

NEW CHURCH *Life*

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

JULY/AUGUST 2016

Celebration and Legacy

Graduates of Bryn Athyn College celebrated with mortarboards joyfully flung to the sky. Graduates of the Academy Secondary Schools honored tradition with the presentation of their class banner. Read a farewell to the College graduates on "Purposefulness" from Dean of Academics Dr. Allen Bedford, page 342. Read about the commencement and awards on page 380, and see photos on pages 387-389. Read the commencement address for the Secondary Schools from the Rev. J. Clark Echols, "Feeling the Flow of the Lord's Love," page 348. Read about the graduation and awards on page 383, and see photos on pages 390-392.



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, “Be Fruitful and Multiply,” the Rt. Rev. Brian W. Keith offers this reassurance: “The purpose of creation looks to heaven, not to this world. So the Lord uses everything we do in this world to sow seeds that can grow forever. Because of this, much of the fruits of our labors are not visible in this life, but will be in the future.” (Page 330)

The Rev. Eric H. Carswell offers a sermon, “Loving One’s Country and Disagreements,” which seems geared to our hopes for a better world amid the reality of political discord. He says: “We live in a world that is far from perfect and yet this is the place and the time the Lord has brought us to and through which He can help us prepare for a heavenly life. The Lord will work with us and with others to build a better world.” (Page 336)

Dr. Allen J. Bedford, Dean of Academics at Bryn Athyn College, addressed the graduates on “Purposefulness” at the dinner prior to commencement. He used images from the moon landing to give perspective to their journey, and related stories from the Word – Moses and the burning bush, and Mary not finding the body of the Lord after His crucifixion but then seeing Him still alive – as speaking to transformations that can occur in their own lives, especially if their purpose is to choose freely to follow the Lord. (Page 362)

The Rev. J. Clark Echols, whose daughter Tykah was the eighth and last of his children to graduate from the Academy Secondary Schools, spoke to the graduates about “Feeling the Flow of the Lord’s Love.” He told them that his experience of the Academy – his own and his family’s – “is that all the educators are using their wisdom, their spiritual gifts and their acquired skills to cultivate your adult, fully human, understanding and feeling of the flow of the Lord’s love.” (Page 348)

In a paper for the Master of Arts in Religious Studies program in Bryn Athyn College, Craig W. Bostock writes about “The Future of the Christian Church and a Prediction of its Interaction with the New Church.” He mixes reality with hope in saying: “We must keep in mind that the hells are doing everything in their power to keep the New Church from growing and gaining acceptance, since it is a direct threat to them. But, for those who are searching for a spiritual meaning to life and come with an open mind and desire to learn,

the New Church should appeal to them.” (Page 352)

Have you ever wished there was a condensed version of *Arcana Coelestia* that would make it easier to read and understand all the spiritual treasure there? Well, that is possible now with a new book, *The Abridged Arcana Coelestia*, written over the past 20 years by a dedicated layman in South Africa, Dr. Willard Mansfield. In a review of the book, his long-time friend, the Rt. Rev. Peter M. Buss Sr., calls it truly “a remarkable gift to the Church.” (Page 363)

What does “The Sound of Infinity” actually sound like? The Rev. Stephen D. Cole finds it in the power of names in the Word – especially the Lord’s Divine Name – and within the quiet beauty of the Hebrew language. (Page 370)

After 30 years of dedicated service as Director of the Swedenborg Library in Bryn Athyn Carroll Odhner is leaving that position to focus her passion and energy on Swedenborgiana and New Church research. We are happy to reprint a retrospective on her inspiring career, which included hosting Queen Silvia of Sweden at the dedication of the Library. (Page 366)

Apparently none of Jonathan Olds’ Academy of the New Church classmates in 1942 remembered much about him or had any contact after graduation. But he came back for his 50th reunion, and an invitation to Charter Day a few years ago stirred his affection for the Academy enough that he rewrote his will. He passed away last summer and left a small fortune to the Academy for an endowed scholarship. Judy Lopacki, Director of Planned Giving for the Academy, says this “will continue to support many students and will make an immeasurable difference in their lives.” (Page 375)

Church News, beginning on page 380, includes:

- The latest minister moves around the Church
- Reports on the commencement ceremonies, graduates and awards for Bryn Athyn College and the Academy Secondary Schools
- Reports from the spring meetings of the General Church Board of Directors and the Academy Board of Trustees
- A preview of the upcoming Charter Day events in October
- A special award for the stunning façade for the Bryn Athyn Cathedral pipe organ
- A first-ever conference of Swedenborg and the Arts, planned at Bryn Athyn College next June and a call for papers

Editorials

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The word “rights” is used a lot these days, and often in ways that obscure an important distinction – namely, between rights that we have from God, based on our very nature as human beings, and rights granted by the state or some other human agency.

The first kind of rights are “inalienable,” as the Declaration of Independence says. They are inherent and sacrosanct because our Creator endowed us with them and they are an essential part of human life.

The second kind of rights are not innate, and can be withheld or modified or revoked by the authority that grants them. So when it is said that people have a right to an education, a job or medical care, for instance, those “rights” (which have multiplied tremendously in recent years) are in a different category than the rights we have simply by virtue of being human.

Such benefits may well be things that a humane and prosperous society feels responsible to provide for all its members – but are they really “rights?” And is government the best way to provide them? And at what point does the obligation of others in society to pay for these benefits become an infringement on *their* rights?

Confusing government benefits with “rights” is dangerous because it reduces essential rights to the status of arbitrarily granted privileges. The right to liberty is worth dying for, and many have; the right to a “free” college education is not. (And calling it “free” is a misrepresentation since someone will have to pay for it.)

The Writings say little about “rights,” but the spiritual order of human life which they reveal provides a foundation for the concept.

It is an “eternal law that everyone should be interiorly in freedom.” (*Arcana Coelestia* 2876) And since it is a general principle that what is interior and what is exterior should be conjoined, it follows that human beings should live in external or civil liberty also, and thus can claim it as a right.

The **right to liberty** comes from God; it is not given to us by the state. In fact, it has to be defended constantly from encroachment by the state – which is the rationale behind the Bill of Rights in the United States Constitution. “Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty,” as Thomas Jefferson said.

But since the state's main purpose and responsibility is to protect our God-given rights, we owe allegiance to it as well as to God. In a well-ordered society, patriotism or love of country is a spiritual love, not just natural. Allegiance to the state is strained, however, when the state itself trespasses on our inherent human rights.

The commandment against murder implies the **right to life**. The commandment against stealing implies the **right to own property**. The first law of Divine providence--"that man should act in freedom in accordance with reason" (*Divine Providence* 71) – implies the **right to liberty**.

Even inherent rights are not absolute. The same Divine truths that give us rights are also the basis of certain limitations and responsibilities that go along with them. The first law of Divine providence, for instance, implies both the right to liberty *and* the responsibility to exercise that right rationally and not abuse it.

The right to life gives us the right to control our own body to save our life, but in the case of a soldier in combat even that right is necessarily circumscribed because of the greater good that would be harmed if soldiers could desert with impunity. The greater good is that of the country whose laws protect its citizens' right to life. (See *True Christian Religion* 414)

The right of **free speech** is implied by the freedom to think which the Lord has given us, since speech is how we express our thoughts. Society must place certain limitations upon the exercise of that right, however, in order to preserve it. Such restrictions (against slander, for instance) are based, like the right itself, upon the order of human life taught in the Word, such as the commandment against bearing false witness. In addition, each of us has a responsibility to monitor and self-censor our own words out of basic charity toward others. Truly free speech is also responsible speech.

The right to pursue happiness is open to interpretation, but it surely includes **the right to own property**, which was mentioned along with life and liberty in the Virginia Declaration of Rights, which was a forerunner of the Declaration of Independence and heavily influenced it. (Jefferson changed the right of property to "pursuit of happiness" in the Declaration of Independence.)

The desire, thought, effort and time that go into acquiring property make it an extension of the person who acquires it by these means. A farmer, a doctor, an entrepreneur – people in all occupations – put a lot of *themselves* into their occupation. We can see the connection between the words "proprium" and "property."

People are occupied (or preoccupied, as we say) by their occupation. The monetary rewards that accrue as a result belong to them as much as the expenditures of time, labor or money they put into the work. One who follows a responsible work ethic, and bears the responsibilities and obligations an

enterprise entails, has a right to the rewards it generates.

The idea that property includes more than real estate and material goods, but something intangible belonging to a person, is evident in the concept of “intellectual property.” The right of property is a metaphysical right; and to deprive someone of his or her property is to infringe upon his or her very personhood.

One of the main arguments Abraham Lincoln made against slavery was that people have a right to enjoy the fruits of their own labor. His argument against one person owning another is thus also an argument in favor of each person’s right to own property.

The right of people to defend themselves is a natural corollary of the right to life – hence **the right to bear arms**. But because weapons can be used to steal or murder, thus depriving others of their rights, the right to bear arms carries with it a responsibility not to use them for such purposes. And because firearms are so deadly, the connection between the *right* to have them and the need for a strong sense of *responsibility* by those who do is especially obvious.

We can see this connection in regard to the “right” to drive, also. Unless people drive responsibly, obeying the traffic laws, there could be no right to drive.

The legitimacy of any right becomes less obvious the further removed it is from the inherent rights we have from our Creator. Freedom of *expression*, for example, is not quite the same as freedom of *speech*, which is necessary for rational discussion of important issues, and thus essential to government by free people.

“Freedom of expression” is a more open-ended term, and has been used to excuse obscene art and entertainments. If this kind of irresponsible abuse of the right is what people think freedom of speech means, how long will it be viewed as a *sacred* right to be preserved at all cost? A debased right is doomed to become no right at all. Those who abuse freedom of speech are actually undermining the very right they think they are championing.

A right which is not exercised is also likely to be lost. Consider **freedom of religion**. The first amendment of the Constitution prohibits any law “impeding the free exercise of religion.” Note that it is not just freedom to *believe* in a religion, but to *exercise* that belief. Sadly, fewer and fewer people are exercising it today; and contempt for those who do is increasing. Acting upon Christian moral principles, or even speaking in favor of them, is often “controversial” now. *Capitulating to the intimidation and failing to exercise our freedom of religion will eventually result in losing the freedom to exercise it.*

Again, though, the right carries with it a responsibility not to abuse it. Freedom of religion is not a license for any religion to deprive others of *their* right to exercise their religious freedom (or any other legitimate right).

We can see how rights and responsibilities are connected by considering how it is with revelation. The Lord has revealed spiritual truth for the purpose of guiding and improving our natural lives. Our ability to apply the truth freely and rationally, and our responsibility to do so, is implied by the truth itself.

The same God we look toward as the basis of our human rights also gives us the responsibilities that go with them. Both the rights and the responsibilities are distinctly *human*. To the extent that we are denied our rights, or shirk the responsibilities that go with them, the quality of our humanity itself is diminished.

(WEO)

THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS

When the Founding Fathers cast their vision for the rights of free people in their Declaration of Independence they were not speaking only for Americans. It is a “self-evident truth,” they proclaimed, that “*all men* [and women] are created equal,” that they are “endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable Rights, and that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.”

So, the “pursuit of happiness” is an absolute right, conferred by the Lord. But that does not mean we have a “right” to be happy all the time on this earth. It means we have a right to *pursue* happiness, just as we pursue and protect freedom in our lives. It’s a crucial distinction.

Among the largest collections in any book store are self-help guides: how to cope, how to overcome, how to change your life, how to find happiness. These books are generally well-meaning and useful. But the ultimate self-help books are the Word and the Heavenly Doctrine.

That is because happiness is not a general state of euphoria and is not a goal in itself. It is not the product of possessions, wealth and stature. Rather real happiness is a general state of contentment that comes as a side effect to a loving and useful life. It shuns self-absorption and is free of anxiety. It speaks to acceptance of one’s lot in life and to a general state of cheerfulness, optimism and absolute trust in the Lord and His providence.

The pursuit of happiness is in the life that leads to heaven – a pursuit best guided by faithfully reading the Word. That is our connection with the Lord. It is where He can work with us in the pursuit. For this is what He wills for all of us – “to make everyone happy to eternity.” (*True Christian Religion* 43)

Happiness is essentially a spiritual quality. That is why it can seem so elusive when we pursue it on a merely natural plane. And that is why its quality in heaven is called “ineffable” by Swedenborg – just beyond our imagination or his words of description.

Happiness is elusive in this life because we live in freedom between heaven

and hell. As part of life we experience pain and suffering, frustration and fear, disappointment and setbacks. We grow through temptation and shunning evil. We also experience the joy of heaven in moments of kindness, innocence and love. We are counseled by the Lord not to go about “with a sad and sorrowful countenance” but to be “joyful and cheerful.” (*Heaven and Hell* 358) Jesus often encouraged His followers to “be of good cheer” and not to be afraid, because “I have overcome the world.” (*John* 16:13)

We all have our own battles to fight in this world, with victories and losses along the way, but the important thing to remember is that the Lord is always fighting for us. Having faith in Him, and a connection with Him through reading the Word, is what leads to true happiness.

We have the compelling examples in the beginning of *Conjugal Love* of the imaginary heavens of some spirits – places of endless dining and pleasure, prayer and idleness. These are “heavens” they were desperate to flee once they experienced anything but happiness there. They learned that heaven is a kingdom of uses – the delight of loving and serving the Lord and the neighbor with no thought of reward.

The great promise of the “pursuit of happiness” is this: “Let anyone who wishes to be happy for evermore know and believe that they are going to be alive after death . . . [and] that the Word is the one and only teacher of how a person should live in the world in order to be happy forevermore.” (*Arcana Coelestia* 8939:3)

We also have the assurance: “Since the angels who are in heaven are in goodness from the Lord, they desire nothing more than to perform useful services. These bring delight to their life, and it is according to useful service that they enjoy bliss and happiness.” (*Ibid.* 6073:2)

So the pursuit of happiness is really the active pursuit of heaven in our lives. It is ultimately the product of our free choices, and the more we choose to have the Lord in our lives the more He is able to lead us to heavenly happiness. We delight in the blessings that hold within them the “ineffable” happiness to come of the pursuit. It is not a sudden state we achieve in this world but the work, the meaning, and the reward of a lifetime.

(BMH)

Letters to the Editors

Letters may be sent to the Editors of *New Church Life* at
Box 743, Bryn Athyn, PA 19009
or e-mailed to Bruce.Henderson@newchurch.org.

A New Dispensation From The Lord

To The Editors:

This letter is in response to the article, “Surely we are not Swedenborgians,” by the Rev. Gerald Waters in the May/June issue.

I agree strongly with what he said. I have used the term Swedenborgian occasionally, but only when I can follow it up quickly with an explanation of why I don't really like the term. But I am as dismayed as you are by the casual way references to the doctrines are sometimes written as coming from Swedenborg rather than from the Lord

We are told that when there is a judgment on the Church a new dispensation is given by the Lord and from that is formed a new church. Thus, after the flood the Ancient Word was given. When the Ancient Church had to be replaced by a representative of a church, the Lord came to Mt. Sinai and presented the law for Israel through Moses, and when that became void of all good and truth, the Lord came down and gave us the gospels through Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. So the three elements go together in a package: judgment, a new dispensation from the Lord, and a new church among men.

I would argue that if the new dispensation is not from the Lord, then there really could not have been a judgment by Him, and any new church, not being from Him, would be invalid. The General Church was founded on the belief that what Swedenborg wrote was a new Divine dispensation, a new chapter of the Sacred Scripture given by the Lord, unfolding and opening up all the previous chapters sent down from Him.

So I am with Mr. Waters. I think we should be careful how we express the origin of what we see from our teachings as coming from the Lord, so that everything we present to people reflects that basic belief and doesn't leave the

reader or seeker in any doubt.

I went to one Journey group some years ago, and have looked at some of the other Journey booklets, and I had the same reaction that Mr. Waters had. They are not accurate in the way the Writings were presented, and in some cases were wrong in what the Writings teach. I haven't seen any of the more recent ones, but I felt that the ones I saw should have been far more carefully edited.

Is this important? I think that if our church is going to be of any importance to the world and to the single individuals who are trying to live a life of the church, then it is absolutely necessary to have a clear acknowledgement of the origin of the church's authority. Is that authority from the Lord, or only from a man, no matter how intelligent he was?

Joseph S. David
Franklin, Pennsylvania

We Follow the Lord Alone

To The Editors:

In his article, "Surely We Are Not Swedenborgians!"; the Rev. Gerald Waters draws attention to the increasing use of terms that make it appear that Swedenborg, not the Lord, was author of the Writings, and he invites views.

I agree with Gerald that there is an increasing tendency to use terms that appear to attribute authorship of the Writings to Swedenborg and that these terms undermine the Lord's Divine Authority and have the potential to harm the descent of the New Jerusalem from heaven to earth. It is upon this Divine Authority of the Writings that the whole of the New Church is based.

If Swedenborg is thought to be the author, the Writings become another set of books with views that we are free to accept or reject as we would those of any other author. People are then free to reject anything in the Writings that they do not like. On the contrary, if the Lord is acknowledged to be the Author and we don't like something that is written, we should feel bound to look into our hearts and find what is lacking in our state of regeneration that is making us wish to reject it.

As Gerald notes, the latest Journey Program, *Living Gratefully*, that I also joined in, uses terms that lead to Swedenborg being considered to be the

author. But as Gerald points out, not only Journey Program do this, but also various other New Church literature.

I have found this to be happening increasingly in *New Church Life*. For example, in the current May/June issue: p. 218, “Swedenborg says”; p. 264, “Swedenborg’s exegesis of the first chapters of *Genesis*” and “Swedenborg’s description of the people of the Most Ancient Church”; p. 266, “When Swedenborg introduces the concept of the *Ancient Word*”; p. 267, “the theological Writings of Swedenborg” and “Swedenborg himself spoke of.”

Although I have singled out these expressions, there are other examples by other authors in other issues of *New Church Life* which give the same impression, namely that Swedenborg wrote the truths on which the New Church is based. Although I applaud the authors for the academic content of these items, and it is with sadness that I am critical of a few expressions in otherwise excellent articles, I would ask future authors to be aware that wording such as cited above can mislead others and be detrimental to the New Church.

It is as well to keep in mind Swedenborg’s own words written in 1770 in a reply to Dr. Johann August Ernesti, Professor of Leipzig University, who was hostile to Swedenborg: “Please read what is written about the mysteries that have been disclosed by the Lord through me His servant.” (My emphasis)

I have great concern that the people most affected by this growing trend of seemingly crediting Swedenborg with writing the theological works are those who are not yet secure in the beliefs of the New Church, namely young people, newcomers and enquirers.

This year I have been fortunate to speak to several interested persons but unfortunately all of them had heard previously of Swedenborgianism or heard that I was a Swedenborgian. It was already in their minds that my church had been started by Swedenborg and that I was one of his adherents, just as are followers of other cults.

It would seem sensible to have a short name that would be acceptable, hopefully, to all branches of the New Church, that could be used in speech, on census forms, hospital admission forms, etc., so that we become an easily identifiable church. Let’s agree on something as simple as New Church or New Christian Church. But NOT Swedenborgian!

We are not Swedenborgians, we are not followers of Swedenborg, we are not a cult. We follow the Lord alone in the Old Testament, New Testament and the Divine Truths of His Second Coming that He alone disclosed through His servant, Emanuel Swedenborg.

Heulwen Ridgway (Miss)
Canberra, Australia

The New Church's True Mission

To The Editors:

The question that Peter Boericke did not ask (letter, "A Wake-Up Call: Will the General Church Survive and Thrive?" *New Church Life*, May-June, 2015) is: "Are the Old Testament, the New Testament, and the Writings for the New Church (through Emanuel Swedenborg) the *Divine Word of God*?"

Of course, my personal answer is yes!

Well then, what better action could the Bishop of the General Church take than to ask all of his ministers to go directly to the *Word of God* with all their hearts and minds, to study what is written there regarding the role of women in the priesthood, and give him their most careful written and verbal counsel? (See "Statement About Gender and Clergy," by the Rt. Rev. Brian W. Keith, *New Church Life*, November-December, 2014.)

With prayer for guidance from the Lord Himself (that is, from the *Divine Word* itself) and months of exacting counsel from the Lord's most dedicated disciples living today, could there be any wiser guidance, in Providence, than that rendered by Bishop Keith?

Mr. Boericke did ask a lot of questions. First, he said that women in the priesthood may be the most passionate and central issue of our time. Then he asked: What is the vision for the General Church? Why aren't young adults joining the General Church? Is General Church membership growing? Is the General Church addressing the relevant issues of the day? Are the General Church and its educational endeavors financially sustainable? What has become of previously abundant New Church print media?

At first, these seem like fair questions, but with more deliberation it seems that they are primarily concerned with growth and other secular matters. Certainly temporal questions need to be addressed if we are to best fulfill our mission. But what is our *true* mission?

Mr. Boericke's answers to his own questions seem to focus on the unwillingness of the General Church leadership to *adapt* itself to current events, practices and what is politically acceptable. I think he may feel that if only we would adapt our approach to make it more "in tune" with world-views, we could reverse all the negative-growth statistics. He's probably right! It seems like, if we don't "give in," our beloved General Church will die!

But isn't that just the point of the New Church? It is *new!* Isn't "accommodating" our approach counter-productive to the Lord's message? Surely our reason for existence is to firmly share *all* the truths now revealed by the Lord. Didn't the Lord direct us to go forth and preach the Gospel to all

nations, peoples and tongues? Didn't He say that if people will not hear Moses and the prophets neither will they attend even if one were to come back from the dead?

I believe that when we try to "fit in" we actually deny the Lord before the crowing of the cock. Are we just being prudent as we seek to swell our membership through temporal appeals, or are we being fearful of rejection or even of persecution? Is our mission really to "help other people to grow closer to the Lord," or is it actually to spread the gospel and so enable the Lord to grow closer to them? Are we to *grow* the Church, or are we to *annunciate* the Church?

Martin Klein
Boynton Beach, Florida

Religion and Politics

To The Editors:

An editorial in the May-June 2016 issue of *New Church Life* on "The Election," quoted *Apocalypse Explained* 852:

In people who love the truth because it is true, theological issues dwell on the highest levels of the mind; moral issues are located on the middle level, below theological issues; and political issues dwell on the lowest levels, below moral issues.

Yes, but all three are essential and work together. None of these acts alone. Our religion – or lack of religion – determines our morals and politics.

Although our own prudence is like a few specks of dust, we can know that our governors should be wise and God-fearing because God has told us so.

It seems to me that it only takes a tiny bit of the brain power we have to see that some beliefs are insane, not wise.

Obviously those who want to ban God, the Ten Commandments and the Bible from public schools, the public square and the military are not God-fearing.

But we do have some good and God-fearing governors and politicians. Only God can judge motives. But we can and should judge words and deeds.

If we love our country as God says we should, we should strive diligently to determine the character of those running for office before we vote.

Of course, our country will never do well if we don't turn back to the Lord Almighty. Without God and the Ten Commandments nothing works.

Charis P. Cole
Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania

Theta Alpha International Essay Contest

The Laws of Life

All high school sophomore (15-16-year-old) New Church girls worldwide are eligible to enter this contest.

This essay is an opportunity to write about what these girls think is important in life. *The Laws of Life* are a set of rules, ideals or principles by which one should live:

- What do you value most in life?
- What is important to you?
- What ideals do you hold deep in your heart?

Think about the people and experiences that have helped form these laws. Pick a topic to write about:

- A personal experience/lesson learned that affects how you live/view your life.
- An aphorism or quote that inspires or guides you.

Entrants can use an analogy, a quotation, story or parable (no personal or romantic relationships). Judges will not know the names of the writers. Cash prizes will be awarded for first, second and third places.

Entries must be received by March 1, 2017. Send to Theta Alpha International, P.O. Box 511, Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania 19009, or email ANCdaughters@gmail.com. The email address may also be used for further information.

Be Fruitful and Multiply

The Rt. Rev. Brian W. Keith

Lessons: Genesis 1:26-31; Matthew 13:31, 32; Arcana Coelestia 1941

Then God blessed them, and God said to them, Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth. (*Genesis 1:28*)

After God made mankind the first thing He told them to do was to be fruitful and multiply. Be fruitful and multiply – how vital that is! Like the first people we all have a tremendous desire to be fruitful, to increase. We are builders by nature. Everyone wants to be useful, productive in their jobs. Married couples desire children, then grandchildren. A challenge of retirement for some people is where they then derive their sense of usefulness. We all want to have a sense that our life here has made a difference – that the world is at least a little bit better off because of us.

Spiritually we also feel this drive to be fruitful and multiply. Regeneration implies improvement and the development of spiritual life. We want to build a spiritual home in heaven.

And what happens to us when we feel that we have not been productive? When we have not been fruitful and multiplied? What if we feel that our work is relatively meaningless? That the labor of our hands has been trivial and of no lasting value? Do we then feel like investing anything in our jobs? Or how do we feel when our children do not seem to care for the things that we do? When they rebel or just seem to drift aimlessly? Do we not feel like we've failed, that all our efforts were in vain? And in our spiritual lives, what if we feel that we are not making progress? What if we feel that we are no more regenerate today than we were five or ten years ago? Does it not give us a sense of failure, a sense of hopelessness?

Have we then been fruitful and multiplied? Perhaps that is the wrong question to ask. Here is a different question to pose: should we expect to see the fruit of our work, the harvest, in this world or not?

In one sense, yes, we should. The Lord wants us to experience success. He

wants us to experience a sense of being useful and the joy that comes from this. He has connected usefulness – productivity – with delights and rewards.

And it should be a warning to us if we are not receiving them. The Lord said that any tree which did not bear good fruit would be cut down and cast into the fire. If our lives produce very little of value, if they have not brought about much good, then there has been a self-centeredness, which is a description of hell. We are not rewarded for this, just as someone who is not working does not get paid.

Yet, if we expect a significant return in this world, if we expect to see boundless fruit and success for any or all of our efforts here, we are going to be extremely disappointed. For each of us has started much that will never be finished here.

For example, think of the mass of information that has filtered through our minds during our lives. How much of it has produced tangible fruit? Of course, each piece of information had a value in its own right in developing our minds. But since we can only recall a very small portion of it we think it was useless. Yet it is all there, and if not used in this life, will be in the next.

The Writings of the New Church give a perspective that is designed to bring us comfort and to spur us on. They point out that most of our fruitfulness will not be primarily apparent in this world but in the next. They say: “Everything that has life in it from the Lord is fruitful and multiplies without limit. This does not happen during a person’s lifetime, but in the next life it does so to an astonishing extent.” (Arcana Coelestia 43) There, it is “unbelievably increased.” (*Ibid.* 1941)

In Isaiah the Lord says: “And I have put My words in your mouth; I have covered you with the shadow of My hand, that I may plant the heavens, lay the foundations of the earth, and say to Zion, you are my peace.” (*Isaiah* 51:6)

This is what the Lord is doing with our lives here: laying the foundations, planting the heavens. Everything that occurs in this world is directed toward that end. We were created not primarily to enjoy a happy life on this earth, but to produce good eternally. The purpose of creation looks to heaven, not to this world. So the Lord uses everything we

The purpose of creation looks to heaven, not to this world. So the Lord uses everything we do in this world to sow seeds that can grow forever. Because of this, much of the fruits of our labors are not visible to us in this life, but will be in the future.

Every day, each moment of the day, the Lord is planting seeds in our lives which will bear fruit. For the purpose of this world is not to complete all things but to begin all things.

our children, think of the time that is given to the care of their physical needs when they are young. The focus tends to be on taking care of business – or the busyness of life. Thus we often overlook what good is being produced because we are not looking for it.

Also, many worries or troubles beset us here and demand our attention. Cars break down. Our parents or friends need to be cared for. Physical or emotional challenges limit our usefulness in this world. These and numerous other natural concerns lead us to only look at what is wrong. For this reason we do not notice some of the good that is taking place in our spirit.

This can lead to discouragement – thinking that we are not being spiritually fruitful. But to accept such discouragement is to belittle all that the Lord is accomplishing. For every day, each moment of the day, the Lord is planting

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do in this world to sow seeds that can grow forever. Because of this, much of the fruits of our labors are not visible to us in this life, but will be in the future.

We should not be surprised that we may see but a small amount of spiritual harvest in this world. It is inherent in the nature of this natural world to limit happiness; it is fairly superficial and external. We have to spend a tremendous amount of time providing for ourselves and our homes – taking care of our external needs. Our work takes countless hours. Maintaining our homes consumes more. And even with

And even with our children, think of the time that is given to the care of their physical needs when they are young. The focus tends to be on taking care of business – or the busyness of life. Thus we often overlook what good is being produced because we are not looking for it.

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The Writings say: “When a person enters the next world, the seed is set free from natural things and starts to grow, just like the seed of a tree, which when it comes out of the ground, grows into a small tree, then into a large tree, and is after that multiplied into a garden of trees, for all knowledges, and wisdom, and the forms of delight that go with them, are in a similar way

Whatever is good, whatever we have embraced from the Lord, has eternal value. It cannot be lost or become unimportant. The seeds planted here will grow in the next life.

made fruitful and multiplied, and are thereby forever increased.” (*Arcana Coelestia* 1941) Whatever is good, whatever we have embraced from the Lord, has eternal value. It cannot be lost or become unimportant. The seeds planted here will grow in the next life.

Examples abound. In the New Church we speak of remains – knowledges of truth and feelings of good that a person has received from earliest infancy. All these are stored up in a person’s inner life, without one ever being lost, and thereafter provide a means by which the Lord can reach us – touching us, leading us. These remains enable us to take delight in learning what is true and to recognize what is good in adult life.

When we are in a self-centered hellish state, it is through remains that the Lord can be near to us and gradually lead us through them. These remains are like seeds that were planted at a very tender age and often have lain dormant very many years before being activated by the Lord. They are stored up within and protected that they may be there when needed.

Other seeds are implanted in our adult lives. Every time we read the Word seeds of truth are being planted in our minds. Although we may only be aware of the literal stories, our spiritual mind is seeded with deeper truths. This happens unknown to us, but those seeds are harvested in the spiritual world. (*Arcana Coelestia* 4280:2)

The parable of the mustard seed shows another facet of this. The Lord likened the kingdom of heaven to the smallest seed there is, which when planted becomes a huge tree able to provide shade and a resting place for birds.

There are many things that appear to us to be inconsequential or very, very small. Our striving to be good is at times like the mustard seed; it seems so puny and ineffective that nothing much could come from it. But we are taught, that “if only a little spiritual good takes root with a person it grows like a seed in the ground.” (*Ibid.* 1100:8)

Also, “If a person by means of combat against evils and sins has acquired anything spiritual in the world, be it ever so small, he is saved, and afterwards his uses grow like a grain of mustard seed into a tree.” (*Divine Love and Wisdom* XVIIe) If he “has acquired anything spiritual in the world, be it ever so small, he is saved” – an amazing teaching!

How much is necessary that we

For nothing, absolutely nothing, is ever lost. Many of the things that we have started here may take a long time to develop, but they remain with us and are seeds that will bear fruit forever.

We should also look at our lives and all that we do here not as an end in itself but as a process of planting seeds that can then multiply.

might be fruitful and multiply in heaven? In one sense not very much at all. We simply need those small little seeds planted in our lives. The more that are planted here the more that will grow to fruition in the next world. For nothing, absolutely nothing, is ever lost. Many of the things that we have started here may take a long time to develop, but they remain with us and are seeds that will bear fruit forever.

So what does this mean? For one thing it means that we should be careful in how we evaluate our worth, our spiritual state. Yes, we should see some harvest, some good fruit, in this world. But we should also recognize that most of the good with us is like a seed, the very small mustard seeds that are planted and are dormant. They are there merely awaiting a springtime in the spiritual world.

We should also look at our lives and all that we do here not as an end in itself but as a process of planting seeds that can then multiply. The Lord quoted an old saying that, "One sows and another reaps." (*John 4:37*) Often our role is to sow the seeds that will be reaped in the next world. In a real sense that's what we are doing with the raising of our children. We are not controlling their destiny. We are not forcing them to be this or that. We are planting seeds in their lives that will bear fruit throughout their adult lives and in the other world forever.

Even in older age, seeds are being planted all the time – seeds that will bear fruit eternally. Every truth we learn and every good intention or action we have are seeds in our lives that will bear fruit forever. The spiritual things we have, and those we give to others, are eternal seeds. Regardless of appearances, not the least seed is ever lost or pointless.

So while we at times may be discouraged by an apparent lack of success or harvest, we should recognize that while our desire to be fruitful and multiply can be temporarily frustrated or lie dormant, where there is good it cannot be stopped.

The Lord assures us that everything good multiplies forever. Nothing good is ever useless or lost. Every little seed planted in our lives or the lives of those around us, even though it appears to be the smallest, will lead to reaping good fruit that multiplies forever. This is the promise of the Lord. This is the assurance that we will be fruitful and multiply.

Amen.



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OUR NEW CHURCH VOCABULARY

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FREEDOM

Because of the difference between heavenly and infernal freedom, some have had difficulty in framing a comprehensive definition of this term. The Writings overcome this difficulty, however, and supply one which covers every kind of freedom by saying that freedom is to think and will from affection, and to act from liberty according to what seems to be reason.

If these are heavenly, the freedom is heavenly, real, and what is called freedom itself; if they are infernal, it is infernal freedom, only apparent, and actually non-freedom.

The difference is that in the former man is led gently by the Lord according to his affections; in the latter he is driven roughly by infernal spirits according to their affections.

Note that freedom which is essential for regeneration is spiritual – freedom to will and think; freedom to do evil and speak falsity is rightly limited. Note also that freedom goes hand in hand with rationality, for which reason it cannot exist until man is of the age at which rationality begins. (See True Christian Religion 489; Arcana Coelestia 4130, 5786.)

GENERALS, PARTICULARS AND SINGULARS

The use of these terms in the Writings is indicated by the teaching that the body, external sense and action are generals, the natural mind and the things that belong to it are particulars, while the rational mind and all that pertain to it are singulars.

It is according to Divine order that there should be generals and particulars, and that both should be together in every single thing; otherwise particulars cannot exist. In the case of man, particulars must be surrounded by generals to subsist. (See Arcana Coelestia 4345; True Christian Religion 775.)

Loving One's Country and Disagreements

The Rev. Eric H. Carswell

Lessons: Luke 20:19-26, True Christian Religion 305-306

In the broadest sense, [the natural meaning of the commandment to honor father and mother] means loving our country because it nurtures and protects us; it is called our “fatherland” from the word “father.” In fact, it is the parents themselves who need to give honor to the country and those who serve it, and to implant this habit in their children. (*True Christian Religion* 305)

In explaining the most focused natural meaning of the fourth commandment, *True Christian Religion* presents a description of good parenting:

These include feeding and clothing their children, and introducing them into the world, so that there they may live civil and moral lives; also bringing them into heaven by teaching them the rules of religion. In this way they provide for their children's well-being in this world as well as their eternal happiness. Parents do all this because of the love they have from the Lord, in whose place they act. (*Ibid.*)

Children, young and grownup, whose parents reflected these qualities, hopefully would find it easy to feel affection for their parents, to honor and obey them, and to thank them for the benefits they have received. Some people had the benefit of growing up with caring and wise parents – some with one or both parents being moderately effective, and very sadly some children grow up with one or both parents being negligent, cruel or abusive. The effects of poor or destructive parenting can be huge and lasting.

Nearly all children as they enter their adolescent years and become young adults come to recognize strengths and weaknesses in their parents. None of us is infallible. At times minor foibles can actually be endearing. But think of the mental and spiritual disturbance that takes place in a young person who realizes that a parent is regularly interacting with him or her in dangerously destructive or just painfully inadequate ways.

That young person is not being called by the Lord to obey that parent no

matter what. What would you counsel a young person to do in such a situation? How is that young person going to make good decisions in an imperfect world? How do *we* make good decisions in an imperfect world?

There can be a parallel, of course, to our relationship to our country. In a broader sense the fourth commandment calls us to honor the leader of our country, other government officials, and all the ways our country as a whole nurtures and protects us. In direct and powerful language *True Christian Religion* asserts: "It is the parents themselves who need to give honor to the country and those who serve it, and to implant this habit in their children." (*Ibid.*) We know all too well that in many circles of modern culture it has become acceptable to denigrate the country and its leaders.

Compared to many countries in this world both present and past, citizens of the United States have much that they could be grateful for. In too many countries corruption makes both local officials and the police unreliable. There are clear historical examples of countries whose leader or leaders are dangerously destructive to the individual welfare of people and to the welfare of all. When we believe something is wrong in our country we almost always have had tremendous freedom to express our protest. This is true about our country now but will it still be true in 10 or 50 years?

Our knowledge of the spiritual history of this world can give us pause as we watch the continued unfolding of events around us. The advent of the New Church into this world promises greater spiritual freedom for all. We know that the Lord is working with infinite love and wisdom in every human being's life to lead him or her away from evil loves, false ideas and the behavior they lead to.

But we are also given a picture of a continuing decline due to the false ideas in traditional Christian doctrine and the life to which they incline a person. In addition there is a growing number of people who apparently feel no restraint about being apathetic or even antagonistic to spiritual principles and values.

Many of us are aware of the power and influence of relativism or the assertion that there is no objective truth but only opinion about the value of everything. Consequently people with this perspective react against any assertion of spiritual truth or expectation of a demanding morality.

Another negative influence is the power of what the Heavenly Doctrine calls natural good. Natural good can lead to a short-sighted concern that people feel happy and content in their

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It is discouraging that while here and there political discourse speaks to foundational values and principles, too often self-interest seems the primary appeal.

immediate surroundings. Anything that seems to inhibit that happiness is viewed as an obstacle and wrong. So no matter what choices a person is making the view is that he or she should be able to be happy right now and in the short term.

It is discouraging that while here and there political discourse speaks to foundational values and principles, too often self-interest seems the primary appeal. Whether it is stated in the context of our national or international interest the appeal is not to what is going to be best for the United States,

our grandchildren and great-grandchildren, but what a decision is going to mean to me and my future in the next few years.

For many of us the last few decades have provided times of satisfaction with our leaders and what our country was doing and also times of deep disappointment and concern.

The Lord's words to the scribes and Pharisees may seem to give clear guidance on our responsibilities when He said: "Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's." (*Luke 20:25*)

The Lord spoke these words in response to an effort to trap Him into saying something that could be used against Him. The scribes and Pharisees thought they would be able to condemn Jesus as a traitor to the Jewish nation and faith if He endorsed paying taxes. On the other hand if He said taxes didn't need to be paid they could take this to the civil authorities and they would perhaps arrest Jesus.

Sometimes His response has been seen as a clear separation of natural and spiritual things or a clear separation of earthly and spiritual government. But consider the following from the teachings for the New Church:

When the life of person is scanned and explored by rational insight it is found to be threefold, namely, spiritual, moral and civil. These three lives are distinguishable. For there are people who live a civil life and not as yet a moral and spiritual life; and there are people who live a moral life and not as yet a spiritual life; and there are those who live a civil life, a moral life, and a spiritual life at the same time. These live the life of heaven; but the former live the life of the world separated from the life of heaven.

This shows, in the first place, that the spiritual life is not a life separated from natural life or the life of the world, but is joined with it as the soul is joined with its

body, and if it were separated it would be, as was said, like living in a house that has no foundation. For moral and civil life is the active plane of the spiritual life, since to will well is the province of the spiritual life, and to act well of the moral and civil life, and if the latter is separated from the former the spiritual life consists solely of thought and speech, and the will, left with no support, recedes; and yet the will is the very spiritual part of a person. (*Heaven and Hell* 529)

What is a person to do when spiritual principle and the law of the country he lives in differ? In a country like the United States there can be political efforts to change a law that seems in opposition to spiritual principle. If the issue is important enough to a person and changing the law seems unlikely he or she may choose civil disobedience. The person can consciously disobey the law knowing that it may lead to civil consequences.

At times people have taken even more extreme steps. Our celebration of Independence Day is a reminder of a time when enough people in the original Thirteen Colonies decided to dissolve the political bonds that tied them to England and its king. They decided to become an independent and separate country. Those who signed the Declaration of Independence knew that if the American Revolution was suppressed and defeated they could forfeit their lives, their fortunes and their sacred honor. The short term consequences of their declaration were anything but easy and hopeful. But the longer results have proved a blessing to millions who followed.

Those of us who are committed to the cause of the New Church in this world can find ourselves out of step with the broader culture in which we live. Priorities of church, marriage and family that the Lord teaches us about in the Heavenly Doctrine are appreciated in some quarters but viewed as quaint, provincial or wrong-headed by others.

Consider the young woman who looks forward to marrying a husband and has committed herself to a chaste life prior to marriage. Friends, acquaintances and others can be mystified by this commitment. As we well know we may face opposition not just from individuals but from legal decisions of the country we inhabit.

During the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus taught:

You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven. (*Matthew* 5:14-16)

Those of us who are committed to the cause of the New Church in this world can find ourselves out of step with the broader culture in which we live.

We live in a world that is far from perfect and yet this is the place and time the Lord has brought us to and through which He can help us prepare for a heavenly life. The Lord will work with us and with others to build a better world.

Each of us is called to learn what the Lord can teach us and let this light shine from our words and actions. He can lead us to see the order of His creation and how He works to lead us to a life of wisely loving behavior. The truth the Lord has revealed calls us to make decisions about what we should and should not think, say and do. It calls us to recognize that some thoughts and motivations in our minds are harmful to us and others.

These are things that the Lord calls us to turn from, to shun as sins against Him. He doesn't promise that our efforts to follow Him will always lead to happiness and fulfillment in the immediate present, but He gives us a

promise that is familiar to many of you:

Peace has in it confidence in the Lord, that He directs all things, and provides all things, and that He leads to a good end. When a person is in this faith, he is in peace, for he then fears nothing, and no solicitude about things to come disquiets him. A person comes into this state in proportion as he comes into love to the Lord. (*Arcana Coelestia* 8455:1)

As we see events in the world around us that cause us concern, great and small, sometimes we may sense that the Lord is calling us to do something to influence the source of the concern. He may not want us to react with peaceful acceptance. He may indeed be calling us to do something. Let us have the resolve and courage to work individually and with others to bring about a healthier state of affairs.

Sometimes an issue may seem far beyond our individual efforts to resolve. May we, at these times, seek the peace of following the Lord as best we can in our own lives and providing for the welfare of those near and dear to us.

We live in a world that is far from perfect and yet this is the place and time the Lord has brought us to and through which He can help us prepare for a heavenly life. Making good decisions in an imperfect world is not easy, but we are not alone. The Lord will work with us and with others to build a better world.

May the peace of knowing that truly the kingdom and the power and the glory belong to Lord strengthen us and comfort us in our daily efforts to follow Him. Amen.



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OUR NEW CHURCH VOCABULARY

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GLORIFICATION

To glorify is to make Divine. Glorification is then the process by which the Lord, on the planes of the rational, natural and sensual minds and of the body, put off by degrees the merely human and put on the Human from the Divine. It includes also the bringing of these planes into an infinitely perfect correspondence with the Supreme Divine, such as that of a Divine mind and body with a Divine soul.

Thus the term refers also to the establishment of a Divine consciousness in the Lord's mind, and to the process whereby His Human, from being a receptacle of life, became life itself. As that which is offered to the Lord by man, glorification is praise, exaltation and worship from a sincere heart. (See True Christian Religion 104; Sacred Scripture 99; Arcana Coelestia 2112.)

Purposefulness

Dr. Allen J. Bedford, Dean of Academics

Graduates, tomorrow morning you will complete the final step in achieving a goal you set for yourselves many years ago: you will receive your college degree. The graduation ceremony actually includes two symbolic moments of degree completion. The first is individual, when you receive your degree from the President. The second is communal, when all of you baccalaureate graduates stand together and move your tassels from the right to the left side of your caps. With these symbolic acts you will be crossing a key threshold in your life's journey.

It is fitting that the ceremony includes both individual and group moments. Your achieving this goal most definitely required your individual work. No one can learn on your behalf. No peer, friend, family or faculty member can do for you the work necessary to gain your own insight and skill. Only you can do that. And so there's a moment in the ceremony when you, alone, walk across the stage and receive your degree.

Equally true, though, is that no one can achieve a goal like this by working entirely in isolation. In the most obvious senses this is clear. You cannot give birth to yourself, and you cannot yourself be accredited, be authorized by the state to confer degrees, and then confer upon yourself your education and your degree. It takes your parents, society, government, accrediting bodies and an academic institution and its faculty and staff to do that. Standing together and moving your tassels as a group symbolizes the joint efforts making possible your achievement.

In the ceremony tomorrow you will hear this declaration: "You have fulfilled the requirements prescribed by the faculty of the College, and thus the Board of Trustees of the Academy, under the power granted by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, has conferred upon you the Associate in Arts, Bachelor of Arts, or Bachelor of Science degree in testimony of your graduation in this year of our Lord Two Thousand Sixteen."

We don't have time to examine each part of this packed declaration but I want to invite you to listen to the statement carefully tomorrow and let its meaning settle in your hearts and minds. It is a kind of blessing – another form of, “Well done, good and faithful servant.” It is the Commonwealth, the Board of Trustees, the faculty and staff, embracing you and shaking your hand.

My topic this evening is “purposefulness.” I invite you to consider purposefulness in two ways, each having two dimensions. The first I have mentioned already – that purposefulness has both individual and communal dimensions. The second way is that purposefulness can (and I think should) be both focused and open. I'll consider first the individual and shared dimensions.

Graduates, you set a goal for yourselves to earn a college degree. With this purpose in mind you enrolled in college, picked a major, filled out a “roadmap to graduation,” completed the requirements along the way, and now find yourselves about 14 hours away from receiving your diploma. You are fulfilling your dream. Well done!

In fulfilling this goal, you are also fulfilling a goal others have held for you.

Parents and family members, have you wanted to see your student graduate from college? How long have you held that goal? Their whole lives?

Graduates, please take a look at your supporters – your parents and family who have wished for you the accomplishment you are achieving. Your achievement is their achievement also. You are fulfilling their dreams as well as your own. Well done.

Faculty and staff, Board members and Alumni Association representatives, have you had a goal of seeing these students graduate? How long have you had that goal? For as long as you have known these students?

Graduates, please take a look at your Bryn Athyn College support team who have wished and worked ardently for your success, challenging you, prescribing requirements for you, comforting you, and cheering your accomplishments. You are fulfilling their dreams as well as your own. Well done.

We see represented in this room that purpose has both individual and communal dimensions.

In addition to balancing individual and communal roles in purposefulness, we can consider also the balance between *focus* and *openness* in our sense of purpose.

Graduating from college is an identifiable goal that is obvious both when it is a dream and when it is accomplished. There's a natural focus about it. I wonder, though, if you also experienced moments when your focus shifted, or turned in a new direction. It could be that you encountered something unexpected and compelling – so compelling that it actually changed your plan.

Consider the image of the astronaut on the moon. This image is an example



of what can be done when large numbers of people share a common, intensely focused purpose. This is a picture from the first moon landing in 1969.

For a time in the late 1960s nearly the entire world shared in a common purpose – to visit the moon and return safely to earth, bringing back moon samples. This was the first time human beings had walked on a celestial body other than their home planet. Everyone who knew about the event recognized it as significant and historic.

The Apollo 11 mission successfully achieved its purpose – landing humans on the moon – but what is more amazing is how the purpose of the Apollo missions was transformed in surprising ways to bless life back on earth.

Consider now the second image – the earth rising above the moon. This picture was taken by the Apollo 8 crew on Christmas Eve, 1968. The Apollo 8 astronauts were the first humans to fly around the moon and see earth from this distant vantage point.



By traveling to the moon we came to see in a new way how special the earth is. The focused mission purpose of the moon landings yielded to a bigger, more uplifting purpose – one that embraced all people on the whole earth. We saw as a species for the first time our collective home, and we have been celebrating “Earth Day” ever since.

Purpose transformed, expanded, uplifted, is one of the most powerful experiences we can have. Several Bible stories show us this.

In one example Moses, whose purpose was to keep watch over his father-in-law’s sheep, is distracted by a bush that is burning but not consumed. He sees this and thinks, “I will go over and see this strange sight – why the bush does not burn up.” (*Exodus 3.3*) Moses’ encounter with the burning bush transformed his purpose from watching over a herd of sheep to being commissioned by God to rescue an entire nation.

The first image – the photograph of the astronaut on the moon – can represent Moses’ purpose as a shepherd. The second image – of the earth rising

above the moon's horizon – can represent his purpose transformed.

In another example (*John* 20.11-13) Mary, distraught and with her world turned to grey desolation, goes to the tomb with spices to care for Jesus' body. She becomes even more distressed when she finds that Jesus' body is not there. She could imagine only that someone took Him away.

But the desolation she was experiencing became instead a new world, a world transformed, when she recognizes Jesus alive and in person. (*Ibid.* 14-16). This transformation happened *because she was open to seeing what she hadn't imagined*.

Again, the first image can represent Mary, distraught in a desolate world. The second image can represent Mary's awakening to the world transformed.

Look again at the astronaut on the moon. We can see this image as a metaphor of our existence here in the natural world. In order to be on the moon we need a spacesuit. Changing levels, in order to be living in the natural world we need what we might call a "space-and-time suit" – our bodies.

Paraphrasing Pierre Teilhard de Chardin,¹ we are spiritual beings having a natural – a *space-and-time* – experience. So that astronaut on the moon is us: a spiritual being standing on a foreign world.

Now graduates, you are about to complete an important, identifiable goal. Your next steps and goals will likely not be as easily identifiable. This can be frightening, but it can also be transformative.

Intense focus is often required to accomplish a goal, but it is important also to maintain openness to new experiences, insights, callings, needs, and opportunities. Otherwise our singularity of focus could make us miss something even more important. Willingness both to focus *and to widen our focus* are needed for us to develop in meaningful, healthy ways.

By completing your degree-specific, focused goal you are stepping into a time that may not have a clear sense of direction or identifiable "roadmap." What are we to do? One solution is to have transcendent goals

By completing your degree-specific, focused goal you are stepping into a time that may not have a clear sense of direction or identifiable "roadmap." What are we to do? One solution is to have transcendent goals – goals not limited by time and space.

1 "We are not human beings having a spiritual experience; we are spiritual beings having a human experience." *Attributed by Robert J. Furey to Pierre Teilhard de Chardin*

What I am suggesting is that we are here in this space-and-time world for a purpose. . . . According to New Church teaching, the purpose of our being here is to have an opportunity to choose in freedom to love one another as God has loved us.

– goals not limited by time and space.

According to New Church teaching, creation's purpose is to return all things to God. (*Divine Love and Wisdom* 171) To me, "returning all things to God" means making our lives, and the impact our lives have on others, an image and likeness of God. In other words, returning all things to God means acting the way God calls us to act, and that is to love one another. If we accept this as our purpose – to love one another – then our purpose can infill all that we do in our natural and spiritual bodies.

If you look closely at the picture of the person on the moon you'll see a large pocket on the astronaut's left thigh. This is the "contingency pocket." This pouch is for holding samples scooped up from the lunar surface

in case the two astronauts had to make an emergency launch. The pockets enabled them to bring back a sample even if they didn't have much time.

The astronauts on the moon had a mission. Similarly, we have a mission – exist for a time in the natural world, have a natural experience, and bring back samples of what we most care about and most want to do. If you look closely at your thigh (or maybe your heart) you might find there a "contingency pocket" – a place to put what matters most to you. Tomorrow you'll get your college degree. Maybe that goes in your contingency pocket.

Maybe you will also have the opportunity to embrace the people near you, sharing your joy and gratitude. Maybe that *love* goes in your contingency pocket.

What I am suggesting is that we are here in this space-and-time world for a purpose. I've also argued that this purpose has both shared and individual aspects, and that intense focus and openness to new experiences or meanings, shifting our focus, are important. According to New Church teaching, the purpose of our being here is to have an opportunity to choose in freedom to love one another as God has loved us.

Graduates, you have been at Bryn Athyn College pursuing a focused purpose for several years and are now on the threshold of achieving your goal. You, transformed, are about to enter a new world – your Earthrise.

“The Lord had said to Abram, ‘Leave your country, your people, and your father’s household, and go to the land I will show you And all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.’” (*Genesis 12.1,3*)

On behalf of Bryn Athyn College’s faculty and staff, our best wishes go with you and with your families and we look forward eagerly to your receiving your degrees and to embracing you and shaking your hands. Well done.



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OUR NEW CHURCH VOCABULARY

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

GOD

By God is meant in the supreme sense the Divine above the heavens, which is the Divine good; in the internal sense the Divine in the heavens, which is the Divine truth, is meant. The distinction made here rests on the fact that Divine truth proceeds from Divine good, makes heaven, and arranges it.

It should be noted also that God and the Father do not, in the spiritual sense, mean two persons; God means the Divine as to wisdom, and the Father means the Divine as to love.

One of the things most characteristic of New Church terminology is that we rarely speak of “God,” but name Him “the Lord” without the addition of other names. (See *Arcana Coelestia* 14, 7268; *Apocalypse Revealed* 21)

Feeling the Flow of the Lord's Love

The Rev. J. Clark Echols

I want to suggest that you graduates consider how you will add joy to the world. Now you have to begin in very simple ways. For instance, whenever I walk into an elevator and there are already some people in the car, I remain facing them, and as the doors close behind me I say, "You are probably wondering why I called you all here."

Why is that funny? Well, you thought: that makes no sense. You have

You anticipate something happening, you have a thought about it, and then an emotion, and that becomes a physical feeling in your body. This happens all the time, to everyone. It must be that the Lord created it to work this way.

an emotional reaction, and your face breaks into a smile, and suddenly, without any effort, your breath is expelled in a laugh. That is what humor looks like. Some irrational thought aroused an emotion, which became a physical reaction. And this is the case with all our emotions. They are messengers that connect our inner, spiritual life with our outer, physical life. Our emotions serve an important role in our bringing the Lord's Divine Love into the world.

For instance, remember a time you were angry. Maybe once you had a great idea, became excited about it and began planning with others to pull it off. And then something foiled your plan. Do you remember getting angry?

You probably clenched your fists, hunched your shoulders, and furrowed your brow. Anger is your reaction to resistance – when your passion is thwarted, when there is interference in bringing your love into the world, which is what the Lord created for you to do – felt as an emotion.

Have you ever been afraid? Right now you are thinking about walking up here on stage in a few minutes. In front of everyone. Everyone will be looking at you. You are trying to remember, which hand do I take the diploma with? There is a small tinge of fear, right? And you are feeling something in your stomach? That is amazing: you anticipate something happening, you have a thought about it, and then an emotion, and that becomes a physical feeling in your body. This happens all the time, to everyone. It must be that the Lord created it to work this way. Surely He created this spiritual and physical interactive system for a purpose.

And now consider sadness. In a little while you will be saying goodbye to some friends. Perhaps your best friend. Your parents can tell you that you might not see your classmates for years. That's just sad. The negative thoughts come, feelings of sadness arise, tears well up in your eyes, the corners of your mouth turn down. Your spirit is showing.

Now I am not an angry person. And I don't worry much. But sadness; well sadness is like a river flowing deep within my mind and my body. Most of the time it is calm, and slow moving. But every once in a while the river level rises, and the waves of grief lap at the edges of my consciousness, and when they overflow their banks, I feel sad. Everyone has felt this. Some more than others. Our love, which is an image of the Lord's love, wants connection, presence. And when that connection or presence is threatened or lost, we feel sad. The Lord designed sadness as a reminder of what love is.

We know from the Word, and from our personal experience, that there is a flow of life from the Lord through our souls, into our consciousness, and as well, into our bodies. That flow of love creates our emotions. So when you experience that anger, joy, sadness or fear, you are connecting your thoughts with your emotions and with your physical feelings. And whenever you live in that flow, you play life full out.

My experience of the Academy

My experience of the Academy is that all the educators are using their wisdom, their spiritual gifts and their acquired skills to cultivate your adult, fully human, understanding and feeling of the flow of the Lord's love.

You are learning that all these emotional experiences create in you a sense of the connection between the Lord's love for you and your physical world. That connection is the experience this Academy strives to create. That is a high bar; and a goal that few schools have set for themselves.

of the New Church Secondary Schools, from when I was a student, and through the last 20 years of having our own children here, my experience of the Academy is that all the educators – every teacher, staff person and administrator – are using their wisdom, their spiritual gifts and their acquired skills to cultivate your adult, fully human, understanding and feeling of the flow of the Lord's love.

So whenever you feel the fear of failing, or anger at a passion thwarted, or sadness at the way something went, or confidence in your skills, or accomplishment at finishing a project, or joy in success and victory, you are learning that all these emotional experiences create in you a sense of the connection between the Lord's love for you and your physical world.

That connection is the experience this

Academy strives to create. That is a high bar; and a goal that few schools have set for themselves.

Remember the time your friend passed that important test? And as you two walked out of the classroom you were excited – happy – about that success? You laughed together, your step was light, maybe bouncy. But you also remember the time your friend was sad and down, and you stayed with them in their grief, feeling it with them, with a slower walk, a quieter voice.

The lesson you can learn from the experiences of all your emotions is that your physical life is actually connected to the way you think about those circumstances, and those thoughts are connected to your experience of emotions. And when your body, your thoughts and your feelings are all working together, you will open your heart and mind to the Divine Goodness and Truth flowing from the Lord.

The experience of the Lord's love is of blessing – of joy. The teachers and staff and administrators all want you to feel the joy of accomplishment. And so there is a lot of encouragement to achieve a better grade. I presume that every one of you, at some point in high school, went to a teacher for extra help. Remember the time you were confused, or frustrated, maybe telling yourself that you are not good enough, or stupid? And so you went to your teachers and

they actually did what they had promised and helped you without hesitation.

They do that because they want to model for you that the Lord's love is constantly available. They want to encourage you to hear the Lord's invitation to accept His love, and so feel loved, just so you can pass that love on by being a messenger of the Lord's love.

This world view – that the Lord God Jesus Christ loves us all indefinitely and unceasingly, and that the Divine Love is communicated through our experience of all the emotions – has formed an educational philosophy and style of teaching that supports your spiritual growth. That is a rare and special experience.

So here is our suggestion: Begin now to imagine the world you will create when your righteous anger is directed at removing barriers from all people's experience of the Lord's love.

Imagine the world you will create when your fear reveals to you the next opportunity for you to stand up for goodness, justice, morality, truth.

Imagine the world you will create when your sadness becomes a powerful, motivating, inner urge to create emotional connection and spiritual presence.

And, after all that, continue to imagine the world you will create when the joy of the Lord's love is experienced by those who hear your laughter. God bless!



The Rev. J. Clark Echols was born and raised in Bryn Athyn. He graduated from the Academy Boys School in 1970 and received an Associate Degree from Bryn Athyn College in 1972. He graduated from Dickinson College in 1974 and was ordained as a General Church minister after graduating from the Bryn Athyn College Theological School in 1978. He has served five General Church congregations: Glenview, Illinois; Denver, Colorado; the Sower's Chapel in Sarver, Pennsylvania; Lake Helen, Florida; and Cincinnati, Ohio; and also has been visiting pastor throughout the United States. He and his wife, Margie (Cranch), who passed away in 2008, had eight children, all of whom have graduated from the Academy Secondary Schools – the youngest this year. In 2011 Clark married Janice Marie Mappin. In 2010 he earned a Master's in Counseling from Xavier University and is a licensed mental health counselor at the Professional Pastoral Counseling Institute in Cincinnati. Contact: jcechols@gmail.com

The Future of the Christian Church and a Prediction of its Interaction with the New Church

Craig W. Bostock

The Writings tell us that the Last Judgment in 1757 marked the end of the Christian Church as “the Lord’s Church” and ushered in the advent of the “New Church.” We might expect that as a result of the Last Judgment the Christian Church would decline in numbers and influence and eventually fade from prominence. However, the Christian Church has maintained its membership and actually grown in many parts of the world since the Last Judgment.

This paper will explore this dynamic by considering the trends of the Christian Church’s population, looking at the history of the churches that preceded it, and considering what the Writings tell us on the subject. Perhaps more importantly we will explore the possible interaction of the New Church with the Christian Church to determine if the two are competitive or complementary.

Previous Churches after their Last Judgments

In order to project the future of the Christian Church it is probably beneficial to look at the fate of the previous Churches after their Last Judgments. The first of the Lord’s Churches is the Most Ancient Church. As described in *True Christian Religion* 11: “[I]n the earliest ages of the world revelation existed everywhere,” thus the Most Ancient Church spread throughout the world.

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We don't know much about what happened to this Church after its Last Judgment as described by the story of Noah, his Ark and the Flood except for a few passages in the *Arcana Coelestia* that describe its remnants in the land of Canaan among the Hittites and Hivites, among whom Abraham, Isaac and Jacob lived. We know that man was fundamentally changed after the fall of the Most Ancient Church in that his will and understanding were separated, so this is perhaps less relevant than the Churches that followed, but not necessarily so.

We know that the Ancient Church at one point spread throughout the whole world as well. It was the Lord's Church until the time that the Jewish Church was set up as a representative church with Abraham and his descendants.

The Ancient Church did not immediately fade from the earth after its Last Judgment either but rather its expansive coverage endured throughout the time of the Jewish Church and well into the period of the Christian Church, even as it most likely devolved further and further from Divine Truth.

As it spread, the early Christian Church often encountered the remnant legends and myths of the Most Ancient Church and/or the Ancient Church in the form of pagan religions. Even today, vestiges of legends and myths about these Churches may remain in remote areas of Oceania, Africa, South America and Asia. In fact, Buddhism and Hinduism remain very viable in many parts of the world and likely evolved from Ancient Church remnants.

While the Jewish (Hebrew/Israelitish) Church is here treated distinctly, in the Writings it is often included as part of the Ancient Church as the final of three phases. The first phase was the establishment of the initial Ancient Church called Noah, immediately after the Flood and continuing until an interim judgment described in the story of the Tower of Babel.

The second phase was referred to as Eber and continued until an interim judgment, as described by the story of the destruction of the Egyptians during the Exodus of the Israelites and the parting of the Red Sea.

Focusing on the Jewish Church we see that there was not an immediate or even a gradual decline after its Last Judgment. The Jewish Church remained viable in and around Palestine for several centuries CE. And, while the Jews later dispersed throughout the earth, when the Jewish state was reestablished after World War II the church was once again focused in the cradle of the Middle East.

There are more members of the Jewish Church today than there were during the Lord's time on Earth. Understandably, Jewish population is difficult to estimate the further back in time we go. In an article in the Jewish Encyclopedia it is estimated that there were roughly three million Jews at the time of their Exodus from Egypt, approximately five million at the time of King David's census, and about four million during the first century CE.

Estimates during the Middle Ages are also difficult but the Jewish Encyclopedia cites one estimate in 1170 CE at about 1 million. Estimates from the late 19th century forward are more widely available and indicate that Jewish populations grew steadily from an estimated 8 million in 1880 to nearly 17 million in 1939. This was followed by a shockingly abrupt decline of approximately 6 million Jews during the Holocaust, after which Jewish population again grew and is currently estimated as approximately 14 million.

However, when considering these populations, it should be noted that the term Jewish is a hybrid between a religion, race and nation. Still, it seems safe to conclude that Judaism has grown significantly from the time of the Jewish Church's Last Judgment and is exhibiting a steady growth trend in absolute numbers but probably declining as a percent of total world population.

From this historical perspective we would not expect the Christian Church to decline abruptly but that it is likely to maintain or even grow in numbers. However, this merely speaks to its population, not to the spiritual health or pedigree of the Church.

Christian Church Growth and Decline

Since its birth in the area of the "Holy Land" the Christian Church has also spread throughout the entire earth. From its initial birth in Judea it spread throughout Europe, into other parts of Africa such as Ethiopia and into Western Asia. It also spread to the "New World" along with the explorers influencing newly established colonies and later countries such as the United States.

Attempts were also made to evangelize China, Japan and India but, while there was some initial success, Christianity failed to have a lasting majority position. Throughout its history the Christian Church has frequently come into conflict with Islam, which has often checked the advance of Christianity and at times pushed its boundaries backwards. Even today Christianity and Islam continue to be in conflict, particularly in the Middle East.

During most of its history the Christian Church has seen its greatest strength in Europe, Western Asia, and more recently the United States, Canada and Australia. However, more recently there has been a declining trend in membership in some of these traditional regions but an explosion of growth in South America and Africa.

In his book *The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity*, Philip Jenkins presents a convincing analysis which shows that Christianity is on the increase in many parts of the world due to a number of factors. These high growth regions include Africa, Latin America and Asia, which he refers to as the "South."

The growth of Christianity in these regions results from both rapid

population growth among the nations with a large Christian presence, and also with high rates of conversion to Christianity in these regions. Jenkins also indicates that the denominations showing the highest growth rates are Pentecostal and Evangelical.

In the context of the Last Judgment of the Christian Church, having taken place centuries ago, this growth rate might surprise us. The growth resulting from population increase from existing Christians is easy to comprehend. But why would the Christian Church continue to attract so many new converts if its time has passed spiritually?

Jenkins offers an explanation that not only are the growing denominations providing spiritual benefits but also help with worldly challenges such as poverty. He states, “The Pentecostal groups have the kind of God that will solve my problems today and tomorrow. People today are looking for solutions, not for eternity.”

He extrapolates future growth resulting from this focus by concluding: “The emerging churches work so well because they appeal to the very demographics of their communities . . . [by targeting] their message very directly at have-nots, or rather, having nothings.” These efforts are focused in the high population urban areas which he projects will continue to increase in the future. Jenkins suggests, “Rich pickings await any religious groups who can meet the needs of these new urbanites, anyone who can at once feed the body and nourish the soul.”

In some cases the church may actually be required to step in and provide the medical, judicial, social and other services that are normally provided by governments, as these governments collapse. Jenkins notes that many of the countries that exhibit high Christian growth rates also are on the list of unstable nations.

International religious organizations have the infrastructure to mobilize support in crisis situations that may be highly in demand in the future depending on how these countries evolve. Jenkins notes that it will be natural

We must keep in mind that the hells are doing everything in their power to keep the New Church from growing and gaining acceptance, since it is a direct threat to them. But, for those who are searching for a spiritual meaning to life and come with an open mind and desire to learn, the New Church should appeal to them.

for the church to attempt to fill this role permanently – as Islam has done in some countries – resulting in an established religious state.

He also points to examples of Christianity playing a key role in the political struggles in Latin America, sometimes in the form of the evangelical Left and “liberation theology,” but also with a more conservative bent. The New Church has also faced this issue on a small scale with its involvement in orphanages in Kenya and will undoubtedly run into similar challenges/opportunities in the future.

Jenkins also notes that the growing denominations tend to meld Christianity with existing cultural rites and practices rather than trying to dictate a rigid framework for the practice of religion. This allows the congregation to embrace the church as its own. However, this can be a difficult balancing act as the church must decide what its core beliefs are, which cannot be compromised, and those which merely reflect forms of worship.

Jenkins points to a particular challenge in the South’s belief in a link to the spirit world and with ancestors who have since departed. While early Christianity shared some of these beliefs, including that of possession, modern Northern Christianity in general is much less accepting of these beliefs, with the exception of certain denominations. Jenkins states:

For the African churches, the notion of continuity with the world of the ancestors is not only credible; it is a fundamental component of the belief system. And while many Western Christians have difficulty in accepting notions of the afterlife or resurrection as literally rather than symbolically true, these theories find a powerful resonance in African or Asian independent churches.

The elasticity of core beliefs is also a challenge for the churches in more traditional “Northern” regions where shifts in cultural norms apply pressure to traditional doctrine, such as women in the priesthood and homosexuality. Interestingly, the Christian denominations that are retaining their traditional doctrine seem to be the ones maintaining their membership, whereas those that eagerly embrace the latest societal shifts seem to be losing members.

This is not surprising since a faith that can be manipulated at will would seem to be of less value in guiding the path of our spiritual lives and might become nothing more than a rationalization for our beliefs and behavior, while doctrine that is believed to be from a higher source and has remained intact provides a consistent path to salvation.

However, even “traditional” beliefs evolve rightly and wrongly over time. In discussing the different approach of religious liberals and conservatives toward scripture Jenkins states: “Liberals judge scripture by the standards of the world; conservatives claim to set an absolute value on scripture and religious sources of authority.” Also of note is that many people are continuing

to be practicing members of denominations even when they disagree with certain doctrinal elements. Perhaps most notable are Catholics who support the use of birth control and abortion rights against the doctrine of the church, yet remain practicing Catholics.

Christianity and Islam have a long history of conflict: spiritually, conversion-wise and sometimes physically. Jenkins predicts that this conflict will continue in certain regions, including Europe where Islam might become the predominant religion in the future. However, he also notes that immigrants to the North from the South are bringing Christianity back to the North, perhaps leading to a second wave of growth.

Jenkins notes that the Christian percentage of total population has remained steady at about one-third for the past 100 years and is expected to continue at that percentage; however, certain regions such as Africa are expected to see an explosion from roughly nine percent in 1900 to a projected 50 percent in 2050. During this same period Islam has grown from roughly 12.5 to 22.5 percent and is expected to grow to 25 percent by 2050. One wonders what the role of the Lord's Divine Providence is in this trend, but that is a topic for a different paper.

If Jenkins' analysis is correct and Christianity continues to grow at even a fraction of the rate he predicts, the Christian Church will remain a driving religious force in the world for the foreseeable future. *Last Judgment 72* provides an expectation of how the Last Judgment affected the world in general, stating that life on earth will go on as before and that there will still be "politics, peace-treaties, alliances and wars, and all the other general and particular features of society." The passage also states:

The future state of the church, however, will not be the same. It may seem much the same in outward appearance, but inwardly it will be different. In outward appearance the churches will be divided from one another as before, their teachings will differ as before, and so will the religious systems of the heathen. But people in the church will henceforward have more freedom in thinking about matters of faith, and so about the spiritual matters which have to do with heaven, because of the restoration of spiritual freedom.

From this passage we should expect that the Christian Church will remain viable well into the future, as the Jewish and even some of the more ancient religions have in the past and continue to this day. However, we can expect an evolution in these religions to greater freedom in matters of faith. In fact, if we look at the evolution of the Christian religions over the past few centuries we can see greater freedom to read the Word in the Catholic Church and a move toward not just having faith but also living a good life (i.e. marriage of faith and charity) for the Protestant churches.

Relationship between the Christian Church and the New Church

To this point the Christian Church and the New Church have not had a significant amount of conflict. This is undoubtedly due to the small size of the population of New Church men and women in the world and the slow growth rate the New Church has exhibited to date. While certain historically significant individuals such as Johnny Appleseed and Helen Keller have embraced New Church theology and important leaders such as Benjamin Franklin and Abraham Lincoln were influenced by Swedenborg's Writings, the New Church remains obscure to most. Those who have become familiar with the New Church sometimes relegate it to cult status – a distinction the New Church shares with the early Christian Church.

While the growth rate of the New Church continues to be very slow, particularly in the North, we can expect that there will be an increase in contact between it and the traditional Christian Churches. Initiatives such as NewChurch LIVE and other outreach programs will result in an increasing number of people being exposed to New Church theology. It remains to be seen what the result of this interaction will be: conflict, tolerance or acceptance. I would posit that it will be all of the above.

Conflict: The Writings spend a good deal of time identifying and explaining the false doctrine of other religions. Many in the Christian Church will feel threatened by this language and feel that it is an attack on their core beliefs. Think about having been raised to believe that faith alone is the only path to salvation and then being told that it is a marriage of faith and charity that saves. Or, while expecting that the second coming will still happen in this world as described in the *Book of Revelation* instead being told that it already took place in the spiritual world.

We should not be surprised that there is a resistance to cast off the prior for the latter, or even to accept the latter as a viable belief. The Writings address this in the *Doctrine of Holy Scripture*: “That for a long time the spiritual sense will not be recognized, and that this is entirely owing to those who are in falsities of doctrine, especially concerning the Lord, and who therefore do not admit truths, is meant in *Revelation* by the ‘beast,’ and by the ‘kings of the earth,’ who should make war with him who sat on the white horse.” (19:19)

Others may conclude that Swedenborg is being elevated to a cult-like figure. Still others conclude that the New Church is similar to the Mormon Church in that it augments the Bible with texts “discovered” by individuals which they consider heresy. I have had these personal experiences when discussing doctrine with people whom I do not know personally and are aligned with the more “fundamental” Christian denominations.

Jenkins notes that particularly in many regions in the South there are

factors which may lead to conflict between religions, particularly as one religion makes inroads into areas where another religion is well established. And as we have seen in Rwanda and elsewhere, religious/ethnic differences can quickly escalate into a very violent and deadly situation.

This is nothing new as religion has been used as an excuse for violence and war throughout history, despite the degree to which the acts may be in conflict with the doctrine of that religion. In fact, often the leaders of religious organizations are directly involved in the violent acts, as was the case in Rwanda. As the New Church grows in these more volatile areas the risk of conflict will increase.

Tolerance: Others will see the commonality of doctrine between Christianity and the New Church, and while we may disagree on specific elements, will agree that we share a common God and at least some and probably much of the same doctrine. This is likely to be the case when New Church men and women form relationships with Christians in their everyday lives, whether at work, school, in social settings or even when New Church members attend traditional Christian church services.

When Christians witness New Churchmen living a life of faith and charity they are likely to feel a connection. I have also experienced this personally at work, in social settings and also through attendance at local Christian churches. While the Christians I interact with do not fully understand my beliefs, we are able to focus on our commonalities. In fact, it is surprising how common many of our beliefs really are until we start talking about specifics.

For instance, my experience is that Christians really do talk as if they believe in one God and that living a good life is as important as faith (i.e. love to the neighbor). It is only when we speak specifically of the Trinity, or of what “saves” a person, that the differences surface. In fact, among the churches that I have attended which hold the tenant that salvation is through “faith alone” the sermons often focus on leading a life in harmony with the Bible and practicing charity toward the neighbor.

Perhaps we should expect that the new revelation given to the New Church will appeal to those who desire a “religion that makes sense” and one that is able to explain the “mysteries of faith.” And in the process provide a path to salvation which is straightforward and achievable to all, although not without a true desire and a dedicated effort.

Acceptance: We have certainly seen a number of converts from traditional Christian denominations to the New Church, who become some of our most enthusiastic members. Ray and Star Silverman come to mind as examples. However, we do not see a large influx of people from this source in the North and it seems unlikely that we will see a significant change in the dynamic in the near future.

This is not surprising since according to the *Doctrine of Holy Scripture*, “Henceforth the spiritual sense of the Word will be imparted solely to him who is in genuine truths from the Lord. . . . Therefore in order to prevent anybody from entering into the spiritual sense of the Word, or from perverting the genuine truth that belongs to that sense, guards have been set by the Lord.” We even see some of our church members leave for other Christian religions which they find more appealing.

The Writings tell us to expect that we will see the most significant New Church growth among Africans and not among the traditional Christian nations. Interestingly, Jenkins gives examples of “cultural” issues such as women in the ministry and homosexuality that lead to Africans being more receptive to the conservative/traditional religions.

New Church doctrine is in line with many of these cultural attitudes so it would seem natural that the New Church would see higher growth rates in Africa. However, it is important to recognize that the New Church is not monolithic or static in its doctrine. For instance, the General Convention does ordain women in the ministry while the General Church and The Lord’s New Church do not. From this one might expect that the General Church and The Lord’s New Church will experience greater growth in the South, while the General Convention might see higher success rates in the North, but only time will tell. This also is a topic for another paper.

Considering the longevity of the Most Ancient, Ancient and Jewish Churches; the text of *Last Judgment 72*; the growth of the Christian Church since the Last Judgment; and the analysis that Jenkins presents, it seems unreasonable to conclude anything else than that the Christian Church will continue to have a significant influence in the world for the foreseeable future.

This may come as a concern to the New Churchman who might expect that the New Church would supplant the Christian Church worldwide. However, the Writings tell us that the Lord’s Church serves as the “heart and lungs” for all mankind, whether he is in the church specific or not, and that angels are present with anyone who loves the Lord and the neighbor.

Just as earlier religions remained viable after the Last Judgment resulting from the Lord’s birth on earth and continued to provide a means for conjunction with the Lord and heaven, we should conclude that the Christian Church will also continue to perform this role to the degree that people are able to read the

Word for themselves and that its doctrines remain aligned with the primary doctrines that the Lord has given us.

What path should the New Church pursue in spreading the “good news right straight from heaven,” as Johnny Appleseed described it? Clearly, the New Church should attempt to share the Writings with everyone who is receptive to them. Initiatives such as NewChurch LIVE and many of the internet projects give introductory exposure to New Church doctrine in non-threatening ways that are more likely to be received than an outright attack on false beliefs held by Christian denominations.

As a “religion that makes sense” we would expect the New Church to be favorably viewed as it is further exposed. However, there are some dynamics working against this. While most people believe that we should treat our fellow man with charity we also see a distrust of religious organizations by many as they perceive an attempt at dominion; see people living in conflict with what their faith teaches but still claim to be saved; and also see beliefs based on a strictly literal sense of the Bible that do not make sense to them.

We also must keep in mind that the hells are doing everything in their power to keep the New Church from growing and gaining acceptance, since it is a direct threat to them. But, for those who are searching for a spiritual meaning to life and come with an open mind and desire to learn, the New Church should appeal to them.

There seem to be important takeaways from Jenkins’ analysis of the growth of the Christian Church for the New Church. One would expect that the regions for which he predicts the highest Christian growth rates would also be potential growth areas for the New Church, especially since at least some of them align with what the Writings tell us.

The New Church doctrine of the marriage of faith and charity should appeal to those who are looking for both spiritual and worldly life improvements, as long as they are not strictly focused on accumulation of wealth, power or an escape from uses.

The South’s connection with the “spirit world” should also provide a link as the New Church can share the knowledge of associate spirits, that we all live in the natural and spiritual worlds simultaneously, although only consciously in the natural world until we transition, and that our ancestors do in fact live to eternity as we will.

Jenkins notes that in the South “revelation simply makes sense” and that the *Book of Revelation* is a favorite, in contrast to the North where it is often avoided. The New Church’s ability to explain this Revelation would be expected to be more readily received in these regions. The challenges will come from cultural norms that are at odds with New Church doctrine, which cannot be compromised, but also from cultural differences that are not in conflict with

doctrine but may vary greatly from the cultural norms of the “North.”

Summary

While the Last Judgment occurred several hundred years ago the Christian Church does not appear to be in population decline and is in fact likely to grow substantially in the future, particularly in the African, Latin American and Asian regions. This follows a similar pattern of the Most Ancient, Ancient and Jewish Churches continuing long after their Last Judgments.

The factors driving the continued growth of the Christian Church have to do with projected population increases in countries exhibiting strong Christian movements, and also with the churches focusing on the natural as well as spiritual needs of people in need – particularly in urban environments – and finally by showing a willingness to combine local cultural norms with the Christian spiritual messages.

These regions of high growth also provide an opportunity for the New Church, going beyond these factors due to connections we can make with belief in the “spirit world” and revelation. The New Church can concur to a degree but more importantly explain it all – along with other beliefs that seem to be remnants of the Most Ancient and Ancient Churches.

Perhaps as importantly we should expect that the new revelation given to the New Church will appeal to those who desire a “religion that makes sense” and one that is able to explain the “mysteries of faith.” And in the process provide a path to salvation which is straightforward and achievable to all, although not without a true desire and a dedicated effort.



Craig W. Bostock is a member of the 1982 graduating class of the Academy of the New Church Secondary Schools and earned an Associates of Arts degree from Bryn Athyn College in 1984. In 1988 he graduated from the University of Florida, earning a Bachelor of Science degree in Aerospace Engineering. He then earned a Masters of Science in Electrical Engineering in 1992 and a Masters of Business Administration in 1996, both from the University of South Florida. He is working toward

a Masters of Arts in Religious Studies at Bryn Athyn College. He began his career as a systems engineering with Honeywell International, working space and defense programs, later moved into program management, and is currently a program manager with Raytheon Company. He is also a Commander in the U.S. Navy Reserve after receiving a direct commission in 1997, and is a qualified Engineering Duty Officer. He serves as the Executive Officer in his reserve unit and also as the CONVAL Program Manager for the SPAWAR Reserve Program, with a focus on information warfare. He and his wife Nancy (Nelis) live in Treasure Island, Florida. They have three children in college. Contact: cnbostock@aol.com

BOOK REVIEW

The Abridged *Arcana Coelestia*

By Dr. Willard Mansfield

Reviewed by the Rt. Rev. Peter M. Buss Sr.

A remarkable gift to the Church has been made by Dr. Willard Mansfield of South Africa. He has worked for many years on an abridgment of the *Arcana Coelestia*, which he offers for lay people who find the challenge of reading the entire twelve-volume work too daunting, as indeed many do.

A little background about Willard Mansfield: I have known him all my life. We grew up together in what was then the Durban Society (now the New Church Westville). From the time he was about 20 (he is now 83), he has been active within the Church.

From those early years, when he was part of the “youth movement” that generated interest and commitment, on through the decades, he has worked together with pastors to encourage others to get involved. This included the time, under the Rev. Daniel Heinrichs, that the congregation moved to Westville and the tiny Kainon School was extended into a full primary school. Willard was a prime mover in the development of the school, which today has 130 students, and a pre-school of around 100.

Willard has a Ph.D. in chemistry, and degrees in business. After many years of work in various corporations, he spent the last 15 years of his career as a professor, teaching business at Natal University. He had several opportunities for lucrative jobs in Johannesburg, the economic hub of South Africa, but refused them in order to keep his children in Kainon School and to support the Church. In his retirement years he has invested the Church's funds so well that they have more than trebled in the last 10 years or so.

But it is Willard's other activity in retirement that is important to this review. From discussions with lay people he found that the full *Arcana* was too daunting for the majority of them, so they did not read it and benefit from its wonders. Even those who were quite well-read found it a challenge. Willard is

convinced that part of the problem is that the continuous internal sense which it reveals gets lost to many lay minds because of the intervening material.

So he set out to abridge it in such a way that the internal sense, and the gems that we find throughout the work, could be kept without the fuller explanation of details. The “abridged” version he offers is perhaps 40% as long as the original. He has left out the short sections between chapters (which appear in other works) and he does not include the chapters from *Genesis*, since people may easily read the work with the Old Testament by their side.

He has also left out the many sections where the Lord explains the details of the internal sense by referring to other places in the Old and New Testaments, and offering their internal sense. These passages, so valuable to scholars, made it harder for some readers to keep the context of the internal sense and the truths it reveals.

Willard has done this work his own way. By that I mean that anyone who undertook such a task would have to make decisions about how to create an abridged version. Over 15 years of daily diligence, he has carefully edited passages to keep the essential internal sense intact, many times revising what he had previously done to get it just right.

He also consulted with many ministers, whose names appear in his first volume. My personal opinion is that he has done a superb job. I am in awe of what he has accomplished, and delighted at the thought of its potential value.

I know that some people will wonder about an abridgment of a work of the Writings. But I would point out that we all do this. Each time a minister uses a passage in the lessons for a sermon, especially if he cuts parts out, he is abridging. Each time we do studies and “compare one passage with another” (see *Arcana Coelestia* 6222:3; 7233), we are taking each passage out of its original context and combining it with other passages. We are clearly encouraged to do this. Even the Writings themselves use sections – often parts of sections – of the Old and New Testaments in quoting. Many books have been written in this way, using parts of the books of the Writings.

The great value of what Willard has done is that it takes into account the reality of many people’s lives – that they may never read the complete *Arcana*. But, presented with a shortened version they will not only get a sense of the wonder of the internal sense of two books of the Old Testament, but also discover the gems that are to be found only in this work.

Here is a partial list of major teachings found only, or only in full detail, in the *Arcana*.

1. The details of the Lord’s life on earth. His spiritual growth and battles with the hells are revealed in a detail which is not found in other doctrinal works. For example, as an infant the Lord was horrified

when He became aware of the dreadful condition of the whole human race, and even wished to withdraw from such knowledge. (# 2222) But instead of withdrawing He inquired into all the states in human beings which would allow Him to rescue them. (See the passages following # 2222) Another example tells how the Lord fought all the hells, and finally, on the cross, He also fought the angels who, loving Him so much, felt that His mission had failed. (# 4299) Such insights into the Lord's work as an infant and throughout His ministry give us a vision of the Divine work that is not available elsewhere.

2. The seven days of creation, telling of the seven stages of our regeneration.
3. The remarkable change at the time of the representative flood, when the Lord separated our understanding from our perverted will, created a new will in our understanding, and made salvation possible once again. Nowhere in human learning is this work of mercy even vaguely apprehended.
4. The teachings about "remains" are to be found only here.
5. There are amazing gems about our regeneration, especially in the Jacob series. Consider # 3603, which says that we find enjoyment in the truth at first because it points out other people's faults, and slowly progresses through three other stages until we love it for the life it makes possible.

Such insights are lost, even to the dedicated reader, if he or she does not read this work.

Willard has therefore permission from the Swedenborg Society, whose translation he used, to continue to make this work available on a limited basis and to publish and distribute it privately. He can be contacted for further information at willardmansfield@inds.cybertek.co.za.

Several people are reading this abridged version of the *Arcana*, and finding great delight in doing so – people who would not otherwise have tackled this task. One man, who has indeed read the *Arcana* three times, found it clarified much that was not previously clear to him.

It is probably true to say that no lay person in recent history has worked so systematically and so effectively on making a section of the Lord's New Word available to the Church. I believe this is an amazing gift to the Church, and encourage its propagation in the manner permitted by the Swedenborg Society.

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SWEDENBORG LIBRARY

Carroll Chamberlain Odhner: A Retrospective

The following is reprinted with permission from
BI-Lines – Notes and News from the Swedenborg Library.
The Library is part of Bryn Athyn College.

After 30 years as Director of the Swedenborg Library, Carroll Odhner has decided to leave that position and focus her many talents on work for which she has a particular passion: Swedenborgiana and New Church reference and research.

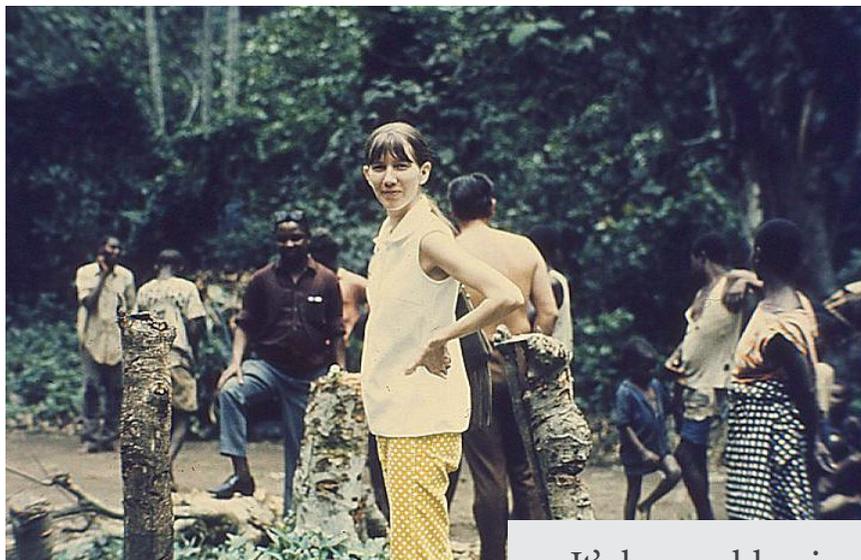
Carroll's full and fascinating career has spanned almost 50 years and is truly global in scope. It has run the gamut from working with Pygmies in Africa to welcoming Swedish royalty; from giving the eulogy for a Catholic nun to raising more than a million dollars for the Swedenborg Library.

After initial plans of becoming a high school history teacher, Carroll's love of books and research eventually propelled her toward a career in library science. She graduated from the University of Michigan with an M.A. in Library Science in 1967, and then began her work career in The Hague, Netherlands, as Head Librarian for the American International School.

She returned to the United States three years later to Newark, New Jersey, as Acquisitions Librarian at the Law School of Rutgers University. While there Carroll also did graduate coursework in the French language, which served her well in subsequent years – particularly so in 1971 when she and her husband, J. Durban Odhner, relocated to Africa.

They spent four years there, during which Carroll held several positions doing library work and library science instruction at the National University of Zaire, and research work at the University of Zambia.

Upon their return to the United States in 1976, and with a growing family, Carroll joined the Academy of the New Church Library as Technical Services Supervisor, Reference and Cataloging Librarian. Ten years later she advanced to the directorship when Mary Alice Carswell retired.



Carroll Odhner in a Mbuti Pygmies camp in Ituri Forest, Democratic Republic of Congo, in 1974.

Carroll also had the opportunity to use her teaching skills during this time by providing instruction in French at the Academy of the New Church Boys School and at Bryn Athyn College.

Much has been accomplished in the Swedenborg Library under Carroll's leadership. The fund raising for, planning and construction of the award-winning library building that we have today is probably her most outstanding achievement, since nothing else would have been possible without that important beginning.

The literal crowning of that effort came in April 1988 when, through much work, diplomacy and planning, Carroll hosted Queen Silvia of Sweden, who made a visit to Bryn Athyn to dedicate the new library.

Among the many projects to improve and expand the library collections and services that Carroll has spearheaded are: implementing an automated library management system; integrating informational literacy into the college core curriculum; increasing vault space for special collections; and adding a branch library in Stockholm, Sweden.

In addition, she has been central to the growth of the Swedenborgiana

It's been a blessing to be able to work in what I consider the most important library in the world – with its precious collection representing the Lord's new dispensation.



Queen Silvia signs the library guestbook as Carroll looks on. (Photo courtesy of *The Globe* newspaper, Montgomery County, Pennsylvania.)



Queen Silvia with Carroll in the Swedenborgiana vault. (Photo courtesy of Svenska Dagbladet, Stockholm, Sweden, April 13, 1988.)

collection by obtaining several original Swedenborg letters and documents. Her efforts on behalf of the library have resulted in numerous grants for digitization and other essential library needs, and the founding of the Friends of the Swedenborg Library (FOSL), which continues to support library programs and uses.

Carroll has also been active in regional librarianship, making presentations and conducting workshops for professional and academic organizations. She served for 10 years as President and in other offices of the Tri-State College Library Cooperative (TCLC), and has remained actively involved in that local consortium.

Carroll continues to be a strong advocate for informational literacy and teaching library research, with the goal of making the Swedenborg Library the hub of Bryn Athyn College academic life. She has been steadfast in her commitment to developing the Swedenborg Library into a full-fledged college library with strong ties to the wider community, and a center of research and scholarship for the New Church worldwide.

We will not be saying *Au revoir* to Carroll, but *Félicitations et bonne chance pour votre nouvelle entreprise!* We are happy and thankful that she will remain

with us as she embarks on the next phase of her career, helping to develop the Swedenborgiana and New Church collections.

Carroll Odhner's Personal Reflections:

When I reflect on my nearly 50 years doing what I love – connecting people with libraries and teaching the life-long skills of information seeking, evaluation and critical thinking – I realize how fortunate I was to find my “calling” so early in life. Even as a child I loved reading and volunteered in local libraries. The smell of old books on the shelves was like the smell of fresh baked bread enticing me to taste what was inside. Sharing this love of books and learning with others and especially to see students light up as they grasped the fundamentals of research was extremely rewarding.

Over the years I've worked in several universities and secondary schools before coming to the Academy Library in 1976. It's been a blessing to be able to work in what I consider the most important library in the world – with its precious collection representing the Lord's new dispensation. In my retirement I will continue on a part-time basis to focus my attention on the development of our unique New Church collections.

In 1986, when I became the Director of the Swedenborg Library, I wrote an article for the *Academy Journal* (1985-1986). I would like to end my thoughts with a quote from this article:

“Our mind, like a library building, houses a collection – a plane of memory knowledges from which we can ‘recollect’ or retrieve that information that can be of use. It is the process of retrieval for use that builds our rational memory – the same process that transforms the static library collection into a vital educational tool. Thus we are building the plane within ourselves from which truths and goods can be brought forth through use to form, page-by-page, our Book of Life – our contribution to the Universal Library.”

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The Sound of Infinity

The Rev. Stephen D. Cole

And thy name shall no more be called Abram; and thy name shall be Abraham, for as the father of a multitude of nations have I given thee. (Genesis 17:5)

The Power of Names

Names in Scripture have power. The name that a person carries gives that person a role to play and a significance that goes beyond this world and the time in which he or she lived. Often the giving of a name, whether at birth or at a renaming, is attended with solemnity and weighted with meaning.

The renaming of Abram and, a few verses later, the renaming of Sarai, represents a change in the role that they will play, or at least a change in their understanding of that role. God had made grand promises to them in the past, but they had been more general and less defined. Now the Lord makes clear that the heirs to the great inheritance that He offers them will be their own lineal descendants, extending through Isaac, the son whose birth He now predicts.

Abram's name change can be understood either in terms of the meanings of the words of which the names are composed or in terms of the change in the sounds of the letters. In both names the first element, "Ab-" ("Ahv-" in the Hebrew) means "father." In the original name "Abram," the second part of the name means "lifted up" or "exalted."

So the name, as a whole, is understood to mean "father of what is high." This literal meaning of the name fits the representation of Abram as he appears in the history recorded in *Genesis*, in that he stands for the Lord. But as the first in the series of patriarchs in the Scripture story, he portrays the states of the Lord in earliest childhood, at the start of the process of glorification.

The renaming of Abram signifies the stage of the Lord's glorification at which He made the highest level in Himself Divine. At this point the focus begins to shift to Isaac, whose life represents the next stage in the Lord's

development, when He made the highest level in Himself Divine.

The second component of the new name is generally supposed to have been taken from the Hebrew word *hamohn* (“multitude”), as language surrounding the renaming implies. So the parts of the new name, taken together, would mean “father of a multitude.” But the Hebrew word for a multitude in the passage is actually “*hamohn*,” with no “r.” Since the new second component of the name replaces the second part of the original name, *ram*, the “r” in the new name, would be unaccounted for.

The explanation that the *Arcana Coelestia* gives of the modification of Abram’s name does not rule out the “father of a multitude” meaning, but it does give a different explanation. The change involves the addition of just one consonant, the “H,” called *He* (pronounced “hay”) in Hebrew. The *Arcana* states:

The name ‘Abram’ was to be so changed in character that the Lord could be represented by it. Therefore the letter H was taken from the name of Jehovah – which letter is the only one in the name ‘Jehovah’ that involves the Divine, and which signifies I AM or BEING – and was inserted in his name, and he was called ‘Abraham.’ (# 2010)

The Divine Name

Understanding the full significance of the foregoing passage requires an appreciation of the nature of the most ancient Divine name. The quotation speaks of “Jehovah,” but the Hebrew for this name in the Bible Swedenborg used as he wrote the *Arcana* (and, for that matter, the Latin of the *Arcana* in which he wrote) would be pronounced “Yehowah.”

However, the original text of the Old Testament had no letters for most vowels, so, at first, only the letters corresponding to Y H W H (Yodh, He, Waw, He) would have been written – the vowels not being indicated until markings reflecting them were added later by the Masoretes. (See *Sacred Scripture 13 and Spiritual Experiences 2414, 5620*)

The four Hebrew letters in the Divine name are sometimes referred to as the “tetragrammaton,” and modern scholars have theorized the name might originally have been pronounced “Yahweh.” One of the reasons for this theory is the relation of the Divine name to the verb “to be” in Hebrew.

The *Arcana* passage mentions that the name means “I AM,” also can be seen when the Lord reveals Himself to Moses from the burning bush. Moses asks: “Behold I come to the sons of Israel, and say to them, The God of your fathers has sent me to you; and they shall say to me, What *is* His name? What shall I say to them?” And God said to Moses: I AM WHO *is* I AM; and He said, Thus shalt thou say to the sons of Israel, I AM has sent me to you.” (Exodus 3:13-14)

The Hebrew for “I AM” here is *Eh-yeh*, with four consonants: *Aleph, He, Yodh, He*. The form for “HE IS” resembles the Divine Name even more closely: *Yih-yeh*, with the four consonants: *Yodh, He, Yodh, He*.

So on the assumption that the Lord’s name was derived from the Hebrew verb “to be” (and based on a few other hints) scholars have concluded that the ancient Israelites would have pronounced the name “Yahweh,” the two syllables of the name corresponding to the two syllables of the eHebrew verb “to be.”

But the Heavenly Doctrine explains that the Lord was known even in the Most Ancient Church as “Jehovah.” (*Arcana Coelestia* 1343, 6846; *Heavenly Doctrine* 247; *Last Judgment* 46:3; *True Christian Religion* 19)

The Hebrew language does, indeed, resemble that of the Most Ancient in some respects, but it would clearly make more sense, especially in light of New Church teachings, to say that the Hebrew verb “to be” is actually derived from the pre-existing Divine name, and not the reverse.

The Meanings of Hebrew Letters

The passage from the *Arcana Coelestia* quoted earlier states that the letter *he* “is the only one” in the name “Jehovah” that involves the Divine. If one ignores the vowel points, which were not written as actual letters in the original language, the two other letters in the name are *yodh* and *waw*. Why would the letter *He* involve the Divine in a way that *yodh* and *waw* would not? An additional clue is given in the discussion, in the *Apocalypse Revealed*, about the spiritual significance of the letters alpha and omega, and their sounds:

On this account, too, Abram was called ‘Abraham,’ and Sarai was called ‘Sarah,’ which was done in order that in heaven by Abraham and Sarah, not they themselves should be understood, but the Divine, which, in fact, is what is understood; for the ‘H’ involves infinity, because it is only breathing. (*Apocalypse Revealed* 38)

So the sound of the letter “H,” or the Hebrew *He*, involves the Divine because it involves infinity. And it involves infinity because it is purely breathing. Why this should reflect infinity becomes more obvious when one considers how the sounds of speech are produced.

In an earlier article on the spiritual meaning of individual letters, *The Sound of Truth* (*New Church Life*, September/October 2012), I noted that the Word sometimes puts creation in terms of the Lord speaking the universe into existence: “By the Word of Jehovah were the heavens made; and by the breath of His mouth all their army.” (*Psalms* 33:6) I also noted the parallel between the Lord putting finite bounds on infinity and the process of articulating breath into vocal sounds.

Most consonants involve the constriction or even the brief but total cutting off of the flow of air from the lungs. The breath is constrained, shaped

and limited to certain forms. The sound of *yodh* is made with the mouth held tight and the tongue pushed up. With the *waw* the interior of the mouth is more open, but the lips are compressed into a small circle.

But the *He* is the sound of the vocal apparatus wide open; it is just the breath itself without limits. So the nature of the sound, and the way that it is produced, reflect the correspondence and meaning of *He*: “infinity.”

Although the sound is not quite identical to the Hebrew, the name of one of the gods of ancient Egypt is quite similar: *Heh*. The hieroglyphic depiction of this god is a figure with upraised arms: This can stand for the number one million, and the god represents infinity and eternity.

Furthermore, although the Heavenly Doctrine never really addresses the origin of the forms of the Hebrew letters, a popular theory is that they take their shapes from certain Egyptian hieroglyphs. According to those who have studied this, an early form of the Hebrew letter *he* is thought to have resembled the Egyptian symbol for someone calling out.

These, obviously, also resemble the hieroglyph for the god *Heh*. When the Greeks borrowed the shape of the letter for their alphabet, they didn't need it for “H” so they used it for a vowel (as the Hebrew had no letters for those). So the Hebrew *He* became the Greek *epsilon* and the Latin (and thus English) “E.” Somewhere along the line the letters were rotated 90 degrees, and if the E is rotated back, **III**, the resemblance to the hieroglyph is even more obvious.



Since the Egyptian hieroglyphics were “nothing else than correspondences” (*True Christian Religion* 201), and “images of natural things that represented spiritual things” (*Arcana Coelestia* 7926), it would stand to reason that these connections and similarities would reflect the ancient knowledge of the science of correspondences.

The open, free, unqualified breath that creates the “H” sound expressed the infinity of the Lord. It occurs twice in the most ancient Divine name, and is the only sound in the name which is wholly Divine. In addition to being added to the names of Abram and Sarai, the *He* is also used as a special pronominal suffix referring to the Lord.

In *Psalms* 132:6, most translations read something like this: “Lo, we heard of it as being in Ephrata; we found it in the field of the wood.” But in the Heavenly Doctrine this passage reads: “Lo we heard of **Him** in Ephrata, we found **Him** in the fields of the forest.” The difference arises from the assumption on the part of the translators that the suffixes on the verbs refer to the ark of the covenant, whereas the *Arcana* explains, “In the original language the pronoun ‘Him’ in ‘we have heard of Him’ and in ‘we have found Him’ is expressed by a letter added to the end of the verb – namely, the letter H, taken from the name Jehovah.” (*Arcana Coelestia* 4594:3)

Another Hebrew word in which the *He* sound figures prominently, and which is recognizable even to many who do not know Hebrew, is “Hallelu-Jah.” This is often translated “Praise the Lord.” The “Jah” part, taken from the name “Jehovah” and ending with a *He*, refers to the Lord. (*Ibid.* 6880) The first part of the compound comes from the Hebrew verb *halal*, which can mean “to praise” or “to celebrate.” This calls to mind the little Egyptian hieroglyph, mentioned above, that stands for someone calling out with arms upraised.

The sound of *He* – the pure, unlimited breath – lies at the heart of the Lord’s name “Jehovah,” which means “He Who is, and Who was, and Who is to come,” which is because “the past and the future in Him are present. Consequently He is eternal independently of time, and infinite independently of place.” (*Apocalypse Revealed* 13:2)

And so the *He* is the sound of the infinite; a fitting sound with which to hail the Lord: “Hallelu-Jah.”



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



Jonathan Hanford Olds: A Legacy for the Future

Judith A. Lopacki

Director of Planned Giving
Academy of the New Church/Bryn Athyn College
General Church of the New Jerusalem

In the fall of 2013, Jonathan Hanford Olds, Academy Class of 1942, received the usual Charter Day mailing. He was living in Florida and had not been to Bryn Athyn since the 50th reunion of his class in 1992.

This gentle reminder of his roots prompted him to call his attorney and cousin, Bob Adams, and ask to have his will rewritten. He wanted to leave an endowed scholarship to the Academy Secondary Schools. We didn't hear anything more until August 2015 when we received an email from Jonathan's nephew, Jonathan Smith of Glenview, telling us that his uncle, Jonathan Olds, had passed into the spiritual world and had left most of his estate to the Academy Secondary Schools.

Jonathan was born on January 22, 1924, in Huntingdon Valley, Pennsylvania, to the late Charles Lewis Olds M.D. and his second wife, Irene Ayres Mansfield Olds. Charles and his first wife, Mary Johnson, a Smith College graduate also educated at Oxford, were both homeopathic physicians who became pioneers in the wilderness of Marco Island, Florida. There they raised three daughters: Saloma, Rosalie and Orida. With Mary's death, Charles returned to the Bryn Athyn area where he married Irene, who gave birth to Joselyn Olds Smith and her brother, Jonathan.



Jonathan, back row, second from right, with the Sigma Delta Pi in 1940.

Jonathan was a quiet, unassuming young man, living with his family in Huntingdon Valley. His father had a large homeopathic medical practice there. Jonathan was a member of Sigma Delta Pi in the Boys School. Since there was no yearbook during the war years, there are no surviving pictures or information on the Class of 1942. There is a picture in the 1940 yearbook. In surveying a number of his classmates, they affirmed that he was very shy and no one I could find had any contact with him after graduation.

We know that Jon joined the Navy just as World War II was heating up. While stationed in Miami, he met his first wife, Mildred Dabney Hudson, and they were married in June 1945. One week later, Jon was transferred to the Navy Yard at Norfolk, Virginia. Then he was transferred to the USS Adonis, a Landing Ship Tank that had been converted to a repair ship, where he remained until the end of the war.

He returned to his new wife in Miami and was hired by Pan Am World Airways. He was also studying at night at the University of Miami. Jon spent 37 enjoyable years with Pan Am, as Chief Project Engineer and Director for new aircraft, as well as Director for Communications.



His wife Mildred died in 1981. A year later, Jon married Frances Agnes Gutman and took early retirement from Pan Am at age 59. They wintered in Key Largo, Florida, and the North Carolina mountains for the summer months until Frances' death in September of 1987.

Experience taught Jon that being around people was the best medicine for grief. He joined a local Fred Astaire ballroom dance studio for lessons where he met his late wife, Eva Milburn, a recent widow, and moved into her home in Horse Shoe Beach, Florida. Jon served as President of the Memories Ballroom Dance Club for nine years, with Eva as secretary, until 2011. They were also

members of the Four Seasons Dance Club and were joyous ballroom dancers as well as superb organizers and hosts.

At age 79, Jon learned to fly a Cessna 172, bought a plane and took great pleasure in his adventures. He was a ham radio operator and took endless delight, as did his father before him, in working in their woods, sawing and chopping logs for the winter fireplace. A kind, active and hardworking man, he engaged in many different types of work on motors and other engineering challenges for 27 happy years before Eva died in March 2015.

Jonathan never had children of his own, but is survived by nephews: Jonathan, Willard and Gilbert Smith of Glenview, Illinois, and Charles Smith of Cherokee Village, Arkansas; also by his second cousin, Martha Olds Adams and her husband, Bob, residents of Hendersonville, North Carolina.

That invitation to Charter Day three years ago reignited the love he felt for the Academy and the time he spent here. Jonathan may have been quiet and unassuming in his younger years, but he blossomed and became very successful as an adult. He left a small fortune to the Academy Secondary Schools to establish the Jonathan H. Olds Memorial Scholarship. This endowed scholarship will continue to support many students and will make an immeasurable difference in their lives.



Thank you, Jonathan. You will be remembered for generations to come.

Contact: Judy.Lopacki@anc-gc.org

Declarations of Faith and Statements of Purpose

Ordinations in Seoul, South Korea – April 30, 2016
The Rt. Rev. Peter M. Buss Jr.



Left to right: Rev. Dong Yong Yang, Rev. John Jin,
Rev. Timothy Zhou, Rt. Rev. Peter M. Buss Jr., Rev Seung Gil Kim

THE REV. TIMOTHY ZHOU (Second Degree)

The Rev. Timothy Zhou is our first General Church priest in China. He and his wife, Lydia, work with 54 students, helping them not only with their education, but also their lodging. Timothy is involved in translating and coordinates two internet groups – one with about 200 younger people with beginning interest conversations arising from New Church teachings, and one with about 20 people who are more committed to seeing the church take hold in China. Timothy was ordained into the second degree of the priesthood.

The Lord Jesus Christ is the only One God of heaven and earth. So He is my all, my God, my King, my Father, my Teacher.

The Lord reveals Himself in His Word, and He took on a human (form) to come into the world to save us. His second coming was accomplished through the Heavenly Doctrine written by His servant Emanuel Swedenborg. Through His Word and the Heavenly Doctrine we can see Him.

Salvation comes from faith in the Lord and living according to His commandments. Love, faith and work must be one; and love is principal and

is all in all.

My vision: Under the Lord's guidance, I hope a New Church school can be built in China through which the children in the poor area can receive good education and the poor people in spirit can hear the Lord's new revelations.

THE REV. SEUNG GIL KIM (Second Degree)

The Rev. Seung Gil Kim is serving as pastor the GangBuk New Church in Seoul, South Korea.

I acknowledge the Lord Jesus Christ to be the one God of heaven and earth.

I acknowledge that the Lord reveals Himself in the Sacred Scriptures and in the Heavenly Doctrine of the New Church.

I acknowledge that salvation comes from believing the Lord, that evils are to be shunned as sins against Him, and that a life of good is to be learned and lived.

My vision: As a minister of the New Church, I will share of the Heavenly Doctrine with my heart and life. Amen

THE REV. DONG YONG YANG (First Degree)

Rev. Dong Yong Yang has been assisting in the Seoul New Church, working with the Rev. Jung who is pastor. He assists with translation and publications. He was inaugurated into the priesthood and ordained into the first degree.)

I acknowledge the Lord Jesus Christ to be the one God of heaven and earth.

I acknowledge that the Lord reveals Himself in the Sacred Scriptures and in the Heavenly Doctrine of the New Church.

I acknowledge that salvation comes from belief in the Lord and the (that) evils are to be shunned as sins against Him and that a life of good is to be learned and lived.

My vision as a minister is to propagate the Sacred Scripture (Word) with relevant readings by translation, writing, publication, education and sermons.

Church News

Compiled by Bruce Henderson

MINISTER MOVES

The Rev. Coleman Glenn has moved to Bryn Athyn for six months to treat a very serious health issue with his wife, **Anne**. Then, due to United States immigration laws (Anne is a Canadian citizen), they will move to Toronto, Canada, where Coleman will assume the role of assistant pastor.

The Rev. Joel Glenn, Coleman's younger brother, who has been serving in Oak Arbor, Michigan, will replace him in Westville, South Africa. **The Rev. Jared Buss**, who has been serving in Toronto, will then replace Joel in Oak Arbor.

The timing for these moves is anticipated to be November. Westville could be without an assistant pastor for six months or longer, so several visiting ministers will help out during that time.

The first of these is the **Rev. Erik Buss**, assistant pastor of the Bryn Athyn Church and former pastor in Westville. He and his wife, **Ann** (Gladish), left for South Africa just after the 19th June for six weeks assisting the **Rev. Malcolm Smith**, the pastor in Westville.

With the **Rev. Ethan McCardell** leaving Seattle, Washington, to take up the pastorate of the Michael Church in London, England, on July 1, the Light for Life Church in Seattle also will be served by visiting ministers until a resident pastor can be placed.

The Rev. Kenneth Alden is moving from pastoral work in Boynton Beach, Florida, into translation work for the General Church. He will begin as consultant to the **Rev. Kurt Nemitz** who is translating the *Index to the Spiritual Experiences* (never before translated into English) before taking up translation on his own. Kenneth and his wife, **Kim** (Truax) will be moving to Bryn Athyn in the near future.

BRYN ATHYN COLLEGE COMMENCEMENT AND AWARDS

Bryn Athyn College of the New Church conferred four Associate in Arts degrees, 25 Bachelor of Arts and eight Bachelor of Science degrees at its 139th

commencement on May 28, 2016. There were no Master of Divinity or Master of Arts in Religious Studies degrees this year.

The graduates represented six countries – Canada, Ghana, Nepal, South Africa, South Korea and the United States – and nine states, including California, Connecticut, Georgia, Indiana, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York and Pennsylvania.

The Commencement Address was delivered by **Amy Buick** (BAC AA degree, 1993). Since this address was written more to be heard than read Amy prefers that it not be published. However, there is a message for the graduates on “Purposefulness” from **Dr. Allen J. Bedford**, Dean of Academics, given at the graduation dinner. (Page 342) Also see photos from the graduation dinner and commencement on pages 387-389, taken by **Serena Sutton**, **Holly Adams** and **Holly Feerrar**. Many more photos are posted on the College’s Facebook page and on its website, www.brynthyn.edu.

Associate in Arts

Samantha Yesenia Calderon, Bloomfield, New Jersey (*With Distinction*)

Chase Edwards, Huntingdon Valley, Pennsylvania

Calisha Francis, Brooklyn, New York

Henry Justin Wadsworth, Marietta, Georgia

Bachelor of Arts (* Indicates *cum laude*)

Steven D. Altman, Strathmore, Canada

Irish Rose Andrews, Philadelphia, PA

Joseph M. Angelucci, Cherry Hill, NJ

Jeffrey Campana, Woodhaven, NY

Joshua A. Cook, Huntingdon Valley, PA

Andrew L. Dexter, Harvard, MA

Sydney D. Elder,* Richmond, IN

Nicholas A. Fetko, Fairfield, CT

Colten D. Harrish,* Edmonton, Alberta

Linnea Heinrichs, Bryn Athyn, PA

Ashley P. Henderson, Hatboro, PA

Stephanie Imperial, Philadelphia, PA

Rebecca Jackson,* Bryn Athyn, PA

Usufu K. Johnson, Philadelphia, PA

Niraj Khatiwada,* Kathmandu, Nepal

Swan Kim,* Gyeonggi-do, South Korea

Quentin B. King, Bryn Athyn, PA

Kelsey M. Kowalick, Harleysville, PA

Graham J. Lermite, Bryn Athyn, PA

Robert M. Moran,* Ambler, PA

Surupsne M. Reyes, Atlantic City, NJ

M. Rogan,* Keansburg, NJ

Mercedes C. Rothwell,* Fullerton, CA

Nicole Smith, Umkomaas, South Africa

Rhady Taveras,* Whitehall, PA

Vyacheslav Tikhonov, Wayne, NJ

John B. Walker Jr., Kempton, PA

Bachelor of Science (* Indicates *cum laude*)

Joel Borketey-Kwaku, Accra, Ghana

Chantal G. Daugherty,* APO AE, USA

Travis D. McCurdy, Bryn Athyn, PA

Cadin McQueen,* Kempton, PA

Joseph J. Kadelock, Philadelphia, PA
Alexus D. Kolb,* Oley, PA

Serra Richie, Aberdeen, MD
Zy’Neka Roberts, Mays Landing, NJ

Colten Harrish was the Valedictorian.

ACADEMIC AWARDS

Theta Alpha Scholarships

Education:

Brittany Gunther (incoming freshman)

Ariel Martin (completed freshman year)

Religion/International:

Leanna Smith (current student)

Bridgett Garrett (South Africa student in MARS program)

Ariel Martin

IAG Scholarships (Presented by **Brian Keister**, Financial Aid Director, and **Dale Smith**, Assistant Financial Aid Director)

Emma Gross

Kattie Cox

Kristina Clark

AICUP-UPS Scholarship (Presented by **Brian Keister**)

Saryluz Ramos

Cole Foundation Human Society

Scholarships and Grants (Presented by **Dr. Gregory Rose**, Chair of the History and Social Science Department)

Scholarships

Luke David

Dan Uber

Grants

Alex Ayers

Michelle Bedford

Christian Blair

Alex Hyatt

Brennen McCurdy

Colonial Williamsburg Teacher Institute Scholarships

(Presented by **Dr. Wendy Closterman**, Dean of Faculty)

Mercedes Rothwell

Lauren O’Conner

Nobre Computer Science Scholarship

(Presented by **Dr. Neil Simonetti**, Chair of the Mathematics and Computer Science Department)

Phoenix Fritch

Bryn Athyn College Alumni Association

Innovation and Leadership Awards (Presented by **David Cooper**, President of the Alumni Association)

Michelle Bedford

Luke Frazier

ATHLETIC AWARDS

Bryn Athyn College had a number of successes this year with six teams making post-season appearances. The men's ice hockey team earned their second straight national division title and their second appearance in the national tournament. Women's basketball and men's lacrosse earned their first ever conference post-season appearances.

Laura Clymer was named Female Scholar Athlete. She is a Biology Major and has achieved Dean's List Honors three times.

Colten Harrish was named Male Scholar Athlete. He is a Business/Psychology ID major and has twice been named to the Dean's List.

The Athletic Department honored 30 student-athletes who have made the Dean's List during the year. The College also recognized 16 student-athletes who received All-Conference Honors.

Kristina Clark was named Female Athlete of the Year. She led the women's basketball team and was the first in Bryn Athyn College history to score 1,000 points in her career.

Travis McCurdy was named Male Athlete of the Year, starring on both the men's hockey and lacrosse teams.

Please go to the College website – www.brynathyn.edu – for more information about individual and team success during the year.

ACADEMY SECONDARY SCHOOLS GRADUATION AND AWARDS

The Academy of the New Church Secondary Schools graduated 53 students on June 11 in Bryn Athyn. This included 26 students from the Girls School (16 with honors) and 27 from the Boys School (five with honors). This year's graduating class represented six states), Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Maryland, Michigan and Pennsylvania), plus four students from China.

The commencement address – *Feeling the Flow of the Lord's Love* – was delivered by the **Rev. J. Clark Echols**. (Page 348)

Many photographs, in addition to those on pages 390-392, have been posted on the Academy Secondary Schools Facebook page and at www.ancss.org, courtesy of **Holly Adams, Jason Buss** and **Joy Feerrar**. There is also a video of the ceremony on the Facebook page.

Graduates of the Girls School (* Indicates With Honors)

Aubrey Asplundh ,* Bryn Athyn, PA	Helena Lippay ,* Jenkintown, PA
Helen Bochneak , Huntingdon Valley, PA	Celeste Lockard , Huntingdon Valley, PA
Olivia Brock , Huntingdon Valley, PA	Kaia Merrell ,* Willow Grove, PA
Hannah Dewees ,* Huntingdon Valley, PA	Pingxu (Sabella) Qin ,* Xi'an, China
Tara Duggan ,* Glenside, PA	Jamie Reynolds , Glenview, IL
Chelsea Duggan ,* Huntingdon Valley, PA	Kyla Rogers , Bryn Athyn, PA
Tykah Echols ,* Huntingdon Valley, PA	Elyssa Rose ,* Huntingdon Valley, PA
Julia Gray ,* Hatboro, PA	Susan Scappatura ,* Clarks Summit, PA
Camille Green ,* Rochester, MI	Ziyue Su ,* Guangzhou, China
Brittany Gunther ,* Huntingdon Vly, PA	Amissah Synnestvedt , Bryn Athyn, PA
Eden Halterman ,* Bryn Athyn, PA	Maya Synnestvedt , Bryn Athyn, PA
Elizabeth Jackson , Bryn Athyn, PA	Chenxi Tang , Shijiazhuang, China
Carina Lindrooth ,* Bryn Athyn, PA	Tyra Walker , Philadelphia, PA

The valedictorian for the Girls School graduates was **Brittany Gunther**.

Theta Alpha gold medals were awarded to:

Tykah Echols and **Eden Halterman**

Honorary Girls School Diplomas were awarded to:

Barbara Jean Duggan and **Traci Gray**

Graduates of the Boys School (* Indicates With Honors)

James Allen , Rydal, PA	Noah Kees , Huntingdon Valley, PA
Carl Asplundh IV , New Hope, PA	Brian McDonald ,* Huntingdon Vly, PA
John Asplundh , Huntingdon Valley, PA	Liam McGrath , Huntingdon Vly, PA
Zachary Brock ,* Huntingdon Valley, PA	Erik Pan ,* Guangzhou, China
Kyle Cole , Mitchellville, MD	Quadir Phillips , Philadelphia, PA
Eric Carr , Huntingdon Valley, PA	Justin Pronesti , Bryn Athyn, PA
Charles Coyle Jr. , Philadelphia, PA	Benjamin Rogers-Petro , Abington, PA
James Earle ,* Delray Beach, FL	Cameron Tealer , New Hope, PA
Angel Gerena , Philadelphia, PA	John (Jake) Thygeson IV , Jenkintown, PA
Frank Goda , Philadelphia, PA	James Vandergrift , Jenkintown, PA
Dustin Gunther , Huntingdon Valley, PA	Thomas Villante , Philadelphia, PA
Austin Hibbs , Philadelphia, PA	Weston Wadsworth ,* Marietta, GA

Adam Holland, Bryn Athyn, PA
Graham Johnson, Russell, PA

Anthony Weizer, Philadelphia, PA

The valedictorian for the Boys School graduates was **Weston Wadsworth**.

A Boys School Gold Faculty Award was presented to **Zachary Brock**.

Honorary Boys School Diplomas were awarded to:

The Rev. Christopher A. Barber
Dr. Saul Fisher

ACADEMIC AWARDS:

Academic Excellence Award: **Westley Wedell**

Emilie K. Asplundh Performing Arts Award: **Teryn Rose**

Theta Alpha International Essay Winners

First Place: **Waverly Wadsworth**, for *Treading Lightly*

Second Place: **Ava Elder**, for *Finding Hope*

Third Place: **Victoria Kline**, for *The Wonderful Experience of Failure*

Bryn Athyn College Academic Achievement Award

Zachary Brock
Brittany Gunther
Tykah Echols

Theta Alpha Scholarship to Bryn Athyn College

Brittany Gunther

Academy teams had a number of successes this year:

- The girls' field hockey team won the Friends Schools League championship for the fourth year in a row.
- The boys' lacrosse team won its third consecutive Friends Schools League championship.
- The boys' ice hockey team repeated as league champions
- The wrestling team also won a Friends Schools League Championship.
- And the girls' softball team played for the league championship for the first time in school history, losing a close game to an undefeated Friends Select team.



ATHLETIC AWARDS:

Winners of the major athletic awards, left to right: Jamie Reynolds, Girls School Sportsmanship Award; Kyla Rogers and Chelsea Duggan, Outstanding Female Athletes; Zach Brock, Stanley F. Ebert Award; Tom Villente, Payson Lyman Award.

Here are the major individual athletic awards:

Girls School

Sportsmanship Award: **Jamie Reynolds**

Outstanding Female Athletes **Kyla Rogers and Chelsea Duggan**

Note: This was the second straight year that Kyla was named Outstanding Athlete for the Girls School. She and Chelsea had the unique distinction of playing on championship field hockey teams for all four of their years in the Girls School.

Boys School

Payson W. Lyman Award (for Charity and Dedication): **Tom Villante**

Stanley F. Ebert Award (for Courage, Integrity, Perseverance, Sportsmanship and Scholarship): **Zachary Brock**

Note: On the boys' championship lacrosse team, **Eric Carr** and **James Vandergrift** were named to the All State team, and James was the first-ever Academy student named All American.

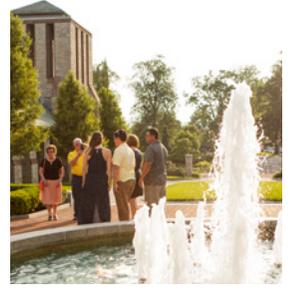
BRYN ATHYN COLLEGE GRADUATION DINNER



The Graduation Dinner



The King family



Meeting at the fountain



Graham Lermite and
Steven Altman



Photos with the mascot



Wendy Closterman

GRADUATING CLASS OF 2016





Associate in Arts graduates Chase Edwards, Calisha Francis, Samantha Yesenia Calderon, and Henry Justin Wadsworth



Cadin McQueen with fellow graduates



Procession through the campus



The graduation ceremony in the Asplundh Field House



Joshua Cook



Amy Buick giving the Commencement Address



Linnea Heinrichs and her family - parents Rev. Bradley and Catherine, Reyana (14), Denali (17), Joram (16), Deacon (20), and Calvin (19)



Quentin King with his mother, Jill



Stephanie Imperial with family and friends



Ashley Henderson with Taylor, her younger sister



Travis McCurdy with his family: Shane, Linda (mom), Brent (dad), Nicole, and Blake



Jeffrey Campana and Allen Bedford



Seniors singing their class song, "Leaving on a Jet Plane" by John Denver



Aubrey Asplundh and Camille Green



Clark Echols speaks to the graduates



Eric Carr



Liam McGrath



Kyla Rogers gives dad a sweet smile as she processes past.



James Allen



Helena Lippy



Chelsea Duggan



Chenxi Tang and Gail "Magistra" Cooper



Twins Amissh and Maya Synnstedt have different opinions on smoking cigars.



Tyra Walker and her family.



Benjamin Rogers-Petro, Noah Kees, and Dustin Gunther



Adam Holland with his parents, Tom and Sherry



Jamie Earle with his family: Rob (Dad), Kris (Mom), Beth, and Colin.



Tykah Echols and her extended family



Rebecca Jackson with her family. From left to right: Sarah (Sister, 19), Benjamin (Brother, 10), Greg (Dad), Thomas (Brother, 16), Daniel (Brother, 13), Alison (Mom), Elizabeth (Graduate, 18), Rebecca (Sister, 22), Luke Synnestevedt (Rebecca's husband, 23). Luke and Rebecca were married June 24, 2016 in the Bryn Athyn Cathedral.



Hannah Dewees and her family, Teagan (Brother, 16), Niles (Dad), Nina (Mom), Hannah, and Kevyn (Sister, 16)



Carina Lindrooth and her family. From left to right: Aven (Mom), Erik (Brother, 16), James (Brother, 23), Carina, Kerstin (Sister, 24), Daniel (Brother, 16), David (Dad)

GENERAL CHURCH BOARD OF DIRECTORS

At the spring meetings of the General Church Board of Directors, May 13-14 in Bryn Athyn, the operating budget was approved with a small surplus.

Executive Bishop Brian Keith reviewed progress on strategic planning since the last meeting, with work on desired outcomes and proposed tracking to be presented at the September meeting. He also discussed specific projects, such as youth participation and engagement of women in church uses.

Bishop Peter Buss Jr. led continuing discussions about the best ways to support growth of the Church in West Africa. He gave an update of the women's participation task force. General Church Education has refreshed its website to collect information into one easily searchable database. Staff seminars are being proposed for schools throughout the Church. Senior teachers, religion teachers and administrators gathered recently to revise the religion and health curriculums.

The Theological School reports a balanced budget thanks to donations to endowment and two new admissions next year.

The Investment Committee reported that results for the New Church Investment Fund have missed targets for the quarter, 1-year, 3-year and 5-year periods, that total portfolio performance is down 4.1% this year, and that strategies and the relationship with the investment firm overseeing the fund will be re-examined.

At the annual meeting of the General Church Corporation on May 14, **Beth Brock, Kirk Hasen and David Radcliffe** were newly elected to three-year terms on the General Church Board of Directors. Incumbents re-elected were **Andrew Bruell, Robert Dike, Darryl Hasen, Blake Hill, Lee Horigan, Brent Hyatt, Daniel Martz and David Norman**. Leaving the Board, and thanked for their service over three terms, were **Charles Ebert and Dain Kistner**.

ACADEMY BOARD OF TRUSTEES

The Board voted to have Glencairn Museum report directly to the Board, which increases its status and will involve the Board more directly in its use. The Museum is reporting a record number of visitors. It anticipates a financial surplus which will be invested for future building repairs. New relationships are being forged with other museums and researchers around the world.

The budget for Bryn Athyn College was approved with a \$1.58 million deficit, which will be reviewed over the summer. The Academy Secondary

Schools budget was approved with a \$75,000 deficit – close to balanced – and the capital budget also was approved.

Bryn Athyn College reported that enrollment for next year is projected to be 310, and new dormitories will be completed shortly.

The education major has been enhanced with state certification expected by the end of the school year, an expanded curriculum has been approved for early childhood and special education courses, and planning is underway for a graduate program.

A new program has been approved for next year for a data sciences minor, which will train students in mastering large data sets. This is becoming a highly desired skill.

The Office of Advancement is reporting significant contributions this year, with more than \$11 million targeted for infrastructure.

A new television system has been installed in the Pendleton Hall auditorium which allows for live streaming for speakers and events.

The Academy Secondary Schools project an enrollment of 230 next year. Positive results have been achieved with fund raising. A strategic planning committee has been formed, with Board members, faculty and parents. An online religion course will be offered this summer.

Cairnwood Estate anticipates a financial loss this year with the new policy of renting for receptions only resulting in fewer bookings. The business model is being adjusted to allow for this.

The Investment Committee noted that investments in the New Church Investment Fund are not meeting targets and that the managing relationship needs to be reviewed.

College Alumni Association: At the annual meeting of the Bryn Athyn College Alumni Association on May 11 **Chara C. Daum** and **Laura Nash** were elected to fill vacant seats on the Board of Directors.

Chara graduated from the College in 1982 with a BA in Religion. She works on the Swedenborg Foundation's New Century Edition translation project and is active in the alumni community.

Laura earned her BSW from West Chester State College and MSW from Temple University after taking classes at Bryn Athyn College. She has worked at the College since 2008 and until recently served as liaison to the Alumni Association.

Board Elections: **Lael Odhner** resigned from the Board in February to devote more time to his start-up business. At the May meeting of the Academy Corporation **Brian Klippenstein** was elected to complete an unexpired term on the Board. Re-elected to three-year terms were **Erin Busby**, **Eileen Glenn** and **Norman Norton**. Already serving unexpired terms and elected to three-year terms were **Brent McCurdy**, **Ronald McQueen** and **Isaac Smith**.

Duane Hyatt was approved for another three-year term as Treasurer.

Susan Asplundh was appointed chair of the Nominating Committee and **Isaac Smith** as vice chair.

Charles M. Cole continues as Vice Chair of the Board and **Joseph D. Seckelman** is Secretary.

CHARTER DAY 2016

This year's Charter Day celebration for the Academy of the New Church extends from Thursday, October 13 through Monday the 17th.

The Rev. Stephen D. Cole, teacher of religion and theology at Bryn Athyn College and its Theological School, will give the Cathedral address on Friday morning.

The banquet program on Saturday evening will feature a special program by the Secondary Schools.

Among a range of events – from class reunions to sporting events – will be:

- Bryn Athyn College Rocks Concerts to benefit the Sherri Rumer Cooper Research Fund (9 p.m. Friday, 10 p.m. Saturday, and 3 p.m. Sunday)
- The return of the popular Chili Cook-off and Carnival on Saturday
- The traditional Deka Tea on Sunday
- Secondary Schools and College tours Saturday morning
- The annual Bob Eidse Run on Saturday morning
- Mix & Mingle after the banquet
- Sporting events, from field hockey under the lights on Thursday to the annual Student Scholarship Golf Outing on Monday

Watch for a mailing with further information. Or you may contact **Ali Childs** in the Office of Advancement: 267-502-4931 or Ali.Childs@anc-gc.org

CATHEDRAL AWARD

Terry Schnarr, Principal Organist

The façade of the Chara Aurora Cooper Haas pipe organ in the Bryn Athyn Cathedral has received a Special Palladio Award for Craftsmanship. This is a national award honoring outstanding achievements in traditional design. The program recognizes both individual designers and design teams whose work enhances the beauty and human qualities of the built environment. Historic Doors (of Kempton, Pennsylvania) is the 2016 recipient of this award.



The prize-winning façade for the Bryn Athyn Cathedral pipe organ

Thanks to **Fred Haas**, the Cathedral Directors, and Gurney-Kerr Contractors for helping to bring this project to fruition. Our warmest congratulations go to **Steve Hendricks** and Historic Doors LLC, and the team of people who made this project a success.

SWEDENBORG AND THE ARTS

A first-ever academic conference on Emanuel Swedenborg and his impact on the visual and literary arts is planned for June 6-9, 2017, on the campus of Bryn Athyn College.

The Swedenborg Foundation, one of the sponsors, says: “The conference will go beyond questions of historical influence to examine how artists across many disciplines – from visual arts, such as painting and sculpture, to literature, music and beyond – translated Swedenborg’s theological vision into aesthetic presentation. What are the similarities and differences in the ways that artists like William Blake, Honoré de Balzac, George Inness, Czeslaw Milosz and Jorge Luis Borges responded to Swedenborg’s thought? And what does Swedenborg’s impact on the arts suggest about the broader relationship between religion, science and the aesthetic?”

The conference will include three plenary speakers:

- **Wouter Hanegraaff**, professor of the history of Hermetic philosophy at the University of Amsterdam
- **Linda Dalrymple Henderson**, professor of art history at the University of Texas at Austin
- **Massimo Introvigne**, founder and director of the Center for Studies on New Religions (CENSUR)

Potential presenters are asked to submit:

- Paper title
- Abstract of the proposed paper (no more than 400 words)
- Short paragraph detailing the presenter’s professional CV

Submissions should be sent no later than September 30, 2016, to swedenborgconference@gmail.com.

Co-sponsoring the event are Bryn Athyn College, the Center for Swedenborgian Studies, CENSUR, Glencairn Museum, the Swedenborg

Foundation, and The Swedenborg Society, London.

Organizing the event are:

Massimo Introvigne, CENSUR

Jane Williams-Hogan, professor of Social Science at Bryn Athyn College

Devin Zuber, assistant professor of American Studies, literature and Swedenborgian Studies at the Graduate Theological Union

For further information visit <http://tinyurl.com/swedarts>.

Life Lines

17-INCH DOCTRINE

Back when we began sacrificing our standards at the altar of self-esteem, a nationally syndicated cartoon captured the madness. It showed a young boy standing against a growth chart – showing that he was 8 feet tall. A school nurse, labeled “Educational Standards,” explains to the boy’s Mom: “He stopped growing a couple of years ago. We keep lowering the measurement so his feelings won’t be hurt.”

Alarm over this trend was echoed by a legendary baseball coach who showed up as a keynote speaker at a national convention of coaches, with a white home plate hanging from his neck.

His audience knew he was an irascible eccentric and figured he was up to something. Finally he said: “You’re probably wondering why I’m wearing home plate around my neck. I may be old, but I’m not crazy. The reason I stand before you today is to share with you baseball people what I’ve learned in my life, what I’ve learned about home plate in my 78 years.”

He began asking coaches in turn – Little League, Babe Ruth, high school, college, minor league, major league: “How wide is home plate?”

They still couldn’t figure out where he was going with this but repeated the same answer: “17 inches.”

“So what do they do,” he asked, “with a Big League pitcher who can’t throw the ball over 17 inches? They send him to Pocatello!”

Then he asked the coaches: “What do we do when our best player shows up late to practice? When our team rules forbid facial hair and a guy shows up unshaven? What if he gets caught drinking? Do we hold him accountable? Or do we change the rules to fit him? Do we widen home plate?”

On the home plate hanging from his neck he quickly sketched a house and said: “This is the problem in our homes today. With our marriages, with the way we parent our kids. With our discipline. We don’t teach accountability to our kids and there is no consequence for failing to meet standards. We widen the plate!”

Same thing with the schools: “The quality of our education is going downhill fast and teachers have been stripped of the tools they need to be successful, and to educate and discipline our young people. We are allowing

others to widen home plate. Where is that getting us?"

"If I am lucky," he concluded, "you will remember one thing from this old coach today. It is this: If we fail to hold ourselves to a higher standard of what we know to be right; if we fail to hold our spouses and our children to the same standard; if we are unwilling or unable to provide a consequence when they do not meet the standard; and if our schools and churches and our government fail to hold themselves accountable to those they serve; there is but one thing to look forward to" – turning that white home plate around to reveal a black side – "dark days ahead."

His message about holding ourselves to a 17-inch standard also applies to the doctrines that guide our lives. The Ten Commandments are the primary example of the "17-inch" rule. There is no wiggle room. We cannot just "widen" any one of them to suit our own desires without weakening the standard and the expectation.

And so it is with all of the teachings of the Heavenly Doctrine. Much as we may be tempted at times to bend them to fit what we might want them to say, they say what they mean. Always. They can be accommodated to different levels of understanding but never compromised. And they are always backed up with the Lord's love and mercy. Whenever we "widen the plate," we not only weaken the doctrine. We weaken ourselves.

(BMH)

'AS IN HEAVEN SO UPON THE EARTH'

Heaven is beautiful and peaceful. The angels live together in harmony and happiness. So we pray, as the Lord has taught us: "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, as in heaven so upon the earth."

Only the Lord can transform the world so completely, but He does it through us. Changing the world means changing the people who inhabit it. The Lord is not like a dictator who would impose a new order upon the world by force from without. His kingdom comes from within. It is a kingdom of love; and love must be embraced freely.

"Thy kingdom come" is joined with "Thy will be done." But we cannot do *His* will until the things in our own will that stand in the way are removed. We cannot worship God and mammon at the same time. So we also pray that the Lord will "deliver us from evil." It is something only He can do, if we let Him.

Heaven can come down to earth. This is the promise of the New Jerusalem. It will happen only gradually, though, as one by one, people are regenerated. Heaven on earth is not achieved by means of a tower of Babel built by worldly ambition, but by opening our hearts and minds to the Lord through prayer, repentance, reformation and regeneration. A Church constituted of people

engaged in this spiritual work will be an outpost of heaven in the world.

Our contribution to the process of changing the world, therefore, is to bring the high ideals and shining principles of truth which constitute heaven down into our daily thoughts, words and acts. And that work begins with repentance, by means of which the Lord delivers us from evil.

As more and more people – in their individual lives and in that little part of the world over which they have some control – are drawn out of the influence of hell and come under the influence of heaven, the Lord’s kingdom will come, “as in heaven so upon the earth.”

(WEO)

VALUING EVERYONE’S CONTRIBUTION TO THE SPHERE OF WORSHIP

What is the sphere of worship and how is it formed? The Lord said that where two or three are gathered together in His name, He is in the midst of them. “His name” means the qualities He represents: goodness and truth, humility and trust, love and peace. A sphere of worship goes forth from all who have love to the Lord in their hearts, and light from His Word in their minds.

When I go into the Cathedral on Sunday mornings, I don’t know exactly who is contributing to the sphere of worship that day, or what exactly they are contributing, or how strong their contribution is on that particular day, but I feel that everyone contributes something. The people who maintain the beautiful gardens you walk through as you approach the building, the person who greets you at the front door, the preacher, musicians, chancel girls, ushers, those who serve refreshments, and those in the pews who say the prayers and the recitation and sing the hymns . . . they all contribute to the sphere of worship.

It’s probably best if we don’t think too much about the fact that we are contributing something, and aren’t especially conscious of what we might be contributing – much less what someone else is or is not contributing. A sphere of worship is a quiet, subtle thing; just listening, affirmatively and gratefully, contributes to it.

A sphere of worship is a treasure the Lord brings forth from the hearts of those who unite in worship of Him. It is really His contribution.

(WEO)

BIRTH PANGS

The process of being born is traumatic for the baby, who comes into the world bawling and with his fists clenched. The mother’s labor is also difficult and painful. But then the newborn babe is carefully wrapped and placed upon the

mother's breast and both of them settle into a celestial state of peace.

Our spiritual rebirth is also traumatic. The Church is our spiritual mother, and the "six days of labor," that is, the stages the Church in us goes through in the process of bringing forth a new angel for heaven, are not easy. But they end in a Sabbath of peace.

"A woman when she brings forth has sorrow, because her hour has come: but when the child is born, she remembers no more the affliction, for joy that a man is born into the world." (*John 16:21*)

In the course of our life in this world, moments of intense difficulty and pain may cause us to despair and rage against God or question the existence of God. But these are just moments, especially in comparison with eternity, and in the next life will soon be forgotten.

Even in this world they become increasingly distant memories as our minds are more and more occupied by heaven.

"And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying; and there shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away." (*Revelation 21:4*)

(WEO)

'THE LORD GOD MADE THEM ALL'

One of the most fascinating books I've read lately is *A Short History of Nearly Everything* by Bill Bryson. It is a grand attempt to probe the mysteries and marvels of creation – from the enormity of the universe to the infinitesimal atom.

Bryson explores the breadth of science in a readable, informative, entertaining style, such as: how we know how old the earth is and what it weighs; how many factors combine in our solar system to make life on earth possible; how we know more about outer space than what is in the depths of the ocean; and the incredible combination of trillions of particles that make us who we are.

But it is important to note what kind of a book this is, and what it is not. In its 478 pages God is mentioned only once or twice, and just in passing. God does not appear in the extensive Index. Neither, needless to say, does Emanuel Swedenborg, who might have helped fill in some answers. This is just a book about science.

Of course, God's role in all this is absolute but that is a different book, waiting to be written. We can fill in for ourselves how God is the source and sustainer of every aspect of creation: "The universe is like a stage on which we are continually being exhibited evidences that there is a God." – *True Christianity* 12

Bryson points out, for example, that the human body is made up of trillions of atoms and that when we die those atoms “just go off to be other things.” True enough. But science cannot explain the soul, which has no atoms and moves on to a spiritual, eternal and indestructible plane.

Within all the fascinating discoveries of science – and we still have so much more to learn – what we really are seeing is the breathtaking intricacy, efficiency and order of God’s creation.

Start with the almost unfathomable extent of the universe – at least the little we know of it – and the equally unfathomable protons, the building block of everything in the universe. (Just try this for perspective: there are approximately 500 billion protons in the space of the period at the end of this sentence.)

What Bryson calls the “visible universe” – all that we can detect with our most sophisticated telescopes and educated guesses – is a million-million-million-million miles across. The number of light years to the edge of the larger unseen universe is written not with tens of zeroes but millions. The average distance between the stars we see is 20 million-million miles. And nobody knows how many stars are in just our Milky Way; it is estimated between 100 billion and 400 billion. And the Milky Way is just one of 140 billion or so other galaxies. This is all part of God’s natural kingdom.

Now shift the perspective from the telescope to the microscope. Bryson writes: “It starts with a single cell. The first cell splits to become two and the two become four and so on. After just 47 doublings, you have ten thousand trillion cells in your body and are ready to spring forth as a human being.”

When you look in the mirror you are seeing trillions of cells, all arranged into you: each with a specific job to do, each carrying your complete genetic code, and each constantly being used up and replaced. “Every cell in nature,” he says, “is a thing of wonder. Even the simplest are beyond the limits of human ingenuity.”

This is mind boggling enough, but every cell contains an estimated 100 million protein molecules – the driving force behind our natural lives.

Bryson says, “Such a staggering figure gives some idea of the swarming immensity of biochemical activity within us. And “never forget,” he says, that “every living thing is a wonder of atomic engineering.”

But it is all so much more than physics and engineering. The more we learn and understand about the symbiotic order of creation, the harder it is for science “purists” to deny God and ascribe all this wonder upon wonder to random serendipity.

The real wonder of it all is that everything in nature – everything – no matter how impossibly large or unbelievably small, was created by God for use. (“What is marvelous is that every individual thing, even to the most minute, is

adapted for use. – *Apocalypse Explained* 1191:2) And the more we learn from God about creation, the more clearly we understand that it is not a one-time event but an ongoing process. As the familiar hymn puts it: “Amid all change, One changing not, yet making all things new.”

And that, in fact, Bill Bryson, is “the short history of nearly everything.”
(BMH)

THE MISSING LINK

Part of Bill Bryson’s sweeping study of creation is devoted to evolution and the quest to confirm that we are indeed descendants of chimpanzees. Much as many an anthropologist is convinced of the progression, no one has been able to bridge “the missing link” and prove a direct connection.

Bryson quotes Ian Tattersall, Curator of Anthropology at the American Museum of Natural History in New York City: “One of the hardest ideas for humans to accept is that we are not the culmination of anything. There is nothing inevitable about our being here. It is part of our vanity as humans that we tend to think of evolution as a process, in effect, that was programmed to produce us.”

Bryson adds: “Indeed, as recently as 1991, in the popular textbook *The Stages of Evolution*, C. Loring Brace stuck doggedly to the linear concept, acknowledging just one evolutionary dead end, the robust australopithecines. [These were ancient primates who left traces in volcanic ash discovered by Mary Leakey in Tanzania in 1976.] Everything else represented a straightforward progression – each species of hominid carrying the baton of development so far, then handing it on to a younger, fresher runner. Now, however, it seems certain that many of these early forms followed side trails that didn’t come to anything.”

The real “missing link,” of course, is not only understanding the creation of human beings but the one unique reason for mankind’s creation by God: a heaven from the human race.

(BMH)

‘FORGET NOT ALL HIS BENEFITS’

Bryson ends his book with a mix of optimism and concern. “We have been chosen,” he writes, “by fate or Providence or whatever you may wish to call it. As far as we can tell, we are the best there is. We may be all there is. It’s an unnerving thought that we may be the living universe’s supreme achievement and its worst nightmare simultaneously.”

We see the “supreme achievements” in science and medicine, technology and invention. The nightmares play out in self-love and wanton inhumanity,

degradation of our environment, and the obliteration of whole species of animal and biological life.

“If this book has a lesson,” Bryson writes, “it is that we are awfully lucky to be here – and by ‘we’ I mean every living thing. To attain any kind of life in this universe of ours appears to be quite an achievement. As humans, we are doubly lucky, of course: We enjoy not only the privilege of existence but also the singular ability to appreciate it and even, in a multitude of ways, to make it better. It is a talent we have only barely begun to grasp.”

To put all of this in perspective, he notes that “we have existed for only about 0.0001 percent of Earth’s history. But surviving for even that little while has required a nearly endless string of good fortune.”

Well, that “other book” still waiting to be written on the spiritual nature of creation would point out that God’s role has been omniscient and that luck has nothing to do with it. It is God’s love, His mercy and His providence that put us here on earth – to love God, to love our neighbors, to be useful, to be good stewards of all we have been blessed with, and to reach always for heaven in the way we live our lives.

Don’t thank luck or good fortune but: “Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me bless His holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits.” (*Psalms* 103:1,2)

(BMH)

THE BILLBOARD

Driving down I-95 on the way into Philadelphia from Bryn Athyn you see a billboard advertising Bryn Athyn College. Pictured on it are two impressive buildings which have drawn many thousands of visitors to Bryn Athyn: the Cathedral and Glencairn.

These two structures were not built to impress the world, but to represent the distinctive teachings of the New Church which make it different and set it apart from the world. But the very fact that they were built for that purpose is why they now serve so well to represent the Church to potential newcomers.

The phrase “unintended consequence” is usually used in a negative sense, but here we have an example of a good unintended consequence.

As the billboard illustrates, the way to attract new people is not to pretend to be like everyone else, but to let them see how extraordinary the New Church is. The beauty of the Church that serves to attract people from without, comes from within; from the profound truths of its doctrines and our love of them.

It is our College’s affiliation with the New Church that sets it apart and makes it special. Apart from that it would be just another small college, but because of its New Churchness it has something unique and immensely

valuable, and beautiful, to offer the world.

The Church affiliation will deter some from attending, but it is by far the most important reason why others do choose to attend. The “of the New Church” part of the College’s name is of crucial importance.

(WEO)

TEACH THE CHILDREN!

What can we do to reverse the trend and bring more young adults into the Church? Start early! Lay the groundwork in childhood for a life of religion that will last into adulthood.

“Take heed . . . lest you forget the things your eyes have seen, and lest they depart from your heart all the days of your life. And teach them to your children and your grandchildren. (*Deuteronomy 4:9*)

In the current *Theta Alpha Journal*, Sarah Bruell Odhner goes right to the heart of the matter in an article on how important it is for parents and teachers to *talk to children* about their religion, and *set an example* by practicing it.

Quoting a famous sociologist, Mrs. Odhner notes that the transfer of religion from one generation to another “hangs on the thin thread of conversation” between parent and child, teacher and student. “When conversations are few and far between this thread is weak,” she writes, “but when woven into the fabric of daily life it becomes strong enough to survive the challenges of adulthood. . . . The more central religion is in the family, the more central it becomes in a child’s worldview.”

From the beginning, General Church women have “felt a strong call to the useful service of nurturing children and their parents, and encouraging children to develop a relationship with the Word.” This led to the writing and publication of the General Church Religion Lessons.

Extensive surveys have revealed that 67 percent of children who completed the lessons joined the General Church as adults. And parents comment on how much they and their children loved the time they spent together on the lessons. The only other factor that produced a similarly high success rate was attending Bryn Athyn College of the New Church.

For younger children, conversations with their parents are most important; during adolescence, conversations with others outside the family are especially helpful. So a Church community and friendships within the Church are also important.

“Women are natural experts on raising children,” Mrs. Odhner observes. “Under the flag of Theta Alpha, the women of the General Church used their expertise to support parents, especially mothers, in passing New Church ideas from one generation to another.”

Among the resources she recommends are YouTube videos, Jacob's Ladder lessons and Youth Journey programs. See *education.newchurch.org* for more information. Also, Mrs. Odhner's address will be reprinted in the September/October issue of *New Church Life*.

(WEO)

BRYN ATHYN CHURCH ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

It was "Colonial Day" at the Bryn Athyn Church Elementary School, and parents and grandparents were strolling about and watching their little Colonial bakers, woodworkers, pharmacists and others demonstrate (with wonderful enthusiasm!) how things were done in the 18th century. The visitors were delighted, and much praise and thankfulness for the school was heard.

On the way out we got into a conversation with the mother of four children in the school. She had taught in a public school for several years before the family moved to Bryn Athyn, and spoke of how different the atmosphere in the Church school was. "It's like night and day," she said. Among other things, she noted a poster displaying the Ten Commandments in the hallway of the Church school, exclaiming: "This isn't usual, you know!"

Later on I thought about the public elementary school I attended in the early 1950s in Missouri, and how nice it was. I remember a thousand details, and feel much nostalgia for that place. I also remember the kindergarten our children attended in Michigan in the 1970s, before we opened the Church school there. It was also an innocent, peaceful, happy place. The atmosphere at both those public schools was quite similar to the one at the Bryn Athyn Church School today.

But how things have changed in the public schools! The children are still innocent, and dedicated teachers do their best, heroically, in an increasingly difficult environment, but the public schools can't help but be more affected by the decline in the surrounding culture than religious schools are (although even they are not unaffected).

If anyone ever wonders what our little Church is accomplishing in the world, just look at our schools – they make a world of difference in the lives of the children who attend them, few in number though they may be. Our schools are not perfect and face many challenges, but they are bright spots in a world that needs all the bright spots it can get.

(WEO)

THE ARMAGEDDON CODE: APOCALYPSE EXPLAINED

In the early 17th century the brilliant physicist Isaac Newton devoted much of his life – beyond his laboratories – trying to decipher the mysteries of the

Bible. He was particularly disappointed with his contemporaries' theories and interpretations of the *Book of Revelation*. There had to be more.

In the Preface to *Apocalypse Revealed*, published in 1766, Emanuel Swedenborg acknowledged such frustration and offered a whole new insight:

“Many people have toiled at an explanation of the *Book of Revelation*, but since the spiritual meaning of the Word has been previously unknown, they have been unable to see the arcana that lie hidden within it. For only the spiritual meaning discloses these. Expositors have therefore produced various conjectures, and most have applied the contents there to circumstances of empires, mixing in as well some observations regarding matters affecting the church.”

He adds that this final book of the Word, filled with apocalyptic symbols and cataclysmic forecasts, “cannot possibly be explained except by the Lord alone, for every single word in it contains arcana which would never be known without a singular enlightenment and this revelation.”

We are blessed to have this enlightenment and revelation from the Lord about the Last Judgment, the Second Coming, and the birth of the New Church. Much of the rest of the world still is back with Newton, struggling to find meaning in it all.

With just the literal sense to guide them it is no wonder, as Swedenborg writes, that “Few nowadays know what the Last Judgment is. They imagine that it is going to be accompanied by the destruction of the world; and this leads to conjecture that then the dead will rise up again and appear for judgment, and the evil are to be cast into hell, and the good rise up to heaven.” (*Arcana Coelestia* 2117)

Those working with just the enigma of the literal sense of *Revelation* are doomed in their efforts to find true spiritual meaning without real revelation to guide them, but you have to admire their persistence in searching for answers. The latest is a book by Billy Hallowell, *The Armageddon Code: One Journalist's Quest for End-Times Answers*.

In a sincere and scholarly attempt to find those answers he interviewed many theologians – but obviously no New Church ministers. He acknowledges that whatever it all means it is scary but we have to hope for the eventual “Rapture” – the Second Coming of Christ.

A Christian reporter notes that people of good will may have many different ideas about what it all means: “I think for me, it's the understanding that we won't know every detail. We can always agree with Jesus coming back, but we won't know every detail. The gaps will be filled in later on when it happens and we'll understand it better when we can look back at it.”

How blessed we are to have been given the gift of the new revelation, to know that the Last Judgment and the Second Coming already have occurred,

and that the fallout is still playing out all around us.

We know that this was a judgment not of “the souls under the altar,” but on the state of the church and the faith within each of us.

We know that the “End Times” are not “Armageddon” but the Holy City New Jerusalem descending from God out of heaven – a time of great hope and promise.

We know that the Second Coming was not another personal visitation but a spiritual presence, and that it was not a one-time event on June 19, 1770, but is ongoing. “The Lord’s coming does not consist, as the letter has it, in His appearing once again in the world, but in His presence within everyone.” (*Arcana Coelestia* 3900:9)

But all of this is not meant to be our little secret. We are all tasked with the Great Commission to share the good news – to go forth and “teach all nations.” (BMH)

A BRIDGE TO THE ARCANA

How many of us have felt overwhelmed and frustrated launching into a study of *Arcana Coelestia*, either as part of a class or as a personal commitment? It is a daunting prospect – even for a theologian.

The temptation is to ask, somewhat facetiously, “Where’s the *Cliff Notes* version? There’s got to be an easier way to do this.”

Now there is. The Rt. Rev. Peter M. Buss Sr. has a review on page 363 of a new abridgment of the *Arcana* by a supremely dedicated South African New Churchman, Dr. Willard Mansfield.

During a long, successful career in industry and academia – all the while completely devoted to the Church – Dr. Mansfield was saddened by the realization that many people were missing the wonders of what is revealed in the *Arcana*, mainly because they find those 12 volumes just too daunting to tackle. So he devoted the past 15 years to careful study, producing an abridged version which Bishop Buss calls truly “a remarkable gift to the Church.”

Dr. Mansfield was extremely conscientious in preserving the internal sense, while cutting out some of the redundancy and distracting material. The result promises to be a “cleaner” read – not compromising the revelation given to us through Emanuel Swedenborg but adapting it to our understanding.

As Bishop Buss notes, ministers “abridge” the Writings all the time in sermons and classes to accommodate to our understanding, and this is what Dr. Mansfield has done on a grander scale.

This abridgment has enormous potential to be useful to church members who have shied away from plunging into the *Arcana*, and as an easier introductory work for newcomers. It should not replace the traditional

translations or the *New Century Edition*, but truly be a bridge to them. Indeed it is “a remarkable gift.”

(BMH)

BAD WORDS BREED BAD THOUGHTS

One of the remarkable features of contemporary life is how common and accepted foul language has become. We’re not talking about an occasional curse when someone drops an anvil on his foot, but the constant use of obscenities as all-purpose adjectives and fillers in ordinary conversation with no awareness that others might find this kind of talk disturbing.

People do this thoughtlessly, usually without any malicious intent. It’s just the way people talk now; some people, too many people. But the significance and repercussions of it may be more serious than we think.

What does crude language say about how people view themselves and others? What does it say about the quality of their feelings and thoughts? What effect does it have on the spiritual sphere in which we live? And on their own souls.

Foul language is verbal vandalism. New York City made a dramatic reduction in serious crimes by paying closer attention to relatively minor ones. “Broken windows policing” sent a message that society *cared* about the quality of life in the city, and would not simply accept anti-social behavior. The result was a dramatic decrease in more serious crimes as well as minor ones.

Here we have an illustration of the principle that: “He who is faithful in what is least is faithful also in much; and he who is unjust in what is least is unjust also in much.” (*Luke 16:10*)

Words matter. How people speak reflects and affects how they think and act. Polite language is no guarantee of good thoughts, but it helps; and vile language encourages vile thoughts and behavior.

“It is not what goes into the mouth that defiles a man; but what comes out of the mouth that defiles a man.” (*Matthew 15:11*) “For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned.” (*Matthew 12:35-37*)

(WEO)

NEWSPEAK

An expanded use of the word “relationship” has become very common in movies and television shows. Instead of people having boyfriends, girlfriends, lovers, fiancés, husbands or wives, they now just have “relationships.” Couples aren’t married or engaged but are “in a relationship.”

It is striking how quickly this new way of speaking came into vogue, and how pervasive it is. And it’s getting worse: the word “gender” has replaced

“sex,” a substitution that facilitates the rejection of the truth that there are only two sexes, male and female – which are derived from the Divine love and wisdom of our Creator.

This redefining and banishment of sex as a category is reminiscent of the totalitarian society George Orwell envisioned in his novel *1984*, in which women’s membership in the “Anti-Sex League” was one of the instruments of Big Brother’s iron control over every facet of life. A main theme in that book is the manipulating of language as a means of controlling thought. Orwell’s “Newspeak” was prophetic of the “politically correct” language we have today.

Over a century ago, another writer, G. K. Chesterton, noted how language was subtly changing and identified the underlying cause: atheism. Here is what he wrote in the *Illustrated London News* in 1912 (from a *Notable and Quotable* item in *The Wall Street Journal* of June 2, 2016):

An interesting essay might be written on the possession of an atheistic literary style. There is such a thing. The mark of it is that wherever anything is named or described, such words are chosen as suggest that the thing has not got a soul in it.

Thus they will not talk of love or passion, which imply a purpose and a desire. They talk of the “relations” of the sexes, as if they were simply related to each other in a certain way, like a chair and a table. Thus they will not talk of the waging of war (which implies a will), but of the outbreak of war – as if it were a sort of boil. Thus they will not talk of masters paying more or less wages, which faintly suggests some moral responsibility in the masters: they will talk of the rise and fall of wages, as if the thing were automatic, like the tides of the sea.

(WEO)

LET YOUR LIGHT SO SHINE

In the wake of the wanton terrorism that killed and injured more than 100 innocent people in Orlando, Florida, in June – and stunned a reeling world – debate raged anew over how best to root out this evil. Among the more positive offerings was this wise insight from the late Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.:

The ultimate weakness of violence is that it is a descending spiral, begetting the very thing it seeks to destroy. Instead of diminishing violence, it multiplies it. Through violence you may murder the liar, but you cannot murder the lie, nor establish the truth. Through violence you may murder the hater, but you do not murder hate. So it goes. Returning violence for violence multiplies violence, adding deeper darkness to a night already devoid of stars. Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that.

Violence, hate and terrorism are the venomous symptoms of the evil flowing from hell that must be confronted and overcome in this world. We need military and law enforcement to protect us, but ultimately the Lord’s love and

goodness are the true salvation of the world.

We know that the Lord loves each and every one of us, and that “because He cannot do good to (us) directly, but only indirectly by means of other people, He therefore breathes into people His love.” (*True Christianity* 457)

He came “a new light” into the world and we are charged to reflect and radiate that light and love by the way we live our lives.

To teach Truth without Good is to walk as one who is blind, because Good is what teaches and leads, and Truth is what is taught and led. Unless Truth is lighted up by Good, or unless faith is lighted up by kindness, there is nothing but darkness. (*Arcana Coelestia* 4844.4)

Our own small efforts – our own candles – may seem insignificant against the menacing storm. But we need to have the trust that this is the Lord working through us – to drive out the darkness, the hate and the violence – and to live our lives with that hope and conviction.

We know it will not be easy because free will always allows people to choose evil and to victimize innocents:

And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil. For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come into the light, lest his works should be exposed. But whoever does what is true comes to the light, so it may be clearly seen that his works have been carried out in God. (*John* 3:19-21)

This year’s Academy of the New Church Senior Class banner shows the way with the motto, “Let your light so shine,” from the Sermon on the Mount:

Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid.

Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light to all that are in the house.

Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven. (*Matthew* 5:14-16)

That is the light to drive out the darkness. Light your candle and be a beacon.

(BMH)



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