to take part for “a taste of the afterlife.” (Bryn Athyn College staged such an around-the-clock reading in 2010.)

Also revolutionary was Dante's concept that we must repent of our sins before we can achieve paradise. And he stood against the prevailing faith-alone dogma, insisting that it is good lives that elevate us to heaven. There is much in Dante's vision, in fact, that resonates with the revelation given in the Writings some 300 years later.

He said that the goal of his trilogy was “to remove those living in this life from a state of misery and lead them to the state of bliss.” He does this by inviting us to reflect on our own failings, find a new sense of direction, and come to live in harmony with God and each other.

This is an heroic quest – for moral knowledge, for truth, for hope – and its enduring value is that it speaks for all our journeys. That is why it resonated so well with the men and women in the streets 700 years ago, and why it still does. Dante's search for deliverance – from chaos to order, despair to hope, darkness to light – speaks to our own pilgrimage.

The Divine Comedy is perhaps best known for the sadistic tortures of *Inferno*, but these are just chilling portrayals of what sin is and its power to enslave us. Dante sees sin as the perversion of love and that the lost souls are there because of their own free-will choice of sin over righteousness. Because he comes to see his own freely chosen sins as a form of enslavement he is able to see – and show his readers – the way to salvation.

He comes to realize in Purgatory that we must repent – purify our own will – before we can be fit to enter Paradise.

When he asks a character named Marco why the world is in such sad

shape, he is told: “You still possess a light to winnow good from evil, and you have free will. Therefore, if the world around you goes astray, in you is the cause and in you let it be sought.”

Paradise, Dante discovers, is all about love – living the life of love. It is our loves, he says, that lead us to heaven or hell. He writes rapturously about being filled with the light and love of God. A nun tells him simply: “In His will is our peace.”

This is the power of great literature – to connect with our own lives and help us see our own struggles and a pathway to deliverance. That its message resonates so beautifully with the revelation of the Writings – even though it is cast in medieval Catholicism – testifies to the ultimate discovery: that all truth comes from God, only through people like Dante Alighieri – or Emanuel Swedenborg.

(BMH)

STORIES

As long as there have been human beings there have been stories, and story-tellers. The essential use of stories is to depict aspects of the eternal conflict between good and evil, and thus present those abstract categories in ways that appeal to the imagination. We need particular examples from human experience in order to grasp spiritual and moral truths; and we need knowledge of universal spiritual and moral truths in order to make sense of human experience.

All good stories are “echoes” of revelation, or moral reverberations of the spiritual truths set forth in the Word of God. The myths and allegories of ancient times are full of correspondences and are offshoots, more or less faithful, of revelation.

The “greatest story ever told” – the story of the Lord’s life and inner struggles – is told over and over again in countless ways forever. If we could somehow extract the nuggets of truth from every tale ever told throughout human history and condense them into one simple story it would be the story of the Lord’s life. And the real story of each of our own lives is the replaying in us of the Lord’s life. His glorification is the pattern of our regeneration; elements of the plot differ, the themes are the same.

(WEO)

DOWNTON ABBEY

Every age has its own particular blind spots, and its own special virtues and clearly seen truths. Reading books or watching plays from a previous era, or that accurately portray life in a bygone society, is useful in that it enables us not

just to discern more clearly the wisdom of our own age and appreciate it more fully but to make us aware of defects in our own attitudes, thought and culture.

The creators of *Downton Abbey* went to great lengths to make it a faithful depiction of life in post-Edwardian England, including physical features such as clothing fashions and cars, but also attitudes and manners. We might congratulate ourselves on the superiority of our modern culture in some respects, but we should also take note of virtues which we may have lost sight of.

(WEO)

IS SCIENCE FINALLY GETTING RELIGION?

Eric Metaxas, author of the current best-seller, *Miracles*, had an encouraging article recently in *The Wall Street Journal*: “Science Increasingly Makes the Case for God.”

He noted that 50 years ago *Time* magazine ran the provocative and infamous cover story: “Is God Dead?” Smug scientists were more and more thinking they didn’t need God to explain the universe. Coincidentally, that same year renowned astronomer Carl Sagan concluded that there were only two criteria for a planet to support life: the right kind of star, and a planet the right distance from that star. Metaxas says: “Given the roughly octillion – 1 followed by 27 zeroes – planets in the universe, there should have been about septillion – 1 followed by 24 zeroes – planets capable of supporting life.”

Mind-boggling stuff. So scientists set up a vast radio telescopic network – certain they would hear voices or at least signals from at least some of the millions of aliens out there. The silence has been deafening.

Well, humbled scientists have been learning much more about the universe. Now they say there are at least 200 parameters for a planet to support life. And it’s not just a chance thing. Unless every one of those parameters is met precisely the whole thing falls apart. Actually, Metaxas says, “The odds against life in the universe are simply astonishing.” And that includes our own earth. For instance, “Without a massive planet like Jupiter nearby, whose gravity will draw away asteroids, a thousand times as many would hit the earth’s surface.”

What are the chances really for all 200-plus parameters being perfect by accident? “At what point,” Metaxas asks, “is it fair to admit that science suggests we cannot be the result of random forces?”

In fact, the fine-tuning necessary for life to exist on a planet is nothing compared to what’s required for the whole universe to exist at all. The four fundamental forces known to astrophysicists, he says, were determined less than one-millionth of a second after “the big bang.” “Alter any one value and the universe could not exist.”

Well. Fred Hoyle, the astronomer who coined the term “big bang,” confessed that his ardent atheism was “greatly shaken” by these developments. It must have been hard for him to write: “A common-sense interpretation of the facts suggests that a super-intellect [as close as he could come to naming God] has monkeyed with the physics, as well as with chemistry and biology. The numbers one calculates from the facts seem to me so overwhelming as to put this conclusion almost beyond question.”

Theoretical physicist Paul Davies agrees that “the appearance of design is overwhelming.” And Oxford professor Dr. John Lennox goes so far as to say: “The more we get to know about our universe, the more the hypothesis that there is a Creator gains in credibility as the best explanation of why we are here.”

So there is hope: God is not dead and science is finally discovering what creation is all about. But you don’t have to be an astrophysicist to get it.

“The universe is like a stage on which proofs are constantly being demonstrated that God exists and that there is one God.” (*True Christian Religion* 12)

(BMH)

EVERY AGE HAS ITS OWN BLIND SPOTS

I have an old *Time* magazine from 1937 that has a full-page ad on the back cover for Lucky Strike cigarettes, touting their . . . health benefits! There was a testimonial from a famous athlete (runner Glenn Cunningham), and another from a well-known Philadelphia society hostess, who served Lucky Strikes after each course at her dinner parties. Smoking, she says, is good for digestion – and what good is fine food if it is not properly digested? This strikes us as laughable today, but there was a time, not all that long ago, when it was not.

Which raises the question: does our society today take for granted any ideas which are actually very wrong and harmful? Are there beliefs or behaviors that we think are right today that in 50 or 60 years will appear as ridiculous as the thought that smoking is healthy does to us now? What are our blind spots? What are we doing that will cause future generations to shake their heads in wonder and ask: “what in the world were they thinking?” Or are we the first generation in all history that at last has gotten everything right?

(WEO)

CONSERVATIVES AND PROGRESSIVES

This excerpt from the Rev. Theodore Pitcairn’s 1967 book, *My Lord and My God*, seems timely:

Many who call themselves progressive mistake change for progress. The

modern, the up-to-date, they consider an improvement on the past. History teaches that civilizations rise and decline. When a civilization is rising, those called progressive are more apt to be right; when a civilization is declining, the conservatives are more apt to be right. But few have the judgment to know when a civilization is rising or when it is declining. Much so-called progress is a delusion, temporarily appearing to advance but in the long run hastening a decline.

A wise man never accepts the name of a progressive or a conservative. He looks for what is genuine in the present and in the past, and is opposed to the false, the counterfeit, whether it be in the present or in the past. As the Lord said: "Every scribe instructed unto the Kingdom of Heaven is likened unto a man....that bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old." (*Matthew 13:52*)

(WEO)

THE LIGHT OF A SMALL CANDLE

Democratic freedom and the free enterprise system often are derided for the abuses they spawn – because of the very freedom they grant to all of us. To be as good as it can be and should be any free system must be rooted in virtue, morality and a willingness to be led by the Lord. So it is with our own natural and spiritual freedom. We are always free to turn toward the Lord or away from Him, and help to define ourselves and our society with our choices.

Consider this perspective from eminent political scientist James Q. Wilson in *Commentary* magazine in 1993:

"Almost every important tendency in modern thought has questioned the possibility of making moral judgments. Analytical philosophy asserts that moral statements are expressions of emotion lacking any rational or scientific basis. Marxism derides morality and religion as 'phantoms forged in the human brain,' 'ideological reflexes' that are, at best, mere sublimates of material circumstances. Nietzsche writes dismissively that morality is but the herd instinct of the individual. Existentialists argue that man must choose his values without having any sure compass to guide those choices. Cultural anthropology as practiced by many of its most renowned scholars claims that amid the exotic diversity of human life there can be found no universal laws of right conduct.

"I wish to argue for an older view of human nature, one that assumes that people are naturally endowed with certain moral sentiments. We have a peculiar, fragile, but persistent disposition to make moral judgments, and we generally regard people who lack this disposition to be less than human.

"Despite our wars, crimes, envies, snobberies, fanaticisms and persecutions,

there is to be found a desire not only for praise but for praiseworthiness, for fair dealings as well as for good deals, for honor as well as for advantage. These desires become evident when we think disinterestedly about ourselves or others.

“Mankind’s moral sense is not a strong beacon light, radiating outward to illuminate in sharp outline all that it touches. It is, rather, a small candle flame, casting vague and multiple shadows, flickering and sputtering in the strong winds of power and passion, greed and ideology. But brought close to the heart and cupped in one’s hands, it dispels the darkness and warms the soul.”

This is a noble sentiment and we need more of it in this increasingly vapid culture. But when the Lord came as “a new light” into the world, this was no small candle. It is indeed a beacon for all that is true and good – in this world and the next. And we are to “let that light shine” in our lives – one small candle against the gathering darkness, perhaps, but part of that true beacon with which we have been entrusted by the Lord.

(BMH)

THIS WAS A GOOD MAN

We do not regularly publish memorial addresses for the many good men and women in the Church, but recently have made exceptions.

One was for Dr. Sherri R. Cooper in the January-February issue this year. Sherri was one of the many bright lights of the Bryn Athyn College faculty, whose new-found New Church faith enriched her study and teaching of science. She succumbed in November to a long, brave battle against cancer. Her life was – and is – an inspiration.

So is the life of B. Reade Genzlinger, whose memorial address is included in this issue. Like Sherri, he was in the midst of life, career and family when he left us all too soon.

Since he learned to fly as a teenager, Reade was as at home in the air as on the ground, favoring small, fixed-wing planes – often restorations of vintage models. It was on a short recreational flight in his beloved second home of Wyoming that Reade died in a crash early in January. It was a sudden, tragic and devastating end to such a bright and always-in-control life, but with his last moments in a cockpit you could almost say that he died at home. Everyone knew that he was doing what he loved.



Lynn and Reade Genzlinger

Reade was the epitome of the “good and faithful servant.” He was always serving – the

Church, the Academy, the community, and aviation organizations – with a mix of grace and wit, a calm sense of what is right and what needed to be done, and always assurance mixed with genuine humility.

He served for years on the Academy Corporation and Board of Trustees, chairing the Salary and Finance Committees. On the General Church Board he was chair of the Budget Committee. For the Bryn Athyn Church Board he chaired the School Building Fund. And he was a leader for the Bryn Athyn Boy Scouts Troop. He was always just that – a quiet leader.

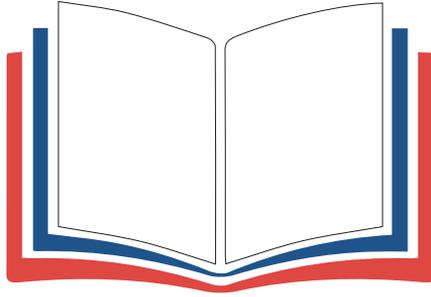
For those who had the pleasure and privilege of serving with him – as I did – he is remembered fondly for his attention to detail, for always thinking from New Church principles, and for his ready smile.

He and his wife Lynn (Pitcairn) were valued together as good parents, good citizens, good friends. For all his many involvements, his commitment and caring in any organization he served, his role as a loving and devoted husband and father, he earned the ultimate epitaph a man can aspire to: This was a good man.

(BMH)

NEW CHURCH LIFE: MARCH/APRIL 2016
Join us for a day of books & talks

Explore, learn and be challenged!



BOOK EXPO

Science, Spirituality and Swedenborgian Theory

Saturday, **April 9**, 2016 | 8:30 AM – 5:30 PM

Bryn Athyn College, Pendleton Hall, 2945 College Drive, Bryn Athyn, PA

Join us for the 2nd Annual Book Expo at Bryn Athyn College! Discover a vast array of topics and books and learn from our guest speakers on the subject of *Science, Spirituality and Swedenborgian Theory throughout History*. Books are available for purchase by cash or check, and Swedenborgian “thought leaders” will deliver presentations throughout the day. The expo wraps up with a wine and cheese reception for attendees, and discussion to keep the conversation going.

SCHEDULE

8:30 AM	Books on sale (8:30-4:30 pm)
9:00 AM	Dr. Soni Werner <i>Conscience: Forensic Psychology</i>
10:00 AM	Dr. Reuben Bell <i>Theology and Philosophy</i>
11:00 AM	Steve David <i>Huh? What's This Basket Still Doing Here, Covering Our Lamp?</i>
1:30 PM	Dr. Kristin King <i>Gardens of Heaven and Earth</i>
2:30 PM	Dr. Jane Williams-Hogan <i>The Call of Charismatic Books</i>
4:00 PM	Wine and Cheese Reception and Discussion (4:00-5:30 PM)
4:30 PM	Book Sales close

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DATE!**

For more information go to www.swedenborg-philosophy.org or email Lisa Childs at ncapbooks@gmail.com.

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