

NEW CHURCH *Life*

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

MAY/JUNE 2024



Behold, I Make All Things New

As the Holy City New Jerusalem descends upon earth, the New Church is born. What is it that makes the New Church “new” – now and forever? (Page 150)

**NEW CHURCH LIFE (USPS 378-180)
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OF THE NEW JERUSALEM**

Bruce Henderson, Editor | bruce.henderson@newchurch.org

Jeremy Simons, Spiritual Editor | jeremy.simons@brynathynchurch.org

Tess Brown, Layout Designer

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To order: 267-502-4990 or susan.wright@anc-gc.org Postmaster: Send address changes to:

New Church Life, PO Box 708, Bryn Athyn, PA 19009 or e-mail: datacenter@anc-gc.org

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 available online at <https://newchurch.org/connect/subscriptions/new-church-life/>, with issues archived to 2006. All issues of New Church Life can be searched back to 1881 at www.heavenlydoctrines.org

In This Issue

Editorials (page 140) include:

- *The New Church: Between Dream and Destiny*: Where we stand as a church – and where we are headed – is somewhere between June 19, 1770, when the Holy City New Jerusalem began descending from God out of heaven, and that time when its destiny will be fulfilled as “the crown of all churches that have ever existed on earth.” And just as with Americans celebrating their God-endowed freedom in the United States on Independence Day, how we progress is up to each of us and all of us.
- *Calling People Together and Sending Them Out*: The Lord calling His disciples together in heaven to go throughout the spiritual world proclaiming that “the Lord God Jesus Christ Reigns” echoes in the call throughout the General Church to attend this year’s Assembly – to come up to the mountain of the Lord, to learn of His ways, and to walk in His paths.

In a New Church Day sermon from 1953 – *All Things New* – the late Rev. W. Cairns Henderson leaves us an invaluable primer on what it is that makes the New Church “new” – and forever new. “The New Church is new, and a church,” he writes, “because it consists, from new doctrine, in an entirely new kind of spiritual life, in which the Lord can be present” – as an *immediate* presence – “in a new way to effect salvation.” This church exists among us only to the extent that it has been established – and continues to grow – within our own hearts, minds and lives. (Page 150)

In another New Church Day sermon – 70 years later – the Rev. Jeremy F. Simons gives depth and meaning to the “seven thunders” in the description in

Revelation as the seventh trumpet is about to sound. “The issue here is about the timing and the process of the Last Judgment and the beginning of the New Church. The book and the teachings it contains are not a magic wand that will suddenly resolve the issues revealed as the seals were opened and the trumpets sounded.” (Page 154)

Writing From the Bishop’s Office, the Rt. Rev. Bradley D. Heinrichs talks about the importance of *Gathering Together* for the General Assembly in Bryn Athyn. There is great history in these gatherings, which bring together people from all over the church to stand personally – and as a group – committed to being led by the Lord. (Page 160)

The Rev. Prescott A. Rogers offers an overview of all the various worship services available in the General Church – their purpose and their value. This useful summary could be converted into a pamphlet for members and visitors in our churches. Each service has its distinct use and purpose, which gives them all – and separately – a special place in our hearts. (Page 162)

The Rev. Todd J. Beiswenger gifts us with a touching story of *True Love* – the sweet love story of his father and mother and an amazing connection with the movie *Ben Hur* that resonated many years after his Mom had left this world – but not their marriage. (Page 168)

Marvin Clymer, Digital Collections Supervisor at the Swedenborg Library in Bryn Athyn, delves again into the early history of the Church in England – the inspiring story of the Rev. Joseph Proud. It is important to keep alive the memory and courageous example of such trailblazers, who often stood against fierce opposition in establishing the first footholds of the church. (Page 172)

In *God’s Dice and Human Freedom*, Ned Uber wades into quantum mechanics to explain how God controls everything in His universe but still leaves us in perfect freedom. Don’t be intimidated by the backdrop of physics; it’s written for a broad audience and is a rewarding read. (Page 188)

Church News (page 206) includes:

- A new Principal named for the Academy Girls School and two searches launched for major positions in the Academy
- The latest pastoral moves and current members of the Bishop’s Council
- Highlights from the January meeting of the General Church Board of Directors
- A meeting of the General Church Corporation and elections to the Board, coinciding with the General Assembly in June
- Highlights of February meetings of the Academy Board of Trustees, including consideration of establishing a separate board for Bryn Athyn College
- The Living Waters Family Camp in July, focusing on charity
- A memorable tour of London for teenage members

Editorials

Bruce M. Henderson and the Rev. Jeremy F. Simons

THE NEW CHURCH: BETWEEN DREAM AND DESTINY

We are all on a journey between dream and destiny – within the church and within the United States. That is the link between the 19th of June and the 4th of July – and it extends throughout the world.

The dream of the New Church rises from the *Book of Revelation* – “*the Holy City New Jerusalem descending from God out of heaven*,” and spreading the truths of the Lord’s Second Coming throughout the world. Its destiny is to be “the crown of all churches that have hitherto existed upon the earth.” We are long in the journey and have a long way to go.

The dream in the United States – shared by democracies throughout the world – is to be a beacon and a model for freedom and responsibility, for values rooted in faith and charity. The dream and the destiny of this nation inspire and resonate because its founding principles flow from God.

A woman outside of Independence Hall in Philadelphia in 1787 famously asked Benjamin Franklin after the drafting of the Constitution: “What do we have – a republic or a monarchy?” He answered succinctly: “A republic – if you can keep it.” *If you can keep it*. The destiny – of our nation, our church, our future – is always up to all of us and each of us.

After the American and French Revolutions in the late 1700s, Edmund Burke, a British statesman who supported the cause of freedom, said coyly: “The effect of liberty is that men may do whatever they please. We should wait to see what it pleases them to do before we risk congratulations.”

So, would Edmund Burke – and the Founding Fathers – congratulate us on what we have made of our nation so far and the direction we are heading? Would Swedenborg be satisfied with where we are as a church and how much – or how little – we have grown its acceptance and influence in the world? Clearly, we have the right foundations but have work to do. We need to ask ourselves: what is our role – as members of the church, and as citizens – in moving us along the journey from dream to destiny?

What distinguishes the church as a “New Church,” and the United States as a new experiment in democracy, is that they both are exceptions to what has gone before.

The New Church is an exception because it is based on a whole new revelation from the Lord. It enables us to know Him as a visible God and to conjoin with Him through the way we unite His Good and Truth in lives of charity.

In a sermon in this issue – *All Things New* – the late Rev. W. Cairns Henderson explains: “What makes the New Church is the presence of the Lord within the Heavenly Doctrine in the minds of those who receive it. This presence is immediate because the Heavenly Doctrine is an immediate revelation of Divine Truth – and the Lord is conjoined with those who receive Him in the life they lead from that doctrine. In this sense the church is ‘new’ because such a presence and conjunction of the Lord is now given for the first time.”

America is an exception because it is based on God-given rights and recognizes its citizens as spiritual beings. It challenges us – as individuals and a nation – to protect religious liberty and individual freedom, to nurture tolerance, compassion and creativity. And it reminds us in the Pledge of Allegiance that we are “one nation under God.” It is all non-political in theory, but we struggle mightily to make it so in practice. This is the enduring challenge.

The dream of the New Church began on June 19, 1770, with the Lord sending His disciples throughout heaven to proclaim: “The Lord God Jesus Christ reigns.” With that came fulfillment of the vision of the Holy City New Jerusalem descending from God out of heaven which, like the Lord’s birth on earth, was not just a one-time event but is ongoing – every day.

We celebrate as well that there are untold numbers in the “church universal” who love what they know or perceive of the Lord in His Second Coming and live good lives. He is revealing Himself and building His Church in them also. There are many noble nations as well with citizens committed to freedom and democracy.

What sets the New Church and the United States apart on a foundational plane is what flows from the Lord. What we celebrate is not our institutions but how the Lord’s love and wisdom lead us and free us all.

Where we all have been, and where we all are headed, are rooted in the Last Judgment, which occurred in the spiritual world in 1757. Then the Lord was able to establish the New Church in heaven, which is continually descending to earth as that “crown of all churches.” Swedenborg did not know when that church would be established on earth – only that it would be, and that he had done his part as “servant of the Lord.” We do not know how it will play out but

the General Church is committed to the destiny, as we faithfully strive to serve that end.

As for all the discord in the world, we know only that the Last Judgment produced and ordered not only new heavens but new hells, which all flow into us. This preserves our freedom and also explains why we have such mixed results and so much work still to do. In this we are inspired by a new light from heaven illuminating the darkness.

We witness and experience every day the fallout from the Last Judgment, with no idea where we are in the continuum – only that the Lord's Church is the last, best hope and will continue to descend. We are a world adrift from spiritual or moral compass, cheered only by the knowledge that the Lord does not permit anything that cannot be turned to good. That does not absolve us from doing our part.

Our church and our country have long histories of struggle and challenge. We believe that each is in a state of continuous improvement but that the process is up to us – much like our own regeneration. We also recognize that all of our challenges – from how we run our institutions to living up to our guiding values and priorities – are essentially spiritual issues.

When we aren't sure where we are going we tend to reach back to the safety of where we have been. That is why history is filled with so many vexing examples of repeating what doesn't work and hoping for different results. We need a sure vision to light the way, to inspire confidence, to lift us out of our comfort zones and move us in new directions. We are blessed that the church and the country have never lacked for vision – the shining city on a hill, the New Jerusalem descending to earth.

Remember in Greek mythology when all the evils were released into the world from Pandora's Box and all that was left was Hope. Hope is what sustains us when vision fades – especially with people who trust in a loving God in control of His universe.

Still, the world is dogged by apocalyptic fear, from misunderstanding the *Book of Revelation* to the doomsday scenarios of science fiction. Fortunately, we know better. We know that the Apocalypse *was* the Last Judgment, which led to the Lord's Second Coming, when He sent His disciples throughout the heavens and gave a new revelation to the world. We are still shadowed by darkness more than 275 years ago. The Holy City is descending – gradually but inexorably. We may be worried about the state of the world and impatient for the church to fulfill its destiny. But if the Lord is willing to establish His Church in this uncertain world, shouldn't we be realistic but also confident and optimistic?

We know that the Lord in His Second Coming is continually bringing new light into the world. *Is bringing*. It is an ongoing, continual process. We

bear sad witness to what still flourishes in the dark but live with the Lord's assurance: "Do not be dismayed for I have overcome the world."

As members of this church we have the charge in *Arcana Coelestia* 398 that we need to know and unite the Lord's good and truth in us, and that "*this is especially important for people of the church.*" We are very good with truth in this church. The good comes in how we live that truth – as individuals and as a church – in charity.

Both the church and the nation must be constantly renewing themselves as they advance toward their destinies. We need good and visionary leaders and sound institutions. But we also need committed followers – quiet, patient, loyal and persevering people who are invested and engaged. The masses may determine what we get on TV and social media. The committed determine our values.

Walt Whitman once said with simple clarity of a poet: "America is nothing but you and me." We can say the same for the church. Both have their foundations in truth from the Lord but depend on each of us and all of us to keep the flame alive.

We stand always between what was and what will be, aware that in both the church and the nation we are not yet all that could be and should be. We have work to do. But we should not be discouraged. Neither should we be complacent.

What we have been blessed with needs to be nurtured and valued and carried forward. That is why New Church education is so vital to the future of the church, and why sound teaching is vital to both church and country. As Plato put it so succinctly: "The only two questions that matter in all the history of the world are: who is teaching our children and what are they teaching them?"

The Lord came not to save a favored few but the whole world. He is constantly bringing His new revelation into the world which lights our way and is a torch in our hands. Think of the Lord's love in reaching out to save all of us. Think of the courage of the Founding Fathers. Think of what we all need to give back.

And as we stand – between dream and destiny – listen to what the Lord says to us:

- *You have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you.*
- *You are the light of the world.*
- *Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven,*

In this place – between dream and destiny – we are called in this year's General Assembly to "go up to the mountain of the Lord (where) He will teach

us His ways and we shall walk in His paths.”

We have mountains to climb but a sure path to our destiny.

(BMH)

CALLING PEOPLE TOGETHER AND SENDING THEM OUT

Here I will add something previously unknown. Several months ago the Lord called together the twelve apostles and sent them out into the whole spiritual world just as they had been sent out before to the physical world. Their assignment was to preach this gospel. Each apostle was assigned a territory to cover. They are carrying out their assignment with complete enthusiasm and energy. (True Christianity 108)

This sending out is the same one announced in True Christianity 791. Here it is said to have happened “*several months ago*” whereas 791 gives it the more precise date of June 19, 1770. The book itself was published almost exactly a year later, in June 1771, perhaps on the same date, according to the translator’s preface of the New Century Edition of this work (page 29).

True Christianity 791 adds the detail that the apostles were called together on one day and sent out on the next. We don’t know whether the 19th of June was the day they were called together or the day they were sent out. But this coming together clearly had a purpose, described here as assigning each apostle to preach this gospel – that the Lord God Jesus Christ reigns – and giving each a specific territory to cover.

Efforts like this almost always happen this way. People come together, where they are somehow prepared for the work they will do, and then they go out and do whatever their work or mission might happen to be. Typically, this doesn’t just happen once, but there is a repeating pattern of going out and coming together that keeps the enterprise going. It might be conferences for people who practice a certain trade, meetings or in-services for teachers, conventions for political parties, or even parties and dinners for friends and families.

When we get together at times like these we share experiences and information that we have, we learn things from teachers and leaders, and maintain connections with others who have the same interests and work. The passage above noted that the apostles “*are carrying out their assignment with complete enthusiasm and energy*” – an energy and enthusiasm that was surely inspired by what happened when the Lord called them together, as well as by their own love of the assignment.

It goes without saying that this is a pattern common to all churches. The

coming together that typically happens on Sunday is a key part of renewing and reinforcing the life of the church, carrying forward its mission, and reminding people of what the Word teaches. The same happens with classes and meetings, as well as with the larger assemblies that happen every few years, as is happening this year in Bryn Athyn.

According to the document, *The Order and Organization of the General Church*, an assembly's purposes "are to hear and discuss presentations on the doctrine and life of the Church, to provide mutual support in people's efforts to worship and obey the Lord, and to support one another in striving to establish His Church upon the earth. Further purposes are to act to confirm nominations for Executive or Assistant Executive Bishops, and for the Editor of *New Church Life*."

In recent years the confirmations of nominations have not been features of Assemblies, mostly because there are now more efficient and reliable ways of having people vote that were not available in the past. But the other purposes of these gatherings have always been the most important and useful ones to the life of the church.

In 1965 the Rev. Erik Sandstrom wrote:

In the sight of the Lord a living church is as one. It is therefore of order that the interior unity of the church should be represented from time to time in general convocations, when the church from scattered parts may come together and experience, confirm and revive that unity.

*This applies in a spiritual church as distinct from a celestial church. There is no evidence in the Writings that there were major gatherings in the first church on this earth. History, of course, gives us no information concerning it. That church, referred to as the Most Ancient, was celestial as to genius. It had interior unity without special convocations. (Assemblies: The Pulse of the Church, by the Rev. Erik Sandstrom, *New Church Life* 1965)*

The internal unity that he speaks of might be the most important goal of church gatherings, even though they sometimes seem to serve more to highlight disagreements and the variety of thought in the church organization. But this is all part of the process of organizational development and progress, and will eventually lead to unity if we can be led to focus on what the Heavenly Doctrine focuses on. This is why Assemblies, like similar gatherings in other institutions, are organized around public presentations that emphasize our most important principles and goals.

In a recent *Wall Street Journal* podcast political commentator Yoram

Hazon points out:

Those things that are not discussed in public, that are not honored and endorsed in public by the leadership constantly and repeatedly, are things that come to be dishonored. (wsj.com/podcasts/opinion-free-expression)

He is saying that the things that are stated in public “*constantly and repeatedly*” are the things that are “*honored and endorsed*.” In the church we continually remind people of the things that we see as true and valuable, such as our reliance on the Heavenly Doctrine as the last word in all spiritual matters. Points of emphasis in any organization will tend to change over time. If we are not reminded of our most important founding principles, we may slip into the belief that other factors may be of equal value in discussing the issues of the day.

When the apostles were called together and sent out by the Lord on June 19th, 1770, they went off to carry “*out their assignment with complete enthusiasm and energy*.” Immersive experiences such as we have at church camps, schools and assemblies are often inspirational for many people. Like the apostles, all of us are called together and sent out repeatedly and in different ways throughout our lives. One example of the effect of these occasions is Carl Theophilus Odhner’s account of the 1886 gathering to celebrate the 10-year anniversary of the Academy:

I traveled to Beach Haven [Long Beach Island, New Jersey], to be present at the celebration of the Decennial of the Academy, which lasted over a week (June 14-19, 1886). I will never be able to do justice to that occasion. It was a milestone in my life, a foretaste of heaven. It was the very culmination of the glory of the old Academy. About 80 persons were present, from different parts of the world, all being together as guests of Mr. John Pitcairn in a magnificent hotel at the seaside [The Engleside Hotel].

There were services, ceremonies, discussions and feasts, every day. What sublime spirituality, and yet what intense natural gaiety and innocent enjoyment! We “boys,” of course, especially enjoyed the “nachspiels” under the leadership of the indomitable Walter Childs.

Fred Waelchli and I roomed together. One morning we awoke to witness a glorious sunrise over the ocean, and seriously discussed whether we were in the natural or the spiritual world! (Carl Theophilus Odhner, New Church Life 1920, 285-6)

The event was one among many that fired him with an enthusiasm that he never lost. It is hard to know whether any particular planned event will have the kind of effect that he describes, but if we answer the call and come with interest and an open mind, we can be sure that the Lord will be able to teach us.

(JFS)

Letter to the Editors

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

The Challenge to Blossom

To The Editors:

Here is a translation by the Rev. N. Bruce Rogers of a sentence in Married Love 146 from the original Latin: *“And regeneration is a gradual separation from the evil qualities which attach by birth to his inclinations.”*

So, let us be willing to let go of certain feelings and ideas that we have, relating to our natural but unregenerate love of ourselves. For example, when I was a young boy growing up in Erie, Pennsylvania, I thought that I could run faster than any of my male friends. Yet one boy, Ralph, consistently outran me. That was difficult for me to acknowledge because I was convinced that I was the best runner on my block.

But, “I forgive you, Ralph.” (Phew, that only required about three-quarters of a century to say! I feel better now even if Ralph never had any ill will toward me. Perhaps my clenched fist of anger toward him has finally relaxed into an open hand, filled with understanding and compassion.)

And, truth be told, I have forgiven many, many people since the days of my youth. Or, perhaps I should say that the Lord brought the spirit of forgiveness into my regenerating soul.

As we know, all of us need to change through the process of regeneration, if we are to live in heaven, forever. The complex rebirth of our souls is accomplished by the Lord, of course, but with our humble cooperation and with what little we understand of the process.

Let us welcome new ideas about charity and the development of loving feelings for our neighbors and for the Lord as He creates us anew.

Consider this quotation from writer Anais Nin (1903-1977): “And the day came when the risk to remain tight in a bud was more painful than the risk it

took to blossom.”

I favor blossoming and that the men and women of the General Church of the New Jerusalem continue to cultivate and nourish the garden of uses that lies before those few who have been led into His New Church.

Richard Linquist
Huntingdon Valley
Pennsylvania

All Things New

A New Church Day Sermon by the late Rev. W. Cairns Henderson

Lessons: Isaiah 65; Revelation 21; Doctrine of the Lord 65

The New Church

Every year in June people meet to celebrate the birthday of the New Church. But in what way is the New Church “new”?

First, let us examine what it is that makes a church. From what is a church derived, and in what does it consist? According to the Heavenly Doctrine for the New Church, a church exists from the Word, and it is such as its understanding of the Word is. Thus a church is derived from doctrine.

It consists in a life according to doctrine, that is, in love to the Lord and charity toward the neighbor, which is religion. And it is made by the presence of the Lord in doctrine, and conjunction with Him in the good of life that doctrine teaches. Therefore, the name, the “New Church,” can refer only to the acceptance of a doctrine, the establishment from it of a religion, and a resulting presence of, and conjunction with, the Lord that never existed before. It is these new things that make this a new church.

This conclusion is the basis of the words: “*Behold, I make all things new.*” (*Revelation 21:5*) The Heavenly Doctrine tells us that this is a prophecy of the New Church, foretelling that in it there will be essential and genuine truths, and thus new things of doctrine and of life, which were not in any of the former churches.

New Truths

What are the new teachings that make the church a new church?

In the first place there is an entirely new idea of God. The Divine truth given in the Heavenly Doctrine teaches that God is one in essence and in person, and the Lord Jesus Christ is that God. It teaches that the Lord in His Divine Human is the one God of heaven and earth, the Father being in Him and the Holy Spirit from Him.

The first advent was the incarnation of Jehovah Himself. Its purpose was the redemption of angels and people, the glorification of the Lord's Human, and the extension from it of salvation. We are taught that the Lord has now made His promised second coming in the Heavenly Doctrine revealed through His servant, Emanuel Swedenborg. This doctrine teaches us to think of the Lord as a Divine Man, whose essence is love and wisdom, and from whom alone is all life, good and truth.

The second new thing of doctrine in the New Church is an entirely new conception of the Word of God. This is that the Word is Divine, holy and fully inspired, because its words are the words of the Lord's own mouth through the prophets and evangelists, and because it contains and supports a threefold series of more and more interior senses which treat only of the Lord and His kingdom. In other words, the Sacred Scripture is a parable from beginning to end. Its characters are not holy in themselves, but they represent Divine and spiritual things. The Word has no holiness apart from the spiritual sense that dwells within it. And because the Word contains the spirit and life of God, it is the fountain of all wisdom, the one source of spiritual life, and the only way to heaven.

In addition to these things there is a new idea of faith as being, not mere intellectual belief in the promises of the Word and blind acceptance of that which transcends understanding, but the love of truth for its own sake and the spiritual sight of truth which is given to those who live according to it.

With this goes a new conception of charity as consisting of doing well to others from an unselfish desire for their spiritual welfare. Furthermore, there is an entirely new idea of human responsibility: while a person cannot do any good from himself, he must remove and shun evils as if of himself, while acknowledging that the inclination and power are from the Lord.

And, finally, there is a new conception of eternal life: that a person lives as a person, with all that this implies, immediately after death. He is then established forever in the life of good or evil he had freely chosen while on earth. And he then lives a human life with like-minded companions in surroundings which correspond to his internal state.

These are, fundamentally, the new things of doctrine from which the New Church exists.

New Loves

A life lived according to these new doctrines produces an entirely new kind of life, a new religion, in which the New Church consists.

As love is the life of a person, so this life is a new love, and it is, primarily, a new love to the Lord. The teachings of the Christian Church, with its

conception of a tri-personal God and the doctrine of vicarious atonement, produced a personal love of the Lord, akin to that which might be felt for an elder brother or friend who had made some great sacrifice to secure benefits for his younger and weaker brethren. But acceptance of the Heavenly Doctrine results in a more interior and spiritual love, which consists in loving the good and truth that proceed from the Lord, and especially in loving His wisdom as it is revealed to the church.

To love good and truth sincerely is to use them for the purpose for which they are given by the Lord – for the spiritual welfare of humankind. Thus, hand-in-hand with a new love to the Lord, goes a new love toward the neighbor. The teaching of the Christian Church also produced a personal love of the neighbor which demanded that even external judgments be left to God and that all people be regarded and treated equally as brethren. To benefit others in this indiscriminating way was said to be Christian charity itself.

But the teaching of the Heavenly Doctrine that good is the neighbor produces an entirely new kind of love. This love consists in loving heaven more than any end of self or the world; in loving what is true, sincere and just; in seeking the eternal welfare of others by loving only what is good in them and trying to amend what is evil; and in acting only from the Word which alone teaches what good is; and all this because the Lord commands it.

A New Life

From these new loves, which come only from the Lord through the Heavenly Doctrine, there arises an entirely new kind of life – a new religion. Now this life is no different in externals from that of any person who obeys the civil and moral laws of society, but it is entirely new in its motives and quality. It is this life in which the New Church consists.

Yet while this life constitutes the church, it does not make it. What makes the New Church is the presence of the Lord within the Heavenly Doctrine in the minds of those who receive it. This presence is immediate because the Heavenly Doctrine is an immediate revelation of Divine truth – and the Lord is conjoined with those who receive Him in the life they live from that doctrine. In this sense the Church is “new,” because such a presence and conjunction of the Lord is now given for the first time.

So, we may say that the New Church is new, and a church, because it consists, from new doctrine, in an entirely new kind of spiritual life, in which the Lord can be present in a new way to effect salvation. This is what is meant by the prophecy, “*Behold, I make all things new.*”

Now we must not fail to recognize the real significance of this claim. A new ecclesiastic body, a new priesthood, new rituals, new forms of worship

and instruction, new customs and social practices, new modes of thinking and speaking, and observance of new conventions, do not in themselves make the New Church, though they are all necessary for its ultimate existence.

The church exists among people, and in their congregations, only to the extent that it has been established within their hearts and minds. And the New Church will be founded on earth as the new gospel finds glad acceptance in human hearts and minds, as the Heavenly Doctrine is received and lived by individuals, and as the Lord takes up His abode with them in the tabernacle of the Heavenly Doctrine which they love, understand and live.

For these reasons the church is, and ever will be, “new,” although it is to endure to eternity. Since the church is made up by the immediate presence of the Lord in the Heavenly Doctrine there will always be born in it new things of love and faith; new and ever more interior perceptions of the inner meaning of the Heavenly Doctrine and of uses and how they might be performed; and an increasingly more perfect life

We may say that the New Church is new, and a church, because it consists, from new doctrine, in an entirely new kind of spiritual life, in which the Lord can be present in a new way to effect salvation. This is what is meant by the prophecy, “Behold, I make all things new.”

of charity, resulting from an ever clearer vision of the Lord and His kingdom. In this way the church that is new will ever remain so, leading people ever more affectively to the worship and love of God. Amen,



The **Rev. W. Cairns Henderson** had been a pastor in Hurstville, New South Wales, Australia, and in Kitchener, Ontario, Canada, taught Religion in the Academy Secondary Schools, College and Theological School, was Dean of the Theological School and editor of *New Church Life*. He was married to Eva (Sandstrom). He passed into the spiritual world in 1974, his wife in 2003.

The Seven Thunders

A New Church Day Sermon by the Rev. Jeremy F. Simons

Lessons: Revelation 10; Apocalypse Revealed 472, 473

And He cried with a loud voice, as when a lion roars; and when He cried out, seven thunders uttered their voices. (Revelation 10:3)

Not much is usually made of this incident in *Revelation*, when the seven thunders uttered their voices. It passes by quickly in the narrative. But it is one of the key turning points in the book. People usually just wonder what it is that the thunders said, and why John was not allowed to write it down. As it turns out, what they said was not nearly as interesting as why their words were sealed.

The incident comes near the halfway point in the book. Up to this point in John's message to the Seven Churches he has described what he saw in heaven, as first seven seals on a scroll are opened and then seven trumpets are sounded. We are told that these scenes depict the way that the Last Judgment was to unfold, as seen by John in the spiritual world.

The opened seals portray the state of the church, and the seven trumpets portray the terrible harm that has been done because the love and faith that the church was to embody have been lost. For example, when the seals are opened horses of various colors with their riders appear, showing that there are many good people in the world who love and understand the Word, but many others who are not so good. When the trumpets blow, terrible scenes of destruction are revealed: fire and hail, seas turned to blood, locusts covering the earth, and people killed. These describe what happens when many fail to understand, love and obey the Word.

Our story takes place just as the seventh trumpet is about to sound. It is the first of a two-part interlude between the sounding of the sixth and seventh trumpets, both parts illustrating the situation in the church as the Last Judgment takes place.

In our story John sees what is called just "*another mighty angel*" coming

down from heaven. We are told that this is actually “*the Lord in His Divine majesty and power.*” He is clothed with a cloud, has a rainbow over His head, and is holding a book. The cloud stands for His divinity as seen on the natural plane. The rainbow stands for this divinity on the spiritual plane, or the divine truth seen there. The little book in His hand is the Word as to a particular doctrine. (*Apocalypse Revealed* 466, 469).

Throughout the book of *Revelation* the Lord appears repeatedly in many different forms. He is the One on the throne, He is the Lamb, He is the Angel on the cloud, He is the One on the White Horse. Here He is the mighty Angel clothed in a cloud. What He does here is a response to the opening of the seven seals and the sounding of the trumpets.

When the seventh seal was opened there was silence in heaven for about half an hour (*Revelation* 8:1). We are told that this was the response of the angels to this news about the state of the world:

The silence in heaven means nothing else than an astonishment there over people who claim to have faith and yet are in such a state. (Apocalypse Revealed 389)

In this prelude to the sounding of the seventh trumpet the Lord has a similar response, except that instead of being silent we read that He roared like a lion. This describes “*a grievous lamentation that the church was taken from Him.*”

A lamentation over this is what the angel’s roaring like a lion symbolizes; for a lion roars when it sees its enemies and is attacked by them, and when it sees its young or its prey carried off. The same is comparatively the case with the Lord when He sees His church carried off by devils. (Apocalypse Revealed 471)

So, the Lord’s response to this news, which of course was not news to Him at all, is much more aggressive than that of the angels. A lion’s roar means trouble for its enemies, and the seven thunders spell out exactly what form that trouble would take.

The thunders are actually the solution to the lament. The seven seals and the seven trumpets describe the problem, the Lord roars in grief, and immediately has the answer to that problem in the seven thunders. The answer is in His hand.

As we read in our lesson, the seven thunders mean that “*the Lord has disclosed throughout the whole of heaven what is in the little book.*” It then explains that the little book is the work, *The Doctrine of the New Jerusalem Regarding the Lord*, which was published in 1763, just a few years before *Apocalypse Revealed* was written. In the text the entire table of contents of that

book is then given, almost exactly as it appears in the book.

John is naturally glad to hear this – understanding that the words of the thunders are the longed-for resolution to the terrible scenes that he has been witnessing.

Why is John told to seal up these words?

But instead of proceeding to deploy what the thunders have said, and the power of what is in the book, a voice from heaven tells John to seal it up. Why is this?

The explanation in our lesson is that the words were sealed because “*present within were such things as would not yet be accepted.*” That is, the book would not be accepted at this point, and so it could not do its work. It goes on to say:

If that doctrine were to be received by others than people possessing charity and its accompanying faith . . . it would be rejected not only by them, but through them by everyone else as well. And if not rejected, still it would be falsified, even profaned.

The issue here is about the timing and the process of the Last Judgment and the beginning of the New Church. The book and the teachings it contains are not a magic wand that will suddenly resolve the issues revealed as the seals were opened and the trumpets sounded.

Something similar is said in *Spiritual Experiences 4422*, written about 20 years earlier, when Swedenborg was informed that only four copies of the first volume of the *Arcana Coelestia* had been sold in the previous two months.

When this was made known to the angels, they were indeed surprised, but they said that it must be left to the Providence of the Lord, and that it is such that it compels no one – which could have been done, but that it is not fitting that any others should read it first than those who have faith, and that this is also known from the Lord’s coming into the world, who also could have compelled them to receive His words, and Himself, but compelled no one, as was also the case afterwards by means of the apostles. But still those were found who received, being those who had faith, to whom the apostles were also sent. (Spiritual Experiences 4422)

John does not write down what the thunders said, and the point is further showed by what happens next. The angel makes a loud declaration that “*there shall be no more time*” and that when the seventh trumpet sounds “*the mystery of God would be concluded.*” That is, time is running out for Christianity. We are told that this means “*that there will be no church or any state of the church*

unless people acknowledge one God, and that the Lord is that God.” (Apocalypse Revealed 476) The case is urgent.

Why is the little book bitter?

John is then told to take the book that is in the angel’s hand and eat it. When he does this he finds that it is sweet as honey in his mouth, but bitter in his stomach. The message is that while many things about the doctrine of the Lord are attractive, other aspects are not so easily accepted. Specifically:

This means that accepting the doctrine from an acknowledgment that the Lord is the Savior and Redeemer is pleasing and agreeable, but acknowledging that He alone is God of heaven and earth, and that His humanity is Divine, is displeasing and vexatious, owing to their falsifications. (Apocalypse Revealed 481)

That is, it is one thing to believe that there is a God who loves us and will save us, but it is another thing to accept that the Lord Jesus Christ is that God and that we must obey what He says in His Word. We read:

So it came to pass, and thus it was shown, how this doctrine would be received before those people meant by the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet were removed. (Apocalypse Revealed 482)

Despite this bitterness, John was directed to continue to prophesy “*about peoples, nations, tongues, and many kings.*” What follows is a second story, a second interlude before the seventh trumpet sounds, which makes the message even clearer.

The Two Witnesses and the Seventh Trumpet

This next story, in *Revelation 11*, is about the Two Witnesses, which are these same doctrines about the Lord. They preach. And although they have great power their message is not only not received, but they are killed. Again, the message would not be received “*before these people meant by the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet were removed.*”

The parallel with the Lord’s crucifixion is clear, an act representing a final rejection of the Lord and exposing the true nature of those who did it. It is the culmination of everything that has happened in the book up to this point, the seven seals and the six trumpets, and now this, showing the nature and the source of the problems afflicting Christianity.

But, of course, the Lord cannot be killed, and neither can these Two

Witnesses. They are resurrected, called up into heaven, there is a tremendous earthquake – and then the seventh trumpet sounds.

The trumpet sounds because the case has now been made. The response in heaven is as if the battle has now been won.

And there were loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!" (Revelation 11:15)

All of this sets the stage for the rest of the book. The doctrine of the Lord is the answer to humanity's problems, but that doctrine is not easily accepted. The doctrine leads to a life of love and charity, but it cannot be accepted except by those in a life of love and charity. It is a circular problem which can only be solved over a period of time.

When this doctrine is first heard from the Seven Thunders it is immediately sealed because it would not be accepted and would invite controversy and disbelief. When John ingests this doctrine in the little book it makes him feel sick. When the Two Witnesses preach it, they are killed, but rise again. The same line of thought continues in chapter 12 as the Woman Clothed with the Sun appears and this same doctrine – and in fact the entire doctrine of the New Church (see *Apocalypse Revealed* 543) – is brought into the world as the Male Child to whom she gives birth. The doctrine and those who espouse it face immediate attack, but this time their defenders come out in force. Michael and his angels, and eventually the Lord Himself on a white horse, defeat the dragon and his allies, paving the way for the New Jerusalem to descend and the New World begin.

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The story of the Seven Thunders and why their message was sealed is a message to us about gradual change and about the gradual acceptance of the truth. The vicious circle of disbelief and bad behavior is not easy to break, but happens a little at a time. We celebrate it at this time of year, in the incremental progress marked by graduations and things such as our June 19th festivities each year.

We often wonder where we are in the long process, but it is important to understand that this same progression happens to each person individually, as well as to

groups collectively. We can't hear the truth unless there is love in our heart, and we can't have love in our heart unless we are willing to hear the truth. It seems like a conundrum, but there is always a way forward as the Lord creates the New Jerusalem in each person a little at a time.

For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth;

And the former shall not be remembered or come to mind. But be glad and rejoice forever in what I create; for behold, I create Jerusalem as a rejoicing, and her people a joy. I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in

My people;

The voice of weeping shall no longer be heard in her, nor the voice of crying.
(Isaiah 65:17-19) Amen.



The **Rev. Jeremy F. Simons** is retired but still serves as Spiritual Editor of New Church Life. He and his wife, Allyn (Edmonds), live in Bryn Athyn. Contact: jeremyfsimons@gmail.com



FROM THE BISHOP'S OFFICE

Gathering Together

The Rt. Rev. Bradley D. Heinrichs

The General Church Assembly is happening June 27-30! It has been a long time since we have been able to hold an Assembly, so I thought it would be useful to share a few thoughts about their value. Our theme for this Assembly is based on this teaching: *"Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord; . . . He will teach us His ways, and we shall walk in His paths."* (Isaiah 2:3).

Notice there is an exhortation amongst the people to do something proactive – to come together and go up to the mountain of the Lord. For an Assembly to be fulfilling, it takes a group of people to make an intentional choice to gather together. It is not always easy to make this happen: sometimes there are visa issues, taking vacation days to leave work, cost of travel, etc. However, the reason why people would make the effort to come to an Assembly is also very important, namely, so that the Lord can teach us of His ways and that we can support each other in walking in His paths.

Many of us have been feeling a lack of personal human connection since Covid hit in 2020 and forced us all to remain locked away from other people. As the pandemic lingered, we got used to communicating with people through Zoom, Teams, and other social media. While that helped to provide some

useful connection, it nevertheless was not enough to fill the void created by the lack of handshakes, hugs, and being directly in the sphere of friends you love.

Not being directly influenced by a person's sphere has also led to increased fighting online, where people find it easier to yell at those with whom they disagree. Often people say things in those unregulated forums that they would never say to the person if they were sitting down and sharing a cup of coffee together.

I know that for some there is anxiety about coming to the Assembly after a couple of years of feeling rather isolated and at odds with certain friends and acquaintances, but there is no need to worry if you are coming together with the Lord at the center. He says to each one of us: *"Fear not, for I am with you; I will bring your descendants from the east, and gather you from the west. . . . Let all the nations be gathered together, and let the people be assembled."* (Isaiah 43:5-9)

In fact, even in heaven it is really the Lord who draws people together. We are told: *"Everywhere in heaven those who are alike are associated together and those who are unlike are dissociated. Any one society in heaven therefore consists of those who are alike. Like are brought to like, not by themselves but by the Lord."* (Heaven and Hell 383) If we trust that the Lord can bring us together and help us find that we really do share the same faith in His Second Coming and desire to live according to those revealed truths, then He will be able to bless us with a feeling of harmony.

I hope that I will see you at the General Church Assembly and that we can worship the Lord together and make a joyful noise in praise of Him.

I will surely assemble all of you, O Jacob, I will surely gather the remnant of Israel; I will put them together like sheep of the fold, like a flock in the midst of their pasture; they shall make a loud noise because of so many people." (Micah 2:12)

Contact: Brad.Heinrichs@newchurch.org

The Purpose and Value of Worship Services For the General Church of the New Jerusalem

The Rev. Prescott A. Rogers

*Give unto God the glory of His name;
Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness.
Psalm 29:2*

The Role of Worship in Religion

Religion is how God and humans connect and form a relationship based on a covenant. In legal terms a covenant is an important contract. In a covenant the two parties agree to certain stipulations or promises that are binding. A covenant with God is something special because it is sacred, for anything having to do with God is sacred. God wants to have a covenant with people to form a close relationship with them. In the covenant He promises to care for the people and to provide for them (providence). But the covenant is not established until people agree to it, and then learn the Lord's truth, love that truth, and then live that truth. The purpose of religion is to foster this covenantal relationship with God collectively (as in a congregation or a particular religion, such as Catholicism) and individually.

Religion has three parts, each of which strives to provide intellectual and/or emotional satisfaction. Faith or a belief system primarily provides intellectual satisfaction by declaring what is true and by explaining topics that belong to religion, such as life after death. Charity or a religious life primarily provides emotional satisfaction because it makes life fulfilling and purposeful. Worship or ritual strives to provide both intellectual satisfaction by means of instruction and emotional satisfaction by means of prayer, hymns and inspiration. The covenant between God and a church or between Him and a person depends on how well people observe and live the life of faith, charity and worship.

Types of Worship Services

There are three types of worship services: regular services, rites and sacraments. The purpose of regular services is to maintain or strengthen the covenant. It is called regular because the calendar determines when the services occur. Worship services occur once a week on the Sabbath or on a special day in the year, such as Easter. They may also occur on other days important to the religion such as Jubilee celebrated in ancient Israel every 50 years or mid-week services for many Protestant denominations.

Rites

The purpose of a rite is to establish a new, personal covenant to be added to the covenantal relationship that already exists between the Lord and a person. A rite marks an important transition in a person's life and in his relationship with the Lord. In the General Church of the New Jerusalem there are six traditional rites.

A **betrothal** is a ceremony whose purpose is to strengthen or confirm (which literally means "strongly firm") the commitment that a man and a woman have made to be married. It strengthens their consent that is the essence of their relationship and of all marriages. During a betrothal a man becomes a groom and a woman becomes a bride. Their lives as well as their relationship have changed for the better with the Lord's presence and blessing.

A **wedding** is a worship service that solidifies the consent and so the relationship between the bride and the groom. They approach the Lord together as bride and groom. He then transforms them into wife and husband. Again, their lives have changed because of the Lord's stronger relationship with them.

An **ordination** is a rite during which a person approaches the Lord as a layman and then becomes a priest, someone who leads in worship.

A **memorial service** is an unusual rite. The participant in the covenant is not physically present in the service, but rather is fully present in spirit. The person has left his life in this world behind and is completely conscious in the spiritual world on the third day. This is why a memorial service is held on or after the third day. The purpose of a memorial service is to mark the transition from a person's earthly life to a heavenly one – a significant change in his life. The service is primarily for that person, but is also extremely important for the loved ones who have gathered to honor the deceased.

A rite less often observed in the General Church is **confirmation**. Its purpose is to mark the transition in an adult from having an historical faith created from what that person was taught during the past to a faith that he

has formed for himself. That person believes truths, not because his parents and teachers taught them, but because he sees the truthfulness in what he was taught. One reason this rite is less observed is that it is not taught in the Heavenly Doctrines, while the four listed above are.

A rite that is rarely observed is **home dedication**. This rite is also not taught in the Heavenly Doctrine. Its purpose is to mark the transition from a home to a home dedicated to the worship of the Lord and the inhabitants' commitment to observe His commandments.

Sacraments

As the name of these worship services indicate, these are the most sacred acts of worship. The reason is that, whereas a rite marks the transition from one stage of life to another, a sacrament marks the transition from being outside the Lord's kingdom to being inside that kingdom. Another characteristic that makes sacraments special is the use of representatives (natural objects or actions that are symbols of spiritual realities, such as good or truth, or spiritual qualities, such as innocence). Representatives used to be the basis of the covenant between the Lord and the pre-advent churches (Most Ancient, Ancient, and Israelitish). Representatives were essential in their worship because the representatives were the only means by which the Lord could be with them. He could not be directly present but could only be present with them remotely, which is what representation means. Representative worship was utterly ended by the Lord at His first advent, except for the sacraments. The Lord on earth changed worship services from being representative to being based on instruction in truth that leads to the good of life. The Lord can only be present directly in truths that lead to goodness.

Baptism is the sacrament by which a baby, child or adult enters the Lord's kingdom on earth which is His church. Water is used as a representative of the natural sense of the Word which is the only means by which people can overcome their evils, hereditary or actual. As water cleanses and purifies the body, so do the truths of the natural sense clean and purify the mind or spirit. As water is necessary for earthly life, so too are those truths necessary for spiritual life.

During the ceremony the priest dips his fingers into a vessel of water and makes the sign of the cross over the chest and over the head of the recipient. The sign is made over the chest because that is where the heart is, and over the head, because that is where the brain is. The heart has to do with love and the brain has to do with wisdom. The sign of the cross represents temptation (which is why Jesus died on the cross). The sign of the cross over the chest is the promise of victory in temptations having to do with what the person loves,

and the sign of the cross over the head promises victory over temptations as to what a person believes. This promise is fulfilled when a person overcomes his falsities and evils by means of the natural sense of the Word symbolized by water.

Holy Supper marks the transition from being outside the Lord's kingdom in the spiritual world, which is heaven, to being inside it. The unleavened bread is a representative of the Lord's love or the goods of that love, and the fermented grape juice or wine represents the Lord's wisdom or the truths of that wisdom. As a person's body needs food and water, that person needs the Lord's love and wisdom for spiritual life. All food represents love, but the unleavened bread means accepting the goods of the Lord's Word without mixing it with selfishness or some other evil, for yeast represents the proprium or that which does not belong to the Lord at all, but only to oneself. This is why the grape juice is fermented by the presence of yeast, for it spiritually means that people not only do see the Lord's truth in His Word for themselves and according to their own understanding, but they are supposed to do so.

Unlike baptism which happens once in a lifetime, people are encouraged to partake of the Holy Supper often. Whereas a person enters the church once, a person needs to be in the states of heavenly love and wisdom occasionally to witness their necessity and their delight before that person makes them his own (appropriation). Whereas baptism is a beginning to a life in the Lord's kingdom, that life is not confirmed until a person appropriates the goods and truths of the Word from the Lord for himself or herself. Regeneration is a process during which a person alternates between states of goodness and of evilness until that person is confirmed in a life of goodness. Holy Supper is the best way for a person to become determined to live the life of goodness.

The Establishment of a Covenant

The rites and sacraments have the same features that exist in all covenants with the Lord . This can be illustrated by the national covenant between the Lord and the Israelites recorded in Exodus. It is the Lord who summons humans to a covenantal relationship as Jehovah summoned the Israelites to Mount Sinai. There the covenant was established, the covenant that the Lord proposed and that the Israelites accepted by saying three times: "All that the LORD has spoken, we will hear and do." (A person at that time said something three times as a sign of complete emphasis.) The Lord was the origin of the covenant, as He is in all the covenants people make with Him. The Israelites were the participants, as are all humans, individually or collectively, who enter a covenant with the Lord.

A special role was played by Moses. Whenever he went up the mountain to

speak to Jehovah, he spoke for the people in establishing the sacred contract. Whenever he came down the mountain, Moses spoke for Jehovah to the people. He was the agent of God and the agent of the people, acting on both their behalf. He was a mediator. In the same way, a priest in every and all worship services is an agent of the Lord and of the people. He represents the Lord whenever he faces the people in the congregation during a regular worship service or the participants in a rite or sacrament. He is the representative of the congregation or the participants when he faces the Word as the greatest symbol of the Lord. He is the mediator in the establishment of, in the maintenance of, and in the strengthening of covenants.

In every rite or sacrament, the participants approach the Lord by entering the chancel where the minister faces them, representing the Lord. Each rite or sacrament has three parts. The first part belongs to the Lord in which part the minister reads passages from the Word. This is the Lord speaking to the people about the covenant and His invitation for the participants to enter into it. The second part belongs to the participants when they answer affirmatively to questions about their belief in the Lord, His Word, and the necessity of living the life of religion. This is their acceptance of the covenant proposed by the Lord. The third part belongs to both the Lord and the participants, during which the covenant is established.

This part has two very important activities: prayer and blessing. In prayer the minister, acting on behalf of the participants (for he is facing the Word), asks that the Lord be with the participants, guide them, and support them in the covenant. The minister then blesses the participants, acting on behalf of the Lord (for he is now facing the participants). With the blessing the covenant is completed, and the participants have a new and closer relationship with the Lord.

Activities and Positions in a Worship Service

Essential to worship on the part of the congregation are three activities, each of which has a physical position which best encourages the proper and appropriate attitude in the members of that congregation. The first activity is listening to the Lord's Word and to a sermon based on and arising from the Word. Sitting is the position that best allows a person to listen, for standing or kneeling after a while becomes tiresome and uncomfortable.

The second activity is prayer in which the people acknowledge the Lord's power, greatness and loving nature. During prayer they ask and hope for the Lord's presence in their lives and His guidance as they follow His Word. Since humility is essential to the effectiveness of prayer, kneeling is the appropriate position because it is a sign of humility and encourages it.

The third activity is the singing of hymns by which the people express their thoughts and feelings as they acknowledge the Lord as their Savior. Standing helps people to sing, but it is also the position of praise and joy.

(Not essential to worship, but beneficial, is the playing of music before the service that helps prepare people for the act of worship, and then during and after the service that encourages reflection of what they heard from the Word directly in the readings and indirectly in sermons.)

A Final Thought

A person can have many covenantal relationships with the Lord. He is part of the congregation, and so the collective covenant. He can be baptized, betrothed, married and ordained. And he will pass onto the next world. These covenants are distinct, but they all contribute to the overall covenantal relationship with the Lord.

*But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the
Father in spirit and truth;
for the Father is seeking such to worship Him.
God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.
John 4:23-24*

*This reciprocal conjunction, of the Lord with humankind and of humankind
with the Lord . . .
is what is meant by the “covenant” in the Word.
Apocalypse Explained 701:2*



The **Rev. Prescott A. Rogers** is retired and serves as pastor of the Charlotte Circle in North Carolina. He taught religion for many years in Bryn Athyn College. He and his wife, Jill (Heilman), live in Waxhaw, North Carolina. Contact: Prescott.Rogers@brynathyn.edu

True Love

The Rev. Todd J. Beiswenger

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It was last March, near the end of the month, and as I was walking through downtown Sydney, I found myself feeling a bit overwhelmed by the sheer volume of rainbow flags and the promotion of Mardi Gras at seemingly every shop in the city. I was meeting my friend and co-conspirator, the Rev. Howard Thompson, for lunch, and he offered me an interesting observation.

It used to be that Mardi Gras was a one-night, maybe a one-day, event where you partied hard because Lent started the next day, and you were going to give up something for the next 40 days. However, Howard's observation was that things have flipped: now we party for a month, and maybe, just maybe, if it isn't too inconvenient or there isn't a birthday party to go to, we'll spend an hour at church.

As I write this, March is only a few days away, and so the month-long party is about to begin. The rainbow flags will fly, and we will be indoctrinated with the message that "love is love," which isn't true. But I won't get into that debate now, instead what I offer is a true love story. I hope it serves as an antidote to the lust that is being sold as love.

We Met, As If By Chance . . .

By Robert Beiswenger

*"It is granted to man to see the Divine Providence in the back and not in the face."
(Divine Providence 175)*

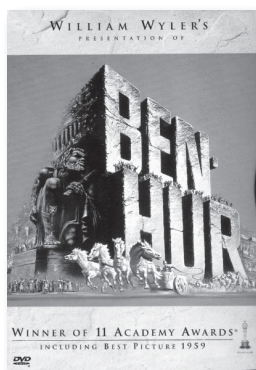
I met Cathy, the girl who would one day be my wife, on a blind date. We were both juniors at Auburn University (in Alabama), and we went to see *Ben Hur*, a lengthy movie starring Charlton Heston in the title role.

The story of Ben Hur, who was born a Jew in the same year as the Lord, was subtitled “A Tale of the Christ.” In the movie, Ben Hur learns of the Christ and eventually accepts Him into his life. At the time, we could not foresee the significance of seeing this movie on our first date.



It was almost 33 years later that my wife was lying on a hospital bed in our family room, her health failing from ovarian cancer. Earlier that day she had gone into a semi-comatose state and the hospice nurse told me that she could probably hear what was going on around her yet could not communicate. It was uncertain whether or not she would come out of this condition. I positioned myself in a chair next to her bed to keep a watchful eye on her and do whatever I could to provide for her comfort.

Later that night I turned on the television and began surfing through the channels to see what was playing that might be enjoyable. To my surprise, *Ben Hur* was playing! Of course, I stopped my surfing and watched it with



Cathy by my side. Little did I know that this “date” would be our last one – at least in this world. After the movie ended, I stood by her bed and watched her as she labored to breathe. With sadness in my heart, I told her, “I love you, and I will always love you. But you have suffered long enough, and if you need to let go, I will take good care of the kids, and I will be OK.” After I had said this, she took about three more breaths, and then stopped breathing. Her ordeal was over, and what I would eventually call a “temporary separation” would be more trying than I could have imagined.

However, I soon realized that seeing *Ben Hur* had been our first date and our last date. As I reflected on our life together — a Catholic guy marrying a Baptist girl and together accepting the Lord in His New Revelation – was a similar “tale of the Christ.” We, too, had “found the Lord” and built a life together in a religious community.

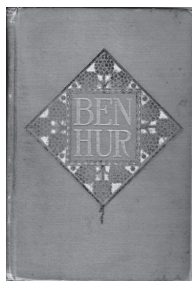
A little more than a year after my wife left this world, Lana, her sister, called me and invited me to join her and her husband at their second home in the mountains of North Carolina. I decided to accept their offer and drove down there from Philadelphia the next day. The first morning I awoke in their

home, I said a little prayer asking the Lord to help me through another day and show me the path I needed to follow – what I needed to do – to be with my wife again one day.

Later that morning, Warren, my brother-in-law, suggested that the three of us should take a drive in the countryside for a little sightseeing. We were soon on our way, enjoying the scenic drive. While on one of the country roads, we passed a wooden home that had been converted into an antique shop.

Warren asked Lana if she would like to stop there and see what they had for sale; he had read that it was going out of business, so there might be some bargains. She was surprised that he was willing to turn around and go back to the store; according to her, it was hard to get him to stop even with advance notice, so his stopping and turning around was very unusual! I just laughed at the friendly jabs they gave each other.

Once in the store, I quickly realized that I had no interest in buying anything, no matter what the price. However, I noticed an area with some books and headed over there to see what might be on sale. I reached high on a shelf for one rather old looking book, but replaced it after a quick glance. After returning it, my hand reached for another book right next to the first one. The title on the spine was faded and unreadable, but I instinctively pulled it off the shelf anyway. Much to my astonishment, in gold lettering on the cover was the title—*Ben Hur!*



I was floored to find something like this; I had never even considered looking for this book, and yet here I had come across a 1912, first-edition copy of it! I then proceeded to open the book, and it fell open to the author's dedication page. When I saw the words, tears quickly flooded my eyes: "*To the wife of my youth, who still abides with me.*"

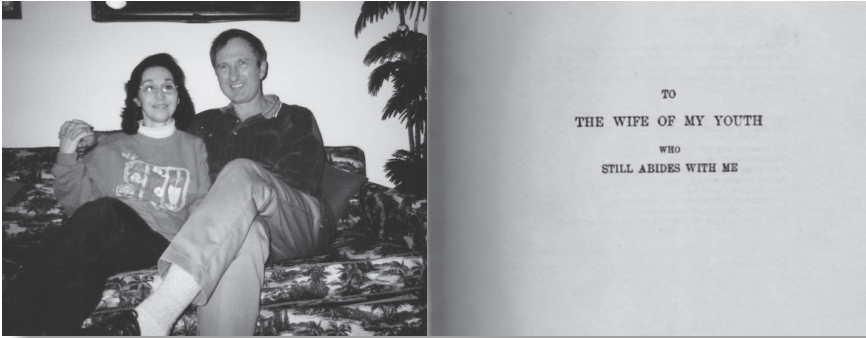
Ben Hur—it was our first date, the story of our life together, and eventually our last date. And, when I least expected it but needed it most, I found a copy of the book with an inscription that was an answer to my prayer.

"There is no such thing as mere chance and what seems to be haphazard, or fortune, is Providence at work." (Arcana Coelestia 6493)

TRUE LOVE

The Rev. Todd J. Beiswenger will complete his pastorate at the Hurstville, New South Wales, Australia, church at the end of this year and has accepted a call to become pastor of the Olivet Church in Toronto, Ontario, Canada, where he will be moving with his wife, Jenn (Jorgensen) and son Zach.

Contact: todd@hurstvilleneewchurch.org



Finding the New Jerusalem: Rev. Joseph Proud

A Memoir by the Rev. Edward Madeley¹

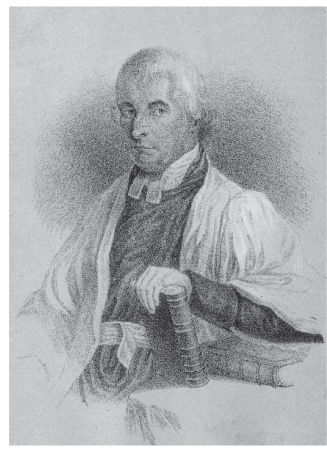
Compiled by Marvin B. Clymer

The Rev. Joseph Proud, whose eminent qualifications for the ministry, and whose piety and zeal, shed a luster over the station in which he so long moved, and whose biography is so intimately blended with the early history and progress of the New Church, was a son of the Rev. John Proud, of Beaconsfield, in Buckinghamshire [England]. He was born on March 22, 1745.

When he was about 11 years of age his father removed, to take charge of the General Baptist congregation at Wisbech, in Cambridgeshire. Though of limited education, yet, under the fostering care of worthy parents, his mind was early imbued with religious principles.

In 1767, before he had reached his 22nd year, he was invited, by the pressing solicitations of the Church, to assist his aged father in the sacred functions of the ministry. He was soon after removed to take charge of a society at Knipton, in Leicestershire, where he remained three or four years.

On February 3, 1769, he was married to his first wife, [Elizabeth], of whom he had 11 children, two of whom survived him. Soon after the decease of his first wife in 1785, he married a widow, by whom he had three more children, who all died in their infancy. Mrs. Susannah Proud survived her beloved husband by three months.



Rev. Joseph Proud

¹ This memoir was printed as a preface to *The Aged Minister's Last Legacy to the New Church* by Rev. Joseph Proud, posthumously printed in 1854.

In 1780 he accepted an invitation to preside over the Church at Fleet, in Lincolnshire. Here he was ordained to the pastoral office; and in 1782, such had been the success of his ministry, that the place of worship was considerably enlarged. About this time, Mr. Hunt, then a surgeon of Norwich, but afterwards of Gissing, in Norfolk, (who subsequently became a cordial receiver of the New Church doctrines, and died in 1824,) proposed to build a chapel and residence for him in that city and give them to him for the term of his life. He accepted the handsome offer, and a commodious place of worship, accommodating from 600 to 800 persons, was immediately erected in Ber-street.

In 1786 Mr. Proud removed thither, and Mr. Hunt became his colleague in the ministry. The same year he published a little poem, *Calvinism Exploded*, which passed through several editions. He also held a public disputation with a Minister of the Society of Friends or Quakers, which was likewise printed. Mr. Proud remained in Norwich about five years. His labors were most successful, and he continued an acceptable and distinguished Minister of the General Baptist connection till the year 1791 – a period of 25 years. During this time he printed several small works, chiefly poems, besides composing many others, both in prose and poetry.

I now come to a new era in the religious life of our venerated friend. About two years after his settlement at Norwich, a physician, resident in that city, earnestly recommended him to read the writings of the Honorable Emanuel Swedenborg, of which only a few were at that time translated into English, and he lent him the *Treatise on Heaven and Hell*.

Mr. Proud read the work, without taking any interest in it, and returned it with the expression of his opinion, that it was a record of the wild and enthusiastic reveries of a fertile yet morbid imagination. Subsequently, and directed doubtless by Divine Providence, J. W. Salmon, Esq., a well-known and zealous receiver, having heard of Mr. Proud's celebrity, was induced to take a journey from London, accompanied by a friend, expressly to visit him. Mr. Salmon was the guest of Mr. Proud during his stay and lost no time in introducing to his earnest attention the Heavenly Doctrines of the New Church.

Mr. Hunt, at once shewed a disposition to lend a favorable ear to the truths announced, in which he was at first vehemently opposed by Mr. Proud, who burst into the room where Mr. Hunt and our New Church friends were together, and in the most strenuous manner exhorted Mr. Hunt to have nothing to do with those doctrines. Anxious to suppress what he considered to be contrary to Scripture testimony, Mr. Proud undertook to convince the visitors, by public discussion, and private argument, that they were the dupes of an artful and visionary enthusiast, and that the religious sentiments they maintained were utterly unworthy [of] the acceptance of mankind.

Mr. Salmon, however, exhibited so truly meek, humble, and loving a spirit,

that he finally prevailed in silencing the opposition, and complied with the entreaty of Mr. Proud to prolong his stay; during which he preached several impressive discourses, which were highly approved by the majority of the large congregations who listened to them.

In his private diary, Mr. Proud recorded at the time his impression of this visit, as follows, under date of “Tuesday morning, 17 June, 1788,” “Mr. J. W. Salmon came to our house. He lives at Nantwich, in Cheshire, is a Member of the New Church, and preaches the doctrines. He preached at our Chapel nine times. Never did I hear any man preach with such power, and Divine demonstration. He appears to be the most humble, affectionate, and holy man I ever knew; and I believe I shall never forget what he laid before me. I verily think that the Lord in great mercy sent him to me and the church for great good; and I trust we have a people prepared to receive further degrees of love and wisdom. O that we may be thus prepared! I love the man most sincerely; and bless the Lord my Savior for sending him. He stayed with us till Thursday, the 26th – that is 10 days, and I accompanied him to Dereham, where I took my leave of this dear, dear man.”

It will be seen, then, that what had been urged in favor of the doctrines of the New Church by Mr. Salmon, made a very considerable impression upon our friend’s mind, who requested, before he left, that he would send him a volume of Swedenborg’s works to read, which he promised that he would peruse with a serious and unprejudiced mind.

Shaken in his belief as to many of his preconceived religious sentiments, he suffered great mental inquietude, but concluded, that if the doctrines of Eternal Truth were thus providentially offered for his acceptance, an obstinate rejection of them, might with justice be imputed to him as a crime. He, therefore, resolved to read in the spirit of prayer for Divine guidance and illumination, and diligently comparing what he read with the Word of God, to weigh all his conclusions in the balance of his best judgment. He anxiously waited for the book, and was not kept long in suspense, for Mr. Salmon, as soon as he returned, forwarded him a copy of *The True Christian Religion, or Universal Theology of the New Church*.

On the morning after receiving this precious treasure, he rose early, and, according to his usual custom, retired to his study in the garden. Before he began to read, he kneeled down, and prayed fervently to the Lord, that he would be pleased to influence and guide his mind on the present momentous occasion. He supplicated for no miraculous interposition. He asked for light and understanding, and that he might be rightly directed by the Divine Word. He then opened the sacred volume, and his attention was arrested by the first passage which met his eye (*Habakkuk . i:5*): “Behold ye among the heathen and regard, and wonder marvelously: for I will work a work in your days, which ye

will not believe, though it be told you."

These words appeared to him to describe his state and be an express answer to his prayer. From that instant he resolved calmly to consider the writings he had previously despised. He began to read *The Universal Theology*, and as he proceeded from chapter to chapter, day by day, he found his old mistaken and gloomy notions of religion gradually giving way, and new convictions springing up of the truth of the New Dispensation. These convictions grew and were soon the established principles of his mind.

How could it be otherwise, when such a work was read in such a spirit! He found the doctrines advanced, were confirmed by the most ample corroborative testimony of the Word of God, and the most cogent appeals to enlightened reason. The more he read, the deeper was his gratitude, the firmer his faith, and the more intense his delight.

Swedenborg's memorable relations, indeed, "staggered" him at first very much. He had no friend at hand to help him. He could not see, from his preconceived views of the human soul and the eternal world, how they contain real, though often astounding spiritual facts, to be confirmed by inward experience, consciousness and perception, as well as by the direct revelations made to patriarchs, prophets and apostles, as recorded in the divinely inspired Word.

The science of correspondences had not as yet unlocked these mental treasures to his soul; but, still, he was afraid to deny their verity and reality, and recoiled from the preposterously absurd thought of their being the mere inventions of a feverish, distracted and distorted imagination. He saw that these relations were written in a lucid style, that many of the deductions harmonized with Scripture, reason, philosophy and genuine morality. He was satisfied to pass them over for a time, till he had become better acquainted with those heaven-descended principles, which he felt assured would be sufficient, most satisfactorily to explain, all their apparent mysteries.

Firmly persuaded of the truth and importance of all that he read, and could comprehend, like the apostle Paul, "he conferred not with flesh and blood," but without hesitation and fear, proceeded openly to declare to all around him the new doctrines he had espoused. Like all novitiates in the New Church, he was impatient for the world to receive them, and expected that they would be embraced by multitudes with readiness, thankfulness and joy – that they needed only to be presented in order to find acceptance.

In his preaching and conversation, he chiefly dwelt upon the doctrines of the Lord, and the necessity of a good life to insure salvation. Some of his hearers were convinced of the truth by his earnest and powerful appeals, others doubted and many denied.

On the evening of Tuesday, February 24, 1789, nine persons were received into church-fellowship, by the rite of baptism administered by immersion.

They were baptized “into the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, as the only God of heaven and earth, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in One Divine Person.”

At the conclusion of the ceremony he preached an eloquent and instructive discourse from *Ezekiel 27:22, 23*. This sermon was printed at the request of the congregation, and may be regarded as one of the earliest discourses, (if not the very earliest,) published after the formation of the first New Church Society in London a few months before. This sermon was entitled *New Jerusalem Blessings, or the Unity, Purity, and Happiness of real Christians in the last Days, in which the New Kingdom of the Lord is established – Jesus the King thereof, who is the only God of Heaven and Earth*.

In July of this year he began a series of morning poetical meditations on various texts of Scripture, similar in design to a year’s meditations in prose, but only continued them about three months. They are, however, full of aspirations and thanksgivings to the Lord, in relation to his introduction to the New Church.

[Rev. Proud wrote in his memoirs]:²

A little time after this, I had an occasion to visit London and while there I was introduced to several Persons of the New Church, who were well pleased that I had, so far received the Writings of E.S. The Friends met one evening in the week at a Gentleman’s House, to spend two or three hours in conversation upon the heavenly Doctrines and Truths of the New Church. To their meeting I was invited – and if at any one time, more than another I looked ignorant, stupid, and incapable of conversation, it was at this meeting. For, like the Disciples at Pentecost, they all seemed to speak with new Tongues.

I wondered, was astonished! – could not conceive where they had gained such extraordinary knowledge – or how they had learned such language. I sat like a ninny – stared with admiration and had not a word to say. In fact, I was astonished beyond measure and thought these men either came down from Heaven, or that some Angel dictated what they said.

I looked upon myself as a mere blockhead, and said, if this be genuine Religion, I am but an infant, know nothing, at 40 years old, and have all my lessons to learn, but I shall never attain to the knowledge they have acquired or be able to converse as they do!

² Memoirs Of the Rev. Joseph Proud (1745-1826). Typed from a photocopy of memoirs handwritten in 1822 by the Rev. Joseph Proud. Page 5.

Full of wonder and admiration, I returned to Norwich; read the Universal Theology, and some other of the Writings I brought home with me; and thus continued to furnish my mind with the Doctrines and Truths they contained.

He returned home greatly strengthened and encouraged. He printed a poem entitled *Jehovah's Mercy made known to all Mankind in these Last Days; or an Invitation to all Men of Religion to accept the Mercy of the Lord, as now manifested by His Messenger and Scribe the Honorable Emanuel Swedenborg*. This poem had a large circulation and reached several editions.

Immediately after his visit to London, he received an urgent request to prepare a volume of original hymns for the use of the public worship of the New Church. With this request he at once complied; and in the brief space of about three months presented a MS [manuscript] copy of upwards of 300 hymns.³ These were greatly approved and an edition was printed in 1790.

In the second edition, printed in the following year, 1791, several additional hymns were inserted suitable for particular occasions and special subjects. In England the sixth edition was reached, and in the *Conference Hymn Book*, which superseded its use in public worship, a large proportion of Mr. Proud's hymns are more or less included.

He was soon convinced that it would be impossible to remain in Norwich as the Minister of Ber-street Chapel. Although by the title-deeds, the Chapel, Minister's house, etc., were his own for life, yet, having changed his religious sentiments, he felt that he could not conscientiously hold them, although he had no prospects before him. He, therefore, freely conceded their use to the General Baptist denomination, and one of the last acts of his life was to convey the whole to trustees of their own selection.

In the course of a very few weeks, however, he received a pressing invitation to visit a gentleman in Birmingham, who was engaged in building a temple for the use of the New Church, to see what was doing, and whether he could make the needful arrangements to become the stated minister. He paid this visit in June 1790; and it was soon amicably arranged for him to take the charge of the congregation when the temple was completed.

He later wrote in his memoirs: "From this period, I date my full separation from the Old Church, and my entrance into the New."⁴

On making application in London, he was ordained a Minister of the New

³ Several writers have assumed that Rev. Proud wrote all 300 hymns, but more recent research indicates that he wrote 130 of them (still an impressive number). See Alec Morley, "William Blake and the Great Eastcheap Orthodoxy," in *Protest and Survival: essays for E. P. Thompson*, London: Merlin Press, 1993, p. 139.

Church, on May 3, 1791, by the Rev. James Hindmarsh. This Temple was the first place of worship ever built for the promulgation of the Heavenly Doctrines of the New Jerusalem. No reasonable expense was spared in its erection; and it was opened for public worship, on Sunday, June 19, 1791. On this occasion Mr. Proud preached two discourses, morning and evening, from 2 *Samuel* 7: 29; in which he took occasion to announce the general doctrines to be advocated in that place. These sermons are before the public; and a contemporary observes respecting them, “that they were masterly compositions, were delivered with the utmost propriety, and were satisfactorily received by an overflowing audience.”

In the same year, the celebrated Dr. Priestley addressed a series of *Letters to the Members of the New Jerusalem Church*, to which Mr. Proud printed a reply in November; and in the following month, a sermon on *The True Nature of the Soul and the Resurrection*. Early in the year 1792, he printed a discourse on *The Fundamental Doctrines of the New Jerusalem*, preached at Birmingham and Bristol. In September of the same year he published a volume of *Twenty Practical Discourses*; and in October, a sermon entitled *General Proofs of the Lord’s Second Advent*, preached in the Unitarian Chapel at Warwick, and another entitled *Jesus Christ the Supreme Head of His Church, preached in Birmingham*.

[Rev. Proud wrote:]⁵

On the 14th day of July in 1791 the French Revolution was (?) commemorated, on which day, a dreadful riot commenced. Dr. Priestley’s home (?) chapel – several other unitarian chapels, and a number of Gentleman’s mansions, were torn to pieces and burnt to the ground. Two or three times, the mob came to destroy our Temple, upon a supposition, that we were against Church and King, as the Unitarians were supposed to be, and the last time the mob came by thousands, with wood under their arms, to burn our Temple. I rushed in among the crowd, to the ringleader, explained to them that we had no connection with Dr. Priestly or that party, and that we wished no ill to the Church, or to the King, and putting a Ginnea (sic) or two into their hands, they went away, with “Huzza to the New Jerusalem forever!” Thus the Temple escaped destruction.

The Temple was regularly crowded to excess, and great indeed were the expectations formed of the future prosperity of the Society; expectations, alas! not then to be realized. While multitudes were flocking to hear “the great New Jerusalem Preacher,” and the Temple was begun to be enlarged, the gentleman

⁴ Ibid, page 6.

⁵ Ibid, pages 7 – 8.

who had erected it, was unexpectedly involved in ruin before any trustees were appointed, and the property was claimed by his creditors, but found to be heavily mortgaged.

Mr. Proud had reposed so much confidence in him as to place in his hands all his little savings, the hard-earned produce of many years of labor and thrifty economy. He lost all, together with his situation as a minister; and with a family to provide for was suddenly thrown upon the world without any apparent means of support. In this trying position, Mr. Proud had no resource but the Divine Providence. He made no loud complaints, but endeavored to bear his heavy trials with Christian fortitude and submission. Nor was he left without consolation.

To the sincere sympathy of his friends, was likewise added, that of strangers. Dr. Madan, the then rector of St. Philip's Church, called at his house, expressed his grief for him in the tenderest manner, and begged his acceptance of a handsome present. Several gentlemen of the Established Church kindly visited him, and liberally contributed to his necessities. A few gentlemen of the Unitarian Societies generously waited upon him with a subscription of £30, to which, subsequently, considerable additions were made. Many others seemed delighted to express in every way their love and goodwill, and to afford him substantial help.

Mr. Proud was truly astonished at the friendship expressed, and the benevolence received. So unexpected a reverse, and so unsolicited an expression of sympathy, overwhelmed his sensibilities for the time. He felt truly grateful that, notwithstanding the cause of goodness and truth had thus early received so severe a blow, in the dishonorable conduct of a professor, he was sustained by the assurance, of being still personally held in universal respect and esteem, by the inhabitants of the town.

Such, however, was the irritated feeling of the public, excited toward the principal cause of all the mischief, that fears were entertained of the temple being burned to the ground. Threats to this effect were uttered, and though an extra watchman was provided, and great precaution taken, some combustible matter was projected through a window by a person unknown, and set the place on fire. It was soon discovered, and the damage done was but slight.

Just at this time a very large and beautiful church was in course of erection in Peter Street, Manchester, for a seceding clergyman of the established church, who had become an avowed receiver of the New Church doctrines. Mr. Proud was invited to be his colleague and accepted the invitation. From a scene of great trial he immediately removed thither.

On Sunday, August 11, 1793, the New Church was consecrated and opened for public worship. He preached on that occasion two able and impressive discourses from *Isaiah 60:1,2*. His preaching proved as popular at

Manchester as at Birmingham, and the spacious church was speedily thronged with attentive hearers, who listened with delight to his eloquent appeals.

A painful disagreement with his colleague, however, soon disturbed the peace of the society, and made Mr. Proud's situation at Manchester, so peculiarly distressing, as to render it impossible for him to stay. He received earnest solicitations to settle at Bristol, and at Liverpool also, where a new Temple was then erecting; but, in the meantime, the Society at Birmingham had collected their scattered remains, and with great exertions, a few zealous friends, who were warmly and materially assisted by our late friend, James Meredith, Esq., built a second Temple, within a few doors of the former, but considerably smaller, being only designed for a temporary accommodation.

Mr. Proud was then urgently intreated to return; and he accepted the offer after an absence of only seven months. He preached his farewell sermon at Peter-street, on Sunday afternoon, January 19, 1794, from *Mark 13:34*, and left the congregation amid universal regrets.

He consecrated and opened the new Temple in Birmingham, on March 30, when he preached three interesting sermons; in the morning from *Isaiah 54:11-13*; in the afternoon from *Psalms 11:7,8*; and in the evening from *Psalm 37:27*. Again the congregations were overflowing, the Society was prosperous, and harmony prevailed.

"Indeed, such was his celebrity, while at Birmingham, that to hear 'the great New-Jerusalem preacher,' was thought a matter of necessity by strangers visiting the town; and the Society fully expected, had he remained, soon to be able to obtain as large and commodious a chapel as that which they had lost." In 1796, he printed two New Year's discourses *On the Great Importance of Improving Time, and also, A Fast Sermon on the occasion of the War*.

Early in 1797, a gentleman from London waited upon him with the information, that he and another friend were building a commodious and handsome Temple in Cross-street, Hatton-garden, for the express use of the New Church, without the most distant view to temporal advantage, and purely to promote the extension of the New Church doctrines; and as a minister would be required, he was to come down to Birmingham to have a personal interview with him and to persuade him, if possible, to accept the appointment, as promising to open out a most extensive field of use.

The Society in Newhall-street were convened during the gentleman's stay and were reluctantly prevailed upon to consent to his removal, and a final arrangement was accordingly made. On May 7 he ordained his successor, delivering a sermon and charge from *Mark 10:16,17*, and again quitted Birmingham for a new sphere of labor.

The New Jerusalem Temple at Cross-street, Hatton-garden, was consecrated and opened on the 30th of the following July. Mr. Proud preached

in the morning from *Isaiah* 62:10; and in the evening from *Daniel* 2:44. Here his services were crowned with almost unexampled success, "and we can state," says a contemporary, "for we continually witnessed it, that the crowds which then pressed to obtain a hearing of Mr. Proud were not fewer than those which more recently flocked after the celebrated Mr. Irving at that same Chapel. Of the *matter* of his discourses, a judgment may be formed from those which are in print: as compositions, they were by no means faultless; but they presented the leading doctrines of the New Church in a very striking and convincing manner, and exposed the opposite errors with great strength and energy; while in pressing home moral considerations they were powerfully persuasive. His delivery, at the time of which we are speaking, notwithstanding some provincialisms of accent, certainly did possess an extraordinary charm: his voice, look, action, and whole manner, were strongly calculated to rivet attention, and to send home what he said both to the understanding and the hearts of his hearers. The consequence was, that many, who came to hear him, became affectionate and steady receivers of the doctrines of the New Church."

This year he composed a small but interesting treatise on Pulpit Oratory, which, if I may judge from my own case, he was accustomed to place in the hands of young men who applied to him for instructions in the ministry, and for ordination. In 1798 he published a sermon on *Divine Grace*: and another on the decease of *Dr. John Harrison*.

About this time, some serious differences arose, between the proprietors of the Temple and the congregation, arising out of an unexpected demand for an increased rental. The amount demanded was considered exorbitant, and it was resisted. At this period Mr. Proud saw a larger and more elegant Chapel vacant, in York-street, St. James's, capable of accommodating 1,200 or 1,300 people; and after making inquiries, he laid the circumstances before the Committee, and urged the desirableness of an immediate removal.

They at once agreed to take the Chapel and secure it on a lease of seven years. In a few weeks, the notice for an advance of rent at Cross-street having expired, Mr. Proud preached his farewell sermon on Sunday, September 29, 1799; in the morning from *Psalms* 122:6, and in the evening from *Exodus* 23:13. In these sermons, he calmly explained, and firmly defended, the reasons for their removal.

York-street Chapel was consecrated and opened on the Sunday following, October 6, when he preached two able discourses, morning and evening, from *Micah* 4: 5, to crowded and admiring audiences.

The lease of York-street Chapel expired in 1806. The congregations had been very numerous and respectable, many influential persons, in London and elsewhere, had been brought into connection with the Church through his powerful ministrations, and it was judiciously determined by the Society,

though at a large increase of rent, to renew the lease for another seven years.

During these 14 years, Mr. Proud, besides composing all his sermons, wrote a large amount of miscellaneous poetry and prose, and kept up an extensive correspondence; he visited many of the societies, opened new places of worship, and ordained several ministers. He was an Editor of the *Aurora*, a monthly magazine devoted to the New Church, and published in 1799 and 1800, and a frequent contributor to its pages. He also continued to take an especial interest in the Society at Birmingham, and besides occasional visits, sent them several earnest and affectionate addresses.

In 1808, he published *A Course of Lectures* on the leading doctrines of the New Church, with poems, followed by *A Second Course* in 1810. The same year he published a small volume of *Six Discourses to Young Persons*, which have proved of considerable service; and also composed and printed a small book of *Hymns and Songs for Children*. On May 13, he preached a charity sermon in York-street Chapel by desire of His Royal Highness the Duke of Sussex, for the benefit of the Queen's Hospital, at Bayswater, to a brilliant and overflowing congregation; and composed a hymn for the occasion. Both were greatly approved, but, through an oversight, were not printed as requested by the Committee of the Institution.

The second lease of York-street Chapel expired in 1813, and a large increase of rent being demanded for a renewal, which it was thought too exorbitant for the Society to pay, the Chapel was relinquished, and they removed to a small and obscure room in Lisle-street, Leicester-square, which was fitted up at a great cost, "a measure which," as a leading member of the Society afterwards said in writing on the subject, "proved imprudent; for the consequent diminution of numbers and of income, became more than commensurate with the diminution of the expenditure." Mr. Proud preached his farewell sermons at York-street on September 22, 1813; in the morning from *Deuteronomy* 26:17-19, and in the evening from *Mark* 12:22-24.

Lisle-street Chapel was opened October 10, when he preached in the morning from *Exodus* 35:29. As a proof that our friend's ministry was acceptable – for he was "a workman that needed not to be ashamed" – I have been informed by those who witnessed the fact, that for the period of 17 years – the time he remained in the metropolis – he always had large and respectable congregations; those in the evening, amounting to not less than from 700 to 1,000 people; except, when at Lisle-street, where the place would not contain so great a number.

Hearing that our venerable friend, now approaching the 70th year of his age, had, from various causes, determined to quit London, the two Societies which at that time existed in Birmingham being in a distracted state, and destitute of a minister, earnestly invited him once more to return. He willingly

consented and made immediate arrangements for his departure. After mature deliberation he decided to become the minister of the smaller branch of the Church, still worshiping in the second Temple erected for him.

Advanced in years, half a century of which had been devoted to the arduous labors of the ministry, and depressed by many afflictions and sorrows, he longed for repose. He purchased a small piece of land at Handsworth, where he built himself a neat little cottage, with the rooms on the ground floor, and a garden in front; here, comparatively, he retired from the world.

In 1815, however, he wrote, at the request of the Society at Brightlingsea, a brief but anonymous *Reply* to a scurrilous pamphlet written and circulated against the New Church in that neighborhood. In 1817 he printed a sermon on that absorbing national event, the lamented decease of the Princess Charlotte, entitled, *The Tears of the Nation*; and about the same time, a small poem on the Divinely Inspired Names of the Lord Jesus Christ; and finally, in the year 1818, he printed his last work, *The Aged Minister's Last Legacy*.

Besides the works above enumerated, he composed, on different occasions, and for various societies, hymns and poetic dialogues for charity sermons and public recitations. Wherever he went he was treated with veneration and respect. The Societies in Birmingham united, and very considerable success attended his exertions, though he had lost much of the vigor of middle life.

At the General Conference of 1815, held in Peter-street, Manchester, from the strenuous support of the late Rev. E. Madeley, of Derby,⁶ with whom the proposition originated, and other friends, it was decided, after ample deliberation, that a missionary ministry should be established "as a most desirable object, calculated, through the Divine Providence, to disseminate the blessings of the New Dispensation both extensively and effectually;" that a fund should be raised to defray all expenses, and that the ministers sent out should be approved by the Conference as "properly qualified to travel through Great Britain, for the purpose of visiting the different Societies already established, of forming new societies, and of proclaiming to the inhabitants of this kingdom at large the Heavenly Doctrines of the New Jerusalem."

The plan was admirable, was for some time liberally supported by the Church, and proved rich in useful results, not the least of which was the origination of our two excellent Missionary Institutions in Manchester and London. Notwithstanding his advanced age, Mr. Proud was urgently solicited by the Conference to undertake the duties of the first missionary, and he rejoiced the whole Church by giving his consent.

At the succeeding Conference of 1816, held in London, Mr. Proud was requested to read the report of the two missionary journeys he had undertaken

⁶ Apparently, this Rev. E. Madeley was the father of the writer of this memoir.

during the year, in discharge of the duties he had assumed as their missionary minister. This most interesting report relating the extraordinary success which had attended his exertions, and testifying to the affection and respect with which he was everywhere received, was heard with “the most lively feelings of satisfaction by all present,” and was directed to be printed in the minutes.

His health permitted him to continue this arduous labor only two years. At length, through age and physical infirmities, our venerable friend found the duties of the pastorate too burdensome, and resolved at Midsummer, 1821, to resign an office, which for so many years he had sustained with so much dignity, delight, and usefulness, but which he could no longer fill with satisfaction to himself. The congregation at Birmingham, from one cause or other, had also, for several years, been in a declining state; the expenses fell upon a few, and with the utmost difficulty they had raised him the small salary agreed upon. Promising to preach gratuitously as often as he could, he retired from the ministry, only possessing as the economic savings of a long life of anxiety and toil, of which thirty-five years were occupied in the ministry of the New Church, his little house and garden, and a private income of about £12 a-year.

Though he had devoted all his services to the Church, yet there was no fund on which he had the slightest claim, and no provision whatever had then been made in the Church, for assisting superannuated ministers. He felt assured, however, that the Divine Providence would not forsake him in his old age. Nor was he disappointed in his trust. Noble-hearted and generous-minded friends at Birmingham, London, Bristol, and elsewhere, who would have blushed to have had their names recorded, hearing of his situation, pressed forward, and to the period of his removal, now rapidly approaching, liberally supplied his temporal wants.

The last extraordinary service in which he engaged was one, respecting which he frequently expressed great anxiety, the ordination of his successor. This service took place on May 8, 1825; on which occasion, he delivered to the newly ordained minister, a brief but emphatic and appropriate charge. On the 25th of the same month he sent a Pastor’s Valedictory Address to the Society, full of kind and excellent advice.

He was accustomed, both in the early and later periods of his ministry, to extemporaneous preaching; but, entering upon the ministry of a church, whose doctrines were so different from those which he had before professed, and the language, proper for the accurate expression of which, must of necessity be less familiar to him than that which he had practiced so long, he feared to trust himself to this mode of speaking, and he consequently delivered written compositions for a number of years.

This was, no doubt, a providential circumstance, as those discourses

were widely circulated among the rising societies which had no permanent ministers. During his ministry he preached not less than 7,000 sermons, 3,000 of which were written. He also left behind him in manuscript a large amount of composition in prose and poetry, exclusively on religious and moral subjects; and besides all this labor, he maintained an extensive correspondence with a large circle of friends.

Though Mr. Proud cannot be ranked among authors of the first literary attainments, yet his abilities, as a writer, were respectable; as a public speaker, he was truly eloquent, if the applicability of that term is to be estimated from the extraordinary effect his delivery frequently produced. He was constantly heard with the most profound attention, and always with delight. Of the innumerable frailties incident to human weakness, but few were discernible amid all the estimable qualities of a Pastor; and it is but justice to remark, that these principally arose out of a reserved manner, which can only be ascribed to his natural temperament, distinct from perversity of character.

“Placed in extraordinary situations,” said one who knew him well, “it is not to be wondered at, if, like the apostle of old, he passed through evil report and good report. Many, we know, expected to find him a model of more than human perfection; and it is not surprising if, on being disappointed in their unreasonable expectations, some underrated his real merits. In his private character he was always irreproachable; and the sincerity of his religious feelings was evinced abundantly by the manner of his conversion to the truth, as related above.

“He embraced it also, when he had no prospect of any results from it but distress and persecution: he knew not, but that by dissolving his connection with the Baptists, he should lose his very means of subsistence; and such for a time, threatened to be the result.”

Who among mankind is wholly free from imperfections? Trials and tribulations are permitted in the Divine economy, to assist in the purification of the mind, by a gradual and almost imperceptible operation. They continually remind us of our polluted and depraved condition by nature, and of the truths which call us to repentance. The good man cannot escape the tribulations attendant on this state of probation: and of these our worthy friend had his portion; while it must be acknowledged, by those who shared his intimacy, that he bore them with a resignation of superhuman origin. He experienced trials of a long-continued and distressing nature in his family; among those he numbered as his friends; in the societies where he labored; and from severe bodily afflictions, owing to a constitutional disorder, which, for many years, attacked him with frequency and violence. But these are the means overruled by a merciful Providence to purify the faithful Christian, and meeten him for a triumphant entrance on an eternal career of angelic felicity and use, amid the

realities of heaven.

The serenity and confidence with which he contemplated the end of his probation were truly remarkable. They show the steady reliance which he placed upon the truths and promises of the Word of God, as expounded in the heavenly doctrines of the New Jerusalem, and the great degree of preparation he had attained for the inheritance of the just. His private virtues endeared him to his relatives and friends, as a man and a Christian; and if anything gave him painful sensations in his latest moments, it was the reflection, that he was about to leave a long-afflicted and beloved wife, who would, by this bereavement, be subjected to the severest trials.

His departure was rather sudden, occasioned by a severe attack of the complaint before alluded to. On the Lord's day morning previous to his decease, he was more than usually lively, and, had his strength permitted, felt more than usually desirous of meeting the church again in solemn worship; for some months had passed since he had been capable of staying through a Sabbath morning's service. In the evening of the same day he was taken ill; and on the Thursday morning following, August 3, 1826, he resigned his spirit into the hands of his Divine Master and Lord.

The last sermon he preached, on an ordinary occasion, was on the 9th of January, 1825. It was an impressive one, from *Psalm 40:2,3*. "*He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings. And he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God; many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the Lord*" from which subject he promised another discourse; and though he was never permitted to perform that engagement, yet has he left a practical sermon in the remembrance of his life, which was most fully exemplified in the language of that text.

A funeral sermon was preached in the New Jerusalem Temple, Newhall-street, by the writer of this memoir, on Sunday, August 20, from *John 12:26*, "*Where I am,*" saith the Lord, "*there shall also my Servant be,*" to a densely crowded and deeply affected audience.

At the urgent request of the congregation that discourse was printed, and some portions of it have been interwoven into these pages. His mortal remains, followed by many friends, were interred in Saint George's Churchyard, Birmingham. On November 21, his widow followed her beloved husband into the spiritual world, and her remains were laid in the same grave, on the headstone of which is this inscription.:

*Here are deposited the remains of the
REV. JOSEPH PROUD, late Pastor
of the New Jerusalem Church in Birmingham,*

*whose removal from this world took place
on the 3rd day of August, 1826,
Aged 81 years.*

*Devoutly zealous in the service of the Lord Jesus Christ, his God and
Savior, he was a faithful and enlightened Minister of His Word; and,
for a long series of years, he earnestly labored to promote the knowledge
and practice of genuine Christianity.*

*Also the remains of his beloved wife, SUSANNAH,
who departed this life on the 21st day of the succeeding November,
Aged 76 years.*

*They left their earthly tabernacles, in the certain hope of jointly participating
everlasting blessedness, in those mansions, not made with
hands, eternal in the Heavens.*

For more details about Joseph Proud see *Memoirs of the Rev. Joseph PROUD (1745-1826)* taken from his handwritten manuscript. It is available at Swedenborg Library in Bryn Athyn and in the New Church Digital Collections.

More stories about early champions of the New Church, can be found in the **New Church Digital Collections** at <https://digitalcollections.brynathyn.edu/>. Select: *New Church History*> *Early History*> *New Church People*> *In America or In England*.



Marvin B. Clymer is the Digital Collections Supervisor at Swedenborg Library of Bryn Athyn College. He and his wife, Wendy (Twining) live in Willow Grove, Pennsylvania.
Contact: Marvin.Clymer@brynathyn.edu.

God's Dice and Human Freedom

Ned Uber

“God does not play dice with the universe” is a quotation attributed to Albert Einstein. It expresses his displeasure that the best quantum mechanics can do is predict the probability of outcomes to an experiment. It's just probabilities, the roll of the dice.

“A butterfly stirring the air in Peking can transform storm systems next month in New York.” (James Gleck in *Chaos*)

“It must be known that Divine Providence is universal, which means that it affects the smallest details of everything” is a statement by 18th century scientific genius and theologian Emanuel Swedenborg. (*Arcana Coelestia* 8478) It is a partial elaboration on the biblical statement: “Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? And one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered.” (*Matthew 10:29-30*)

“God's greatest concern is for a person's freedom,” was also written by Swedenborg.

This solves the seemingly impossible contradiction between a person having free will and God having infinite power, knowledge and control of everything. It isn't a contradiction if God is using His infinite power, knowledge and control to provide for each person's free will.

*Einstein was right.
God does not play
dice with the
universe. It just
looks like that
from mankind's
perspective. God
intentionally does
this to preserve
our freedom.*

Einstein was right. God does not play dice with the universe. It just looks like that from mankind's perspective. God intentionally does this to preserve our freedom. The dice are on the level of quantum mechanics, but through the mechanisms elaborated by chaos theory, tiny changes in these “smallest details” can affect things ranging from

the thoughts of a person to the weather.

While reading the book, *The Ghost in the Atom*, edited by P. C. W. Davies, I found myself making connections between the four quotations above and the book's discussions by various physicists on Aspect's experiment. This experiment tried to overcome the probabilistic limits to quantum mechanics. I highly recommend this book because it provides an impressively understandable discussion of quantum mechanics. However, you don't need to read the book or have a prior knowledge of quantum mechanics to see these connections.

Quantum mechanics is the branch of physics dealing with the behavior of particles the size of atoms. Its explanations of how electrons, protons and neutrons interact agree with all the experiments done to this time. With quantum mechanics, for a precisely known set of starting conditions, it is possible to predict the future behavior of a set of particles. While it is now only possible to make predictions for groups of just a few particles, as computers improve, it will be possible to predict the future for more and more complicated collections of particles.

However, at this time quantum mechanics cannot predict the outcome of a single experiment; it can only predict the probability of possible outcomes. The Heisenberg uncertainty principle explains this inability to predict the outcome of a single experiment. That principle embodies the experimental observation that it is not possible to measure both the exact position and exact velocity of a particle. The more precisely a particle's position is measured, the less precisely can its velocity be measured.

The product of the uncertainty in position and the uncertainty in velocity is always greater than a fixed constant. This means that it is not possible to know the initial conditions well enough for quantum mechanics to be able to predict anything more than probabilities of the future. It is usually believed that this uncertainty occurs because the act of measuring one property of a particle disturbs the other properties of that particle.

However, if the uncertainty comes from the act of measuring, then it should be possible to design an experiment to eliminate that. A. Aspect conducted an experiment trying to "beat" the Heisenberg uncertainty principle. This involved forcing a calcium atom to emit two identical particles (photons) of light. The light particles travel in exactly opposite directions with exactly the same energy and polarization.

Rather than measuring energy, position and polarization were used. One measurement was made on one photon and the other measurement was made on the second photon so the two measurements should not interfere. But, when the experiment was done, the results were consistent with Heisenberg. It was not possible to know more about the particles than the Heisenberg uncertainty principle allowed.

This poses a significant problem for physics because all known mechanisms of a perturbation or information transfer during the measurement cannot explain this result. The fastest a perturbation can travel is the speed of light. The two light particles are already traveling away from each other at the speed of light, and the measurements take place at the same distance from the center point where the two light particles were created. Thus there is no way a physical perturbation could travel from one measurement location to the other before its twin particle had been measured. This dilemma is what prompted the interviews of prominent physicists that Dr. Davies presented in *The Ghost in the Atom*.

One of the physicists, John Bell, stated that Aspect's experiment is consistent with quantum mechanics if the world is what he called "superdeterministic." By this he meant that all parts of the experiment including the experimenters were interacting in a way that preserves the Heisenberg uncertainty principle. By extending the boundaries of the "experiment" to include the observer, Bell comments that all parts of the universe are cooperating to uphold Heisenberg. This thereby absolutely limits the human ability to predict the future.

Divine Providence

This description of superdeterminism seems identical to Swedenborg's concept that the Divine Providence of God controls all actions, even to the least particulars. Nothing happens by chance, even the roll of dice.

How can God's actions on the quantum mechanical level affect the world on the scale of airplanes, weather and people? This is where chaos theory comes in. All physical systems are non-linear in some fashion due to effects at the atomic level. Thus, they show chaotic behavior. A chaotic system often appears to be stable, existing within some regular pattern, but it never exactly repeats its behavior. Most small perturbations die away with no significant effect.

However, some small perturbations grow to affect the behavior of the whole system. This is termed the "butterfly effect." Whether a perturbation grows or dies out depends upon the interaction of all other parts of the system. Chaos theory provides an understanding of a mechanism by which God can act on the quantum mechanical scale and the effects can act and be seen on the human scale.

The human brain exhibits chaotic behavior. The difference between firing or not firing a neuron in the brain can depend upon a few molecules of neurotransmitter. The secretion, diffusion and absorption of these molecules is definitely affected by phenomena on the quantum mechanical level. Thus, if God controls things below the level of Heisenberg, He can directly influence our thoughts.

Free Will

Swedenborg further states that the purpose of Divine Providence is to bring as many people to heaven as possible while preserving human freedom. So, if God controls everything, can we even have free will? The answer is yes, God controls everything so that we have free will.

Why must there be this limit to man's ability to predict the results of quantum mechanical experiments? Because if mankind were able to predict the future this would take away human freedom.

Swedenborg states that to preserve a person's freedom, God's Providence can only be seen in hindsight. For me an example is the World War II battle of Midway. While the battle involved the efforts of many brave men, much of the outcome hung on the inability of the Japanese to find the American carriers. The carriers were in the sector to be covered by a Japanese plane that had had radio trouble. That radio trouble could have been caused by any number of microscopic level phenomena, all of which could have been affected by phenomena at the quantum mechanical level.

None of this can be taken to be a proof. In Dr. Davies' book, there are discussions of infinite parallel universes, and many other involved possibilities. However, chaos theory and Aspect's experiment can be combined with Swedenborg's theology to give an understanding of the interface between the spiritual and the natural world, of the interaction between our eternal souls and our bodies.

Now Known

Several decades ago this knowledge was not available and this combination of thoughts was not possible.

In a C. S. Lewis essay, *Miracles*, he believes that miracles appear miraculous

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because of our imperfect understanding of the laws of nature. “In other words, there are rules, and a unity which is deeper than uniformity. . . . I do not say that the normalities of Nature are unreal. . . . But to think that a disturbance of them would constitute a breach of the living rule and organic unity whereby God, from His point of view, works, is a mistake.”

Einstein said: “I cannot conceive of a personal God who would directly influence the actions of individuals or would directly sit in judgment on creatures of his own creation. I cannot do this in spite of the fact that mechanistic causality has, to a certain extent, been placed in doubt by modern science.” (He was speaking of Quantum Mechanics and the breakdown of determinism due to the Heisenberg uncertainty principle.)

“The further the spiritual evolution of mankind advances, the more certain it seems to me that the path to genuine religiosity does not lie through the fear of life, and the fear of death, and blind faith, but through the striving after rational knowledge” (Albert Einstein)

Through the combination of quantum mechanics, the Heisenberg uncertainty principle, and chaos theory, it is possible to understand how the application of Divinely ordered quantum mechanical events can lead to “supernatural miracles” in the macroscopic world. It could be that God’s dice are not random to Him while He orchestrates all the rolls so that they are random for us, to preserve our freedom. This resolves the polarity of God’s omnipotence and human’s free will.

“Now it is permitted to enter with understanding into the mysteries of faith.” (Emanuel Swedenborg.)

“There are only two ways to live. One is as though nothing is a miracle. The other is as if everything is.” (Albert Einstein)

“If a person perceived and felt the operation of the Divine Providence s/he would not act from freedom according to reason; nor would anything appear to be as from himself. It would be the same if he foreknew events.” (*Divine Providence* 176)

From Wikipedia on the Copenhagen interpretation of Quantum Mechanics:

Many physicists and philosophers have objected to the Copenhagen interpretation, both on the grounds that it is non-deterministic and that it includes an undefined measurement process that converts probability functions into non-probabilistic measurements. Einstein’s comments, “I, at any rate, am convinced that He (God) does not throw dice,” and, “Do you really think the moon isn’t there if you aren’t looking at it?” exemplify this. Bohr, in response, said, “Einstein, don’t tell God what to do.”

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Copenhagen_interpretation August 12, 2013

Wikipedia now has a good article on Bell's theorem and the experiments that have proven consistent with quantum entanglement or superdeterminism:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bell_test_experiments

Contact: *neduber@gmail.com*

Echoes of Easter

Editors' note: These poems by the Rev. Coleman Glenn were meant to appear in the March/April issue but somehow got lost. They still carry the power of Easter that lingers in our souls.

PALM SUNDAY

The Rev. Coleman S. Glenn

As all the wedding guests are well aware,
the bride and bridegroom's burning hearts will cool.
No couple can escape the time-worn rule:
the budding branch, come winter, must grow bare.
A cynic mocks the thought that love might spare
these two from turning cowardly or cruel;
a witness (whom the former calls a fool)
knows frost might yet give way to warmer air.

The shouting crowd who celebrate their King
grasp little of what lauding Him will mean;
arrayed in ignorance, the children bring
abundant fronds to lay a path of green.
Within a week, this crowd will turn away.
And yet — let loud hosannas sound today.

ECCE HOMO

The Rev. Coleman S. Glenn

Behold the Man whose head is crowned
with thorny branches twisted round
by hands that bear the stain of sin.
The multitudes are pressing in
and cries of "crucify!" resound.

Like seed sprung up in thorny ground
the loud “hosannas” have been drowned.
Through all the frenzy and the din,
behold the Man.

Behold Him now condemned and bound.
Behold Him. Hear the hammers pound.
Behold, as well, the soldier’s grin.
Behold a mirror. Look within
and face whatever there is found.
Behold the Man.

THE ROAD TO EMMAUS

The Rev. Coleman S. Glenn

On Sunday, two apostles walk
dejected till they meet a Man
who sets their hearts ablaze with talk

of Christ fulfilling Scripture’s plan.
They cling to everything that’s said;
though understanding, neither can

discern from words His name; instead,
they know Him when He breaks the bread.

Life Lines

Bruce M. Henderson and the Rev. Jeremy F. Simons

THE CALL OF THE MOUNTAIN

Mountains call to us. Whether the imposing Rockies in the United States and Canada, the captivating Swiss Alps, lush mountains rising out of magical fjords in Norway, or your own favorites, we are awed by their majesty, their beauty, their calling.

Real adventurers are drawn to the risk-reward challenge of climbing their peaks. Most of us are happy with down-to-earth mountain-top experiences, however vicarious. But we are called to “go up to the mountain of the Lord” together – to seek always the higher ground, the clarity of an elevated perspective, and drawing closer to the Lord in the way we live our lives.

That is the theme of the General Assembly June 27-30 in Bryn Athyn, based on the calling of *Isaiah 2:3: Come and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord . . . He will teach us His ways, and we shall walk in His paths.*”

Not everyone in the church will be able to attend the Assembly and participate in the shared workshops, plenary sessions and worship, although there will be an impressive number attending from all over the church. But we all share the calling and the experience of looking up to the Lord and praying that we may be led by Him when we come back down the mountain with a renewed sense of putting all of this relationship into our lives.

“Going up to the mountain” is not always a physical challenge; it can be just elevating our spirit to a new plane. This is beautifully illustrated in the Bryn Athyn Cathedral, where the central aisle up to the chancel is a slight incline so that congregants approaching the Lord for the Holy Supper – or a bride and groom for the Lord’s blessing on their marriage – actually experience the elevation of mind and spirit.

There are many examples of mountain-top experiences in the Word, all with special meaning. One of the most powerful – and relevant – is Moses spending 40 days and 40 nights on Mount Sinai, receiving the Ten Commandments. When he finally came back down with the Commandments on two slabs of stone, he was distraught to find the children of Israel had grown impatient and

asked Aaron to make them an idol of a golden calf for them to worship.

They had not gone up to the mountain themselves, sought the Lord to teach them His ways, and committed themselves to walking in His paths. That is why they wandered so in the wilderness for 40 years, making progress, then backsliding through the vicissitudes of life we all experience. This is the lesson we all are called to learn. And this will be the blessing of the Assembly experience, which can be shared even remotely.

Climbing a mountain – even figuratively – is hard work and challenging. It takes commitment and courage. There are risks and rewards. Hopefully, it is an exhilarating experience – the “rush” of accomplishment, of establishing a new relationship with the Lord, of walking in His ways and making our lives more meaningful.

It is about forging a new covenant through finding the mountains in our lives – and the path on the other side. That is where we live the faith that makes the church.

*A knowledge of the way from walking in it,
And a walking in the way through a knowledge of it.
(Divine Providence 60)*

(BMH)

WHITE GARMENTS

*So he said to me, “These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.”
(Revelation 7:14)*

At this time of year it is common for people to wear white clothes. Graduations, weddings, our June 19th pageants, and other events feature white garments. People often like to wear cool white clothes in the heat of summer.

The Writings tell us that many people in the next life love white garments:

Among the spirits there are many who love white clothing, and indeed, with such intense desire that they aroused in me a kind of longing to buy white clothing. (Spiritual Experiences 1333)

In the *Book of Revelation* white garments are noted numerous times. They are a promised gift for “he who overcomes” (3:5), they clothe the 24 elders around the throne (4:4); they comfort the souls under the altar (6:11), they are given to those who come out of the “*great tribulation*” (7:9), they are worn by the armies of heaven who follow the One on the white horse (19:14).

There is nothing surprising about these references. Most people worldwide

intuitively grasp the positive significance of white garments – although in parts of Asia it is also often associated with mourning and funerals. The color is most often connected with purity, hope, truth, innocence and similar thoughts. The Writings describe white garments as relating to truth and Divine protection.

The white robes represented the presence about them of the Lord with Divine Truth. By means of Divine Truth the Lord protects His own, for He surrounds them with a sphere of light, from which they have white robes. When encompassed by this sphere they can no longer be infested by evil spirits. (Apocalypse Explained 395)

This explains why the white garments in Revelation are an effective remedy to the suffering of the souls under the altar, and a significant reward for “*he who overcomes*.”

Another way to put it is that white garments stand for the answers and solutions to our most vexing issues.

This June as we celebrate New Church Day on June 19th and join together for an Assembly at the end of the month we might keep this in mind. In a sense, white garments are a celebration of the answers to all of humanity’s problems, and the promise of the peace on earth that is the New Church.

(JFS)

A WING AND A PRAYER

We all love birds. We love their plumage, their songs, their flight, their freedom. The Lord tells us in the Sermon on the Mount to “look at the birds of the air,” who “neither sow nor reap” but are cared for by their Heavenly Father

We watch the birds of the air with some longing. With Icarus and the Wright brothers we long to be free to soar above the challenges of our world – to gain the perspective of “mounting up with wings of eagles.”

The Word is filled with references to birds – doves and ravens, owls and eagles. They all have spiritual meaning. We are told that birds correspond to a spiritual affection for truth – for that special ability to rise above, to see more clearly, to know what is required. Many people of all faiths believe that some birds – especially cardinals – are spiritual messengers from departed loved ones.

Birds are a special part of God’s creation, and we are called to be stewards of all of it. That call is beautifully articulated in a book by Anders and Beverly Gyllenhaal: *A Wing and a Prayer – The Race to Save Our Vanishing Birds*.

Anders is a 1970 graduate of the Academy Boys School. He went on to a distinguished career in journalism, including executive editor of three major newspapers in the United States and chair of the Pulitzer Prize Board. His

wife, Beverly, was a newspaper reporter, syndicated columnist and author of three cookbooks.

In their spare time they are serious “birders.” When they retired a few years ago they were concerned that a third of North American birds have vanished over the past 50 years – victims of lost habitat, chemicals, predators, “progress.”

They packed up a camper and toured the country, plus parts of South America, to find out what is happening to the birds and what we can do about it. They bring to this engaging and elegant book their skills and their passion. It is beautifully written and edited, fascinating in detail and insight, offered with heartfelt expertise, concern and solutions. It is illustrated with Anders’ captivating photographs of birds, that make you smile and heed their calling.

It is a calling that resonates with our place in the Lord’s creation as active caretakers. We have caused much of this crisis and are indebted to Anders and Beverly for helping to light the way – with the help of the birds themselves.

Like canaries in coal mines who alert miners to dangerous gases, birds do more than sing. They tell us what’s going on and what needs to be done to save them.

It is amazing to learn that 83 million birds in this country are banded and tracked by satellites, computers, cell towers – and dedicated birders. The director of one bird-banding lab says: “We know birds are biological indicators. So if we keep track of their populations over time, we can understand what the problem is now, and we can also look at the past and see how the problem was advancing. But most importantly, with the work of statisticians and biostatisticians, we can project where the future is going.”

We are part of that future – and that past. One haunting quote from the book: “Birds are among nature’s masterpieces. They speak to our hearts.”

All of the Lord’s creation speaks to our hearts and to our souls. We are commanded to love the Lord with all our hearts and sometimes wonder how we are to do that. Remember that when Jesus was asked by His disciples how to love Him, He said simply three times: “Feed my sheep.”

We feed His sheep – and His birds – with kindness and caring, because they too are our neighbors. Their freedom calls to our own, for with freedom comes responsibility. We all want to make this a better world. That includes nature. Part of our responsibility is just to “listen to what the birds are telling us” – not just their songs. Listening to the impassioned calling of Anders and Beverly Gyllenhaal helps too – the perfect calling of “a wing and a prayer.”

(BMH)

SAFE AT HOME

Loving the neighbor may be an easier concept to grasp than loving the Lord, whom we do not see so readily. It comes into every interaction with other

people – being kind, wishing them well, not judging. It happens even on a baseball field.

I grew up with the sport and still identify with what ex-major league pitcher Jim Bouton discovered in his classic ode to baseball, *Ball Four*. “I spent my whole life gripping a baseball – only to find out it was the other way around.”

Baseball has had that grip on me – not just for the fun and drama of the game itself, but for all the little life lessons that have come along the way. All of that is captured in a delightful new book, *Tao of the Backup Catcher*.

It focuses on Eric Kratz, a backup catcher for 14 different major league teams over a career of 20 years – and countless minor league teams along the way. He and his saintly wife – who packed up cars and kids to follow him around the country and never stopped believing in him – were pleased when his first assignment was a town in AL. They assumed that meant Alabama. Turned out it was Alberta, Canada. Such was their adventure. And it wasn’t all about baseball.

Every team needs a backup catcher – someone to give the starter a day off, maybe once a week, and to be there in case of emergency. He quickly learns that it all has as much to do with life as baseball.

Kratz says at one point: “Baseball isn’t life. But it’s not a bad place to practice life.” He got a lot of practice. And he learned well.

He learned how to be a team player – as much in the clubhouse as on the field. He learned how to be unselfish, caring about others, becoming a better person.

Backup catchers are a special breed, often unheralded but comfortable with themselves. They have accepted their roles. They know they will never be stars. They are grateful to have a part and make the most of it. And they learn some lessons the stars may not.

When Kratz asked a fellow backup what advice he would give to a new member of their fraternity, he said: “I think the biggest word is to be a servant. You have to be a servant and it goes back to conversations with (other players) throughout my career and truly valuing other people’s careers, as much as my own. Becoming a servant. Becoming unselfish. That’s the life lesson.”

When Kratz finally retired, the ball still had a grip on him and he began coaching his sons. The book’s author, Tim Brown, says: “When the lessons of those decades had taken root, had helped form him, he stood before those 16 middle schoolers and offered something greater than the path to the major leagues. ‘Do this and remember what you’ve learned along the way,’ he said. ‘And then remember how you treated people along the way.’”

Not a bad life lesson for all of us – about loving the neighbor, even in the shadows of countless baseball stadiums. “Tao” can be translated as “path” – finding your way. Kratz found his path. He was always comfortable behind the plate – behind hundreds of home plates all over the country, learning how to

be more than a backup catcher and more of a loving neighbor. That's why he feels it was all worth it – and why there is nothing like forever being “safe at home.”

(BMH)

WHAT DO YOU LOVE?

David Brooks is a *New York Times* columnist and best-selling author on a quest to discover what goes into making a truly good person. In books filled with exhaustive research and insight – such as *The Road to Character* and his latest, *How to Know a Person* – he quotes psychologists and rabbis, educators and deep thinkers, probing their research and observations.

He is searching, probing, learning and it is all admirable. But it is all on a natural, worldly plane, not spiritually enlightened. I can't help wishing that he would discover Swedenborg and find the answers he is seeking.

How to Know a Person focuses on “the art of seeing others deeply and being seen.” In many ways it is a treatise on loving the neighbor. He exalts people he calls natural “illuminators.” They ask the right questions in getting to know someone and really listen – helping people to feel really seen and understood.

He decries the pervasiveness of social media with its cruel divisiveness and outsized judgment. “There is judgment everywhere,” he laments, “and understanding nowhere.” He has come to believe that “the quality of our lives and the health of our society depend, to a large degree, on how well we treat each other in the minute interactions of life.”

He decries the boors – and we all know them – who can talk to you for an hour and never ask you a question, never even try to get to know you. That is not being seen, not being heard – the opposite of charity and loving the neighbor.

Brooks suggests asking someone you don't know, “Tell me your story.” That brings to mind what we are told about people awakening in the spiritual world who are asked about the quality of their lives. That does not mean, “What did you do for a living,” or “Tell me about your family.” All that may come into it, but what the angels want to know – and what will determine our place in heaven or hell – is: “What did you love? What is your ruling love?”

That is how we really know what matters in life. That is how to really “know a person” and love our neighbor.

(BMH)

THE LAST WORD

I am grateful to Denis de Chazal for forwarding an obituary from the *Financial*

Times about a prominent reformer in the “New China” emerging from the Cultural Revolution of the 1970s. The man was Li Keqiang, who rose from humble origins to be a key advisor of President Xi Jinping.

He was much more reform minded and visionary than Xi was willing to tolerate and eventually he was marginalized in favor of brutal loyalists, more in tune with Xi’s dictatorial control.

But Li’s conscience would not silence his concern for what he thought best for China. And even at his death last October, he had the last word.

In his farewell speech to the State Council (China’s cabinet) he warned President Xi and his cohorts: “Heaven is looking at what humans are doing. The firmament has eyes.”

This was unusual in a country that is openly hostile to religion in all forms, but it is a warning that resonates through history – and should tweak the conscience of anyone who pursues power and wealth over loving the Lord and the neighbor. “Heaven is watching.”

(BMH)

EIGHTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF D-DAY

At 6:30 a.m. on Tuesday, June 6, 1944, nearly 160,000 Allied troops landed on the Normandy beaches. Of those, 73,000 were from the United States, 83,000 from Britain and Canada. Forces from several other countries were also involved, including French troops fighting with General Charles de Gaulle.

According to PBS:

A total of 4,414 Allied troops were killed on D-Day itself, including 2,501 Americans. More than 5,000 were wounded.

In the ensuing Battle of Normandy, 73,000 Allied forces were killed and 153,000 wounded. The battle — and especially Allied bombings of French villages and cities — killed around 20,000 French civilians.

The exact German casualties aren’t known, but historians estimate between 4,000 and 9,000 men were killed, wounded or missing during the D-Day invasion alone. About 22,000 German soldiers are among the many buried around Normandy. (Key Facts about D-Day at PBS.org)

At the time of the D-Day invasion more than 400 young people from the

General Church were in uniform, out of a total General Church membership of 2,349. Many of these participated in the events of D-Day. Fifteen young men from the General Church gave their lives as soldiers during the war and a number of others were held as prisoners of war. One of those who gave their lives was Flying Officer William George Bellinger, of Windsor, Ontario, Canada, who had been reported “*missing after operations*” in 1943. His father, Harold D. Bellinger, wrote the following to the Rev. Norman Reuter a year later:

Just a few lines to inform you that our Bill has passed on and will not return to us. Needless to say, the telegram came with a shock, as we did hope, without end, that news of his safety would eventually come. Now we know that his uses on earth have been terminated, and we need no longer tolerate the suspense under which we have been held since he was first listed as missing. The Lord has called him to perform greater uses in heaven.

While we feel and know that Bill cherished life here, and was by no means ready to give it all up so early, just having attained manhood, and while we shall greatly miss him – greatly miss his enlightening communications from overseas, greatly miss his anticipated return home to us – through our aching hearts we after all realize that our loved one, Bill, has entered upon eternal, peaceful, happy life in heaven.

His was the lot to be saved the ordeal of struggling through this world’s unrest and cruelty. Our thanks go to the Almighty for having revealed through the New Church Writings the truth and understanding which gives us strength in this hour of sorrow. (William George Bellinger Obituary, New Church Life, 1944)

This kind of heartbreak was too common 80 years ago, and it was magnified by the grim reality that the fate of the free world really did hang in the balance.

Few of the veterans of that conflict are still with us, and the youngest of them are 98 years old. But the events of WW II still have our attention because of its global nature, the number of us who have relatives who were involved, and because of its world-changing results. My own father flew a B-24 Liberator on D-Day and recounted how huge their formation was and how the English Channel below was crowded with ships. Many others have similar stories.

In the 1950s, Memorial Day celebrations in Bryn Athyn focused mostly on the veterans of the First World War, who were then in their 50s and 60s, marched in ranks in uniform, and fired their old Enfield rifles in a three-volley

salute. There were plenty of people then who remembered veterans of the Civil War, the last of whom died in 1956.

The WW II veterans, still in their 20s and 30s, were so numerous and had such large families that they made up the crowd paying tribute. Over the years their numbers have dwindled, and only a few people even remember D-Day anymore. Now our Memorial Day and July 4th ceremonies include the casualties and veterans of Korea, Vietnam, Iraq and Afghanistan, who are thankfully far fewer, but just as brave and worthy of honor, as those heroes of previous generations.

Surely we all love and remember people who were moved by a passionate love of country to fight against its enemies even to their death in order to free it from the yoke of slavery. (True Christianity 710)

(JFS)

OBLIGATIONS OF FREEDOM

The Fourth of July in the United States – Independence Day – celebrates the founding of a whole new form of government of “We the People,” whose rights flow from God, not government.

Freedom always implies responsibility. It is up to “we the people” to secure those rights and preserve our freedom.

In his memorable Gettysburg Address, President Abraham Lincoln spoke of the Founding Fathers bringing forth “a new nation conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.” The Civil War was testing “whether that nation, or any nation so conceived and so dedicated, can long endure.”

All these many years later we see every day the enormity of the threat and the insistence of the challenge.

Among the most revolutionary words ever written did not come from Lenin or Marx but from the Founding Fathers: “We the people.” It was that simple, that radical, that profound. This was a turning point in history – faith that government could be entrusted to the people and that “these truths are self-evident” – that we are endowed by our Creator with inalienable rights of “life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.”

On its 150th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence in 1876 President Calvin Coolidge called it “essentially a spiritual document.” The future of the country depended on that founding faith enduring. “Governments don’t make ideals,” he said. “Ideals make governments.”

French philosopher Alexis de Tocqueville visited this fledgling nation in

the early 1800s and wrote in *Democracy in America* that its strength lay in its unique fusion of religion and liberty. Among our greatest challenges now is how far we have strayed from George Washington's conviction that it is impossible to govern without God and the Bible.

President Harry Truman lamented: "The fundamental basis of this nation was given to Moses on the Mount. The fundamental basis of this nation's Bill of Rights comes from the teaching we get from *Exodus* and *Matthew*, from *Isaiah* and *Paul*. I don't think we emphasize that enough these days. If we don't have the proper moral background we will end up a totalitarian government which does not believe in the right of anybody except the state."

We have seen a lot of material progress since then, not much spiritual progress. And Truman is sounding like a prophet.

The hope is what Tocqueville found in that early America, that its people had "all a lively faith in the perfectibility of man," who saw their nation in "a constant state of improvement," and believed that our future would always be better than our past.

This is the obligation we embrace. This is the freedom we celebrate.

(BMH)

Church News

Compiled by Bruce Henderson

FROM THE BISHOP'S OFFICE

The Rt. Rev. Peter M. Buss Jr.

Academy News: From the Chancellor

New Girls School Principal

It gives me pleasure to announce that **Erica Odhner Stine** will assume the role of Principal of the Academy Girls School, effective July 1, 2024. Erica's appointment to this position was affirmed unanimously by the Board of Trustees at its April 17, 2024, meeting.

Erica has served the Academy since 2010 with a student-support, math and history focus. Prior to that she has served in several teaching roles, demonstrating substantial educational experience. While at the Academy, Erica has taken on many advising and extracurricular roles, demonstrating her holistic commitment to the program.

Erica will succeed **Kira Schadegg** whose term as Principal is ending this June. Congratulations to Erica and thank you to Kira.



Two New Searches

As Chancellor I am coordinating two leadership search processes. The first is for a Managing Director for the Secondary Schools, re-instating that position which has been vacant for the past 18 months.

The second is for a President of Bryn Athyn College who will succeed the **Rev. Eric Carswell**, whose interim term is set to end in June of 2025.

Executive Bishop

Pastoral News:

- The **Rev. Todd Beiswenger** has been affirmed as the next pastor of the Olivet Church and School in Toronto. He and his wife Jenn will be moving in January, 2025, to allow for their son to finish high school in Australia.
- The **Rev. Jong-Ui Lee** will be moving to Atlanta to be the pastor of the Morningstar Chapel there. This is an exciting new chapter for this congregation, and for Jong Ui together with **Elaine** his wife.
- Warm congratulations to **Rev. Calvin Heinrichs** and **Rev. Steven Gunther** on their ordinations into the second degree of the priesthood: Calvin on January 21 in Kempton with **Rt. Rev. Brad Heinrichs** officiating; Steven on March 3 in Oak Arbor with me having the honors.

Please join me in wishing well to these colleagues and their families.

Bishop's Council

This group of lay people from around the church is invited to give counsel to the Bishop's Office on matters within the life of the church. It was first constituted in 2020 with a steady group serving for three-plus years. Bishop's Council has recently gone through a significant planned turnover phase. The following members are meeting approximately six times a year with the bishops:

- **Richard Narh** (Tema, Ghana)
- **Thando Tshabalala** (Diepkloof, South Africa)
- **Doug Hunt** (Boulder, United States)
- **Tom David** (Boston, United States)
- **Helen Ference** (Bryn Athyn, United States)
- **Brendon Cockerell** (Westville, South Africa)
- **Marian van Genne** (Netherlands)
- **Carey Foord** (Westville, South Africa)
- **Murray and Lori Heldon** (Hurstville, Australia)
- **Mikalsh and Gaird Brock** (Kansas City, United States)
- **Tania and Micah Alden** (Bryn Athyn, United States)
- **Garrett and Ange Tait** (Cayndale, Canada)

GENERAL CHURCH BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Highlights of January 2024 Meetings

President's Report

Rt. Rev. Peter M. Buss Jr.

Bishop Buss provided updates and progress on strategic objectives of the General Church. He announced the new members of the Bishop's Council, listed above:

Vice Presidents' Report

The Rt. Rev. David Lindrooth reported that the Boulder (Colorado) New Church has agreed to pilot its renewal efforts with the General Church's Global Healthy Congregations project.

The Rt. Rev. Bradley Heinrichs reported on the pastoral placement process in societies. (See Church News in the January/February issue of *New Church Life*.)

Vision Casting and Communications

Marijke Bau-Madsen reported the General Church communications strategy, including the results of a Core Language Project, which will help to establish the goals of "pillar messaging" in the General Church. Next steps will involve drafting public messages and developing ways to get feedback on the usefulness and clarity of these messages.

Marijke adds: "The process of defining our core language explores the most essential components of who the New Church is: what needs the faith can meet for people, what makes it different, and how it can impact your life. The ability to answer these questions clearly and quickly, and then use those answers consistently throughout communication, is key to inviting people to begin and continue their journey with us.

"If core language is the process of defining our message concepts, creating pillar messaging is the process of deciding what language and approach will best reach our audience. Together these two steps help us explain in simple terms why we think the New Church can be an important tool for spiritual growth in people's lives."

General Church Assembly

Emily G. Hasen

Emily updated the Assembly team's planning for the June 27-30 Assembly. Registration was ready to open and a promotional video was being developed, including an overview of offerings, including worship, social events and workshops. All information is available at www.gcassembly2024.org

General Church Outreach

Charles Ebert and the Rev. Pearse Frazier

Pearse reported on Outreach objectives and the strategic planning process for the coming fiscal year: starting and growing groups, leading to church circles.

The first milestone is gathering quality contact information. Initial social media relationships offer ongoing contact only indirectly. Our goal is to increase the quality of interaction at any point of contact for further steps of engagement. Geographic information could benefit from a visiting minister. The goal is to gather 10,000 emails and 1,000 with geographic locations.

The next goal is gathering groups in person. Improving in-person engagement involves helping congregations to market in their areas.

General Church Education

Charlotte Gyllenhaal, Rachel Glenn, Greg Henderson, Rebekah Russell

The team updated the Board on Easter mailings for families and work on *The New Testament for Young Children*.

Greg presented fiscal year objectives for the Intake Program for New Church education, including:

- Conducting a comprehensive study focusing on General Church teachers and ministers
- Initiating a New Church e-Learning course, with all North American General Church teachers asked to complete one-third of the modules

Greg also offered an overview of types of collaboration between General Church educators, including teacher and curriculum meetings, teacher reviews and leadership team meetings.

Theological School Committee

Darren Bau-Madsen and the Rt. Rev. Peter Buss Jr.

Bishop Buss reported progress on strategic goals, including Objectives for the Recruiting and Developing Priests Project for the fiscal year.

One recent update is the addition of a Stepped Program in theological training which allows a student to pursue a Master of Divinity part time while employed elsewhere,

Bishop Buss also previewed an upcoming recruiting effort to grow incoming classes. Efforts to support priest development will include two ministers this spring via the New Manager Boot Camp at Berkeley Executive Education in California.

Relationship Statement for General Church Schools

David Frazier, Executive Director

A statement has been developed which codifies a common understanding between congregations and the central office of the General Church. It defines the relationship, including terms of employment, payroll and insurance, and establishes the nature of these responsibilities so that as leadership and stakeholders change there is continuity and shared understanding about who is responsible for what. The Board unanimously approved a template amenable to affiliate organizations with schools in the United States.

Global Healthy Congregations

John Berridge

Optimistic developments were reported, beginning with creating a model for a sustainable congregation that can be used to help any group across the world to flourish. An overall goal is to support congregations with good practices for developing healthy finances and growing engagement.

The first pilot studies have just begun through collaboration with the Boulder, Colorado, congregation.

The team welcomed Jane Enis as manager of projects.

Work on FY25 Objectives will include more precise definition of a healthy

congregation in order to agree on and work toward goals in a coordinated manner; optimizing the use of grant money by working with congregations on strategic plans, best practices and data reporting; collaborating with Outreach on strategies for attracting attention; and engagement with content, resources and congregations.

Human Resources

Jamie Uber and Karen Stoeller

The committee was meeting in February to formulate plans for annual salary increases and is also considering two new leave policies: Parental and Caregiver Leave. Progress was reported on updating background checks. All new hires complete a pre-employment background check and all employees re-screen on a five-year rotation.

Advancement

Stephanie Klippenstein and Mark Wyncoll

Mark thanked the Board and donors for continued support. There has been a slight dip in annual giving, with many regulars turning their attention to urgent needs occurring during the year. Fundraising was aided by strong planned giving gifts.

GENERAL CHURCH CORPORATION

The General Church Corporation is scheduled to meet June 26, 2024, in Bryn Athyn, the night before the opening of the General Assembly. The meeting will include elections to the Board of Directors.

Seven incumbents, willing and eligible, have been nominated for re-election:

John Berridge – Deal, Kent, United Kingdom

Barbara Horigan – Toronto, Ontario, Canada

Rene Johnson – Russell, Pennsylvania

Brynna Carswell Smith – Boston, Massachusetts

James Uber – Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Wayne Wadsworth – Marietta, Georgia

Tanya Woker – Westville, South Africa

Four new nominees for three-year terms are:

Erin Busby – Austin, Texas

Stephen Elphick – London, United Kingdom

Kelly Niall – Caryndale, Ontario, Canada

Shawn Synnestevedt – Sunset Beach, North Carolina

Three board members are retiring after serving maximum three-year terms:

Wade Buick – Kempton, Pennsylvania

Stephanie Klippenstein – Maysville, Missouri

Ned Uber – Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Resigning from the Board is **Andrew Martz**.

ACADEMY BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Highlights from meetings of February 9-10

Chancellor

Chancellor Peter Buss Jr. reported that a leadership review of the Academy Secondary Schools was moving forward, with a recommendation expected in May. The appointment of an interim Girls School Principal for the 2024-25 school year is also expected.

Vice Chair

Dr. Charles Lindsay

With Board responsibilities spreading over four institutions there are times when the Bryn Athyn College President has not felt fully supported by the Board and that the Board could not have the College's interests as its primary focus.

The Vice Chair presented a chart showing how a separate, fully autonomous Board for the College might function, and what actions would be needed to effect such a change. The presentation invited discussion and input. Although the proposal envisions two separate Boards, various checks and balances were proposed, such as reciprocal veto powers over "secularization sensitive" actions and the need for coordination on issues with liability implications, such as the

sale of assets. After a full discussion, the Board will consider at its next meeting what committee process should be used to study the proposal.

Bryn Athyn College

Hard work is continuing on developing a budget for the 2024-25 school year that conforms with limits imposed by the Board, while assuring preservation of academic programs and retains the Division 3 sports program as a vital part of the college experience.

Academy Secondary Schools

Four staff members are not returning next year. The reconfigured dormitory program is working, although with added burdens for some staff. Student mental health needs have increased dramatically, requiring a doubling of services. Recruitment challenges persist in this highly competitive region. There is mounting concern over addressing and planning for aging buildings and systems.

Secretary-General Counsel

Phil Zuber

The Secretary, Treasurer and Principals conducted an orientation program, followed by a tour of the buildings. Work continues to finalize an expectation form for Board and Corporation members.

Treasurer

Duane Hyatt provided annual endowment sustainability projections and said that failure to address deficits is a growing existential threat to Academy institutions. But we also need to find the means to fund aging buildings and systems.

Investment Committee

Since inception with its investment advisor returns on investment have outperformed the benchmark. The public portion of the portfolio did well in 2023, although slightly below the 70/30 benchmark. The market outlook remains positive.

Advancement

This year 100% of Board members contributed to the Academy. The schools have used social media well to communicate about events and programs.

Glencairn Museum

The infrastructure replacement project is complete. The Museum is up and running with a full schedule of events and programs in the spring. Children's summer camps are back, with four weeks of programs. There were 4,000 visitors during the Christmas season. Because of the renovations, Glencairn now can receive objects on loan from the University of Pennsylvania to augment its Egyptian Gallery. There will be a display of a Hopi house with kachina dolls and a Hopi artist creating and interpreting the exhibit.

Cairnwood

In December 3,000 people toured Cairnwood, which continues with a robust schedule of education and social events, in addition to hosting private and corporate events.

LIVING WATERS FAMILY CAMP

The Rev. Justin Schorran

The 10th annual Living Waters Family Camp will take place July 11-14. This year's theme is Charity.

Now is a great time to start a family tradition where grandparents, parents and children can go to a summer camp to worship, learn, pray and play together. These family camps provide a fantastic opportunity for the Lord to store up some cross-generational New Church remains. Every good church camp has the Lord at the center, and the opportunity to learn about Him from His Word and to worship Him with thankful praise.

The theme this summer is **Charity**. *The Doctrine of Charity* was something precious to the people who lived in ancient times. It taught them who the neighbor is and how the neighbor ought to be loved. Throughout the ages this doctrine was forgotten, but the Lord in His Second Coming has restored these teachings for the sake of the New Church. What can we learn about charity from what the Lord has revealed?

The camp is located near Paisley, Ontario, on the Saugeen River and is called Hidden Valley Christian Camp. You can explore it on the web at hvccamp.ca. It is 194 kilometers from the Olivet New Church and 154 kilometers from

the Carmel New Church. It is also only 189 miles from Oak Arbor, Michigan, so we are warmly welcoming any of our southern neighbors from the United States to attend as well. Canoeing and fishing are available and the camp is just 20 kilometers from the beach on Lake Huron.

The General Church in Canada has been very supportive of this venture and there are scholarships available to ensure that the camp is affordable enough for most everyone to attend. For more information about the camp, or if you would like to attend, please visit the website to register @ Living Waters Family Camp. Contact: *livingwatersfamilycamp@gmail.com*

“Living waters” are often mentioned in the Word, and by them are meant truths that come from the Lord and are received. These are living, because the Lord is Life itself, as He Himself teaches, and that which comes from Life itself is living.” (Apocalypse Explained 483:1)

OUT AND ABOUT IN LONDON

Ann Buss

(Reprinted with permission from the Newsletter for the United Kingdom)

Toward the end of January, the **Revs. Erik Buss and Grant Odhner**, along with wives **Ann** and **Sarah**, took our United Kingdom church teens to explore another corner of London. Along with the teens came some of their younger siblings, a friend, a couple of girlfriends and quite a number of parents who wanted to see the sights and lend a hand. In all we were 27 souls.

It was fiercely windy and cold that day, but the skies were blue. The only unpleasant bit was waiting outside the London Aquarium, on the quay by the breezy Thames, while everyone congregated. Inside, the Aquarium dazzled us with the myriad variety of the Lord’s seagoing creation. We wound our way through the dark labyrinth of spaces, peering into bright tanks, wondering at the occupants who were sometimes gorgeous, sometimes ugly. A favorite sight was a long tank full of many kinds and colors of corals, all waving gently in the current.

No one wandered the wrong way and everyone stayed in small groups as requested. Erik kept on counting and recounting heads as one must. His job was a little harder when we travelled on the tube from Westminster to Bakerloo. Navigating that with so many moving parts was a little unnerving. But it went well and it was educational for the teens who are not so familiar with using the Underground. We ate lunch at a pizza restaurant on Baker Street. I think the proprietors were very happy to serve this large and hungry crowd.

After lunch, we trooped down the road to number 221B Baker Street to the Sherlock Holmes Museum, a five-story Victorian row house, decorated with antiques from the time of the famous detective and complete with a small chemistry set, framed photos, shag pipe and armchairs pulled up to the grate, where the nervous visitor could sit and tell Sherlock what had happened to the family jewels.

The museum is staffed by people dressed as Bobbies and maids and one of the maids gave us a brief talk and answered questions. The two rooms per floor are quite small and our group had to move carefully to avoid knocking into any little tables or whatnots. Each room gave the appearance that the owner had just stepped out and would return any moment to start smoking or read his correspondence.

On the upper floors many ghoulish mannequins with sinister faces, fake blood or bottles of poison, etc., recreated some of the characters in the tales. This made us think that perhaps our next trip should be to Madame Tussaud's. With several floors between her own room, the parlor, the front door and the kitchens, I think that poor Mrs. Hudson would have had quite a workout.

We enjoyed the outing very much and we look forward to another day when we can explore something else with our teens.

The teen group touring London.



Announcements

ORDINATION, Second Degree

The law of the truth was in his mouth, and 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)

Gunther, Steven Paul

At Oak Arbor Church, Rochester,
Michigan, March 3, 2024, Rt. Rev.
Peter M. Buss Jr. officiating.

BAPTISMS

Take heed that you do not despise one of these little ones, for I say unto you that in heaven their angels see the face of My Father who is in heaven. Even so it is not the will of your Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish. (Matthew 18:10,14)

Asplundh, Nicolas Ray

At Lake Helen, Florida, February
11, 2024 (born October 17, 2018),
son of Rhys and Gabriely Couto
Asplundh, Rev. Ryan M.
Sandstrom officiating.

Baker, Camille Michelle

At Kitchener, Ontario, Canada,
February 7, 2024, Rev. Mark B.
Allais officiating.

Djah, Marie Amenan Aimee

At Yamoussoukro, Côte d'Ivoire,
December 2, 2023, Rev. Bab
Moise officiating.

Effo, Antoinette N'dah Yah

At Yamoussoukro, Côte d'Ivoire,
December 2, 2023, Rev.
Bab Moise officiating.

Guelablemon, Triphene Bihe

At Yamoussoukro, Côte d'Ivoire,
December 2, 2023, Rev. Bab
Moise officiating.

Hendricks, Lee Weston

At Kempton, Pennsylvania,
November 12, 2023 (born August
10, 2023), son of Mark and Genta
Jungé Hendricks, Rev. Brett D.
Buick officiating.

King, Elswyth

At Kempton, October 28, 2023
(born October 10, 2023), daughter
of Kendal and Linnea Heinrichs
King, Rt. Rev. Bradley D.
Heinrichs officiating.

Kouame, Françoise Amenan

At Yamoussoukro, Côte d'Ivoire,
December 2, 2023, Rev. Bab
Moise officiating.

Kouman, Clotilde Afoua Kra

At Yamoussoukro, Côte d'Ivoire,
December 2, 2023, Rev. Bab
Moise officiating.

McCurdy, Rowan George

At Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania,
March 10, 2024 (born August 28,
2023), son of Brennen and Sierra
Phillipi McCurdy, Rev. George D.
McCurdy officiating.

Rohtla, Paxton Alessio

At Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania,
March 30, 2024 (born November
30, 2023), son of Alex and Monica
Sellecchia Rohtla, Rev. Malcolm G.
Smith officiating.

Soria, Christopher

At Glenview, Illinois, February 25,
2024, Rev. Mark D.
Pendleton officiating.

Tate, Iris Pendleton

At Rochester, Michigan, February
11, 2024 (born March 10, 2023),
daughter of Nicholas and Clara
de Chazal Tate, Rev. Steven P.
Gunther, officiating.

CONFIRMATION

*All religion is of life; and the life of religion is to do good. So far as anyone shuns
evils as sins against the Lord, he does good, not from himself but from the Lord.
(Life 1,18)*

Asplundh, Carl Hjalmar IV

At Kempton, Pennsylvania,
February 23, 2024, Rev. Brett D.
Buick officiating.

BETROTHALS

The marriage of good and truth is from marriage of the Lord with the Church, and this from the marriage of love and wisdom in the Lord; for good pertains to love, and truth to wisdom. (Divine Providence 21)

**Asplundh-Smith, Carl Hjalmar
Asplundh IV and Savanna Marie
Smith** At Kempton, Pennsylvania,
February 23, 2024, Rev. Brett D.
Buick officiating.

**Cranch-Good, Benjamin Bradley
Cranch and Brianne Glenn Good**
At Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania,
February 24, 2024, Rev. Scott I.
Frazier officiating.

**Cranch-Deibert, Karl Cranch
and Jade Xinmin Deibert** At Bryn
Athyn, Pennsylvania, February 10,
2024, Rev. Scott I. Frazier officiating.

IN MEMORIAM

Those who are in heaven are continually advancing to the spring of life, and to a spring so much more delightful and happy the more thousands of years they live, and this to eternity, with increase according to the progressions and degrees of their love, charity and faith. (Heaven and Hell 414)

Bedford, Christa Virginia Kenner
March 16, 2024, of Hatboro,
Pennsylvania. 86

Klein, Lauretta Corbett
April 6, 2024, of Hatboro,
Pennsylvania. 89

Cauthorn, Francis Paul
February 9, 2024, of Bryn Athyn,
Pennsylvania. 77

Place, Catherine Rose Waters
March 24, 2024, of Nottingham,
Nottinghamshire, United Kingdom. 91

Holmes, Carla Jill
April 5, 2024, of Glenview,
Illinois. 63

Smith, Raymond
June 18, 2023, of Camberly, Surrey,
United Kingdom. 89
Delayed report.

Howard, Timothy Brandon
February 13, 2024, of Summerville,
South Carolina. 48

Waters, Allan William
February 17, 2024, of Hillcrest,
KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. 70



Listen online or download:

The New Church and the Second Coming of the Lord ~ 1950 General Assembly
The Faith of Love ~ 1954 General Assembly
The Risen Word ~ 1966 General Assembly
The Church in the World ~ 1973 General Assembly
The Thoughts of Many Hearts ~ 1984 General Assembly
What is the Lord's Will and How Do We Follow It ~ 1991 General Assembly
The Church in 3000 ~ 2000 General Assembly
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Mark H. Wyncoll | General Church Advancement
267-502-2423 | mark.wyncoll@newchurch.org

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