

NEW CHURCH *Life*

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

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2024



*He came “**a new light into the world**” and still comes to us – every day – as that everlasting bright and morning star which heralds His New Church, the New Jerusalem. (Page 405)*



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New Church Life

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

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In This Issue

Editorials (page 405) include:

- *The Bright and Morning Star: Christmas is the Season of Light.* The gift begins with the creation story in Genesis when God said, “*Let there be light,*” and He “*saw that it was good.*” In the Christmas story He “*comes a new light into the world.*” And at the end of the Word, in *Revelation*, He is seen as “*the bright and morning star*” – coming again as the light of His New Church.
- *Christmas is About Unity:* The Christmas story has its counterpoints of strife and conflict, but the overriding lesson is all about bringing us together under the hope and promise of “peace on earth, goodwill toward men.”

Christmas is a lot about spectacles, from the angel appearing in the sky to the humble stable in Bethlehem. But, says the Rev. Derek Elphick, Christmas also comes in a host of little things that are unspectacular but essential – things like humility and innocence. As part of our perspective of Christmas let us appreciate the little things and, “This Christmas season let us go back to Bethlehem. Let a humble willingness to be led by the Lord be the ‘little thing’ that count most.” (Page 422)

The Rev. Dr. Erik Sandstrom offers a scholarly consideration of “Baby Jesus” – all that is contained in the history of the Lord’s birth on earth and all of the spiritual teachings about His birth and early childhood which have played out throughout our history. (Page 427)

In the Memorial Address for Neil Buss, his uncle, the Rt. Rev. Peter Buss Jr., told how he lived the familiar Parable of the Talents. As the former treasurer for the General Church and Academy of the New Church, Neil was a gifted leader – not only for the institutions but for all the employees of the church. He was also a dedicated family man and the Bishop said of him: “If he has invested over a lifetime in the best things – in marriage, family, church,

spiritual principles and qualities, and living a life of dutiful service – then the Lord will surely put to use those qualities in His kingdom.” (Page 434)

In his Charter Day Cathedral Address, the Rev. Matthew Genzlinger offers the “Five Promises of New Church Education,” which make it unique and distinctive in the world. The real beauty lies not only in the religion courses offered from grade schools through college but in the way teachers in all disciplines “use their subject matter to confirm and illustrate the spiritual ideas that the Lord has laid open at His Second Coming.” (Page 441)

Writing From the Bishop’s Office the Rt. Rev. Bradley D. Heinrichs reports that the church in South Africa is facing daunting challenges – both economic and governmental – but the spirit is strong, adjustments are being made, and the future is bright. (Page 441)

The Rev. Grant Odhner writes about the appealing nature of “True Kinship” – the idea that in heaven we do not see our “kin” as brothers and sisters, fathers and mothers, but everyone there sees themselves “as the Lord’s children, and as related to one another, based on spiritual ties to Him.” (Page 451)

Church News (page 464) includes:

- New President named for Bryn Athyn College
- What’s going on in Bryn Athyn College that makes it truly distinctive and unique
- Highlights of the Charter Day weekend, including recognition of Distinguished Alumni in Bryn Athyn College and the Academy Secondary Schools
- The newly formed Kansas City New Church under the leadership of the Rev. Calvin Heinrichs
- A report on another successful session of the British Academy Summer School

This issue also includes the Annual Report of the General Church Secretary (page 481), the Directory of General Church Clergy (page 485), and the 2024 Index for *New Church Life* (page 513).

Editorials

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

THE BRIGHT AND MORNING STAR

In the beginning . . .

In the beginning, God created the heaven and the earth, And the earth was without form and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said, Let there be light; and there was light. And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness. (Genesis 1:1-4)

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. . . . In Him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not. (John 1:1-5)

From the beginning, we have looked for light to show us the way. Light illuminates our world and infuses our spirit. Light in the Word, from creation story through *Revelation*, represents good and truth flowing from the Lord: “a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path.” (*Psalm 119:105*)

Long before the Lord came on earth, people knew the prophecies and longed for the promised light. Most “walked in darkness,” but had hope because of what the Scriptures taught:

I shall see Him, but not now. I shall; behold Him, but not nigh: there shall come a star out of Jacob, and a Scepter shall rise out of Israel. (Numbers 24:17)

The Lord finally came to enlighten the darkest spiritual time in history. His birth was announced by angels in a heavenly star, with “good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.” That promise still rings with every Christmas season – an eternal light leading to heaven.

Look at all that brightens the Christmas season, lighting up the Word, and illuminating our path. Our homes and towns sparkle with twinkling, festive

lights. The star atop many a Christmas tree is a symbol of our hope. The Lord still is born into our hearts every day.

(The prophecy) The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined. (Isaiah 9:2)

And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them [the shepherds] and the glory of the Lord shone round about them, and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Fear not, for I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. (Luke 2:9)

And, lo, the star went before them, until it came and stood over where the young child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy. (Matthew 2:9,10)

(The wise men) Where is He that is born king of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the East, and are come to worship Him. (Matthew 2:2)

And the light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not. There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. The same came for a witness, that all men through him might believe. He was not that light, but was sent to bear witness to that light. That was the true light, which lighteth every man who cometh into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not. He came into His own, and His own received Him not. But as many as received Him, to them He gave power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name. . . . And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and glory. (John 1:4-14)

And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and man loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For everyone that doeth evil hates the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. But he that cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God. (John 3:19)

As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world. (John 9:5)

Then Jesus said unto them, Yet a little while is the light with you.

Walk while you have the light, lest darkness come upon you for he that walks in darkness knows not where he goes. While you have the light, believe in the light, that you may be the children of light. (John 12:35,36)

These are words for all time, and for our time. All these 2,000 years since the Lord first came to us – and again more than 250 years ago as the Spirit of Truth in His Second Coming – people still walk in darkness, we still are dealing with evil, we still are losing sight of the light and searching for its flicker.

The Lord has come on earth – twice – to show us a new way. We are slow learners but He does not lose patience. The light is always there. We just lose track of it at times, distracted by the flashing, empty beacons of the world. The Lord waits and His light is constant. But He calls on us to do our part:

Arise, shine, for thy light has come. (Isaiah 60:1)

When I sit in darkness, the Lord shall be a light unto me. (Micah 7:8)

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 who is in heaven. (Matthew 5:14-16 – from the Sermon on the Mount)

Our modern world and culture distract our young people especially with neon glitz and empty values. We need to hold true to the light of the Word as our hope and our guide. For all who seek the light it has always been there and ever will be. Many still are blind to spiritual truth and meaning in their lives, but the Lord never gives up on us. His light remains our North Star, leading us to the peace of heaven.

The Last Judgment came in 1757, reordering heaven and hell and preserving our freedom. The Second Coming occurred in 1770, the birth of the Lord's New Church descending from God out of heaven as "the crown of all churches."

The whole purpose of that Second Coming – the Lord's new revelation given to us through Emanuel Swedenborg – is to enlighten our understanding by shining a new light of truth so that we may see for ourselves and freely decide what kind of spiritual life we will lead. This revelation invites us to be made new by the light of the morning star and the water of life, that we all may be "the people who walked in darkness (who have) seen a great light" – ready to be transformed.

I am the root and offspring of David, the bright and morning star. (Revelation 22:16)

This symbolically means that He is the same Lord who was born

into the world and who then was its light, and who is about to come with new light, which will arise before the eyes of His New Church, which is the Holy Jerusalem. (Apocalypse Revealed 954)

I am come a new light into the world, that whosoever believeth on Me shall not abide in darkness. (John 12:46)

(BMH)

CHRISTMAS IS ABOUT UNITY

A beautiful aspect of Christmas is that it does not generally lead to polarization. It is usually seen as a unifying holiday. Whether people are believers or not, there is little to object to in a day that celebrates the birth of a Baby who is said to bring peace and joy to the world, and goodwill to all people.

While there is little conflict in the Christmas story, it is not wholly absent. Herod seeks the Child to destroy Him, but the family easily escapes, warned by the angel. Simeon also makes a prediction at Jesus' presentation at the temple, saying:

Behold, this Child is destined for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign which will be spoken against (yes, a sword will pierce through your own soul also), that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed. (Luke 2:34,35)

The meaning and truth of this is clear by the end of the Gospel. But the statement is passed over without further comment.

The Lord clearly states in many passages that He came to bring peace to all people:

(He comes) to give light to those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace. (Luke 1:79)

Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men! (Ibid. 2:14)

Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest! (Ibid. 19:38)

Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. (John 14:27)

These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world. (Ibid. 16:33)

But He also states the opposite:

Do you suppose that I came to give peace on earth? I tell you, not at all, but rather division. (Luke 12:51; also Matthew 10:34)

To illustrate this point there are parables about how this division will happen, such as the parable of the broad and narrow way, the separation of the sheep from the goats, also the wheat from the tares. There are the wise and the foolish virgins, and in the parable of the dragnet the fish are separated, with the bad ones being thrown away. There are also others in which the good and bad are distinguished in various ways.

In a similar vein, a major purpose of the Lord's coming is to accomplish a Last Judgment, which is defined as *"the separation of those who live according to Divine truths, from those who do not live according to them."* (*Apocalypse Explained* 875)

The separation brought about by the Last Judgment happens when the Lord comes with love and truth, causing those who love it to follow Him, and those who don't to take a different path. This is why the Last Judgment happens at the Lord's coming.

The Word also calls this the *"gathering of the flock"* of those who are willing to hear the voice of the Shepherd. Similarly, angels blow the trumpet and call people from the four corners of the world to come to the Lord. The fact that not everyone responds to this call does divide the population, but the purpose is to bring everyone who is willing.

In these examples it is clear that the divisions that are mentioned are for the sake of our long-term unity and peace. It should also be clear that real unity and peace are not possible without these kinds of divisions.

People tend to see this even when it comes to the political divisions that bedevil us, wherever we may happen to live. We are unhappy about the polarization that divides us, but we also tend to think that the way to unity is for other people to come around to our way of thinking. We may give lip service to the acceptance of diverse ways of thinking, but the conflict is real and persistent nevertheless. This is why it is so difficult for politicians to unify the people.

In religious terms, however, unity is real and attainable. At Christmas we come together around the simple story of the Lord's birth and His promise of peace on earth. Being clear about what He teaches may sometimes seem to divide us, but it actually leads to unity. Unity is not just about agreement, but about our behavior. There will always be discord where there is lying, violence, unkindness and immorality. During the Christmas season people seem to understand this, which is one of the things that makes this time of year so special.

(JFS)

Letters to the Editors

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

A Call to Purity in New Church Education

To The Editors:

The Rev. Jeremy Simon's article, *The Dream of New Church Education*, (September/October 2024 *New Church Life*) correctly identifies the early Academy worldview in stating: "The Academicians saw the church's position as perilous, like the woman in *Revelation 12* pursued by the dragon" and referring to "the fundamental pessimism of [the founders'] views."

Functionally they saw the small and scattered General Church congregations as being islands of relative truth and goodness in a raging sea of falsity and evil. Is this the worldview that the Lord encourages us to hold in what He has taught us in the Heavenly Doctrines? I think this worldview functionally makes the Lord's power, presence and operation relatively weak and the power of falsity and evil relatively strong. It encourages people to expect those outside the church to be spiritually dangerous and those in the church to be virtuous and wise.

This article suggests that the crucial changes in our perspective on ourselves and the world around us are relatively recent and there is a basis for this argument. But the big issues have been brewing for a long time. For its first 50 years, nearly 100% of Academy Secondary Schools graduates joined the General Church. Starting in the 1940s, the rate of graduates joining the General Church declined year by year.

Why the 1940s? I wonder if many Academy graduates got to know fellow Armed Services personnel and recognized that many of them had strong religious beliefs and convictions about living a good life. Perhaps they wondered if the relatively insular environment and perspective on "Old Church" people they had experienced was necessary or useful. By the mid-1960s, there was a

strong recognition that college-age students and older were not joining the General Church as they had in the past. By the later 1970s, some of our New Church schools recognized that their previous healthy regular growth was not going to be sustained as families tended to have fewer children than in the past. For many reasons there has also been a growing interest in evangelization.

The article both asserts: “The teachings state that the New Church will find few adherents within the culture of the former church” but goes on to acknowledge “the success of *offTheLeftEye* and the New Christian Bible Study.” Isn’t this success a clear indication of many people in our world who rejoice in the teachings for the New Church when they learn of them in an inspiring presentation?

In the earlier books of the Writings, there is evidence that the Christian Church is treated as a whole and correctly condemned for its false doctrine. Books published later make a clear distinction between the *clergy* of the Christian world and the *laity*.

This faith reigns today throughout the Protestant Reformed Christian world among the clergy, but not among the laity, save for a very few. For laymen take faith to mean nothing more than to believe in God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and think that anyone who lives rightly and believes rightly is saved. Regarding the Lord, moreover, they believe that He is their Savior. For they do not know the mysteries of justification taught by their preachers, and even though the preachers preach them, still **among their lay listeners these mysteries go in one ear and out the other.** Indeed, the teachers themselves regard themselves as learned on account of their knowledge, and in their colleges and universities they toil mightily to comprehend those mysteries. **That is why we said above that this faith is the faith of the clergy.** (*Apocalypse Revealed* 0 – Section on The Doctrines of the Protestant Reformed Church and Religion in Summary – emphasis added.)

There is at this day such thick darkness throughout the Christian churches that the sun gives no light by day, nor the moon and stars any light by night, is occasioned solely by the doctrine of justification by faith alone; for it teaches faith as the only means of salvation . . . many other things of a like nature are the interiors of that doctrine; the exteriors, which do not gain admission, are valuable sayings concerning charity, good works, acts of repentance, and exercises of the law; yet these are accounted by them merely as slaves and drudges, which follow their mistress, faith, without contiguity. **But because**

they know that the laity account these things as equally necessary to salvation with faith, they carefully subjoin them in their sermons and discourses, and pretend to conjoin them with and insert them into justification. **This, however, they do merely to tickle the ears of the common people, and to defend their oracles, that they may not appear mere riddles, or like the vain responses of soothsayers.** (*Brief Exposition* 79, see also *Apocalypse Explained* 765.)

These teachings of the New Church would have us expect laity from the Christian world to have an affirmative response to the fundamental ideas of the New Church. Bryn Athyn College's experience is that most of the students who arrive new to the New Church have a very positive reaction to the required first-year religion class for new students, Religion 101.

As to the question of membership: first, we live in an era where fewer people are joining organizations of any kind, including churches. Some of this is due to the negative impression that churches have produced with their teaching and life. Second, as the article notes, Bishop George de Charms was clear that church membership is not the goal of educational institutions:

It has been supposed that in the New Church we have a New Church education for the primary purpose of increasing the membership of our Church. . . It is not the end and purpose of our education to increase the membership of our Church. The end or purpose of our education is to develop a mode of training that will be in cooperation with the Divine Providence, that will open the gates of influx to the operation of the Lord with children so that He may lead them, and it will not take away their freedom of spiritual life by determining their life for them ahead of time. (*The Philosophy of New Church Education*, p. 31)

This article presents, in my reading, a call for our schools to return to an earlier "purity." I do believe we want to make good faith efforts to admit students who give evidence of being affirmative to New Church ideas and our faculties should work hard to have New Church ideas and the life they encourage characterize our schools. I don't think the health of our children and our schools would benefit from returning to the pessimistic perspectives and relatively cloistered life of the early General Church.

The Rev. Eric Carswell
President
Bryn Athyn College

A Challenge to the Clergy

To The Editors:

I read with great interest the analysis of the current state of New Church education by the Rev. Jeremy Simons: *The Dream of New Church Education*, *New Church Life*, September/October 2024. He reminded us of the dreams, philosophy and history involved in the great effort that General Church members made to keep the Heavenly Doctrines alive from generation to generation through education. But I believe there are additional factors and trends needing consideration that we might find uncomfortable.

As a faculty member in Bryn Athyn College for more than 35 years, and as a parent and grandparent, I have been involved in many conversations with students, parents of students, and my own relatives about the College. This letter relates my sense of those conversations and my general feeling about attitudes around the Church. What follows is based on that gut and anecdotal evidence.

I have observed several factors at play. First, and most practical, is the issue of finances. College education across America has become more expensive. The reasons for this are various. One financial pressure is that students and parents expect more services from a college, and as a result colleges and universities have hired proportionately more staff – not so much faculty – and built more facilities to accommodate these expectations as they compete for new students. (Of course, other factors are at work as well.) Similar considerations apply to Bryn Athyn College as it attempts to compete. Thus, despite aid packages, the College appears, at least to parents, priced such that it is no longer the bargain it once was. In the effort to compete, the financial competitive edge seems mostly lost.

Second, the process for deciding which college to attend has changed. Up until the late 20th century, New Church parents strongly supported a year or two at Bryn Athyn College before the student transferred to some other college or university to finish a chosen major. (In those days, Bryn Athyn College only offered liberal arts, and majors in education and religion/philosophy.)

Parents believed that a liberal arts background grounded in a New Church religious philosophic milieu was important enough to warrant the hassle of transferring part way through college, and the extra cost of perhaps an extra semester or two incurred by the transfer. Parents seemed to understand that the timely conjunction of the opening rational mind and the rational doctrines of the New Church were perfect for the college-aged mind. (See further thoughts on this subject in *New Church Life*, page 39, February, 2003, *Is Bryn Athyn College Important to the New Church?*)

Again, toward and into the 21st century, attitudes seemed to change. As the financial aspect of college became important, parents looked more favorably on the most efficient path through college. Transferring was a bother and often came with a financial cost. Even more important, changes in parenting styles have perhaps led to a willingness to give the child greater say in some of the large decisions. In particular, parents appeared to give their college-bound children a stronger role in the college decision. Has there been also a waning of parental enthusiasm for the important special knowledges imparted at a New Church college? Taken as a whole, these factors led to much less parental expectation of any attendance at Bryn Athyn College. Through the late 20th century and beyond there has been a steady reduction in Bryn Athyn College attendance by graduates of the Academy Secondary Schools.

As a faculty member who witnessed Bryn Athyn College growth in secular and spiritual capability, more professional faculty, and better facilities, the downward trend in enrollment of incoming students from the Academy Secondary Schools and other New Church schools is disheartening. What can be done: can Bryn College survive only by losing its distinctive New Church soul?

I believe that there are several pieces to a solution. But in this letter I would like to suggest one that costs no money.

In our priesthood, we have a whole network of potential Academy ambassadors. Most of these men have had at least some exposure to New Church education beyond their theological training. In many cases, it was their experience with New Church education that helped inspire their decision to enter the priesthood. Yet, when was the last time you heard a sermon about the general importance of New Church education? When was the last time you heard a sermon about the specific states of young people, and their specific spiritual needs, especially as regards the knowledges and decisions that they will need to make as they navigate the challenges of modern adult life? So, here is a wonderful opportunity, an opportunity that we have let slip since the days when Bishop Willard Pendleton penned his book on *“Education for Use.”*

Therefore, I ask that members of our clergy consider an increased role in spreading the importance of New Church education, especially at the higher levels. In many ways the future of New Church education rests on significant clergy support. I ask that they familiarize themselves with some of the literature that is available as to the “why” of New Church higher education. I ask that clergy learn about the modern version of Bryn Athyn College, its faculty, its students, and its life.

Yes, its earthly manifestation is not perfect. Yet it is very good, and comes at a truly important bifurcation point in the development of the mind of an emerging young adult. And finally, I ask that they then pass this knowledge and their supportive passion on to their parishioners, whether from the pulpit,

or in more informal settings. Make the case for Bryn Athyn College. Rebuild the fire in parents' minds for New Church higher education. As Mr. Simon's original paper was directed to the clergy, I also present this letter as a challenge to our spiritual leaders.

For the sake of future generations, I pray that our clergy see the need, embrace the cause, and rise to meet this challenge.

Gregory L. Baker
Professor Emeritus
Hatboro, Pennsylvania

Legitimate Questions

To The Editors

In the July/August 2024 *New Church Life* Karen Mazzotti has a letter, *The Precious Gift of the Word*. She raises a number of interesting points, but I am only responding to the two below as these seem to be the ones she has focused on:

1. That women in the church take a subservient role to men and
2. That women rely on men for their regeneration and consequent salvation

First, Karen queries how in this day and age such a "destructive and dehumanizing appearance" of truth can survive? I can well understand why this is troubling to her for two reasons. First, it has been troubling to many women in the General Church since I was a teenager (and I am at the other end of life now). Second, and to me more disturbingly, women's rights have become so much at the forefront of our lives today that they are threatening the destruction of the ideal of the marriage of one man with one woman exclusively, as well as male and female relationships in general.

Not only are these disturbing trends in the breakdown of marriage and of male/female relationships, they are new, key and essential to the establishment of the New Church separate from the Old Church as so clearly set out in detail in *Conjugal Love* and in less but still supporting detail in the various other works of the Writings for the New Church. From my readings of *Conjugal Love*, this misconception is due to the passage stating that the wife should be the love of the husband's wisdom.

However, I believe this sounds uncharacteristically harsh in the doctrines on those never marrieds, on those whose husbands have limited to zero wisdom, on widows and on married couples who are in different spiritual states. What wife would want to rely on the wisdom of a husband who has little or no wisdom and, sadly, there are many such husbands even in the General

Church, such as those who have little or no interest in the teachings or where work commitments leave insufficient time for study. Also, from this passage, how is it that unmarrieds, widows, etc., are totally left out of the possibility of gaining any wisdom if they are obliged to rely on a husband when, like unmarrieds, they do not have a husband? I think that Karen and many in the past are raising a legitimate question.

I wonder if this seemingly straightforward statement is in some way being misinterpreted? In *The Doctrine of The New Jerusalem Concerning the Sacred Scripture* 91, there is a sentence that reads: "... the Word is written by pure correspondences; and many things in it are appearances of truth, and not unveiled truth." Could it be that this passage in *Conjugal Love* about a wife/woman being the love of a man/husband's wisdom is a veiled truth, not unveiled?

I have no particular knowledge about this, in fact have never thought about it before, but I just happen to be re-reading *Doctrine of the Sacred Scripture* and came across the passage and wondered about it, so I am just raising this as a question that might explain some of the seeming obscurity when unmarrieds, etc., are thought of in this context. It certainly might dampen down the concerns of a number of General Church women over many decades who have felt that its women are underrated in comparison to the men.

In which case, does that statement apply to married couples in heaven and also to those very few couples who have attained a heavenly state while on earth through their regeneration but does not apply as a blanket statement to the numbers of married couples even in the church who have not commenced regeneration? I have no firm view but wonder if the wife/woman being the love of her husband's wisdom falls into the category of a veiled truth.

Karen's second issue, that of women needing to rely on men for their regeneration and consequent salvation, is out of order with the teachings of the doctrines. The doctrines make it abundantly clear that regeneration is a completely individual matter dependent on the shunning of evils as sins against God. Salvation by the Lord is a product of regeneration and hence whether any individual person is *of the church*, not just a *member of the church*, so has the church within them through regeneration.

As Karen intimates, no individual, whether male or female, is dependent on any other human being for his or her regeneration, hence for his or her salvation. In this we are all equal, dependent only on our individual efforts to shun evils as sins against God and each person receives equally the Lord's love, leading and guidance. This teaching is very clear in the Writings and Karen is quite right to draw attention to this.

Near the close of Karen's letter, in describing the Word she includes some of the lovely and descriptive words of *Psalms* 19:10: "*more precious than gold,*

than much fine gold."

Gold is a word used frequently in the Word as gold corresponds to the highest or celestial of the three heavens, silver corresponding to the middle or spiritual heaven, and iron to the lowest or natural heaven. There are a number of chemical elements but I can only recall reading in the Writings of the apparent "production" of gold, silver and iron in *Doctrine of the Sacred Scripture* 66. In illustrating how the spiritual and celestial senses of the Word are unfolded from the natural sense or sense of the letter when the natural sense is being read in the world, this number uses comparisons from the three kingdoms of nature, animal, vegetable and mineral. About the latter it is said: "In certain places in the bowels of the earth, there are mineral ores impregnated with gold, silver and iron; and from exhalations hidden in the earth gold, silver and iron derives each its own element."

There are no details given about how these exhalations interact with the mineral ores or otherwise lead to the extraction of the elements to produce the gold which corresponds to the celestial sense or the silver corresponding to the spiritual sense, both of which senses are enfolded in the sense of the letter.

I wonder why we are given this information; of what use is it for us to know that this seemingly natural process takes place? The Writings do not usually, perhaps never, divulge information that is not of use to us. I might be missing the point but I cannot see the use of this information unless it is useful to the angels and not to those of us living in this world. That is not a frivolous suggestion as there are a few passages in the *Arcana Coelestia* where we are told that certain information is withheld because it is beyond our comprehension but that it is comprehended by the angels. At the very least we are being informed about some process of extraction and purification of the three elements relating to the three senses of the Word and the three heavens. I assume for the states of heavenly life that we should strive for increasing order of heavenly state but that is a guess.

For many years it has intrigued me that some work has to be done, as it were, to "manufacture" or extract these three elements in a pure form; these elements didn't just arrive on earth as pure elements following the "big bang" or some other form of creation by the Lord. Perhaps this is similar to the work that we on earth need to do in the work of regeneration to reach the state of love to the Lord and charity toward the neighbor that would fit us for the lowest, middle or highest heaven with their correspondences of iron, silver and gold. That is, that the extraction and purification of the three elements from the mineral ores might relate to purification during repentance and regeneration. Again, that is my guess.

I'll end with a brief passage that to me is the epitome of inspiration for the work that lies ahead for each of us if we are to attain a heavenly state and be

given the great gift of using and enjoying the Word as it is in its interiors. Under the bracketed heading [Concerning the Word] *Spiritual Diary 44* states: “The interiors of the Word are of the utmost beauty.” That’s something worth striving for.

Many thanks to Karen for her letter which I thought was well-researched and thought-provoking.

Huelwen Ridgway
Canberra, Australia

What Do the Writings Really Say?

To The Editors:

I would also like to comment on the letter from Karen Mazzotti and the Rev. Jeremy Simons’ reply:

I have long been troubled when *New Church Life* publishes a letter from a member of the laity simultaneously with a response by a minister especially, as in this case, when the minister takes a contrary view. It seems to me that members may simply accept the view expressed by the minister without giving further thought to the issue. In this case, Rev. Simons appears to me to have dismissed Karen’s two main points and I am not sure that he is correct.

He seems to make clear that he regards Karen’s comments as wrong but bases his overall assessment of her point of view by focusing on her statement: “we are created the same, born the same, and die the same.” It seems that he has taken that statement out of context and misinterpreted it, nor has he shown by quotes from the Writings that she is wrong in her two major points, which are that the General Church makes women subservient to men (women should look to the wisdom of men) and that conjugal love is not limited to married men and women but applies to everyone individually.

Instead, he states that he does not agree with her and chooses to focus on peripheral issues. I wonder whether, in taking this position, he, no doubt unintentionally, may stifle debate or further thought, even though he has not addressed doctrinally and from the Writings Karen’s major points. One can only conclude that the General Church does take the view that women should look to the wisdom of men, presumably only married couples within the church, but he does not wish to be drawn on this matter, hence his “muddying” of the issues and perhaps ending any debate.

It goes without saying that I believe every marriage should strive to follow the principles of conjugal love. However, this is not, to me, the issue being raised by Karen.

After a lifetime (I am 82) in the General Church and having spent much

time actually studying, rather than merely reading the Writings, I would have to say that the church does in reality make out that women are subservient to men as much is made of women loving the wisdom of men.

The church has taken the heavenly state of conjugal love to apply to marriages on earth. It takes the view therefore that all earthly marriages should in practice emulate a heavenly state, including that women should love the wisdom of their menfolk and that marriages within the church do just that. Thus, women should look to their husbands for leadership. It seems to me, then, beside the point to say that “the help provided to each other by men and women are of equal importance.” That is not a doctrinal refutation of Karen.

As long as I can remember, the General Church has made the point that women in earthly marriages should love (accept?) the wisdom of their husbands. I do not dispute that this is true if married partners have both regenerated, both are in the heavenly state of conjugal love, and have been chosen by the Lord to be conjugal partners to eternity. However, the state of married partners on earth is not likely ever to be in that heavenly state. Such a view also leaves out anyone who is not married. How, for example, would an unmarried woman find wisdom to follow, or how would a single man have love?

No matter how much a married couple may think they are in love, no one can know the spiritual state of themselves, let alone the state of anyone else, not even of their partners.

Importantly, too, perhaps we need to recognize that regeneration and conjugal love are the same. Both are dependent on the exact same attributes: the marriage of good and truth. To me *Conjugal Love* is about what constitutes regeneration. It IS regeneration and applies to each person individually. However, it would seem that the General Church, in practice on earth, has separated the two.

The church says that everyone individually should regenerate – that is, conjoin within themselves good and truth. Yet the church appears to take the view from all it teaches that conjugal love, also defined by the marriage of good and truth, only applies to married couples. One can only wonder then where single people, divorcees, widows, widowers and those of other faiths stand? Karen has also raised this question of mine with her comment, misinterpreted and taken out of context, so it may appear, by Jeremy Simons, which I quoted above.

It is true that the Writings say that every woman is born with conjugal love. However, that is innate and will only eventuate if the woman regenerates. But if the woman does not regenerate that innate conjugal love is still-born.

Conjugal Love 226 makes it clear that there may be conjugal love with one of the partners and not with the other. In other words, either the wife or the husband may have conjugal love but not the other. That is, conjugal love

is not confined to only married couples, and that every individual, regardless of sex or marital status, may have conjugal love. Also, if the husband does not have conjugal love, but the wife does, is it not absurd for the General Church to take the view that wives should love the wisdom of their husbands? If a husband does not have conjugal love, then he obviously does not have wisdom. Is this not the point Karen makes, yet which Rev. Simons says is wrong?

Conjugal love cannot be separated from regeneration. Both must be attained by each person whether male or female, regardless of faith and marital status. Both are heavenly states. The only difference between the two, I would think, is the bringing together by the Lord of a man and a woman in the same identical spiritual state when, and only then, do the teachings in the book *Conjugal Love*, take effect.

When that book talks about husband and wife, and the interplay between them, we need to look to what is spiritually meant by husband and wife, not what we see here on earth as husband and wife. The more times I read *Conjugal Love*, the more I feel that it is not describing anything about our natural lives on earth but rather about life in heaven. The Writings state that in an earthly marriage one partner may have conjugal love but not the other. That in itself means that 1) people individually may have conjugal love which is not something confined to marriage and 2) that women should not be told that they should love the wisdom of men. Men, including their husbands, may not have any wisdom.

Unfortunately, so it seems to me, the General Church may have taken a book about life in heaven as a textbook for marriages in the church, thus making women subservient to men and excluding so many people in different states of life or in other faiths from having conjugal love. If both conjugal love and regeneration are predicated on the marriage of good and truth within an individual then conjugal love can only be developed in each individual, and when the Writings say that love comes from women and wisdom from men and that a wife is the love of the husband's wisdom, surely that has to be first and foremost within each individual, for that is what regeneration is all about: the marriage within each person of good and truth.

The following references in *Conjugal Love* confirm, in my view, the points I make:

- (222) the conjugal sphere is universal and flows into all things
- (223) this sphere is received by the female sex and thence transferred to the male sex
- But note (225), that where there is no conjugal love this sphere is received by the wife but not by the husband through her. It also states that a man who does not love his wife receives this sphere from elsewhere.

- (224) Only where there is love truly conjugal is this sphere received by the wife, and by the husband solely through the wife. However, this is a heavenly state and implies regeneration and also that the couple have been chosen by the Lord to form one angel.

Number 226 makes it clear that there may be conjugal love with one of the partners and not with the other. In other words, either the wife or the husband may have conjugal love but not the other. That is, conjugal love is not confined to only married couples, so every individual, regardless of sex or marital status, may have conjugal love.

Barrie Ridgway
Canberra, Australia

Awakening to 'Woke'

To The Editors:

I would like to thank the Rev. Howard Thompson for his thoughts on the term “woke”, published in the September/October issue of *New Church Life*.

I have found the term “woke” disturbing from the moment it first emerged as an adjective in daily speech. Initially, I just found it very annoying to hear a verb used as an adjective. It seemed awkward and silly.

I later came to understand that many people were using the word to encourage a more objective and honest presentation of our country’s history, particularly in our schools, including recognition of some of the serious missteps,

And now it is distressing that “woke” has become a political buzz word often used as a weaponized term and in a divisive way. I much prefer Rev. Thompson’s reflections on the true awakening we can all hope for.

Alaine York
Huntingdon Valley
Pennsylvania

The Little Things: A Christmas Perspective

A Sermon by the Rev. Derek P. Elphick

It doesn't matter our age. We are all influenced in one way or another by the subtle messages of this world that whisper in our ears lingering questions, such as:

- What have you accomplished in your life?
- What great things have you done?
- What is your legacy going to be?

The assumption behind these accusatory thoughts is that our worth, our value, is based on whether or not we have accomplished “amazing” things in our lives, or whether or not we have made an impact on society.

Commercial sales and marketing, along with numerous online platforms, amplify the illusion that you too should expect amazing results in your life.

Our young people, especially, but adults too, are bombarded with images of smiling, happy people; of action/adventure shots of people having fun – “living the dream” – and people experiencing unending success and pleasure: in their relationships, their work, and in making an impact on the world.

Of course, what is conspicuously absent in all these carefully staged photo-ops are the less glamorous aspects of life – which, ironically, are the more important. These are “the little things” in life – the things that get no fanfare. This is as simple as people sitting at desks, putting in a good day's work; toiling in fields or factories; or creating, building and fixing things.

Such images are missing because they “don't sell.” They are considered

*The little things in life,
like hard work,
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unimportant, uninteresting, unrelated to the “fun stuff” in life.

Consider: when was the last time you saw a picture of people thinking, concentrating, studying, reading a report, or sitting in a meeting? Or an image of people experiencing pain or suffering from failure, setback, disappointment? You don't, because these kinds of images and messages don't sell.

The little things in life are seen in hard work, commitment, sacrifice, perseverance and delayed gratification. These tend to lie hidden, yet these are the things of unsung heroes, the real successes in life.

This is why the Lord says in the Gospels: *“He who is faithful in little things will be faithful in the big things.”* (Luke 16:10)

So, let us explore together a spiritual principle from the Lord's Word that helps us measure success in a different way, a way that soothes and feeds the soul, a way that leaves us more peaceful and content about whether or not we are making an impact in this world.

There are a number of examples in the Scriptures of people measuring success in earthly terms. Think of Naaman, the commander of the Syrian army, who expected a big, dramatic show for the healing of his leprosy but was told instead to wash himself in the Jordan River seven times. Naaman was furious. He was insulted. He felt it was beneath him to do such a simple, little thing. (2 Kings 5:1-19)

Or think of James and John who requested of Jesus that they sit at the left and right hand of His throne in heaven. (Mark 10:35-45) Visions of grandeur were clearly on their mind.

The Lord defines success very differently. For starters, we are taught that:

Life from the Lord [can] only flow into a humble and submissive heart . . . the reason being that when the heart is truly humble, nothing of selfishness or material concern stands in the way.
(Arcana Coelestia 8873)

Humility is the leading idea behind all that follows in this exploration of the little things in life. Without humility it is going to be difficult to understand why the Lord would say that we need to become as little children again (Matthew 18:3), or that we need to be last, not first. (Ibid. 20:16)

But with humility in our hearts we will begin to understand when the Lord says, “little by little, I will drive out your enemies” (Exodus 23:30-33), and that our battles against evil cannot be won overnight.

We will begin to see why the Lord says: *“Man looks to the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart,”* (1 Samuel 16:7), that we must be on our guard not to be fooled by appearances in this world.

We will also start to appreciate why the Lord says, *“My peace I give to you – not as the world gives,”* (John 14:27), that there might be parts of our lives in

which we are looking for peace in the wrong places.

Yes, the Lord encourages us to look at the world differently. We need these reminders from the Lord's Word because the little things we're talking about are always under attack by the hells and are being made to appear (and feel) unimportant, irrelevant, even childish, in comparison to the important "adult" business at hand that we feel compelled to attend to.

Nowhere is this more important than in the Christmas story itself. Everything about the Lord's birth and life on earth defied earthly expectations, beginning with His birth in humble, poor surroundings and ending with the realization that He was a very different kind of Savior than people had been expecting. From something little came something great.

This brings us to our text from the prophet Micah, which is the famous Christmas prophecy of the Lord's birthplace on earth – and notice how the Lord is referred to:

But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah . . . though you are little among the thousands of Judah; yet out of you shall come forth to Me the One to be ruler in Israel. (Micah 5:2)

Though you are little, yet out of you shall come a ruler.

Of course, this is referring to the Lord Himself. It is also connected to another Christmas prophecy, from the prophet Isaiah, predicting that "*a little child shall lead them,*" (*Isaiah 11:6*), which again is a prediction of the Lord's birth on earth and how from something "little" and innocent will come something great and powerful.

The place where the Lord was born involves secrets that have not yet been revealed. (Until now.) (Arcana Coelestia 4594)

This passage goes on to explain that Bethlehem was the town where Rachel gave birth to her second son, Benjamin, and where, later, David was born and anointed king.

There is so much to be unpacked in terms of the significance of this Divine birthplace but we will just mention the connection between "little Bethlehem" and "little Benjamin," who was the youngest of Jacob's sons and is referred to as such. (*Psalms 68:27*)

Spiritually speaking, little Benjamin can be thought of as a connector. Remember that Joseph in Egypt refused to reveal his identity to his brothers until his youngest brother, Benjamin, arrived on the scene. The spiritual reason for this is given in *Arcana Coelestia 4592:6*:

Joseph could not be conjoined with his brothers, nor with his father, except by means of Benjamin, for without an intermediate no

| *conjunction is possible.*

Benjamin represents this intermediate, this connection between heaven and earth, Specifically, “*Benjamin represents the innocence of the natural mind.*” (*Apocalypse Explained* 449:9) We can think of Benjamin or Bethlehem (they carry the same correspondence) as representing a “new response” in our mind, which joins the ideas of heaven with what is going on in the natural level of our life.

This is one of the interior reasons why the Lord chose to be born in little Bethlehem. He, too, represented the innocence of the natural mind, so much so that – unlike us – even “*the natural (level of His mind) was eager for good and filled with a longing for truth.*” (*Apocalypse Explained* 449)

The fact that Benjamin is the youngest brother symbolizes how this new, innocent response is the last thing to be born in us. (*Arcana Coelestia* 5688) It may be the last thing to be born in us, but it also promises to produce the greatest blessings and rewards. It is the “little thing” worth waiting for and holding onto.

So, when we let little things like humility and innocence grow in us, true peace and happiness will follow:

| *Heavenly delight is not the delight of being great or being preeminent over others; it is the delight that comes from humility, and the delight that comes from serving others. (Arcana Coelestia 3417)*

Humility and innocence are not things we can conjure up on the spur of the moment. We cannot force these heavenly impulses into existence. We don’t wake up one morning and say: “Now I’m going to be really humble and innocent!”

Rather, this rebirth comes as a result of us staying true to the “little things.” It comes from not worrying about making an impact in this world; not worrying about our legacy; not worrying about how the world and society judges our character and worth. Instead, the Lord encourages us to be “*faithful in the little things.*” (*Luke 16:10*)

When we let little things like humility and innocence grow in us, true peace and happiness will follow.

He encourages us to continue working hard, faithfully and diligently in our work, in our uses, in what we feel we have been called to do; staying true to our commitments and responsibilities; making those sacrifices; and not shying away from the pain, suffering and grief that come from battling our evils and doing the right thing.

This can feel like a lonely, isolated journey at times because the world

doesn't notice us doing these things. Of course, that is the point: to become like a little child again is a private matter, between us and the Lord.

However, as one teaching says, loving the Lord and our neighbor will give us "a sense of well-being," although it is often "dulled by the cares of this world." (*Heaven and Hell* 401)

This Christmas season, let us go back to Bethlehem. Let a humble willingness to be led by the Lord be the "little thing" that counts the most.

This Christmas season, let us go back to Bethlehem. Let a humble willingness to be led by the Lord be the "little thing" that counts the most.

Amen.



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Baby Jesus

The Rev. Dr. Erik E. Sandstrom

The baby Lord's "first mental awareness of all," when He was an infant, was that "the Divine was to be united to the Human and the Human to the Divine in Him." (*Arcana Coelestia* 1461) Just imagine having that as your first conscious recollection, your first memory in life. Baby Jesus also became aware that "the entire Word¹ had to do with Himself and had first come from Him." (*Ibid.*)

That is a very unusual infancy, given that infancy is labeled from birth to five years old. During that time, after birth in Bethlehem, Mary and Joseph fled to Egypt, and spent several years there, until it was safe to return to Nazareth, in the north, Galilee, not Judea where Bethlehem was. Thus, Jesus grew to be known as the Nazarene, not the Bethlehemite, significant when later people asked where He came from: "Can anything good come from Nazareth?" asked Nathaniel before he joined as a disciple. (*John* 1.46). And at the Lord's trial the Pharisees asked Nicodemus: "Search and see, that no prophet arises out of Galilee." (*John* 7.52) So the birthplace in Bethlehem, Ephrata of old, had been forgotten.

Yet the prophecy of Christ is that "out of Egypt I have called My Son." (*Hosea* 11.1, *Matthew* 2.15.) And thither Joseph and Mary fled from Herod's wrath. But exactly where in Egypt?

Scripture is silent, but scholars now think without a doubt it was to Alexandria. Alexander the Great had built a new capital of Egypt there after his conquest in 331 B.C. By circa 30 B.C, the era of Julius Caesar, Mark Anthony and Cleopatra, Julius had used 3,000 Jewish soldiers in Alexandria's siege. By the time of the Lord's birth, therefore, it was an egalitarian thriving Roman-run metropolis, with a population of Jews equaling that of Judea. Mary and Joseph could even have found relations there. Let us suppose Joseph and Mary hastened to Alexandria, with the gold the Wise Men had presented at "the house in Bethlehem" providing accommodations and where local synagogues were operating.²

¹ Current Sacred Scripture, the Tenach, or Old Testament, i.e. Torah – Five Books of Moses, Neviim-Prophets and Ketuvim-Psalms.

² The gifts of myrrh and frankincense were major trade items in Petra, Syria, perhaps en route for the Syrian wise men.

Geza Vermes, well-known Jewish scholar and translator of the Dead Sea Scrolls, unearths a fascinating possibility: carpenter in those days included being low level scholar, i.e. people with special knowledge and access to the Torah in the Synagogues.³ This is pertinent, since the “first mental awareness of all” that Jesus had as an infant, was as stated, “His Human and Divine were to be united in Him.” (1461, cf *Arcana Coelestia* 1407, 1410, 1426) Such an awareness of the Divine within Him is meant by Abram in Egypt being told by Jehovah:

“No longer shall your name be Abram, but Abraham shall be your name.” This involves the Hebrew letter H, was to be taken from the Tetragrammaton, יהוה, Jehovah, and added to Abram to become Abraham, and the other H added to Sarai to become Sarah:

“Indeed, the letter H added to Sarah’s name was taken from the name of Jehovah, in order that Sarah, like Abraham, might represent the Lord’s Divine, that is in order that the Divine marriage of Good and Truth in the Lord might be represented: “Abraham being Divine Good and Sarah Divine Truth.” (*Arcana Coelestia* 2063)

Learning this would seem to require access to the Hebrew Script of the Torah.⁴

In any case, the Lord from His first infancy, knew not only of His mission on earth, but also the Torah, to which we suppose Joseph had access. The Lord became aware that His own entire life, such as it was to be, is described even down to His thoughts” or ideas. (*Ibid.* 2523) That was why the Lord willed “to instruct Himself with nothing but knowledge of the Word, since it concerned Himself, and had first come from Him.” (*Ibid.* 1461)

So, we presume He had some access to an actual Torah text, perhaps via Joseph the carpenter. In any case, He instructed Himself, although omniscient as to His Divine, He had “all knowledge prior to learning,” still He willed to learn everything as an infant, as other children did. And since the Divine was in His Human uniquely so He could notice the distinction between them, He therefore led a double life, and “He progressed more rapidly and completely than other children.” (*True Christian Religion* 89; *Arcana Coelestia* 1450, 1463) Thus He “revealed from Himself to Himself,” what was next to be done, by “reading His own scripture.” (*Ibid.* 5121) He “made dispositions to Himself by Himself” in the glorification process. And so, He knew the sequence of things to come:

How the Divine itself, the Divine human and the holy proceeding were to be united within Him; then how His rational would be

³ Vermes, “Jesus the Jew.” 1981 p.21-22

⁴Hebrew Scripture was preserved by the work of the Masoretes (Sacred Scripture 139, De Verbo 4),

made Divine and finally the nature of the human race to be saved through the union of the Human and Divine essence within Him. (Ibid. 2171)

The Lord read Himself into His role. Thus He fulfilled all the scriptures, right up to the last words on the cross: “It is finished,” meaning completely fulfilled. (*Lord 11*)

So, from infancy the Lord not only knew “the Word concerned Himself,” but also “that it had first come from Him,” i.e. He had caused the Word to be so written that it provided Him with His autobiography prior to living it. How did the Lord do that?

First, after the Ancient Word “was lost because it was not understood” (*Sacred Scripture 102*), a “new Word less remote” had to be introduced. The Lord in fact did not make His Advent “right after the Flood,” in fulfillment of the prophecy “the seed of the woman shall trample the head of the serpent,” (*Genesis 3.15*)⁵ just so that a written record of His Advent could substitute for the actual birth in Bethlehem. For the Lord used the celestial angels, from the Adamic Most Ancient Church, used to “govern the human race” post deluge, (*cf. Arcana Coelestia 3061, 6280, 6371, 6831, 9315*) These angels needed such a written record for the millennia to come, lest they founder before the critical time of actual birth. “The angels saw the Advent as already accomplished” in the Genesis account. (*Ibid. 2523*) That’s why “a new Word” was needed.

But first actual events needed to happen, to be recorded later. So, the “new Word” began by His “special providential leading” (*Ibid. 5291.7, 6025*), the Sons of Israel, the Chosen People, by “miracles and command,” (*Ibid. 42281*) all through a geographical territory actually linked to heaven as to every hill, river, valley and city, (*Ibid. 4517, 5135, 6516*) From the “Nile to Euphrates” – probably including Sahara, which was fertile up to 9000 B.C. – this landmass was linked to heaven, a heaven-sent geography, if you will. (*Ibid. 5196, 4240*)

The very meaning of the names of places had been preserved from most ancient times. That is why the Old Testament Joseph was first “sent to Egypt so that the Word could be written about him afterwards.” (*Ibid. 5316, 5307*) First the events were provided, then the events were extracted in “such detail in story form, but only in such a sequence, and using only such words as might in the internal sense contain such arcana,” namely of the “Lord’s entire life on earth.” (*Ibid. 1468, 2523*)

A brief history of the Word

The first invention of writing, is meant by “the mark of Cain.” This resulted in

⁵ Genesis 3:15, “the seed of the woman shall trample the head of the serpent.” (*Arcana Coelestia 2523*) The Most Ancients before the Flood made this a common saying, even loving to have large families to facilitate His advent by birth. (*Ibid. 1123*) “Maybe He’ll be the next one, darling?”

the Word of Enoch, bridging the gap between the Most Ancient and Ancient churches. It was a doctrinal summary as told by the last generation who knew it. Studying and learning from this Word was later written up as the “made-up story” of the Ark of Noah. It may have included the cave art of *Lascaux* and *Chauvet* in France, exercises in animal meanings, since Enoch’s Word was “preserved from harm at the hands of the last remnant” i.e. Nephilim or giants, the deformed, remnants who were set on “its destruction.” (*Apocalypse Explained* 728)

After initial problems interpreting that Word, the Church Noah grew to “many nations, at which point the Ancient Word was composed by “direct influx” (cf. *Heaven and Hell* 254), by revelations via angels, but now appearing in a totally different way from the Most Ancient Church, because their mentality was totally different. (*Arcana Coelestia* 784, 4493)

It was after this Ancient Word, e.g. *Genesis* chapters 1-11, became too remote to comprehend, that the “chosen people, the sons of Israel” could finally be directed by “special Providence” even as to “who were born,” and with what character (*Ibid.* 5291.7, 6025) and using miracles and penalties, and using the Israelites’ esteem “for holiness and ability to obey” – to move them from land mass to land mass as already connected to heaven, all for the sake of eventual recording of events so as to contain a spiritual sense.

Because of the complete ignorance of spiritual things and the afterlife, these “holy-seeking” servants of Jehovah could be steered, in “every detail of each event so as to represent” whatever was necessary. (cf. *Ibid.* 5291) With that history behind them, chosen scribes could then be “told from heaven” every detail to write, (*Ibid.* 6597) as stated in “such sequence, and using only such words, as could represent.” (*A* 1468e) The general setting “at that time” was thus for “spiritual things to come forth into actual realization.” (*Ibid.* 1675) Selective things happened meaningfully. All representations could actually take place “when so commanded.” (*Ibid.* 7613) e.g. Moses’ rod turning into a serpent. Thus, miracles happened “actually” – according to the order of creation:

1. “The influx of the spiritual world into the natural” universe (*True Christian Religion* 91, add. to 1, cf. *Arcana Coelestia* 7270, 10076) caused spiritual substance “to be inserted into a corresponding natural one,” creating edible “manna.”
2. Or the spiritual eyes of all present were opened, as with the pillars of fire or cloud: simple spirits who relished the Israelite rituals, crowded near to Israelites, this provided access to angels who then saw the spiritual order of the encampments. (*Ibid.* 4311, 8588) The actual

angelic presence brought the pillar, while the darkness was the fault of human ignorance.

3. Or Moses held the staff aloft to ensure the conquest of the Amalekites. (Ibid. 4876, Apocalypse Explained 727) The Israelites saw with their spiritual eyes after the actual sunset, allowing victory.

During the Lord's advent on earth, His miracles "implied and were signs of the states of the church." (*Arcana Coelestia* 8364.6, 9083.2) Divine miracles then were necessary because the hells were already invading the human race, threatening universal physical possession by demons and the extinction of humanity, disease, infestation, savagery and the death of the Church on earth. Since the spiritual world was already intruding, the link between heaven and the human race actually was "altogether broken," but lest humanity perish, at that instant "the Lord came on earth, and established that link in Himself." (*Ibid.* 2243) Again, the baby Jesus in the manger restored that order. Or, Mary being just pregnant, caused Elisabeth's baby to leap. "The Lord was already in the world." (*True Christian Religion* 158)

Such miracles happened back then, according to the laws of creation, without breaking human freedom, because of total ignorance of the spiritual world. Today, however, such miracles are impossible, and would remove freedom and cause idolatry. (*Coronis* 0.11) That is why after the resurrection miracles ceased, but continue today as "human contingencies" (*Spiritual Experiences* 2434, *Arcana Coelestia* 4031), e.g. blind seeing by the internal view opening up, via human interaction. We have all experienced several of these modern miracles!

Thus the Lord as an infant, from that first mental awareness, "willed to instruct Himself in nothing but knowledge of the Word [the Torah, etc.] because they most deeply regarded Himself, and had first come from Him." (*Ibid.* 1461) That is why the resurrected Lord could "open the disciples' understanding to comprehend the Scriptures, and from Moses to Psalms, show them in all the Scriptures how it behooved Christ to suffer, be crucified and rise again." (*Luke* 24:27,44-46)⁶

The story included His infancy, as already told in the story of Abram, His first awareness of being Divine, the name changed to Abraham. His teen years on earth is the story of Isaac, probably including Jesus' exam to be a rabbi and talking to the doctors at the Temple. (*Luke* 2.46-50) His adult age is told in the story of Jacob, and His public ministry, by Joseph.

⁶ Now all that He said then is printed as *Arcana Coelestia*.

His betrayal by Judas was prophesied when Judah said, “Come, let us sell Joseph,” and he was sold into Egypt (*Genesis 37.27, Arcana Coelestia 4751ff*) via the Ishmaelites, but really the Midianites, meaning how Christianity would emerge or “be unwrapped” from Judaism. (*Ibid. 4772*)

His glorification and final resurrection, and what happened to His physical body, is found in the story of Joseph interpreting the dreams of the Butler and the Baker. (*Ibid. 2083, 5078*) The actual body was “extirpated and Divine forms took its place, so the Divine natural was made actual” (*Ibid. 6873, Divine Love and Wisdom 233*) from the tomb to Ascension.

His infantile awareness is represented by Abram being told by Jehovah “look north, south, east, west,” and “count the stars if you can,” (*Genesis 13.14, 15.5*) meaning the Lord knew as an infant that “all people, as many as there are in the universe,” were to be saved by Him, “all outside the church, in it, all who existed in the past, present, and in the future.” (*Arcana Coelestia 1605, 1805*) Thus He knew the “nature of the human race He came to save,” meant by all the categories in Sodom and Gomorrah that Abram begged Jehovah to save. (*Ibid. 2250*)

Imagine Jesus as perhaps a two-year-old, reaching wordlessly toward a scroll of the Torah in Alexandria, a thriving egalitarian metropolis, with industry and economic booming, under “*Pax Romana*” of Octavian.⁷ Italy was even then part of the representative nature of geography, extending the “meaning” from the most ancient church, to all European: “the future Europe” is prophesied by Patmos (*Apocalypse Revealed 36*), via Emperor Constantine, whose realm spanned both the Holy Land and Europe. (*True Christian Religion 636*)

That is how “the nations of Christianity would inherit the representation of the Holy Land,” and the reasons why all European wars would continue to happen, and to represent the “evils of the church” being punished. (*Divine Providence 251*) That is why the second coming took place by means of a Swede, meaning “spiritual realities.” That was how Jesus came to be worshipped in Europe, and Christianity spread to the entire globe. (*Divine Providence 256*) Baby Jesus is adored every Christmas, worldwide.

And so the Lord later, proclaimed that:

- “His Divine Human is seen when Jehovah is seen, thus that He is the face of Jehovah.” (*Arcana Coelestia 10579*)
- “He Himself from eternity, was Jehovah Himself.” (*Lord 30*)
- “He had united His Divine and Human.” (*Arcana Coelestia 461*)

⁷ The Writings credit Octavian· aka Caesar Augustus· with helping finish the Temple in Jerusalem· say he was a “just man·” only promoting those of upright character· (*True Christian Religion 73, 851, Spiritual Experiences 6082*)

BABY JESUS

All this was foreseen from His first infancy as baby Jesus. As He was nearing the completion of His mission, He recalls His own infancy encapsulating the above quotes: “Before Abraham was, I AM.” (*John 8.58*)



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Neil Martin Buss

A Memorial Address by the Rt. Rev. Peter M. Buss Jr.
Bryn Athyn Cathedral – August 17, 2024

*Readings: Matthew 25: 4,15-21; Apocalypse Explained 193.10;
Arcana Coelestia 5006.4*

*Psalm 84:2-12; Charity 167; True Christian Religion 416; Conjugal Love 216;
Psalm 121:1-8*

We gather this morning to honor the life of Neil Martin Buss, who has left this earth to take his place in the Lord's eternal kingdom. We honor the feelings and wrap in love the people who are grieving his loss: a loving wife and family, including four children together with their spouses and their children, a brother, two sisters-in-law, two brothers-in-law, a beloved niece, and many others who considered him a friend and honored him as a good man.

When summing up a life well-lived, as is certainly the case with Uncle Neil, it is not uncommon to reference the familiar line of Scripture:

Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord. (Matthew 25:21)



It is further fitting in this case, because of the context of that complementary message. This is the parable of the talents that we heard in the readings. It is all about investing large sums of money, which is a perfect lens through which to look at the life of a person whose profession was banking – a profession

which turned into Neil's way of serving the church.

To understand this parable, we are wise to consider what the "talents" of this parable are that the man gave to his servants. In the Writings of the New Church, we learn that talents represent things of a spiritual or heavenly nature, not necessarily worldly wealth. Talents are the knowledges of goodness and truth that come to us from the Word, which we are to invest in our lives by living according to them as best we can. (*Apocalypse Explained* 193:10; *Arcana Coelestia* 4424, 7770:2)

Talents also represent our human prudence or our ability to determine our own destiny – founded on the fundamental human abilities of freedom and rationality. Investing in this case is to make wise and selfless choices, and to prioritize the things of spiritual life over the temporary pleasures of this world. (*Divine Providence* 210) Talents further represent our exercise of charity or love toward the neighbor, or our God-given ability to use our time and energy and insights to help our fellow human beings. (*True Christian Religion* 413)

Talents also represent what the Writings call "remnant states" or "remains," which are times when heaven or heavenly experiences have touched our lives and "remain" with us. (*Arcana Coelestia* 2967:2, 5291:4) Investing these talents can mean responding to the Lord's gentle push by means of them to exhibit the heavenly qualities of being a safety net for others, of honorableness on which others can count, of looking for and championing the good in others, of caring for the things of the Lord's kingdom. (See *Apocalypse Explained* 193:10)

With these things in mind, we turn our attention to the life of Neil Buss, to see evidence of his investing the talents that the Lord entrusted into his care. The part of the parable we read marks five talents that became 10 – a few that became many. As such we look at five dimensions of Neil's life:

1. The wise use of worldly riches. First, we return to Neil's profession, as a banker turned Treasurer of the General Church and Academy. In the parable, the servants are to wisely invest the sums of money given to them, causing them to grow. Neil Buss was known to have an extremely high financial IQ and married that with a desire to see those resources put to useful spiritual

The parable of the talents is all about investing large sums of money, a perfect lens through which to look at the life of a person whose profession was banking – which turned into Neil's way of serving the church.

purposes for the organizations he loved – a very good combination.

There is much that could be shared about Neil's professional life. In his native South Africa, he quickly rose through the ranks of Standard Bank, the largest financial institution in South Africa at the time. He was told by higher-ups that he was in line to become General Manager of the entire bank (i.e. its President).

Maybe if he had stayed in South Africa that leadership position would have been his. But Neil and Carol prioritized family instead, choosing like many South African families at the time to leave the hard social and racial aspects of the country behind for a better life in the United States. That was in 1979. In the summer of 1982, after continuing in the banking profession, he was offered the position of Treasurer of the General Church and Academy, a role he filled for 16 years, before shifting his focus to Chief Investment Officer for the New Church Investment Fund for the final two years of his career.

The accomplishments under Neil's tenure are amazing and worth noting. He was a fiscal conservative, with a core philosophy of protecting and securing resources for the future, for when the Lord was ready to take the church to a broader base of worshipers and students.

With this approach, the General Church's portion of the New Church Investment Fund went from \$15.7 million to \$155 million in 16 years, an average growth rate of \$9 million per year after budgetary expenses, with the overall fund across all partners swelling to around \$600 million.

Neil was also instrumental in seeing the base salary for ministers and teachers go from \$11,960 to \$28,525 – a 164% increase and a credible wage at that time. In addition, he was instrumental in increases to the benefits package, including a higher pension, and an additional sum in an Investment Savings Plan, plus retiree medical benefits. He wanted the teachers and ministers of the church to be able to work from conviction focused on the use at hand, rather than worrying about their “daily bread.”

Neil also served in a leadership position in the Real Estate Finance Committee, which, under his tenure, saw to the building or expansion of church buildings or the procurement of land for 21 societies or circles. It was during this period also that Cairnwood Village came into being.

For his efforts to serve the spiritual uses of the church as honestly, justly and faithfully as he could, we can all send gratitude and admiration his way. But now we leave behind the literal talents of the parable – the financial sums that were invested – and move to more figurative talents that were in evidence in Neil Buss's life.

2. Investing in marriage. For many people who find love, it isn't long before they come to value that person and that experience of life together with that person, far more than anything that worldly wealth could buy. Neil was

one of those blessed people who found love in the form of Carol Cecilia Bongers.

They met when they were both quite young, making it necessary for Neil to wait patiently until Carol was old enough to accept his invitation to marriage. Even then she was just shy of 20 when they got married (and he 23), after a two-year engagement and betrothal. That was on July 9, 1966 – 58 years ago – which they count as 60 because of their necessary long engagement.

In my interviews with family members, a consistent theme in Neil's life is marriage. When asked what they admired most about their father, all the kids commented on the ways he championed Carol, making her feel like the center of his universe. The number one lesson they take from his life was Neil's love for and devotion to Carol. It showed, they said, in the fierceness he exhibited if they disrespected Mom, in the ways they would put music on and waltz around the house or show everyone up at the Charter Day Dance, in their cooking together, and in their older years, their tender care for each other.

Three quotes sum up very well this precious part of Neil's life. Wendinne (daughter-in-law) was struck the first time Michael brought her to the Buss home for an introduction, by Neil's and Carol's marriage, commenting: "These people really love each other!" Tony Rose, a nephew-in-law, once commented to Neil at a family gathering while watching his wife talk with Carol, "We are both very lucky" – to which Neil immediately responded: "Bones, there isn't a day that goes by that I don't thank the Lord for leading me to Carol." The third quote comes from daughter Cheryl, who claimed that many men would wish to hear from their daughter, "He looks at Carol the way I hope my husband will look at me."

It is telling that this service includes a special presentation of the song, *O Precious Sign*, and that we just heard a beautiful perspective on the reunion of husband and wife in the world to come – *Joy in the Morning*. May we all take the example of treasuring the marriage given to us, if we are so fortunate to have been led to love by the Lord.

3. Investing in family. Neil and Carol count as some of their most treasured blessings the opportunity to raise four children, to see them find love and get married and to raise families of their own. First there was Michael, who found Wendinne, and raised two strapping young men. Then came Gary, who was blessed with Lynn and three children. Shaun was next, who teamed up with Brenda to raise three fine Buss children. And after a pause came Cheryl, who made Robin a lucky man, and is actively involved in raising three boys and a beautiful girl.

Again, at the testimony of those closest to Neil Buss, he is loved and remembered for his devotion to family. It showed in camping trips; in his grill-meister skills; in his sacrifice in moving the family to the United States and starting over so to speak, in his pattern of timely departure from work so that he could enjoy the evening with his family; in building two special homes for

them to live in; in the decision with Carol to celebrate their 50th anniversary with a family trip to South Africa; in careful frugality so that they could own a lake house in Wallenpaupack, Pennsylvania; in his consistent pattern to look for the good in them; in the time to listen and offer wisdom; in his preparedness – with a pen knife or a paper towel, whatever it took, even in quirks like enormous sneezes or in his worrying nature with plan B and C at the ready.

The grandkids shared favorite memories of life at the Lake or at the Florida condo, gardening, boating, biltong, helping him do jobs, and the list goes on. Some quotes from them: “His intelligence is astounding – I remember trying to read through his issues of *The Economist* at the Lake House.” “Tubing is always more fun with Grandpa behind the wheel.” “He always knows how to make kids laugh.”

Family of course extends to siblings – on both sides of the marital equation. Neil counted his brothers as best friends, and greatly enjoyed welcoming Carol’s siblings into his small group of core people. Neil’s brother, Peter, said: “It is remarkable that in the yearbooks of all three sons, when they were asked to say who their hero was, they named their Dad. How many of us could match that?”

Cheryl would and has said the same. And some comments from the kids: “We all felt that we had an ally no matter what.” “He was the kind of Dad who would fight for our dreams; if I wanted something he’d try to support it.” Amazing, too, is the effect Neil had on an extended circle of nieces and nephews, and the children of his closest friends – many of whom are here today, and who saw him as one of the beloved father figures in their lives. I count myself among that crowd.

4. Qualities. Of course, a man’s life extends beyond family, to the values he exhibited in all facets of life, and with anyone with whom he came into contact. A fourth theme in Neil’s life is that of his characteristic qualities, or the personality dimensions that made him the human being he is. In the best sense, these are gifts from the Lord, talents, which increase as they are used; through the process of regeneration and intentional spiritual investing, they can grow to the point where they shine as lights about us to the people who know us best.

Those closest to Neil remarked on these qualities: Passion for doing the right thing and honoring the right thing. Deferential, not needing the spotlight, instead taking the time to comment on the positives of others. Hard-working. Patriotism—in loving the good things about South Africa, in serving in the reserve forces and rising to the rank of major; in his deep affection for the United States especially because of its focus on freedom. A creative problem solver, showing itself in his counsel and also his do-it-yourself reflexes. Prudence and wise decision-making, based on principle. A great example of

serving honestly, justly and faithfully.

Again, turning to quotes from family: “He was great with finances, yes, but he also loved poetry, music, and art.” “He is a true gentleman. I could trust that he was always going to be honorable.” “His smile always reaches his eyes when he’s greeting you and giving you a hug.” “I [will] miss his mischievous smile, reassuring hand, and steadfast support.”

5. Investing in spiritual riches. Finally, we come to Neil’s life-long devotion to the New Church faith and to the institutions that seek to serve the Lord’s vision of it – the General Church and the Academy. Beyond career, Neil is known to be a devout New Churchman. It came to him naturally, in that he grew up in the New Church faith, attending New Church schools in the early years, and happily engaging in church societies wherever he lived. It expanded when he started a habit of devotional reading with the small work *Doctrine of Charity*, wherein he learned about true charity or service. It grew through a lifelong habit of going to church and supporting the church in many ways.

A little-known thing about Neil is his knowledge of the teachings of the Word, and his access of them in the decisions of life. Not only did he remember, with his keen intellect, many a beloved quote from the *Psalms* or the *Sermon on the Mount*, but he made sincere attempts to make decisions based on principle.

A major part of the faith of the New Church is the vivid belief in the life after death. From the perspective of the New Church faith there is a going forward – an entrance into life eternal which brings along all those qualities that made Neil the person he is, honed over a lifetime of regeneration and sincere efforts toward spiritual growth.

In this forward-looking vision, gone is the characteristic frailty of old age, and springing powerfully forward is a vibrant and young spirit clothed once again with a capable and responsive body. Neil is very much alive, entering into the next phase of life where everything that makes him the human being we honor today is as much a part of his experience as ever. That life, even now, includes reunions with loved ones who have gone before him: his father and mother at the top of the list, and a beloved brother, and others.

If he has invested over a lifetime in the best things: in marriage, family,

If he has invested over a lifetime in the best things: in marriage, family, church, spiritual principles and qualities, and living a life of dutiful service – then the Lord will surely put to use those qualities in His kingdom.

church, spiritual principles and qualities, and living a life of dutiful service – then the Lord will surely put to use those qualities in His kingdom. There the investing can continue, and the multiplication of goodness at the hands of the Lord can expand forever. Surely, foremost in that preparation will be the making of a nice home to welcome the arrival of his dear wife when her time comes to cross over – and there will be joy in that morning for sure.

In the meantime, we pray for the Lord's tender care for those who are adjusting and will continue to adjust to the absence of Neil in their day to day lives. The prayer I share with you is that the Lord our God, the same Lord who is watching over Neil at this very moment, will be with you and will comfort you as you necessarily move forward. May His presence and love be felt.

May you find strength by means of the encouragement and hope that He offers you. May you have a deep sense of trust, together with a feeling of peace, that He is indeed leading you through this time of transition, lifting you up, and feeding You in ways only He can. May you capture and exhibit the qualities you love the most in Neil, investing them in your lives as best you can.

To quote from a beloved Psalm: *"The Lord shall preserve thee from all evil: he shall preserve thy soul. The Lord shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in from this time forth, and even for evermore."* (Psalm 121:7-8)

Amen.

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Five Promises of New Church Education

Charter Day Address, Bryn Athyn Cathedral – October 11, 2024

The Rev. Matthew L. Genzlinger

Readings: Genesis 28:10-17; Arcana Coelestia 3702; Conjugal Love 532

Today is a day to celebrate what New Church education is all about. I want to start with a simple reminder that New Church education is founded on the reality that just over 250 years ago the Last Judgment was accomplished, and the Lord God Jesus Christ fulfilled the prophecies of His Second Coming.

With this fulfillment, the Lord provided the entire human race with a new freedom of spiritual thought. AND, He gifted us with a new revelation, from heaven, concerning so many spiritual realities that people are now permitted to understand rationally. (*True Christian Religion* 508)

When asked by angels, “What news from earth?” Swedenborg replied: “That the Lord has revealed secrets which surpass in excellence all the secrets previously revealed from the inception of the Church.” (*Conjugal Love* 532) These were teachings about the spiritual sense of the Word, correspondences, life after death, the degrees of the human mind, the Lord Himself, life on other planets, and many more.

This reality has and will continue to affect the world and the trajectory of the human race in so many ways, most of which we will never even be aware of.

In addition to our beautiful campuses, the social life, our small class sizes, our athletics and various majors; what does being a New Church institution allow us to offer the world that no one else can?

So, the question I would like to ask is this: In our little corner of the world, how does this reality affect what we do specifically in the name of New Church education? In addition to our beautiful campuses, the social life, our small class sizes, our athletics and various majors; what does being a New Church institution allow us to offer the world that no one else can?

Leading up to Charter Day, I pondered how I might answer this question. I started to think about it in terms of a young man or woman, interested in the New Church, and trying to decide whether he or she would come to one of our schools, or go somewhere else. I began to wonder: what would I say to try to convince them?

Speaking specifically to their interest in the New Church, what commitments, what promises, would I want to make about what they would find and experience here, if they did choose us over the hundreds of other colleges or high schools around the world? I came up with five promises or commitments that I would want to assure them of and which I would like to share, along with a brief explanation of each.

Promise 1: If you choose to come to this school, you will find a faculty and an administration that is unapologetically affirmative and excited about New Church teachings.

Before we even address academics, it struck me that the doctrines for the New Church so often talk about the importance of our affections or loves. Of course, how we think, and what we do matters, but what defines us more than anything else is what we love. So, the first thing I would want to promise any student trying to decide whether or not to come to one of our schools, is that if you choose us, you will be joining a campus community where the faculty and the administration are filled with individuals who are affirmative toward and have a deep affection for the Divine truths that the Lord has now laid open at His Second coming.

If you choose to come here, you will see and you will palpably feel that this affection is the lifeblood running through every aspect of this institution.

Promise 2: You will find a wonderful variety of religion classes that provide the opportunity to study and explore New Church doctrine in incredible depth.

In some ways, this is the low-hanging fruit, right? Of course, a big part of what we offer at our schools is religion classes on New Church theology. However, it is worth reminding ourselves that here, within these walls, we offer our students the ability to study and explore New Church ideas on a level and depth that you will not find in any other institution on the face of this earth.

If you are genuinely interested in New Church theology, I can promise that if you attend our schools, you will find religion classes that inspire you, that

challenge you, that invite you to explore the aspects of New Church theology that ring true in all religions. And the aspects of New Church theology that are very different and even at odds with a vast amount of the Christian world and our current culture.

And yet, you will also find that in these same religion classes your freedom will be immensely valued and respected. You will be invited to decide for yourself whether these teachings make sense, and whether or not you want to embrace them and make them a part of your life.

Promise 3: If you choose to come to this school, you will find a New Church educational institution where every subject is used to illustrate and confirm the Divine truths revealed by the Lord in His Second Coming.

Given what I just said, it might come as a surprise to hear me suggest that in many ways I actually don't think religion classes are the most exciting part of what New Church education offers the world. Religion classes are important. But, with apologies to all the religion teachers in the room, of which I am one, I would argue that it is in how we bring New Church teachings into the other classrooms where New Church education truly shines.

What does this look like? When it comes to what you might call New Church cosmology, one of my favorite realities is the fact that the natural world as a whole and in every part can be used to illustrate and confirm spiritual realities and truths.

We read in *Heaven and Hell* 56: "For the things that are in the spiritual world can be seen as in a mirror from those things that come into existence in the natural world."

What does this have to do with New Church education? Well, if you choose to go to one of our schools, you will certainly learn the same math, the same history, the same psychology, biology and chemistry that you would learn at any school. But one of the things that makes these schools unique is that you will find teachers and professors in every discipline who love New Church teachings and use their subject matter to confirm and illustrate these spiritual ideas that the Lord has laid open at His Second Coming.

I asked some professors at the college to share some examples of how they do this in their classrooms.

- **Caira Bongers** says that in her statistics class she uses the fact that small samples are only moderately representative of the whole, to illustrate the spiritual idea of "appearances of truth" found in the Heavenly Doctrine. (*New Jerusalem and its Heavenly Doctrine* 27.4)
- **Dr. Neil Simonetti** says that in his mathematics class he uses the concept of discrete and continuous mathematical applications

to confirm what the Heavenly Doctrine says about discrete and continuous degrees existing in all things.

- In his course on the human mind, the **Rev. Stephen Cole** uses something called “split brain” research to illustrate and confirm what the *Arcana Coelestia* says about the bilateral nature of the human brain.
- In Philosophy 220, **Dr. Dan Synnestvedt** says he uses texts on political ideologies to illustrate the teachings on the differences and connections between the civil, moral and spiritual planes of life.
- When **Ethan King** teaches economics, he uses the concept of economic incentives as a window into the continuous operation of Divine Providence. He also uses his business ethics class to illustrate New Church teachings about mediate goods.

The list goes on. So, you can see that if you choose to come to this school, in every subject you study you will be challenged to use the course material to help you better see and understand spiritual truth. As *Psalms* 148 says, all things in nature will praise the Lord.

Promise 4: If you choose to come to this school, you will find that while there is a huge focus on spiritual realities, this focus will actually help you to better understand and appreciate all of the natural world subjects and disciplines you choose to study.

One of the wonderful things about New Church theology is the fact that the Lord does not encourage us to escape from the world in pursuit of some esoteric spiritual truth or existence. New Church theology states that in order to be truly “spiritual” people, we must engage with the world.

Relating this to New Church education, we should remember that when we choose to look at the natural world through a spiritual lens, not only does the natural world help to confirm and illustrate spiritual truth (promise #3), the natural world itself becomes better understood and appreciated.

So yes, you will find a big focus on spiritual realities if you choose to come to these schools, but I can also promise you that, in turn, this will actually help you to better understand and engage in a useful life in this world as well. Because of the spiritual focus we have at these schools, you will be a better mathematician, businessman, teacher, psychologist, plumber, or stay-at-home-mom. Because of the spiritual focus we have at these schools, you will be able to better serve, in this world, in whatever career you choose to pursue.

This reality reminds me of what we were taught about the “most ancient

people” in our earlier readings. In describing the meaning of the ladder that Jacob saw reaching up to heaven, with angels ascending and descending, and the Lord standing on the top, we read:

Whatever the most ancient people apprehended by any of their senses was to them a means for thinking about the things which are the Lord's; thus, concerning the Lord and His kingdom. From this came the delight they gained from things worldly and earthly. Moreover, when these people contemplated in this manner the lower and ultimate things of nature, these also appeared before their eyes as if they were alive. (Arcana Coelestia 3702)

Because of the spiritual focus we have at these schools, you will be able to better serve, in this world, in whatever career you choose to pursue.

Promise 5: You will find yourself among a community of educators who understand and truly believe that the ultimate goal of Divine Providence is a heaven from the human race.

Of all the ideas and teachings that the Lord has gifted us with, one of the most important and consequential is the eternal truth that God's main goal is to get us to heaven. The entire point of living a life in this world is to cooperate with the Lord in preparing us to live a blessed life forever in His heavenly kingdom.

There is a lot we could say about this beautiful reality. I would love to have more time to focus on the fact that heaven is a kingdom of uses. So, here at these schools a huge emphasis is on helping our students become useful members of society whose focus is on serving others.

I just want to remind us all of the simple reality that we take the eternal welfare of our students very seriously. If you choose to come to this school, I can promise you that you will find a community that cares about helping you succeed and to be useful in this world. However, you will also find a community that cares even more about your eternal success and the eternal life of use that the Lord created us all for.

These five commitments or promises of New Church education are five promises that I enjoyed coming up with and that inspire me. Perhaps you have others. And, of course, how each one of these promises is applied deserves to be explored in much greater detail than we have time for today. But I want to end by addressing a question that I know somebody is going to ask me before this Charter Day weekend is over: “So, Matthew, are these commitments, these promises, being kept at the Academy of the New Church schools?”

Please ask me this question! It's a bit controversial. But I think this is a question that we should all embrace and that none of us should shy away from

or feel insulted by. Because people care about this question, as they should. I'm not going to give my full answer now. But I would like to end by offering two brief observations.

First, the answer is: Yes, these five commitments or promises are being kept. It's sometimes a difficult task, we're certainly not perfect at it, but every day the teachers and professors who are in this room are finding ways to keep these commitments and to fulfil the promise of what New Church education is. Please, find one of them and thank them for what they do.

And second, the answer is: "Yes, we can do better." This isn't a scary thing to admit. This is not said with any kind of accusation or sense of failure on our part. It's a simple recognition that we can always do better. The very life that God gave us is a life that can be perfected to eternity. With this in mind, I will say that one of the things that excites me most about teaching at Bryn Athyn College of the New Church is not reflecting on all the great things we are doing or using Charter Day to reminisce about the great New Church educators of the past.

What motivates me is being a part of a community of New Church educators who are not just willing but who are excited about asking the questions: "What next?" "Where have we fallen short?" "How can we do better?" "What can we do to adapt to the current reality?" How can we find new ways to clarify to the world what exactly we offer at these schools and why we believe that New Church education can transform your life?

Recognizing what we are doing well is valuable. And, exploring how we can keep these promises even better is truly exciting; and it is certainly something that I hope New Church educators will also be asking thousands of years from now.

How lucky are we to be a part of an institution that is founded on the reality of the Lord's Second Coming and the New Revelation of Divine Truth that He has gifted us with. With the Lord's guidance and our willingness to follow we have the ability, in our little corner of the world, to make a truly impactful difference in the lives of the students who choose to come here. Together,

*With the Lord's
guidance and our
willingness to follow
we have the ability
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impactful difference
in the lives of the
students who choose
to come here. May
we continue to find
new ways to keep the
promises of what New
Church education
offers us all.*

FIVE PROMISES OF NEW CHURCH EDUCATION

may we continue to find new ways to keep the promises of what New Church education offers us all.



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FROM THE BISHOP'S OFFICE

Big Changes in South Africa

The Rt. Rev. Bradley D. Heinrichs

In the month of September, I had the privilege of travelling to South Africa to support the various congregations there, but this visit also included some very special events. However, before we get to those, I think it might be useful to familiarize you with the current state of affairs in South Africa.

The country has been struggling through tough economic times, which has made it increasingly difficult for New Church members to support their pastors and churches. As the Rand, their national currency, has plummeted, it has led to people opting to leave the country and move overseas, which has had an adverse impact on the donor base. Added to that is a government that has not been functioning well and has cracked down on granting visas for people from abroad who actually desire to relocate and work in South Africa. This combination of factors has put a stress on our New Church congregations there.

As a result, we have been talking for a few years about the need to consolidate our ministerial resources and facilities. Up near Johannesburg is the Gauteng region where we have three congregations: Diepkloof, Alex and Buccleuch. The problem is that with the Rev. Glenn Alden retiring as the Pastor of Buccleuch, there were only two pastors left to serve three congregations.

The Rev. Mandla Stole worked to convince his congregation in Alex of the benefits of joining forces with the Buccleuch congregation. On my visit, I

appointed him as the acting pastor of Buccleuch and his previous congregation now gets bus transportation to attend services there. This allows them to rent out their facility in Alex to generate some income. The joining of the two groups has led to a rejuvenation, where more members of Alex are actually attending church in Buccleuch because of the Sunday School, and due to the old adage that there is strength in numbers.

The Rev. Patrick Mbali remains as the acting pastor of Diepkloof, and I also appointed him as an assistant in Buccleuch to work closely with Mandla. In order to take on this extra workload, he will be leaving his position as a transportation coordinator and school bus driver and working full time for the church. He is very excited to devote all his time and energy in serving the New Church in the Gauteng region.

In recognition of these new roles and responsibilities for Mandla and Patrick, the episcopal office felt it was appropriate to ordain both of them into the pastoral or second degree of the priesthood. We decided it would be best to bring all three congregations together at New Church Buccleuch for a joint ordination service. It was an honor to see the humility with which these two gentlemen approached this service and the sincerity in their statements of faith and purpose which they declared before the congregation.

The church was packed full with members from Diepkloof, Alex and Buccleuch. In fact, chairs were placed in the foyer for additional seating, and some people still had to sit outside on the patio and brave the unseasonably cold weather. The singing of the Zulu songs in the service was powerful, beautiful and incredibly moving. It certainly stirred the remains of my childhood in Durban, where the Zulu songs filled my young ears. The worship service had even more reasons to celebrate since there were also the baptisms of two young girls who were enrolled and numbered for heaven.

About 360 miles south by car – roughly a six-hour drive through the stunning Drakensberg Mountains – you come to New Church Westville which many still (incorrectly) call Durban. It is part of the KwaZulu-Natal region, where we also have congregations in Clermont and KwaMashu. There is a similar problem in this region where we have three congregations but only two ministers available, so we have been promoting consolidation there too.

The Rev. Joel Glenn is the pastor of New Church Westville and is ably assisted in the Kainon School by the Rev. Bheki Dube. Bheki is also the pastor of Clermont and is involved in the translation of the Heavenly Doctrine into Zulu, editing the work of Mo Zungu. They are finishing volume 12 of the Arcana Coelestia. Joel is well loved in the congregation, and they are hopeful that his visa will soon be granted, after winning the case in court by proving that he had a legal right to continue working and serving the church there.

About two-and-a-half hours northeast of Westville is the congregation in

Impaphala. The Rev. Protus Mkhize is the pastor there and is working hard to establish some sustainable farming to provide a source of revenue to support the congregation. It is difficult work in a remote area where people struggle with poverty every day.

Finally, in Cape Town at the southern tip of South Africa, we have a growing congregation of New Church people who count on visiting ministers from the Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal regions to provide services for them. They would love some day to be able to support a resident pastor.

There are many challenges facing South Africa, but there are plenty of reasons for hope. Many of the people are encouraged by a recent shift in power during the last government election which is forcing the various political parties to work together in a unity government.

The people in our New Church congregations are resilient and try to support their churches even in tough financial circumstances. Our priests who serve there, although few in number, are incredibly dedicated to serving the Lord's New Church in that glorious country.

Ultimately, the greatest reason for hope is that the Lord Himself is constantly working through these wonderful people to help establish His New Church. If you ever have a chance to visit South Africa, I would heartily encourage it, because it will change you forever!

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See page 480 for photos of the ordinations in South Africa.

True Kinship

The Rev. Grant H. Odhner

In ancient times all who were people of the church called themselves “brothers.” Afterward, when the church turned aside from good (and so from truth), they no longer called one another “brothers” from spiritual relatedness and affinities, which are a matter of charity and of faith, but only from natural relatedness and affinities, and also from friendship. What is more, they began to be indignant that one of a meaner condition should call himself a “brother.” The reason was that they made little or nothing of closeness from a spiritual origin, but very much, and indeed everything, of closeness from a natural and civil origin.

The reason why in ancient times they were called “brothers” from spiritual affinity, was that the “new birth” or regeneration produced relationships and affinities on a higher level than natural birth. Also, because spiritual ties derive their origin from one Father, namely, from the Lord. Hence it is that after death people who come into heaven no longer acknowledge any brother, nor even a mother or father, except from good and truth. According to these they find new “brotherhoods” there. (Arcana Coelestia 6756)

What a beautiful ideal -- that human beings should see themselves as the Lord's children, and as related to one another, based on spiritual ties to Him!

A little self-examination will show us how inclined we are to view others based on “closeness from a natural and civil origin.” Our “natural self” cultivates relationships based on the self. It bonds with those who are extensions of itself (e.g. family, socioeconomic and ethnic peers, close community), and with those who benefit itself in some way (e.g. friends). When our natural self rules, these criteria alone direct our attention as we form relationships and view others. And, if our natural self is in charge, we also apply the same criteria in defining “the church.”

The spiritual part of us looks at others in a very different way. It looks and

evaluates others not in reference to itself, but in reference to what is good and true and useful. Especially it looks from the heart on the heart. It looks true-ly, not ignoring what is different or what is false and evil. (In fact, our spiritual self sometimes takes measures to restrain others or limit their influence in order to protect what is good and true from harm.) But this higher part of us always looks for a deeper commonality, so far as it can. And its constant purpose is to wish well and to bring help.

Our “spiritual self” defines “the church” in terms of people’s reception of the Lord – in terms of how much they are receiving and acting from His love and wisdom. And it doesn’t just look at what people are receiving in the moment, but also what they are able to receive, their potential. Its purpose is to nurture that potential and they seek to bring it out.

In short, our higher self is constantly looking to serve the people whom the Lord has placed in its sphere. It views all as potential “brothers, sisters and friends.” It allies itself with the spiritual efforts that others have made, or are making, or can make.

Who will the Lord put before you today? How will you view them? How will you serve them and help them on their way?

And His mother and brothers came to Him . . . And it was told Him by some, who said, “Your mother and Your brothers are standing outside, desiring to see You.” But He answered and said to them, “My mother and My brothers are these who hear the word of God and do it.” (Luke 8:19-21)



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Life Lines

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

NEIL BUSS: A LIFE WELL LIVED

We are used to hearing the Parable of the Talents in memorial addresses – in tribute for those who have used well the talents given to them by God and added value through service to others. We smile as we think of them “entering into the joy of the Lord.”

And we smiled to hear the Rt. Rev. Peter Buss Jr. lead off the memorial address for his uncle, Neil Buss, with this parable. Neil not only devoted his life to serving the Lord and His Church, but his “talents”

actually made him a gifted leader in the world of finance. He had risen high in the management of the largest bank in his native South Africa. And when he and his wife, Carol, brought their family to Bryn Athyn, he was an outstanding and dedicated treasurer for the General Church and Academy for almost 20 years.

As Bishop Buss notes in his address (page 434), under Neil’s leadership the New Church Investment Fund grew dramatically, he was a driving force in increasing salaries and benefits for employees, and he helped many societies throughout the church to grow and flourish. This is his legacy: investing his talents in service to the Lord, the church and the people he helped care for.

Neil was a humble man, never seeking credit or attention. He was known for a gracious smile that deflected praise and encouraged support for the institutions and people he served. His image was burnished by absolute devotion to his wife and family. His “talents” and his use were equally focused on what he valued most – and the church and his family prospered in his loving care. He had a great sense of balance.



Neil rose eagerly to opportunities for stewardship and loving others – especially his family. He was happy to work quietly behind the scenes, shunning the spotlight for a steady prudence, principled decision making and quiet strength. He was a true gentleman.

Neil and Carol perfectly complemented each other. She served the church with as much devotion and quiet leadership – as a master teacher in the Kainon School in South Afrida, in the Bryn Athyn Church School and with the General Church Office of Education. She made him proud – and all of us grateful – for her illustrated books for children on the Old and New Testaments. Wherever they traveled together, to societies and churches throughout the world, they were radiant ambassadors for the church, for New Church education, for devoted marriage.

As Bishop Buss said of Neil in his memorial service: “If he has invested over a lifetime in the best things – in marriage, family, church, spiritual principles and qualities, and living a life of dutiful service – then the Lord will surely put to use those qualities in His kingdom.”

We are warmed by that lingering signature smile now as Neil enters into “the joy of the Lord.” The Parable of the Talents indeed is a perfect metaphor for this good man. So is this classic epitaph from Robert Louis Stevenson, written for just such a man as Neil Buss:

The man is a success who has lived well, laughed often, and loved much; who has gained the respect of intelligent men and the love of children; who has filled his niche and accomplished his task; who leaves the world better than he found it; who never lacked appreciation of earth's beauty or failed to express it; who looked for the best in others and gave the best he had.

(BMH)

BRIAN GUNTHER: THE QUIET NEW CHURCHMAN

Brian Gunther, who passed away at age 63 in his native Bryn Athyn, was the epitome of the quiet New Churchman who is the rock and foundation of our church.

His life was not easy. For 44 of his 63 years he faced severe physical and medical challenges. But that never stopped him. He didn't complain. He didn't feel sorry for himself. He committed his life to serving the church, the community



and the family he loved.

He learned to cope from a young age by focusing not on himself but learning and doing what was right – and steadfastly living his faith. He was known for being zealous and outspoken in standing up for what he believed but he cared passionately for others – even when setting them straight.

Brian was not the leader of a parade – but the parade could not happen without him. He was the kind of loyal, committed follower that every leader needs and is grateful for. He earned the quiet respect of Boy Scouts and many church and community organizations, never looking for credit – just doing the right thing. One small but telling example: every day he raised and lowered the flag in the borough park near his home, carefully folding it – just right – each night. Nobody knew and that didn't matter. It was a sign of the man.

What marked his life was a tradition that began as a child – walking to church in the cathedral every Sunday with his Dad, then with his own children, and always with a test on the walk home: What was church about today? And how does that message relate to our lives?

He chose nursing as his profession, from pediatrics to hospice care, because it was the best way to put his faith and love – and life experience – into caring for others.

It was a tribute to this quiet, humble, good man that the cathedral was filled for his memorial service with hundreds of people whose lives he touched and influenced – including many Boy Scouts and leaders in uniform.

In his beautiful memorial address the Rev. Derek Elphick used as a theme the familiar verses from Micah about “what does the Lord require of you?” Brian Gunther was the model. Did justly. Loved mercy. Walked humbly with his God.

(BMH)

JAMES LINDSAY: ‘WHAT A GOOD MAN!’

Whether or not you knew Jim Lindsay from the Freeport/Sarver area in Western Pennsylvania, we all have known people like him. They are a special breed – men and women who face down more adversity than most of us will ever know and are remembered not as victims but for their inspiration.

Jim passed into the spiritual world on October 2 at age 72 and while there were many tears among his large, loving family and wealth of friends, there were the smiles he always



reflected, happy memories, and appreciation for all that his life had meant to others.

At a memorial service in his hometown Sower's Chapel, the Rev. Michael Gladish captured his overflowing spirit and enduring legacy.

As a farm boy, Jim developed a can-do spirit that survived the first of his trials – severe burns at age six that led to months in the hospital and life-long scars, and a tractor accident as a young adult that suspended him upside down between the seat and steering wheel. At age 55 he was diagnosed with prostate cancer, then multiple sclerosis, and finally colon cancer. At one point doctors thought he had brain cancer and gave him only a few months to live. His sense of humor prevailed at a “death party” for family and friends to say farewell.

The MS was most debilitating, his body confined to a wheelchair but his spirit as robust as ever. As Rev. Gladish said: “This had no effect on his attitude or his thinking. If anything, it made him stronger and more determined.” He did not let his illness define him. Rather, “he continued for all those years with the same vibrant, loving, caring and extremely sociable personality,” doing everything he could for his family and others, always radiating that fun-loving sense of humor.

“None of this is intended to evoke grief or pity. Jim refused to let any of his misfortunes define him or spiritually limit him. If anything, he chose to deal with them in the most positive way possible, learning from them how to be more useful and sympathetic to other people, steeling his mind for the best possible outcomes, and most of all, maintaining full confidence in the Lord's Divine providence and the continuation of life after the death of the body. He did not fear death. For him there was nothing to fear; it was all part of his preparation for the eternal life that awaits us all.”

Rather than giving in to limitations he embraced the opportunity to be an example – of trusting in the Lord, of living for others, of gratitude, acceptance and living what you believe.

Jim's daughter Michelle wrote about her father:

We hope that our Dad was as inspiring to you as he has been to us. He was a physically strong man and also a mentally tough one. He didn't give up and he taught us all perseverance and resilience.

Anytime I talk to someone and tell them I am Jim Lindsay's daughter, I always hear: “What a good man!” He was kind, caring, compassionate, hardworking, honorable. He had a strong faith. He loved people and had great interpersonal skills, so he could talk to anyone. He inspired many people with his ability to take the good morsels out of life's challenges and pay them forward. He did not give up! He loved you all!

“And so today,” Rev. Gladish concluded, “despite the sadness of losing the companionship of such an inspirational man, we can rejoice in his lifetime of community service and his awakening to a whole new world of usefulness and fulfillment, made possible by his seriously dedicated commitment to seeking the good, and turning every adversity into something of eternal value. What guy! And what a lesson he has taught us all.”

As the Lord did for him, Jim Lindsay has also shown us the way. And what better epitaph could anyone hope for than: “What a good man!”

(BMH)

CHURCH OF THE HOLY CITY

What used to be known as the Swedenborgian Church of North America’s “National Church,” established in 1858 at 1611 16th St NW, Washington, DC, has made a significant change. Here is the announcement from that church:

First, we are happy to announce that the Church of the Holy City is under contract with Union City Church to purchase our building. After reviewing four competitive offers, we’re thrilled that it will go to a vibrant spiritual community of 500 members. Our final service in the building will be on October 20, and we hope you’ll join us for this significant moment in our church’s journey.

Looking ahead, our Church Board is already planning for a new home in the Dupont area in Washington, DC, with hopes to create something similar to Swedenborg House in London – complete with space for worship, events, dining, and even overnight accommodations. The sale of our current building for \$5,260,000, will help fund this vision, and we’re excited to establish an endowment fund to support spiritual entrepreneurs.

Best wishes for success in this move, and for the establishment of a lively center like that in London in Washington, DC, close to the city center. Hopefully it can be a place where people from all over the country can come to learn about Swedenborg.

(JFS)

IMPATIENCE AND HOPE

Does this sound familiar?

*A youth approached me. He was bearded; his clothes were dirty;
he wore a student’s cloak and he looked the typical New Cynic I*

deplore. Where the original Cynics despised wealth, sought virtue, questioned all things in order to find what was true, these imitators mock all things, including the true, using the mask of philosophy to disguise license and irresponsibility. Nowadays, any young man who does not choose to study or to work grows a beard, insults the gods, and calls himself a Cynic.

That may sound like any neighborhood curmudgeon disgusted with today's noisy protestors, but this was a rant of the Emperor Julian in the Fourth Century AD in ancient Rome. Times change. Worrying about our young people and our culture does not.

Another prophet who still resonates is C.S. Lewis, a self-confessed lapsed atheist who became a champion for Christianity after experiencing the horrors of World War II. He is best known for fanciful children's stories like *The Chronicles of Narnia* and *The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe*, as well as such enduring commentaries as *Mere Christianity*, *A Grief Observed* and *The Screwtape Letters*.

Shortly after the war – and a deep introspection about the underlying currents of such savagery – he wrote a short *Christmas Sermon for Pagans* that is as timely now as it was then. After this great clash of ideologies, it seemed clear that good had won over evil. But Lewis fretted about ominous signs of an emerging “post-Christian” attitude that surrendered objective truth to the liberating appeal of moral relativism. That sounds familiar too.

“As for the new ideologies,” he warned, “the newly invented Wrongs and Rights, does no one see the catch? If there is no real Wrong and Right, nothing good or bad in itself, none of these ideologies can be better or worse than another. For a better moral code can only mean one which comes nearer to some real or absolute code. If there is no objective standard, then our choice between one ideology and another becomes a matter of arbitrary taste. Our battle for democratic ideal against Nazi ideals has been a waste of time, because the one is no better than the other. When there is no objective Right or Wrong, each race or class can invent its own code or ideology just as it pleases.”

Soon after this fellow British novelist George Orwell gave us a warning of a dystopian future – 1984 – a world of moral confusion sliding into groupthink and absolute control of people's lives.

Since then we have careened from the drug-addled '60s to today's angry protestors who tolerate only one distorted view of the world. All of this has tracked a downward spiral in church attendance and a rising hostility to religion throughout much of the world. The pagans are still very much with us.

But still Christmas comes. Hearts are forever touched by twinkling lights, a spirit of good will for all, and a sense that God still is born into our hearts –

every day – in spite of all the Santa Claus commercialism and denial bent on drowning out the story and the carols.

Doubt and cynicism forever linger. Hope remains the eternal gift.

(BMH)

PATIENCE AND TRUST

When the Lord was born on earth more than 2,000 years ago, He brought the gift of salvation. And He gave us His Word as a pathway. But while the literal sense of the Word is sacred and honored as the reservoir of Divine truth, its internal, spiritual meaning remained hidden.

We were given the promise, however, when Jesus said to His disciples:

I have yet many things to say unto you, but you cannot bear them now. But when He, the Spirit of Truth is come, He will lead you into all truth. (John 16:12-13)

That Spirit of Truth came with the birth of the New Church in heaven in 1770 and the Lord's Second Coming – the revelation given through Emanuel Swedenborg that was completed with the publication of *True Christian Religion* in 1771. Most believers, however, still know only the literal sense, which they revere as the Word of God and study as a guide for their lives. But they still are challenged to puzzle over the real meaning of challenging stories and images in the Bible – from the six days of creation to the apocalyptic images of the book of *Revelation*.

A good example of searching for meaning in the literal sense is the story of God tempting Abraham by calling on him to sacrifice his beloved son Isaac as a burnt offering to Him. Indeed, Abraham so loved the Lord that he was prepared to do as commanded – even to the point of binding his son, preparing the wood to set ablaze, and drawing his knife. Then a ram was suddenly provided for the sacrifice, Isaac was spared, and an agonized Abraham passed his test. But reading the literal sense alone, it seems incredibly cruel that a loving God would do this to the faithful Abraham, so people understandably struggle to find meaning in the words alone.

We are taught in the *Arcana's* Preface to the spiritual explanation of this chapter in *Genesis*:

How greatly they are deluded who remain in the sense of the letter alone, and do not search out the internal sense from other passages in the Word in which it is explained.

So, this story can only be properly understood in the internal spiritual

sense, where it is revealed that this troubling scene is really talking about the Lord's own "most grievous and inmost temptations." It is not really about Abraham calling his son Isaac but is all about the relationship of God and His Father and that this temptation was permitted so that the Lord could expel all that remained human in Him, until nothing but the Divine remained – His glorification.

With His crucifixion the Lord actually was sacrificing Himself to free us. He was not cruelly tempting Abraham, as the letter alone states, but revealing how He loves us – and that He is especially with us in our temptations.

So why are people who love the Bible still struggling to properly understand it – still ignorant about the revelation of the Spirit of Truth? This strains our instincts too – we who long to share the Lord's church and revelation with a searching, needy world. But we must trust the Lord – as Abraham did.

He has told us in His revelation that a new church is raised up whenever any church is consummated, and we are in that process – in a time known only to the Lord. The New Church must remain small until the former church is consummated and people are ready to accept and understand the Word's real meaning. But a "remnant" must exist somewhere on earth or the human race could not survive – and that "new church" could not grow. The Lord came into this world – twice – so that there might be the saving conjunction of heaven with the human race through His New Church.

Still, there are many of us who share David's lament in *Psalms 13*: "*How long, Lord? Will You forget me forever? How long will you hide your face from me?*"

What was hidden has been revealed – and is being revealed. Many good, caring people are searching and ready to see – but "in His good time." And we have a role as that blessed remnant – to help sow seeds in good ground, and to wait patiently on the Lord, with trust and gratitude.

(BMH).

RELIGION AND EDUCATION

A recent article in *The Economist* reports that religion is making a comeback in American public schools, and that students who are religious tend to perform better than those who don't believe.

The article notes: "Perhaps the fear of God motivates these holy high-achievers." It quotes the author of a book – *God, Grades and Graduation* – as saying: "There are kids who really believe that God is watching over them, or God is intervening in their life or somehow judging them. It prompts kids to behave in ways that are pleasing to God."

It is more likely that these students perform well because part of being religious is developing conscience – a sense of what is right and wrong – and

being good students is a product of conscience informing their choices.

This is even more true of New Church education. In his seminal book – *Education for Use* – Bishop Willard Pendleton notes that the state of the world and modern education “emphasizes the need for an educational system which recognizes that the ultimate welfare of society is dependent upon the cultivation of a moral and a spiritual conscience in the individual,” and that “this is the work of New Church education and is why New Church schools are needed.”

(BMH)

OUTREACH WITH AI

With every advance in technology there seems both curse and blessing. The internet brings a whole world of useful information to our screens – but also pornography and tips for terrorists on how to make bombs. And so we are both excited and nervous about the next level – artificial intelligence or AI – and how it might be used for good or evil.

And what might be the implications for our church? Will AI be able to write sermons? Can it be a useful tool to research the Writings – for ministers, theologians and readers? Some early experiments with the AI ChatGPT show that when it is asked about life after death, for instance, it can produce a worthy synopsis of teachings from the Writings. So, there are promising possibilities that are worth exploring in the church.

One recent hopeful note: Bishop David Lindrooth reported that someone in the Oak Arbor, Michigan, society asked an AI server if there was a New Church congregation nearby. Here is the reply – and bear in mind that this comes from a sophisticated computer, not an actual person looking up information:

“Yes, the ‘New Church’ refers to a Christian denomination based on the teachings of Emanuel Swedenborg, an 18th century theologian and scientist. The New Church, also known as Swedenborgianism, emphasizes a clear path to happiness and addresses questions about God, love and life after death with answers that aim to make sense. In your area, you might find the Oak Arbor Church in Rochester, Michigan, which is a congregation of the New Church. They focus on providing spiritual guidance and fostering a community based on Swedenborg’s teachings. Is there something specific you would like to know about the New Church or its teachings?”

Surely there will be curses of AI to be dealt with. But this is a blessing.

(BMH)

THANKSGIVING PERSPECTIVE

Celebrations of Thanksgiving date to biblical times and throughout history people have gathered to thank God for the blessings bestowed upon them. Formal Thanksgiving traditions in Canada and the United States crown the harvest with a chorus of praise. But our gratitude often is clouded with haunting concerns.

Consider the Pilgrims who launched Thanksgiving in a new world when the future looked bleak and ominous. Still, they felt moved to thank God for the most precious gifts they had – faith and opportunity.

Each year at Thanksgiving *The Wall Street Journal* reprints a message written by Nathaniel Morton for the *Chronicle of the Plymouth Bay Colony* in 1620, which includes:

Being now passed the vast ocean, and a sea of troubles before them in expectations, they now had no friends to welcome them, no inns to entertain or refresh them, no houses or much less towns to repair unto to seek for succor. And for the season it was winter, and they that know the winters of the country know them to be sharp and violent, subject to cruel and fierce storms, dangerous to travel to known places, much more to search unknown coasts.

Besides, what could they see but a hideous and desolate wilderness, full of wild beasts and wild men? And what multitudes of them they were, they then knew not; for which way they turned their eyes (save upward to heaven), they could have but little solace or content in respect of any outward object; for summer being ended, all things stand in appearance with a weather-beaten face, and the whole country, full of woods and thickets, represented a wild and savage hue.

If they looked behind them, there was a mighty ocean which they had passed, and was now as a main bar to separate them from all the civil parts of the world.

There was a cloud over their heads, every bit as menacing as what hangs over ours. When they celebrated that first Thanksgiving in 1621 with Chief Massasoit and 90 of his braves, they were hardly celebrating America the bountiful. For the next two bitter winters they were almost wiped out by “the starving time.” But they persevered and they endured.

Indeed, Thanksgiving has its roots in troubled, ominous times. When Abraham Lincoln proclaimed it as a national holiday, the nation was rent and

in no mood for praise and gratitude. But what he said in that first Thanksgiving Proclamation in 1863 – in the heat of the Civil War – still resonates today:

We have been the recipients of the choicest bounties of heaven; we have been preserved these many years in peace and posterity; we have grown in numbers, wealth and power as no other nation has ever grown. **But we have forgotten God.**

We have forgotten the gracious hand which preserved us in peace and multiplied and enriched and strengthened us, and we have vainly imagined, in the deceitfulness of our hearts, that all these blessings were produced by some superior wisdom and virtue of our own. Intoxicated with unbroken success, we have become too self-sufficient to feel the necessity and preserving grace, too proud to pray to the God who made us.

No matter how dire our circumstances, “how desolate the wilderness” before us, we always have freedom, we still have faith, we have opportunity, we have a gracious loving God providing for our souls and our future. We always have hope. And we always have reason to give thanks.

(BMH)

Church News

Compiled by Bruce Henderson

NEW COLLEGE PRESIDENT

The Rt. Rev. Peter M. Buss Jr., Chancellor

The Academy Board of Trustees affirmed the nomination on October 28 of **Sean Connelly** as the next President of Bryn Athyn College of the New Church.

Sean is a product of New Church education from the Academy Secondary Schools through Bryn Athyn College. He is an entrepreneurial business leader with a particular acumen in finance.

The search committee was impressed with his collaborative approach, clear understanding of the current state of the College, his approach to presidential leadership, and his mission-based vision.

He is a member of the Academy Corporation and the Finance Committee, serves on the Board of Governors of Cairnwood Estate, and served for nine years of the Bryn Athyn Church Board and Finance Committee.

More information will be available in the January/February issue of *New Church Life*.

MAKING BRYN ATHYN COLLEGE UNIQUE

The Rev. Eric Carswell, President

The committee working on the search for the next college president is focusing on applications from three candidates. Each will meet for an interview with the committee, then have interviews with various stakeholders at the college and beyond. The finalists then will be scheduled for presentations for the Bryn Athyn College community, Board and Corporation members. A decision is expected by the end of November or the beginning of December.

Artificial intelligence (AI) has some amazing capabilities. Text from portions of the College's website was loaded into Google's NotebookLM software which produced a 10-minute podcast of a woman and man talking about what a great education Bryn Athyn College provides, with a lot of accuracy about its programs.

I recently read an address by former Dean and professor **E. Bruce Glenn**

from many decades ago with a perspective that still applies. He refers to our former name, The Academy of the New Church College, and I leave it in his words:

I do not believe that the Academy College is the best college in this country, but I do believe it is the most important. . . . If Harvard or the University of Chicago or California Tech. or Swarthmore or any other college in this country failed, there would be others to take its place. The teachers who form the staff and the students who enroll there would find something roughly equivalent to which to transfer their allegiance and in which to develop their uses. But if the Academy of the New Church College were to fail, there would be nothing in the foreseeable future to replace it. (Academy Journal, 1969-1970, Literary Number, July 1969 p. 23)

Some notes on what is happening in Bryn Athyn College classes:

- Assoc. Professor **Grant Scharr**, Religion 101, *Introduction to New Church Doctrines*: “The students are super positive and engaged. We have been exploring the doctrine regarding the internal sense of the Word, as well as discussing correspondences and symbolism in nature. They seemed especially riveted by the illustration that a tree corresponds to perception, as we discussed photosynthesis and osmosis, and how these both perfectly correspond to how we receive truth from the Lord. More than usual have written in their daily journals that this new approach to the Bible has cleared up a lot of confusion concerning what it is really about and how it is, indeed, God speaking to us.”
- **Dr. Eugene Potapov**, *Environmental Science 105, Introduction to Sustainability*: “In the last two years the Sustainability class planted some salad in the campus garden. This season was exceptional, as we managed to grow ready product in four weeks. The standing crop is estimated at 100 pounds. and ready to harvest. The class is waiting for orders of gourmet spicy organic Arugula Lettuce.”
- **Dr. Angela Rose**: This past spring 11 students graduated from Bryn Athyn College with a degree in Early Childhood and Special Education. Here is a glimpse into two of the events that the current education majors are participating in this year.

Students in a course on developing language and literacy in early childhood

will be taking part in an event called “The Path of Light,” a pre-Halloween, non-scary event for young children. The students will be reciting and acting out Mother Goose nursery rhymes and a Brother’s Grimm Fairy Tale. **Bishop George de Charms**, who taught a course for many years on the *Philosophy of New Church Education*, was one of several New Church luminaries who promoted the idea of teaching through story. He gave special attention to the fairy tale genre:

Folklore, fable, fairy tales – all these have the same value as the Memorable Occurrences for little children. They are based on the idea of the spiritual world, of the human mind and the way it operates. They illustrate spiritual laws, and the more ancient the stories are, the more illustrative they are because they were written, or came into being, at a time when people had a perception of the spiritual world.

- **Dr. Fredrik Bryntesson:** Three more graduates of Bryn Athyn College have been added to the Biology Major and pre-Nursing program alumni display in the Doering Center. Our display includes 60 alumni who have either completed or are attending graduate or nursing school, and 62% of these alumni were student-athletes at Bryn Athyn College.
- **Dr. Greg Rose:** Thanks to generous and continuing support from the Cole Foundation for Renewing the Culture, Bryn Athyn College is in its 10th year of offering *Reacting to the Past* (RTTP) courses – history courses that contribute to our Human Society major. This year their focus is on the concepts of security and self-determination in 1945 as students explore two conferences that occurred at Yalta in February and Simla in British India.

These courses involve students playing two role-immersion games set in historical moments of crisis such as the Constitutional Convention or the French Revolution. They require diving into classic texts such as *Plato’s Republic*, the *Federalist Papers*, or the *Bhagavad Gita*. In these complex games, each of which lasts several weeks, students become individual historical characters who need to make group decisions. At Yalta, for example: what should happen to a defeated Germany? How will new governments emerge in liberated Europe? What sort of new international organization will emerge? The expectation is that the resulting student-run debates, negotiations and compromises result in a deep learning experience.

Beyond the complex games, the historical research, the fun, and the

student engagement, there are two key attributes of these courses that make them the perfect fit for a New Church institution of higher education.

First, one of the key themes in our Human Society major is that of human choice, rooted in the first law of divine providence. Human beings are free to make choices about what to believe, how to act, and how to respond to their circumstances. RTTP games call attention to this point because they highlight that history did not have to unfold as it did. The events of the past were not pre-determined but were shaped by the choices people made within the circumstances and conditions in which they lived. While the students need to play their roles in historically appropriate ways, within these roles they wrestle with decisions and make choices about what to do. They can – and sometimes do – create different outcomes than what happened historically because of how they understand, present and weigh the multiple considerations at play.

Second, the teachings for the New Church suggest that our rational ability – the key human capacity to distinguish between good and evil – begins to be opened by means of civic and moral truths. Ideas about justice, equity, considering the perspectives of other people, reflecting on the morality of certain ideas and actions – these are the central elements of RTTP games. The rational capacity, however, does not form or open simply by knowing civic and moral truths, but by living them. And while taking an RTTP course is not the same as living civic and moral truths, it is a lot closer to living them than just reading about them.

- **Dr. Sophia Castro:** One of our senior psychology students, **Kayla Smith**, is taking a research apprenticeship with **Dr. Fernando Cavallo**. As part of her internship, she presented a poster in April 2024 at the American Academy of Pediatric Neuropsychology. The study presented measured the impact of Virtual Reality on treating adolescent anxiety. A publication stemming from that research has been accepted for publication in the next issue of the *Journal of Neuroregulation*.

Dr. Cavallo is in the final phase of seeking funding and approval to launch two experimental studies at Bryn Athyn College involving photo-biomodulation and Virtual Reality to treat ADHD in collaboration with **Dr. Janet Krettek** of PCOM and Holy Redeemer Hospital. Students majoring in psychology will have the opportunity to collaborate and assist in the data collection process as research assistants.

Finally, former psychology student **Shaina Childs** and current senior psychology student **Laura Hughes** are collaborating on a manuscript for publication with Dr. Castro. The study is about an in-class experiment

conducted in the Introduction to Psychology class at the College. The study investigates:

1. The most effective learning strategies to increase retention and transfer of knowledge.
 2. Expand on the application of retrieval-based practice learning in an introductory psychology classroom setting.
 3. Examine the assumption that immediate feedback is more effective than delayed feedback in a classroom setting.
- **Rev. Dr. Thane Glenn:** I have the privilege of teaching a dual-level graduate/undergraduate course in *The True Christian Religion*. The course revolves around an investigation of the questions “what is the New Church?” and “what is new about the New Church?” We explore these questions through an intensive study of the book alongside an intensive study of the coming Kingdom of God promised throughout the Bible. When I taught the course last spring, every class day was like a little trip to heaven, as our discussions lit up with the excitement of new discoveries at every turn – graduate students exploring alongside upper-level undergraduates, students born and raised in Swedenborgian communities, students who had come to adopt New Church ideals in adulthood, and students unfamiliar with Swedenborg before attending Bryn Athyn College, all conversing together. For me, this is what Bryn Athyn College is all about.
 - **Dr. Sarah Wong:** In *Special Education 111: Introduction to Special Education*, we just launched our unit on the 13 categories of disabilities (per the federal law, IDEA). As the students are introduced to a wide range of disabilities, we attempt to humanize what they are learning by ensuring that they hear voices of and stories from those with disabilities along the way. We have intentionally built in an opportunity to meet members of the Horizon Group (part of New Church Challenge), in a carefully planned social event on campus. Over dinner, games and activities, class members are given the opportunity to get to know a group of individuals they might not otherwise meet – in a relaxed, fun setting. This sort of an event has become a tradition and a highlight for our students and the Horizon Group members.

Also in class, as we began this unit, we revisited New Church doctrine

on variety: “(The) perfection of heaven is the result of variety . . . so heaven is a unity resulting from the arrangements of various parts in the most perfect form,” (Heaven and Hell 56) and the concept of the Universal Human.

I share with the students that the perfection actually comes from an integration of what is different and varied, a beautiful reminder that disability can be viewed as part of what is possible, whole and perfect, rather than something solely viewed as broken, pitied, or to be fixed. This can be applied both at the individual level and community level.

CHARTER DAY 2024

This year’s Academy of the New Church Charter Day celebration (October 10-13) got off to an unexpected start when the opponent for the traditional Saturday afternoon football game cancelled the day before. The football coaches and team quickly pivoted to a flag football tournament against a backdrop of colorful tents for a fund-raising tailgate. Highlights of the weekend included:

- A Cathedral address by the **Rev. Matthew Genzlinger** – *Five Promises of New Church Education* (See page 441)
- The Theta Alpha luncheon, featuring a talk by **Nina Dewees** on *A Loving Community*
- Many happy class reunions
- Distinguished Alumni for Bryn Athyn College and the Academy Secondary Schools and an Outstanding Volunter (see below)
- Reunion classes art exhibit
- Many social and sporting events
- The 30th annual Student Scholarship Golf Outing, which has raised close to \$800,000 in scholarship funds for the College and Secondary Schools

Distinguished Alumni

Bryn Athyn College

This award recognizes alumni of the College who have given back to their

communities, their alma mater and the church by applying the values and perspectives gained from a New Church liberal arts education.

Ian Lumsden

Ian attended Bryn Athyn College, earning an associate's degree in 2005. He was a volunteer firefighter at Bryn Athyn Fire Company, both in high school and in college before serving in the United States Army as an Army Ranger (Special Forces).

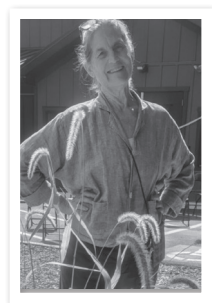


He would like to recognize Tristan Smith, a close Fire Company mentor, as the inspiration to join the Army and specifically his military serve branch of choice. (Tristan, a graduate of the Academy Boys School, gave his life while serving with the U.S. Army in the Iraq War in 2006.) Ian served in the 2nd Battalion for Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan, and he went on to complete four tours, for about one-and-a-half years in the country during active combat deployment.

Ian also served the state of Pennsylvania as a Team Leader in the Army National Guard while working as an EMT and studying to get into Physician Assistant School. After leaving the Armed Forces, he was an EMT-B, and now is a Physician Assistant at Jefferson Torresdale Hospital in its Trauma Unit.

Nina Finkeldey

Nina attended Bryn Athyn College in 1974-1976 and the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts for two years. Her creative endeavors have included many things: she taught art in Bryn Athyn Church School, designed and decorated countless weddings, started the Bryn Athyn Craft Sale, and volunteered at Glencairn Museum designing displays.



She worked at Bryn Athyn College managing the complex details of the Jungé Pavilion, Common Ground, and the Student Social Center, which was also in that building at the time. She was the manager of the Bryn Athyn Thrift Shop for more than 21 years, which annually nets approximately \$100,000 a year for Bryn Athyn Church.

As director, she regularly attended and contributed to the Bryn Athyn Church Staff meetings. A major part of that multi-facet job is managing the volunteer workers, around 80-100 adults per year, as well as many students. In this role, she created a positive environment of kindness and respect for

all, providing opportunities for many to participate in this valuable service to others. She retired in 2022.

Brenna Synnestvedt

Brenna attended Bryn Athyn College in 1974 and received her AA from Millersville State College and her BA in Anthropology from George Washington University. She and her husband, Chris Nunez, worked with refugees in Thailand and Seattle. They were Peace Corps volunteers in Solomon Islands and then hired as Peace Corps Volunteer Trainers. A decade later with two children they moved to Romania where Chris was Administrative Officer of the Peace Corps and Brenna became involved with a Romanian women's co-op who weaved rugs.



After returning to the United States, Bryn Athyn College hired Brenna as the International Student Advisor, a position she held for three to four years, always looking for ways to integrate them into the Bryn Athyn and extended American cultures.

In 2000, Brenna became Nina Finkeldey's right hand at the Bryn Athyn Thrift Shop. Her sensitivity to other cultures has helped BATS become a benevolent and caring face of the Bryn Athyn Church for thousands of people over the years. She took over the directorship of BATS when Nina retired.

2024 Outstanding Volunteer

Lynn-Del Sandstrom

From the Swedenborg Library staff:

We are incredibly fortunate to have Lynn-Del Sandstrom as a vital part of the Swedenborg Library team. Since 2015, she has volunteered more than 350 hours to process our newly acquired books. She makes them shelf-and-reader ready by adding protective dust jackets, book plates, and all the stickers and labels a library book requires. Lynn-Del's consistent willingness to assist and her dependable, friendly presence makes a seemingly mundane task special. We are deeply grateful for her commitment and expertise.



Academy Secondary Schools

The Girls School and Boys School continued their tradition – now in its 32nd year – of honoring Distinguished Alumni, usually chosen from reunion classes. These women and men are invited to talk to the seniors of the respective schools about how their Academy experience has influenced their lives and careers.

Academy Girls School

Erica Cantley

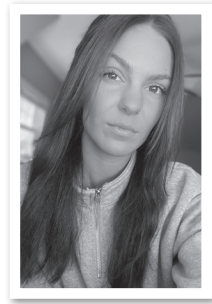
Erica, Class of 1984, lived in the girls' dorm as a junior and senior where she made lifelong friends. She began her work life in restaurant management, culminating in being named chef Daniel Boulud's first female maitre d'. Her second career was teaching high school English at her beloved Academy from 2002 to 2018. In 2020 she wrote an acclaimed memoir – *Teaching Hamlet As My Father Died* – with insights from her teaching career as her beloved father was dying far away in Costa Rica.



She is also a podcast host, mentor, hospitality career coach and sits on the Advisory Board of the Food Education Fund in New York City, which supports high school students through culinary arts and hospitality.

Taylor Henderson

Taylor, Class of 2014, grew up in Hatboro, Pennsylvania, and attended the Bryn Athyn Church and Academy Schools from kindergarten through senior year. At the Academy she participated in clubs, sports and theater, and was a part of Student Council in her senior year as Social Representative.



She received her degree in Secondary Education with a Biology major from York College of Pennsylvania. After graduating, she spent the next few years teaching at various high schools including Lower Moreland, Council Rock South and Wyomissing Area High School.

Today, Taylor works as a server, bartender and catering manager at Giuseppe's Family Restaurant, where she enjoys interacting with customers

and creating a positive experience in people's days.

Academy Boys School

Glenn Gurney

Mr. Gurney attended high school in Michigan and earned his associate degree from Bryn Athyn College in 1984. In 1986 Bryn Athyn College awarded him the Larry E. Spalding (athlete of the year) award. He has taken a number of construction management courses from Penn State and earned his Michigan Construction License in 1987. He worked with a number of construction companies and has been the owner and president of Gurney Kerr Contractors since 1988.

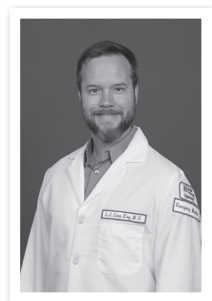


Glenn has coached several sports at the Academy including baseball, softball, ice hockey, roller hockey, lacrosse and soccer. He was the boys ice hockey coach from 2008-2020 and received an Honorary Diploma from ANC in 2009.

He is in his sixth term as a Bryn Athyn Borough Councilman, beginning in 2004. He married his wife Charlotte (Lottie) in December 1989. They have three children (Chad, Cree, and Cade) and four grandchildren (Sumner, Bo, Riot, and Crew).

Linus King

Dr. King, Class of 2004, grew up going back and forth between Bryn Athyn and West Philadelphia. (His Dad lived in BA and Mom in Philly). He attended public school in Philly (Powell then Masterman) through sixth grade, then transitioned to Bryn Athyn Church School for seventh and eighth.



He attended ANC all four years of high school and was valedictorian for his class and received a gold Faculty Award. He then completed an Associates Degree at Bryn Athyn College, earned a Bachelor's Degree in neuroscience at the University of Pittsburgh and an MD at Jefferson University, followed by an emergency medicine residency at Temple Hospital.

Since 2016 he has been working clinically at Jeanes Hospital in suburban Philadelphia and has an appointment as an associate professor of emergency medicine at Temple University. Since 2021 Dr. King has also taken on the role

of clinical director/section chief of emergency medicine at Jeanes Hospital.

In 2009 he married his high school sweetheart, Bronwyn Latta, and they have two children, (Beckett 11, Juniper 8), who attend Bryn Athyn Church School.

GENERAL CHURCH BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Highlights of September 27-28 Meetings

President

Rt. Rev. Peter M. Buss Jr.

Welcomed as new Board members were **Erin Busby, Stephen Elphick, Kelly Niall and Shawn Synnestvedt.**

Five strategic projects and professional goals were reviewed, including working with the Academy on an executive leadership plan and investing in video communications.

Vice Presidents

The Rt. Rev. Bradleys Heinrichs gave an update on South Africa, including two new ordinations. These ministers (**the Rev. Patrick Vikinduku Mbali and the Rev. Mandla Charlton Stole**) will serve in Diepkloof and Buccleuch. A translation team in South Africa is making progress on a Zulu translation of the *Arcana*.

The Rt. Reven David Lindrooth is working with **Karen Stoeller** and the Human Resources department to revise the clergy development and review process. He shared his goal of making Emanuel Swedenborg a publicly recognized name and plans to lead a new General Church effort to embrace online and video communication.

Real Estate Finance

Wayne Wadsworth, reporting on behalf of a Cairncrest Building Task Force, presented research on capital repairs and suggested next steps toward determining a long-term sustainable plan for the General Church central offices, currently housed in Cairncrest.

Theological School

The Rev. Dr. Andrew Dibb and Karen Stoeller

Dean Dibb reported progress on recruiting priests, with 10 students enrolled in the Theological School, representing nine countries of origin. The School will focus for the next few years on the need for an increasing supply ministers, standardization of worldwide theological training, and enhanced professional development for ministers.

Baird Kistner has been appointed to the new Ministry and Education Recruiter position, beginning in mid-October.

Global Healthy Congregations Committee

John Berridge and Jane Enis

The committee is working to support the health and growth of worldwide congregations, focusing on identifying key indicators, such as member engagement and creating tools to help congregations thrive.

We are running three pilot projects in the United States in Boulder, Colorado, Tucson, Arizona and Maysville, Missouri. These projects provide valuable insights, helping to refine methods and tools for use in other congregations.

We are focusing on completing these pilot projects before expanding to ensure that tools and strategies are well-tested and effective.

General Church Education

Rachel Glenn, Charlotte Gyllenhaal, Greg Henderson and Rebekah Russell

Rachel gave an overview of Religious Education Programs, including family gift mailings around the world, Jacob's Ladder Religion Lessons, books published in 2024, New Church Vineyard site refresh, and the GCED Assembly display.

Rebekah reviewed school leadership and themes for 2024-25 in local schools. She reported on the role of GCED in teacher support, evaluation and curriculum focusing on incorporating New Church concepts. She also reported on professional development projects such as the New Church teacher and competency modules and an upcoming teacher in-service.

Greg reviewed the work of the General Church initiative to support a continuous flow of trained teachers to ensure quality elementary education. The recruiting hire will work with this initiative in General Church schools and the Theological School.

General Church Outreach

Charles Ebert and the Rev. Pearse Frazier

Outreach hopes to increase support for local advertising designed and organized for congregations. Outreach is focusing on using some of its budget to promote awareness of and engagement with both central and congregational uses. It is also working to help congregants feel confident about inviting friends to services and taking outreach initiatives.

Teryn Glunz gave an update on the refreshed New Church Books website, which offers a new look and feel, an updated search function, and a broader book inventory. Next steps are focused on establishing a core marketing plan.

The work of General Church Outreach can be checked on YouTube,

Instagram, Facebook, New Church Audio and its website.

Advancement

Greg Clay and Mark Wyncoll

Giving at the beginning of FY 25 is on track to meet yearly goals. Advancement ran a successful donation drive for Daily Inspirations

Marijke Bau-Madsen announced that **Heath Pitcairn** has been hired to help create a higher volume of quality New Church media. The communications platform will focus on how best to share core messages, such as the Lord's desire for us to experience the profound joy of heaven.

FROM THE EXECUTIVE BISHOP

The Rt. Rev. Peter M. Buss Jr.

Head of Human Resources **Karen Stoeller** and I are excited to announce that **Baird Kistner** will join the General Church Human Resources team as our new Ministry and Education Recruiter. This important new role is part of our broader strategy to build a strong next generation of ministers and teachers who are ready to care for the church.

Baird comes to us with an extensive background in New Church education and was unanimously recommended by the search committee. He officially began in this role in mid-October. We are excited to have his expertise as we work together to promote rewarding career opportunities within the General Church.

PROGRESS IN KANSAS CITY

Rev. Calvin Heinrichs

The Kansas City New Church is up and running! Getting into the swing of things is a lot of work. We have been averaging 20 people per service and have started several classes along the way, including a retiree class, general doctrinal class, and two teen groups. These are the fun parts of the job!

Less fun but necessary, we have been building out our YouTube channel and Facebook page. We are getting closer to having enough content to start a marketing campaign in the area. We are in talks with a local church about forming a joint youth group but have yet to find a time that works for both. We are also in talks about getting on the rotation for a retirement home community worship service. These efforts at integrating into the local society are some of the ways we are trying to get our name out there.

One question I get asked a lot is "where do you worship"? For now, we worship in my house primarily, but also among other congregation members'

houses. We do this for a variety of reasons: First, it is simply the cheapest and most economical way to start. Making the jump from once-a-month to weekly worship and from no doctrinal classes to a variety of them is an adjustment.

This group is going through a lot of new things all at once and for now, keeping a little of the old with a lot of the new, feels like an important anchor as we chart the course for a new New Church. We eat a meal together every week after church. I think this has led to a lot of cohesion among the group, although it is a lot of work.

Another part of getting the church up and running has been a lot of driving. With people spread out in the Midwest, I spend a lot of time driving to visit parishioners. I drive as far north as Sioux Falls, South Dakota, as far south as Tulsa, Oklahoma, as far west as Fort Riley, Kansas, and as far east as St. Louis, Missouri. I also have parishioners in Iowa, Nebraska and even Dallas, Texas.

I have not been everywhere yet, but I am hoping by the end of my first year to have visited all of them at least once. As someone who grew up in a Canadian suburb, I never thought I would routinely drive more than an hour just to have coffee with someone. People are just more OK with driving out here. I have learned to schedule pastoral calls during my car rides to help regain some lost time driving.

One thing I have found is that participation from remote places in my Zoom doctrinal classes has seemed to pay off. With some personal effort to meet people where they are, it goes a long way toward engaging them in the church. However, all that driving aside, most of my congregation lives within 30 minutes of me. Though we are spread out now, and to an extent, always will be, we are working toward gathering together and have another family moving to the area from afar, helping to make a central hub of this regional church.

We are thankful for the support of the General Church as we work toward financial stability and self-sufficiency. The funds we have received have done a lot to serve the uses of this church and there are still a lot of uses being discovered and fostered.

If you are ever passing through the Kansas City area, please consider visiting us, Missouri loves company.

BRITISH ACADEMY SUMMER SCHOOL 2024

Be Still and Know

Ann Buss

British Academy Summer School, held as usual at Purley Chase Centre, brought together an unusually mature, fun, affirmative and engaged group of young people. We had 41 students, nine of whom were European, and the rest

from different parts of America.

Our theme this year was *Be Still and Know that I Am God*, a wonderful theme which perhaps balanced out all the whirl of activity and play and sport and outings which these youngsters love so much. Our ministers addressed this theme using a range of stories from the Word in our morning chapels and evening vespers services.

This year's headmaster was our pastor, the **Rev. Erik Buss**. He invited the **Rev. David Roth** of Colorado, and the **Rev. Scott Frazier** of Bryn Athyn to be on staff and they greatly enriched our two weeks. David has come many times, but it was a first visit for Scott and three of his children. It was also a first time for David's two teenaged daughters.

In addition, we were ably supported by our regulars – the devoted staff who come each year: the **Rev Grant and Sarah Odhner, Doug Reuter, Michaela Boyesen, Lysandra de Padua** and **Theo Kurkov**. As usual we also owe a debt to **Gweirydd Williams** and **Philly Agrizzi Louzada**, who popped in to assist with the Olympics (Philly), and the trip to London (Gweirydd) which follows the close of BASS. I was also able to assist and enjoyed creating a replica, along with some students, of the famous painting about God entitled, *The Sun*, by Edvard Munch.

With this talented team of teachers, the young people explored such topics as: Prayer, Spiritual Awareness, Personal Authenticity, Relationships, Themes in Scripture, and many more. The staff was delighted with the number of thoughtful questions and comments they got from students. Very few needed to be nudged to put their phones away, which was lovely.

We had two splendid outings, one to Warwick Castle and town, and the following week, another to Stoneleigh Abbey, followed by a stop at Leamington Spa.

It seemed that every afternoon's free time and all the evenings had a host of activities. There was the usual flashlight freeze tag, football, badminton, ping pong, Werewolf, chess, cards and people making up songs on the piano. Two brave young men led us in evening vespers, which is something we always love to see.

One of our biggest events was the Gala and the theme was 1920s Old Money. We put fancy flower arrangements on the tables and sprinkled fake dollar bills and glitz around the room. Everyone had a chance to dress up, or at least borrow a bow tie, and use some of the dance moves they'd learned out on the grass. Profound thank-you's to everyone for their assistance and to the young people for their sense of fun and their openness to New Church ideals.



**SCENES FROM LAST YEAR'S CHRISTMAS TABLEAUX
IN THE BRYN ATHYN CATHEDRAL**



ORDINATIONS AND BAPTISMS IN SOUTH AFRICA



The ordinations of the Revs. Patrick Mbali and Mandla Stole in Buccleuch, South Africa, with the Rt. Rev. Bradley Heinrichs officiating.



The Rev. Patrick Mbali with his wife, Noti



The baptism of Maya Bayede, with her mother, Nombuso Dhladhla, and Bishop Heinrichs



The baptism of Nalenhle Yamihle, with her father, Nomkosi Nhlapo, mother, Mlungisi, and Bishop Heinrichs



Bishop Heinrichs officiating at the ordination of the Revs. Mandla Stole and Patrick Mbali

Annual Report of the Secretary of the General Church of the New Jerusalem

Anita F. Halterman

Between July 1, 2023, and June 30, 2024, 52 new members were received into the General Church, and nine members resigned. During the year, the Secretary's office received notice of the deaths of 41 members.

| | |
|--------------------------|-------|
| Membership July 1, 2023 | 5,369 |
| New Members | 52 |
| Resignations | 9 |
| Deceased Members | 41 |
| Membership June 30, 2024 | 5,371 |

GENERAL CHURCH OF THE NEW JERUSALEM

NEW MEMBERS

AUSTRALIA

Harris, Haly Elise

BRAZIL

Villanueva, Johny Antonio
Zavalaga

CANADA

MacFarlane, Theresa Lynn
Shrestha, Bina

CÔTE d'IVOIRE

Agnes, Corneille

SOUTH AFRICA

Cockerell, Angela
Mlobothi, Vincent Sonwabo

UNITED KINGDOM

Chen, Haochuan
Morgan, Muriel Monique
Morgan, Paul

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Arizona
Bailey, Peggy Mary
Brown, Sierra Mercedes
Yapo, Achi Evariste

California

Scott, Barbara Beals

Colorado

Mayer, Matthew

Florida

Fleming, L. Deanne

Maryland

Roscoe, Gretchen Amy
Soley, Efui Kossi
Sweeney, Brenna L.

Michigan

Jones, Gleice Oliveira
Smith, Renee N.

Pennsylvania

Austin, Angus
Chaves, Matheus Synnestvedt
Cotton, Peter Keith
Cranch, Benjamin Bradley
Cronlund, M. Bruce
Cronlund, Molly Colleen
Cronlund, Rachel
Glenn, Anne Grace
Good, Brianne Glenn
Hale, Harper
Holmes, Blake
Hyatt, Jason
King, Freya Mildred
Machado, Frank Covas
Machado, Helca De Melo
McCurdy, Blake
McCurdy, Kaitlin Brock
McFall, Levi
Nelson, Maxwell
Rhodes, Edmund Pitcairn
Rogers, Colin James
Roth, Gregory Adam
Schorran, Garrett Vaughn
Sidella, Richard Charles
Sidella, Yvonne Delois
Smith, Daric
Stephens, Mark
Williams, Rafe

Virginia

Bradley, Evan

Wisconsin

West, Timothy Hugh

DEATHS

Appleton, Dorothy Mary, April 8,
2024, of Harwich, United Kingdom. 98

Baltazar, Lydia Somonte, September
13, 2023, of San Diego, California. 85

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

Bellinger, Morven Mary Rennie,
July 13, 2023, of Coniston, Ontario,
Canada. 59

Blair, Jane Weed, December 5, 2023,
of Valencia, Pennsylvania. 95

Blair, Robert Horner, February 27,
2024, of Valencia, Pennsylvania. 98

Bochneak, Greta Echols, May 20,
2024, of Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania. 88

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

Dristy, Margaret Maria Rucki,
March 1, 2024, of Delray Beach,
Florida. 89

Fiske, Marian, December 23, 2023,
of Glenview, Illinois. 95

Fornander, Maj, November 28, 2023, of Jonkoping, Sweden. 88

Fors, Gayle Katherine Jeronimus, June 21, 2024, of Kennett Square, Pennsylvania. 86

Goerwitz, Richard Leonard Jr., October 15, 2023, of Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania. 90

Graham, Leone Asplundh, November 14, 2023 of Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania. 89

Grubb, David Jr., October 23, 2023, of Cardiff, California. 83

Heinrichs, Rev. Daniel Winthrop, November 9, 2023, of Boynton Beach, Florida, 94

Hendricks, Merle Elizabeth Robinson, March 11, 2024, of Penticton, British Columbia, Canada. 92

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

Hunsaker, Robert Burns Jr., December 15, 2023, of Kempton, Pennsylvania. 94

Hyatt, Wynne Sumner, November 16, 2023, of Glenn Dale, Maryland. 89

Jeffries, Dorothy, October 11, 2023, of La Conner, Washington. 98

Karallus, Janet McClarren, October 2, 2023, of Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania. 89

Kirsten, June Kelly Barnes, June 1, 2024, of Padstow Heights, New South Wales, Australia. 97

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

Lehman, Katherine Doering, November 22, 2023, of Pottstown, Pennsylvania. 85

Maciaczyk, Mario John, July 11, 2023, of Kitchener, Ontario, Canada. 85

Parker, Cecil John, January 21, 2024, of Guelph, Ontario, Canada. 91

Parker, Sylvia Dorothy, December 2, 2023, of Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania. 88

Pellani, Sandra Lois Rogers, December 10, 2023, of Feasterville, Pennsylvania. 70

Pitcairn, Peggy Jean Bailey, May 24, 2024, of Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania. 65

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

Rotella, March Mitchell, April 2, 2024, of Carlisle, Pennsylvania. 49

Sandstrom, Alfred Daniel, July
24, 2023, of Line Lexington,
Pennsylvania. 83

Simonetti, Paul John, September 24,
2023, of Langhorne, Pennsylvania, 89

Smith, Audrey Merrell, April 26,
2024, of Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania. 95

Smith, June Marie, April 10, 2024, of
Lansdale, Pennsylvania. 92

Smith, Philip Stanley Graham,
August 10, 2023, of Bryn Athyn.
Pennsylvania, 90

Smith, Robert Alan, January 16,
2024, of Glenview, Illinois. 87

Stewart, Murielle Fidele Mary
Plouffe, November 28, 2023, of
Kitchener, Ontario, Canada. 74

Walker, John Alan, August 6, 2023,
of Rosseau, Ontario, Canada. 69

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

RESIGNATIONS

Austin, Kelly
Clark, Rebecca A.
Hyatt, Garry
Reuter, Jason
Woofenden, Kelly
Name Withheld by Request, 4

Directory

GENERAL CHURCH OF THE NEW JERUSALEM 2024-2025

OFFICIALS

Bishop: The Rt. Rev. Peter M. Buss Jr.

Assistant Bishops: The Rt. Revs. Bradley D. Heinrichs
and David H. Lindrooth

Secretary: Mrs. Anita F. Halterman

GENERAL CHURCH OF THE NEW JERUSALEM (A Corporation of Pennsylvania)

OFFICERS OF THE CORPORATION

President: The Rt. Rev. Peter M. Buss Jr.

Vice Presidents: The Rt. Revs. Bradley D. Heinrichs and David H. Lindrooth

Secretary: Mrs. Rene H. Johnson

Executive Director: Mr. David O. Frazier

BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE CORPORATION

Annette Baltz, Darren Bau-Madsen, John Berridge, Craig Bostock, Beth Brock, Rhett Brown, Erin Busby, Greg Clay, Jesse Cole, Charles Ebert, Stephen Elphick, Charlotte Gyllenhaal, Kirk Hasen, Grant Heinrichs, Robert Heinrichs, Barbara Horigan, Keith Hyatt, Rene Johnson, Ethan King, Catherine McQueen, Kelly Niall, Erik Odhner, Torrance Pitcairn, David Radcliffe, Brynna Carswell Smith, Shawn Synnestvedt, James Uber, Wayne Wadsworth, Tanya Woker

Ex-officio Members: The Rt. Rev. Peter M. Buss Jr.

The Rt. Rev. Bradley D. Heinrichs

The Rt. Rev. David H. Lindrooth

Mr. David O. Frazier

BISHOPS



- **Buss, Peter Martin Jr.** Ordained June 6, 1993; 2nd degree June 18, 1995; 3rd degree June 9, 2013. Serves as Executive Bishop of the General Church, General Pastor of the General Church, Chancellor of the Academy of the New Church, President of the General Church in Canada, and President of the General Church International, Incorporated. Address: PO Box 743, Bryn Athyn, PA 19009



- **Heinrichs, Bradley Daniel.** Ordained May 23, 1999; 2nd degree November 19, 2000; 3rd degree January 13, 2019. Serves as Assistant Bishop of the General Church, Vice President of the General Church International, Incorporated, President of the General Church in South Africa, and Head of the General Church Education Department. Address: PO Box 743, Bryn Athyn, PA 19009



- **Lindrooth, David Hutchinson.** Ordained June 10, 1990; 2nd degree April 19, 1992; 3rd degree January 20, 2019. Serves as Assistant Bishop of the General Church, Vice President of the General Church International, Incorporated, and Head of the General Church Outreach Department. Address: PO Box 743, Bryn Athyn, PA 19009

PASTORS



- **Acton, Elmo Kenneth.** Ordained May 28, 2017; 2nd degree December 2, 2019. Serves as Assistant Pastor of the Glenview Society. Address: 74 Park Drive, Glenview, IL 60025

Aggro, Hennock. Ordained July 13, 2008; 2nd degree July 4, 2010. Serves as Assistant Pastor for the Asakraka New Church. Address: The New Church, PO Box AS 10, Asakraka-Kwahu, E/R, Ghana



- **Agnes, Sylvain Apoh.** Ordained May 23, 2004; 2nd degree June 25, 2006. Serves as National Pastor of the General Church in the Ivory Coast, President of and Instructor in Theology at the New Jerusalem Theological Institute in Abidjan, and Senior Pastor of the Sinai Chapel, Bobby. Address: Grand Bassam, Côte d'Ivoire

Aka, Honoré Amahin. Ordained July 11, 2010; 2nd degree August 12, 2012. Serves as Pastor of the Bouake Group in Côte d'Ivoire. Address: 01 BP 12161, Abidjan 01, Côte d'Ivoire

Akotey, Edward. Ordained July 4, 2010; 2nd degree October 21, 2012. Serves as Pastor of the Nteso Group of the New Church in Nteso, Ghana. Address: PO, Box 4, Nteso-Kwahu, E/R Ghana



- **Alden, Kenneth James.** Ordained June 7, 1980; 2nd degree May 16, 1982. Serves as a translator for the General Church and curriculum consultant for General Church Education. Address: PO Box 743, Bryn Athyn, PA 19009



- **Allais, Mark Barry.** Ordained May 24, 2009; 2nd degree November 21, 2010. Serves as Pastor of Carmel Church in Kitchener. Address: 40 Chapel Hill Drive, Kitchener, ON N2R 1N2, Canada

Amoako, Kwadwo Adu. Ordained July 13, 2008; 2nd degree July 4, 2010. Serves as Pastor of Pankrono-Kumasi New Church in Kumasi, Ghana. Address: PO Box RY 143, Railways, Kumasi-Ashanti, Ghana

Ampem-Darko, Israel Gyan. Ordained July 13, 2008; 2nd degree July 4, 2010. Serves as Assistant to the Pastor of the Asakraka New Church. Address: The New Church, PO Box AS 10, Asakraka-Kwahu, E/R, Ghana



- **Appelgren, Göran Reinhold.** Ordained June 7, 1992; 2nd degree July 3, 1994. Serves as Pastor of the Stockholm Society and Visiting Pastor to Copenhagen, Denmark; Regional Pastor for Europe and India. Address: Tegnérslunden 7, 111 61 Stockholm, Sweden

Assiobo, Yaovi Kouglo Leopold. Ordained April 9, 2017; 2nd degree January 26, 2020. Serves as Pastor, Chapelle le Puits de Jacob, Vogan, Togo. Address: 06 B.P. 61202 Lome 06, Lome, Togo



— **Atta, Jean Aime.** Ordained May 27, 2012; 2nd degree September 21, 2014. Serves as Pastor of The New Church of Phoenix, and Visiting Pastor, Western US Regional Pastor. Secretary of the Council of the Clergy. Address: 5631 Shea Boulevard, Scottsdale, AZ 85254

Ayi, Segno-Kodjo. Ordained May 27, 2001; 2nd degree July 20, 2008. Serves as National Pastor for the Church in Togo, and Pastor in Togoville. Address: La Nouvelle Eglise du Togo, B.P. 61202, Tomé, Togo



— **Bab, Moise O.** Ordained August 25, 2013; 2nd degree August 9, 2015. Serves as Pastor of the Yamoussoukro congregation, Côte d'Ivoire. Address: BP 1574 Yamoussoukro, Côte d'Ivoire



— **Barber, Christopher Augustus.** Ordained May 26, 2013; 2nd degree October 17, 2014. Serves as an Instructor of Religion in the Academy of the New Church Secondary Schools in Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania. Address: PO Box 707, Bryn Athyn, PA 19009



— **Beirith, Eduardo.** Ordained August 16, 2012; 2nd degree October 16, 2015. Serves as Pastor of the New Church Group in Curitiba, Parana, Brazil. Address: Nestor de Castro 223, Loja 2 Centro, Curitiba, PR 80.020-120, Brazil



— **Beiswenger, Todd Jeffrey.** Ordained May 22, 2011; 2nd degree January 19, 2014. Serves as Pastor of Olivet Church in Toronto, Ontario, Canada. Address: 279 Burnhamthorpe Road, Etobicoke, ON M9B 1Z6, Canada, beginning January 2025

Beugre, Étienne Mogue. Ordained April 2, 2017; 2nd degree August 11, 2019. Serves as Acting Pastor N'dotre Abobo General Church Group, Côte d'Ivoire. Address: 01 BP 12161 Abidjan 01, Côte d'Ivoire



— **Blair, Charles Edmund.** Ordained May 28, 2006; 2nd degree April 27, 2007. Serves as Pastor of NewChurch Live in Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania. Address: PO Box 716, Bryn Athyn, PA 19009



— **Borketey-Kwaku, Jacob Borteye.** Ordained, May 18, 2003; 2nd degree July 13, 2008. Serves as Pastor of Nungua New Church, Ghana. Address: PO Box TNE 1278, Teshie-Nungua Estates, Accra, Ghana



— **Buick, Brett Dunbar.** Ordained May 31, 2015; 2nd degree November 13, 2016. Serves as Pastor of the Kempton Society. Address: 583 Hawk Mountain Road, Kempton, PA 19529



— **Buss, Erik James.** Ordained June 10, 1990; 2nd degree September 13, 1992. Serves as National Pastor for the United Kingdom and Pastor for Colchester New Church, Colchester, Essex, England. Address: 175-181 Maldon Road, Colchester, Essex C03 3BL, United Kingdom



— **Buss, Jared James.** Ordained May 31, 2015; 2nd degree October 23, 2016. Serves as Pastor of the Pittsburgh New Church, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Address: 299 Le Roi Road, Pittsburgh, PA 15208



— **Carswell, Eric Hugh.** Ordained June 10, 1979; 2nd degree February 22, 1981. Serves as President of Bryn Athyn College of the New Church. Address: 2945 College Drive, PO Box 717, Bryn Athyn, PA 19009



— **Cole, Nathan Field.** Ordained January 11, 2009; 2nd degree August 22, 2010. Serves as Visiting Pastor to circles and groups within the United States. Address: (Kempton New Church) 583 Hawk Mountain Road, Kempton, PA 19529



- **Cole, Stephen Dandridge.** Ordained June 19, 1977; 2nd degree October 15, 1978. Serves as Assistant Professor of Religion and Philosophy at Bryn Athyn College of the New Church and Theology at Bryn Athyn College of the New Church Theological School. Address: PO Box 717, Bryn Athyn, PA 19009



- **Cowley, Michael Keith.** Ordained June 13, 1982; 2nd degree May 13, 1984. Serves as Visiting Pastor to Western Canada and other locations.

Dakouri, Evariste Daligou. Ordained July 11, 2010; 2nd degree August 12, 2012. Serves as Pastor of the Jacquerville New Church Group in Côte d'Ivoire. Address: 21 BP 4352, Abidjan 21, Côte d'Ivoire



- **Dayoro, Aime Okpo. Ord**
ained August 25, 2013; 2nd degree August 9, 2015. Serves as Pastor of Ayama General Church Group. Address: 01 BP 12161, Abidjan 01, Côte d'Ivoire

Devassy, Peter Naduvilaveettil. Ordained October 23, 2011; 2nd degree October 25, 2015. Serves as Translator. Address: The New Church, Ompathungal Canal Road, Mattathur, PO, Trissur, Kerala, India



- **Dibb, Andrew Malcolm Thomas.** Ordained June 6, 1984; 2nd degree May 18, 1986. Serves as Dean of Bryn Athyn College of the New Church Theological School. Address: PO Box 717, Bryn Athyn, PA 19009

Doukourou, Moise Gogable. Ordained July 11, 2010; 2nd degree August 12, 2012. Serves as Pastor of the Divo New Church congregation.



- **Dube, Jerome Bhekuyise.** Ordained June 5, 2005; 2nd degree November 11, 2007. Serves as Pastor of the Clermont and Westville Societies in South Africa and Regional Vice President of the South African Corporation. Address: Private Box 1164, New Germany 3620, South Africa



- **Dziekpor, George Genya.** Ordained July 13, 2008; 2nd degree July 4, 2010. Serves as Pastor of the Abelenkpe Group in Accra, Ghana, and Administrator and Instructor of the West Africa New Church Theological Institute. Address: PO Box CS 9277, C7, Tema, Ghana

Ebute-Metta, Kuroakegha. Ordained November 11, 2018; 2nd Degree September 11, 2022. Serves as Pastor of Bayelsa State, Nigeria Group, and National Pastor of Nigeria. Address: PO Box 861, Yenagoa, Bayelsa State, Nigeria, 560001



- **Elphick, Derek Peter.** Ordained June 6, 1993; 2nd degree May 22, 1994. Serves as Pastor of Bryn Athyn Church, Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania. Address: PO Box 277, Bryn Athyn, PA 19009



- **Eshun, Ekow Essiedu.** Ordained May 27, 2007; 2nd degree July 13, 2008. Serves as Pastor of the Tema, and Madina Circles in Ghana, West Africa, and Principal of the Tema New Church School; National Pastor of Ghana. Address: PO Box CS 9299, Community 7, Tema, Ghana

Floyd, Thomas X. Ordained May 31, 2015; 2nd degree June 16, 2019. Serves as Assistant to the Pastor in Stockholm and is Visiting Pastor in Scandinavia. Address: Bakkegata 8A, Åsgårdstrand 3179, Norway



- **Frazier, Glenn "Mac" McKinley.** Ordained May 28, 2006; 2nd degree June 22, 2008. Serves as Pastor of the Washington New Church, Mitchellville, Maryland. Address: 11914 Chantilly Lane, Mitchellville, MD 20721



- **Frazier, Pearse McCollum.** Ordained May 22, 2011; 2nd degree September 30, 2012. Serves as Assistant Director of General Church Outreach. Address: PO Box 743, Bryn Athyn, PA 19009



- **Frazier, Scott Innes.** Ordained May 28, 2006; 2nd degree May 11, 2008. Serves as Assistant Professor of Religion and Latin and Chair of the Religion Department at Bryn

Athyn College of the New Church. Address: PO Box 717, Bryn Athyn, PA 19009



- **Genzlinger, Matthew Laird.** Ordained May 27, 2001; 2nd degree August 10, 2003. Serves as Instructor at Bryn Athyn College of the New Church. Address: PO Box 707, Bryn Athyn, PA 19009



- **Gladish, Nathan Donald.** Ordained June 13, 1982; 2nd degree November 6, 1983. Small Group Leadership Coordinator for General Church Outreach, Visiting Minister. Address: PO Box 743, Bryn Athyn, PA 19009



- **Glenn, Coleman Starkey.** Ordained May 24, 2009; 2nd degree October 3, 2010. Serves as Assistant to the Pastor of Bryn Athyn Church. Address: PO Box 277, Bryn Athyn, PA, 19009



- **Glenn, Joel Christian.** Ordained May 31, 2015; 2nd degree September 25, 2016. Serves as Pastor of New Church Westville and School Pastor of Kainon School in Westville, South Africa. Address: 36 Perth Road, Westville, KwaZulu-Natal 3630, South Africa



- **Glenn, Thane Powell.** Ordained May 24, 2009; 2nd degree June 6, 2010. Serves as Associate Professor of Religion and English at Bryn Athyn College of the New Church. Address: PO Box 717, Bryn Athyn, PA 19009



- **Gunther, Steven Paul.** Ordained May 29, 2022; 2nd degree March 3, 2024. Serves as Acting Pastor of the Oak Arbor Society in Rochester, Michigan. Address: 945 Oak Arbor Circle West, Rochester, MI 48306

Gnagne, Gedeon G. Ordained August 25, 2013; 2nd degree, August 9, 2015. Serves as Pastor of Sikensi, Gomon, and Bakanu Groups. Address: 01 BP 12-161, Abidjan 01, Côte d'Ivoire

Gyamfi, Martin Kofi. Ordained June 9, 1991; 2nd degree August 28, 1994. Serves as full time Regional Pastor for

West Africa. Address: The New Church, PO Box AS 10, Asakraka-Kwahu, E/R, Ghana



— **Halterman, Barry Childs.** Ordained June 5, 1994; 2nd degree September 8, 1996. Teaches and serves as Head of the Religion Department in the Academy of the New Church Secondary Schools and Chaplain for the Secondary Schools. Address: PO Box 707, Bryn Athyn, PA 19009



— **Heinrichs, Calvin Bradley.** Ordained May 29, 2022, 2nd degree January 21, 2024. Serves as Pastor of Kansas City Circle. Address: 5151 SE Grindstone Road, Cameron, Missouri 64429

Jin, Yong Jon. Ordained June 5, 1994; 2nd degree June 16, 1996. Serves as Pastor of the Philadelphia Korean New Church, and responsible for outreach to the Korean-speaking community in the United States; Regional Pastor for Asia; Dean of the Korean New Church Theological School. Address: 537 Anne Street, Huntingdon Valley, PA 19006

Jung, Young Ho. Ordained April 29, 2012; 2nd degree April 26, 2014. Address: 104 -301 Han Shin Apt, 131 Jeaki-Ro Dongdeamoon-Gu. Seoul, Republic of Korea

Kim, Seoung Gil. Ordained April 29, 2012; 2nd degree April 30, 2016. Serves as Pastor of Kangbuk New Church in Seoul, South Korea. Address: In Su Dong 391-15, Suyu 5-dong, Kangbuk-Gu, Seoul, Republic of Korea 142-884

Lasme, Mellon René Agnès. Ordained, April 2, 2017; 2nd degree August 11, 2019. Serves as Pastor of Bassam New Church Group in Côte d'Ivoire, and Instructor in Theology at the New Jerusalem Theological school in Bassam. Address: 01 bp 12161 Abidjan 01, Côte d'Ivoire



— **Lee, Jong-Ui.** Ordained May 31, 1998; 2nd degree June 17, 2001. Serves as Pastor of the Atlanta Society in Alpharetta, Georgia. Address: 2780 Bethany Bend, Alpharetta, GA 30004

Lee, Soon Choel. Ordained April 29, 2012; 2nd degree April 26, 2014. Serves as National Pastor for South Korea. Address: 1st Floor Seoul New Church, 11 Nokburn-Ro, Eunpyung-Gu, Seoul, Republic of Korea



— **Lompo, Samuel Oumpougila.** Ordained August 25, 2013; 2nd degree August 16, 2015. Serves as National Pastor for Burkina Faso, and Pastor of the New Church of Burkina Faso, Ouagadougou. Address: 11 BP 412 Ouagadougou CMS 11, Burkina Faso



— **Lumsden, Derrick Alan Mark.** Ordained May 25, 2008; 2nd degree May 16, 2010. Serves as Associate Pastor of the Kempton New Church. Address: 583 Hawk Mountain Road, Kempton, PA 19529

Mangoua, Cyprien Kouamé. Ordained July 11, 2010; 2nd degree August 12, 2012. Serves as Pastor of the Cité Verte General Church Group in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, and District Pastor of Abidjan. Address: 01 BP 12161, Abidjan 01, Côte d'Ivoire



— **Matsumoto, Shiro.** Ordained April 30, 2012; 2nd degree April 27, 2014. Serves as National Pastor of Japan. Address: 1-206, Inagedai-House, 7-8, Inagedai-cho, Inage-ward, Chiba-shi, 263-0032 Japan



— **Mbali, Patrick Vikinduku.** Ordained March 3, 2019. 2nd Degree September 22, 2024. Serves as Pastor of the Diepkloof and Buccleuch congregations in South Africa. Address: 41 Demper Street, Westwood Gardens, Lindhaven 1724, South Africa



— **McCardell, Ethan Derek.** Ordained May 25, 2003; 2nd degree March 21, 2004. Serves as Pastor of Sunrise Chapel in Tucson, Arizona. Address: 8421 East Wrightstown Road, Tucson, AZ 85715

Mkhize, Sibusiso Protus. Ordained May 25, 2003; 2nd degree November 11, 2007. Serves as Pastor of the Impaphala Society in South Africa; Visiting Pastor to

Empangeni. Address: H602 Umgankla Road, Kwa Mashu 4360, South Africa



— **Nicolier, Alain.** Ordained May 31, 1979; 2nd degree September 16, 1984. Address: Conte' 09420 Rimont, France



— **Odhner, Grant Hugo.** Ordained June 7, 1981; 2nd degree, May 9, 1982. Serves as Pastor of Michael Church in London, England. Address: 131 Burton Road, Stockwell, London, SW9 6TG, United Kingdom



— **Odhner, John Llewellyn.** Ordained June 7, 1980; 2nd degree November 22, 1981. Serves as Assistant to the Pastor of Bryn Athyn Church in Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania, and works on the Office of Outreach Internet Project. Address: PO Box 277, Bryn Athyn, PA 19009



— **Pendleton, Mark Dandridge.** Ordained June 9, 1991; 2nd degree May 29, 1994. Serves as Pastor of the Glenview New Church, and President of the Midwestern Academy of the New Church. Regional Pastor for Midwest United States. Address: 74 Park Drive, Glenview, IL 60025



— **Perry, Charles Mark.** Ordained June 9, 1991; 2nd degree June 19, 1993. Serves as Pastor of the San Diego Society in San Diego, California; visits Palo Alto, California. Address: 2701 Meadowlark Drive, San Diego, CA 92123



— **Roth, David Christopher.** Ordained June 9, 1991; 2nd degree October 17, 1993. Serves as Pastor of the New Church of Boulder Valley in Boulder, Colorado, and Regional Pastor for the Western United States. Address: 1370 Forest Park Circle, Lafayette, CO 80026



— **Sandstrom, Ryan Matthew.** Ordained May 22, 2011; 2nd degree January 13, 2013. Serves as Pastor of Ivyland New Church in Ivyland, Pennsylvania. Address: 851 W. Bristol Road, Ivyland, PA 18974



- **Schnarr, Grant Ronald.** Ordained June 12, 1983; 2nd degree October 7, 1984. Serves as Instructor of Theology and Chaplain at Bryn Athyn College of the New Church, Regional Pastor for NewChurch Live. Address: PO Box 717, Bryn Athyn, PA 19009



- **Schorran, Justin Eric.** Ordained June 13, 2021; 2nd degree May 7, 2023. Serves as Pastor of Boynton Beach New Church in Boynton Beach, Florida. Address: 10621 El Clair Ranch Road, Boynton Beach, FL 33437

Segbenu, John Kwaku. Ordained July 13, 2008; 2nd degree July 4, 2010. Serves as Pastor of Ningokope New Church. Address: PO Box 325, Madina-Accra, Ghana



- **Silverman, Ray.** Ordained June 6, 1984; 2nd degree June 19, 1985. Serves as Professor of Religion and English in Bryn Athyn College of the New Church. Address: PO Box 717, Bryn Athyn, PA 19009



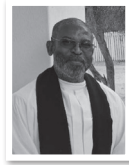
- **Smith, Brian Donald.** Ordained May 30, 2010; 2nd degree October 30, 2011. Serves as Assistant Pastor of the Washington New Church and Principal of the Washington New Church School. Address: 11914 Chantilly Lane, Mitchellville, MD 20721



- **Smith, Jeffrey O.** Ordained May 26, 2018; 2nd degree August 15, 2021. Serves as Assistant to the Pastor of Bryn Athyn Church. Address: PO Box 277, Bryn Athyn, PA 19009



- **Smith, Malcolm Glenn.** Ordained May 30, 2010; 2nd degree February 26, 2012. Serves as Assistant Pastor of Bryn Athyn Church, Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania. Address: PO Box 277, Bryn Athyn, PA 19009



- **Stole, Mandla.** Ordained March 4, 2018. 2nd degree September 22, 2024. Serves as Pastor of the Alex and Buccleuch Congregations, South Africa, and as Executive Vice President of the South African Corporation. Address: 392 E. Bank Avenue, Alexandra 2014, South Africa

Villanueva, Johnny Antônio Zavalaga. Ordained October 28, 2008; 2nd degree August 19, 2012. Serves as Pastor of Campo Grande and Fatima. Address: Rua Caldas 242, Campo Grande, Rio de Janeiro, RJ, Brazil 23-081-080

Yang, Dong Y. Ordained April 30, 2016; 2nd degree October 30, 2022. Serves as Pastor of Seoul New Church. Address: A dong 202 ho, 65-13, Songpobaeksong-gil, Ilsanseo-gu, Goyang-si, Gyeonggi-do, Republic of Korea 10212

Yang, HyunJin. Ordained May 29, 2022; 2nd Degree September 22, 2024. Serves as Pastor of the Hurstville New Church beginning January 2025. Address: 26 Dudley Street, Penshurst, New South Wales 2222, Australia



— **Zattey-Agboga, Godwin.** Ordained May 27, 2007; 2nd degree July 13, 2008. Serves as Pastor of New Salem New Church in Ho, Ghana. Address: PO Box HP 396, Ho, Volta-Region, Ghana

Timothy . Ordained May 1, 2013; 2nd degree April 30, 2016. Serves as a New Church Pastor for China. Address: Contact Rev.Yong Jin

MINISTERS in the First Degree

Ahotosse, Martin Cokou. Ordained April 14, 2019. Serves as Acting Pastor in Hevie, Benin. Address: 03 BP 3850, Cotonou, Benin

Choe, Mahn Hoe. Ordained April 29, 2012. Serves as Acting Pastor of Ahnseong Uri New Church in Ahnseong, South Korea. Address: Woorim Apt 105-806 Jinsa-Ri, Kongdo-Eup, Kyeong-ki, Ahnseong-Si 456-713, Republic of Korea

da Silva, Marcos Marques. Ordained July 9, 2023. Serves as Assistant to the Pastor of Campo Grande and Fatima Societies, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Address: Rua Serraria Lote 3

Quadra 2, Campo Grande, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 23-071-010

Nakato, Sachio. Ordained November 6, 2022. Assists in Tokyo, Japan.

Park, Jea S. Ordained April 26, 2014. Serves as Minister to the Ham Pyung Chundranamdo Korea. Address: 658 Sanggok-Ri Haebo-Myun, Hampyung-Gun Chunnam – Do, Republic of Korea

Rodrigues, Daniel. Ordained July 7, 2023. Serves as Assistant to the Pastor of Curitaba Circle, Brazil. Address: Rua Maria da Luz Rocha Belao, 392, Xaxim Neighborhood, Curitaba, Parana, Brazil, 81-710-590

Sie, Gabriel Amari. Ordained April 7, 2019. Serves as Pastor of a group in Abidjan. Address: 09 BP 12161, Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire

AUTHORIZED CANDIDATES

Daniel Calvo, Bryn Athyn
Thomas J. Jackson, Bryn Athyn
N'Drin, Rodrigue, Côte d'Ivoire
Hayford, Benjamin Ebo Saah, Ghana
Karikari, Sylvanus Charles, Ghana
Eric Sjödin, Sweden

GENERAL CHURCH MINISTER SERVING A NON-GENERAL CHURCH GROUP



— **Thompson, Howard Arthur.** Ordained May 22, 2011; 2nd degree June 23, 2013. Serves as Pastor of the Roseville Congregation, the New Church of Australasia. Address: 4 Shirley Road, Roseville, NSW 2069, Australia

RETIRED



- **Buss, Peter Martin Sr.** Ordained June 19, 1964; 2nd degree May 16, 1965; 3rd degree June 1, 1986. Bishop Emeritus of the General Church



- **Keith, Brian Walter.** Ordained June 6, 1976; 2nd degree June 4, 1978; 3rd degree October 17, 2004. Bishop Emeritus of the General Church



- **Kline, Thomas Leroy.** Ordained June 10, 1973; 2nd degree June 15, 1975; 3rd degree November 30, 2003. Bishop Emeritus of the General Church

Alden, Glenn Graham. Ordained June 19, 1974; 2nd degree June 6, 1976

Asplundh, Kurt Hyland. Ordained June 6, 1993; 2nd degree April 30, 1995. Teaches Theology part time at Bryn Athyn College and sixth-grade Religion at Bryn Athyn Church School

Bau-Madsen, Arne. Ordained June 6, 1976; 2nd degree June 11, 1978

Bown, Christopher Duncan. Ordained June 18, 1978; 2nd degree December 23, 1979. Serves as Visiting Pastor to various groups in the United States

Burke, William Hanson. Ordained June 7, 1981; 2nd degree August 13, 1983

Cooper, James Pendleton. Ordained June 13, 1982; 2nd degree March 4, 1984. Executive Vice President of the General Church in Canada, Visiting and Regional Pastor in Canada, and Chaplain of the Military Services Committee. Temporarily Serves as Pastor of the Olivet Church in Toronto, Ontario, Canada until January 2025. Darkwah, Simpson Kwabeng. Ordained June 7, 1992; 2nd degree August 28, 1994

Echols, John Clark, Jr. Ordained August 26, 1978; 2nd degree March 30, 1980

Elphick, Frederick Charles. Ordained June 6, 1984; 2nd degree September 23, 1984

Ferrell, Michael Eugene. Ordained June 5, 2005; 2nd degree June 3, 2007

Gladish, Michael David. Ordained June 10, 1973; 2nd degree June 30, 1974. Serves as Regional Pastor of the Southeastern United States

Goodenough, Daniel Webster. Ordained June 19, 1965; 2nd degree December 10, 1967

Heilman, Andrew James. Ordained June 18, 1978; 2nd degree March 8, 1981

Heinrichs, Willard Lewis Davenport. Ordained June 19, 1965; 2nd degree January 26, 1969. Serves as Visiting Pastor of the Central United States

Howard, Geoffrey Horace. Ordained June 19, 1961; 2nd degree June 2, 1963

Koudou, Roger. Ordained July 13, 2008; 2nd degree July 11, 2010. Serves as Pastor of Yopougon group, Côte d'Ivoire.

Larsen, Ottar Trosvik. Ordained June 19, 1974; 2nd degree February 16, 1977

McCurdy, George Daniel. Ordained June 25, 1967; Recognized as a Priest of the New Church in the second degree July 5, 1979; received into the priesthood of the General Church June 9, 1980. Serves as Visiting Pastor of the Harleysville Circle in Harleysville, Pennsylvania, and the Cape Cod Group in Massachusetts. Acts as the General Church's Ecclesiastical Endorsing Agent for Military Chaplains, Civilian Chaplains

Nemitz, Kurt Paul. Ordained June 16, 1963; 2nd degree March 27, 1966. Serves as a translator for the General Church

Nobre, Cristóvão Rabelo. Ordained June 6, 1984; 2nd degree August 25, 1985. Serves as a translator for the General Church

Orthwein, Walter Edward III. Ordained July 22, 1973; Recognized as a priest of the General Church in November, 1976; ordained into the 2nd degree, June 12, 1977

Rogers, Norbert Bruce. Ordained January 12, 1969

Rogers, Prescott Andrew. Ordained January 26, 1986; 2nd degree April 24, 1988. Serves as Pastor of the Charlotte Circle in North Carolina

Rose, Patrick Alan. Ordained June 19, 1975; 2nd degree September 25, 1977
Sakae, Seich. Ordained April 26, 2014

Sandström, Erik Emanuel. Ordained May 23, 1971; 2nd degree May 21, 1972

Schnarr, Philip Bradley. Ordained June 5, 1996; 2nd degree May 31, 1998

Simons, Jeremy Frederick. Ordained June 13, 1982; 2nd degree July 31, 1983. Serves as Visiting Pastor to the Elizabethtown, Pennsylvania, Circle; Spiritual Editor of New Church Life

Smith, Christopher Ronald Jack. Ordained June 19, 1969; 2nd degree May 9, 1971. Serves as Religion teacher for grades 11-12 students in the Kempton Church School

Smith, Lawson Merrell. Ordained June 10, 1979; 2nd degree, February 1, 1981

Synnestvedt, Louis. Ordained June 7, 1980; 2nd degree November 8, 1981.

Yang, Gyu Dae. Ordained into 2nd degree October 21, 2007.

Ministers in Other Careers

Alden, Mark Edward. Ordained June 10, 1979; 2nd degree May 17, 1981

Barnett, Wendel Ryan. Ordained June 7, 1981; 2nd degree June 20, 1982

Bell, Reuben Paul. Ordained May 25, 1997; 2nd degree April 11, 1999

Chapin, Frederick Merle. Ordained June 15, 1986; 2nd degree October 23, 1988

Childs, Robin Waelchli. Ordained June 6, 1984; 2nd degree June 8, 1986

Cowley, Alan Michael. Ordained May 26, 2013; 2nd degree July 13, 2014

Clifford, William Harrison. Ordained June 6, 1976; 2nd degree October 8, 1978

Glenn, Richard. Ordained June 28, 2020

Fitzpatrick, Daniel. Ordained June 6, 1984

Glenn, Robert Amos. Ordained May 28, 2000; 2nd degree June 2, 2002

Hauptmann, Olaf. Ordained May 23, 2004; 2nd degree July 30, 2006

Lewin, Alan. Recognized as Priest in the General Church November 19, 2006. Ordained into the 2nd degree December 2, 2007

DIRECTORY

Kouame, Henry Joel Kouassi. Ordained July 11, 2010; 2nd degree August 12, 2012

Odhner, Calvin Acton. Ordained May 22, 2011; 2nd degree February 17, 2013
aek, Sung-Won. Ordained May 27, 2001

Rose, Jonathan Searle. Ordained May 31, 1987; 2nd degree February 23, 1997. Serves as translator for the Swedenborg Foundation

Schorran, Paul Edward. Ordained June 12, 1983

Walsh, Garry Brian Ordained May 27, 2001; 2nd degree September 8, 2002

Synnestvedt, Judah Edward. Ordained May 26, 2018

Xaba, Langelibalele Abraham (Phila). Ordained August 27, 2006; 2nd degree August 9, 2009

SOCIETIES AND CIRCLES

| <i>Society</i> | <i>Pastor or Minister</i> |
|--|---|
| Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire | Rev. Sylvain Apoh Agnes, Senior Pastor Rev. Moise Bab, Pastor |
| Accra, Ghana | Rev. George G. Dziekpor, Pastor |
| Alexandra, Johannesburg South Africa | Rev. Mandla Stole, Pastor |
| Asakraka, Ghana | Rev. Martin K. Gyamfi, Pastor Rev. Hennock Aggro, Assistant to the Pastor Rev. Israel Ampem-Darko, Assistant to the Pastor |
| Atlanta, Georgia | Rev. Jong Ui Lee, Pastor |
| Boulder, Colorado | Rev. David C. Roth, Pastor |
| Boston, Massachusetts | Rev. Nathan D. Gladish, Visiting Pastor |
| Boynton Beach, Florida | Rev. Justin Schorran, Pastor |
| Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania | Rev. Derek P. Elphick, Pastor Rev. Malcolm G. Smith, Assistant Pastor Rev. Coleman Glenn, Assistant to the Pastor Rev. John L. Odhner, Assistant to the Pastor Rev. Jeffrey O. Smith, Assistant to the Pastor |
| Buccleuch, Johannesburg South Africa | Rev. Mandla Stole, Pastor Rev. Patrick Mbali, Assistant Pastor |
| Clermont, Durban South Africa | Rev. Jerome Bhekiyuse Dube, Pastor |
| Colchester, England | Rev. Erik J. Buss, Pastor |
| Dawson Creek, B.C., Canada | Rev. Michael Cowley Visiting Pastor |
| Detroit, Michigan (Oak Arbor Church) | Rev. Steven P. Gunther, Acting Pastor |
| Diepkloof, Soweto South Africa | Rev. Patrick Mbali, Pastor |
| Freeport, Pennsylvania (Sower's Chapel) | Rev. Chris Bown, Visiting Pastor |
| Glenview, Illinois | Rev. Mark D. Pendleton, Pastor Rev. Elmo K. Acton, Assistant Pastor |
| Hurstville, Australia | Rev. HyunJin Yang, Pastor as of January 1, 2025 |
| Impaphala, South Africa | Rev. S. Protus Mkhize, Pastor |
| Ivyland, Pennsylvania | Rev. Ryan M. Sandström, Pastor |
| Kempton, Pennsylvania | Rev. Brett D. Buick, Pastor Rev. Derrick Lumsden, Associate Pastor |

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|---|--|
| Kitchener, Ontario, Canada (Carmel New Church) | Rev. Mark B. Allais, Pastor |
| Kwa Mashu, Durban South Africa | Rev. Jerome Bhekiyuse Dube, Visiting Pastor |
| London, England (Michael Church) | Rev. Grant H. Odhner, Pastor |
| Mitchellville, Maryland | Rev. Glenn 'Mac' Frazier, Pastor |
| New Church Live Ningokope, Ghana | Rev. Brian D. Smith, Assistant Pastor |
| Pankrono-Kumasi, Ghana | Rev. Charles E. Blair, Pastor |
| Phoenix, Arizona | Rev. John K. Segbenu, Pastor |
| Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania | Rev. Adu Amoako, Pastor |
| Rio de Janeiro, Brazil (Campo Grande, Fatima) | Rev. Jean A. Atta, Pastor |
| San Diego, California | Rev. Jared J. Buss, Pastor |
| Seoul, Korea | Rt. Rev. Bradley D. Heinrichs, Visiting Pastor |
| Stockholm, Sweden | Rev. Johnny A.Z. Villanueva, Pastor |
| Tema, Ghana | Rev. Marcos Marques da Silva, Assistant to the Pastor |
| Toronto, Ontario, Canada (Olivet Church) | Rev. C. Mark Perry, Pastor |
| Tucson, Arizona | Rev. Dong R. Yang, Pastor |
| Westville (Durban) South Africa | Rev. Göran R. Appelgren, Pastor |
| | Rev. Thomas X. Floyd, Assistant to the Pastor |
| | Rev. Ekow E. Eshun, Pastor |
| | Rev. Todd Beiswenger, Pastor beginning January 2025 |
| | Rev. Ethan D. McCardell, Pastor |
| | Rev. Joel C. Glenn, Pastor |
| | Rev. Jerome Bhekuyise Dube, Pastor |

Circle

Cape Town, South Africa
Central Pennsylvania
Charlotte, North Carolina
Chicago, Illinois
Cité Verte, Abidjan
Copenhagen, Denmark
Curitiba, Parana, Brazil

Dome (Taifa), Ghana
Gesco, Abidjan
The Hague, Netherlands
Harleysville, Pennsylvania
Kansas City, Missouri

Visiting and/or Resident Pastor or Minister

Rev. Joel C. Glenn, Visiting Pastor
Rev. Jeremy F. Simons, Visiting Pastor
Rev. Prescott A. Rogers, Pastor
Visiting Pastors
Rev. Cyprien K. Mangoua, Pastor
Rev. Göran R. Appelgren, Visiting Pastor
Rev. Eduardo Beirith, Pastor
Rev. Daniel Rodrigues, Assistant to the Pastor
Rev. Israel Ampem-Darko, Pastor
Rev. Evariste D. Dakouri, Pastor
Rev. Grant H. Odhner, Visiting Pastor
Rev. George D. McCurdy, Visiting Pastor
Rev. Calvin B. Heinrichs, Pastor

| | |
|------------------------------------|--|
| La Crescenta, California | Visiting Pastors |
| Lake Helen, Florida | Rev. Justin Schorran, Visiting Pastors |
| New York City/ | Rev. Jeremy F. Simons, Visiting Pastor |
| Northern New Jersey | |
| Palo Alto, California | Rev. C. Mark Perry, Rev. Jean Atta, Visiting Pastors |
| Perth, Australia | Rev. Yang HyunJin, Visiting Minister |
| Philadelphia New Church | Rev. Yong J. Jin, Pastor |
| (Korean) | |
| Seattle, Washington | Rev. Michael Cowley, Visiting Pastors |
| (Light for Life New Church) | |
| Tokyo, Japan | Rev. Shiro Matsumoto, Pastor |
| Yopougon, Côte d'Ivoire | Rev. Roger Koudou, Pastor |

Note: In addition to Societies and Circles, there are Groups of General Church members in various geographical areas that receive occasional visits from a priest.

Announcements

ORDINATIONS, Second Degree

The affection for interior truth teaches what is in the Word. This is evident from the symbolism of a shepherd as being one who leads and teaches. From this affection a church is a church, and a pastor is a pastor. (Arcana Coelestia 3795)

Mbali, Patrick Vikinduku

At Buccleuch, Sandton, South Africa, September 22, 2024, Rt. Rev. Bradley D. Heinrichs officiating.

Yang, HyunJin

At Hurstville, New South Wales, Australia, September 22, 2024. Rt. Rev. David H. Lindrooth officiating.

Stole, Mandla Charlton

At Buccleuch, Sandton. South Africa, September 22, 2024, Rt. Rev. Bradley D. Heinrichs officiating.

BAPTISMS

Infants are introduced by baptism into the Christian heaven, and angels are there assigned to them to take care of them, by whom they are kept in a state of receiving faith in the Lord. (True Christian Religion 677:5)

Alden, Janet Virginia Kelley

At Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, September 13, 2014, Rev. Jared J. Buss officiating.

Asplundh, Palmer Brynn

At Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania, July 21, 2024 (born July 14, 2015), daughter of Brandon and Trina Palmer Asplundh, Rev. Jeffrey O. Smith officiating.

Anani, David Jean de Dieu

At Abomey-Calavi, Atlantique, Benin, May 28, 2023 (born April 8, 2023), son of Codjo Jean Anani and Françoise Lokossou, Rev. Martin Ahotosse officiating. Delayed report.

Asplundh, Sawyer Shae

At Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania, July 21, 2024 (born March 29, 2018), son of Brandon and Trina Palmer Asplundh, Rev. Jeffrey O. Smith officiating.

Asplundh, Trina Marie Palmer

At Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania, July 21, 2024, Rev. Jeffrey O. Smith officiating.

Asplundh, Willow Elaine

At Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania, July 21, 2024 (born March 15, 2021), daughter of Brandon and Trina Palmer Asplundh, Rev. Jeffrey O. Smith officiating.

Atcho, Fresnelle Fènou

At Abomey-Calavi, Atlantique, Benin, July 2, 2023 (born May 19, 2023), daughter of Koffi Atcho and Akouavi Kodo, Rev. Martin Ahotosse officiating.

Ayankpele, Pereowei Asiagbe

At Yenagoa, Bayelsa, Nigeria, September 8, 2024 (born February 23, 2023), son of Benson and Faith Tokere Ayankpele, Rev. Kuroakegha Ebute-Metta officiating.

Benson, Emeleakpo Glory

At Yenagoa, Bayelsa, Nigeria, September 8, 2024, Rev. Kuroakegha Ebute-Metta officiating.

Björkström, Julius Fredrik Johansson

At Stockholm, Sweden, August 24, 2024 (born August 14, 2020), son of Fredrik Johansson and Rakel Björkström, Rev. Göran R. Appलगren officiating.

Borgsten, Gunnar

At Stockholm, Sweden, September 29, 2024, Rev. Göran R. Appलगren officiating.

Buick, Lachlan Reidar

At Kempton, Pennsylvania, July 7, 2024 (born April 2, 2024), son of Bennett and Alison Cole Buick, Rev. Stephen D. Cole officiating.

Capili, Kian Brylee Baltazar

At San Diego, California, August 17, 2024 (born March 11, 2024), son of Bryan and Angelee Baltazar Capili, Rev. C. Mark Perry officiating.

Coffin Lopez, Adriel Hernan

At Longmont, Colorado, November 24, 2023 (born May 29, 2023), son of Brendan and Diana Coffin Lopez, Rev. David C. Roth officiating. Delayed report.

Cooper, Gage River

At Kempton, Pennsylvania, August 18, 2024 (born May 29, 2024), son of Bryan and Carla Schorran Cooper, Rev. Paul E. Schorran officiating.

Cotterill, Christy

At Westville, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, July 28, 2024, Rev. Joel C. Glenn officiating.

D'Alonzo, Peyton Kathleen

At Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania, August 11, 2024 (born April 3, 2024), daughter of Adam and Amy Vandergrift D'Alonzo, Rev. Charles E. Blair officiating.

Daniel, Didi Benjamin

At Yenagoa, Bayelsa, Nigeria, September 8, 2024, Rev. Kuroakegha Ebute-Metta officiating.

Dhladhla, Maya Bayede

At Buccleuch, Sandton, South Africa, September 22, 2024 (born August 28, 2023), daughter of Nkhanedzeni Rankhododo and Nombuso Dhladhla, Rt. Rev. Bradley D. Heinrichs officiating.

Edah, Miracle

At Abomey-Calavi, Atlantique, Benin, March 10, 2024 (born January 10, 2024), daughter of Paulin Edah and Fatima Akpo, Rev. Martin Ahotosse officiating.

Gilmore, Tahlia Joyce

At San Diego, California, September 21, 2024 (born March 15, 2024), daughter of Tristen and Maihna Venice Gilmore, Rev. C. Mark Perry officiating.

Glenn, Beatrice Tamar

At Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania, September 8, 2024 (born August 23, 2024), daughter of Coleman and Anne Grace Hurd Glenn, Rev. Malcolm G. Smith officiating.

Jeremiah, Maxwell Oluem

At Yenagoa, Bayelsa, Nigeria, September 8, 2024, Rev. Kuroakegha Ebute-Metta officiating.

King, Mako Murielle

At Kempton, Pennsylvania, August 18, 2024 (born August 2, 2024), daughter of Hayden and Reyana Heinrichs King, Rt. Rev. Bradley D. Heinrichs officiating.

Lykins, Callie Christeen

At Rochester, Michigan, August 11, 2024 (born October 5, 2023), daughter of Robert and Catherine Steen Lykins, Rev. Steven P. Gunther officiating.

Mergen, Diana Marie D'Amato

At Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania, September 8, 2024, Rev. John L. Odhner officiating.

Nhlapo, Nalenhle Yamihle

At Buccleuch, Sandton, South Africa, September 22, 2024 (born January 15, 2024), daughter of Mlungisi and Nomkhosi Lingile Nhlapo, Rt. Rev. Bradley H. Heinrichs officiating.

Samuel Michael, Baraziba Zion

At Yenagoa, Bayelsa, Nigeria, September 8, 2024 (born March 14, 2022), son of Samuel and Princess Dorgu Samuel Michael, Rev. Kuroakegha Ebute-Metta officiating.

Smith, Lachlan Dale

At Thornhurst Township, Pennsylvania, August 12, 2024 (born July 11, 2024), son of Robert and Lauren Anderson Smith, Rev. Malcolm G. Smith officiating.

Synnestvedt, Noah Ember

At Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania, September 8, 2024 (born June 10, 2024), son of Gregory and Ivy Daum Synnestvedt, Rev. Malcolm G. Smith officiating.

Thomas, Nia Amarachi

At Phoenix, Arizona, August 18, 2024 (born November 9, 2022), daughter of Joshua and Nicole Nkechi Thomas, Rev. Jean A. Atta officiating.

van Zyverden, Penny Marie

At Kempton, Pennsylvania, August 3, 2024 (born January 25, 2023), daughter of Gerald and Jenna Wyncoll van Zyverden, Rev. Brett D. Buick officiating.

Waddell, Lena Lucille

At Phoenix, Arizona, August 18, 2024 (born June 24, 2017), daughter of James Waddell and Stephanie Randolph, Rev. Jean A. Atta officiating.

Waddell, Makaela Marrie

At Phoenix, Arizona, August 18, 2024 (born November 9, 2019), daughter of James Waddell and Stephanie Randolph, Rev. Jean A. Atta officiating.

West, Timothy

At Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania, June 29, 2024, Rev. Mark D. Pendleton officiating.

Woltemate, Reagan Kathleen

At Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania, August 11, 2024 (born June 10, 2024), daughter of Mark and Kathleen Woltemate, Rev. Charles E. Blair officiating.

Zamorano Soria, Adrian Alessandro

At Glenview, Illinois, March 21, 2024, Rev. Mark D. Pendleton officiating.

CONFIRMATIONS

In You, O Lord, I put my trust; let me never be ashamed. For You are my rock and my fortress; therefore, for Your name's sake, lead me and guide me.
(Psalm 31:1,3)

Thomas, Joshua Mandela

At Phoenix, Arizona, August 18, 2024, Rev. Jean A. Atta officiating.

Waddell, James Alexander

At Phoenix, Arizona, August 18, 2024, Rev. Jean A. Atta officiating.

Thomas, Sally Ann Waddell

At Phoenix, Arizona, August 18, 2024, Rev. Jean A. Atta officiating.

BETROTHAL

It is proper on earth for a priest to perform betrothals and to hear, receive, confirm and consecrate the consent. The consent is the essential element in marriage, and the rest of the things that follow are its formalities.

(Conjugal Love 21:4)

Adams-Newell, Jeremy Mason

Adams and Julia Newell

At Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania, June

23, 2024, Rev. Steven P. Gunther

officiating.

MARRIAGES

The conjugal union of one man with one wife is the precious jewel of human life and the repository of Christian religion. In a word, a person is a living soul as a result of that love. (Conjugal Love 457)

Canellakis-Oz, Nicholas E.

Canellakis and Arabella S. Oz

At Cliffside Park, New Jersey, Rev.

Charles E. Blair officiating.

Cranch-Good, Benjamin Bradley

Cranch and Brianne Glenn Good

At Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania,

August 3, 2024, Rev. Scott I. Frazier

officiating.

Dickson-Hunt—Gran, Zane

Alexander Dickson-Hunt and

Alexandra Adele Gran

At Estes Park, Colorado, September

23, 2023, Rev. David C. Roth

officiating. Delayed report.

Micklewood-Foord, Christopher

Ian Micklewood and Chelsea

Serene Foord

At Westville, KwaZulu-Natal, South

Africa, August 9, 2024, Rev. Joel C.

Glenn officiating. (Blessing)

Roberts-Major, James Grant

Roberts and Rebecca Ruth Major

At Rochester, Michigan, September

22, 2024, Rev. Steven P. Gunther

officiating.

Schorran-Troxell, Garrett Vaughn

Schorran and Erin Elizabeth Troxell

At Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania,

September 10, 2024, Rev. Lawson M.

Smith officiating.

IN MEMORIAM

A human being is so created that as to his internal he cannot die; for he can believe in God, and can also love God, and can thus be conjoined with God by faith and love; and to be conjoined with God is to live to eternity.
(Arcana Coelestia 10591)

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