

NEW CHURCH *Life*

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

MARCH/APRIL 2019



Tender and Powerful

Light. Flowers. Love. They speak to Easter and they speak to Mother's Day. See an Easter sermon by the Rev. Eric H. Carswell (page 104), and a Mother's Day sermon by the Rev. Ryan M. Sandstrom (page 119).

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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New Church Life is online at www.newchurchlife.org, with issues archived back to 2006. All issues of New Church Life can be searched back to 1881 at www.heavenlydoctrines.org.

**GENERAL CHURCH ASSEMBLY 2020:
JUNE 18-21, 2020**

Rt. Rev. Peter M. Buss Jr.

To the Members and Friends of the General Church:

General Church Assemblies have served to gather people from around the world for a time of friendship-building and focus on the faith and life of the New Church. Those of us who get to travel to church sites around the world have the privilege of seeing the variety of ways our church is serving every day. A General Church Assembly is a time for the reverse to happen, for representatives from the many parts of the Church to come together so that all may see some of that variety. An Assembly also serves to remind us of what draws us together in the first place – the messages we have been given in the Word, and the collective effort to live the life that flows from them.

The 2020 Assembly falls on the 250th anniversary of the Lord sending out His twelve disciples to the whole spiritual world “to preach the Gospel that the Lord God Jesus Christ reigns.” (*True Christian Religion* 791)

More information about this Assembly, its theme, and the programs that will be offered will be published in the coming months. If you have input that you would like to offer, particularly along the lines of what would inspire you or others to attend, we would love to hear it.

Please contact Bishop Buss and the Rev. Eric H. Carswell, host pastor, at info@gcassembly2020.org.

In This Issue

Editorials (page 99) include:

- We are intensely focused on the Lord at Christmas and Easter – how He is born with us each day, how He is risen with us each day. But it’s all too easy to lose that connection when we settle back into the cares of the world – as Mary and Joseph did when they left Jesus behind for three days, without realizing it, and as the disciples did just prior to His crucifixion. But he never forgets us: “I am with you to the end of the age.”
- There is much tragedy and sadness surrounding the Easter story, but while “weeping may endure for a night, joy cometh in the morning.” That joy is what we should carry with us.

In an Easter sermon, *The Light of Truth*, the Rev. Eric H. Carswell says the light of truth that the Lord brought into the world has the enduring power to light our way and enlighten our minds. “Which part of us will respond to the light the Lord offers each of us? The part that can be protected by the light? Or will our response come from the part of us that is endangered by the light?” It is a choice for each of us to make. (Page 104)

In another Easter sermon, *Signs that Will Follow Those Who Believe*, the Rev. Michael D. Gladish tells of the Lord appearing to the remaining 11 disciples after His resurrection, rebuking them for their unbelief, and offering five strange signs for those who believe: casting out demons, speaking in tongues, taking up serpents, immunity to deadly poisons, and able to cure the sick. What do these signs mean in our own lives? (Page 109)

The Rev. Todd J. Beiswenger explains why we have no crosses in our churches. We focus on the risen Lord in His Glorified Human, not His suffering on the cross. “The cross for the New Church is about temptations, and how Jesus was able to accomplish His mission of restoring balance to the world by being tempted and resisting them.” (Page 116)

The Rev. Ryan M. Sandstrom offers a Mother’s Day sermon, *Tender and Powerful: How the Precious Sphere on Conjugal Love in Women Affects the World*. He writes: “Mother’s Day is a nice opportunity to honor not only mothers, but all women. It’s also a chance to think about the Lord’s Church,

which is frequently compared to a mother and a woman in the Word.” (Page 119)

A report on this year’s Boynton Beach Retreat includes an outline of a banquet address by the Rt. Rev. Peter M. Buss Jr., *Proudly General Church*, plus summaries of four-day presentations by: The Rev. Eric H. Carswell, *How Do We Come to Genuine Wisdom? The Story of Joseph and His Brothers*; the Rev. Dr. Ray Silverman, *Teaching Religion in Bryn Athyn College*; and the Rev. Jeremy F. Simons, *The Last Judgment: What It Is and What It Isn’t*. (Page 125)

The Rev. Jeremy Simons offers *Some Examples of the Effects of the Last Judgment*, including the Word spreading in the United States; the one-man circulating library of the Writings – Johnny Appleseed; Swedenborg’s influence on understanding life after death; and the work of the Swedenborg Foundation in spreading the Writings in Ghana. (Page 135)

The Rev. Dr. Erik E. Sandstrom offers a study on *The Holy Supper: The Gate into Heaven*. He explains the significant difference between the Holy Supper in the New Church and throughout Christianity. “It is the act itself that is holy,” he says – not the elements. “The essential element in the Holy Supper is the informed attitude, and faith. But [the effect] also can happen without knowing it, without conscious awareness. So just walk deliberately.” (Page 139)

Church News, page 154, includes:

- An episcopal visit and dedication of a new church building in Seoul, Korea
- A report on the State of Bryn Athyn College
- A report on the February meetings of the Academy Board of Trustees
- A report on the February meetings of the General Church Board of Directors
- The upcoming meeting of the General Church Corporation and election of Board members
- A new book by Kent Rogers, *Seven Days of Spiritual Evolution*
- Various summer camps offered by the Academy
- A new Montessori program for the Oak Arbor New Church School in Rochester, Michigan

Coming in the May/June issue: The ordinations of the Rt. Revs. Bradley D. Heinrichs and David H. Lindrooth, including: their Statements of Faith; the sermon preached by the Rt. Rev. Peter M. Buss Jr. at Brad’s ordination; the sermon preached by Rt. Rev. David Lindrooth at his ordination; and lots of photographs.

Editorials

I AM WITH YOU ALWAYS

Christmas and Easter are separated by seasons and emotions but are always connecting us to the Lord – with why He came on earth and with what He accomplished for us. Implicit in both of these holy days is the promise in His last words to His disciples: “I am with you always, even unto the end of the age.” (*Matthew 28:20*) He came not only to subdue the hells and restore our path to heaven but to become a visible God for all mankind – every day born for us, every day risen for us. But for all of the intense focus of Christmas and Easter it still is easy for us to lose sight of Him.

For most of us the Christmas story ends with Simeon’s blessing of the baby Jesus in the temple. But it continues: “And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon Him.” (*Luke 2:40*) When He was 12 He was taken by His parents to Jerusalem for the Passover, but when they returned He stayed behind – without them knowing. Mary and Joseph traveled three days before realizing He wasn’t with them.

Imagine their panic in rushing back to search for Him – and their relief when they found Him in the temple “astonishing” the learned with His wisdom. Of course, they had mixed feelings and gently scolded Him. Didn’t He know they had sought Him “sorrowing”? But He simply asked why they were looking for Him. Didn’t they know He “must be about My Father’s business”? They did not understand what He meant, but He returned with them to Nazareth where “His mother kept all these sayings in her heart.”

It is easy for us to feel critical. How could Mary and Joseph travel three days – even if they were in separate groups – without realizing that Jesus was not with them? But we know that although the Word speaks of ancient times and peoples, it is always speaking directly to us and is relevant to our lives. So, just as Mary and Joseph were devoted to their Son but lost track of Him on their journey, we can lose our connection too when we plunge back into the cares of the world.

All the while, however, the Lord is “about My Father’s business” – caring for us, loving us, and leading us to heaven. When we realize what we have “lost” we go back “sorrowing” to find Him. Now we can understand and appreciate His words and His work. He is always there for us. Always. But we can lose

track of the connection and need to consciously find Him again.

Throughout His brief life on earth Jesus attracted a devoted following, especially among His disciples. But at the end Peter denied Him to save himself, Judas betrayed Him, and crowds who witnessed His love and His miracles "lost Him" and turned ugly, shouting, "Crucify Him!"

Jesus knew what was coming and tried to warn His disciples, who did not understand, and assure them that He was not leaving them. But the night before He was arrested, when He retreated into Gethsemane to pray, He returned to find His disciples sleeping. He chided Peter: "Could you not stay awake with Me one hour?" Then He says to the disciples: "Stay awake and pray that you may not come in to the time of trial; the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak." (Matthew 26:40-41) But even after this warning He left them twice more to pray, and each time He came back to find them sleeping. Again, we may be tempted to judge the disciples but these words are also directed at us. Does the Lord ever find us asleep when we should be "staying awake and praying"?

When Jesus was crucified, the disciples and all who loved Him must have felt heartbroken and abandoned. Would they ever see Him again? What would happen to them? But when He appeared to His disciples a few days later, before ascending into heaven, He assured them that He had not left them, as He never leaves us, and would always be with them, as He is with us.

That is the promise of Christmas and Easter – that He never loses touch with us, even though we can lose track of Him and forget. He said it then and He says it now: "Behold, I am with you always, even unto the end of the age."

(BMH)

‘JOY COMETH IN THE MORNING’

Just as springtime is especially joyful because it follows the dead of winter, so the miracle of the Lord's resurrection was especially joyful because of the nightmare that came before it. His betrayal by Judas. Peter, the "rock" that crumbled and denied three times that he knew Him. The mockery of His trial, the viciousness of the mob, the injustice and cruelty of His punishment. "Even the robbers who were crucified with Him reviled Him." (Matthew 27:44)

Each year at Easter time we recall the saying in the *Arcana Coelestia* that "He rises again daily in the minds of the regenerate, and even every moment." (n. 2405) This leads to the thought that each "day" or spiritual state in which the Lord rises in our mind is preceded by a "night" or period of temptation in which we are assailed by the power of evil. And to the further thought that during those dark hours we should find strength and hope in the knowledge that a new day will follow the night.

But it's not easy – doubts and despair are what make the nights so dark. The Lord Himself, who knew full well the glorious final outcome of the ordeal He was facing, sweat blood in Gethsemane while His disciples slept. "He came to the disciples and found them sleeping, and said to Peter, "What! Could you not watch with Me one hour?" (*Matthew 26:40*)

The disciples stand for the various truths of faith that we count on for support in times of trouble, and yet it is in moments of fear and despair, when those truths are most needed, that they seem weak and unreliable. We may even feel that God has forsaken us, as the Lord Himself did on the cross. Such is the nature of temptation.

But the spiritual darkness surrounding the Lord's death was dissipated on the morning of His resurrection. The extreme torment and grief He endured, and that encompassed those who loved Him, gave way to unimaginable joy when He returned to them alive. And so it is with us today when He "rises again" in our minds. "Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning." (*Psalms 30:5*)

(WEO)

OUR NEW CHURCH VOCABULARY

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

VASTATION

This is the process, carried out in the world of spirits, whereby the external evils and falsities remaining with the good are separated, so that they may be prepared for heaven, and hypocritical goods and mere knowledges of truth are taken away from the evil in order that they may be made ready for hell. The latter is sometimes called devastation to distinguish it from the former. The church is said to be vastated when nothing of charity and faith remains in it. (See *Arcana Coelestia* 411, 2694, 7474)

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.

Read Holy Scripture and Change the World

To The Editors:

A follow-up to the *New Church Life* January/February 2019 article, "Read the Word, Change the World."

The Rev. Alan Cowley was strong in his recommendation that we read the Word every day. I agree that reading Holy Scripture every day, thinking about it, and putting it into practice is a powerful use. It is the connection between heaven and earth.

Sacred Scripture includes the Bible, which includes the books of the Word. Part of Swedenborg's preparation to record "The Teachings of the New Church" was to read and study the Bible in great detail.

Doing our own Bible study helps us to see the relationship between the sacred literal sense and the inner spiritual meanings of the stories in the Bible. Every part – even every word in Sacred Scripture – has a spiritual meaning. We learn the deeper spiritual meanings by seeing the words of Scripture "through a Swedenborgian lens."

This means the teachings of the New Church show how verses from various chapters in the Word can be knit together to teach the inner spiritual truths that lie hidden in the literal stories. Verses from chapters in the Bible that are not in the Word can also contribute insights that help illuminate spiritual truths.

Bible study is not the same thing as studying the history of the Bible (the book). History shows that the Bible has been a powerful force. The new Museum of the Bible in Washington, D.C., a few blocks from the nation's capitol, is a testimony to the Bible down through the ages. As reported in *Time* magazine in a 2007 article, "The Bible has done more to shape literature,

history, entertainment and culture than any book ever written.”

This secular evaluation misses the most important use of the Bible, namely the literal stories which are Sacred Scripture about God, the spiritual world of heaven and hell, and the Lord's Church on earth, and the path we humans must take to repent and regenerate.

We live in an increasingly secular culture. Yet, thousands of Bible Studies are happening all over the globe. For those looking for meaning in life – who love and respect God and their fellow human beings – let us help them discover the treasure of “The Teachings of the New Church.”

Let our New Church Bible Studies speak to all peoples.

Michael A. Brown
Tucson, Arizona

Nature and the Divine

To The Editors:

I just read Justin Stroh's article, "Evolution and Religion: One Scientist's Perspective," in the November/December 2018 *New Church Life*, and found it a great read: firstly at countering the false logic and assumptions of creationists, and secondly, showing how well the theory of evolution matches what we know about Divine Providence.

As a biologist for some 20-plus years I found it delightful seeing how well nature illustrated the presence of the Divine and how logically the Theory of Evolution matched what I had observed in the field and knew from the Writings. Thank you.

Rev. Julie Conaron
Willow Grove, Pennsylvania

The Light of Truth

An Easter Sermon by the Rev. Eric H. Carswell

Lessons: *John* 1:1-14, 8:12, *Arcana Coelestia* 6000:2

Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, "I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life." (*John* 8:12)

Did you ever wonder how young the Lord was when He first knew that His life would not end peacefully? How young was He when He knew that His work was leading to a final conflict that would end in His death? We don't really know. The prophecies of the Old Testament foretell that it was to happen. From prophecies He could have known when He was still very young what would occur. Jesus told His disciples over and over that He would suffer and be put to death. Conflict was inevitable. Good and evil cannot dwell together peacefully. One or the other must dominate.

The Pharisees could not let Jesus continue to do what He was doing. They hated the Lord and what He said. They could not have peace while He lived and taught. His work threatened them constantly. The Lord did not seek the earthly power that Pharisees wanted. He was not concerned with reputation as they were. But everything that He did brought a threat nearer to them. As the Lord told Nicodemus:

And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and people loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God. (*John* 3:19-21)

The Lord came bringing the light of truth, but not to do harm to anyone. The teachings for the New Church state:

The light which is life from the Lord in heaven is called Divine Truth, because it shines in the minds of those who are there, and therefore shines before their eyes. In the Word "light" means Divine Truth, and intelligence and wisdom from that truth, and the Lord Himself is called "the Light." (*Apocalypse Explained* 186:11)

The light of truth from the Lord can be a tremendous blessing to anyone

who receives it. Nevertheless, that light was a threat to the Pharisees. They were threatened even though Jesus wanted only good for them. He hated no one. But they hated Him – hated Him enough to want Him dead.

The Pharisees knew what trouble the light would cause them. The light of truth threatened to destroy the dearest parts of their lives. It threatened their power. It threatened their reputations as true followers of God. It threatened to change their ability to do the things they wanted to do and they wanted none of it. Conflict was inevitable.

Yes, they could have ignored one man, but as long as Jesus taught and performed miracles anyone could know what He knew. Anyone could get the light of truth. Jesus was specifically a threat to the Pharisees because He was bringing that light to so many people. People were learning what was true and good. They could see the sham of the Pharisees' life. The Pharisees wanted people to think they were more obedient to Jewish law than anyone else, but the Lord showed that they were hypocrites. They followed parts of the letter of the Law of Moses, but they consistently broke its intent. The Lord made this perfectly clear.

The Lord knew this would bring conflict and a lack of natural peace. The Lord wants nothing to do with the peace that comes from ignorance of danger. The half-awake soldier peering out into darkness may have peace while the enemy silently stalks him. The Lord would not stand by to let a false peace continue. He would bring a bright light that would expose the enemy. He came with the light of truth to help all who needed it.

Standing in the light is not always comfortable. Imagine someone watching over your shoulder to see how you spend your time each day – watching each moment. Do you feel comfortable with your priorities? Would the observer encourage you in what you are doing and maybe even remind you to make time for yourself? Or would you feel threatened by what that person would notice? Would the light of objective observation defend or threaten your life?

The Lord said, "I have come as a light into the world, that whoever believes in Me should not abide in darkness." (*John 12:46*) Although He wanted nothing but good things for all people conflict was inevitable. The Pharisees were going to seek His death. They wanted peace, the quiet of ignorance, the

Jesus was specifically a threat to the Pharisees because He was bringing that light to so many people. People were learning what was true and good.

The Lord comes to each of us, in many parts of our lives. He comes to bring us the light of truth.

peace of subjection. Good and evil cannot get along together. They do not get along together within us. Conflict is inevitable.

The Pharisees tried to end the Lord's power by many means. They tried to cast doubt on ideas that He taught. They tried to make Jesus contradict Himself. They questioned whether His life reflected a correct obedience to Old Testament law. They

pointed out that He ate with sinners and publicans. They said His disciples didn't strictly follow ancient traditions of washing or that they broke the strict rules about work on the Sabbath. The Pharisees tried to end the Lord's power by many means. But the Lord could not be hurt by them. The Pharisees could not extinguish His light or hide from its revealing rays.

Part of each of our minds is like the Pharisees. It is threatened by the light of truth. This part of our mind would like to destroy the power of truth. It would like to destroy the power of the Lord's Word. But this destruction cannot be done quietly. To destroy it, Jesus must be crucified. Something living within each of our minds must be deliberately put to death.

Yes, the Pharisees had their reasons, their justifications. But what they did was murder. It did not fit within even a broad interpretation of the Law of Moses by which they pretended to guide their lives. By their own standards, the Pharisees broke the law many times in their arrest and trial of Jesus. But the same day they scrupulously avoided entering Pilate's home, the home of a non-Jew, lest they make themselves unclean for the Passover. The same day, Jesus was discovered to be dead when they came to hasten His death lest anyone be on a cross during the Sabbath celebration. They kept the law at their own convenience.

The Lord comes to each of us, in many parts of our lives. He comes to bring us the light of truth. He comes to protect us from evil, to protect us from unnecessary sadness. But this light would reveal the ugliness of things we want – of things that we think and do. These things are evil. The light of truth threatens parts of our lives.

The Lord quoted from the prophet Micah when He said:

For I have come to "set a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And a man's foes will be those of his own household." (*Matthew 10:35-36, cf. Micah 7:6*)

The life of your mind is like an extended family. Some of your thoughts

are related to following thoughts like a father is related to a son. Some of your affections are related to affections that follow from them like a mother is to a daughter. These thoughts and affections will not be at peace with each other unless the conflict is resolved.

We hope that the power of evil loves and false ideas will be destroyed in our minds. The alternative is terrible: the power of good and truth can be crucified. We can recognize the conflict. An angry thought can be followed and challenged by one calling for more mercy. A selfish desire can be followed and challenged by one that

calls us to give to others. A commitment to do what is good and true can be challenged by a host of related doubts and desires like a person finding his foes to be members of his own household.

The Lord called on people to use the light:

A little while longer the light is with you. Walk while you have the light, lest darkness overtake you; he who walks in darkness does not know where he is going. While you have the light, believe in the light, that you may become sons of light.

(John 12:35-36)

And again He said:

Are there not twelve hours in the day? If anyone walks in the day, he does not stumble, because he sees the light of this world. But if one walks in the night, he stumbles, because the light is not in him. *(John 11:9-10)*

Which part of us will respond to the light the Lord offers each of us? The part that can be protected by the light? The part that someday could be with us in our lives as angels? Or will our response come from the part of us that is endangered by the light? Will evil be destroyed or will an attempt be made to destroy the truth?

The disguise of evil is unfortunately the disguise of goodness and righteousness, as the Pharisees tried to show everyone. Unfortunately, evil feels like us, like our kith and kin. We are tempted to accept self-justification. To protect our own bad habits because they don't look all that bad to us. They feel rather familiar. Getting rid of significant bad habits feels at times like we are losing our very lives. But we know well that the Lord said: "He who loses

Which part of us will respond to the light the Lord offers each of us? The part that can be protected by the light? Or will our response come from the part of us that is endangered by the light?

We all know that it takes effort to get to heaven, but it is also true that no one goes to hell by accident. The Lord was not crucified by accident.

his life for My sake will find it.” When we lose our natural life we will actually leave behind the death of hell and find the life of heaven. This doesn't happen easily.

Conflict is inevitable in our lives. It is inevitable in our daily choices. Conflict will come in our decisions about the things that we want. It will come in our decisions about acting patiently or angrily. It will come in our decisions about choosing an easy but unhealthy course or standing up for

what is true. Conflict is inevitable.

We all know that it takes effort to get to heaven, but it is also true that no one goes to hell by accident. The Lord was not crucified by accident. It was the result of choices by people. Choices that arose from a conflict – a conflict that must take place. The Lord did not come to bring peace. He brought the light of truth. He brings that light to each of us. Let us look for it in our lives. Yes, part of us will feel threatened by it – a part of us that needs to be destroyed.

The Lord came as a light for the people of this world. He came that we might have life and have it more abundantly. Let us welcome Him into our thoughts and actions.

Amen.



The Rev. Eric H. Carswell is pastor of the Bryn Athyn Church. He has previously been: pastor of the Glenview, Illinois, and Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, societies and head of their schools; Dean of the Bryn Athyn College Theological School; regional pastor of the Northeastern United States; Vice Chancellor of the Academy of the New Church; and Bishop's Representative for Education for the Academy and General Church Schools. He and his wife, Donna (Zeitzi), live in Huntingdon Valley, Pennsylvania. Contact: eric.carswell@brynathynchurch.org

Signs That Will Follow Those Who Believe

An Easter Sermon by the Rev. Michael D. Gladish

Lessons: *Mark 16:9-20 ; Apocalypse Explained 706:14; New Jerusalem and its Heavenly Doctrine; Psalm 34:8-22*

After the Lord rose from the grave on what we now call Easter Sunday, He appeared to various women and men who had followed Him during His ministry, reassuring, comforting and even literally feeding them – in one case with bread in the evening and in another with fish early in the morning. And then, as we read in Mark’s Gospel, He appeared to all 11 of the remaining disciples as they met around a table and “He rebuked their unbelief and hardness of heart because they did not believe those who had seen Him after He had risen.”

And He said to them, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned. *And these signs will follow those who believe:* In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues; they will take up serpents; and if they drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover.” (*Mark 16:14-18, added emphasis*)

Our topic is “these signs” and what they really mean to us today. Are they intended to be tests of our faith, or are they the logical consequences of it? And what is the deeper significance of these miraculous signs as they are listed in the Word?

Occasionally some churches or pastors in rural communities make news for their commitment to handling rattlesnakes as a testimony of their faith. When one of them is bitten and dies (as happened a few years ago) believers are usually not deterred, simply saying that the victim obviously didn’t have enough faith! (Similar things are often said in evangelical churches about the Lord’s promise of prosperity to those who believe – with similar implications: if you don’t prosper it’s because you don’t have enough faith.)

But all these things need to be seen in the light of the Lord’s consistent

Are “these signs” intended to be tests of our faith, or are they the logical consequences of it? And what is the deeper significance of these miraculous signs as they are listed in the Word?

teaching that His kingdom is not of this world. Yes, He did say about food and clothing that if we seek first the kingdom of God all these things will be added to us. (*Matthew 6:33*) But He also said that we must not lay up treasures – even food – on earth, only treasures in heaven (6:20), so it is pretty clear that the food He was talking about is the righteousness with which we can be filled, and the clothing the garments of salvation. (*Ibid. 5:6, Isaiah 61:10*) Indeed, He said, “What shall it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?” (*Matthew 16:26*) We could go on.

The point is that the Lord frequently referred to the blessings of heaven as if they were material or physical things, and yet He clearly spoke metaphorically, that is, symbolically. For example, He said that if we have faith as a mustard seed we can move mountains. (*Matthew 17:20*) Well, think about it: faith is only compared to a mustard seed to illustrate how little we need, and so the thing we will move with that faith is no more a physical mountain than the mustard seed is faith. It simply refers to large obstacles in our spiritual life, typically our own self-love.

So, again, when the Lord referred to those who would inherit His kingdom for their good works to the hungry, the thirsty, the stranger, the naked, the sick and the prisoner (*Matthew 25:35*), He wasn't just referring to those who have these physical problems. He was talking about the spiritually hungry and thirsty, the spiritual stranger, and those who are spiritually naked, sick or imprisoned, that is, all who long for what is good and true, or are constrained by what is bad and false.

Just so, the signs that will follow those who believe must be spiritual and not merely natural or physical, otherwise they wouldn't relate to the kingdom of heaven. So, let's look closely at these five special signs that were given at the Lord's resurrection and see what they really mean.

“In My name they will cast out demons.”

The Lord had already taught the disciples that the only way to cast out demons – at least the very stubborn ones – was by prayer and fasting. (*Matthew 17:21*) But surely He didn't mean just going through the motions. No, obviously, real prayer is a deep cry from the heart, and likewise fasting is

the awareness of our lack and our need for the bread of life, the spiritual good that only the Lord can provide.

We must not assume or claim any powers that we can't possibly have, including power over evil spirits or demons. (Remember, one evil spirit is a channel for many thousands more to affect us.) But if we humble ourselves to learn and do what is good from the Lord, then the demons have no place to stay with us – in fact they can't stand to be with us because they can't stand the sphere of the Lord's love and wisdom.

Names everywhere in the Word represent essential qualities or characteristics. So to cast out demons – or do anything, really – in the Lord's name is to do it in the spirit and power of HIS love and wisdom. The only way we can get this with any degree of confidence is from His Word – the doctrine or concepts drawn from the Word. This naturally involves daily contact with it, and reading and reflection on it, not to mention applications in life. We can't impose this on anyone else, but we can do it for ourselves, and we can encourage others, especially by example, so the effect of the teaching is mainly on ourselves.

Still, the promise is that when we do these things the demons we have otherwise welcomed into our lives will be cast out. In fact, they will withdraw of their own free will, and seek some other place to present their insulting influence.

“They will speak with new tongues.”

This is one of the most oddly misunderstood teachings in the New Testament. Coupled together with the story in the second chapter of the *Book of Acts*, it has been assumed that this is some new kind of natural language that can only be understood by gifted people who can interpret what is being said for others. Accordingly, many churches encourage people at worship to let go of any rational conception of the truth and open themselves up to an influence they believe is the Holy Spirit, a spirit that in some way speaks through them in words they themselves don't understand. And yet the Lord Himself said that the Holy Spirit is the spirit of truth, and that spirit surely does involve understanding!

Of course, none of us can understand the whole truth, especially the whole truth of the Word, but when you look carefully at the story in *Acts* you can see right away that this mystical speech is not what the believers who had met in Jerusalem for the celebration of Pentecost were experiencing. Rather they were all speaking in their own native languages and the miracle was that they all understood one another.

What, then, does it mean that believers will speak with *new tongues*? Well, just as “tongue” is a word that refers to speech or language, so a *new*

Here in His resurrection the Lord says that people who believe in Him will “take up serpents.” What this means is that when we honor the Lord first of all He will give us the ability to “handle” our sensual desires in a spiritually healthy way.

tongue is a new way of speaking, that is, from a new understanding – in this case with special consideration for the Lord and His Word. It is a new way of thinking and talking that arises out of our conviction about what He teaches.

For example, whereas before we are reformed and regenerated by the Lord we might be inclined to make nasty remarks about others, accuse, condemn or otherwise belittle our neighbors, worship our own ideas, despise the Word and take the Lord’s name in vain, *after* we have been reformed there is no way we can talk or even think like that. Our “new tongues,” that is, our new ways of speaking will reflect our commitment to the Lord’s instruction.

“They will take up serpents.”

The serpent is a universal symbol in just about all cultures of the world for what is sensual in human life. It occurs in ancient civilizations, mythology and literature, modern art, advertising and even fashion, and of course above all in the Word, literally from beginning to end, where the flying dragon of *Revelation* is also referred to as “that serpent of old” first mentioned in the Garden of Eden.

Subtle, silent (for the most part), and creeping as it does on the ground, it represents that part of our lives most closely connected to the earth. It is the sensual principle – the idea that the delight of life rests in the pleasures of the five senses: taste, touch, sight, smell and hearing. So, exotic pleasures, and particularly erotic pleasures, are often portrayed in a context that includes alluring poses and suggestive-looking serpents.

But here in His resurrection the Lord says that people who believe in Him will “take up serpents.” What this means is that when we honor the Lord first of all He will give us the ability to “handle” our sensual desires in a spiritually healthy way. He will give us the ability to control and subordinate our natural urges so that they do not harm us. In fact, the really good news here is that the Lord is telling us we don’t have to give up the pleasures of the senses at all, *as long as we make use of them in spiritually responsible ways.*

In other words, we can have nice things; we can eat well and engage in various recreations, even including games of chance; we can dance, and play,

and have a lot of fun; and we can enjoy the pleasures of intimacy in marriage. There is no great virtue in poverty or deprivation for its own sake. Rather what the Lord asks of us is that we keep these things in perspective and subordinate them to the higher principles of the spiritual life.

So, for example, whereas we can spend a fortune if we have it on fine dining and recreation, we really should compare this with what we spend – in time and money – on our spiritual lives. Do our contributions to the church come off the top of our budget or do our natural pleasures come first so that the church only gets what's left over? Which is more important – to you and your neighbors? It's pretty difficult to tame and train a serpent. But the Lord says that if we really believe in Him we can do it, and we will do it.

“And if they drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them.”

In the Word what we drink refers to what we take into our minds and think about, whether truth or falsity. So, the Lord blessed “those who hunger and thirst for righteousness,” saying they will be filled. And when we drink the wine of the holy supper we know that it corresponds to the purified Divine Truth that we hope to receive from Him as well. On the other hand, to drink what is false is to believe in a lie. But to suppose that we could drink polluted water, kerosene or muriatic acid and not get sick, defies the Lord's own laws of order.

The beautiful and reassuring thing about this particular sign is that if we learn and believe anything false it will not harm us spiritually as long as we have faith in the Lord. This certainly seems counterintuitive, as we know that falsity and misunderstanding can do a lot of damage in our natural lives. But it's different spiritually because more than anything else the Lord looks on the heart, that is, on our loves and intentions.

We all make mistakes. We all misunderstand. We all have a limited ability to understand. But if we love the Lord and love our neighbors as ourselves the wrong and hurtful things we may believe or experience in this life will be rendered harmless in our spiritual lives.

For example, the Lord explains in the Heavenly Doctrines that any church preaching salvation by faith, and faith alone, may be deeply involved in a fundamental falsity. But there are people within such churches who are not hurt by that falsity because they know intuitively that the life of faith is charity, and so they do their best to live according to the Word. (See *Apocalypse Explained* 764)

Again, more personally, we may learn and accept things about ourselves or other people that are quite wrong, and not knowing any better we may organize our lives accordingly. But if we believe in the Lord we can be sure that He will preserve our spiritual lives in spite of that, and open our eyes to the

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truth when we are ready to see it. The only proviso is that we honor Him by doing the best we can with what we do understand from His Word.

“They will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover.”

This is the last of the signs given in Mark’s Gospel, and just as the previous one refers to falsity this one refers to the evils of life. Note, however, that it doesn’t say the evils won’t harm us; it says we can recover.

The hand in Scripture is a symbol for the power to do good or evil. It is also a means of communicating affection, as when we hold someone’s hand, or put a hand on someone’s shoulder. So, to lay hands on the sick is to offer consolation and help to a person who is affected by evil. It’s important that we not think of the

whole person as evil – any more than we would think of a person’s sickness as being the person himself. But still, how can we help somebody in this way without being patronizing?

Well, as in medicine the first principle is to do no harm. What this implies is that we address the evils in ourselves first of all, lest they aggravate the evils in others. Only then will we, by laying our hands on someone else, be able to communicate the good of genuine charity from the Lord. And that good will be communicated not just by physical touch, but even more effectively by the work of our hands as we set a good example for that person.

Finally, you may have noticed that these five signs the Lord listed in His resurrection are similar to the five commands He gave the disciples when He first commissioned them in *Matthew*, chapter 10. There He told them to “(1) go and preach, saying, ‘The kingdom of heaven is at hand.’ (2) Heal the sick, (3) cleanse the lepers, (4) raise the dead, (and 5) cast out demons. Freely you have received, freely give.”

We could perhaps have a whole sermon comparing the two lists. But for now just consider this: the ultimate purpose of all that the Lord revealed and taught was that we might grow in our faith and use that faith to help others, establishing His kingdom on earth as it is in heaven.

In the beginning, as in *Matthew*, it seems to be all about those others: preach to them, heal them, cleanse them, raise them up and cast out *their* demons. But in the end, as in *Mark*, we must learn that we can only help others when we do our own work first: cast out our own demons, speak with new tongues, take control of our sensual urges, and if (or rather when) we are given poison to drink, ask the Lord in faith to protect us inwardly from its harmful effects. Then, and only then, can we lay hands on the sick so that they will recover.

Then the Lord can bless all of us as we work together in His name. And then He can truly establish His church among us for the good of all the world. Amen.



The Rev. Michael D. Gladish will retire June 30 as pastor of the Washington New Church Society and School in Mitchellville, Maryland. He has been a pastor in Hurstville, New South Wales, Australia; Los Angeles, California; the Olivet New Church in Toronto, Canada; the Calgary New Church in Alberta, Canada; and the Dawson Creek Society in British Columbia, Canada. He has also been regional pastor for the Southeastern United States. He and his wife, Virginia (de Maine), will continue to live in Mitchellville. Contact: mdgladish@gmail.com

OUR NEW CHURCH VOCABULARY

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VESSEL

The idea expressed in this term as the Writings use it is fundamental to a true concept of man; for man is said to be a vessel which receives life from the Lord, and the term is therefore applied to the will and the understanding, the rational and the natural, and the forms of which they are composed.

The idea is not that of a glass, a cup or a bowl into which liquid is poured, but that of an organic form which reacts to an influx impinging upon it – reacts with or against the influx, as the eye reacts to light or the ear to sound. When this is known, it can be understood how, although the Divine does not finite itself in proceeding as it does in creating, the reception of influx from the Divine is human and finite. (See *Arcana Coelestia* 3318)

Why No Crosses?

The Rev. Todd J. Beiswenger

(Reprinted from the April 2018 New Church Newsletter, Hurstville, Australia)

Have you ever noticed that New Church churches just don't have crosses on them? You really don't find them inside either. Some of you might note that the Bryn Athyn Cathedral is in the shape of a cross, but aside from that our buildings are generally devoid of crosses. Contrast that to just about any other Christian church and you'll see a very marked difference. Crosses are the main symbol for them, but we rarely use them.

Okay, so why not? Why don't we have any crosses? It really all comes from how the Writings tell us we should visualize the Lord. Here's an example: "As the Lord actually presents Himself to us, we must actually receive Him, not, however, as He hung upon the cross, but as He is in His glorified Human, in which He is present, the body of which is the Divine Good and the blood of which is the Divine Truth." (*True Christian Religion* 728)

We read something similar in *Apocalypse Explained*:

It is by means of Divine truth, when it is received, that a person is reformed and regenerated by the Lord and saved, and not by the shedding of blood on the cross. This can be seen from this also, that the garments of angels appear glistening from what is white and bright, not from faith in and thought about the blood of the Lord on the cross, but from Divine truth with them from the Lord; for, as was said above, their garments are all in accord with the truths with them. Nor is any angel permitted to think of the Lord's passion, but only of His glorification, and of the reception by Him of the Divine. (N. 476)

What New Church scholars have taken from these passages, and others that teach similarly, is that we really aren't to focus on the cross when we think of the Lord, but rather we should think of the risen Lord. It's been said, "Focus on the empty tomb, not the bloody cross." And just to be clear, "bloody" in this context is the blood of Christ, not a derogatory adjective.

It is definitely a different perspective than mainstream Christianity. They are very much focused on Jesus' blood and the cross. It creates many issues for us in terms of evangelization because for other church Christians to come

to us, they have to completely reorient their thinking. It also makes it difficult for us to use mainstream Christian music in our worship services because so much of it is about the blood on the cross. I really can't begin to tell you how many songs we've not used because the lyrics are just not compatible with our beliefs.

You could make a case that we have perhaps gone too far the other way by not mentioning the cross more. After all, it is a Christian symbol. When a child is baptized, the minister makes a cross on the child's forehead and breast with the water. *True Christian*

Religion 682 states: "For at baptism an infant receives the sign of the cross on his forehead and breast, which is a token of his inauguration into the acknowledgment and worship of the Lord."

The New Church does see the cross as a Christian sign as well, but because of what the Lord teaches us in the Writings we come to a different understanding of what that sign means. The cross for the New Church is about temptations, and how Jesus was able to accomplish His mission of restoring balance to the world by being tempted and resisting them. It wasn't just the final sacrifice of being tempted on the cross, but rather He went through them His whole life.

Since we, too, have to go through temptations, the cross can be used as a useful reminder to us about the sacrifices we also must make to accomplish our own goal of regeneration. It isn't easy, and it can feel like we're dying in the process – and that's because we are. A part of us IS dying.

Yet what mainstream Christianity has done is teach that because Jesus died on the cross we are saved. Because He died, we live. So they put the cross front and center as a constant reminder of the price that was paid for our lives. There is some truth in it, but what saves us here and now is not Jesus' death, but rather our own willingness to receive His Divine Truth and Goodness into our lives.

It's true that if He hadn't suffered on the cross we wouldn't have the freedom to receive Him, but at this point our salvation depends on our actions today, not the actions of Jesus from 2000 years ago. While there's no doubt

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that the passion of the cross is a big deal, it also carries with it the weight of hundreds of years of false teachings about it.

What I take from the Writings is that when we focus on the empty tomb, the resurrected Lord, we are reminded of the complete story of Jesus and His life. We are to think of the Divine Truth represented by His blood, but we are also to think of His birth, His fulfilment of Scripture, His teachings, His miracles, His healings and the transformation of His human to a Divine Human. These are all present in the resurrected Lord. There's far more

to the Lord's life on Earth than the passion of the cross, and He wants us to think of all of those things, not just His suffering. And that's why you won't find crosses in New Church churches.



The Rev. Todd J. Beiswenger is pastor of the Hurstville New Church and the Brisbane New Church of Australia. He and his wife, Jenn (Jorgenson), live with their son in Penshurst, New South Wales, Australia. Contact: todd@hurstvillenewchurch.com

OUR NEW CHURCH VOCABULARY

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WILL

Like the understanding, the will, which is the other faculty that constitutes the human mind, is a receptacle and a reactive organ. The will is that individual reception of, and reaction to, love inflowing from the Lord which makes the ruling love and the man himself. The native will is unsalvable; the new will is created in the reformed understanding by the descent into it of remains, which have been stored up for that purpose. (See *Arcana Coelestia* 7342; *Divine Love and Wisdom* 403; *True Christian Religion* 570)

Tender and Powerful

How the Precious Sphere of Conjugal Love in Women Affects the World

A Mother's Day Sermon by the Rev. Ryan M. Sandstrom

Lessons: *Genesis 2: 21-25; Conjugal Love 393*

Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife, and they shall be one flesh. (*Genesis 2: 24*)

Everyone knows that the number one gift on Mother's Day is flowers. Most mothers and women are genuinely pleased when receiving flowers; there's a sense of delight they feel. So, why do you, mothers and women specifically, like flowers? Women especially enjoy receiving flowers, more than men do. Men don't care so much for them; they're more interested in other kinds of gifts, like small metal things. But women enjoy receiving flowers for all occasions. Why is that? Is it because they are pretty and smell nice? Candy, too, is pretty and smells nice but the enjoyment of candy isn't the same as it is with flowers. Perhaps if we consider the spiritual origin of flowers that might tell us some things.

According to the Heavenly Doctrine, in many different numbers, flowers correspond to memory knowledge. This is the knowledge of truth, the learning of truth which first enters our memory and is where truth is stored for a time. It is because of the knowledge of truth that flowers exist in heaven. Everything in heaven is created due to the correspondence and connection with spiritual qualities.

So, when an angel in heaven learns a truth, and is especially affected by it, he might find himself suddenly standing in a field of flowers. In addition, flowers on earth exist because they existed in heaven first, which came about from the learning of truth. So even the flowers that we enjoy so much here on earth have their spiritual origin from the learning of truth, which first takes place in the memory.

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Flowers affect you, you can delight in them, you can say you have an affection for flowers. With this spiritual connection in mind, your delighting in flowers can suggest that the same happens with the knowledge of truth. Delighting in knowledge means that the knowledge of truth affects you, it delights you and puts a smile on your face, similar to how flowers affect you and make you feel happy.

Mother's Day is nice opportunity to honor not only mothers, but all women. It's also a chance to think about the Lord's Church, which is frequently compared to a mother and a woman in the Word. The question before was, why do women like flowers? By the same token we can ask this regarding mothers. Why do we love our mothers? In a more general sense let's think about why men love women.

Let's go back to *Genesis* 2: 21-25, the creation of woman. Every woman has what it takes to be a mother. According to the Lord's words in *Luke* 8:21, all people have what it takes to be a mother, which is when we hear the Word of the Lord and act upon it. People have made the mistake in the past, looking at this passage in *Genesis*, of saying that men are superior over women since woman was created and formed out of man. Let the record show that there is nothing in this passage, or the whole Word for that matter, that even implies that women are inferior to men. In fact, the Word proves the opposite; although men and women are equal, women in certain ways are far superior – not dominant, superior.

See what happened to Adam when the woman was created and brought to him. He's dominating the scene, naming all the animals, then as soon as *woman* comes along he leaves father and mother and cleaves to his wife. This just happens, and it's really hard to stop it.

The word "cleave" means to join strongly, suggesting a tight and intimate connection. We can analyze all the reasons why this happens, why he would drop everything and cleave to his wife, but quite honestly it simply comes down to fact that she is a woman. She just appeared, she didn't need to do or say anything. Man leaving father and mother and cleaving to his wife happens on account of woman, even though he takes the action.

I think all men would agree that women are very special. What makes them special? Is it their beauty and elegance? Is it their ability to bear and raise children? Let's just say yes to those, but like the flower and its beauty deriving

its qualities from a spiritual origin, women (and men) derive all their qualities and virtues from a spiritual origin also.

According to the Heavenly Doctrine, women are born with conjugal love. This is something men don't have; they are not born with this love. Men are born with a love of growing wise, a love of learning. But women are born with conjugal love, which is a love of conjoining, a love of bringing together. Males pick up on this – do not underestimate the significance of this. (See *Conjugal Love* 393)

Behold the power of conjugal love, found primarily in women, but from the Lord. We can say that this Love is at the core of all females. Conjugal love, although tender, is very powerful and you can know this by seeing how women affect men, as we see in *Genesis 2*.

We see the tenderness of this love in the way women, especially mothers, care for children and for others. We see the power of this love in that it can take a man, who by nature and creation is stern, rigid, judgmental, critical and can be overpowering, and yet this love in women can completely soften him. It doesn't destroy him, or change him, or break him down. It softens him without taking away any of his love of growing wise, or any of his masculine virtues.

All the men you know who are highly caring, compassionate, loving, thoughtful, gentle, yet still manly in every way, are ones who have been most affected by women in their lives. It started way back at birth and childhood, even before birth in the womb, with their mothers; at that time males were affected by the conjugal sphere in the form of soft, gentle, yet powerful feminine influence early in life. Later on the feminine influence he received increased thanks to his sisters, aunts and grandmas.

As the man grows he gets a new feminine influence containing the conjugal sphere from his female teachers, friends, and at last, especially his wife. Even after his wife the feminine influence continues with his own daughters, nieces and granddaughters. We see here that women of all kinds and ages have a significant and abundant effect on men of all kinds and ages.

This effect, this power of conjugal love, is not a power women use at will. It's in their very being, in the way they walk and talk, and present themselves. *Conjugal Love* 223 speaks of this effect of women over men, stating that with a man, just mere thought of a female can drastically change and soften him and allow him to be filled with genuine love from the Lord.

In a word, if it weren't for women, particularly mothers and wives, men wouldn't stand a chance in this world. They would become worse than a savage beast, full of self love. This is a standard truth, and most people in the world are aware of this. This truth and awareness shows even in popular music.

There is a jazzy song called "Big Bad Bill," which is all about how a woman changed a man from being a brute beast into a sensible person. The lyrics

Only women can provide men with what they don't have from birth, and only men can provide women with what they don't have from birth.

describe Bill as

Rough and tough and would strut his stuff. Half the whole town scared to death, when he walked by they all held their breath. He's a fighting man showing off. Then Bill got himself a wife, now he leads a different life. Big Bad Bill is Sweet William now. Married life changed him somehow.

That word "somehow" makes it seem like a mystery. People are aware of the change that women bring in men somehow, but few people can really explain why or how. Luckily for us

we have explanations in our doctrines. We already know according to Heavenly Doctrine that women are born with conjugal love, and this love is a love of joining together. With this love, in marriage, wives attach themselves to their husband's intellect. As a result the wives become the form of their husband's wisdom. So now that his wisdom is in her, the husband will love his wife and not himself.

This is a very deep, spiritual explanation of how attraction, connection and exchange between men and women, husbands and wives, work. There are spiritual qualities inherent in each sex and through marriage these qualities are exchanged between the husband's and wife's souls, minds and bodies.

A more general exchange between men and women takes place also, and this is because only women can provide men with what they don't have from birth, and only men can provide women with what they don't have from birth. This exchange and interaction and transference of spiritual qualities is impossible to take place between men and men, or women and women. Man with his male buddies has some level of bond and exchange, as do women with their female friends. But their level of connection can only go so far, the same way that two identical puzzle pieces can be placed together, though unable to interconnect.

Men and men walk side by side, as do women and women. But only men and women together, especially in marriage, walk face to face. They are two puzzle pieces, not identical to each other, and thanks to that difference they can interconnect perfectly, wholly forming one solid piece. As they both walk forward face to face they constantly move closer and closer into each other and become, as Adam said, "bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh." They are no longer two but one.

Women are born with conjugal love, men are not. Men, however, are born

with something that women don't have from birth, yet they get it from men, especially their husbands. We can see that through our relationships with men and women in general, and in marriage with husbands and wives in particular, that through the interaction of the sexes, something spiritual takes place in each other.

Our regeneration really does depend on our interaction with other people, especially with the opposite gender because we gain things from them that we cannot gain by ourselves. Through this interaction, exchange and transference of spiritual qualities between the genders in general and in particular, it really helps form the Church in each person, and thus the Church is formed on earth this way.

Let us finish by talking about the Church, since it is constantly compared to a woman and a mother in the Word. There was another minister, not from the New Church, speaking to his congregation on the power of women in this world. He was saying how women have the amazing ability of qualifying things

and multiplying things. He used examples in the context of marriage, saying that when a husband gives his wife his seed, she gives him a baby. If he gives her groceries, she gives him a meal. If he gives her a house, she gives him a home, and so on. The same truth applies to the Church, that the Church, as a woman and mother, takes truth from the Lord and produces doctrine out of it.

In *Revelation* 12 we get the amazing vision of the Woman clothed with the Sun. The Woman gave birth to a Male Child. The Woman represents the Church, and the Male Child represents Doctrine.

We can see that through our relationships with men and women in general, and in marriage with husbands and wives in particular, that through the interaction of the sexes, something spiritual takes place in each other.

Through this interaction, exchange and transference of spiritual qualities between the genders in general and in particular, it really helps form the Church in each person, and thus the Church is formed on earth this way.

We say that mothers give birth to babies even though we all know babies are created by the Lord. In the same way the Church gave birth to Doctrine, through the work of Emanuel Swedenborg, yet we all know this Doctrine is created by the Lord.

Doctrine is a very effective system of teaching whereby we can access the truth and comprehend it. It's how we can learn the truth, become affected by it, and best of all, live by it. When this happens we are who the Lord said we are in *Luke* 8:21: We are His Mother and Brothers, hearing the Word of God and doing it.

So, in the name of mothers, in the name of all women, in the name of the Church, and especially in the name of conjugal love: Happy Mother's Day.



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WISDOM

Here is a term which is predicated only of life. Wisdom consists in perceiving, willing and doing truths from love, and it involves an appetite for good and truth. It is therefore distinct from knowledge and intelligence, though they may lead to wisdom and are necessary for it. (See *Arcana Coelestia* 1555, 10,336)

Boynton Beach Retreat 2019

Bruce Henderson

Another successful Retreat in Boynton Beach, Florida, January 28-31, attracted people from eight states: Connecticut, Colorado, Florida, Illinois, Indiana, Maryland, Pennsylvania and South Carolina. (See photos on page 167 and 168.)

Plans are already underway for a Retreat next year – same time (last week in January), and same place (Duncan Conference Center), with very little price increase. Watch for further announcements.

This year's program included a banquet talk by the incoming Executive Bishop, the **Rt. Rev. Peter M. Buss Jr.**, "Proudly General Church." See a summary below, along with reports of the four-day presentations by:

- The Rev. Eric H. Carswell, pastor of the Bryn Athyn Society, on "How Do We Come to Genuine Wisdom? The Story of Joseph and His Brothers."
- The Rev. Dr. Ray Silverman on teaching Religion in Bryn Athyn College, particularly focusing on an updated version of his and his wife Star's book, *Rise Above It: Spiritual Development for College Students*.
- The Rev. Jeremy F. Simons, retired pastor of the Bryn Athyn Society and Chaplain at the Bryn Athyn Cathedral, on "The Last Judgment: What It Is and What It Isn't."



PROUDLY NEW CHURCH

Banquet Address – The Rt. Rev. Peter M. Buss Jr.

Following is the general outline used by Bishop Buss in his talk:

Things I'm proud of:

- Our heritage
- Our worship services and worship spaces
- Our schools
- Our capabilities, such as New Church Vineyard

- His newly formed team, Assistant Bishops David Lindrooth and Brad Heinrichs, and the General Church clergy
- Church events that serve people in many ways
- Our faith, including: the Lord, the Word, salvation, spiritual choice, spiritual growth, life after death, the Lord's Church, useful service, married love and the Second Coming.

Things I'm not so proud of:

- In-fighting
- Non-healthy worry about the future (we're dying)
- Talk of splits
- People opting out (young people, women, men)
- Mission creep influenced by culture (desperation?)
- Ways in which we don't seem up to the challenge (lack of energetic engagement)
- Resistance to trying things that the Lord might bless and lack of respect for our past

What would make me more proud?

Two "vision phrases":

1. Firm in internals, yielding in externals (clarify what we stand for, then try some things)
2. A General Church that increasingly reflects the faith of the New Church

Evidence of our faith in action

1. Usefulness
2. Life after death
3. Family, marriage
4. As of self: Communication; Planning ("If you wish to be led by Divine Providence, therefore, use prudence as a servant or assistant who faithfully manages the goods of his Lord." *Divine Providence* 219)
5. Trust in providence: Leadership principles; a Church that is seen as willing to address its issues with humility and effectiveness; people doing amazing things

"Do not fear, for those who are with us are more than those who are with them." (2 Kings 6:16)

We have an awesome message, and the Lord is on our side,.



**HOW DO WE COME TO GENUINE WISDOM?
THE STORY OF JOSEPH AND HIS BROTHERS**

The Rev. Eric H. Carswell

This study was a sweeping example of the richness of the Lord's teachings about the spiritual meanings within the Word, focusing on the familiar story of Joseph and his brothers, and how it all applies to our own lives. The presentation covered *Genesis* 37 through 45 and the corresponding series in *Arcana Coelestia*. The basics of the story include:

- Joseph hated by his brothers for being the most loved by their father Jacob
- Dreams that had him reigning over his brothers, making them hate him all the more
- The brothers, sent by Jacob to visit his brethren, strip Joseph of his coat of many colors, cast him into a pit, and sell him into slavery
- Joseph then sold in Egypt to Potiphar, captain of the Pharaoh's guard
- Joseph advancing in Potiphar's house, resisting the advances of his wife, being falsely accused and thrown into prison, where he is protected by the Lord
- The Pharaoh's butler and baker also thrown into prison, where Joseph interprets their dreams, which was favorable to the butler but not the baker, who was hung
- Joseph interprets the Pharaoh's dreams about fat and lean cows, thin and healthy ears or corn, as signs of seven years of plenty, then seven years of famine, and how this elevated Joseph as the most powerful man in Egypt under the Pharaoh
- Jacob sends his sons to buy corn in Egypt during the famine; Joseph recognizes them but they don't know him and are imprisoned as spies
- They are sent home – to return with Benjamin – with money hidden by Joseph in their sacks of corn, which made them afraid
- The famine forces them back to Egypt with Benjamin, where Joseph provides a feast for them
- Again their sacks are filled with food, plus a silver cup in Benjamin's, which leads to a confrontation but eventual reconciliation as Joseph makes himself known to his brothers

All of this family drama makes for a compelling story but it is so much enhanced, as are all things in the Word, by the spiritual sense and its everlasting meaning to our own lives.

Eric explained that this story is really is all about how our minds work, as revealed in the *Arcana*. One of the key teachings is that there is great difference between simply knowing the facts of revelation and being truly wise. We come to genuine wisdom from the Lord initially through truth. We learn what is true and use this consciously to choose to live better lives. If we do this with the prayer that the Lord change our motivations He will bring the miracle of regeneration into our lives. As we regenerate and become spiritual we are led by good loves to understand the truth much better than before. This is the source of true wisdom.

We are taught that the highest object of worship is the Lord's Divine Human. This constitutes the life of religion – worshipping a visible, knowable God.

Joseph's brothers represent first truths – the church growing with us. Joseph himself represents the wisdom of life, which is above those first truths. That's why his brothers hate him; in their eyes, they are right, he is wrong. That's the way falsity works. It's easy to see and condemn evil and falsity in others, not so much in ourselves. Joseph's coat of many colors represents the beauty of spiritual truth, something his brothers cannot appreciate.

One of the strengths of our Church is that it is led by the Word – as a church and within our lives. *Arcana Coelestia* 2189 teaches that the more truth is implanted in us, the more the life of charity is perfected. The person who knows the most doctrine is not necessarily the most charitable; that comes with true wisdom.

When Joseph was stripped of his coat of many colors and thrown into the pit by his brothers that shows them as seeing the truth of the Word as too hard and unreasonable for them, so they reject it. We do that in our own lives when the Lord's Word and commandments “aren't working” for us – when we “know better” and turn away from them. But the brothers do begin taking responsibility for why their lives aren't working, as we must, and they are reconciled with Joseph – with the Lord.

The overall teaching of the Joseph story is that we cannot come to genuine wisdom without regeneration. What is purely natural must be rejected and replaced with what is spiritual. And as our intelligence and wisdom are perfected we will be blessed with happiness forever.

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TEACHING RELIGION IN BRYN ATHYN COLLEGE

The Rev. Dr. Ray Silverman

Ray Silverman, associate professor of Religion and English, has been teaching at Bryn Athyn College for the past 20 years. He focused his presentation on:

- Day One: Teaching Religion 101 – “Rookie Religion” – especially to students new to the New

Church

- Day Two: Teaching conjugal love to traditional and new students
- Days Three and Four: Teaching a revised version of *Rise Above It*, co-authored with his wife, Star: *Rise Above It: Spiritual Development for College Students*

“Rookie Religion,” required of all students, is an introduction to New Church theology through the 21 essential doctrines in *New Jerusalem and its Heavenly Doctrines*. Because there are so many students in the College new to these teachings, he focuses first on the commonalities with traditional Christianity, then gets into what New Church doctrine adds to them. This is consistently ranked by students as one of the most popular courses in the College. A common comment is “this religion makes sense.”

This course, taught by several ministers in the College, is limited to 16 students per classroom, and 90 percent are from a Christian – not necessarily New Church – background. There have been several cases of professed atheists and agnostics becoming true believers as they come to see God as pure love.

Ray said this is like a course on Shakespeare in that we want students to *understand* the teachings of the Church, even if they don’t *agree* with all of them. But he read glowing testimonials from several students, including one who had chosen to be baptized. Not all choose baptism, of course, but “we hope they are forever influenced,” with their lives changed in positive ways. After all, a Charter purpose of the Academy is to *propagate the Heavenly Doctrines of the New Jerusalem* – that is, to plant seeds, not necessarily to see the harvest.

To illustrate the congruence of New Church and traditional Christian teachings Ray had each of us pick a card with a quality (such as love), then pair up with the person holding the complementary trait (wisdom). Using this exercise with students helps them to see that faith, for example, does not stand alone, but belongs with charity. Then they can see such natural pairings throughout our doctrines (i.e. good and truth, will and intellect, bread and wine, etc.).

Day Two – Teaching Conjugal Love: Ray has been teaching this elective course – Religion 273: Religion and Marriage – for 20 years and says it “always gets better.” He uses *Conjugal Love* as a text, which starts with a vision of heaven as a kingdom of uses, then portrays marriage as a united form of use in the highest sense. We become truly human when good and truth come together in the husband and wife as a united form of use. Students new to the Church, he said, may be skeptical at first but eventually come to accept and even love the idea of true marriage lasting forever. “It’s already in there, implanted in them by the Lord,” said Ray. “The teachings in *Conjugal Love* help them to see that what they sense in their heart of hearts is really true.”

Using other resources – such as the book, *How to Avoid Falling in Love with a Jerk* – in conjunction with *Conjugal Love*, students are given the tools for what works in marriage – and what doesn’t. They write essays, using passages from the Writings, on betrothal and marriage and several examples read by Ray were quite moving.

He noted that students and culture have changed over the 20 years he has been teaching the course, but it has become easier to present the ideal of conjugal love because they generally long for order in their lives. In fact, Ray pointed out that as society disintegrates the students seem to be more receptive to genuine truths about marriage, not only because they make sense but also because these teachings are filled with hope.

Days Three and Four – Spiritual Development for College Students: Ray and Star have updated their popular book, *Rise Above It*, for college students. This elective course, which used to be “Moral and Spiritual Life,” has become very popular in the College because what students learn can be immediately applied to their lives. Ray hopes the book will eventually be taught in colleges all over because of its enormous potential to help students in these critical years of moral and spiritual development.

He asks students from many diverse backgrounds to suspend atheistic and agnostic beliefs in order to immerse themselves in the possibility that a loving God really does exist, and that God’s will can be known through living according to the Ten Commandments. It’s similar to practicing the “willing suspension of disbelief” familiar to students of literature – except that in this course they are *suspending disbelief in God*.

As they immerse themselves in this approach, even for just 10 weeks, they experience the deeper truths contained within the Ten Commandments, apply them to their lives, and experience profound changes. One thing new in this version of the book is the inclusion of many positive journal entries from students, which make the concepts relevant to other students’ lives.

As they go through the course, they see the depth within each commandment, such as all the “false gods” in our lives that violate having “no

other gods before My face.” They come to understand that it is by living the Ten Commandments – common to all religions – that the Lord is able to be with us, and that the life of heaven – to which we all aspire – is simply living the commandments.

Again he read sincere and moving journal entries from several student journals, testifying about their experience of putting the commandments to work in their lives.

(Watch for a review of Ray and Star’s book, *Rise Above It: Spiritual Development for College Students*, in a future issue of *New Church Life*.)

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THE LAST JUDGMENT: WHAT IT IS AND WHAT IT ISN'T

The Rev. Jeremy F. Simons

The New Church teaches that the Last Judgment took place in 1757. Since that date the world has changed in many different ways. What kind of changes are due to the effects of the Last Judgment? New Church members have often attributed positive changes in our world to the Last Judgment, but is this true?

This presentation took a look at the different kinds of changes going on in the world and compared them with what is taught about the Last Judgment.

Day 1 – What do the Writings predict about the effects of the Last Judgment and the New Church?

We begin with a discussion of what the Writings predict will happen over time as a result of the Last Judgment. In short, the world will continue pretty much as it has, but eventually the New Church will come into its own, creating a better world.

Day 2 - What are the changes that we currently see in our world? The lecture displayed dozens of charts, graphs and other illustrations showing some of the trends that we can observe both in the West and worldwide.

Some examples of positive trends would be declines in violence, hunger and disease, and increasing political freedom.

Some examples of negative trends are increasing atheism, sexual immorality, and the decline of marriage in the West.

Day 3 - How do we explain the contrast between things that are improving and those not improving?

One explanation is that the changes that have been going on in the world

from the beginning of civilization mostly have to do with a continual increase in knowledge and technology. In 1982 Buckminster Fuller theorized that until 1900 the world's knowledge doubled every century, and that by 1982 it was doubling every 12-13 months. Today it is thought to double every 11-12 hours.

The result is an increasingly sophisticated and organized world, enabling a smoothly functioning society where obvious evils are recognized and dealt with in ways that are impossible in traditional societies.

But not all good things fit into this category. While a modern organized society can effectively deal with murder, violence, theft and lies, and require care for those in need, there are other good things that a modern organized society is less likely to deal with.

Religious commandments against other gods, taking the Lord's name in vain, keeping the Sabbath day, and committing adultery, for example, receive less effective attention. The harm that breaking them causes is less obvious and demonstrable.

Two passages from the Heavenly Doctrines may explain this contrast:

- Since Most Ancient times “there has been a progression of Divine truth from inmosts to ultimates, thus from wisdom to mere ignorance; and that now there is a progression of it from ultimates to interiors, thus from ignorance again to wisdom.” (*Apocalypse Explained* 948)
- “If the successive states of the churches on our earth are considered, it is evident that they have been like the successive states of a man who is being reformed and regenerated; for in order that he may become a spiritual man, he is first conceived, afterwards born, then he grows up, and is subsequently led on further and further into intelligence and wisdom.” (*Apocalypse Explained* 641)

The first passage above describes a world that has gotten worse and will eventually get better. The second passage describes a world that has been continually improving. Together they can be seen to describe a world that has fallen from the wisdom of the ancients, but which is also maturing.

Day 4 – What do these things have to do with the Last Judgment?

The Writings define the Last Judgment in two ways:

- “The Last Judgment is the separation of those who live according to Divine truths, from those who do not live according to them.” (*Apocalypse Explained* 875)
- “The Last Judgment is nothing else than the end of the Church with one group of people and the beginning of it with another.” (*Arcana Coelestia* 3353)

This separation of the good from the evil, and the resulting end of one church and beginning of another, acts like a course-correction in humanity's

spiritual journey.

More specifically, the effect on people is that:

After the Last Judgment brought about the restoration of communication, people have been able to be enlightened and reformed. This means that they have been able to understand the Divine truth of the Word, accept what they have understood and retain what they have accepted, because the intervening obstacles have been taken away. (*Continuation Concerning the Last Judgment* 12)

This brings us to our most important point. The purpose of creation is a heaven from the human race, and the Lord creates that heaven by the regeneration of people individually and of human society as a whole. He does this by means of the Word. The Last Judgment is a part of that process because it corrects misunderstandings and provides for a new understanding, with new information that is provided by the Lord's coming as the Word.

The most important point, therefore, is that the Last Judgment's effect of changing the world is something that takes place only by the spreading of the Word. This is facilitated by the increase of every form of knowledge, and the improvements that this increase brings – but the two should not be confused.

An early New Church heresy is a misunderstanding of this point. Called the “Permeation Theory” it is the idea that the new light from heaven inevitably changes all things in this world, gradually erasing old falsities and implanting the truth, apart from any actual dissemination of the information now revealed in the Heavenly Doctrine. The pages of *New Church Life* are full of arguments opposing the permeation theory.

The key thing that disproves the permeation theory is the teachings that:

The church is made ready for betrothal and then for conjunction or marriage in no other way than by the Word; for the Word is the one and only means of conjunction or marriage, inasmuch as the Word originates from the Lord and is about the Lord, and thus embodies the Lord. (*Apocalypse Revealed* 881)

As explained in *New Church Life*:

The fact is that man can no more receive spiritual truth by immediate influx than he can any other kind of truth; and if we find traces of the teachings of the Writings in modern thought that is not the result of any permeation, but of the widespread dissemination of the Writings themselves by various agencies.” (*Permeation or Dissemination? New Church Life* 1953)

That is, the real effects of the Last Judgment will come only as the Writings themselves are made known, accepted, and put into practice.

The conclusion is that the many improvements that we see in the world are not the result of new light brought about by the Last Judgment but are mostly due to the simple increase of knowledge worldwide. That in turn does set the stage for people to come in contact with and accept the truths of the Word. But by itself it leads to evil things as well as good things – because it is

by nature natural, not spiritual.

In conclusion, then, the world is getting better in many ways. The most visible and dramatic ways are due to the incredible increase in knowledge worldwide. Some is also due to the effects of teachings of the Word that have in one way or another become well-known and have had an impact on the human race. But in our world the end of the Christian Church continues to make itself known, leading to many forms of evil and hardship. The true effects of the Last Judgment only come as the Word is spread and put into practice.

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OUR NEW CHURCH VOCABULARY

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

WORD

The Word is the Lord as to the Divine truth, the Divine truth proceeding through the heavens, and Divine revelation in the heavens and on earth. What the Divine has revealed is with us the Word. For us, therefore, the term is inclusive of the inspired books of the Old and New Testaments and the books written by the Lord through Emanuel Swedenborg which contain the Heavenly Doctrine. (See *Arcana Coelestia* 8200, 10,127; *Verbo* 35)

Some Examples of the Effects of the Last Judgment

The Rev. Jeremy F. Simons

If the real effects of the Last Judgment come only as the Writings themselves are made known, accepted and put into practice, is there any evidence that this is happening or has happened? Below are some instances that might be seen as examples of teachings from the Heavenly Doctrines having found their way into mainstream thought, or having been spread to large numbers of people.

On various websites there are lists of important historical figures who have been influenced by Swedenborg. It is hard to know, of course, how much of an influence there really has been. Three examples of these lists can be found at these websites: www.swedenborg.org/EarlySwedenborgiansInAmerica.aspx; www.swedenborg.org.uk/emanuel_swedenborg/influences; www.newchurch.org/about/swedenborg/

The examples below, some of which are from these lists, are of people and movements that had the effect of spreading the information given in the Heavenly Doctrine to large numbers of people.

Johnny Appleseed

Johnny "*Appleseed*" Chapman brought the teachings of the New Church to significant numbers of people. While traversing Pennsylvania, Ohio and Indiana from 1807 to 1845 to sell seedlings from his nurseries, Chapman gave out new chapters of Swedenborg's books to his customers. He entered frontier settlements, crying, "*News! Fresh from heaven!*" as he gathered up chapters that had been read by the pioneers and gives out new chapters. Congregations throughout the American Midwest may owe their origins to his work, but more significantly, his place as an American icon is known nationwide.

The Transcendentalists

In 1821, Sampson Reed's Harvard University address on genius interested Ralph Waldo Emerson in Swedenborg. By the 1830s, the transcendentalist reading group including Emerson, Bronson Alcott, Henry Thoreau and Margaret Fuller was reading Swedenborg. Emerson showcased Swedenborg, whom he calls "*a colossal soul who lies vast upon our times*," in his book *Representative Men*, a book read widely throughout the 19th century.

Samuel Wilderspin and early childhood education

The idea that children's earliest experiences affect their later life is related to New Church teachings about "remains." Samuel Wilderspin was baptized into the New Church in 1791. In 1820 he and his wife, Sarah, accepted employment as Infant School master and mistress in a school for poor children in Spitalfields, London. With no formal training, he creatively put New Church educational ideas into practice.

With Swedenborg's teachings about remnants in mind, their goal was "*to sow the seeds of virtue, piety, and holiness*" in the minds of the infant poor. In 1823 Wilderspin published his first book on education. The book was to be re-written, expanded on and refined 11 times.

He stopped teaching in 1826 to focus on establishing Infant Schools for the poor in England, Scotland and Ireland. The schools were much admired, and their methods praised. They became a model for infant education in Europe and North America. Wilderspin was responsible for establishing 200 schools in his lifetime. He is also noted for inventing the school playground. (*Sarah Odhner, January 2019*)

Charles Dickens

"Based on Dickens' preoccupation with finding one true and sacred religious doctrine and combined with his established curiosity for elements of a supernatural nature, the 1841 presentation of "*the work on Heaven and Hell*" to Dickens may have opened the door to a great impact on Dickens' life and work. The strong comparisons of the spirits and the similarity of theology between *A Christmas Carol* and *Heaven and Hell* that suggest Swedenborg's direct influence in Dickens' work only reinforce this argument.

"If Dickens was impacted by Swedenborg enough to include pieces of *Heaven and Hell* in *A Christmas Carol*, Dickens may have continued to study more of Swedenborg's numerous works. If this was the case, Dickens' own impact on the Victorian culture through his published works would

suggest a proliferation of Swedenborg's theology among the individuals who came into contact with Dickens's works, not only in Victorian Britain but across the world." (*Mary Lutze, "Swedenborg's Enduring Influence," The New Philosophy 2016*)

Harriet Beecher Stowe and *Uncle Tom's Cabin*

Stowe's famous 1853 novel, the number one American best-seller of the 19th century, made a unique appeal to end slavery. Rather than dwelling only on its injustice and evil, the book emphasizes the goodness and kindness of the peoples of African descent.

Her descriptions of their nature, such as in chapter 38, seem to repeat the teachings about Africans in *Arcana Coelestia* 2604, *Heaven and Hell* 326 and elsewhere, with which she was likely familiar. The effect on the American public was so great that when Lincoln met her, he is said to have remarked: "So you are the little woman who wrote the book that started this great war."

Swedenborg's Influence on the American understanding of death and the afterlife

Many sources throughout the 19th century contributed to a uniquely American view of the afterlife that had its origins in the *Heavenly Doctrine*. The unprecedented grief brought on by the Civil War caused a change in people's thoughts about the afterlife and a search for answers.

For example, Elizabeth Stuart Phelps' book, *The Gates Ajar* (1868), consists entirely of a mother comforting her daughter after the death of her brother by recounting in detail the life that awaits him in heaven – a description she attributes to Swedenborg's *Heaven and Hell*. After *Uncle Tom's Cabin* this book was the number two 19th century best-seller.

George MacDonald (1824-1905).

Scottish novelist, poet and "myth-maker," he is best remembered for his children's stories *At the Back of the North Wind* and *The Princess and the Goblin* and for his adult fantasies, *Phantastes* and *Lilith*. He was inspired by Swedenborg and Blake. He was a friend of Henry Sutton and of Garth Wilkinson and inspired authors such as W.H. Auden, C.S. Lewis, Lewis Carroll, and J.R.R. Tolkien.

His influence, perhaps reflected in the works of those he influenced, seems to have been especially in the idea of the broad sweep of human history leading through hardship to a bright future.

DT Suzuki (1870-1966).

Daisetsu Teitaro Suzuki was an internationally known Japanese Zen Buddhist scholar. He lived in the United States from 1897 to 1908, where he met his future wife, Beatrice Lane (who had studied under William James). It may have been through her that he first encountered Swedenborg's works.

He translated *Heaven and Hell*, *New Jerusalem and its Heavenly Doctrine*, *Divine Love and Wisdom* and *Divine Providence* into Japanese and was a Vice President of the 1910 International Swedenborg Congress. He wrote an essay on Swedenborg, *Suedenborugu*, and described him as “*the Buddha of the North.*”

Swedenborg Foundation, Swedenborg Society, and New Christian Bible Study

The publishers of the Writings, such as the Swedenborg Foundation in the United States and the Swedenborg Society in the United Kingdom, have done much to bring the Heavenly Doctrine to large numbers of people. For example, in the 1960s the Swedenborg Foundation had a policy of sending a free book to anyone who requested one. By the late 1960s they were sending upwards of 10,000 books per year to Ghana. In a 10-year period they had sent more than 100,000 books there, compared with very few anywhere else. This work effectively launched the New Church in West Africa, where there are currently scores of New Church congregations.

Currently in the United States the Foundation's *offTheLeftEye* YouTube channel has more than 70,000 subscribers, with some of its videos having been viewed more than a million times. The New Christian Bible Study website, an independent effort, similarly has many thousands of users and is fast becoming a major online resource for studying the Word.

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The Holy Supper: The Gate Into Heaven

By the Rev. Dr. Erik E. Sandstrom

Since the New Church was initiated by the descent of the Holy City New Jerusalem, with the publication of the Writings, from 1749 to 1771; and since the Writings are the Holy City bringing heavenly things to earth (*Heavenly Doctrines* 1-7; *True Christian Religion* 779; *Apocalypse Revealed* 896); and since they reveal life after death and a heaven “from the human race” (*Divine Providence* 323, *Arcana Coelestia* 2034) for the sake of which marriage delights exist (*Heaven and Hell* 402) – it is of interest to know there is an actual “gate into heaven” and a “key” for it, for New Church members and all the world. That gate is the Holy Supper, now to come into “the use itself” by knowing the “spiritual sense of the Word.” (*True Christian Religion* 700)

There are “only two universal gates” – the sacraments of baptism and the Holy Supper. Baptism is a gate entering the Church, the Holy Supper a gate “into heaven.” (*Ibid.* 669) “There are no other gates” or sacraments. (*Ibid.* 721; see also 729)

The Holiest Act of Worship

The Holy Supper is the holiest act, and it is attended with the true view of the Divine Human, with the spiritual sense of the Word opened up, giving us a true understanding of why the two only sacraments are holy. That is why it is conjunctive: it joins our minds to heavenly minds. (*Arcana Coelestia* 2177.8) If we also live by the Lord’s commandments, the Holy Supper “conjoins us with the Lord, and consociates us with angels.” (*Apocalypse Revealed* 849)

That is why a part of the New Church manner of participating in the Holy Supper is to know what is meant by the bread and the wine, all the more so since “scarcely any know that the bread signifies the Lord’s love toward the universal human race, and the reciprocity of man; and the wine signifies charity.” (*Arcana Coelestia* 6789)

However, even without knowing the meaning, “with those who receive the bread and wine in a holy manner, conjunction is effected with heaven and

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with the Lord through these; and the goods of love and charity flow in through the angels, who then do not think of bread and wine, but of love and charity.” This conjunction takes place “when the man is in good, **without his knowing it.**” (*Ibid.*, my emphasis)

It seems we can receive the benefits, whether knowingly or not. For the external practice invites an influx from heaven, so just partaking in a “holy act in a holy manner”

allows angels to perceive the internal reality within it. (*Ibid.* 4211) It is the *act* that is holy. This perhaps is of comfort, if you were wondering why there is no visible effect from partaking of this most holy sacrament.

A Sense of Respect for the Symbols

Still, one wonders how do we come into a state of holiness? How do we prepare for this sacrament? “Unless they are received *with respect* what is Divine does not flow into them.” (*Ibid.* 10208:3, my emphasis)

Respect depends on what we are thinking while we are participating. Dignity in performing and partaking in external rituals comes with knowing the internal meaning. We do it by thinking of what the elements stand for: “Bread is the Lord and His mercy, what is of Love to Him, charity toward the neighbor, and amendment of life. Wine means charity to the neighbor.” (*Ibid.* 4217.2)

When we do this there “is a connection of man with heaven, and through heaven with the Lord. The bread and wine have become symbols and unite the man who is in holiness of life with heaven, and through heaven with the Lord.” (*Ibid.*) Showing such respect is well within every adult’s behavior, which is why you “come of age” before participating. (*True Christian Religion* 721) Hence is our long-standing reverent manner of partaking of the Holy Supper.

Nothing Holy in Them

It might be surprising to find that there is nothing holy in the bread and the wine. It is the holy supper, a sacrament, but the bread and wine are not holy: they are **symbols** which we show respect, thereby associating the member’s state of holiness of life with heaven and conjoining him or her with the Lord. So, it is the *act* that is holy – “the most holy act of worship.”

Here the angels with whom we are associated quickly come to the rescue:

they are the “minds” we are conjoined with in the Holy Supper. The era of representation came to an end with the Lord’s Advent, and internal things are now regarded – mental things not externals. (*Ibid.* 1003) That applies to the Holy Supper: the internal things apply to correspondences and conjunction, not primarily the external elements. When some in the other life said of the Holy Supper, “This is a mystery, it’s a mystery!” the angels – probably smiling – quickly agreed: “Yes, but a mystery that can be understood.” (*True Christian Religion* 621) Understanding the mystery is seeing its purpose: “This takes place when man with the understanding sees the holy things contained in [the sacraments].” (*Ibid.* 700)

So how do we understand this holiness, and the “use itself”? The angels go on to explain: to give us understanding from their heavenly minds, the ones with which we are conjoined by the Holy Supper:

The bread and wine do not bring this about; there is nothing holy about them. But material bread and spiritual bread correspond to each other, and so do material wine and spiritual wine. Spiritual bread is the holiness of love, spiritual wine the holiness of faith. Both of these are from the Lord, and both are the Lord. Thus there is a conjunction of the Lord with man, and of man with the Lord. [Conjunction] is not with the bread and wine, but with the love and faith of the man who has repented. Being conjoined with the Lord is also being brought into heaven.” (*Ibid.* 621.13; *Apocalypse Revealed* 224e)

That is why Christians are mistaken to think that the elements are “holy in themselves.” (*Arcana Coelestia* 4700) They even “adore” the host! But they do not know that their “holiness” comes from “bread” meaning the holy of love and charity in heaven, and “wine” meaning the holy of charity and faith there. (*Ibid.* 4700, cf. 3464, 3735)

This is why the holiness, the use itself, comes from knowing the internal sense. The essential conjunction is thus not between the holy of love and of faith and the elements, although that conjunction also exists. Instead the essential conjunction that takes place in the Holy Supper is between:

1. The holiness of love and faith of the repentant man
2. The love and wisdom of the Lord

This is an interior and mental conjunction. But there is no essential conjunction with the sacramental elements – bread and wine – themselves, which are but “symbols” of the higher things. The conjunction is on the mental level, between our minds and the minds of heaven, and with the Lord, then also between our minds and the elements. “The spiritual bread and wine corresponds to the natural bread and wine.”

A secondary link is between our minds and the bread and wine. Do we have to think of all that when coming forward?

So, the words to remember of the Lord's passion are: "Do this in remembrance of me." And "I lay down my life for the sheep." These are simple phrases to think when coming forward.

Remember the Lord's Passion

What should we think of? The Lord's Passion on the cross: "I advise him, when he takes the bread and wine . . . to think to himself . . . that it is the holiest act of worship, and to remember Christ's passion and His love for man's salvation. For He says: Do this in remembrance of me." (*Luke 22:19*; see also *True Christian Religion* 709, cf *Life* 42, *Arcana Coelestia* 9393)

We can have only a little awareness of how to maximize this conjunction, how to prepare a right attitude, since as we saw conjunction

also takes place "without man's knowing it." It's OK to come forward even when surprised by a sacrament, and you are just off the street, so to speak. But it is clear that the Sacrament needs to be associated with a knowledge of what is meant by the bread and the wine, with respect, and with thoughts on this meaning, and on the Lord's passion.

So, the words to remember of the Lord's passion are: "Do this in remembrance of me." And "I lay down my life for the sheep." (*John* 10:15,17; 15:13; *True Christian Religion* 709) These are simple phrases to think when coming forward.

The Correct Doctrinal View of the Lord's Passion

The Lord's Passion is the apex of all Doctrine, the full weight of reason for the Second Advent, and the giving of the Heavenly Doctrines. But how often do we think of the Lord's Passion?

We more often recall the gross error of the Christian Church that "Christ died for our sins." He took away our sins and left us under no obligation to overcome our own evils, erasing them by Christ's *atonement* for them. Totally false, of course – that we are all saved either by the Catholic Mass, the Orthodox hesychasm,¹ or Reformed grace and faith.

Well, it just isn't so. We must exchange these false views and install the grandly stated truth of the matter: He did not *take away* our sins, thus did not *die for our sins*, but instead He *carried* or *bore* our sins. We could say, He *suffered* them, or suffered *from* them.

1 Hesychasm, the Orthodox inner thought ceasing to register the senses, in order to achieve an experiential knowledge of God. (*Wikipedia*)

By the passion of the cross He did not take away sins, but bore them as the Prophet, that is to say, He suffered that there should be represented, in Himself, the church in respect to its maltreatment of the Word. (*Lord 65*)

He suffered Himself to be treated as the Word had been treated because He was the Word. (*Ibid. 15*)

The proper New Church view of the Passion of Christ, therefore, is that the Lord was crucified because the Word had already been crucified.

The proper New Church view of the Passion of Christ, therefore, is that the Lord was crucified because the Word had already been crucified. He “suffered” the same fate to befall Him because all of humanity’s evils were the entrance for the hells to tempt Him, and that was the only manner in which He could be tempted and conquer the hells. (cf. *Arcana Coelestia* 1573: 7,8)

He was willing to “bow the heavens and come down” by taking upon Himself the burden of all hereditary evils – of the entire human race! He “bore” our sins, that is He suffered from the hereditary tendencies to evils of every kind, and conquered hell thereby. That was how evil had been done for centuries to His Word. The “wiles and venom” of His temptations were consequently 1000 times as severe. (*Ibid.* 1820, 1573) That was how the Lord made Himself into the Redeemer, the very purpose of the Advent. (*Lord 33*)

That is how the Lord suffered for us: we ourselves did that to Him. We still do. Our highest motive for shunning evils as sins against the Lord is therefore to prevent the Lord suffering from *our* sins. (cf. *Arcana Coelestia* 8925) Do not harm the Lord by the evil we intend or do, the falsities we think or speak. Such a mentality springs from innocence.

By overcoming all those hereditary evils, and the hells themselves flowing in through them – from the time of His infancy to the cross – He can now remove the same evils from us when we ask for His help. We do so when coming to the Holy Supper.

Salvation, Regeneration, Redemption

What are the “internal qualities” of the mind that the Lord after His Advent now regards? (*Ibid.* 1003) The effectiveness of the Holy Supper, and the reason for its institution as a Sacrament to be performed in perpetuity, is for the sake of the interior uses, namely of regeneration and salvation: for the Holy Supper brings the Lord’s Divine Human, the source of Holiness, together with man’s own regeneration and salvation: “That it is the Lord’s Divine Human and Holy proceeding by means of which and from which come life and salvation, is

By overcoming all those hereditary evils, and the hells themselves flowing in through them – from the time of His infancy to the cross – He can now remove the same evils from us when we ask for His help. We do so when coming to the Holy Supper.

very well known from the words of the Holy Supper: ‘This is My Body;’ ‘this is My Blood;’ which is the Lord’s Divine Human.” (*Ibid.* 2343.9)

The Holy Supper is also compared to “spiritual nourishment,” which is “for everlasting salvation.” (*True Christian Religion* 709) Those are two good reasons to take it repeatedly, or “once or twice a year.” (*Ibid.* 530)

But how do regeneration and redemption happen? We always wonder: how far along am I in my regeneration? Well, these are tied to the Holy Supper. (*Ibid.* 729) For those who are “regenerated” this sacrament is a “signature and seal that they are the Sons of God.” “The Holy Supper effects this” because the Lord’s Divine

Human is present. The “whole of redemption” from the Lord in His Divine Human is present in this sacrament. (*True Christian Religion* 728)

Again, how? Not in the elements, which are not in-and-by themselves holy. (*Apocalypse Revealed* 244) Instead, they are present when a “person takes the bread which is the Lord’s body, when he takes the wine, which is the Lord’s blood.” The conjunction that takes place is “with anyone by means of the good of love directed to Him and coming from Him. And, anyone is conjoined to the Lord by means of the good of faith in Him and coming from Him.” (*Heavenly Doctrine* 213)

So faith – believing in the Lord and in the sacrament – entails and effects such a conjunction. But because worship is “one thing, and regeneration another” (*Arcana Coelestia* 10206), consequently regeneration takes place in life, *after* partaking of the sacrament.

So in worship, we are conjoined with the Lord when taking the elements, according to our attitude of respect: “This conjunction with the Lord by means of the sacrament of the Supper only occurs in the case of those who are in possession of the good of love and faith to the Lord and coming from the Lord. In their case the Holy Supper is a means of conjoining, but in the case of others there is presence, but not conjunction.” (*Heavenly Doctrine* 213)

The essential ingredient in the Holy Supper is the informed attitude, and faith. But it also can happen without knowing it, without conscious awareness. So just walk deliberately.

Self-Examination and Repentance

These we can do before coming forward. For redemption happens after temptation, and temptations are part – or progress reports – of regeneration. And regeneration takes place doing the right thing in daily life, mostly in our jobs, making it a good habit. For everyone is regenerated “according to their occupation.” (*True Christian Religion* 580) It happens when we “prepare for the future,” and “remove intervening obstacles” which raise anxiety and doubt. (*Divine Providence* 296.10) We all remember such instances, right? But the only known conscious ingredient, over which we are in charge in our life, is self-examination and repentance.

Now you tell me!

That is why the Holy Supper is a sacrament of repentance. (*Divine Providence* 122) The very purpose of the Holy Supper is to look to the Lord alone in our repentance! It is by this Divine “means of mercy” we had for the gate of heaven, namely repentance of life, we are led to our regeneration. And self-examination precedes repentance. So here is the great clue for your preparation for the Holy Supper: “it is not necessary to list all your sins”! (*True Christian Religion* 539)

No Open Listing of Sins

We “need not recount all our sins.” Here is something of a relief, in fact a danger to avoid: give no blanket statement such as, “I am totally evil.” It might be true, but it leads to blindness to all evil. So, let us not dupe ourselves into thinking a blanket confession will remove them: (*Ibid.* 278a)

After his confession (that he is in all sins) he also believes himself clean and washed, when nevertheless he is unclean and unwashed . . . for the confession of all sins is the lulling to sleep of all, and at length blindness. (*Ibid.*)

Into the Closet

Blindness to our evils is not repentance. Instead, we should just pick one at a time. “Anger” always works, since every evil appears as anger. Indignation is different, since we feel that when seeing injustice. Angels feel that, too, so you can keep your indignation, or outrage. But anger is different.

The essential ingredient in the Holy Supper is the informed attitude, and faith. But it also can happen without knowing it, without conscious awareness. So just walk deliberately.

So, pick the most embarrassing sin, the closest secret, one you would be most embarrassed to have known – or lacking that, just pick getting mad at others – since it is the singe of hellfire (*Matthew 5.22*), and confess it in total silence and privacy, to the Lord's ears alone. You can do this whenever.

Since in the Holy Supper we have a conjunction with the “minds of heaven,” so we can exercise our two levels of thought, and from our higher or interior thought look down on our outward or more exterior thought. From higher thought we can see what “our will” is doing in “our lower thought.” That makes our thoughts a pure-factory – therapeutic. (*Divine Providence 278; True Christian Religion 659*)

And rest assured that such a confession brings forgiveness: 1. The Lord forgives all sins. 2. He led you to see it to begin with: “The reason a confessed sin is forgiven by the Lord, is first, He forgives all sins.” But of more comfort: “He guided you in your self-examination which disclosed the sin, He inspired sadness” at seeing it, and also gave you the “effort to desist from it and begin a new life.” (*Ibid. 539*)

The Lord was behind the personal confession, which is why forgiveness came with it. A new life looks exactly as the same old, same old – but minus that sin. That is repentance of life!

This is involved in “going into your closet and shutting the door and pray to the Father who sees in secret,” (*Matthew 6.6*) which means “interiorly, as one is in oneself.” (*Arcana Coelestia 5694*) That is actual repentance. (*True Christian Religion 530*)

Although you may have confessed this way before coming forward, you may also discover an evil “afterwards” – after coming forward. In either case, then say to yourself: “I will not do this, because it is against the Lord.” (*Ibid. 530*)

That is redemption: you are being held back from that evil by the Lord our Redeemer. (cf. *Ibid. 121*)

Our Individual Redemption

And that is the individual's redemption: it comes after temptations to do our self-confessed evil again: but then you recall the Sacrament, your key to the gate into heaven, and say, “I will not.”

So, “After His universal redemption the Lord reduced to order all things in heaven and in hell; with anyone after temptation He does in like manner, that is He reduces to order all things of heaven and the world that are in them. . . . He establishes what pertains to the church in the person, making them a church in particular.” (*Ibid. 599*) That is meant by, “Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you; not as the world gives, give I unto you.” (*John 14.27*) You become a church in smallest unit.

The Priesthood Administers Holy Things

Priests are to “administer the holy things of the Church,” and their “honor and dignity” or “status” are to be accorded to them as they themselves attribute all these to the Lord. (*Heavenly Doctrines* 317) For priests are just the “means” for the goods and truths of the Church: the Church should be “loved above all” by the members – who by the way are called “human angels” (*Ibid.* 30), although not by themselves! And “priests should be loved secondarily, only for the sake of the Church, because they only serve.” (*True Christian Religion* 415)

The priest is “not the messenger of the Lord, but the truth he teaches, is!” (*Apocalypse Explained* 130.8; *Malachi* 2.7) His message is the Word of the Lord, which now in the New Church is “doctrine,” meant by “take up your bed and walk.” (*Arcana Coelestia* 10309) That doctrine of the New Church is the Holy City, New Jerusalem. (*Apocalypse Revealed* 896) This Word of Heavenly Doctrine is preached, while the Word of Sacred Scriptures is the basis and foundation of holiness.

The Holy Supper is holy from the Lord as the Word, and He is “the all in worship, in the Church.” (*Arcana Coelestia* 2811) Thus to the priesthood belongs the Office, which is from the Lord alone. (*Ibid.* 9809.2,6: *True Christian Religion* 661)

The Source of Holiness: The Ark of the Covenant

The primary source of the holy things of the Church is the Word of the Lord: “It is in everybody's mouth that the Word is from God, is divinely inspired, and is therefore holy.” (*Sacred Scripture* 1)

That holiness has been carried forward from pre-Advent times by the Tabernacle and the Temple, each housing the Ark of the Covenant, containing the Two Tables of stone with the Ten Commandments. (*Apocalypse Explained* 701.21) That is why there was the Holy of Holies. (*Sacred Scripture* 46) For the Ten Commandments are the “rudiments” and “first fruits” of the Word, (*True Christian Religion* 260, *Apocalypse Explained* 1073) the “complex of all religion” (*True Christian Religion* 283) and contain “universally all things of doctrine and life, faith and charity.” (*Ibid.* 289)

Pillar of Fire and Cloud

Everything done in the Tabernacle, or during the 40 years in the wilderness, and later in the Temple, received its holiness from the presence of the Ark: the encampment, marching, (*Life* 55) the sacrifices and incense. (*Ibid.*; *Apocalypse Revealed* 529; *Arcana Coelestia* 10129) All the external things the Third Ancient Church Israel did preserved holiness by all the ceremonies, “by which they were sanctified, that is to say washings, sprinklings of blood, and

anointing, which [by themselves] do not in any way whatever touch internal things.” (*Ibid.* 8788) They were symbols, just as the bread and the wine.

This is the same number, together with No. 8588, which describes how the angelic heavens, which at that time was the celestial heaven which had sovereignty (*Ibid.* 8054, 6306, 6914, 6858, 8294, 6854), were actually present with the Sons of Israel, bringing with them what was heavenly. A cohort of internally good but simple spirits were right next to the Israelites, and in them internal innocence was posited by the angels. (*Ibid.* 8588) The result was the pillar of fire and cloud, really a “column of angels” – probably witnessed *en masse* through their spiritual eyes.

Books of Moses

So, holiness was preserved down to the Advent. The Ark of the Covenant was holy because of the Ten Commandments on the tables of stone, but the Books of Moses were also placed in it: The Books of Moses remained after the Ark was lost,² preserving the link of holiness via the Hebrew text, and reading it in post-captivity synagogues. The Jews continually read the holy Torah (*Last Judgment* post. 251) so at the time of the Advent, their “deep and holy respect for the Word in which every single thing was representative and a meaningful sign of Divine things” was one reason the church “was established among them.” (*Arcana Coelestia* 3479.2)

The Books of Moses, or the Law or Old Testament, preserved an intimate connection between the angels of heaven and the Church on earth, with even the religious observances of the Church “representing the Lord.” (*Ibid.* 9349) For the entire Old Testament contained the very whole life of the Lord, “down to the very thoughts,” long before He came, allowing the Lord’s glorification to be “as present” or already accomplished, to the angels. Otherwise they couldn’t wait, and the Lord would have come right after Noah’s Ark landed on Ararat! (*Ibid.* 2523)

So, with Moses read in Synagogues, the Lord began His public ministry by reading from Isaiah, “the spirit of Jehovah is upon Me” (*Isaiah* 61: 1,2; *Luke* 4: 16-19), in the Synagogue in Nazareth. This reading mentioned “Jehovah’s anointed,” which meant “The Lord in respect of His Divine Human.” (*Arcana Coelestia* 9954.11; *Apocalypse Explained* 375.17) “Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing,” (*Luke* 4.21) meant that the Lord “fulfilled everything in the Word, everything was brought to completion.” (*True Christian Religion* 262, *Lord* 11) So reading the Old Testament preserved the link – and holiness –

2 It may be in Axum, Ethiopia. Maybe a myth, but it has been documented. Tantalizing. Ethiopia is the only nation in early *Genesis* still extant, same place.

between the heavens and the Church on earth. He Himself became that link at the time of the Advent.

The Lord Himself While on Earth

The Lord is the “Word made flesh.” On earth “He Himself taught Divine Truth.” That is meant by, “If anyone thirsts let him come to Me and drink. Whoever believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his belly will flow rivers of living water. (*John* 7.37-38; *Arcana Coelestia* 9818.14)

After the Resurrection, He continued to instruct in truth, again using angels and spirits to teach. This method was the Holy Spirit breathed on His disciples, (*Arcana Coelestia* 9818:14) eventually resulting in the Second Coming, when He spoke “doctrine” once and for all, the Holy City of Doctrine descending from Him out of heaven. (*Apocalypse Revealed* 896, *New Jerusalem and its Heavenly Doctrine* 7, Lord 63)

The Holy Land

Although the Lord Himself on earth was the only source of holiness and truth, there was some other help: the heavens were still conjoined with the geographical territory of that area since the times of the Most Ancient Church: place names had been preserved because of their correspondence to heaven, from most ancient and ancient times for no other reason. (*De Verbo* 15) That is why, at the time of the Advent, this territorial and correspondential relationship between the spiritual world and the Church of Israel incorporated this conjunction. (*Apocalypse Explained* 638:16) For example, the Mount of Olives, by its most ancient location and correspondence, “brought conjunction of the Lord and heaven with the world.” (*Ibid.* 638.10)

Not only did the different geographical locations represent the Lord’s states on earth, but the fulfillment of the Word depended on the Lord going to those places. (*Arcana Coelestia* 2523, 5620) This ceased to be the case only after the Resurrection. (*Ibid.* 1003)

As Jesus read His own scriptures, in the Holy Land, He could fulfill them and so bring the holiness that was in and from the Divine Itself in Him, down into the Human made Divine. The consequent holiness in the Divine Human is meant by “blood” in sacrifices, as we read:

“As regards 'blood' meaning that Holiness . . . ‘Gather yourselves from all around to My sacrifice which I am sacrificing for you, . . . upon the mountains

So reading the Old Testament preserved the link – and holiness – between the heavens and the Church on earth. He Himself became that link at the time of the Advent.

of Israel, so that . . . You will eat the flesh of the mighty, and drink the blood of the princes of the earth.' (*Ezekiel* 39:17-21) 'Eating flesh and drinking wine' means making Divine Good and Divine Truth one's own, and so making one's own the Holiness which proceeds from the Lord's Divine Human." (*Arcana Coelestia* 4735 5.)

From Sacrifices to Christian then New Christian Holy Supper

The Lord made His own the Holiness brought down to the Divine Human. As He made His Human Divine, the holiness was present in Him, and everything holy proceeded from Him, in step as His Human was made Divine. That was how the Word was actually made flesh, i.e. celestial things were "implanted and made Divine." (*Ibid.* 1469)

It is from His Holiness that the Holy Supper is called the feast of the great God: "Come and gather yourselves together to the supper of the great God." (*Revelation* 19.17) It means the establishment of the New Church, to learn the truths and goods of the Church, (*Apocalypse Explained* 831) and the Holy Supper. (*True Christian Religion* 705)

The Internal Sense Conjoins us with Heavenly Minds

The Lord's glorification was represented by the sacrifices of the Israelites, and they were transferred to the Holy Supper, with the Lord Himself being the means and source of the holiness. (*Heavenly Doctrines* 221) His Divine Human is the common denominator in all sacrifices and offerings. (*Arcana Coelestia* 4211) That is why the Holy Supper has the same meaning as the meat and drink offerings of the Israelites. (*Ibid.* 4581:6)

The transfer of holiness from pre-Advent to post-Advent times involved the angels transferring their presence from the ancient sacrifices to the modern sacrament. (*Ibid.* 4127:2) However, new angels were associated with the Christian Church, from the new "spiritual heaven" established after the Lord's resurrection. (*Ibid.* 6858)

Our "modern era" has its roots in the fact that people who lived between the flood and the Advent, could now as "angels of the spiritual or second heaven," (*Arcana Coelestia* 8054) dwell with "Christians" whose sacraments included the two the Lord Himself established: Baptism and the Holy Supper. For up to the Advent, the celestial angels, from people who lived prior to the Flood, had dwelt with the representations of the Hebrews and Israelites, right down to reading the Torah in synagogues.

The "Scepter of Judah" ruled right up to "Shiloh coming." In Christian times, however, the spiritual heaven dwelt with the church, via the New Testament as basis, with the New Covenant also being in the Holy Supper. (*True Christian Religion* 730; *Apocalypse Explained* 392:8)

The actual transfer itself, from Old Testament Sacrifice to New Testament Sacrament, came precisely via those very “hard sayings” which caused many followers of the Lord to abandon Him: “Unless you eat my flesh, drink my blood.” (*John* 6:50-58; *Heavenly Doctrines* 222) But these unsettling words have an internal sense, which conjoin angels and men: The flesh or bread and blood or wine, refer to the Divine Good and Truth of the Lord. (*Ibid.*)

The spiritual heaven and the nascent “new star” of the primitive Apostolic Church could be conjoined for a spell, (*True Christian Religion* 176) even though it was a Christianity dying “from its cradle.” (*Ibid.* 378) But the Holy Supper was instituted by the Lord Himself – a representative act of “such holiness that human minds are [thereby] conjoined with heavenly minds.” (*Arcana Coelestia* 2177:8)

Christian Link Up to New Church

The first Christian Church, in its initial integrity of genuine charity, came into the use of the Sacraments of Baptism and the Holy Supper, has led to the New Church coming into the “use itself,” and the “dawning new Christianity’s” understanding of the spiritual sense of the sacraments. (*True Christian Religion* 668)

Catholics practiced the Eucharist, or Mass, until they obscured the Word to the point that it had to be rescued, in Providence, by the Reformation headed by Luther. (*Apocalypse Revealed* 759; *Apocalypse Explained* 1069; *Sacred Scripture* 110) Just as the Reformation “restored the Word to the world,” (*Invitation to the New Church* 14) so also was the Holy Supper rescued from Transubstantiation, thus maintaining the Reformed possibility of conjunction.

Transubstantiation is called “the material presence of the Body and Blood of Christ,” (*Spiritual Experiences* 5842): viz. that the bread and wine become the blood and flesh of Christ Himself in the ingestion process. Christ himself is thus “transubstantiated” – a position affirmed at the Second Vatican Council (1962 – 1965):

In the most blessed sacrament of the Eucharist "the body and blood, together with the soul and divinity, of our Lord Jesus Christ and, therefore, *the whole Christ is truly, really, and substantially* contained. This presence is called 'real' . . . it is a *substantial* presence by which Christ, God and man, makes himself wholly and entirely present." (The Catechism of the Catholic Church: paragraph 1374)

Vatican II in 1965, thus affirmed the "Eucharistic sacrifice is the source and summit of the Christian life." And: "The Eucharistic sacrifice is the center and root of the whole life of the priest." The Eucharist cannot be altered by any priest; “it is to be a means of spreading the Church.”

That was why the Reformed providentially maintained the link with heaven in the Sacrament, in a new way. However, they “went to the sacrament

of the Supper, and still they did not desist from the evils of their former life.” (*Conjugal Love* 16) But they did go to the sacrament. So, Christians have been at various levels of participation, treating the sacrament with a variety of mistaken, false or naïve views, while still others mock the Holy Supper. (See *Arcana Coelestia* 2178:8; *True Christian Religion* 677)

Transfer from Christian to New Church Sacrament

So, there was a Christian use of the Sacraments. Just as at the time of the First Advent the conjunction between heaven and the church was “altogether broken” (*Arcana Coelestia* 2243), and the Lord became the link, so also at the time of the Second Advent “total damnation stood threatening at the door,” (*Brief Exposition* 117) and the Second Advent took place with a transfer of the Christian to the New Church Holy Supper, and priesthood, and form of worship.

This constitutes the phrase “to come into the use itself” (*ipsum usum fructum*), (*True Christian Religion* 700) of the sacrament, restored to its true conjunctive nature. And that as we have seen requires knowing the internal sense. It is because of the “signification” of bread and wine, i.e. the internal sense of wine and bread in the literal sense, or their representation today, that they effect conjunction with the Lord and heaven. This is why the New Church is titled “Christianity now for the first time beginning to dawn.” (*Ibid.* 700)

Just an awareness of the spiritual sense of the Word is enough for the correct performance of the Holy Supper. You all know flesh and bread, blood and wine, mean “exactly the same” as the good and the truth of faith, conjoined with the Love and Wisdom of the Lord. (*Heavenly Doctrines* 222; *Arcana Coelestia* 9127) So there is no such thing as transubstantiation, no salvation by grace, no magic.

Conclusion

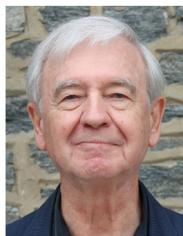
Partaking of this most holy sacrament may effect conjunction with or “without our knowing it.” The knowledge and thought of the internal sense of the elements, and thought of the Lord’s passion, adds to the conjunction. This most holy act preserves the whole history of how holiness has continued from one church to the next.

In the Holy Supper, the Lord Himself in His Divine Human is the historic and vital link, and He is the overall doctrine that governs this sacrament. The Lord made His Human completely Divine, even down to the “recipient organs,” (*Arcana Coelestia* 5078) displacing them with an actualized “divine natural” (*Wisdom* 233) by “wiping out the maternal [physical] forms, and receiving Divine forms *in their place*.” (*Arcana Coelestia* 6872, added emphasis) The Lord made Himself fully God-Man. (*Ibid.* 4738)

The Holy Supper in the New Church is *not* the same as in the Christian Church, because of the false view of the Passion as being “redemption itself,” (True Christian Religion 132) leading to instant salvation by grace. Instead, we are saved by the means of Divine mercy, repentance. The New Church has consequently come into the “use itself” of the sacraments by knowing their internal meaning and how the Lord is present in them.

The Holy Supper is the most holy act of worship because it comes together with the Word of the Lord, the revelation of the spiritual sense and understanding it, and the establishment of the New Church with a New Church priesthood. Self-examination and repentance result in forgiveness, and then temptations are overcome by remembering that sacrament, and saying “I will not” – and a new life, which is redemption, salvation, the key to the gate of heaven.

The Holy Supper in the New Church is *not* the same as in the Christian Church, because of the false view of the Passion as being “redemption itself,” leading to instant salvation by grace. Instead, we are saved by the means of Divine mercy, repentance.



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Church News

Compiled by Bruce Henderson

SEOUL KOREAN NEW CHURCH DEDICATION

The Rt. Rev. Brian W. Keith

On January 12 I dedicated the new church building for our Seoul New Church congregation and the Korean New Church Corporation. **David Frazier**, our executive director, also attended, as it was a joint venture with the General Church and he had worked closely with them on it.

This has been a tremendous effort on their parts. Using money locally donated, then doubled by our Healthy Church Match program, plus the sale of their previous building, they were able to create a facility that will serve them much better, both now and into the future. And it will also become a center for the development of the New Church in all of Asia.

Their previous building was located on a back alley that was hard to find, even if one knew where to look. Also, there was only one parking spot anywhere nearby. While it gave them a start, it was a hindrance in attempts to spread the New Church there.

The location of the new building is on a prominent corner – with an elementary school, public park and cultural center also situated there. It is easy to locate, has parking, and is in a well-known area.

There are two buildings. On the corner is a five-story structure. The top floor is their meeting room which also houses a growing collection of the Writings and collateral works translated into Korean, Japanese and Chinese. (They currently have in Korean *True Christian Religion*, the *Four Doctrines*, and *Heaven and Hell*, in addition to several others. Three of their clergy are actively producing more translations.)

The ground level floor will be rented as a convenience store and the intervening floors will be rented as a tutoring center. In this way the building generates income for their operations, and as the church grows they can take over floors as needed. The basement also has a relatively large gathering room with a full kitchen for church functions.

Next door to this structure is the church. Actually, the first floor is the

manse and the second is the church. After leaving one's shoes in the downstairs foyer and walking up the lovely wood stairs, the worship space opens up. The chancel has a rough-cut white stone wall behind it, with a beautiful stained-glass window on the side. On the right is the church office. On the left is a wooden wall of cabinets for storage, space for a baby grand piano, and a vestry off the chancel.

The dedication service had more than 70 people in attendance. As elsewhere, New Church Koreans live scattered about, and this event brought many together, including a number from the southern congregation in Kwangju.

The Rev. Yong (John) Jin, the Regional Pastor, and I were on chancel for the service. After opening the old copy of the Word, John read lessons in Korean. **The Rev. Kyu Dae Yang**, recently retired as the Seoul pastor due to health issues, showed a PowerPoint presentation on the planning and construction of the buildings. After a leading layperson brought forward a new copy of the Word, I pronounced the words of dedication and placed it on the altar.

John then gave an address in Korean, speaking to the church being more than a building, and how this church could bring the people together. The service also had spirited singing and musical solos. After the service we gathered in the basement of the corner building for a wonderful luncheon. (The pastor, the **Rev. Soon Cheul Lee**, hosted the dedication and then led the worship service in the church the next day.)

It is hard to characterize the excitement and hope this new building has produced. Yes, they went through many challenges as plans had to be revised and obstacles overcome, significantly delaying the construction. But the discouragement is gone and they are looking forward to this building serving them and others for many years to come. May this truly become a beacon of the New Church, a shining light for people to find the Lord God Jesus Christ and the life that stems from His truths.

(See photos on pages 165 and 166)

STATE OF BRYN ATHYN COLLEGE 2019

On January 28, President Brian Blair and senior administrators delivered an update on the College to an audience of live and online viewers. The presentation included general areas of challenge and opportunity for the College, as well as recent developments in academic offerings and student life programming.

President Blair described the strategic direction of the College in terms of where it has come from and what the current demographic and technological landscape looks like. He reminded the audience that up until recent history,

the College was represented by a majority of students who sought only their associate degree before transferring to another institution. The expansion of baccalaureate-awarding majors and the development of new academic programs, such as the nursing agreement with Jefferson University, have resulted in a majority of students who are now graduating with four-year degrees.

The president also showed data collected from social media platforms, indicating a shift in employment statistics for Bryn Athyn College graduates. There was a decline in those deciding to stay at home or pursue unpaid work, and there was a rise in those employed in the business, health and sales sectors.

Looking ahead, he spoke about future developments related to distance learning and certificate programs, both of which will open doors to large, untapped portions of the population that are used to having information at their fingertips, with options to access their education in a format convenient to their schedules and geographic locations. Noting that the underpinning of the College's spiritual mission informs every strategic decision made, the president acknowledged that staying technologically competitive is vital to the delivery of that mission in the current higher education environment.

Degree Programs and Academic Initiatives

Wendy Closterman, Ph.D., Chief Academic Officer and Dean of Faculty, shared the most recent developments within the academic purview of the College. Her opening statements eloquently placed this work within the context of its purpose, explaining that the changes are “new manifestations of the mission that has sustained and nourished Bryn Athyn College for 140 years and we trust will continue to do so for many years to come.”

Dean Closterman reviewed the line-up of offerings at the College, including 11 baccalaureate programs, three graduate degrees, 17 minors, and associate degrees with 13 areas of emphasis. Most recent on this list were the bachelor's in mathematics; the BFA in building arts; minors in finance, marketing and medieval studies, and the Master of Special Education with an emphasis on literacy.

An accelerated degree program was also recently announced, which offers a guided pathway for students with strong academic skills who want to complete college in three years. The four-year program remains the best option for most students, but the new program will offer an opportunity for qualified students to take an accelerated path, which means they will pay less in tuition and could enter the workforce earlier.

As a result of very generous donations, a new fund has been established to support current core faculty and prospective future faculty to pursue terminal degrees. This fund is designed for teachers who demonstrate excellence in the

classroom, who are rooted in the New Church mission, and who have strong academic credentials in disciplines of need. Dean Closterman noted that such support is invaluable in planning for growth and faculty succession.

The final academic initiative covered in the presentation was the newly formed Institute for Swedenborg Studies, led by the **Rev. Thane Glenn**, Ph.D. as director. The mission of the Institute is to engage a wide variety of audiences with the study of Emanuel Swedenborg, Swedenborgian theology, and the impact of both; and to encourage such study in forms that can effectively be promoted and facilitated within and via Bryn Athyn College. The MARS program is now under the auspices of the Institute. Its focus this year is development. With a steering committee, work is underway to create bylaws, develop plans for shaping the MARS program curriculum, and develop non-credit online courses related to Swedenborg studies.

Student Life

Suzanne Nelson, Sc.D., R.D.N., Dean of Students, spoke about three key areas of student life: residence life, health and wellness, and student activities and multicultural programming. She said the student life administrative team is excited to maintain a vision that supports the mission, striving to meet student needs appropriately and effectively while engaging students in campus life so they can have the fullest college experience possible.

Dean Nelson introduced **Michael Austin**, the new Director of Residence Life, who came to the College last spring from Stony Brook University. He has implemented a new community engagement model that includes increasing the amount of professional staff supervision as area coordinators. He has also created the new faculty area coordinator position, and has increased training for student resident assistants (RA's).

The new community engagement model focuses on five outcomes:

1. Sense of belonging
2. Healthy living
3. Learning outside of the classroom
4. Spirituality and concern for others
5. Global citizenship

The program uses assessment, facilities management and programming to achieve these outcomes. Some of the new programming this year includes late night socials, fire pit s'mores, movie and popcorn nights, residence suites Olympics, and barbeques. A faculty passion series has also been created to help students interface with faculty outside of the classroom and learn about hobbies and interests that enrich their teachers' lives. A weekly residence life newsletter has been going out to the College community this year, keeping

everybody connected and aware of what's happening on campus.

Recent data from winter term shows that resident students are having a positive experience and that RA's are engaging effectively with the students, with average scores of 3.9 and 4.3, respectively, out of a total of five points.

In health and wellness, many areas of improvement were reported. **Scott Jones** has been promoted to Director of Health and Wellness, and under his leadership there has been an increase in access to care (four days per week compared to three last year). Health visits are up 25%, and there is ongoing improvement of services through policy building that incorporates input from other areas. Mental health services were also bolstered, with an increase of 75% in counseling hours. These services are being offered as same or next-day appointments, compared to the national average of a two-week wait time. More health education and mental health screenings have been offered on campus than ever before.

Student activities and multicultural programming have been changing their focus from large-scale events to smaller, more personal events in an effort to bolster the sense of community on campus. **Jonathan Carr**, hired during the summer of 2018, has been coordinating these efforts. Aside from the six student organizations currently running activities throughout the year there have been new campus events focused on social interaction, as well as establishing new traditions such as a Christmas tree-lighting ceremony and Diversity Week.

This event was recorded and is available to viewers via the Bryn Athyn College YouTube Channel. Just enter "live.brynathyn.edu" into your browser to see past recordings on the State of the College as well as past Distinguished Speaker programs.

ACADEMY BOARD OF TRUSTEES (FEBRUARY 8, 2019)

Bryn Athyn College

Board Vice Chair **Brent McCurdy** reported that a committee is working closely with College President **Brian Blair** on enrollment. An extremely competitive market for new students makes predictions about enrollment challenging.

President Blair said the enrollment stream looks good for next year and that increased management is producing more accurate numbers. Analytics are helping to determine where to maximize enrollment and where to reduce.

Among College highlights:

- The new Student Center will be dedicated at Charter Day
- Increased interest in rental of facilities is aiding the budget
- Student outcomes have been excellent in terms of employment and placement in graduate programs

- New degree programs have been added at no additional cost or are funded by special contributions (Bachelor's in Mathematics, BFA in Building Arts, BS in Education, Master's in Special Education)
- Residence life is getting more attention and student response has been positive
- The vast majority of students are affirmative to our religious teachings; chapel attendance is up, with enthusiasm for Friday Chapel

Academy Secondary Schools

Among highlights reported by General Manager **Jim Adams**:

- 1,800 tickets were sold for the December performances of *Annie*, with more than 100 students participating in the cast or crew
- Graduates were hosted at an event to reconnect them with the Academy
- In sports, the girls field hockey team won the Friends League championship, the football team was 10-0, and basketball coach Kevin Givens won his 300th game for the Academy
- There will be an estimated 224 students next year – about the same as this year
- Faculty salaries are low, posing a risk of losing several teachers
- A trades program, to partner with local New Church businesses, is being developed
- A state-mandated “Safe 2 Say Something,” is being implemented for anonymous tips to prevent any kind of school tragedy

Glencairn Museum

Director **Brian Henderson** thanked the staff for an outstanding job during his prolonged absence due to illness. Among highlights for the year:

- 76 school groups have visited since September
- Numerous workshops have been popular with the public
- The World Nativities exhibit at Christmas attracted more than 5,000 visitors
- Glencairn is joining Google Arts and the Culture museum group, which will make its collections known worldwide and also aid in research, conservation and museum loans

Finance

The Academy achieved 90% of its contribution goal of \$1,375,000, with an additional \$2 million for endowment. **Susan Asplundh**, chair of the Advancement Committee, reported that generous donors have provided \$10.3 million in contributions this year. So far this year the Academy Board is at a

70% contribution rate, and the Corporation at 62%.

The six-month operating budget shows expenses in line with projections and revenues slightly behind. Treasurer **Duane Hyatt** reported a 6% drop in endowment last year, due to a weak fourth quarter. He expressed concern about overall dependence on the endowment, leaving the Academy at risk of market volatility, and that operating deficits need to be brought under control.

GENERAL CHURCH BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President's Report

The Rt. Rev. Brian W. Keith reported on the dedication of the new church building in Seoul, Korea, that will also serve as a center for the New Church in Asia

Pastoral changes effective July 1, 2019:

- **The Rev. Mark Allais**, pastor in Caryndale, Ontario, Canada
- **The Rev. Brett Buick**, pastor in Kempton, Pennsylvania; the **Rev. Lawson Smith**, who is retiring as pastor, will continue on the pastoral team
- **The Rev. Mac Frazier**, pastor in Mitchellville, Maryland; the **Rev. Brian Smith** becomes full assistant pastor

Vice President

The Rt. Rev. Peter M. Buss Jr. said the Assistant Bishop selection process is underway to receive votes from the General Church membership. Mechanisms for communication from the central office have been improved, such as online newsletters. More multi-directional avenues are needed to include a network of communicating agents throughout the church – perhaps something like the old Ambassador Program.

Strategic Planning

Executive Director **David Frazier** said a General Church Strategic Planning Committee, to be led by the Bishop and include clergy, board and administration, will be formed to coincide with the transition of the Executive Bishop. As part of the planning the Board recommended that clarity first be given to the vision for the Church. A reasonable budget will be included in 2020 for a churchwide survey for feedback on strategic direction.

Executive Director

David Frazier reported that the Executive Committees of the General Church and Academy Boards met jointly where emphasis was placed on collaborating to increase school enrollments, and to further develop church engagement and distribution of New Church teachings.

Roughly \$12,000 was granted to Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, under the leadership of the **Rev. Lompo**, for final building inspection, tax assessment and land title ownership process.

General Church Education

Bishop Buss updated progress in three strategic focal points: New Church Teacher Competencies project underway for professional development; making resources available for a Children's Old Testament production; and a four-school In Service Day in March gathering people to focus on use.

General Church Outreach

The Rev. David Lindrooth updated progress on the Grand Human Project, aimed at providing spiritual community for online content consumers. Outreach is reaching out to other organizations attempting similar work. A next step is to launch internet community building projects associated with some of our congregations.

International Committee

Bishop Buss and David Frazier said the committee responding to reception of the Heavenly Doctrines; looking at the potential global growth of New Church teachings; and improving resources for various needs. A research and development plan is aiming for a repeatable system for global congregational success which can be deployed to other regions.

Budget

David Frazier reported a surplus of about \$86,000 in the fiscal 2019 budget, on approximately \$2.6 million revenue and \$2.5 million in expenses. Contributions were reported down 50% for the half-year compared to last year, with the number of gifts up 1% and number of donors down 1%.

Theological School

Amy Buick, chair of the Theological School Committee, reported that 210 men have graduated with Master of Divinity degrees since 1880, of which 119 are living and 63 are currently employed by the General Church or sister organizations. The General Church also employs 45 non-degree, ordained ministers, trained by alternate schooling under the oversight of the Bryn Athyn College Theological School.

GENERAL CHURCH CORPORATION

Members of the General Church Corporation are invited to the annual meeting

May 18 at 3 p.m. in the Benade Hall auditorium on the Academy Secondary Schools campus in Bryn Athyn.

This meeting will include election to the General Church Board of Directors. (One-third of the 30-member Board is elected each year.)

Incumbents eligible and willing to be re-elected are:

- **Beth Brock**, Huntingdon Valley, Pennsylvania
- **Darryl G. Hasen**, Old Greenwich, Connecticut
- **Kirk Hasen**, Huntingdon Valley, Pennsylvania
- **Brent Hyatt**, Bowie, Maryland
- **David Radcliffe**, Mitchellville, Maryland

New nominees for three-year terms are:

- **Allen J. Bedford**, Ph.D., Huntingdon Valley, Pennsylvania
- **Darren Bau-Madsen**, Berthoud, Colorado
- **Jesse Cole II**, Glenview, Illinois
- **Charlotte Gyllenhaal**, Glenview, Illinois
- **James G. Uber**, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
- **John F. Walko**, Abington, Pennsylvania

Leaving the Board after three terms, with thanks for their service are:

- **Andrew R. Bruell**, Felsted, United Kingdom
- **Robert M. Dike**, Atlanta, Georgia
- **P. Blake Hill**, Kitchener, Ontario, Canada
- **Lee Horigan**, Toronto, Ontario, Canada
- **Daniel P. Martz**, Huntingdon Valley, Pennsylvania
- **David Norman**, McGregor, Texas

SEVEN DAYS OF SPIRITUAL EVOLUTION

The Swedenborg Foundation has published a new book by **E. Kent Rogers**, *Seven Days of Spiritual Evolution*.

The Foundation states: "Starting from a place of both spiritual and scientific inquiry, Kent Rogers explores the Creation story as a path to our own spiritual rebirth. Using Swedenborg's teachings as a foundation, he weaves in experience gained from his practice as a therapist, drawing insightful parallels between the different stages of our spiritual growth and the types of mental blocks that people can face on their journey of personal development."

“For each ‘day,’ Rogers describes the spiritual state we might find ourselves in, the challenges we face, and ways in which we can overcome those obstacles. He concludes each chapter with a series of exercises, a guided meditation, and a series of questions for discussion or contemplation. When these tools are taken in combination with the lessons throughout the chapters, the book offers workable methods for improving how we think and behave on a daily basis.”

Kent graduated from Bryn Athyn College with a BA in religion in 1995 and earned an MS in mental health counseling from the University of Massachusetts. In 1999 he set up an orphanage in Nepal under the auspices of Loving Arms Mission. There he married Shova Budhathoki. He is now a theological student at The Lord’s New Church in Bryn Athyn. The book is available from the Foundation, www.swedenborg.com/bookstore or by calling 610-430-3222, ext. 100.

ANC SUMMER CAMPS

Traditional summer camps at the Academy of the New Church are gearing up, with registration already available online. These include:

Performing Arts Camp: June 19 – 29. For 6th, 7th and 8th graders. Contact: *Sarah.Waelchli@ancss.org*.

Tools 4 Life: June 23 – 29. For 10th, 11th and 12th graders. See www.ancss.org for information and registration.

ANC Summer Camp: July 7 – 13. For 8th and 9th graders. See www.ancss.org for information and registration.

Glencairn Museum Mythology Summer Camp: June 17 – 21 and June 24 – 28. For 9 and 10-year-olds. Contact: *Christine.McDonald@glencairnmuseum.org*.

MAPLE LEAF ACADEMY

Maple Leaf Academy, a New Church camp for teenagers – those who have completed grades 8 through 12 – has been scheduled for June 27 through July 3 at the Ecology Retreat Centre near Orangeville, Ontario, Canada. Former campers are also invited for a Maple Leaf 50th reunion.

For information please contact **Stephanie Kuhl**, Camp Director, at stephkuhl@live.ca.

OAK ARBOR MONTESSORI SCHOOL

The Oak Arbor New Church School in Rochester, Michigan, will be launching a Montessori program in the fall. The transition will begin in the lower grades, with a 3- to 6-year-old classroom and a 6- to 9-year-old classroom. Subsequent grades will follow through sixth grade. The Middle School (seventh and eighth grades) will be a hybrid of Montessori Methodology and Traditional School Curriculum. For more information, visit the website, www.oakarborschool.org, or email *Camille Rodda* at crodda@oakarbor.org.

OUR NEW CHURCH VOCABULARY

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

WORSHIP

Internal worship, which is worship itself, is a perpetual activity of love to the Lord. External worship is the life of charity. Public and private worship is the life of piety, and rituals are the garments of worship. From this it may be seen that the term, which we hold in common with all other churches, has for us a very different meaning. From this it may be seen also that although rituals are necessary they are not the essentials of worship, and that, like garments, they may be changed and need not be the same for all. (See *Apocalypse Explained* 325, 684, 696; *Arcana Coelestia* 7884)

DEDICATION OF A NEW CHURCH IN SEOUL, KOREA
(Photos courtesy of Gretchen U. Keith)



Inside the sanctuary of the new church building



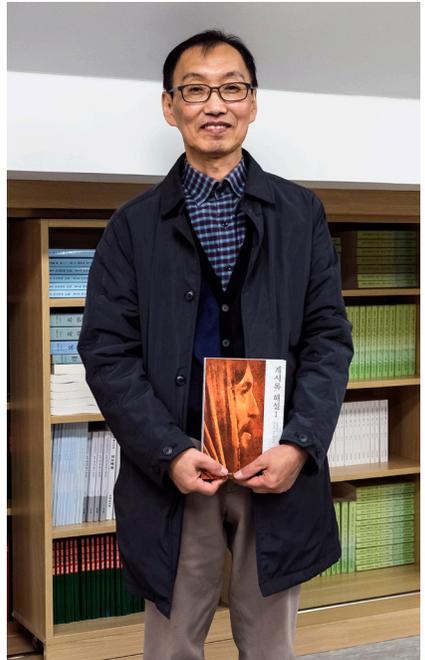
The Kyoto, Japan, group with Bishop Brian Keith, top right



Left to right: Rt. Rev. Brian Keith, Rev. Yong Jin, the four members of the Building Committee for the Seoul New Church – Mugil Kim, Rev. Kyu Dae Yang, Rev. Soon Cheoul Lee, Nang Hyum Kim – and General Church Executive Director David Frazier



The adjacent building houses the book center and meeting areas for the church as well as rental space to generate income.



Soon Cheoul Lee with his Korean translation of the *Arcana*

DEDICATION OF A NEW CHURCH IN SEOUL, KOREA



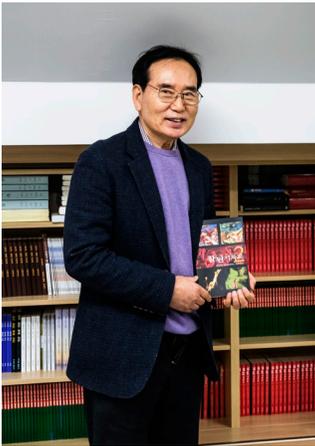
Presentation by Rev. Lee during the dedication



Outside of the new sanctuary and manse



The Yang family: Rev. Kyu Dae Yang, his wife, Sook-Hee Eun, with their son, Ryan, and granddaughter, Leslie



Rev. Kyu Dae Yang with his Korean translation of *True Christian Religion*



The Lees welcome Rev. Yong Jin, left, and Bishop Keith, right, to Seoul



The proud congregation in their new sanctuary

BOYNTON BEACH RETREAT
(Photos courtesy of Lois McCurdy)



Left to right, the Rev. Dan Heinrichs, Boynton Beach, Barbara and Tony Pearson, and Helen Jarvi, all of Palm Beach, Florida



Left to right, Naomi and Bob Smith, Lake Worth, Florida; Jeremy Simons, Ray and Star Silverman, and Allyn Simons, all of Bryn Athyn



Martin Klein, Boynton Beach, left, talking to Ray Silverman, Bryn Athyn



Star Silverman, Bryn Athyn, left, with Corrine Echols, Ocala, Florida



Jerry Fuller, Glenview, IL



Jeremy and Allyn Simons, Bryn Athyn, with Bill and Dorothy Radcliffe, Mitchellville, MD



Larry Kaufman, Boynton Beach

BOYNTON BEACH RETREAT



Joe David, Indianapolis, Indiana



Margo Farrington,
Bryn Athyn, PA



Class of 1960 reunion: Left to right,
Carol Henderson, Peggy Braun, Noel
Griffin, Ronnye Sands, Cynthia Walker



George McCurdy, Bryn Athyn



Kent and Jerry Fuller,
Glenview, Illinois



Bishop Peter Buss speaking
at the banquet



Left to right, Star Silverman, Bryn
Athyn, Barbara Pearson, Palm Beach,
and Lois McCurdy, Bryn Athyn



Jim and Sue Boericke,
Boynton Beach, Florida



George and Mary Cooper,
Mitchellville, Maryland

Life Lines

ON READING WELL

I once overheard a young man bragging to a friend, “I’ve never actually read a book.” I felt sad for him. It is typical of my generation, of course, to look down on those who seem to get all their information off screens – with all the shallowness of a tweet. But not reading books? That’s closing a door to so much that enriches life.

Karen Swallow Prior, a professor of English at Liberty University, has a new book, *On Reading Well*, which makes the case that reading good books is not only enjoyable but helps to develop our own character and make us better people.

She called an earlier book – *Booked: Literature in the Soul of Me* – a love story, “the story of how my deep love of reading slowly meandered into a deep love of God.” She says that “by reading widely, voraciously and indiscriminately, I learned spiritual lessons I never learned in Sunday school, as well as the emotional and intellectual lessons that I would have encountered within the realm of my lived experience. Most importantly, by reading about all kinds of characters created by all kinds of authors, I learned how to be the person God created me to be.”

Some people scoff at fiction as superfluous – not as worthy as books about real people and events. But good fiction, Ms. Prior contends, holds up a mirror in which we see ourselves vicariously by judging literary characters, and this helps to shape our own character. “More than informing us,” she contends, literature “forms us.”

“To read well,” she says, “is not to scour books for lessons of *what* to think. Rather, to read well is to be formed in *how* we think.”

Our reading, of course, should start with the Word and the Writings as the ultimate guide for forming character, but literature offers a rewarding supplement.

Thomas Jefferson, who was a prolific reader – including the Writings – considered reading an exercise of moral feelings, “producing a habit of thinking and acting virtuously.”

Whether we are reading the Word, the Writings or *Crime and Punishment*, Ms. Prior says, “we can hardly attain human excellence if we don’t have an

understanding of human purpose. Human excellence occurs only when we glorify God, which is our true purpose.”

She concedes that “reading great books is not the only way to cultivate virtue and achieve the good life. But literature has a peculiar power in forming our visions of the good life.”

All of this makes me think of my father, the Rev. Cairns Henderson, still revered as a theological scholar and masterful writer in the history of the Church. His collected editorials from 25 years at the helm of *New Church Life* are forever poignant, relevant and timeless. That is because he was the opposite of the young man proud of himself for never reading a book.

My Dad read completely through the Word every year and the Writings every three years – more than a dozen times in his lifetime – in addition to focused studies. But he also was a voracious and eclectic reader – everything from biography and history to mysteries and philosophy. When we went on vacation he always had an armload of good books. That gave him a world view informed by the Word and doctrine, which produced the wisdom that forever enriches the Church. Now that was “reading well.”

(BMH)

GUIDEBOOKS TO VIRTUE

Karen Prior’s *On Reading Well* is divided into 12 chapters, each relating a virtue to a great book, such as:

- **Justice:** *A Tale of Two Cities* by Charles Dickens
- **Diligence:** *Pilgrim’s Progress* by John Bunyan
- **Patience:** *Persuasion* by Jane Austen
- **Courage:** *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* by Mark Twain

The power of such books is that their settings may be remote from our experience but the lessons are timeless. The story of Huckleberry Finn, for instance – one of the great novels of American literature – still resonates because it is not only about summoning the courage to do what is right, but about how we form a conscience that guides us to what makes right.

Huck Finn’s friendship and devotion to the runaway slave, Jim, leaves him tormented because everything in his culture and upbringing tells him he should not be protecting a slave. Indeed, he’s sure he will go to hell because of it. But his love for the good and innocent Jim overcomes his fear, as a true conscience forms in him.

Anyone’s conscience is only as good as the values and truth it is based in. There was nothing noble in the conscience of the slaveholder, who felt he was right and justified in his dominion.

“The problem for Huck – and for all of us,” Karen Prior says, “is that his

conscience is not an entirely reliable guide. In fact, one main target of Twain's satire in the novel is the conscience that is malformed by a corrupt culture. Huck harbors distorted views of right and wrong, one implanted to him by his flawed society. The progress he undergoes that corrects the wrong lessons his culture has taught him is the essence of *Huckleberry Finn*."

That is a process we all go through in forming true conscience. We may not be as handicapped as Huck by his culture, although we are all susceptible to justifying anything we see as right.

Without the drama of Huck and Jim's life-changing "adventure" on a raft we come to that true conscience as we turn to follow the Lord:

Your conscience is a new will and understanding implanted in you by God. So it is that God is present with you to the degree that you love what is good and true. (Arcana Coelestia 4299)

Our spiritual life is contained in true conscience, since that is where our faith comes together with kindness. So doing things according to our conscience is doing them from our spiritual life. (New Jerusalem and its Heavenly Doctrine 133)

Mark Twain's story is more allegory than theology, but this is the process Huck went through in finding the courage to do what his heart told him was good and right, even as his head condemned him. That is the spiritual growth, moral clarity and courage we all aspire to.

All of this ideally benefits our world and our culture. As Karen Prior concludes: "In addition to shaping individual experience and character, great literature has a role in forming the communal conscience and public virtue. We can understand a great deal about a culture – its strengths, its weaknesses, its blind spots, and its struggles – when we examine the literature that it not only produces but reveres."

If I could recommend one book to that young man with no desire to read a book, *Huck Finn* would be the one. It just might open up whole new worlds to him.

(BMH)

THE GIFT

Best-sellers come and best-sellers go, and for our favorites we bestow posterity on our bookshelves. In New Church homes the Word has its own special place, often in a repository. The Writings also have a shelf of their own – the old mossy-and-green set or the pastels of the New Century Edition. But they are set apart.

Throughout all of written history – since the invention of the Gutenberg press – the Bible has been the best-seller of the year, every year. When the King James version was published more the 400 years ago, it was revolutionary.

People then were burned at the stake for owning Bibles or worshipping in secret groups. The king wanted to return the Bible to the people and they embraced it. Now there are more than a billion copies in print, and despite the decline of organized religion in the world demand for the Bible is constant.

Why? Many of the people who love and revere it do not understand all of it but they consider it holy – either divinely written or divinely inspired. People who treasure books love good stories, good characters, good drama. Within them they find inspiration, purpose and meaning for their lives. And nowhere more so – through all the cycles of these centuries – than in the Bible.

Sincere believers in Bible groups all over the world study its stories – from the mystery of creation to the strange symbols of *Revelation* – searching for meaning that they can apply to their lives. Within the literal sense there are obvious good messages. And anyone with a good heart gets glimpses into the spiritual meaning they have been promised. (“I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. When the Spirit of Truth is come, He will guide you into all truth.” – *John* 16:12-13)

How blessed we are in the New Church to have that “Spirit of Truth.” We know that reading and hearing the Word is the Lord speaking with us, and never more deeply and personally than when we read the literal with the internal sense. This is the ultimate in “reading well.”

The Lord has given the Word to mankind, and also to angels, so that by means of it they may be with Him. Indeed the Word is the means by which earth is united to heaven, and heaven to the Lord. (*Arcana Coelestia* 3476)

This is the great gift we in the Church have been given. *Nunc Licet* – now it is permitted to enter into the mysteries of faith. Now it is permitted. Now it is possible. Now it is up to us. This is a gift to share.

(BMH)

SAVING THE PLANET

When people speak of "saving the planet," they mean saving it from the depredation of human beings. This will require a profound change in the human psyche; a spiritual change from within. New laws and better education about the natural environment are not enough. "Consciousness raising" that only rises to the level of natural awareness is insufficient. Healing the environment requires a diagnosis of the spiritual illness, the human soul sickness, of which environmental ills are but symptoms.

The whole natural universe comes from and is sustained by the perpetual influx of life flowing into it from the spiritual world. This is the most basic truth about the existence of the beautiful world we call home, but too few people know and understand this and give it serious consideration. And so

it is rarely mentioned in all the anxious discussions about saving the planet.

The earth was created by the Lord for the sake of the human race, and all things in nature relate to and represent aspects of human nature. The two worlds, spiritual and natural, meet and are connected in us. And the quality and strength of that connection depends upon the spiritual quality of human beings.

Just as an unhealthy spiritual state in people's minds affects their physical condition, so the spiritual state of the human race as a whole affects the health of the planet they inhabit. As we say in the Lord's Prayer, the peace and happiness we hope for on earth originates in heaven: "Thy kingdom come, as in heaven, so upon the earth."

The reverence for nature that inspires respect and concern for the natural environment begins with reverence for the God who created the natural world. The deep understanding of nature we need to help heal it involves an understanding of the Divine order and purpose that pervades it.

There is only one Savior of the world, and no human intelligence or agency apart from the love and wisdom we receive from the Lord can get at the root of the environmental problems we've created. We certainly have our part to do because the Lord works through people and has appointed us to be stewards of the earth. "The Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden, and there He put the man whom He had formed. . . . Then the Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to tend and keep it." (*Genesis* 2:8, 15)

The Lord has given His Word, and established His Church to preach and teach it, in order that His kingdom might be established, first in the hearts and minds of people, and then through them throughout the earth. Saving the planet begins with the spiritual salvation of the human beings who populate it and for whom it exists. The Church, therefore – simply by tending faithfully to its spiritual mission of preaching and teaching the Word – is on the front lines in the battle to save the planet.

(WEO)

THE TWO SIDES OF RELIGION

As human beings, we live in two worlds: the outer, natural world, and the inner, spiritual world. Religion is concerned with both worlds. Inwardly, religion is loving and believing in God; outwardly, it involves living morally and charitably ("righteously") in obedience to the Lord's commandments.

Both these aspects of religion are necessary and should be conjoined, but it is not unusual for one to be emphasized at the expense of the other. Carried to an extreme, spirituality regards natural reality as unimportant or even only as an illusion. The false extreme of naturalism, on the other hand, is to view

spiritual reality as unimportant or only an illusion. The first error leads to withdrawing from the world and the uses of natural life in favor of mystical contemplation; the second promotes materialism, nihilism and hedonism.

Each error, by denying one half of reality, at the same time diminishes the half it does acknowledge. A spirit without a body is a ghost; a body without a spirit is a corpse. To the extent that a person's life is so centered on the body and material things that the human spirit within them lacks expression and atrophies, they become like beasts.

It is in the joining together of the inner and outer dimensions of our nature, the spiritual and the natural, that we become truly human. This is why religious belief and practice are essential to human life, individually and in society generally.

(WEO)

SIRI: HOW DO I GET TO HEAVEN?

Such is “progress” that we have outsourced our brains. With “smart” phones we don’t need to know phone numbers, directions, or where to go to find out about anything. All we have to remember is where we put our devices.

GPS – Global Positioning System – in cars and cell phones has virtually done away with road maps and those you-can’t-miss-it directions: “Just turn left at the gas station with the blue sign, then right at the hardware store.”

It’s still possible to get lost with GPS but Siri is always calm and ready to re-route us to get us back on track.

We are also hopefully on a spiritual path to heaven, which has its own twists and detours, and we can easily feel lost there too. Fortunately, we have the ultimate guide – the Lord and His Word – showing us the “highlighted route” and patiently correcting us when we go astray. Hopefully, we’re paying attention.

“The life that leads to heaven is not one of withdrawal from the world but a life in the world. A life of piety apart from a life of charity does not lead to heaven at all.” (*Heaven and Hell* 535)

“Heaven is not located on high, but where the good of love is, and this resides within a person, wherever he or she might be.” (*Arcana Coelestia* 8153)

The ever-helpful Siri might cut through it all: “Just turn right, and keep going straight.”

(BMH)

‘WHO IS EMANUEL SWEDENBORG, ALEX’?

Back in mid-January the popular TV game show *Jeopardy!* included a category, “A Visit to Skansen,” featuring “the world’s first open air museum” – home

to 500 years of life and history in this charming Swedish town. One of the clues read: "This is the preserved summer home of 18th century mystic and author Emanuel Swedenborg, who lived here when he wrote *Secrets of Heaven*, a verse-by-verse commentary on these first two books of the Bible."

One of the contestants gave the easy answer – or question in the case of Jeopardy! "What is *Genesis* and *Exodus*?"

For those keeping track, this is at least the fourth time *Jeopardy!* has used Swedenborg in a clue. In a December 2011 show, the category was "Touched by an Angel," and the clue: "This 18th century Swedish scientist who had visions of angels gave his name to a Christian mystic movement." Again, an astute contestant correctly answered, "Who is Swedenborg?"

Apparently, someone who works on answers and questions for the show knows Swedenborg – and is even current enough to use *Secrets of Heaven* rather than *Arcana Coelestia*. But here's a "question" for the next round: "This famous 18th century Swedish theologian and author of *Secrets of Heaven* is **not** a mystic."

"Who is Emanuel Swedenborg, Alex?"

(BMH)

THE UNPUBLISHED WORKS

The six volumes of *Apocalypse Explained* and the five volumes of *Spiritual Experiences* are often referred to as being "unpublished" works, but they are unpublished only in the sense that Swedenborg himself did not publish them. If they were truly "unpublished," we would not know about them and there would be no debate regarding their status.

Spiritual Experiences was obviously not intended for publication, but Swedenborg drew upon it extensively in writing the theological works that were published. Many of these experiences appear as "memorable relations" in the published theological works. In providence, this material was preserved and published after Swedenborg's death, and has been a rich source of useful insights to students of the published works.

The time of writing gives no reason to assign second-rate status to the unpublished works. *Arcana Coelestia*, the first work of the new revelation that Swedenborg had printed, was published between 1749 and 1756, so the 1759 date he put on the manuscript of *Apocalypse Explained* is well into his years as a revelator. *Spiritual Experiences* consists of notes written between 1746-1763, so it also is contemporaneous with Swedenborg's revelatory period.

Rev. Dr. William R. Woofenden, in the *Swedenborg Researcher's Manual*, concludes that Swedenborg "did at one time intend to publish" *Apocalypse Explained*, because he wrote "London, 1759" on the title page of a fair copy of

the work (i.e. a neatly written copy ready to go to the printer).

Whether or not a work was published during Swedenborg's lifetime is certainly worth noting but is not a determining factor in establishing the "canon" of the Writings (in so far as the New Church can be said to have a canon). Nor is the question of published/unpublished of much help in settling doctrinal disputes.

If a statement in a work left unpublished by Swedenborg contradicted something in a published work, we would naturally give more weight to the published statement – but I am not aware of any such case.

In my view, the theological works written by Swedenborg during his revelatory period, including ones he left unpublished, form a remarkably consistent and coherent body of truth. The answer to a question regarding the life and teaching of the New Church is found, not in any single statement, but in the context and the light gained from a sincere and careful consideration of the Heavenly Doctrine in its entirety.

(WEO)

OUR NEW CHURCH VOCABULARY

In 1961 the Rev. W. Cairns Henderson, as editor of *New Church Life*, launched a series on *Our New Church Vocabulary*, which appeared through 1966. We have been reprinting these unique definitions – from “Affection” through “Worship” – since May/June 2014 and the series comes to an end in this issue. Many of these definitions begin by noting that a term is unique to the Writings – such as “Conjugal” or “Proprium” – or defined quite differently from general usage – such as “Remains” or “Use” – so this collection is a lasting treasure for the Church.

In launching this series Mr. Henderson wrote:

“The New Church has a vocabulary that is entirely its own. Every subject field has its particular terminology; and as the Writings were given to convey new truth, ideas never before unfolded to the human mind, and as the communication of ideas requires appropriate language, the Writings contain many distinctive terms. These terms were selected by the Lord with the precision of wisdom. Each one has a very exact meaning, or group of related meanings, and was chosen by the Lord because it, and no other, expressed adequately the idea or ideas to be transmitted.

“Evidently, then, it is of great importance that we should understand correctly what is meant by these terms as they are employed in the Writings, and that we should be able to use them accurately in our own thinking, speaking and writing. Some are theological terms which occur frequently, and there a facile familiarity may blind us to their profundity. A few are peculiar to

the Writings, and therefore presuppose a considerable amount of specialized knowledge. Others – and these may present difficulties – are terms which have a different meaning in the Writings from that assigned to them in current usage.”

He also cautioned that these definitions would not be “rightly understood or properly used” if they were regarded “as all-inclusive and exhaustive, or if it is supposed that no others could be valid.” They would fail in their purpose “unless it is clearly realized that definitions are not meant to confine man’s thinking to themselves, but to provide it with a well-marked point of departure, in order that the initial idea may be gradually infilled.”

The fact that this collection of New Church vocabulary is as timely and meaningful now as it was 50 years ago speaks to both the importance and value of the project. It is an enduring example of New Church scholarship that still serves the Church and our understanding of the Lord’s revelation.

(BMH)

OUR NEW CHURCH VOCABULARY

Final note from the Rev. W. Cairns Henderson, creator of this series, in 1966

These entries bring to a close this series of general definitions, publication of which as an occasional department began in January, 1961. It is emphasized now, as it was then, that the definitions given are not offered as all-inclusive, exhaustive, or the only ones that could be valid. Definitions are not meant to confine our thinking to themselves, but to serve as a well-marked point of departure from which we may proceed to infill ideas they help us to form. Unless these things are realized, this attempt to explain the terms which make up our New Church vocabulary will not have succeeded.

Announcements

ORDINATIONS

The law of the truth was in his mouth, and injustice was not found on his lips. He walked with Me in peace and equity, and turned away many from iniquity. For the lips of a priest should keep knowledge, and people should see the law from his mouth; for he is the messenger of the Lord of Hosts. (Malachi 2:6-7)

Third Degree

Heinrichs, Bradley Daniel – At Carmel New Church, Kitchener, Ontario, Canada, February 13, 2019, Rt. Rev. Peter M. Buss Jr. officiating.

Lindrooth, David Hutchinson – At Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania, January 20, 2019, Rt. Rev. Peter M. Buss Jr. officiating.

First Degree

Ebute-Metta, Kuroakegha – At Yenagoa, Nigeria, November 11, 2018, Rt. Rev. Peter M. Buss Jr. officiating.

BAPTISMS

Behold, children are a heritage from the Lord. (Psalm 127:3)

Alden, Caleb Peter – At Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania, January 6, 2019 (born December 11, 2018), son of Micah and Tania Alden, Rev. Kenneth J. Alden officiating.

Atta, Daniel Aime – At Scottsdale, Arizona, January 10, 2019 (born December 16, 2018), son of Jean and Mary Atta, Rev. Nathan D. Gladish officiating.

Badu, Stephen – At Pankromo, Kumasi, Ghana, January 20, 2019, Rev. Kwadwo Adu Amoako officiating.

Braam, Viola Lyse – At Toronto, Ontario, Canada, January 20, 2019 (born August 12, 2018), daughter of Marco and Laura Braam, Rev. Jared J. Buss officiating.

Frey, Dr. Kurt P. – At Meadowbrook, Pennsylvania, January 13, 2019, Rev. Dr. Ray Silverman officiating.

Gonzales, Lilia Carter – At Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania, January 21, 2019 (born January 14, 2018), daughter of Michael and Stephanie Gonzales, Rt. Rev. Brian W. Keith officiating.

Hurd, Adara Grace – At Toronto, Ontario, Canada, December 30, 2018 (born October 9, 2018), daughter of Andrew and Claire Hurd, Rev. Coleman S. Glenn officiating.

Kunugiza, Suemi – At Kyoto-fu, Hushimi-ku, Japan, January 16, 2019, Rev. Seiichi Sakae officiating.

Samuel – At Huiyang, Gwangdong, China, January 6, 2019 (born June 1, 2018) son of Lydia and Tim, Rev. Yong J. Jin officiating.

MARRIAGES

Truly conjugal love is not possible except between two; neither is it possible between two except from the Lord alone. Engraved on this love is heaven with all its blessings. (Conjugal Love 332)

Cole-Lopez, Thane Snowden Cole and Arelys Royo López – At Boulder, Colorado, December 28, 2018, Rev. David C. Roth officiating.

Consalvo-McCaffery, Philip Leo Consalvo and Rachel McCaffery – At Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania, December 29, 2018, Rev. Charles E. Blair officiating.

Smith-Griffiths, Jeffrey Owen Smith and Kelsey Joy Griffiths – At Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania, December 29, 2018, Rev. Calvin A. Odhner officiating.

Tucker-Collins, Kevin Andrew Tucker and Kelly Lynn Collins – At Trumbull, Connecticut, December 31, 2018, Rev. Elmo K. Acton officiating.

DEATHS

In order that a person may live to eternity, it is necessary that what is mortal, or the material body, should be taken away from him by death. When this is done, that which is immortal is uncovered, and the person becomes a spirit still in the human form. (Divine Providence 324)

Brannon, Carol Birchman – February 16, 2019, of Huntingdon Valley, Pennsylvania. 58.

Brom, Beverly Trout – March 7, 2018, of Boulder, Colorado. 87.

Bruser, Elizabeth Schoenberger – October 11, 2018, of Baton Rouge, Louisiana. 95.

Dunlap, Joan Davis – January 14, 2019, of Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania. 99.

O’Hagan, Lee Varallo – February 4, 2019, of Huntingdon Valley, Pennsylvania. 49.

Pendleton, Marcia Henderson – January 6, 2019, of Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania. 92.

Reuter, Justin David – February 4, 2019, of Newtown, Pennsylvania. 79.

Smith, Sandra Lee – January 3, 2019, of Days Creek, Oregon. 78.



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"For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." Matthew 6:21



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