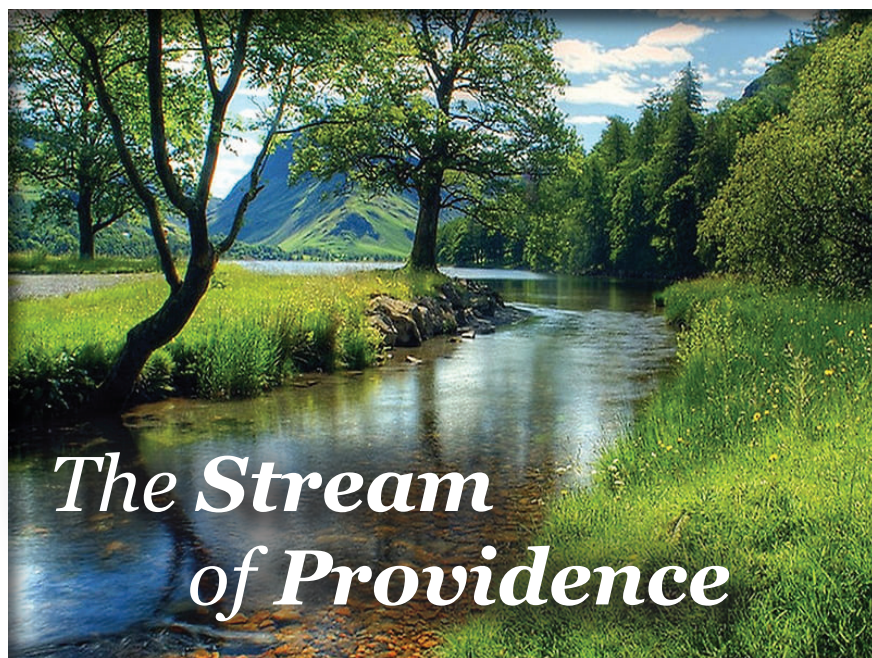


NEW CHURCH *Life*

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

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2025



*Trusting to its flow brings **peace** and **confidence** to the direction of our lives. (Page 14)*



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New Church Life

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

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

In This Issue

Editorials (page 3) include:

- *The Call*: From Mary, Moses and Samuel to John the Baptist and the disciples, the Word is filled with stories of people being called to do great things. Emanuel Swedenborg also had a special calling – which came in strange dreams and troubling experiences – and he devoted the last 27 years of his life to answering that call as “servant of the Lord.” We are also called by the Lord to grow His Church within us and to answer: “Here I am Lord. Send me.”
- *The Population Explosion and the General Church*: Sixty years ago the “population explosion” was real – and the cause of much sociological handwringing about effects all over the world. Now we are in the midst of a population decline, which also has ominous implications – including for the General Church.

The Rt. Rev. David Lindrooth offers an insightful sermon on *The Power of the Lord’s Providence* – what it means to put our trust in Him and let the Stream of Providence guide our lives. He writes: “If we want to truly live as a spiritual human being – fully active as the person the Lord created us to be – the Lord will show us how to do this with the teachings in His Word.: (Page 14)

A Charter Day Address from 1943 by the Rev. Willard Pendleton – *The Preservation of the General Church: Perpetuation of Academy Uses* – still resonates in the essential relationship between the Church and the Academy. “It is the position of the General Church,” he wrote those 81 years ago, “that the true field of evangelization is with the children of New Church parents. If this is so, no sacrifice is too great; if not, we do but waste our time and substance.” (Page 19)

Donald Ridgway speculates about *Searching for Answers About the First Humans on Earth*. He rejects the theory of evolution on the grounds that: “If we follow the Darwinian idea of a slow transition from ape to man, no matter how long it takes it would mean that inevitably the first man would have animal parents.” Actually, he says: “Evolution proceeds through billions of years until the highest aspects of the human mind become an actuality with

the potential to become an image of the Divine Human.” (Page 26)

Writing From the Bishop’s Office, the Rt. Rev. Peter Buss Jr. focuses on “our sole purpose” – performing uses to the Lord and our neighbor – which becomes our “soul” purpose as well. To this end, we are called to learn, to pray, and repent for purpose, and then to serve with purpose. “All of these are parts of a life of spiritual purpose.” (Page 34)

What does Mike Tyson’s return to the boxing ring at age 58 have to do with the Lord’s messages to the Seven Churches? Well, says the Rev. Todd Beiswenger, there’s a lesson in those messages – and Tyson’s own career – about the importance of overcoming. (Page 39)

The Pittsburgh New Church School in western Pennsylvania has distinguished itself, possibly saved itself, and distinguished itself among General Church schools by developing expertise in teaching children with dyslexia. This has been immensely valuable to parents throughout the region. This was the subject of an in-service program for teachers and administrators throughout these schools, presented by Rebekah Russell, co-director of General Church Education, and Julie Uber, long-time teacher in the Pittsburgh School. (Page 45)

The Rev. Prescott Rogers has a new book – *The Heavenly Doctrines as Systematic Theology* – based on years of study. In a review of the book, the Rev. Michael Gladish acknowledges that it is “heavily philosophical . . . but for anyone who wants confirmation of the universal, comprehensive nature of the revelation, it is a tour de force, fully demonstrating how it all works and why the whole panoply of teaching is worthy of any scholarly critique.” (Page 47)

A paper presented at Council of the Clergy meetings last June by the Bishop Emeritus, Brian Keith on “Orphan Passages” in the Writings may seem arcane to many readers but actually is a fascinating summary of these sometimes strange, stand-alone passages that convey kernels of spiritual wisdom. (Page 50)

Church News (page 86) includes:

- Official announcement of the new President of Bryn Athyn College, Sean Connelly, and a message from him
- Two new appointments in the College
- Highlights from the October meeting of the Academy Board of Trustees
- A new program to help the church grow in the United Kingdom
- An episcopal visit to Sweden and Norway, with photos
- An 86-year-old gesture honoring the workers who built Glencairn, with their families, is repeated for all those involved in the year-long infrastructure replacement project

Editorials

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

THE CALL

Throughout the Word people are called by the Lord to change their lives and follow Him. In accepting that call they changed the world, forever affecting our lives through their faith and service. Among those we know best:

- **Mary:** She was understandably troubled when told by an angel that she was to be the mother of the Lord, wondering how this could be. But assured that she “had found favor with God,” she did not question or hesitate, saying humbly: “Behold the handmaid of the Lord. Be it unto me according to Thy word.” And so she lived.
- **Moses:** He was a common man and when an angel appeared to him in a burning bush and called on him to deliver the people of Israel, he resisted, saying the people would not listen to him. But when the Lord gave him signs and promised to teach him what to say, Moses agreed and led the children of Israel through the wilderness for 40 years to the promised land – as we still are led.
- **Samuel:** When called in the night as a child, he did not even know the Lord, but Eli told him just to say when called: “Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth.” With this simple commitment, Samuel became a lifelong prophet for the Lord.
- **John the Baptist:** He was miraculously born to the elderly Zacharia and Elizabeth with a mission, baptized by Jesus in the river Jordan, and sent forth to baptize and call people to repentance. This humble, persistent man was imprisoned and executed – but never wavered from his calling.

- **The Disciples:** They were ordinary fishermen when Jesus called to them: “Come after Me and I will make you fishers of men.” They devoted their lives to serving Him and were called together again in heaven on June 19, 1770 – at the completion of *True Christian Religion* – to preach that the Lord God Jesus Christ reigns.

Among all those answering such daunting callings is **Emanuel Swedenborg** – whose 337th birthday we celebrate on January 29 – called to be the prophet of the Lord’s Second Coming.

This was an enormous challenge for a man in the midst of a very successful career and well-respected in his native Sweden. But he always had a spiritual bent, was raised in a religious family as a student of the Word, and sought answers to vexing mysteries – from the nature of God to the human soul. He prepared himself for years by diligently reading, studying and understanding the Word, because he had to be able to understand its internal sense to present it coherently to the world.

As committed as he was, it was not easy to give up his purposeful life. And his years as revelator were not a blissful period of spiritual experiences, simply recording what was revealed to him. He was tested and tormented over several years with strange dreams and temptations, much of it recorded in a personal diary – *Journal of Dreams* – which was never intended for publication. In her iconic 1952 biography – *The Swedenborg Epic* – Cyriel Sigsted sets the scene:

It was Easter [in 1744], and Swedenborg had partaken of the Lord’s supper. In the evening his mind was beset with temptations. Inner contentment alternated with outer sadness. He dreamed of meeting an acquaintance who tried in vain to induce him to join his company. He took this to mean indulgence, riches, vanity. An indescribable state of heavenly bliss succeeded this state of temptation, with full consciousness of God’s love and the willingness to give up his own life for Him. (Page 184)

This was a huge commitment and we honor Swedenborg not only for his devoted work as “servant of the Lord” in transcribing all the depth and doctrine of the Lord’s Second Coming, but with appreciation for all that he went through to be spiritually worthy of such a task – fraught with the promise of forever altering the world and heaven.

Yes, Swedenborg was tortured with temptation and doubt, but that all confirmed a calling he felt prepared to embrace – through the next 27 years of his remarkably productive life. After describing his disturbing dream, Ms. Sigstedt offers this insight from his *Journal of Dreams*:

| *I had in my mind and body the feeling of an indescribable delight, so*

that had it been in any higher degree the whole body would have been dissolved in pure joy. In a word, I was in heaven and heard speech which no human tongue can utter, with the life that is there, with the glory and most delight that flow from it.

And so he was guided through those remaining years of his life, living in both this world and the spiritual, committed to being a faithful “servant of the Lord.” But the trials did not diminish. In her forthcoming biography – *The Making of a Modern Visionary: Emanuel Swedenborg, Eyewitness to the Apocalypse* – the late Dr. Jane Williams-Hogan writes:

Having walked through “the valley of the shadow of death,” and then receiving his Divine call, Swedenborg was reborn. There is no doubt that his dreams and visions transformed him and his future. This secular man of science became a seer and visionary.

This was both his calling and his choice – and an enormous commitment. Jane continues:

Swedenborg was not simply the spokesman for the new truths; he had to truly understand them for himself. He needed to undergo a difficult period of training and preparation by the Lord. It is clear from his early written efforts immediately after his Divine call that he lacked both the correct idea of his new mission and the theological truths to undertake it. This process would take an additional three-and-a-half years of intellectual and emotional struggle.

But just as the Lord was not immediately and universally embraced in His first coming, this new revelation from “the Spirit of Truth” was not widely and immediately embraced either – and still has not been these 250 years later.

Here Swedenborg was presenting to the world the Lord’s own guide to salvation through the spiritual sense of the Word, but there was more public resistance than acclaim and appreciation. He suffered through three long years of “heresy trials” in Gothenburg in the 1770s, for example, when bitter controversy gripped the Consistory of the state Lutheran Church over his teachings as “opposed to the Word of God.”

Swedenborg was subject to public scorn and the trial was personally draining. But some of the Consistory admitted there was much to be admired in his writings and the trial eventually was abandoned when the “heresies” could not be proven. Cyriel Sigstedt notes: “So ended this important trial for spiritual freedom. And many years later the people of Sweden were granted complete freedom of religion.” Such freedom, of course, is fundamental for the acceptance and spread of the Writings throughout the world.

Throughout all of this, Swedenborg never claimed to be – or aspired to

be – a charismatic leader. All he wanted to be was the Lord’s obedient servant, faithfully carrying out what he was called upon to do. In the first published book of the Writings – *Arcana Coelestia* – he asserted:

I am well aware that many will say that no man can possibly speak with spirits and angels as long as he lives in the body; and many will say that it is all fancy, others that I relate such things in order to gain credence, and some will make other objections. But by all this I am not deterred for I have seen, I have heard, I have felt.

And in his culminating work – *True Christian Religion* – he stated:

Since the Lord cannot manifest Himself in person, and nevertheless has foretold that He was to come and establish a New Church, which is the New Jerusalem, it follows that He will do this by means of a man who is able not only to receive these doctrines in the understanding but also to publish them by the press. (# 779)

Once it became known in the early 1760s that he was the author, he was willing to discuss his books when asked but never initiated such conversations. For 19 years he published anonymously. He also never tried to attract a following or start a church. He saw his calling not to speak out and seek support but simply to write and publish. The Lord would do the rest.

For all of this we owe him tremendous respect and gratitude. This is why we observe his birthday every year with society and school programs. We are careful not to overdo our praise, remembering that he sought no personal acclaim and wanted only to be known as a humble servant of the Lord. There is even some hesitancy in the church to call ourselves “Swedenborgians,” lest we appear to be worshipping him.

His calling was great and it must have been tremendously gratifying – and humbling – to be chosen to convey this new revelation to an immensely needy world. But he must have been discouraged and disappointed at times finding that the world was not eagerly embracing this life-saving revelation for their salvation. The books were getting attention – and great praise as well as condemnation – but very few were being sold. He understood, however, that the Spirit of Truth would be accepted and understood only when the falsities of the current church were overcome and people were ready. As the fallout from the Last Judgment plays out through centuries, we still await the wide embrace this revelation deserves. Swedenborg was ever patient and trusting in the Lord. So must we all.

This is the gift of the Lord’s new revelation – His New Church – delivered to us thanks to Swedenborg’s 27 long years of devoted service, for which he deserves to be remembered and honored. And this now is part of our own calling – as people blessed with the church – to protect and grow it as we are able.

In our lives we all are called by the Lord: to obey His commandments; to love Him by serving Him and our neighbor; to shun evil and regenerate; to be born anew for heaven; “to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with our God.” By answering the call we may be transformed into angels – and hopefully inspire others to follow.

Our calling is not as dramatic as Mary and Moses, Samuel and John the Baptist, the disciples and Swedenborg, but no less meaningful. For as we grow the Lord’s Church within us, the Lord grows it through us. Would that we answer the call as humbly, willingly and faithfully as those we honor: “*Here I am, Lord. Send me.*”

(BMH)

THE POPULATION EXPLOSION AND THE GENERAL CHURCH

During the 1960s the “*population explosion*” was a topic on the lips of commentators throughout the western world. In many ways this was similar to our concern today about climate change, which began about 30 years later. A huge difference between them, though, is that whereas international cooperation around climate change has been hard to achieve, it took only a few decades to reverse global trends having to do with overpopulation. No one talks about the population explosion anymore.

Since 1804, the global population has increased from 1 billion to 8 billion due to medical advancements and improved agricultural productivity. According to the Wikipedia article on the topic of human overpopulation, the world population growth rate peaked at 2.1% in 1968. Concern about what this growth would do to the world was widespread in the 1960s and ‘70s. One result was that large families quickly went out of style. Shrinking family size has been attributed to other causes as well, such as the invention of the birth control pill in 1960 and the increased number of women in the workplace, among others.

According to many sources, global fertility has dropped dramatically in the past 50 years. Today overpopulation is no longer a topic of concern for social scientists, and families in the United States and other industrialized nations have continued to get smaller. Now the concern about overpopulation has been replaced by worries about the effects of population decline.

During the 1960s and ‘70s, when overpopulation was such a concern, the promise of overcoming this issue was about having adequate food and space, the preservation of natural resources, less pressure on housing, and easing crowding everywhere from highways to supermarkets to hospitals. The

reality of population decline, however, is about an aging population, an aging workforce, labor shortages, a declining economy, and the lack of critical mass needed to keep existing community structures operating. The result is the closure of schools, stores, theaters, and many other things that a shrinking and aging population can no longer support. This includes churches.

There are many reasons why church membership and attendance have declined over the past 50 years in the United States and other western countries. Not least among these are the statements in the Writings about the church being at its end and the accompanying decline of faith and charity in the former Christian world. But the largest factor is arguably the simple mathematics of the decline in the birth rate.

In the early General Church, the birth rate was something that received a surprising amount of attention. Bishop W.F. Pendleton's address to the Assembly of 1899, which became known as "*The Principles of the Academy*," included as its seventh principle: "*Any interference on the part of man with the law of offspring in marriage is an abomination.*"

These "principles" were never legislated as central positions of the church but were rather the bishop's view of some of the key issues of the day. As such, although they were held in high esteem at the time, some of them are no longer widely accepted in the church. The only position the General Church takes is that the Heavenly Doctrine is the Word of God and that what it teaches is the last word on all spiritual issues.

In the years since the bishop enunciated this "*seventh principle*," many have felt that the Writings do not fully support the emphatic language that he used. Interestingly, the topic of population decline was a national issue at that time. They called it "*race suicide*." President Theodore Roosevelt, in 1904, called it "*fundamentally infinitely more important than any other question in this country*," arguing to the American public that "*the man or woman who deliberately avoids marriage, and has a heart so cold and selfish as to dislike having children, is in effect a criminal.*" (Wikipedia)

This may explain Bishop Pendleton's tone, just as current popular attitudes toward birth control may explain current feelings in the church about that. While the Heavenly Doctrine does not say much directly on the topic, there is no lack of principles and passages to draw on. Here are a few.

1. "*A love of little children is forever conjoined with conjugal love. . . . The first end of conjugal love is the procreation of offspring, and the last end, which is the effect, is the offspring produced.*" (*Conjugal Love* 385)

This passage, and this entire section in *Conjugal Love*, establish the close link between conjugal love and the love of offspring. The procreation of

offspring is called the highest and most excellent of all uses. (*Ibid.* 156)

2. *“About those who make love without true marriage love, or the desire to have children: There are many men and women, especially in Christendom, who . . . acquire the nature of wanting to make love without any desire for children, thus cutting themselves off from the very central and deepest aspect of it.”* (*Spiritual Experiences* 1202)
3. *“Whatever destroys or perverts marriages, and destroys propagation, that is diabolical.”* (*Ibid.* 3697)

These passages say that the desire for sex without joining it with marriage and a desire for children cuts it off from its deepest aspect, and that the opposition to propagation and marriage is hellish.

On the other hand, *Divine Providence* 180 includes reproduction among those things that a person is able to and ought to control:

4. *“Everyone knows that a person is occupied with external operations, as in his seeing with the eye, hearing with the ear, tasting with the tongue, feeling with the skin, breathing with the lungs, impregnating his wife, and so on. Is it not enough for him to be conscious of these external operations and to direct them for the health of his body and mind? When he cannot do this, what would be the case if he were also to direct internal ones? It can now be seen from this that if a person were to clearly see Divine providence, he would inject himself into the order and course of its progression, and upset and destroy it.”*

This passage lists “*impregnating his wife*” as one of the things a person “*directs for the health of his body and mind.*” The implication is that this is right and proper, and that there is nothing wrong with a couple deciding how many children to have.

Much more could be said about this, but the expectation and practice of several generations of General Church members was to have large families. There was nothing especially unusual about this, as it was true of many people over the years. But church members today may not appreciate the extent to which the beliefs of the founders about the future growth of the church organization depended on it.

The founders of the General Church certainly made efforts at evangelization, and many people have joined the church from its very beginning. But they believed, as the Writings clearly teach, that evangelization would not be easy or very successful in this culture. They therefore pinned their hopes for

organizational growth on large families and New Church education. If enough children were born, and if enough of them came to love the New Church and remain attached to the organization, then the organization would grow. If not, then the church would shrink and possibly go out of existence. They believed that we would never be able to gain enough members through evangelization alone to be successful in this part of the world.

For over a century this theory has been borne out, with the church maintaining a steady growth rate of 10% to 15% each decade up until 2010. During that time about two-thirds of the membership has come from those born within the church and one-third from those born outside of the church, many of whom came into the church through marriage. Since 2010, however, the growth rate has slowed considerably and for the past five years the membership has been declining by very small amounts – although in 2024 it grew by two members. The mathematics of fewer children and a smaller percentage of them remaining with the church are catching up with us.

The most heartbreaking aspect of this is that many of the congregations throughout the church face declines that threaten their existence. Too few children have been born, and too few of them have remained with the church in their location, and evangelization has not been able to make up the difference. People often blame the church organization and its methods and leadership for these declines, when the more obvious cause is simply the birthrate. This may be why there has always been an emphasis in the church on marriage and family, as is true in the Writings themselves.

The church organization is not the church itself, which is infinitely more important. But organizations serve the uses that spread and nurture the church through publishing, broadcasting, preaching, educating and maintaining a clergy, bringing people together for worship, instruction and mutual support, and in other ways.

Any way that you look at it, though, people are needed. When it comes to the number of people who genuinely love one another and worship the Lord in His Second Coming, reading, understanding and practicing the truths of the Heavenly Doctrine, nothing could be better than a population explosion.

(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 email Bruce.Henderson@newchurch.org

Essential Questions and Suggestions

To The Editors:

Full Disclosure: I served on the Academy Board of Trustees that unanimously passed the Strategic Plan which created many of the problems we now face and which Bruce Henderson's excellent editorial (*The Future of New Church Education – New Church Life*, September/October 2024) attributes to “*overly ambitious growth initiatives*,” and “*overly optimistic planning for growth*” which led to “*rapid expansion, growth and financial investment that has not materialized as forecast and left the schools scrambling to survive.*” As the editorial states: “*serious miscalculations by the Academy Board of Trustees*” mentioned above “*resulted in huge budget deficits which the current board is still struggling to overcome.*”

In my opinion, this assessment is correct. Even more so are the questions he poses: *What is the future of New Church education*; and *What can and must we do to help?*

At its inception, the mission of New Church education was to educate the children of New Church parents. That mission was intact in 1985, the year that the Rt. Rev. Willard D. Pendleton published his book, *Education for Use*, the culmination of his life-long love and study of the subject.

In the almost 50 years since then, enrollment in most New Church schools has declined dramatically in our local societies as well as in the Academy's Secondary Schools and College. As a result, what seems to be a new mission is emerging, which might be called *Planting Seeds*.

Almost 40 years after the publication of *Education for Use*, the Rev. Glenn (Mac) Frazier, Pastor of the Washington New Church Society, wrote an editorial in the March 2024 society newsletter, *The Echo*. After more than a year of in-depth discussions with many and various New Church and school stakeholders, Pastor Frazier has proposed a new mission, born of necessity,

focused not only on educating the children of New Church parents, *but to serve families beyond the church's membership.*

This is not a new idea; it is being discussed at all levels of New Church education. What is new is contained in the Washington Society's new mission statement, which reads in part:

*To support parents in nurturing the spiritual, moral and intellectual development of the children . . . **using a New Church curriculum taught by New Church teachers** (emphasis added).*

That editorial goes on to say:

(T)here are some of you who see potential challenges in committing to an all-New Church faculty going forward. . . . But I firmly believe . . . that while anyone can be trained to teach New Church doctrines at some basic level, it takes someone who has been actively embracing New Church values and striving to live them to transmit a New Church culture to the next generation.

Going forward may require going back. Pastor Frazier's words echo Bishop Pendleton's of 40 years ago:

This is why New Church educators must be students of the Writings, for unless the courses which are taught in our schools are ordered by doctrine, they will not be significantly different from the same courses taught in other schools.

Given the current situation in our school systems, it will not be easy to do, but perhaps the ideal articulated by Bishop Pendleton and Pastor Frazier can be reestablished over time. In the meantime, a couple of suggestions come to mind:

- 1) Restarting the now defunct Education Council meetings which used to be held during the summer.
- 2) Requiring all teachers in the system, members of the church or not, to read and report annually on *Education for Use*.

These suggestions will not solve all our problems, but they start at the top. Can we refine our mission as outlined by Pastor Frazier, working toward the goal of New Church courses taught by New Church teachers?

It won't be easy.

Gael P. Coffin
Bryn Athyn
Pennsylvania

Still Standing and Serving

To The Editors:

While wondering what I might write about for *New Church Life*, my attention settled on the last 23 words of a paragraph in the book, *Selected Editorials*, by the Rev. W. Cairns Henderson: “. . . .that the capacity for use continues to the end of earthly life, though the use may be more interior and less readily seen.” (page 58)

The title of Rev. Henderson's editorial is *Use and Old Age*. And I will respond to his encouraging thoughts for us senior citizens with a quotation from a sonnet by John Milton (1608-1674). It is known commonly as *On His Blindness* and ends with the thought: “They also serve who only stand and wait.”

I observe that the act of standing requires personal effort, which also is an essential part of being useful and consequently of feeling so.

As I understand it, influx is according to efflux and that this spiritual law has no senior limitations.

Richard Linquist
Huntingdon Valley,
Pennsylvania

Responding to New Church Life

In addition to published letters to the editors, there are other options for more immediate questions or comments:

- The New Church Facebook page
– <https://facebook.com/NewChurchOnline> -- is moderated by Outreach and questions are answered.
- The General Church website – <https://newchurch.org/> -- contains a link for questions and comments. About 1,000 emails are answered each year.
- Videos posted on YouTube
– <https://www.youtube.com/newchurchvideo>
-- have a public comments section.

The Power of the Lord's Providence

The Rt. Rev. David H. Lindrooth

*Lessons: Ezekiel 47:1-19; Arcana Coelestia 8478;
True Christian Religion 573*

Along the bank of the river there were very many trees, on the one side and on the other. Then he said to me: "This water flows toward the Eastern region, goes down into the valley, and enters the sea. And when it reaches the sea, its waters are healed." (Ezekiel 47:7,8)

Imagine a beautiful crisp dawn. You are watching the sun peaking over the Eastern horizon bathing a beautiful garden landscape with its warm golden light. The sky is dotted with small clouds outlined with shining crimson beauty. And you find yourself standing in a great and mighty river filled with the water of life gently pulling you toward the east.

This is the image we are invited to reflect on as told by Ezekiel in our lesson. It is a powerful image that holds within it keys for discovering a deeply meaningful life. The Lord, with all His Divine attributes, is gently drawing each of us toward spiritual healing, strength and ultimately a tranquil life in heaven to eternity. In a word, the river is drawing us toward an indescribably beautiful and comprehensive human experience of living – more complete and whole than we could possibly imagine.

One aspect to consider is the current in the stream itself. We can reflect on our lesson from *Arcana Coelestia* that speaks of the state of peace we are offered when we understand that we are in "the stream of providence" and recognize that its strong current is taking us toward all

*We can reflect on the state of peace when we understand that we are in **"the stream of providence"** and recognize that its strong current is taking us toward all that is good.*

that is good.

Perhaps it is helpful to remember that that current (of providence) is drawing us along toward the good ends that the Lord has in mind for us, every moment of every day. The Lord is operating constantly, with His desire to lead us toward heaven in times of light and in our times of darkness. He never leaves us alone. Along the way, He is able to provide us with exactly what we need for our internal, angelic growth and development.

Still, it is true that we often don't feel the pull of this great current. It is similar to what we experience when we are actually floating in a deep and wide river. Since we are carried at the pace of the flow of the water, we only feel the pull of the current when we put our feet down and try to stand on the bottom. When we resist the current, it is then when we become aware of its strength.

This general unawareness of the strength of the current is a marker for the freedom the Lord gives us to experience because He allows us to feel our life as if it were our own. We can, from our proprium, fight against the current – choosing to go somewhere of ourselves that perhaps is upstream from where the current is leading us, but that expends a lot of energy! Going with the flow of providence is far easier, and as we read in the story, we can be assured that the current is carrying us to a place of beauty, bounty and healing.

The flowing of the mighty river teaches us something about the creative forces of the Lord. We enter the stream at birth – or even at conception. The waters flowing over Ezekiel's feet represent the Lord's governance of the outermost aspects of our lives. He watches over our infancy; He attends to the growth and development of our physical bodies and our developing hearts and minds.

The creative current of the Lord orchestrates our “coming into being,” or our “existence” as He constantly flows from heaven, causing us and the earthly things around us to come into existence. It might be hard to recognize but were it not for this constant inflowing and creative force streaming into the universe and all its specific forms, all that we know and are familiar with would instantly cease to exist. But it doesn't cease to exist because the Lord is eternal, without end – and His almighty operation of creation flows uninterrupted, providing us with the natural universe and all its familiar physical attributes. As the Psalmist reflects: *“The earth is the Lord's and all its fullness, the world and all those who dwell therein.”* (Psalm 24:1)

This might seem difficult to hold in our conscious mind. We as mere mortals have finite minds which limit our thinking to concepts that fit into time and space. But it is worth reflection because the recognition of what the Lord is constantly doing to keep our physical universe in existence and operating helps us find our place and our purpose as human beings. Or, to say it another way, understanding where we are in relation to God helps us see our

role and place in the universe. With that in mind we can chart a meaningful direction for our path in life.

The story invites us to immerse ourselves in God's great and mighty river called His Divine Providence. We define the Lord's Providence as His plan or design for us, for the universe and everything in it. And specifically in respect to human beings, everything in the Lord's grand design is oriented around helping human beings be "human" – not just as people walking around and living for a few short years on earth but growing as angels and becoming more and more human to eternity. Our lives have meaning to the degree that we are willing to cooperate with the Lord to this end.

We read in *Genesis*:

God created mankind in His own image, in the image of God He created him, male and female He created them. Then God blessed them and said to them, "be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves upon the earth." (Genesis 1:26,27)

The creative process of the Lord is Divinely Human in nature and character. Everything about the Stream of Providence flows according to and in a Divinely Human pattern or form. Everything about our creation (by the Lord) is in His image and likeness – therefore, we are human to the degree that our actions and life reflects the Lord's Divinely Human nature. (See *Divine Providence* 207)

It is also important to understand the link that the Lord has given us that connects His creative process – shown by Ezekiel as a river – to the Word that the Lord has revealed to us. For the Word is the sacred document that shows us how we position our lives to be in that river, in harmony with the forces of the current flowing from the Lord which create us and enable us to be truly human.

We see the connection made in the first verses of John where we read:

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. (John 1:1-3)

So, if we want to truly live as spiritual human beings – if we want to be fully active as the person the Lord created us to be – the Lord will show us how to do this with the teachings found in His Word. The Heavenly Doctrines explain that the Word isn't a body of lifeless stories. The Lord actually is alive within all its stories and teachings, leading us and giving us the personal insights we

If we want to truly live as spiritual human beings – fully active as the person the Lord created us to be – the Lord will show us how to do this with the teachings in His Word.

need to steer our lives toward Him.

The story in Ezekiel describes this immersive process. The Angel guide leads Ezekiel one thousand cubits out into the river and gradually the river deepens. This is symbolic of truths flowing in and influencing us, gradually, in deeper and deeper ways. (See *Apocalypse Explained* 629)

The river first flowing over Ezekiel's ankles represents initial states of spiritual intelligence where a person has the ability to see and use truths from the Word to apply to external situations of life. This would suggest a person who, after initial instruction, takes the concepts from the Word and seeks to obey them in external situations. It reflects situations where we are still motivated by external affections. We want to go to heaven. We are afraid of going to hell. We don't want to be known by others as a bad person. These external motivations are not very spiritual in nature, but they serve us by setting us up in the stream of providence so that we can be led to deeper things.

Through that obedience, a person is led to a deeper intelligence that is motivated by a love for understanding how to use the teachings for good, and a real desire to lead a life of charity toward the neighbor. This is reflected in Ezekiel being drawn another thousand cubits into the river and then standing in the current with it covering his knees.

The Lord is constantly leading us, encouraging us to make choices that deepen our relationship with the love and wisdom that radiate from Him alone. And so, we see Ezekiel being drawn farther into the river, where it covers his loins. At this stage, a person is coming to truly appreciate the spiritual origins of marriage – particularly as an extension of the relationship between the love and wisdom that flow through heaven from the Lord.

This is the marker of people who are truly a part of the church because they now have the ability to use their intelligence to share the Lord's love and wisdom in balanced ways. They see how it combines and how it is used to convey spiritual life. This kind of intelligence is derived from a true desire to serve others rather than self.

And yet, the water continues to deepen to the point of total immersion and the person needs to swim. This represents celestial intelligence. It comes from an awareness that a person is totally dependent on the Lord for all that is good in one's life. From this recognition, the person is aware that nothing that originates from self is good. All the person's actions then are motivated

by the desire to further the Lord's ends (without regard to self). No one comes into this state unless he or she is conjoined with the Lord in love to Him. (See *Arcana Coelestia* 9262) This is the kind of love known to the angels of the highest heaven.

It is no surprise that our modern culture has failed to provide our young people with clear paths of life that offer deep value and meaning for how to be a successful human being. Much of what is offered around us ultimately is trivial and selfish – and only offers emptiness. As such, the culture advocates solutions to life that directly oppose the stream of Providence described by Ezekiel. And the culture has become blind to the spiritual answers that are simple and yet complete. The vision of the river is a reminder of that simplicity. One need only wade into the Stream of Providence and the power of the Lord that takes us, draws us in, develops our intelligence and wisdom, and heals us.

As we travel its course, we become angels filling our lives with a deep satisfaction, peace and meaning that can only come from Him. It is the true way to become human. And, as we progress, the Lord so completely holds us in His arms that we don't even notice the care and attention that He is constantly offering us along the way.

"This is the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes."

Amen



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The Preservation of the General Church

Perpetuation of Academy Uses

Charter Day Address, October 16, 1943

The Rev. Willard D. Pendleton

Editors' note: In the Pastor's Box in the *Bryn Athyn Post* for Charter Day this past October, the Rev. John Odhner quoted from this 1943 address by Bishop Pendleton, illustrating its enduring relevance to the General Church and the Academy – and their essential relationship – these 81 years later.

The subject of the evening – the Preservation of the General Church – is a timely topic, for we are living in a rapidly changing world. Even a superficial knowledge of the trends of the times is enough to destroy our complacency and encourage a discussion of the problems which confront the General Church in the world of tomorrow.

I do not wish to imply that our right to worship according to the dictates of our faith is at stake. That issue is being successfully defended on the field of battle at the present time (World War II). But insofar as we believe distinctive New Church education to be essential to our purpose, there is cause for real concern.

The modern tendency toward federal control of education; an increasing tax burden; the growing demand for technical training; the regimentation of youth – these are but a few of the trends which do not auger well for the future of the Academy. It is not our intention to discuss these matters, for we are not qualified to do so; nor would it prove anything if we were; but, taken together, they are ample evidence of the direction in which the world is moving, and they give rise to the question of the place of private educational institutions in the post-war scheme of affairs.

In all probability there is not one of us who anticipates any appreciable reduction in his tax burden with the termination of hostilities. The war debt has reached astronomical proportions, and the end is not yet in sight. Quite apart from the high cost of war, however, the democracies are committed to a program of social and economic reform which, by way of taxation, will reduce private surplus to a new low for some years to come.

Whether or not we approve of this program is a matter of personal opinion and has nothing to do with the subject under discussion. We simply accept the

fact that such a program is under way and has received considerable popular support.

Our interest in the matter is the effect of these trends upon private educational institutions, whether the trends be financial, political or humanistic in nature, the particular point in question being the effect of the reduction in private surplus upon the Academy. And by surplus we mean the difference between the cost of necessities of life and personal income. It is out of surplus, be it small or great, that institutions such as the Academy have been supported in the past and, to the best of my knowledge, the only way in which they can be supported in the future.

With this thought in mind, we can readily understand why it is that in recent years all private educational institutions in the country have sent out urgent appeals to their alumni for financial assistance. They are keenly aware of the fact that they can no longer depend upon the handsome bequests of former days. If they wish to preserve their private status, they must seek an increasing number of small contributions. Failing in this, they must turn to the state for support.

With us, however, there is no alternative. Because we are a church school, open only to the children who have been baptized into our faith, we are not eligible for state subsidies, and rightly so. Our only hope of additional support – that is, of income other than return on endowment – lies with the small but, we hope, determined membership of the General Church.

At times reference is made to the large endowment of the Academy. We know what is meant. It is a figure of speech, but it is apt to create a wrong impression. When viewed in the light of the demands that are placed upon it, we cannot say that it is large; indeed, it is barely adequate to meet present needs. If this be so, what of future needs?

Nor do we speak of that distant future when the Academy schools will be 10,000 strong. We refer to the problem that is immediately before us – to the education of the several generations of children for whom we are responsible within our own lifetimes. Within the next 50 years the needs of the Academy will certainly be greater than they have been in the last 50 years. We are extremely fortunate in our endowment, but we cannot rely upon it – not in the face of increasing needs and diminishing returns from investments. Perhaps it is just as well, for a false sense of security is not conducive to progressive development.

These are the facts as we understand them. And if we have taken a somewhat practical approach, it is because any serious discussion of the problem before us which does not take these facts into consideration is apt to be misleading. The support of the uses of the church must begin in ultimates; and assuredly the Academy is one of our most important uses. Without the

ultimate, spiritual uses cannot be performed. This is sound doctrine; it is one of those self-evident truths which requires no explanation.

Perhaps it is so evident that at times we fail to see the need for emphasis; but if we judge the signs of the times aright, the need is with us now. We cannot expect the Board of Directors of the Academy to solve this problem for us; it is a mutual problem in which we all share some portion of the responsibility.

So far, we have been speaking of the Academy; yet our subject is the preservation of the General Church. There is much that might be said on this subject; it is a tremendous field for reflection. The preservation of freedom, the perpetuation of the priesthood, growth through missionary endeavor, the establishment of new societies – all are pertinent to the problem. But we propose to confine our remarks to that phase of our work which most intimately concerns a Charter Day gathering.

It is not only the nature of the gathering, however, which determines our approach to the subject, but the belief that it is our educational system, rather than these other matters, which is threatened by the counter current of the times. We submit for your consideration, therefore, the proposition that the perpetuation of the Academy schools is essential to the growth and development of the General Church.

There is nothing new in this thought; it is older than the Academy itself. Nevertheless, it calls for consideration – or should we say re-consideration – in that every generation of New Churchmen must determine this question for itself. At no time can it be said that it is no longer an issue. The reason for this is that the work of education, now or in the future, cannot be maintained except at the cost of considerable sacrifice on the part of many.

We have been speaking of the Academy, yet our subject is the preservation of the General Church. We cannot expect the Board of the Academy to solve this problem for us; it is a mutual problem in which we all share some portion of the responsibility.

And so we are forced to ask ourselves: is it worthwhile? Many New Churchmen have thought not. Our friends in Convention and Conference have never seen the need. Even within the General Church there are those who believe it to be superfluous. It is the position of the General Church, however, that “the true field of evangelization is with the children of New Church parents.” If this is so, no sacrifice is too great; if not, we do but waste our time and substance.

When it is said that “the true field of evangelization is with the

children of New Church parents,” it does not mean that this is the only field. Rather does it imply that here is a field already prepared – a most fertile field, free from the doctrinal persuasions and preconceived philosophies of a decadent Christian world. These children, whom the Lord has committed to our care, are our first responsibility – and first things must come first. If we cannot inspire our own children with the love of truth, by what virtue shall we bring others to the light?

This was the vision of the early Academy. Not that they ever repudiated missionary effort, but the educational responsibilities which they assumed required all that they had, both in means and manpower. Whenever and wherever it was possible, they established schools; and from that day to this we have been fully occupied with the work of education.

The time is coming, however, and we hope it is not too distant, when the General Church can assume its rightful obligations in the field of evangelization; but it can come only as priests and teachers can be released from the more important demands of our schools and our established societies.

When we say that the perpetuation of the Academy is essential to the preservation of the General Church, we are not speaking of the Academy as an institution but of the use which it serves. At the present time, however, the Academy schools are the ultimates upon which the use depends, and it is of the present, or the immediate future, that we are speaking tonight. It is imperative, therefore, that, for the time being at least, we sustain the institution, despite the many difficulties that may arise. If the signs of the times are not favorable, it cannot be helped; these things are beyond our control. It is not impossible that they may be the very means by which our resolve will be strengthened, and the use which we serve more deeply appreciated. One thing, however, is certain; if we are to succeed, it is to the use that we must look for our inspiration.

If this may be counted among our assets, then there is no private educational institution in the world which can lay claim to the reserves which we possess. In facing the future, we do not count upon our endowment, nor upon any handsome bequests; rather do we depend upon that spirit of determination which is born of a *spiritual affection for truth and devotion to use*. Granted these two things, all else will follow.

By the “love of truth” we do not refer to an intellectual appreciation of doctrine; we have in mind that spiritual affection for truth which is defined in the Writings as “the love of truth for the sake of use.” This love is the true spirit of the Academy. In the education of our children, in our doctrinal endeavors, in the support of our institutions, we have no other end in view.

If at any time we lose this vision, we will have failed, and nothing can spare us. Neither the General Church nor the Academy, nor any organization within the Church, could survive the judgment; indeed, there would be no further

reason for our existence.

The doctrine of use, as revealed in the Writings, is our Spiritual Charter – that Divine Document which clearly defines the purpose for which we exist, and which ensures our existence as long as we keep faith with the terms of the Covenant.

Perhaps the most revealing evidence of the state of the Christian world is the fact that men think of uses as a means to an end, rather than as an end in themselves. The truth is that use is Divine. We are not speaking of vocations, labors and services. These are merely forms of use, or the means by which the Divine of use, that is, the Divine will, is done. The fact is, therefore, that men do not do uses; they respond to them. So comes the meaning of the term “responsibility.” Thus, it is in the performance of their responsibilities that men enter into the life of use. Indeed, there is no other way. When it is said in the Writings that the kingdom of heaven is a kingdom of uses, we understand it to mean that the kingdom of heaven is a kingdom of human responsibilities.

If, therefore, in educating our children, we fail to inculcate in them a sense of responsibility for the uses of the church, by what virtue will the church be sustained? To what purpose are the truths which we are taught in these schools, if they do not inspire men with the love of use? These are not rhetorical questions, but issues which every New Churchman must determine in his own time and in his own way.

We would not leave you with the impression that we believe the organized church to be essential to man’s salvation. We are not speaking tonight of the Lord’s New Church, but of a human institution dedicated to the work of the New Church. It is important that we bear this in mind. For human institutions can fail, but the Lord’s New Church cannot. Somehow, in some way, it will survive the rise and fall of civilizations. The truth cannot perish. Yet at all times there must be some organization – some group that will preserve the knowledge of the Most High God.

It might well be that in their order and organization they will have little in common with the General Church of today, but one thing is sure: they will, like the General Church, subscribe to the sole authority of the Writings. This faith, even if it be with but a few, is imperative to the perpetuation of the Lord’s New Church. Whosoever declares this faith takes upon himself certain responsibilities – those responsibilities which are essential to the establishment of the Lord’s Church on earth.

It is not for us to define these responsibilities. Men must see them for themselves. That an obligation exists is evident, but we do err greatly if we place men under a sense of obligation. To do so is to force their state, to make a natural burden of what should be a spiritual privilege. Our appeal is not to men’s conscience, but to their affections. If their affections are dormant, if their

hearts are not stirred by a presentation of the use, we must go our way.

The ancient law of the debtor is the law of spiritual life: *“When thou dost lend thy brother anything, thou shalt not go into his house to fetch his pledge. Thou shalt stand abroad, and the man to whom thou dost lend shall bring out the pledge to thee.”* (Deuteronomy 24:10,11)

Surely those who have received the ministrations of the church are indebted to the church. But we cannot force payment of the debt. The spirit of persuasion is an evil thing; it places men under a sense of obligation which, in their hearts, they do not recognize. Organizations of the church may be built this way, but the Lord’s New Church cannot. It must be comprised of free men – free from all moral persuasion and spiritual coercion.

This freedom has been zealously guarded by the General Church from its formation. At no times has it stooped to those methods whereby men are persuaded against their will. In all instances it is the use which has been presented. We realize that there are many reasons why men may support uses, but there is only one good reason for so doing. This is the reason which should be emphasized, not only by those who are directly responsible for the organizations of the church, but by parents, teachers, priests and laymen.

By way of instruction men must be led to perceive that these uses are not burdens which have been placed upon us, but that they are the means which the Lord Himself has provided whereby our faith may take root in life. It is true that they come to us by way of men – that externally considered they are human institutions – but the use itself is Divine. The work of the General Church, the work of the Academy, is not the work of men; it is the Lord’s work – the work of salvation.

No man or group of men can save the soul of another; all that is given to us is the sacred privilege of cooperating with the Lord to this end. This is done by means of human instrumentalities, by means of institutions and organizations which serve as an ultimate basis for the operation of the Holy spirit. If these means fail, others will have to be provided; but they will not fail – not as long as they serve the use to which they are dedicated.

In educating our children within the sphere of the church, therefore, we are not primarily concerned with their intellectual development along doctrinal lines; our objective is a life of use. A knowledge of truth which is not inspired by a love of use is a sterile thing – utterly unproductive of good. Thus, it is that our educational system is designed to cultivate that spiritual affection for truth which prompts men to seek out those uses which the Lord would have us serve in order that His kingdom on earth may be established.

If, indeed, we love the truth, we will respond; that is to say, we will accept responsibility. So it is that two things are essential to the preservation of the General Church – two things which, in themselves, are one – namely, the

spiritual affection for truth and devotion to use. Granted these two things and the General Church will not only be perpetuated but will enlarge the sphere of its usefulness with each succeeding generation.

It is with these thoughts in mind that it occurs to me that this is an opportunity to acknowledge the spiritual debt which the General Church owes to the Academy. As one not directly associated with the institution, but as a pastor of the General Church, I do not believe that it would be inappropriate if I were to say a word in this regard. Certainly, if it were not for the Academy, the General Church would not be what it is today; indeed, there is reason to believe it would not be at all.

It is the Academy which has trained our pastors and teachers; it is the Academy which is the inspiration of our local schools; it is the Academy which

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has encouraged the study of interior doctrine among priests and laymen; and, more important than all of this, it is the Academy which has imbued three generations of children with an affection for truth.

Surely, we would be callous indeed if we were not grateful. It is a large debt, but not one which we cannot repay. By way of devotion to use we can, if we will, return to the Academy in full measure all that we have received at her hands.

THE REV. WILLARD D. PENDLETON was pastor in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, when this address was delivered. He was ordained into the third degree in 1946 and named Executive Vice President of the Academy. He was elected Executive Bishop and President of the Academy in 1962. He retired in 1976 and passed into the spiritual world in 1998. He wrote his seminal book on New Church education – Education for Use – in 1984.

Searching for Answers About The First Humans on Earth

Donald Ridgway

I have always been fascinated by this topic and that by means of New Church doctrine and science it may be possible to find an answer to what is, for me, a real conundrum, as Darwin's evolutionary theories always left man with animal parents.

From the spiritual Sun by means of its heat and light the universe was created from first to last. (True Christian Religion 33)

The following explanation is from the first of six lectures on repentance given by the Rt. Rev. N.D. Pendleton to the Bryn Athyn Society in 1934:

God produced limited enclosures – minimal vortices of inconceivable perfection which successively became more and more finite in form and structure.

Successives thereafter . . . composed all things of creation, spiritual and natural.

One sequence of these enclosures, by the highest degree of compression, produced the natural sun, wherein the finite forms suffered a total deprivation of life which is God; and these, in their emanation from the natural sun, formed the earth – the final basis of creation. They compose nature, in its strict definition, as apart from living forms, and ultimates at rest, or substances exclusive of life.

On the other hand, the created enclosures derived directly from the Spiritual Sun are called spiritual because inclusive of life, and each in degree responsive to the Divine, yet the Divine life within them is constrained within bounds, and this increasingly down to the ultimates of the spiritual world. It is through the intermediation of these spiritual world forms that so-called living things spring up on earth.

In all descending spiritual forms, increasing constraint

is accompanied by a lessening freedom. The Divine life in itself alone is free in its unbounded continuity. Hence . . . men gifted with human freedom, and that animals and plants possess something of freedom, each in accord with its structural form. With the constraint of life, freedom suffers until it ceases.

Man is composed of soul, mind and body. . . . The inmost soul of man is near placed with reference to the Spiritual Sun . . . (and this proximity, brings about) man's immortality . . . the soul is super conscious. Conscious life is a strict predicate of the human mind."

What may not be clear is that from the first or highest to the last or lowest enclosure, the Lord was always discretely separate from His creation. The last of these enclosures in nature "which suffered a total deprivation of life" was the first moment for the universe, "the Big Bang," which is nothing but a discretely correspondent image in the whole cascade of the Lord's purpose: a heaven from the human race.

In light of the discrete separations, as mentioned above, could random evolution and natural selection be admitted here as a reflection of the limited freedom given to living creatures? I think Dr. Reuben Bell has the answer:

What if the "randomness" were the operation of order, on a grand scale – so grand that we could not appreciate it because we are inside the system? What if order were the forms, the inherent way things are related? (Intelligent Default, Pg. 123. Reuben P. Bell)

From the first nano-second of the Big Bang there is order in what is apparent chaos. George Smoot won the Nobel Prize for the work on the COBE project to find the background radiation that proved the Big Bang. He describes those first moments in astronomical terms. "At a ten-millionth of a trillionth of a trillionth of a trillionth (10⁻⁴²) of a second, after the Big Bang . . . all the universe of which we can observe today was the tiniest fraction of the size of a proton."

The uses of all created things ascend by degrees from last things to man. (Divine Love and Wisdom 65)

A relation to man deducible from . . . the mineral kingdom . . . is seen in its endeavour to perform uses. When a seed falls into the bosom of the earth, she cherishes it with nourishment from every source, so that it may shoot up and present itself in a form representative of man. . . . This does not arise from the heat of this world's sun but from life operating through that heat. (Ibid. 61)

As creation evolves through billions of years from the mineral to the vegetable and animal kingdoms its forms (uses) seem to carry intelligence, which appear to be the operation of nature, but every aspect of its incredible variety is a natural image of the spiritual world.

It is the constant teachings of the Writings that material substances are not part of the living embodiment of any organism that is grown from seed. The function of the mineral kingdom is to clothe, fix and render permanent the real living body of any vegetable or animal creation. The real body of any living creature is a form of use. If we identify the living organism with the material substances that clothe it, we fail to see the Divine purpose for which it is created. (Bishop George de Charms)

During the slow pace of evolution there have been very large (the first moment of organic life) and relatively swift mutations (as in the Cambrian explosion when almost all fauna began to exist) which drastically shortened the timespan for the appearance of humans on earth.

There are unfathomable moments when forms (uses) appear that have no preceding mutational history. They arrive fully formed – as in the “irreducible complexity” that Michael Behe has discovered in biology. (See his *Edge of Evolution*.) I explain this more fully in a short essay presented in *New Church Life*, July/August 2023, *Can Science Help Those Who Doubt the Existence of God?* in which I give a diagram of the bacterial flagellum. Behe argues that the loss of any one of these protein parts would result in complete loss of motor function. Thus, that the motor is “irreducibly complex.” It could never have come from a precursor system.

Here it seems nature presents a unique opportunity for form to skip the slow accretion required by Darwin – a slow accretion that even staunch Darwinists like Richard Dawkins point out would not have given time for the appearance of man.

Had the Divine not left us free, albeit with the conatus within toward the Divine Human, we as part of nature would have been automata. This impetus is literally of infinite importance to us as it leaves us in freedom but gently encourages us toward the spiritual. The Lord’s constant influx vivifies all forms of life. It is why Gerard Manley Hopkins can say with such conviction: “The world is charged with the grandeur of God.”

We are in the spiritual and the natural as we live and breathe in this world. As we go about our daily lives we are in the natural world and also the spiritual world, our five senses are alive through our mind which is spiritual. (See the Rev. Andrew Heilman’s wonderful essay, *Conservation is Perpetual Creation*.)

| *The two worlds are not worlds, but two levels of the same reality –*

from inert matter through a series of intermediates, to the Divine form, cascading into creation according to an implicit order giving rise to natural laws that govern the structure and function of the universe, and all that is within it. (Intelligent Default, page 304, Reuben P Bell)

When the planets began to form the Lord's purpose of "a heaven from the human race" became possible. *Ab initio*, at the quantum level, His influx becomes evident in the various uses fulfilled by the first forms; minute particles (quarks, leptons, bosons, gluons, etc.) which begin to become atoms and molecules that make up the mineral kingdom and eventually the vegetable and animal kingdoms.

"Evolution" proceeds through billions of years until the highest aspects of the human mind become an actuality with the potential to become an image of the Divine Human and in time a "likeness" of Him. Each created thing, from particles of sand to the human, to the heavens, is a participant in the whole.

Dawkins' realisation that the earth's lifespan of 4.5 billion years was not enough for human appearance leads us to question the validity of evolution. The *Doctrine of Forms*, however, solves the conundrum as the Lord's influx gives evolution the conatus toward the human.

We have seen that the likely engine of major evolutionary change is not natural selection, but chromosomal rearrangement. But for all these processes, the one essential is complexity – the apparent propensity of matter to build up, into more and more complex forms, resulting ultimately in living forms that evolve each into more complex organisms." (Reuben Bell, Intelligent Design, page 319)

Some may argue that this influx, this conatus, this impetus we talk about that directs nature, is just another form of "creationism" or pantheism that maintains that God is part of nature; but Bishop N.D. Pendleton's explanation, based on the Writings, shows that God is discretely separate from His creation. Only human beings escape a form of determinism and animals are born into the knowledge of their lives but they do have a degree of freedom.

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potential to become an
image of the
Divine Human.*

We humans are both natural and spiritual beings. The nexus between the natural and the spiritual is crucial in understanding the Lord's discrete influx into His creation. As He sees us awaken freely to the spiritual sun,

so nature turns toward the corresponding natural sun in its impetus toward fulfilling its uses.

The uses that natural forms fulfil grow through billions of years until they manifest so cogently in the incredible complexity of the human genome and its “developmental gene regulatory networks.” Such staggering complexity, behaving with apparent intelligence, should give any atheist pause for thought. It has caused at least one, the well-known British philosopher Anthony Flew, to renounce atheism after 50 years staunchly advocating it.

Now, is it obvious that mutations helped to bridge the gap between apes and the first humans, and these first hominids certainly had a reasonable resemblance to apes. According to scientists, they first appeared on earth some six million years ago when various species arose. Today the genetic difference between apes and homo sapiens is measured to be less than 2% but this does not make an ape almost human, as man is literally infinitely different from an ape.

With brute animals the case is similar to that of men with that of influxes and correspondences, namely that there is an influx from the spiritual world and an afflux from the material world by which they are held together and live; but the very operation exhibits itself in different ways in accordance with the forms of their souls and thence their bodies. (Arcana Coelestia 3646)

Our souls and minds, when leaving this earth, go on to live to eternity. In other words, the ratio between 0 and 1, between human and animal, is infinite. This difference could possibly be explained as a gigantic mutation in the order of what Michael Behe calls “irreducible complexity,” where there are no precursor steps to its appearance. But he is referring to small elements of an organism, not the huge difference between man and apes.

If we follow the Darwinian idea of a slow transition from ape to man, no matter how long it takes it would mean that inevitably the first man would have animal parents. This strikes any fair-minded person as shockingly unfair, as the parents would die as any other animal and the offspring would live eternally. However, if the Behe paradigm were possible, it would do away with this objection.

When it comes to the first men on earth, often referred to as Preadamites, do the Writings give us any clues as to their possible animal forbears? The Rev. Dr. Hugo Odhner tells us that Preadamites were possibly

rude and elemental expressions of the natural loves and untutored instances of a humanity which perhaps was not yet, and perhaps already existed as a race of beings in an embryonic infancy not yet matured into real self-consciousness – not yet born into its destined immortality; whose God-offered souls had not yet been accepted

as their personal possession; whose will and understanding were involuntary tools of God, even as those of the unborn babe – and thus returned to God when their bodies died.”

Surely it could not be at the behest of so primitive a creature to accept or reject that most precious “God-offered” soul. This explanation seems to me to accept the gradual evolution from beast to man and, of course, also suggests that a stillborn child does not go on to heaven, but their souls are “returned to God.” A controversial topic I don’t mean to get into.

Dr. Odhner continues:

We do not know our individual past, still less the origin of man . . . let us then, be bold in this our ignorance, and patient in the knowledge and steady light of doctrine that we may have. For impatience is barren of any spiritual offspring, unless we count the cheap conceits of knowing all there is to know – a dangerous assumption, fostering fantasy and fatal progress – a bubble of an idea, liable to be pricked at any time by the passing breeze.

Wonderful advice and beautifully expressed, which the reader may feel I should have heeded but when I think how far we have come and how clever some of our New Church scientists and theologians are, could I not challenge them?

What a piece of work is a man! How noble in reason! How infinite in faculty! In form and moving how express and admirable! In action, how like an angel! In apprehension, how like a god! The beauty of the world, the paragon of animals.

Is Shakespeare’s *Hamlet* far off the mark? Hasn’t he emphasised the fact that in creating man the Lord has created something potentially magnificent? A celestial angel. When an animal dies, it dies. We are born ignorant but when we die, we will live forever.

Scientists unaware of eternal life may see the difference as being “consciousness,” which they consider a miracle, (a kind of epiphenomenon, I presume) but it is our *self-consciousness* that is the miracle, our ability to think about our own thought that gives us the freedom to change the course of our thought and action.

The materialists can’t accept that this is a gift from God. They can’t allow a “Divine foot” into the cloistered walls of their methodology. Where is the answer to this difference between animals and men, this conundrum? How could animals become human?

I have searched for an answer and think I have found the spiritual answer. In his work on *The Function for which the Natural World has been Created*,

Bishop George de Charms said:

As the Writings plainly teach, the souls of both plants and animals originate in the third “spiritual atmosphere” or the atmosphere of the natural heaven. On the other hand, the souls of men are formed by the Lord in the two higher atmospheres – those of the celestial and spiritual heavens. Plants and animals therefore have but one degree of spiritual life, while human beings have three degrees of the mind.

This makes humans infinitely different from animals. Is there not a scientific answer that will not make the transition between animal and human seem so very unfair? Perhaps there is another clue? It now appears true that new species come about through top-down evolution, (the use) of a creature exists before it is assembled and can exist. The Doctrine of Forms plays a crucial role in explaining this phenomenon. New Church scientists can now use their knowledge of the doctrine to reveal its great truths:

Natural forms originate from the First, the Lord, from His spiritual Sun by means of its light and heat the universe was created from first to last. (True Christian Religion 33)

Fortunately, we now have the discoveries of “Intelligent Design” scientists who explain top-down creation at length in Stephen Meyer’s *Darwin’s Doubt*. As Darwinism would have it, the painfully slow accretion and ordering of parts to form a complex animal by bottom-up evolution just does not work. The extraordinary complexity of “developmental gene regulatory networks” and “irreducible complexity” display palpable evidence of the Doctrine of Forms working to shape nature.

I believe we should embrace brilliant theistic scientists of the calibre of Behe and Meyer with open arms. I obviously disagree with Reuben Bell on the question of Intelligent Design. These are men of wonderful scientific knowledge with a passion for revealing truths in line with their Christian belief.

Of course, the Writings often refer to our “animalistic natures” and the depths to which we can descend in states of evil, which may lead us to conclude that we did indeed spring from brute beasts. Our beginnings were almost certainly “red in tooth and claw,” but there must have been a degree of innocence in the early humans; otherwise it seems impossible that something as magnificent as the Most Ancient Church could have arisen.

But there is some help as the Rev. Ormand Odhner points out, the Writings do reveal a partial description of these first humans. (I’m not certain where to find it.)

They did not speak with words, possibly not with sounds. They had none of the rudiments of civilization. They ate no meat. Their

breathing was different from ours. They lived as wild animals. They were in ignorance and, naturally, falsities. They had no conjugal love. They had not heard of God. Their great distinguishing quality was that they had no evil. They had what we called instinct. They knew spontaneously how to live on earth, and later, how to live for heaven.

It appears to me that modern science, far from destroying our belief in God, corroborates His existence with every new discovery, as it opens a cornucopia of corroborating evidence. But this does not solve my problem: how did our most early forbears become human? How was man gifted an eternal soul and not have been parented by mortal animals?

Is there any new evidence or must we, as Dr. Odhner, so wisely says:

Be bold in our ignorance, and patient in the knowledge and steady light of doctrine (and accept that impatience is barren of any spiritual offspring . . . the cheap conceit of knowing all . . . a bubble of an idea, liable to be pricked at any time by the passing breeze.

It appears to me that modern science, far from destroying our belief in God, corroborates His existence with every new discovery, as it opens a cornucopia of corroborating evidence.

DONALD RIDGWAY was born in Durban, South Africa, in 1940. His interest in the arts led him to London at age 21 for three years of work in theater. Back in South Africa he joined the SA Broadcasting Corporation as an announcer for 35 years as actor and director for stage, radio and television. In 2002 he returned to England



where four of his children still live, two in South Africa and one in New Zealand. He recently moved to France. He says he left the church for a long period "and wandered in a wilderness of spiritual doubt" before realizing he could not exist "without the sublime logic of the Heavenly Doctrine and its magnificent revelation of the interior sense of the Word." Contact: donaldridgway2904@hotmail.com



FROM THE BISHOP'S OFFICE

“Our Sole Purpose”

The Rt. Rev. Peter M. Buss Jr.

“Sole purpose.” One of the most inspiring teachings in the Heavenly Doctrines uses the striking phrase, “the sole purpose,” calling us to consider what should be our central life’s ambition:

The sole purpose for which people are born is that they may perform a use to the community they are in, and to their neighbor while they live in the world, and in the next life may perform a use in accord with the Lord’s gracious purposes. (Arcana Coelestia 1103.2)

Our “sole purpose” gets us thinking about goals, achievement, focus and direction – all in a spiritual frame. There is intentionality and even ambition in there too. So is meaning, fulfillment, centeredness and blessing. I think of someone doing what they’re uniquely suited to do, like a musical composer in the zone of creativity, with her mind trained on the flow of chords bringing to reality the way it all harmonizes and builds in her mind.

For us then, “the sole purpose” – the guiding direction, the thing that we’re uniquely gifted at doing, the focus of our creative energy and mental exertion by means of which we bring what is in the mind to reality in harmonious and beautiful ways – is our version of usefulness. The calling is to consider the ways we can contribute usefully within our community and with our neighbors – and there are countless ways of doing so – and let the Lord expand and refine that in ways that extend into eternity.

The Lord Himself gave us a powerful example while in the world. We are reminded that Mary and Joseph found Him, after a three-day somewhat frantic search, in the Temple at age 12, “*sitting in the midst of the teachers, both*

listening to them and asking them questions,” and astonishing them with His answers. (Luke 2:46) But that intellectual insight is not the point. It is the sense of direction that was confirmed within Him in the process that led Him to respond to Mary and Joseph: “*Why did you seek Me? Did you not know that I must be about My Father’s business?*” (vs. 49) What did He mean? It’s hard for us to grasp fully the Divine mindset reflected here, but one passage of many in the Heavenly Doctrines gives some insight:

While He lived in the world the Lord was engaged repeatedly in conflicts brought about by temptations, and was repeatedly victorious. . . . The Lord was filled repeatedly with an inmost confidence and faith that, because it was pure love out of which He was fighting for the salvation of the whole human race, He could not but be victorious. (Arcana Coelestia 1812; cf. Heavenly Doctrine 302)

Suffice to say that the Lord is the perfect example of “sole purpose” put into action – of a Divine mind and heart entirely devoted to the salvation of the whole human race.

Let us turn to the ways we are called to follow that example. We do so by engaging with as much energy and devotion as we can muster in a life of spiritual purpose. That involves learning for a purpose, praying or worshiping for a purpose, repenting for a purpose, and ultimately serving with purpose.

Learning for a purpose. It starts with our version of exactly what we see with the Lord – learning His will for our lives within the pages of His Word. In our natural realm, we have all had experiences of engaging diligently in learning with a specific outcome in mind. Consider taking a drivers ed class and pouring over a “rules of the road” manual from the state in which you live for the purpose of obtaining a driver’s license. We willingly take in information on road signs, safe distances to follow other cars, the specific things to be vigilant about while driving, and many other things so that we can achieve our goal. Or take the example of learning a foreign language. Tremendous effort can go into vocabulary, conjugations, conversational exchanges, and pronunciation so that we may converse with others in that language.

How much more important is this focused learning when it comes to spiritual life? A teaching in this regard explains the words of Scripture: “*To him who thirsts I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely.*” (Revelation 21:6) “*This symbolically means that to those who desire truths for some useful spiritual purpose, the Lord will give of Himself through the Word everything conducive to that useful purpose.*” (Apocalypse Revealed 889)

We are given the example of a priest:

| *If a priest is prompted by the good of the priesthood, which is to*

provide for the salvation of souls, to teach the way to heaven, and to lead those whom he teaches, then to the extent that he is prompted by that good, thus by a love of it and desire for it, he acquires the truths he needs for him to teach and by which to lead. (Doctrine of Life 39)

The same invitation and opportunity are before all of us, to turn to the Word for guidance and instruction in how to be of service. A teacher wishing to bring New Church concepts into her classroom will find answers to that thirst. Parents wishing to raise their children with the Lord and the things of spiritual life in mind will discover the truths and resources that can help them serve. More generally any of us who turn to the Word to find guidance on our life's purpose will discover the ingredients of true wisdom.

Praying for a purpose. Next, we reflect that it is the voice of the Lord Himself that we hear in the pages of His Word. It follows that it is to Him that we should turn, and we do so by the simple act of prayer.

Again, we turn to the Lord Himself as an example. At the beginning of His adult ministry, after He had called some of His disciples and had begun to teach and heal, we learn of Him rising very early one morning, “long before daylight” retreating to a solitary place to pray. (*Mark 1:35*) As with Mary and Joseph in the story mentioned earlier, the disciples went looking for Him. It was Peter who said when they finally found Him, “Everyone is looking for you,” to which the Lord responded: “*Let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there also, because for this purpose I have come forth.*” (*Mark 1:37-38*) What a wonderful example of praying for a purpose, of taking time in the beginning of a day to strengthen Himself for the “sole purpose” for which He came into the world.

The questions come to us then: how active is our prayer life; and how focused is it? We know that we are to pray, but how often do we place ourselves before the Lord at the beginning of any given day with the ardent prayer that He help us to be focused on a life of useful service? We can imagine ourselves drawing on the Scriptures, again using the Lord's own example, saying to the Lord, “*Nevertheless not my will, but Thine be done*” today (*Luke 22:42*) – and being more open that day to the Lord's providence as our guide?

It is also within our grasp to place before the Lord a specific project or use on which we would like to make progress, with the intention of drawing on His wisdom and energy and inspiration. We might all agree that the Lord is able to flow into a humble and open heart with as much of His Divine energy and wisdom that we can absorb – giving to us a full response to our prayers for any useful purpose. As we read in the Psalms: “*Delight yourself also in the Lord, and He shall give you the desires of your heart.*” (*37:4*)

Repenting for a purpose. Of course, sometimes the answer to our

prayers, or the insight into the most useful thing we can do to be more capable of serving, is to repent. One of the earliest and most repeated messages of the Lord's ministry was to: "*repent, for the kingdom of God is at hand.*" (Matthew 4:17)

Casting our minds back on what we have explored so far, if we do spend time within the pages of the Lord's Word, we will be reminded of the things that are forbidden to which we incline. When we turn to the Lord in prayer, that His will be done today, we may feel the pangs of conscience reminding us that it is time – time to go to battle against our worldly ambitions that are essentially self-oriented, or against our propensity to belittle when we feel threatened, or against our wandering eye and willingness to entertain lust, or against our desire to be seen as right and to win the argument at any cost.

We all recognize our flaws and spiritual weaknesses. Despite our desire and ability to serve, or our innate kindness, or the ways in which the Lord leads us to exhibit integrity, we know that we have spiritual work to do.

In this regard I bring forward a fascinating passage in the Heavenly Doctrines that I refer to as the "surgery passage." It's actually about self-compulsion and repentance, but uses an allusion to surgery to make the point:

Take for example one who is willing to risk death for the sake of some particular end, or one who is willing to endure physical pain for the sake of their health. There is a willingness and so a certain freedom in those actions. . . . So also with those who compel themselves to do what is good. (Arcana Coelestia 1937:4)

Many of us have reflected on loved ones, or ourselves, who get to a certain point that the pain of going through a surgical procedure is less than the pain of continuing with the ill health of our current state. It's the same in our spiritual lives. The pain we see ourselves causing, or the agony of our plagued conscience, is eventually significant enough that we are willing to embrace the steps of repentance. So it is, in our quest for a life of spiritual purpose, that we go through the steps necessary to get there. We come before the Lord with a genuine and heartfelt desire to change for the better – to sacrifice something that has brought destructive pleasure, for the sake of our relationships, our marriage, our usefulness, our salvation.

Serving with purpose. "*The sole purpose for which [we] are born is that [we] may perform a use to the community [we] are in, and to [our] neighbor while [we] live in the world.*" (Arcana Coelestia 1103.2) We have explored some vital dimensions of that calling from the Lord to a life of spiritual purpose.

There is the devotion to spiritual learning. On any given day we can open ourselves to the Lord's teachings. With a consistent attention to this "fountain of the water of life" we will hear the many things that the Lord wants us to know – the perspectives He wishes us to embrace, the things that are hurtful

“OUR SOLE PURPOSE”

and forbidden and why, and some specific insights into the issues on which we are trying to make progress.

This is especially true if accompanied by prayer and a life of worshipful devotion. When we humbly place ourselves in the presence of the Lord, which we can also do on any given day, we can be confident that He will flow in. We will feel comfort and centeredness, we will be strengthened, and we will receive answers in exchange for our patient and quiet listening.

And if the calling in those times of prayer is to some avenue of repentance – to turn away from something that has been plaguing us – we can be sure that the Lord will come in with His Divine power to conquer for us, and will also flow in with the opposite good, super-charging our ability to be the useful human being that we long to be.

All of these are parts of a life of spiritual purpose. Our version of our Father’s business is a life of useful service – being the best person we can be for others, so that we can contribute something needed and valuable within the Lord’s kingdom. May we be among those who thirst for the waters of life, trusting that to the extent we set our hearts on some useful spiritual way of serving: *“The Lord will give of Himself through the Word everything conducive to that useful purpose”* (*Apocalypse Revealed* 889), and lead us to serve capably to eternity in accord with His gracious purposes. (*Arcana Coelestia* 1103)

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Mike Tyson and the Seven Churches: Lessons in Overcoming

The Rev. Todd J. Beiswenger

Editors' note: This article was written by the Rev. Todd Beiswenger for the Australian Newsletter before Mike Tyson's return to boxing on November 15. Tyson lost that fight but the lessons gleaned from the Word and the Writings about overcoming in life still apply.

Maybe you heard that Mike Tyson was back in the news. At 58 years old he stepped back into the boxing ring on November 15, against a 31-year-old up-and-coming fighter, Jake Paul, famous for his YouTube channel. It was an odd mash-up of a former heavyweight champ versus an inexperienced fighter half his age. Tyson lost on points.

I find Mike Tyson's life really interesting. He grew up in a broken home, and while his mother tried to support the kids, they were very poor. So, Mike got into all sorts of trouble – mostly stealing and fighting – which got him into juvenile detention. There he found a boxing program.

He thought he was tough and was big for his age, so he took on another inmate in a supervised match. Tyson lost, badly. The other guy was well trained, Tyson not at all. But to his credit, he wanted to learn, and learn he did. It wasn't a path he travelled without difficulties or setbacks, but over the next few years he learned patience and perseverance as he trained to be the youngest heavyweight champion ever.

The plan worked. He turned 18 and demolished opponents for two years before getting a shot at the title in 1986. He knocked out the defending champ in the first round and held the title for four years – a long time in the boxing world. After losing the title in 1990, his life started falling apart. A rape case was brought against him; he was convicted and spent three years in prison.

After his release he started working to regain the title, which he did. This time he held it for only nine months, losing in an upset to Evander Holyfield. His career record was 45 wins, two losses. Over the next several years he tried to win the title back, and was winning, but lost the title fight each time. His

career ended with 50 wins and six losses.

People debate where he ranks among the all-time greats; 50-6 is an incredible career. Not many have lost the title and regained it as he did. But the reason I'm writing this is because of the comments of one man: Teddy Atlas.

You've probably never heard of him. He is a boxing trainer who is really good at his job. He's trained several big-name fighters -- one of whom was a young Mike Tyson. When asked how great Tyson was, he said: "I don't know if he was ever great. I know he was sensational. I know he was the greatest mix of speed and power ever. I know he was one of the greatest punchers from either side of the plate, left or right."

That sounds "great" to me. But Atlas added that while Tyson had a lot of ability, "greatness" is more than talent. He cited Tyson's upset loss to Buster Douglas in 1990, and a pair of upset defeats to Evander Holyfield in 1996 and 1997.

"A fight is not a fight until there's something to overcome," he said. "Until then, it's just an athletic exhibition. Yeah, who's a better athlete? Who's got more quick-twitch fibers? Who's more developed in those physical areas?"

"But a fight is not a fight until there's something to overcome. So, if you go by my definition, not Webster's -- pretend it means something -- Mike Tyson was only in five, six fights in his life. The fights where there was something to overcome, he didn't overcome it." So, despite the 50-6 record, Atlas sees Tyson's true record at 0-6 because those six fights were the only ones of his career where there was something to overcome.

Is Teddy Atlas right? Is "greatness" less about talent and more about a person's ability to overcome? A few things come to mind, the first of which are the seven churches of Revelation. The letter written to Pergamos says: "To him who overcomes I will give some of the hidden manna to eat. And I will give him a white stone, and on the stone a new name written which no one knows except him who receives it."

Who does God value? The church with talent? No. The church that overcomes.

Thyatira is told something similar -- to "hold fast what you have till I come. And he who overcomes, and keeps My works until the end, to him I will give power over the nations . . . as I also have received from My Father; and I will give him the morning star."

Laodicea is another church told to overcome. In fact, if you go through the book of *Revelation* there are five other places where we're told that the person who overcomes will receive some reward. So "overcoming" is important.

But what about talent? How does God regard our talent? We

*A fight is not a fight until
there's something
to overcome.*

talk regularly about our hereditary evils, but the fact is we also have hereditary good, which I regard as a “natural talent” for good. Some people do start out with a better disposition than others. You might equate it to one person being just naturally more athletic than another. So, what about a person who dies as a child and ends up in the highest heaven as a result of not corrupting himself through a life in this world? Are such people really “better?” Are they “greater” than lower angels, or have they just had less to overcome?

Here’s a specific example:

There was one, the son of a king, who died in childhood and grew up in heaven, who held this opinion. Therefore he was let down into that life of evils into which he was born, and he then perceived from the sphere of his life that he had a disposition to domineer over others, and regarded adulteries as of no account; these evils he had inherited from his parents; but after he had been brought to recognize his real character he was again received among the angels with whom he had before been associated. (Heaven and Hell 342)

We are told that this isn’t an isolated incident just for the children of royalty. In reading the whole passage it seems like all children raised in heaven at some point or another are let down into their lower self to see their inherited evils. When I think of these people as highest angels, I start to see Atlas’ point, because these angels may have a great ability, but what have they had to overcome? Or perhaps they’ve had similar things to overcome, but how hard is it for them to overcome them while being raised in heaven by the highest angels?

The Writings say that children raised in heaven

“are content with the few and paltry things presented to them, and find delight in them; they have no solicitude about food and clothing, and none about the future; they do not look to the world and covet many things from it; they love their parents and nurses and their child companions with whom they play in innocence; they suffer themselves to be led; they give heed and obey.” (Heaven and Hell 277)

To me, all of this isn’t a description of people who have had to dig deep to overcome their natural tendencies. Being good wasn’t hard for them.

Laodicea is another church told to overcome. If you go through Revelation there are five other places where we’re told that the person who overcomes will receive some reward.

In the Gospels, Jesus actually tells us who is the greatest of men. It's John the Baptist. When I think of his life, I think of a man who wasn't necessarily the most talented, but a man who had to overcome. Similarly, Jesus never told us of His amazing talent and abilities – although He did put them on display. But He did say: "I have overcome the world."

So maybe Atlas is right: true greatness isn't a matter of talent, but of one's ability to overcome. It seems to align with what the Word teaches. I think it's a useful perspective to hold onto as well. It's easy to get down on ourselves for our failings, shortcomings, and lack of talent, especially as we see others excelling. But when those demons tell us how untalented we are, it is probably a good approach to say: "Yes, I may not be the most talented, but I can overcome, and I am going to overcome you too."

And with that, you will be great in the eyes of Teddy Atlas – and, believe it or not, the eyes of the Lord too.



THE REV. TODD J. BEISWENGER has just taken over as pastor of the Olivet Society in Toronto, Ontario, Canada, where he lives with his wife, Jenn (Jorgenson) and their son. He was previously pastor in Hurstville, New South Wales, Australia. Contact: pastor@olivetnewchurch.org

General Church In-service Blazing a Whole New Trail in Pittsburgh

Rebekah Russell

Director, General Church Education



General Church Teachers at the Pittsburgh In-Service

Periodically, General Church Education organizes and funds a professional development event for General Church teachers in the form of an in-service. This allows the teachers from a variety of schools to learn, collaborate with, and get to know other teachers in the system. Teachers often describe these as useful and energizing – even fun. A special fund set up to support teacher excellence (the Jacob Schoenberger Fund) is used to make these events happen, along with financial support from the schools, and some of GCED’s working budget.

This year, the Pittsburgh New Church School both hosted the event in October and presented the program on learning challenges. The school has maintained its identity as a New Church school in form and function even

as the teachers have done extensive training to become trained educators for students with dyslexia, dyscalculia, dysgraphia and ADHD.

They are eager to share what they have learned with the other teachers in the system who can benefit from this knowledge in their own classrooms. GCED is tremendously grateful to the teachers and PNCS volunteers who made this happen.

The report below from Julie Uber, a long-time teacher at PNCS, describes the event in more detail.

By Julie Uber

Pittsburgh just had the honor of hosting 60 teachers from other New Church schools for a two-day in-service. The theme could have been: “What are they doing in Pittsburgh?” Really, they all came to hear more about how to teach struggling readers. It was wonderful -- so inspiring for our faculty, that these knowledgeable and dedicated teachers looked to PNCS for leadership. The feedback we received was overwhelmingly positive!

Our hope is that more New Church schools will invest in training and equipping their teachers with the skills needed to help those who are challenged in reading, who make up approximately 20% of the population. There is a huge need for schools like ours.

Children with dyslexia are usually well aware that they do not read the same way that many of their peers do. They can't. Certain pathways in their brains don't work in the same way their neurotypical classmates' brains do. These children, diagnosed or undiagnosed, struggle. They progress down a sad slope of eroding confidence and negative comparisons. They begin to internalize words they might hear: “You are slow!” “You'll never be able to do this.” “You're stupid!” They begin to believe all this as undeniable truth.

The bottom of this slope is called hopelessness. Hopelessness is not sustainable. The Lord does not wish for anyone to feel this way. He tells us in the Word, in *Jeremiah 29:11*: “For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says Jehovah, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you hope and a future.” Also in

Our hope is that more New Church schools will invest in training and equipping their teachers with the skills needed to help those who are challenged in reading – 20% of the population. There is a huge need for schools like ours.

Isaiah 41:13: "For I, the Lord your God, will hold your right hand, saying to you, 'Fear not, I will help you.'"

Studies show children can be helped by systematic, sequential instruction in reading and phonemic awareness. Their brains are plastic enough that new pathways can be established. They can also be helped by learning with many of their senses, more than just reading and writing.

Small class sizes make a huge difference because a teacher can assist each child in the areas where he or she most needs help. The students can both learn to read, and read to learn.

It is a process that does not happen overnight. The children are hauling baggage: negative self-talk, poor self-image, doubt and denial, and a need to hide so no one notices that they are fragile. My sister-in-law, Gabby, created some signs especially for the middle schoolers, about some of their difficulties. There are five of these signs altogether, combatting with gentle humor the feeling of despair:

S omeone
T alented,
U nder
P ressure,
I mproving
D aily.

I am

Q uite
U nstoppable;
I am
T itanium.

I ntelligent

G irls and guys
I mprove
V arious
E fforts

U sing
P erseverance

It's important to establish a sense of safety for the children at the new school they've just arrived in. We notice that there is a change in posture and behavior over the first few weeks, as the new student begins to realize that this is a safe environment. We work very hard to make sure that the children are kind to one another, especially about academic struggles. If a child feels safe enough to come out of his or her shell, then good teaching can happen, and good learning will result.

Many of our transfer students have expressed to their parents this feeling that our school is not like other schools. We are so happy to hear it! One of the ways we preserve the environment where learning can happen is by making the children aware that everyone has struggles, and that no one can do everything perfectly the first time. We use the word "YET," as in I'm not very good at that . . . yet. This helps preserve the idea that growth is possible.

The faculty and staff of PNCS would like to thank everyone in our society who helped with all the logistics of hosting a big event like this in-service. Food, drink, sharp pencils, chairs, extra toilet paper and tissues, desserts – there were many pieces that all came together seemingly effortlessly. Thank you also to the students who helped clean up the building, and whose artwork decorated the rooms. Their growth and progress make it all so very worthwhile!

I would also like to emphasize the joy and the sense of mission I feel – and all of us who teach at PNCS – because of our decision to expand our New Church school to include children who want and need to learn how to read. We have found a new and vitally important role in the world, serving our neighbor in a tremendously useful way. We want to serve them well because children are a blessing from the Lord.

We take to heart the quote from *Deuteronomy 6:6*: "*These words, which I command you this day, shall be on your heart; and you shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise up.*"

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BOOK REVIEW

The Heavenly Doctrines as Systematic Theology

The Rev. Prescott A. Rogers

(Reviewed by the Rev. Michael D. Gladish)

This new book, just published by (and for) the General Church, puts an exclamation point on the Rev. Prescott Roger's long career of teaching the systematic theology of the New Church to students in the Bryn Athyn College and Theological School. It is a condensed but comprehensive review of five principal doctrines developed in the Heavenly Doctrines penned by Emanuel Swedenborg, showing how they all interconnect and relate to each other as one systematic whole.

This paperback, of about 150 pages, begins with a general introduction to the project, and with a chapter on Swedenborg himself as the instrument of these revelations. A neat table of contents lays out the plan of the book, and includes detailed references to subheadings, terms and concepts outlined in the book.

Filled with diagrams to illustrate the concepts, much of the material will be familiar to readers of Prescott's commentary, *A Companion to Divine Love and Wisdom*, published in 2018, but now presented as an integration of all the major doctrines expounded in the doctrinal works from the Last Judgment in 1757, right through to *True Christian Religion*, published in 1770.

As Prescott has said, he was told years ago by a professor of theology at Temple University that these doctrines constitute the greatest example of an integrated system of theology that the world has ever seen. This got him thinking about the Writings in a whole new way!

First of all, in chapter two, Prescott discusses "the philosophical doctrines," and shows how the underlying concepts of essence, form, order, degrees, influx and correspondences are interwoven into all the particular teachings in all the doctrinal books. Then he demonstrates in detail how this works. So the book is, in fact, a sweeping review of almost every important spiritual concept elucidated in the books of the Second Advent. It's not light reading, but for

anyone with the specific interest, it is a concentrated, potent review of how all of these life-saving teachings correlate into a unified whole.

The five principal doctrines covered in the book are those about the Lord, the Word, regeneration, the Lord's kingdom (in heaven and on earth), and marriage (for which he prefers the traditional use of the term, conjugal love).

Incidentally, the reference in the book's title to the Heavenly Doctrines in the plural, rather than the singular form, is deliberate, even though some in the church these days favor the singular as a way of emphasizing the comprehensive nature of the whole revelation. But the author makes the point that individual topics within the whole are also referred to as doctrines (as in, "the doctrine of the Lord"), and his point is to show how they all make one unified whole, one "systematic theology."

Another thing some readers may notice is the author's occasional reference to "Swedenborg's" works, and even to the idea that Swedenborg may have made some mistakes, or developed his thinking over time in some non-essential concepts in "his" books. This may be jarring to those of us who really believe every word in "the Writings" was inspired by the Lord Himself, but again, the author defends his view on the basis that this is a rational revelation, couched in the language and context of the age in which it was written (as, he says, all revelations are).

He also stresses that whereas the Lord Himself is the Source of all the teachings, He entrusted Swedenborg with the important job of choosing the words to express these teachings. (This is one of the reasons we often find significant changes in the manuscripts from the first drafts to the second and final drafts of the books.) So, as Prescott suggests, some concessions need to be made for an ongoing development of the writer's understanding. But he is careful to point out that this only applies in matters of worldly knowledge, and not to what Swedenborg was taught directly by the Lord through angels. (See *True Christian Religion* 779)

Overall, the book is heavily philosophical in its discussion of the issues, and so may not appeal to the casual reader, but for anyone who wants confirmation of the universal, comprehensive nature of the revelation, it is a *tour de force*, fully demonstrating how it all "works" and why the whole panoply of teaching is worthy of any scholarly critique. Indeed, the author has in mind two future, complementary editions of the book, especially accommodated as a textbook for a course in (any) theological school, and then also for the general public, whereas this present edition is specifically for general readers with an existing New Church background.

Finally, just a few words on the conclusion, the last chapter of the book: here, following all the detailed explanations of specific teachings, you will find the neatest, tidiest summary of New Church theology that you could

imagine, tying all the thousands of pages of the individual doctrines into one unified package. If this doesn't inspire the reader to read more, and read more carefully, possibly nothing else will.

That said, and acknowledging the challenge, this reader was left with a couple of questions: first, the author asserts that the New Church will someday grow to "fill the earth," as the Ancient and Most Ancient Churches had done. This appears to be based largely on a reading of the prophecy in *Daniel 2:35* that takes the word, earth, literally, which, while hopeful and optimistic, does not seem consistent with the whole thrust of exposition in the doctrines.

And second, in a startling sentence right near the end, we are advised that someday, based on a thorough understanding of the correspondences revealed in the Writings, New Church people may be able to perform miracles, as was done in the Ancient Church. Really? In spite of a general teaching in *Coronis 53* that seems to argue against this idea? Well, OK, maybe. But it's one of those things that should make you think – and read more deeply and broadly in the doctrines.

The book may be purchased on Amazon.com or from the bookstore listed on the General Church website, NewChurch.org, selling for \$10 plus tax. Some of the book centers in our north American churches may also have it available for sale.

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Orphan Passages

Slightly Modified Council of the Clergy Presentation June 2024

The Rt. Rev. Brian W. Keith

One of the key responsibilities of the priesthood is to “teach people according to the doctrine of their church from the Word” (*New Jerusalem and its Heavenly Doctrine* 315), for “it is not doctrine but soundness and purity of doctrine, consequently the understanding of the Word, that establishes the church.” (*True Christian Religion* 245) And these doctrines are to “be collected into a one.”

The case is the same in general with the church when it is being set up again: the doctrinal things of good and truth must be collected into a one, for it is on these that it is built. Moreover, doctrinal things have a connection with and mutual respect to each other, and therefore unless they are first collected into a one, there will be a defect, and that which is lacking must be supplied by man’s rational; and how blind and illusory this is in spiritual and Divine things, when its conclusions are from itself, has been abundantly shown above. For this reason there has been given to the church the Word, which contains all the doctrinal things of good and truth. (*Arcana Coelestia* 3786:2; see also 10105:2, 4479, 6627, 6222:3, 7233:3)

The importance of comparing passages to get a full view of any doctrine is further emphasized here:

The internal sense is not only that sense which lies concealed in the external sense, as has heretofore been shown, but is also that which results from a number of passages of the sense of the letter rightly collated, and which is discerned by those who are enlightened by the Lord in respect to their intellectual. (*Arcana Coelestia* 7233:3)

This is demonstrated throughout the Heavenly Doctrines. A quick scan of *Arcana Coelestia*, *Apocalypse Explained*, or numerous other works will find countless references to the Sacred Scriptures, and cross references to other passages in the Writings. Most of the material in *The New Jerusalem and Its Heavenly Doctrine* is comprised of references back to the Arcana. And the Writings are filled with mutually supporting ideas, almost as if they were an interconnected web of doctrines.

Both with this as an example, and the professional requirements to cite

one's sources, any doctrinal presentation, and to a lesser extent a sermon, that is going to be taken seriously will be well-anchored with quotes or references to passages in the Heavenly Doctrines and Sacred Scriptures.¹ So it is not uncommon to cite not just one passage, but multiple passages to demonstrate that the idea is commonly taught and the minister is not making something up out of whole cloth.

It is easy to do this because the Writings teach the main principles of the doctrines so often, with such variation, throughout the Heavenly Doctrines that it would be hard to miss the essentials and fall into the various heresies of the previous churches. (Although some claim the Writings are overly repetitious!) A number of passages, rightly collated, are the warp and woof of our doctrinal teaching.

Yet for all of that, what do we do when we cannot find supporting passages, but there appears to be only one passage in the entirety of the Writings that makes a point? I've termed these "orphan passages" to indicate that they do not appear to have any other passages in support.² While they may fit in with, or agree with, the general tenor of doctrine, they express a unique idea. Or, they may be "stand alone" passages where they appear to be disconnected with any other passages, or even a doctrinal train of thought. This is not to say that they are opposed to other teachings, but that there are no other supporting passages.

Initially I had thought there might be a few of these unicorns in the Writings. But the more I studied the more of them I found, to an astonishing extent. Thus, the purpose of this paper is to convey the varied landscape of orphan passages, perhaps making us more aware of them, and even more comfortable using them with confidence.

Puzzling Orphans

One of the challenges of orphan passages can be that because they are not

1 A possible exception here was Bishop George de Charms. While he had done impressive scholarly work throughout his career, toward the end of his life he presented several papers to the Council of the Clergy which were very short (4-5 pages) and virtually without any references at all. After one of these an enthusiastic young minister came up to him and said, "Bishop de Charms, did you know that there's a passage that supports your main point?" The bishop, smiling gently, said, "Yes, I know." Perhaps the wisdom of old age.

2 Some of my colleagues have objected to the term "orphan" as it might be viewed as derogatory or suggest these teachings are somehow invalid. Another image, suggested to me by the Rev. David Holm is that the whole of the teachings of the Writings are like a globe – one can start at any one point and travel around and eventually return to where one began. This illustrates how all the doctrines are connected and mutually supporting. With this image, such orphan passages may be viewed as the mountain peaks, or interesting and unique geologic features that are not found elsewhere on this globe.

expressed elsewhere in the Writings in various ways, which would give us further context or modification, interpreting them can be puzzling. One example of this is *Arcana Coelestia* 6822:

Good can be instilled into another by anyone in his country, but not truth, except by those who are teaching ministers; if others do this, heresies arise, and the church is disturbed and rent asunder.

Who are these “teaching ministers”? (Elliott, in a more interpretive translation, uses this phrase: “only by those who are ministers that teach it.” The Latin is “*qui ministri docentes sunt.*” This translation creates other problems: who are ministers who don’t teach the truth?) This phrase, based on Potts’ more literal translation, has been interpreted as either being limited to ordained clergy only, or anyone authorized by the church to teach, such as all instructors at the Academy, in our other church schools and Sunday Schools, or saying that only a subset of clergy, presumably in academic institutions, should be the scholars who establish doctrine for the rest of the clergy and church. In the absence of any other evidence, it is hard to be certain of any interpretation.

Some statements apparently fly in the face of well-established doctrine:

... man is reborn of the Lord, whereas the Lord not only regenerated Himself, but also glorified Himself, that is, made Himself Divine. (*Arcana Coelestia* 3138:2; cf. 3153) “With the Lord however there was not regeneration, but glorification.”

Such a twist is also found in the teachings on regeneration. In a memorable relation, Swedenborg says “It is a resulting law of order that it is needful for one to lead himself into faith by means of truths from the Word, and into charity by means of good works, *and so reform and regenerate himself.*” (*True Christian Religion* 71:2 emphasis added)

The “so reform and regenerate himself” is startling, especially given *Life* 112: “In a word, one cannot regenerate himself, that is, form in himself a new heart and a new spirit, but the Lord alone [can effect this], who is Himself the Reformer and Regenerator.” However, this is modified a few passages on with an angel speaking: “God is able to regenerate a man spiritually only so far as the man, accordance with his laws, regenerates himself naturally.” (*True Christian Religion* 73:2; cf. also an angel speaking: (*Ibid.* 621:9) “Man consequently has the ability to reform and regenerate himself as if from himself, provided he acknowledges in his heart that it is from the Lord.” (*Apocalypse Revealed* 224:9; *Brief Exposition* 69) Thus, we can presume the initial statement was speaking according to appearances.

And what are we to make of this: “one’s thought from his will produces all

the strength of his body, and if it were inspired by the Lord through His Divine truth, one would have the strength of Samson.” (Arcana Coelestia 10182:6) Is this just hyperbole, suggesting we could have increased strength, or does it really mean we could have Samson’s strength?

Or, a final one from this category: What about the angel’s statement that there are as many natural stars created as there are heavenly societies? (*True Christian Religion* 160) Is this just their speculation which we can take as such, or is there really a one-for-one correspondence between heavenly societies and physical suns?

Favorite Orphans

A number of orphan passages have become my favorites, and I’ve probably used them more frequently than I should have in sermons and presentations. These are often pithy statements that make an important point, such as:

Nor does the Lord require more of the person of the church than to live according to what he knows. (*Arcana Coelestia* 6706)

Love such as the Lord had transcends all human understanding, and is in the highest degree incredible to those who do not know what the heavenly love is in which the angels are. To save a soul from hell, the angels would regard death as nothing, nay, if it were possible *they would undergo hell for that soul.* (*ibid.* 2077; emphasis added)

For what has once been implanted from infancy as holy, *especially if by fathers*, and thus inrooted, the Lord never breaks, but bends, unless it is contrary to order itself. (*Ibid.* 2180:5; emphasis added)

Moreover, when they who are in perception feel compassion, they know that they are admonished by the Lord to give aid. (*Ibid.* 6737)

Wherefore also the Lord provides for the good, who receive His mercy in time, such things as contribute to the happiness of their eternal life; riches and honors for those to whom they are not hurtful; and no riches and honors for those to whom they would be hurtful. Nevertheless, to these latter He gives in time, in the place of honors and riches, to be glad with a few things, and to be more content than the rich and honored. (*Ibid.* 8717:3; cf. *Divine Providence* 354:3 – on different degrees of joy in this world and how one would not be happy with another’s)

[O]ne should not be solicitous about the future, or trust to his own prudence. Wherefore those that are in faith rarely obtain the objects of their desire, while they desire them, but yet, if it be for their good, they obtain them afterwards, when not thinking of them. (*Spiritual Experiences* 3538)

He is not even able to turn His face away from a person and frown upon him. (*True Christian Religion* 56) (Said of the Lord not being capable of anger. Ager translation use “with a stern countenance.”)

See Appendix A for more examples of these types of orphans.

We would surely be diminished if we did not utilize these quotations in our teaching.

Repeated Orphans

This is a somewhat contradictory title. How can an orphan passage be repeated? Well, there are a number of instances when an identical passage can be found elsewhere in the Writings, but I still consider it an orphan because it is the same as the original. Does repetition give it more weight, or give us more certainty when we quote it?

Perhaps the most prominent of these is Swedenborg’s encounter with Mary in the spiritual world:

Once it was granted me to speak with Mary the mother. On a certain occasion she passed by and appeared in heaven above my head in white raiment like silk; and then pausing a little she said that she had been the mother of the Lord, who was born of her; but that He, having become God, had put off everything human that He had derived from her, and that she therefore worshiped Him as her God, and was unwilling that anyone should acknowledge Him as her son, because in Him all is Divine. (*True Christian Religion* 102:3)

This same event, usually word for word, is repeated in *Spiritual Experiences* 5834, *Last Judgment Posthumous* 69, *Continuation of the Last Judgment* 66, and, surprisingly again in *True Christian Religion* 827.

Another essential passage is *Arcana Coelestia* 10325, which famously lists the books of the Bible with an internal sense. We have taken this as definitive regarding the canon of the Old and New Testaments. This passage is exactly repeated in *New Jerusalem and its Heavenly Doctrine* 266 and *White Horse* 16.

Now, we might think that even if this passage did not exist we could have figured it out. *Arcana Coelestia* 2606 lists the books of the Laws and

the Prophets, although without mentioning they have an internal sense. And *Arcana Coelestia* 2921 notes: “in the Word of the New Testament, with the Evangelists and in *Revelation*” – which could be taken as a New Testament list of books in the Word, again, without mentioning having an internal sense. (See also *Arcana Coelestia* 4057, *DeVerbo* 21:2 and *Apocalypse Explained* 514:20 which have the same list; however, *Apocalypse Explained* 815:2 only lists the Gospels.)

While in Swedenborg’s letter to Dr. Beyer, dated April 15, 1766, he says: “With reference to the writings of the Apostles and Paul I have not included these in *Arcana Coelestia*, and this for the reason that they are doctrinal writings, and so are not written in the style of the Word as are the Prophets, David, the Gospels, and the Revelation.”

So, we might have excluded these works from the New Testament canon. However, what then would we make of *True Christian Religion* 158: “But in the Word of the New Testament, both in the Gospels and in the Acts of the Apostles, as also in their Epistles it is mentioned frequently”? (Which is itself an orphan passage!) And of the frequent quoting from these works, particularly in *True Christian Religion* as if they were part of the Word? Surely these and other passages without *Arcana Coelestia* 10325 would have given us enough grist for our doctrinal mills to be arguing about the canon of the Old and New Testaments for a great deal of time!

There is also the somewhat horrific story of parents encouraging their children to fight, apparently closing heaven to them, found in *Arcana Coelestia* 2309 and repeated in *Heaven and Hell* 334. And the act of good conscience for one to withdraw from a political race if it is perceived that the opponent is better qualified is found in *Arcana Coelestia* 9120 and *New Jerusalem and its Heavenly Doctrine* 136 (and virtually identical in *True Christian Religion* 666:2). Finally, there is repetition of the governance series in the *Arcana* and the *Heavenly Doctrine* of the New Jerusalem. This yields several orphans:

They [priests] must teach them according to the doctrine of their church, and they must lead them to live according to it. (*Arcana Coelestia* 10794 = *New Jerusalem and its Heavenly Doctrine* 315)

Priests ought to teach the people, and through truths ought to lead them to the good of life; but still they ought not to compel anyone. (*Arcana Coelestia* 10798 = *New Jerusalem and its Heavenly Doctrine* 318)

He who believes differently from the priest, and makes no disturbance, must be left in peace; but he who makes a disturbance must be separated; for this also belongs to the order for the sake of

which is the priesthood. (*Arcana Coelestia* 10798; = *New Jerusalem and its Heavenly Doctrine* 318) (cf. some earths in universe where evil doers, if they do not repent and change, are cast out, although I don't believe any of these actions are by priests)

These are rather vital teachings, even if the last of the quotes has only been applied once in the history of the General Church.³

Interesting Orphans

Some of the orphans, while not making essential points, nevertheless make interesting statements about various aspects of doctrine. One of the first that comes to mind here is a teaching on our feelings:

We read here and there in the Word that men are questioned as to their state; but the reason is that man believes that no one knows his thoughts, still less the state of his affection. A further reason is that men may have *consolation from being able to express their feelings, which often proves a relief*. (See n. 1701, 1931; *Arcana Coelestia* 2693, emphasis added)

Another fascinating one relates to the course of our thoughts:

A characteristic mark of the evil, is, that the ideas of their thought and speech are wont to commence from good, but they end in evil; and of the good, that the ideas of their thought and speech may commence from evil; but they end in good; for, with the evil, evil is universally dominate, hence they are swayed thither; but, with the good, good is universally dominate, therefore their ideas are swayed thither. (*Spiritual Experiences minor* 4577)

We also learn from an orphan passage that “*the very first speech in every earth was speech by the face, and from two origins there, the lips and the eyes.*” (*Earths in the Universe* 54:2) This adds an interesting wrinkle to the statement that the Lord “conversed face to face” with the most ancients. (*Arcana Coelestia* 49)

A source of natural good is noted, as: “Moreover, some have such good in consequence of ill health and feebleness.” (*Arcana Coelestia* 8002) Imagine, a use of illness is that of instilling more natural good, making us more pliant and friendly. And feebleness, translated “debility of mind” (Latin: *imbecillitate*) by Elliott, can also contribute to natural good. It's not spiritual good, but still something to add to one's life.

Then there is the delightful experience African spirits had:

3 Bishop de Charms separated the Rev. Ernst Pfeiffer from the General Church at the height of the “Hague movement” controversy in the 1930s, from which emerged the Lord's New Church which is Nova Hierosolyma organization.

On a certain occasion their ears were opened so that they heard the singing of a Psalm of David in some place of worship in this world, which affected them with such delight that they too sang along with that congregation. (*Sacred Scripture 108*)

Imagine that when we sing in church that an angelic congregation could be singing along with us!

A concerning orphan is how spirits may influence us on earth. Some have the ability to cause us to be forgetful:

There was something which I had forgotten, and which I seemed to myself anxious to recall to mind, but [certain] spirits were unwilling; wherefore when it was recalled, or was on the point of being recalled, they snatched it away, so that I could not recollect it. (*Spiritual Experiences 3573*)

And, apparently some people can cause the death of others by magically stopping their breathing.

There was detected at another time a crime which he had committed against a woman, whom, perhaps, he had violated; namely that he had killed her by a certain magical art, concerning which the spirits spoke, [saying] that it was a hidden art, though still known to some on earth, and that [some] are able to kill others without the use of any knife, sword or dagger, or other [instrument], and that it was [effected] by a magical stopping of the breath. (*Ibid. 4494; cf. 4539*)

Spiritual World Orphans

While the general contours and phenomena of the spiritual world are well covered in the Writings, many aspects are only reported once. This is perhaps not too surprising given how much exploration and how many experiences Swedenborg had there.

Some have to do with processes to improve people in the spiritual world, such as,

It was granted me to observe one kind of agitation there, that consists in forcing one to speak faster than he can think. This they effected by abstracting the speech from the thought, and by then forcing the spirit to follow their speech, which it is painful to do. By means of such an agitation the slow are inaugurated into a quicker thinking and speaking. (*Arcana Coelestia 5187; see Spiritual Experiences 1014* also)

They who correspond to the mouth are continually desiring to speak, for in speaking they find their greatest pleasure. When they are being perfected they are reduced to this – that they do not speak anything but what is of service to their companions, to the common good, to heaven, and to the Lord. (*Arcana Coelestia* 4803) (Oh, that we might have such a process here on earth!)

Some others have to do with the surroundings. Such as “the angels of the inmost or third heaven dwell in the east upon mountains, where olive trees abound more than all other trees.” (*Apocalypse Explained* 638:6; cf. *Heaven and Hell* 520, where the path to celestial kingdom “appears adorned with olive trees and fruit trees of various kinds.”) Another in the lower heavens consists in cloud interpretation:

There is a like appearance when angels of the higher heavens speak about Divine truths; what they say is then presented to the view of those who are in the lowest heaven under the appearance of a cloud that floats hither and thither; the more intelligent of them know from its movement and brightness and form what the angels of the higher heavens are speaking about with each other. (*Apocalypse Explained* 594)

Or what separates the individual hells from each other:

There are as many hells as there are genera and species of evils, each hell being separated from others as it were by rainstorms, clouds, or waters. In the other life evils and falsities appear before the eyes of spirits as rainstorms and clouds, and also as waters; the falsities from evils of those who have been of the spiritual church and have lived evilly, appear as waters; but the falsities from evils of those who have been of the celestial church, appear as rainstorms. (*Arcana Coelestia* 8137:2)

Also interesting is how our names work in the other world, where “the names used on the earth are not uttered; but the names of the persons who are spoken of are formed from the idea of all things known about them combined into a single word.” (*Apocalypse Explained* 102:2; cf. 892; this is called a mononym) So, Plato, Socrates, Moliere, and even Madonna, Beyoncé and Jewel will be the norm with our names there! Nor do they always stay the same. Consider this:

Within the societies the quality of each one’s state of life is constant, for each one there dwells in a quarter and also at a distance from the center according to the quality of his affection and of his intelligence; therefore his name is in accord with this quality. When,

therefore, the name of anyone in a society is heard his quality is also recognized. . . . *But outside of societies this naming according to one's state of life is not constant; for before a man-spirit enters into any society he passes through many states in order that he may put off the things that disagree with his ruling love and put on such as agree with it, and yet everyone is named according to the state in which he is, and also according to the idea and perception of what his state is. (Apocalypse Explained 676:2, emphasis added; cf Divine Providence 230)*

This may only be while a person is on their way to their heavenly home, but perhaps it occurs when angels occasionally venture outside of their societies.

There are several others, such as when Swedenborg was speaking with angels, “as it were written numbers appeared before my eyes like those seen on paper in bright day, and I perceived that the very things they were speaking of fell into such numbers.” (*Arcana Coelestia* 4495:2). Or: “Moreover, those who bring together truths or falsities so that they cohere appear in the spiritual world as bakers kneading dough, with an oven also near them.” (*Apocalypse Explained* 540:4) Or, while all spirits come into the common spiritual language, at least initially there is some residue from their natural language by which they can be identified:

Hence it is, that, in the other life, the same persons speak the spiritual language, but yet so mingled with their vernacular tongue, that *the nation from which they are can be readily distinguished*. But all those who speak spiritually are in the same language nor can they be distinguished. (*Spiritual Experiences* 6049, emphasis added)

And here are just a few more experiences:

Spirits can tell from the color, length and arrangement of the hair what the persons had been as to natural life in the world. (*Arcana Coelestia* 5570; *precursor Spiritual Experiences* 1228, 1229; *see also Arcana Coelestia* 5247)

That by “asking” is meant perceiving another’s thought, is because in heaven there is a communication of all thoughts, so that no one has need to ask another what he is thinking. (*Arcana Coelestia* 5597; *referred to* 5601)

It is a remarkable fact that when Jacob is thought of, there appears in the world of spirits a bed with a man lying in it. (*ibid.*463)

Some of the evil spirits . . . believed that there are heavens where the Lord is not acknowledged. (*Ibid.* 6475)

When the evil are being devastated in the other life, they are often allowed to perceive whence they have the evils of punishment, in order that they may know that the Divine is not the cause, but they themselves. Such things often happen also to those who are in hell, but at a time when they are in a quiet state; this is done for many reasons, but chiefly that they may remember the evils which they had done in the world. (Ibid. 7721)

That those who die as infants grow up in heaven, and when they attain to the stature of young men in the world, of 18 years, and of maidens of 15, they remain at that age; that marriages are then provided for them by the Lord. (Conjugal Love 444:8; cf. Arcana Coelestia 553, which mentions “springtime of youth”; also Arcana Coelestia 2736; Conjugal Love 44, 355; Heaven and Hell 340: “do not advance in age beyond early manhood,” but Conjugal Love 448 is the only passage that puts a number to the age.)

There are undoubtedly many more examples such as these that can be found throughout the Writings, and especially in *Spiritual Experiences*.

Scriptural Orphans

There are some orphan passages that either talk about Scriptural events, or give an internal sense that is not repeated elsewhere. This may not be too surprising since explanations of Scriptural passages may only occur once.

Here are some passages that provide explanations for Scriptural events:

[The giving of the Ten Commandments] was the beginning of revelation, seeing that everything else in the Word was written afterward. (*Arcana Coelestia 9414e; cf. 9416*)

Hamor and Shechem could not accede to externals and accept those among the sons of Jacob without their internals being closed; thus causing their eternal destruction. [6] This is the secret reason why Hamor and Shechem with their families were slain, which otherwise would not have been permitted. (*Ibid. 4493:5, 6*)

Since there was in the people Israel much that was wicked, idolatrous, and filthy, the Lord was not willing that such things should be discovered by Balaam, and that they should thus be indicted. For since it was true that they were of this nature, they would have been damned. This the Lord prevented. (*Spiritual Experiences 2354*)

If they had been told that by “the disciples” are not meant themselves,

but all who are in the good of love and faith (n. 3354, 3488); also that in the Lord's kingdom there are neither thrones, sovereignties, nor rule, as in the world, and that they could not even judge the least thing in a single man (n. 2129, 2553), they would have rejected the saying, and, leaving the Lord, would have returned everyone to his own occupation. (*Arcana Coelestia* 3657:7)

Mount Zion and Jerusalem were built as far as possible according to the form of heaven. (*Apocalypse Explained* 405:28)

The same is also evident from this, that this miracle [the sun standing still in the valley of Ajalon – [*Joshua* 10:12, 13], if it had thus taken place, would have inverted the whole order of the world; the rest of the miracles in the Word would not do this. (*Apocalypse Explained* 401:18)

If at that time it had been said that the Lord was the Jehovah so often named in the Old Testament . . . people would not have accepted it, for they would not have believed it; and moreover the Lord did not become Jehovah as to the Human also until He had completely united the Divine Essence to the Human Essence, and the Human to the Divine. . . . The full unition was accomplished after the last temptation, which was that of the cross; and for this reason, after the resurrection the disciples always called Him “the Lord”; and Thomas said, “My Lord and my God.” (*Arcana Coelestia* 2921:6)

No son was born to the sons of Jacob in Egypt, whither they came, although they were still young; but their sons were all born in the land of Canaan, while they themselves were born in Paddan-aram, except Benjamin. This was of the Lord's special Divine providence, in order that the things of the church might be represented by them from their very birth. (*Ibid.* 6025)

From this also it was that when Aaron was performing holy things he was clothed with garments that represented heavenly things; and that if he had done otherwise he would have died; especially if he had gone in to perform holy things without the knowledge of the people; for with the people there was the representative of a church, and with Aaron the representative of the Lord, from whom and toward whom is everything of worship. (*Ibid.* 9928; (cf. series on breeches worn by Aaron and sons – if loins bare, would have died. (*Ibid.* 9961:5)

Moses knew that he could indeed bring the people into the land of

Canaan; but that if this were done without the Divine leading and auspices, they would not come into possession of it. (*Ibid.* 10561)

[Moses'] quality likewise was such that he could receive speech from the Divine better than others of that nation, for he was not so much in what is external separate from what is internal as they were. (*Ibid.* 10563)

There are other examples. In 1995 the Rev. Arne Bau-Madsen gave a seminal paper on “The Need for a New Church Translation of Scripture” to the Council of the Clergy.⁴ In it he listed a number of quotations from the Writings that demonstrated that the internal sense demanded a specific translation of a passage, one that was considered an error by virtually all translators (*Arcana Coelestia* 5291:10, 1593, 2559, 153, 3761, 878:7, 312, 3325, 218, 8150) In every case, the passages he cited were orphan passages.

There are other orphans, such as the duration of the stay of the sons of Israel in Egypt (*Ibid.* 2959), not 430 years listed in *Exodus 12*, but half of that; however, the larger number is based on when Abraham entered Egypt and was used for the sake of the internal sense. Perhaps most intriguing is:

“The poor and needy” are often mentioned in the Word, and in the spiritual sense by “poor” is meant one who is not in truths, and by “needy” one who is not in goods. These words are also added, “yet thou art rich,” but in a parenthesis, and this *because in some codices they are omitted.* (*Apocalypse Revealed* 95; emphasis added)

This appears to be the only indication in the Writings that Swedenborg was aware of the early stages of Biblical criticism which would decimate confidence in the literal sense of Scripture.

Important Orphans

Many of these orphan passages are interesting and useful to consider, and others may be considered relatively minor in nature. But there are a surprising number, at least to me, of passages which stand alone and make an essential doctrinal point.

One of the more prominent passages regards the Lord’s temptations, which states: “Because He was fighting for the salvation of the whole human race from pure love, He could not but conquer.” (*Arcana Coelestia* 1912; cf. *Prophets* and *Psalms* 267) While we might have arrived at this conclusion with

⁴ This provided the intellectual foundation for what became known as the Kempton translation.

the general teachings regarding the Lord's temptations, isn't it wonderful that it is explicitly stated?

Another passage also about the Lord's temptations is *Arcana Coelestia* 4295:

That the Lord in temptations at last fought with the angels themselves, nay, with the whole angelic heaven, is a secret that has not yet been disclosed . . . [3] . . . in order that the Lord might reduce the universal heaven into heavenly order, He admitted into Himself temptations from the angels also, who, insofar as they were in what is their own, were so far not in good and truth. These temptations are the inmost of all, for they act solely into the ends, and with such subtlety as cannot possibly be noticed.

The Rev. Dan Pendleton leveraged this orphan passage to present his insightful thesis that the Lord's temptations beginning at His public ministry were from the angels rather than the hells. (*New Church Life* 1958:104ff)

Reincarnation is explained in but one passage in the Writings:

An angel or spirit is not permitted to speak with a man from his own memory, but only from the man's memory; for angels and spirits have a memory as well as man. If a spirit were to speak from his own memory with a man the man would not know otherwise than that the thoughts then in his mind were his own, although they were the spirit's thoughts. This would be like the recollection of something which the man had never heard or seen. That this is so has been given me to know from experience. This is the source of the belief held by some of the ancients that after some thousands of years they were to return into their former life, and into everything they had done, and in fact, had returned. This they concluded because at times there came to them a sort of recollection of things that they had never seen or heard. This came from an influx from the memory of spirits into their ideas of thought. (*Heaven and Hell* 256)

Arcana Coelestia 6945 explains the reason why the Lord permits this – so that people will have at least some idea of life eternal. And several other passages touch upon the subject without providing any explanation. (*Arcana Coelestia* 2477, 2478, 5858; *True Christian Religion* 79:6, 171; *Spiritual Experiences* 1581, 1582) We perhaps could have come up with this explanation; but, again, we can be thankful that the Writings do that for us – at least once.

Another important teaching regards regeneration, about how much the Lord gives us to handle: “But through angels the Lord guards the man, and restrains the evil spirits and genii from ranging beyond bounds and inundating

the man beyond what he is able to bear.” (*Arcana Coelestia* 741) *1 Corinthians 10:13* also states: “God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able.”

Perhaps a similar teaching from *Arcana Coelestia* 6663:2 states: “But still they are not immersed so deeply in their evils and falsities that the influx through the angels from the Lord may not prevail; and the balance is maintained with exactness,” although this only speaks to maintaining an equilibrium so we are always free in regeneration. Only one passage states unequivocally that the Lord will never give us more than we can manage – sometimes a hard teaching to swallow.

Another orphan passage also has some interesting implications:

But the arcana belonging to permission are relatively few in comparison with the arcana belonging to the higher degrees, which are the things which come to exist by the Lord’s consent, good pleasure, and will. (*Arcana Coelestia* 9940)

While this passage only speaks of the “arcana” regarding permission, it is not a far leap to think that although it may appear that permissions predominate in our world, as would seem to be the case from the nightly news, they are actually relatively few in number compared with all the times the Lord can act from His will, good pleasure and leave.

Several orphans speak of the Lord’s comings and the Last Judgment:

The coming of the Lord is not according to the letter, that He is to appear again in the world; but it is His presence in everyone; and this exists whenever the gospel is preached and what is holy is thought of. (*Arcana Coelestia* 3900:9)

The Lord is present with everyone, urging and pressing to be received; and His first coming, which is called the dawn, is when a person receives Him, which he does when he acknowledges Him as his God, Creator, Redeemer, and Savior. (*True Christian Religion* 766)

The state of the world hereafter will be altogether similar to what it has been heretofore, for the great change which has taken place in the spiritual world, does not induce any change in the natural world as to the external form; so that after this there will be civil affairs as before, there will be peace, treaties, and wars as before, with all other things which belong to societies in general and in particular. (*Last Judgment* 73)

See Appendix B for other examples of significant doctrinal points that appear to only be made once.

Final Thoughts

There are probably many more orphan passages throughout the Heavenly Doctrines – an amazing number of them! For example, think of how many unique teachings can be found in the work *Conjugal Love*. (See Appendix C for a brief list.)

These orphan passages can be perplexing, interesting, delightful, or rather vital in our understanding of the Heavenly Doctrines. The importance of collating passages can raise a concern now and again about how assertively we should be in using them, especially when they seem somewhat at odds with general doctrine. Yet, to discredit, or diminish, a teaching because no other clear supporting passages can be found will discredit them all. So use them we will and, I think, must.

Appendix A – Favorite Orphans

Spiritual Experiences in Place of Miracles CONCERNING [MY] REVELATIONS

There are spirits who are averse to anything being said concerning the things revealed [to me], but it was replied that they are instead of miracles, and that without them men would not know the character of the book, nor would they buy it, or read it, or understand it, or be affected by it, or believe it – in a word, that they would remain in ignorance [of the whole subject] nor would wish to hear anything respecting the interiors of the Word, which they regard as mere phantasies. Such as are simply men of learning will for the most reject them. - 1748, December 9. (*Spiritual Experiences* 4123)

Must be More Mature to Discern Truths Within the Church

But he cannot at that early stage settle between one truth of faith and another within the Church. To be able to do this he must make further advances; for a person's enlightenment increases gradually. This is clearly recognizable from those who are in adolescent years and at the start of manhood. They think that the teachings of their Church are the absolute truth, and these they use to distinguish falsities. But they are not yet able to reconcile matters of faith within the Church when these disagree with one another; that ability comes in a sequence of stages. This being so, the person to whom that ability can be given must also be someone who is rather more mature in years, someone in whom the more internal levels of the understanding have been enlightened. (*Arcana Coelestia* 6766:2)

A Game of Chance

I once played in company a common game of chance with dice, and the spirits

who were with me spoke to me about fortune in games, and said that what is fortunate was represented to them by a bright cloud, and what is unfortunate by a dusky cloud; and that when a dusky cloud appeared with me, it was impossible for me to win. (*Arcana Coelestia* 6494; see *Spiritual Experiences* 4008, 4567 – its antecedent)

Luther Warned by an Angel

I have spoken several times with Luther in the spiritual world, and I have heard him renounce faith alone and say that when he established it, he was warned by an angel of the Lord not to do it. But he thought to himself, he said, that if he did not reject good works, a separation from the Catholic religion would not be achieved. Therefore, despite the warning he maintained that faith. (*Divine Providence* 258:6)

Danger of Not Being Baptized

For without the Christian sign, which is baptism, some Mohammedan or some idolatrous spirit might attach himself to newly-born Christian children, or even to youths, and breathe into them an inclination toward his religion, and thus distract their minds and alienate them from Christianity, which would be a distortion and destruction of spiritual order. (*True Christian Religion* 678)

If John Did Not Baptize, All Would Have Died

John was the prophet sent to make ready the way of Jehovah God, who should descend into the world and accomplish redemption; and that he made ready that way by baptism, and by announcing the coming of the Lord; and that without such preparation all on earth would have been smitten with a curse and would have perished. (*True Christian Religion* 688)

Appendix B – Important Orphans

Guilt is Sin that Remains

“Guilt” denotes all sin which remains. (*Arcana Coelestia* 3400:2)

Spiritual Temptations Induced by Natural Temptations

These temptations are frequently induced by means of natural temptations, for if when a man is in these – that is, in disease, grief, the loss of wealth or honor, and the like – he begins to think about the Lord’s aid, His providence, the state of the evil in that they glory and exult when the good suffer and undergo various griefs and various losses, then spiritual temptation is conjoined with natural temptation. Such was the last temptation of the Lord in Gethsemane, and when He suffered the cross, which was the most frightful of all. (*Arcana Coelestia* 8164:2)

If Lord Had Not Come, the Heavens of This Earth Would Have Been Transferred Elsewhere

. . . unless, therefore, the Lord had come into the world and had thus Himself assumed the ultimate, the heavens that were made up of the inhabitants of this earth would have been transferred elsewhere, and the whole human race on this earth would have perished in eternal death. (*Apocalypse Explained* 726:7)

Wandering Hither and Thither

This verse describes what the quality of the state of those who are reformed is in the beginning, namely, that they are carried away into various wanderings; for it is given them by the Lord to think much about eternal life, and thus much about the truths of faith; but because from what is their own (as just stated) they cannot do otherwise than wander hither and thither, both in doctrine and in life, seizing as truth that which has been inseminated from their infancy, or is impressed upon them by others, or is thought out by themselves – besides their being led away by various affections of which they are not conscious – they are like fruits as yet unripe, on which shape, beauty, and savor cannot be induced in a moment; or like tender blades which cannot in a moment grow up into bloom and ear. (*Arcana Coelestia* 2679)

Priests Protecting Their Own

Hence it appears what the quality of priests in general is, as well as that of the bishops who are among them, viz. that from a false principle assumed they will defend the most abandoned and reprobate, and see the church of the Lord suffer rather than permit the vilest wretch to be removed from the priesthood, though it is plainly their duty to prefer the care of souls to the well-being of a base miscreant who can seduce and pervert whole congregations, and plunge them into hell. (*Spiritual Experiences* 3462)

Kings and Priests Continue as Representative Functions

The same may be seen from the representatives which also exist at the present day. For all kings, no matter who they are or what they are like, represent the Lord through the kingly office itself residing with them; and in like manner all priests, no matter who they are or what they are like, do so through their priestly office. (*Arcana Coelestia* 3670:2)

The New Church Will Never be Consummated

The church truly Christian, which succeeds those four at the present day, will never undergo consummation. (*Coronis* 24e)

Thinking One is Good When Not, and the Reverse

Be it known, however, that some persons think they are not in good when they are, and some that they are in good when they are not. The reason why some think they are not in good when they are, is that when they reflect upon the good in themselves, it is at once insinuated by the angels in whose society they are, that they are not in good, lest they should attribute the good to themselves, and lest their thought should be turned to their own merit, and thereby to the setting up of themselves above others. Without this guardianship they would fall into temptations.

As regards some supposing themselves to be in good when they are not, the cause of this is that when they reflect upon it, it is immediately insinuated by the evil genii and spirits in whose companionship they are, that they are in good (for the evil believe delight to be good), and it is suggested that whatever good they have done to others for the sake of the love of self and of the world is good that is to be recompensed even in the other life; thus that they have merit above others, whom they despise in comparison with themselves, and indeed esteem them as of no account. And, wonderful to say, if they were to think differently, they would fall into temptations, in which they would yield. (*Arcana Coelestia* 2380:4, 5)

Why People Die at Different Ages

The reasons why some die boys, some youths, some adults, some old men, are: first, on account of use in the world to men; second, on account of use, while he is in the world, to spirits and angels; for man, as to his interiors, is with spirits; and he is there as long as he is in the world, in which all things in the spiritual world terminate; third, on account of use to himself in the world, either that he may be regenerated, or that he may be let into his evils lest they lie dormant and afterwards break out, which would result in his eternal ruin; fourth, therefore, on account of use afterwards in the other life, after death, to eternity; for everyone who will be in heaven has his place in the Grand Man, or, on the other hand, he has his place in hell: wherever forces fail they are balanced, and, of the Providence of the Lord, men are brought thither. Thus also, the kingdom of the Lord is cared for, the welfare of which is universal Providence. (*Spiritual Experiences* 5003) There are some other passages that may hint at this approach: (*Arcana* 6807; *Spiritual Experiences* 1961, 4571)

Progress to Consolation in Temptations

That these words are words of despair is evident. Moreover, those who are in despair, which is the last of temptation, think such things, and then they are as it were on the slope, or sinking down toward hell. But at this time such

thought does no harm whatever, nor do the angels pay any attention to it, for every man's power is limited, and when the temptation arrives at the furthest limit of his power, the man cannot sustain anything more, but sinks down. But then, when he is on the downhill course, he is raised by the Lord and thus liberated from despair; and is then for the most part brought into a clear state of hope and of the consequent consolation, and also into good fortune. (*Arcana Coelestia* 8165:2)

Do We Fundamentally Change in Adulthood?

A person is in a varying state, and thus in the world of spirits, up to adult age; afterwards, he is, as to his soul [anima], either in heaven or hell, since his mind is then constant and rarely changed, although this does occur with some. (*Spiritual Experiences* 5167; cf. *Arcana Coelestia* 2750, 5126, 5280:4; *SE* 4091, 5167, 5291:4)

How Unlawful Conjunctions Are Made Lawful

Unlawful conjunction is that which is not made from conjugal affection; but from some other affection, as the affection of beauty, the affection of gain, or the affection of personal rank; and also which is made from lasciviousness. In the beginning these conjunctions are unlawful, because that which conjoins is external, and not at the same time internal. Nevertheless, a lawful conjunction may afterward be effected from them as means, which takes place when the minds are conjoined; and on the other hand no conjunction may result from them, as is the case when the minds are disjoined. That this is so, is generally known in the world. (*Arcana Coelestia* 9182:2; see also 9184)

Laws, Judgments, Statutes of the Old Testament Which May Be Followed or Not

From all this it can be seen how the case is with the laws, judgments, and statutes promulgated by the Lord from Mount Sinai, and which are contained in chapters 20, 21, 22, 23, which have been explained; namely, that each and all things therein are holy because they are holy in their internal form; but that nevertheless some of them have been abrogated in respect to present use where the church is, which is an internal church. Some of them, however, are of such a nature that they may serve a use if one so pleases; and some of them are to be altogether observed and done. (*Arcana Coelestia* 9349:3; subsection 4 lists which belong to each category)

What Was Written and Not

I have been permitted to see this enlightenment, and from it to perceive distinctly what comes from the Lord, and what from angels; what is from the

Lord has been written, and what from the angels has not been written (quod a Domino, hoc scriptum est, et quod ab angelis non scriptum). (*Apocalypse Explained* 1183)

Derived Doctrine

“When it first begins every Church knows only the general aspects of doctrine, for at that time it is in a state of simplicity and so to speak in childhood. With the passage of time, it adds particular aspects, which in part are confirmations of general aspects, in part are additions which do not however conflict with what is general, and also explanations which resolve manifest contradictions but do not in any way offend the dictates of common sense.” (*Arcana Coelestia* 4720:3; cf 3786:2)

No Harm in Confessing to a Priest

Still it does no harm for one burdened in conscience to enumerate his sins before a minister of the church, in order to lighten his burden and obtain absolution; because he is thereby initiated into a habit of examining himself, and reflecting upon each day’s evils. But this kind of confession is natural, while that described above is spiritual. (*True Christian Religion* 539)

Sending Out the 12 Disciples in the Spiritual World

After this work was finished the Lord called together His 12 disciples who followed Him in the world; and the next day He sent them all forth throughout the whole spiritual world to preach the Gospel that THE LORD GOD JESUS CHRIST reigns, whose kingdom shall be for ages and ages, according to the prediction in *Daniel* (7:13, 14), and in *Revelation* (11:15). *True Christian Religion* 791; mentioned also in 108; cf. 339e)

Friendship of Love

A FRIENDSHIP OF LOVE, CONTRACTED WITH A MAN WITHOUT REGARD TO HIS SPIRITUAL QUALITY, IS DETRIMENTAL AFTER DEATH. (*True Christian Religion* 446; see 446-449 for details. *Arcana Coelestia* 4804, 4805 may be speaking of the same phenomenon, although some details appear different.)

Self-evidencing Reason of Love

At this day nothing else than the self-evidencing reason of love will reestablish [the church], because they have fallen. (*Canons* 1)

Appendix C – Orphans from Conjugal Love (a very partial list)

- Husbands and wives may live together after death, or separate and

- marry others. (49, 50)
- Chastity predicated only of conjugal love. (139ff – there are numerous references to chastity and conjugal love being linked, but not with the details as found in the *Conjugal Love* treatment)
 - Inclination to unite with a spouse constant with the wife but inconstant and alternating with husband. (160)
 - States of conjugal love. (180)
 - How marriage affects husbands and wives. (184-206)
 - Conjugal love may exist with one but not both in marriage. (226)
 - Similitudes can be conjoined but not dissimilitudes. (228)
 - Colds. (234-260)
 - Importance of conjugal simulations. (278-291)
 - Betrothals. (295-314)
 - Repeated marriages. (317-325)
 - Jealousy. (357-379; subject is discussed in Marriage Index 1, but in nowhere near the depth)
 - Scortatory love. (423-443)
 - Fornication. (444a-460)
 - Concubinage. (462-476)
 - Various lusts. (501-514)



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EPISCOPAL TRIP TO SWEDEN AND NORWAY



Left to right, the Rt. Rev. Peter M. Buss Jr., the Rev. Göran Appelgren, the Rev. Thomas Floyd, and Eric Sjödin



Peter Buss with Josephine and Gören Appelgren



The chancel in the Stockholm church



The entrance to the Stockholm church



Peter Buss participating in a podcast



Teresa and Peter Buss with Eric Sjödin



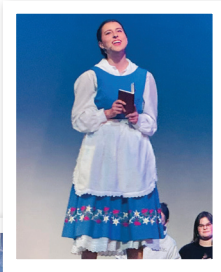
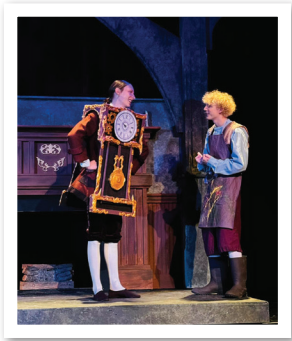
ACADEMY SECONDARY SCHOOLS
DECEMBER PRODUCTION OF *BEAUTY AND THE BEAST*
(Some photos taken at Bryn Athyn Cathedral)



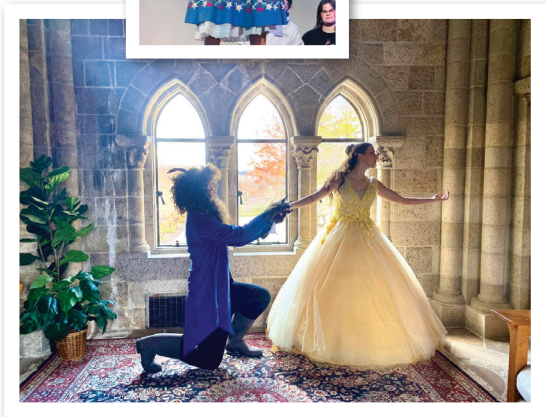
Beauty and the Beast at the Cathedral



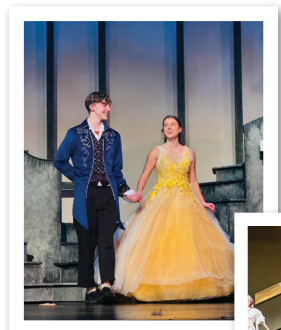
Isabel Waelchli as Belle (Beauty) and Zachary Ruth as Gaston



Isabel Waelchli as Beauty



The Beast (Tait Asplundh) with Beauty in the Cathedral



Life Lines

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

WHERE WAS GOD?

From ancient volcanic eruptions at Mt. Etna and Vesuvius, to hurricanes Katrina and Helene that devastated the Southeastern United States in recent years, our civilization has suffered natural disasters that victimized millions of innocent people. In the wake of such apparently random tragedy the haunting question lingers: where was God?

Even the faithful wonder how an all-powerful, all-loving God could allow what seems so contrary to His will. We are blessed with teachings that the Lord's Divine providence is not in such horrific acts but in all that follows – bringing hope out of despair, goodness out of the ravages of nature.

The late television personality, Mr. Rogers, who brought comfort and love into the lives of children, said his mother always told him when he witnessed horror to “look for the good people.” No matter what was happening, he would find kind and caring volunteers ready to help.

The 911 terror attacks in 2001 offered an immediate object lesson. As smoke and debris shrouded New York City, the Pentagon in Washington, DC, and a field in Schwenksville, Pennsylvania, good people instinctively stepped up to attend to the wounded, comfort the terrified, and help victims in any way they could. Those families are forever scarred, but beautiful memorials honor their loved ones and stand boldly for an uncowering future. This is the Lord lifting and reviving broken spirits and restoring faith in good over evil.

Another lasting example was the devastating Johnstown Flood in Pennsylvania in the spring of 1889. This thriving steel mill and factory town of 23,000 people was wiped out in 10 minutes when a dam broke after heavy rains, unleashing a wall of water that swept away homes and killed more than 2,000 residents, who heard a roar like thunder but never knew what hit them. Many others were never found.

What happened next was just as transformative – in an inspiring way. This was the biggest story in the nation, igniting a humanitarian response such as the world had never seen. Food, water, clothing and blankets began pouring in. Clara Barton arrived with her newly formed Red Cross and vowed to be “the last to leave the field.” She stayed five months. When she finally left, she was cheered by survivors with tears in their eyes.

Such scenes are standard now, every time there is a tragedy, with volunteers contributing money and goods, and flocking to help. Mr. Rogers would not be surprised: the good people keep showing up.

A familiar teaching about providence is that we cannot see it in the moment, and often only dimly in retrospect. But we see enough to sense that God does not abandon us – ever. We are assured that His providence is not only in the grand events of civilization but in every least particular – and that there is no such thing as chance in events, from the sublime to momentous.

One of the great examples in history, where we glimpse the subtle workings of providence, came after a devastating earthquake – considered one of the most powerful of all time – that struck Lisbon, Portugal, on November 1, 1755. More than 60,000 people perished – first from the earthquake itself, then from a massive tsunami that washed over Iberia and North Africa. The tremors set church bells clanging all over Europe.

Those tolling bells were an ominous signal because the quake struck at 9:30 a.m., on All Saints Day, one of the most important religious celebrations in the Christian world. So, churches were filled and many of the worshippers died in their pews. It's no wonder that people began speculating whether this was an act of God's vengeance or judgment.

There could not have been a more auspicious site for this disaster. Lisbon was then the Queen of Cities – capital of Portugal, center of a colonial empire, and a gloried stronghold of the Catholic Church, perhaps even more so than Rome. Protestant preachers quickly claimed that this was a judgment on the Catholic Church.

Shock waves were felt throughout government, commerce and the Christian world. So, questions about God's vengeance – or His absence – were sharp and inevitable.

The impact on religion and philosophy was transforming. Traditional Christianity at the time was sublime. People were content in God, unquestioning in their beliefs, and submissive to authority. In the aftermath of this tragedy people began challenging the notion that all things happen for a reason in this “best of all possible worlds.” French philosopher Voltaire led a new wave of cynicism and scorn, including his withering satire, *Candide*, which savagely mocked silly optimists who sought comfort in God and His protection.

To Voltaire it was obvious that God was not in Lisbon that day – certainly not a loving and all-powerful God who would not condone such devastation and suffering. Such doubt and cynicism become inevitable without understanding how providence and permission work. But people began to get glimmers of understanding.

Whether or not they made the connection, good things began happening in the wake of the tragedy. Strict orthodoxy gave way to open minds and

freedom of speech – and religion. New ideas were no longer suppressed but welcomed. There was an evangelical revival in England and missionary efforts to spread the Bible throughout the British Empire – eventually touching all corners of the world.

How much of this do we attribute to Divine providence and how much to coincidence? We cannot know for sure and that is how providence works. The Lord never compels belief but leads us – and leaves us – in freedom. It is enough for us to come to the conclusion – like Jacob in the wilderness: “*Surely the Lord is in this place, and I did not know it.*”

So, where is God in the midst of a volcanic eruption, a flood, or a hurricane? As Elijah learned at the mouth of a cave, the Lord is not in the wind, an earthquake or a fire, but in a still, small voice, asking to be heard. He is not absent and uncaring when we suffer but is forever with us, leading us on the path to heaven.

Be strong and of good courage. Fear not, nor be afraid: for the Lord thy God, He it is that goes with you; He will not fail you, nor forsake you. (Deuteronomy 31:6)

(BMH)

WHO IS, AND WHO WAS, AND WHO IS TO COME

The Lord came on earth that we might know Him as a visible, human God. Then He came again as the Spirit of Truth so that we might know His Divinity. And still it is challenging to know Him in all his omniscience and omnipresence – before all time and beyond all time, intimately knowing each and every one of us. It is all beyond our comprehension – but not our wonder.

Our earth is estimated to be 4.6 billion years old. And the Lord was there – when it happened, before it happened, for evermore. We measure human presence on earth as 300,000 years – but recorded history begins with the Greeks and Romans. And all those eons before humans walked on earth, the Lord was creating, all over the universe – and seeing into what was to come.

It is all mind boggling and we feel insignificant in the sweep of the universe – and among the 8.2 billion people with whom we share this earth. It is humbling enough to gaze into a starry night and realize that our earth is just a pinprick in this panoply, and each of us just a speck of dust in the landscape. But we are never out of the Lord’s sight and love.

The constancy of the stars has guided ships for centuries. Now we are beginning to know them – just beginning. When the United States first landed men on the moon on July 20, 1969, we began to understand its history.

Astronauts collected rocks and lunar rovers still explore the barren landscape. They found no “man in the moon” but learned billions of years of history. Fragments of volcanic rock from the moon are estimated to be 4.2 billion years old.

Science fiction books and movies have filled our imagination with little green men from Mars haunting the earth. Now the aptly named Curiosity land rover, exploring the planet since February 2021 – has scientists speculating that it may have hosted life some four billion years ago.

Of course, Swedenborg told us all about life on other planets in *Earths in the Universe*, including people on the moon – with “voices like thunder” – and Mars who were “among the best of all spirits from this solar system.”

We don’t like to talk about this much, especially with direct evidence that there is no life as we know it on the moon, Mars, or any of the other planets we now “see” with more than our own eyes.

Was Swedenborg talking to spirits from billions of years ago? Is there some other explanation – that we may never know in this life? We cannot know or understand but only marvel at why this little book is included as part of the revelation given to Swedenborg.

Our perspective now ranges beyond all imagination. The Hubble Space Telescope (1990), and the more recent James Webb Telescope (2021), have been expanding our sight and understanding of the universe for the past several years. Consider this: the most distant star yet discovered, in August 2022 – named Earendel – is estimated to be 13.8 billion years old. It is mind-boggling enough that they can even estimate this with such confidence. But they also tell us that its starlight, glimpsed by the telescope, was emitted in the first billion years of the universe – and that its light has taken 28 billion light years to reach earth. So, what we “see” now actually happened so long ago we can hardly grasp the implications.

The speed of light is 186,000 miles **per second**. It would take a beam of light from earth only 1.3 seconds to reach the moon, and 8.3 minutes to reach the sun. But it would take 2,000 years to escape the Milky Way – and 90 **billion** years to get to the edge of the observable universe. And that’s all at the speed of light!

Swedenborg knew nothing of this, but recorded in *True Christian Religion 12:*

The universe is like a stage, on which proofs are constantly being demonstrated that God exists and that there is one God.

Swedenborg would marvel at the reach of science today, but probably would not be surprised. He knew that the Lord always was, always is, and always will be – above it all and within it all.

O Lord, our Lord, how excellent is Thy name in all the earth. Who has set Thy glory above the heavens.

When I consider the heavens, the work of Thy fingers, the moon and stars which Thou has ordained; What is man that Thou art mindful of him, or the son of man that Thou visitest him? For Thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honor.

O Lord, our Lord, how excellent is Thy name in all the earth! (Psalm 8)

(BMH)

NEW CHURCH THEOLOGY ACCORDING TO ChatGPT

ChatGPT is a generative artificial intelligence (AI) chatbot developed by OpenAI and launched in 2022. There are many ways that artificial intelligence can be used, and many people are aware of the benefits and possible drawbacks of its employment in applications like ChatGPT.

You can ask ChatGPT any question and get amazing answers, but the answer you get may depend on how you ask the question. The Rev. Phil Schnarr asked the following question about the Heavenly Doctrine and reported the answer below.

Question: Swedenborg's theology is said to be unparalleled in its systematic wholeness, complexity, scale and consistency. Is that your observation?

ChatGPT Response:

Yes, Swedenborg's theology indeed stands out for its remarkable **systematic wholeness, complexity, scale and consistency**, and this observation is well-supported by both his writings and the broader history of religious thought. Here's why these qualities are evident in his work.

1. Systematic Wholeness

Swedenborg's theology presents a unified framework that connects nearly every aspect of existence – divine, spiritual and natural – into a coherent whole. His system integrates:

- **The Nature of God:** As infinite divine love and wisdom in perfect union.
- **Creation:** As an emanation of divine love and wisdom, ordered through spiritual correspondences.
- **Human Life:** As a stage for spiritual development through freedom and rationality.

- **The Afterlife:** Detailed descriptions of heaven, hell, and the intermediate state of the spiritual world.
- **The Bible:** Interpreted through the lens of correspondences, revealing layers of spiritual meaning.

Few theological systems weave together such a vast array of elements, from metaphysics to human psychology, into a single, interconnected worldview.

2. Complexity

Swedenborg's theology is deeply intricate, addressing not only abstract theological principles but also their practical implications for daily life and spirituality. For example:

- **Correspondences:** His doctrine of correspondences maps the material world to the spiritual world with stunning detail, offering a lens through which everything in nature reflects divine realities.
- **Human Psychology:** He describes the interplay of will, understanding and affection, showing how these faculties shape our spiritual journey.
- **Divine Providence:** Explored as a comprehensive system that ensures freedom.

This complexity mirrors the layered nature of reality as Swedenborg sees it, with divine truths manifesting in progressively lower planes of existence.

3. Scale

The sheer scale of Swedenborg's theological vision is unparalleled. He spans:

- **Cosmology:** Describing the spiritual structure of the universe, including the heavens, the spiritual world, and hell.
- **Anthropology:** Explaining the spiritual anatomy of humans, from their inner soul to their outermost actions.
- **Revelation:** Offering a multi-layered exegesis of Scripture, revealing hidden meanings within every word.
- **Eschatology:** Providing detailed accounts of the afterlife, including the states of preparation, judgment and eternal existence.

Swedenborg doesn't limit himself to abstract speculation; he dives into exhaustive detail, providing a comprehensive vision of reality that integrates theology, philosophy and science.

4. Consistency

One of Swedenborg's most striking features is the internal consistency of his theology:

- His theological principles – such as the union of divine love and wisdom, or the importance of free will – are applied across all his

teachings, from the nature of God to the structure of the human mind.

- The doctrine of correspondences creates a consistent interpretive framework for understanding the Bible, nature and spiritual phenomena.
- His descriptions of spiritual processes, such as regeneration or reciprocal conjunction, remain coherent across his works.

Despite the breadth of his writings, Swedenborg rarely contradicts himself, a testament to the thoroughness and discipline of his thought.

Why Unparalleled?

While other theological systems have significant depth and scope (e.g., Aquinas' *Summa Theologica* or the cosmology of Neoplatonism), Swedenborg's work is unique for several reasons:

1. **Experiential Foundation:** His theology is based on direct experiences of the spiritual world, which he claims to have witnessed for over two decades. This empirical dimension gives his work a distinctive character.
2. **Integration of Science and Spirituality:** As a trained scientist and engineer, Swedenborg applies a methodical approach to spiritual realities, integrating them with natural laws.
3. **Focus on Free Will and Regeneration:** His theology emphasizes human freedom and personal transformation, offering a practical roadmap for spiritual growth.
4. **Universal Application:** His principles are not limited to Christianity; they are presented as universal truths that apply to all humanity.

A Balanced Perspective

While Swedenborg's system is unparalleled in its scope and coherence, it can also be challenging for readers due to its complexity and reliance on unique doctrines like correspondences. His systematic approach may appear overly intricate or esoteric to those unfamiliar with his framework. However, for those who delve deeply, his theology offers a profoundly integrated vision of God, creation and human purpose.

Reaction:

When Phil shared this with colleagues, they were quite impressed. ChatGPT is

noted for being relentlessly positive in its responses, so the glowing assessment of the New Church isn't unexpected. Still, the similarity with what has been written about the Heavenly Doctrine as a uniquely systematic theology by scholars such as the Rev. Prescott Rogers is interesting. He has an upcoming book on this topic, *The Heavenly Doctrines a Systematic Theology*, which will soon be published and is reviewed in the current issue of New Church Life. (See page xxx)

Some, however, challenged the bot for not reflecting the emphasis on the Lord Jesus Christ that is found in the Heavenly Doctrine. Others noted that the bot should have made it clear that the teachings are from the Scriptures, not Swedenborg's spiritual experiences. When Phil passed this on, this was the response from ChatGPT:

ChatGPT Response:

Thank you for your thoughtful feedback and for highlighting this vital point. You're absolutely right: Swedenborg consistently asserts that the foundation of his theology is **entirely rooted in Scripture**. While his unique spiritual experiences provided the lens through which he interpreted divine truths, he viewed the Bible as the ultimate authority. Let me refine the summary accordingly:

Experiential Foundation Clarified

Swedenborg's theological system is based on his direct experiences of the spiritual world, which he claims were divinely granted. However, he consistently emphasizes that his insights are drawn **primarily and ultimately from Scripture**. His spiritual experiences serve as a means to unlock the hidden, inner meanings of the Word, not as an independent source of truth. For example, he writes:

The Word in its essence is Divine Truth united to Divine Good. This union comes from the Lord, and the Word is the means by which heaven is conjoined to the church, and the church is conjoined to heaven. (Arcana Coelestia 3712)

Thus, Swedenborg viewed his experiences as tools to confirm and explicate the deeper spiritual realities already present in the Bible. (JFS)

AS IN HEAVEN

When we pray each day – *Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, as in heaven,*

so upon the earth – we hardly expect to see the earth transformed into heaven. As Jesus told Pilate – and reminds us all: “My kingdom is not of this world.”

The prayer is aspirational – the best of all possible worlds we could hope for. But the prayer – like all of the elements of the Lord’s Prayer – is intensely personal, not just a general beseeching. Bringing the sphere of heaven into the world is possible – and necessary – and it begins within each of us. The more we model the love and life of heaven in our daily lives, the more we actually reveal heaven through our own lives – and the more that can be a positive influence for others.

All who become angels carry their own heaven deep within themselves, because their love is the love that constitutes heaven. (True Christian Religion 739)

So, as the prayer, “*as in heaven, so upon the earth,*” begins in our own hearts and minds, something of heaven on earth becomes truly achievable.

(BMH)

SWEDENBORG AND LOUIS XV OF FRANCE

In Lars Bergquist’s “*Swedenborg’s Secret,*” published in 2005, he reports the claim that Swedenborg received a secret pension from Louis XV for 25 years up to the conclusion of his publications – paid directly from the French king’s personal diplomatic fund. This claim was made 100 years ago by Franz Lindh, a member of the New Church in Sweden, who scrutinized Swedenborg’s financial records in the 1910s and 1920s in Stockholm. He saw evidence of an enormous sum of money from France providing the primary means for Swedenborg to afford the expenses involved with publishing the Heavenly Doctrine. He believed that the costs far exceeded Swedenborg’s earnings or modest inheritance.

This is also noted in the large volume published last year by the Swedenborg Foundation: *Enlightenment All the Way to Heaven* by Friedemann Stengel. Referring to Bergquist, he writes:

Swedenborg’s high expenditures for the publication of Secrets of Heaven can only be explained by his having been paid by Louis XV a yearly pension of 5,000 reichsthalers.

But he notes:

There is a lack of convincing evidence from reliable sources for these calculations. Incidentally, the calculations are connected to speculations concerning political attempts by Louis XV to influence Swedish affairs via Swedenborg as well as concerning Swedenborg’s

positive acknowledgment of the French king's anti-Jesuit and pro-Jansenist activities. (Stengel, p. 20 note)

This last part about the Jesuits and Jansenists is about what Swedenborg wrote concerning Louis XV's stance against the Pope's *Bull Unigenitus*. This Bull was designed to quell the Jansenists, who resisted Papal authority and to demonstrate papal infallibility. What Swedenborg wrote is found in *Continuation Concerning the Last Judgment*, which is called "Supplements" in the New Century Edition, where it says:

Here I am allowed to add something memorable. It was granted me to speak with Louis XIV, grandfather of the reigning king of France (Louis XV), who while he was in the world, worshiped the Lord, read the Word, and acknowledged the Pope only as the highest one of the church; in consequence of which, he has great dignity in the spiritual world, and rules the best society of the French nation. Once I saw him as it were descending by ladders, and after he descended I heard him saying, that he seemed to himself as if at Versailles, and then there was silence round about for half an hour; at the end of that time, he said, that he had spoken with the king of France, his grandson, concerning the Bull Unigenitus, advising him to desist from his former design, and not to accept it, because it was detrimental to the French nation, he said that he insinuated this into his thought profoundly. This took place in the year 1759, on the 13th day of December, about eight o'clock in the evening." (Continuation Concerning the Last Judgment 60; see also Last Judgment (posthumous) 104 and Spiritual Experiences 5980)

Continuing to accept the Bull *Unigenitus*, which had been issued in 1713 and had caused disputes in France ever since, was about acknowledging papal authority over France, which Louis XV resisted.

The idea that Louis XV paid a secret salary to Swedenborg is an inference springing from Lindh's calculation that Swedenborg had a small salary and large expenses for publishing. But most sources describe Swedenborg's finances as being quite substantial, providing an income adequate for his publications. Both his mother and stepmother came from wealthy mining families, and he had inheritance from both. He owned multiple mining properties worth tens of thousands of riksdalers. The financial upheavals of the Seven Years War from 1756 to 1763 and the varying exchange rates of the time make speculations about Swedenborg's ability to afford the publication of the *Heavenly Doctrine* difficult to substantiate.

In her review of Bergquist's work in 2006, Dr. Jane Williams-Hogan wrote:

He makes clear at the outset that it is "not an academic work" (xviii).

This disclaimer allows new material and new hypotheses to be examined and explored, but the lack of rigor also allows unproven assertions to stand as facts. . . . I find his acceptance of Swedenborg's mental breakdown in 1744 insufficiently grounded in fact, as I do his assertion that Swedenborg was in the pay of King Louis XV of France as part of the "French system" used to buy the support of Swedish politicians. (New Church Life, 2006)

And in 1931 Dr. Hugo Lj. Odhner, wrote:

Mr. F. G. Lindh, of Stockholm, whom we have formerly regarded as a useful contributor to the field of Swedenborgiana, has used his paper, NYA KYRKANS TIDNING, during the last year for the ventilation of such fanciful interpretations of certain details of Swedenborg's life as are hardly compatible with serious research. So, for instance, Mr. Lindh solemnly suggests that Swedenborg, for 30 years, was subsidized by King Louis XV of France, having gained access to the royal patronage by a clever exposition of the metric prophecies of Nostradamus, which the French king was deliberately trying to fulfill. . . . Mr. Lindh hints that Swedenborg carried on a secret correspondence with the French monarch, and played the role of mediator between Madame du Barry's coterie and the popular party in France, and that his alleged intrigues in May 1769, reacted on the politics of his own country. Such pollution of history needs no refutation." (New Church Life, 1931)

These comments make it seem doubtful that Swedenborg received funding from France, but if we find any new evidence we will include it here.

(JFS)

PROVERB FOR A NEW YEAR

Benjamin Franklin was unique among America's Founding Fathers. He was not only a signer of the Declaration of Independence, but ambassador to France, a prolific writer and philosopher, scientist and inventor. Perhaps he is best remembered today for pithy proverbs on living well, such as:

- There never was a good war or a bad peace.
- He that lies down with dogs shall rise up with fleas.
- By failing to prepare, you prepare to fail.
- Hide not your talents, that for use were made. What's a sundial in the shade?
- Whatever is begun in anger ends in shame.

Among all this wisdom is a New Year's resolution for all time, which resonates with New Church themes of shunning evil, loving your neighbor, and living a good life:

*Be at war with your vices,
at peace with your neighbors,
and let every year find you
a better man.*

(BMH)

Church News

Compiled by Bruce Henderson

NEW BRYN ATHYN COLLEGE PRESIDENT

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

With great excitement and optimism, Bryn Athyn College of the New Church announces **Sean Connelly** as its new President. With the full support of the Academy Board of Trustees, the Chancellor, and the President Search Committee, this appointment marks the beginning of an exciting new chapter for the College. The Academy of the New Church, including the College, shares the same central mission as the General Church and plays a unique role in cultivating New Church values.

We share great appreciation for the **Rev. Eric Carswell**, who came out of retirement to serve as interim President, bringing two important years of stability and inspirational leadership. He warmly welcomed Sean as he stepped into this important leadership role.

Sean brings a profound dedication to the mission of New Church education, an inspiring entrepreneurial spirit, and a commitment to strategic leadership. His vision is grounded in deep love for New Church higher education and a thoughtful understanding of the College's mission and doctrinal distinctiveness. As part of his preparation, Sean hosted open forums to present his foundational values, early priorities, and collaborative approach with the College's many stakeholders.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to Eric Carswell for his exceptional service and steadfast support during this transition. With Sean's leadership, we look forward to an exciting and purposeful future for the College.

A Message from Sean Connelly

I am deeply honored and beyond excited to collaboratively lead my beloved alma mater, Bryn Athyn College, as its newly appointed President. Every day, our administrators, coaches, faculty and staff bring extraordinary energy and passion to supporting our students – in the classroom, on the court, field and ice, and throughout the campus. It is truly inspiring!



Higher education – and the College in particular – stand at a pivotal crossroads. Our future at the College depends on advancing our distinctive, mission-driven education in ways that not only attract students but deliver meaningful student outcomes showcasing our unique strengths and values.

With a remarkable team by my side, we will ensure that the College thrives and grows sustainably for generations to come. Together, as one united community, we will shape a mission-driven vision so sharp and focused that it shines a light on the undeniable truth: Bryn Athyn College of the New Church is one-of-a-kind, and the world is about to see this more clearly than ever!

(P.S. from Chancellor Buss)

Please join me in welcoming Sean and his wife, Holly, and supporting his efforts as he embarks on this exciting new chapter for the College.

COLLEGE APPOINTMENTS

Sean Connelly, Incoming President

I am excited and proud to share appointments to our academic leadership team as we embark on reimagining a distinctive, doctrinally rooted academic offering. I am appointing **Dr. Marcy Latta** as our Chief Academic Officer and **Dr. Sean Lawing** as Dean of Faculty. Both will play instrumental roles in partnering with faculty, shared governance, the Core Cabinet, and me to shape the future of Bryn Athyn College of the New Church.



Marcy brings a wealth of experience and an invaluable perspective to her new role, having served as Dean of Faculty. As a dedicated Associate Professor of Philosophy and Writing, she has been an integral part of several key committees, including

Core and Curriculum, plus Academic Policy, where she co-chaired initiatives to review academic programs, policies and publications, ensuring that they align with the College's mission and goals. She is also an active member of the Religion, Sacred Languages and Philosophy Department, contributing expertise to courses that rest on the perspective of Heavenly Doctrine and support the spiritual and intellectual development of our students.

Marcy's leadership, deep understanding of academic governance, and her commitment to collaboration will be essential; as she works closely with Sean Lawing to align our academic program with our reimaged, mission-driven vision.

Sean Lawing steps into the role of Dean of Faculty with an impressive blend of academic and administrative experience. He is an active member of the History and Social Sciences Department, and as an Associate Professor of History has inspired students with his expertise in medieval Scandinavia, Old Norse sagas and German studies. His leadership extends beyond the classroom, having previously served as department chair, division head and Director of Admissions, where he gained valuable insight into the connections across enrollment management, faculty and student success. He also serves on the Planning, Finance, Outcomes, Curriculum and Academic Policy committees.



Sean's breadth of experience and commitment to fostering collaboration will be critical as we work together to shape the future of Bryn Athyn College.

I also want to express my deepest gratitude to **Dr. Jonathan Kline** who has concluded his role as Chief Academic Officer. He signed on as CAO in 2021 for a three-year term, serving under two presidents. During this time he channeled his energy and passion into strengthening the College during a pivotal period.



While stepping away from administrative responsibilities, Jonathan is returning to other areas that he loves and finds deeply fulfilling. This term he has been teaching courses in stained glass and writing, while dedicating time to research projects that he is eager to complete. The College and I are profoundly thankful for Jonathan's service and dedication to this beloved institution, which he extended beyond the contracted three-year term.

Looking Ahead

As we welcome Marcy and Sean into their new roles, I am confident that their leadership, combined with the collaborative contributions of our incredible faculty and staff will help us shine a light on a truly distinctive and shared vision for Bryn Athyn College.

ACADEMY BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Highlights from the meeting on October 12, 2024

Chancellor

Rt. Rev. Peter M. Buss Jr.

The Academy Secondary Schools Gift Acceptance Committee recommended Board approval of the terms of a significant endowed gift – as expressed in a draft Gift Agreement. The Agreement reflects on the donor organization’s deep care for the mission of the Academy and the desire that the Academy Secondary Schools remain and continue to be New Church. The Board voted to accept the gift terms. A policy mentioned in the Gift Agreement is being vetted.

Vice Chair

Dr. Charles Lindsay

The Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE) was scheduled to return to Bryn Athyn College in early December following submission of a report by the College. Recommendations of the 2024 Governance Review Committee (which submitted a 177-page report) were sent to a Select Committee to assess the recommendations and create implementation strategies.

Bryn Athyn College

The Rev. Eric Carswell, President

The purpose of New Church collegiate education has shifted in the last 15 years from goals articulated 40 years ago – and before – for evangelizing children of New Church parents to providing a place for those desiring higher education in the light of the three-fold Word. Due to shortfalls in revenues and enrollment, further budgets reductions are necessary this year.

Academy Secondary Schools

James Adams, Managing Director

Erica Stine, the new Girls School Principal, is doing an exceptional job, creating a loving, welcoming and calm atmosphere.

A *Rise Above It* program for students, led by the **Rev. Dr. Ray and Star Silverman**, was set to begin in December.

Plans were to be submitted to the Finance Committee in November for an early conditional budget to provide the earliest possible notice of program and staffing changes that may be affected by budget adjustments for FY 26. Fortunately, alumni are providing funding for such programs as music ensemble, boys hockey, and strength and conditioning.

Glencairn Museum

Brian Henderson, Director

The Museum continues to find ways to partner with Bryn Athyn College and the Academy Secondary Schools.

In September, families of the tradesmen who participated in the recent renovation of Glencairn were invited to a joyful open house at the Museum reminiscent of the October 1938 open house given by **Raymond and Mildred Pitcairn** for the families of craftsmen contributing to the construction of Glencairn.

Advancement

The Bryn Athyn College *Alumni Magazine* is being delivered now only digitally. (See the College website, *brynathyn.edu*, for information.)

The search for donors to endow chairs at the College continues.

The College Alumni Association has been re-activated.

Investment Committee

The public investment portion of the endowment increased 10% this year. Private investments are 27% of the portfolio. Our investment advisor remains “cautiously optimistic.”

A NEW PROGRAM TO HELP THE CHURCH GROW IN THE UK

The Rev. Erik J. Buss

At a recent All Ages Weekend, a team from the General Church presented a new program they would like to implement in the United Kingdom if we are willing to try. A newly formed department in the General Church called the Healthy Church Congregations Committee is trying to work with

congregations to revitalize them.

Sometime in the next two years, the General Church is moving us down from two ministers serving the UK Church to one minister. This move is not from any lack of support of the church but because there is a minister shortage and the church needs to balance out the ministers and the people being served.

In demonstration of the General Church's care for the church in our country, **Bishop David Lindrooth**, together with the Healthy Church Congregations team, made a proposal at the All Ages Weekend to make the UK church a special project of the Healthy Church Congregations Committee in the hopes that it will help us find our next step forward.

In our situation, this would be finding a way to survive and then to thrive. The response at the weekend was positive, as was a follow-up meeting of the team with the whole General Church Council Board. The board planned to meet in December to brainstorm five-year goals we would like to propose to the broader membership of the church as part of this initiative.

The Healthy Church Congregations initiative is new. In another form it had been working in Africa with good success and has recently started work in the United States. Three congregations there have volunteered and the early results are positive – although it is too early to be called a grand success. Key people in this group are Bishop Lindrooth, **Jane Enis**, the project manager and lead person we would interact with, and our own **John Berridge**, who is on the General Church Board and chairs this board committee.

The basic plan is that they help us to come up with three five-year goals. A layperson then takes on leadership of each goal, leading a committee to work on it. (We have a lay leader so it does not all fall on the pastor, which is a death knell because it overwhelms one person, although the pastor would be very involved in each initiative). Then the goals are broken down into six-month tasks, and the team meets with Jane every two weeks to make sure they are staying on task and addressing the issues.

This is a much more structured approach than what we usually undertake. It also comes with resource support from the General Church, such as expertise in Google Ads and social media, programs to track contacts, and even financial support for running ads.

At a purely emotional level it is great to know that the General Church is thinking about us and planning ways to help us thrive. We are not alone in our small country but are part of something bigger that is looking out for us.

To help us decide if we want to respond to this invitation I have called a Zoom meeting on January 21, to help us decide if we want to take this momentous next step in the story of the New Church in the United Kingdom.

EPISCOPAL VISIT TO SWEDEN AND NORWAY

Rt. Rev. Peter M. Buss Jr.

My wife, Teresa, and I had the opportunity to travel to Stockholm and Oslo in November 2024. The visit consisted of worship services in the beautiful Stockholm church, and in the living room of a host family in Oslo.

Pictures of the Stockholm portion of the trip (see page xxx) show visits with the pastor, Göran Appelgren, and his wife, Josephine, with Eric Sjodin, a candidate for the priesthood who will be ordained in June 2025, and with Thomas Floyd, our pastor resident in Oslo but working also in Stockholm.

While there I had the opportunity to participate in a podcast recording with Göran and Thomas. We also visited with congregants and board members to hear about the strong outreach work ongoing in the country. The Oslo portion of the trip included connecting with a few families who live there, who relished the opportunity to get together for worship and connection with the broader church.

Whenever I have the opportunity to visit Scandinavia, I consider it a back-to-our roots experience. Walking around the Stockholm that Emanuel Swedenborg lived in brings to mind the revelation that is the foundation of our faith. It is wonderful to see the continuing efforts in that part of the world.

GLENCAIRN MUSEUM

In October 1938 **Raymond and Mildred Pitcairn** invited all those involved in the building of their new home, with their families, to Glencairn to express appreciation and gratitude for their work.

On September 15, 2024, Glencairn Museum continued this tradition, inviting all who had contributed to and supported the infrastructure replacement project to the Museum with their families. Tradesmen, contractors, engineers and many others were warmly invited to lead their families through Glencairn, sharing with them the stories and fruits of their hard labor.

After brief remarks and words of appreciation from Glencairn Director **Brian Henderson**, and Cooper Mechanical Solutions Project Manager **Christopher Peuler**, more than 180 guests – including many of the contractors' spouses and children, enjoyed self-guided, behind-the-scenes access throughout Glencairn, with refreshments in the Cloister, Great Hall and kitchen.

ASIAN NEW CHURCH MISSION

Rev. John Jin, Regional Pastor for Asia

My eyes have seen Your salvation, which You have prepared before the face of all peoples, a light for revelation to the gentiles. (Luke 2:30-32)

The “Let’s build a healthy New Church of the Lord in Asia” movement, which began its specific activities in 2022, continues to develop and grow in a practical and specific way. For example, the main agenda of the Asian clergy meeting held in Seoul in collaboration with Australia was: “How can we make the New Church a church that obeys the word of the Lord and loves one another?” And: “How can the heavenly doctrine become the principle that guides our lives?”

In the Asian Pastors’ Seminar that followed, they diligently searched for solutions by pondering: “How can we teach and lead the congregation?” And, “What role can pastors play in creating a healthy church that becomes a heavenly community centered on the Lord?” In addition:

- 1) What should we improve and develop further to become a community that conforms to the teachings of the New Church?
- 2) What should our church change for the youth who are currently distancing themselves from the church, and what are the alternatives?
- 3) We are discussing how to spread, educate and guide the gospel to the Gentiles who do not know the Lord and the Word, who account for more than 70% of the total population, in churches centered on Christians who currently account for less than 25%.
- 4) In North and Southeast Asia, which accounts for 33% of the world’s population (2.3 billion), the New Church mission is limited to Korea and Japan, including China. Many Asian countries remain barren lands. So, it was time to establish a mission based in Malaysia for two reasons. In addition to expanding missions in the Asian region, the current situation in mainland China is very hard to mission, so a place where people can freely study and discuss for missionary work was needed. So, we rented a newly built apartment for two years, where Chinese New Church members and Asians can gather to freely educate and do missionary work.
- 5) The Asian New Church began basic research on developing the existing Western-style church into a new model that considers the mentality and religious background of Asians.

Missionary work in mainland China is subject to many restrictions.

This is not only due to the dangers and restrictions caused by government sanctions, but also due to the exclusion from traditional religions, the lack of financial resources and professional manpower, and the difficulties arising from

their harsh reality, making it very difficult for even those who have accepted the teachings of the New Church to maintain their beliefs. Nevertheless, they firmly believe in the Lord and live courageously according to the teachings of the New Church and their conscience of faith with the determination that “if I die, I die.” Under these sacrifices and the grace of the Lord, the New Church has achieved meaningful results and continues to grow. I would like to humbly introduce some of these achievements.

Public Sunday Service

A Sunday service in the Shanghai area is broadcast live nationwide through SNS with about 40 people in attendance. People living in Jiujiang, Hunan and Beijing also gather to worship on Sunday. Many New Church preachers participate in the Shanghai church service remotely to lead sermons and Q&A. Overseas Chinese living in Australia and the United States are also participating.

Discussion group meeting

Currently, people who are interested in the teachings of the New Church are divided into several groups and are active. On the positive side, the teachings of the New Church are widely known, but on the negative side, they are unable to get along with each other as if they only know what they know. This is causing concern for many. Therefore, leaders gathered in Shanghai last October to discuss how to minimize the negative aspects and maximize the positive aspects. As a result, much of the concern was removed and they resolved to find ways to get along with each other with hope and to approach the doctrine with a humble heart.

Church Leader Training

Currently, three people are participating in the local theological school and one person is taking the course at Bryn Athyn Theological School. The China Theological Seminary is planning to ordain pastors in spring 2026. In the missionary course (lay leader), about 20 students are completing the second 12-week course. When they complete the fourth course, they will be given a certificate officially recognizing them as missionaries and will be granted the qualifications to become leaders. They are still receiving various sanctions, but they are dealing with them wisely. Your encouragement and support will be of great help.

Translation and Publication

Most of the HD translations have been completed and are being reviewed. The translated content has been made available for easy reading on NewChristianBibleStudy.org and the New Church website in China, and hard copies are being made and distributed to those in need. In order to make it widely known, an ISBN must be obtained and officially published, but this is impossible due to regulations. We are making multi-faceted efforts to overcome this. In addition, we are challenging the task of creating a search engine for those who want to teach and study New Church teachings. This work is expected to require a lot of manpower and resources.

Develop Support Center

Due to local conditions and the characteristics of the New Church, the Heavenly Community cannot pursue small group meetings. Therefore, each community is bound to be limited in what they can do due to insufficient manpower and resources. As a measure to overcome this, we have planned to establish a Support Center based on IT and AI as a project of the New Church in China. The Support Center will operate a counseling center and a support center for problem solving through real-time conversations, like the past web site function.

For example, we spread the teachings of the New Church to as many people as possible through video, audio, live stream, blog, comics, YouTube, etc. We go beyond the simple function of conveying information and provide doctrinal support that allows for questions and answers. We also play a role in helping leadership in conflicts or difficulties that may arise within the community. We also play a role in helping church members with psychological, physical, and other difficulties, or consult on other issues such as technical issues in using a computer or requests for financial support and work together to find solutions.

Southeast Asia Mission and Free Missionary Activities

The increasingly oppressive sanctions are reaching a very serious level. Therefore, an alternative that can protect all the resources achieved so far, freely educate, discuss, and help growth in a difficult environment is urgently needed. We have been investigating and researching the Sabha area of Malaysia, which is relatively easy to access with little money and has religious freedom, as a target for this purpose for the past two years.

As a result, we have finally selected it as a Southeast Asia mission center and a place for education, communication and saving resources for the church

members. Therefore, we decided to rent it for two years before securing a permanent location. The center will complete internal repairs by the end of February 2025 and start operations in March.

Forming a leadership team

This team discusses and decides on the current problems of the Chinese New Church and plays a role in preparing for issues that may arise in the future. In addition, this team is responsible for and operates the Research and Development center for systematic growth and development. It presents solutions for the diversity and intergenerational conflicts that our church is facing, as well as for missions to the younger generation and gentiles.

The Asian New Church is also facing many challenges. In particular, the Japanese and Korean New Churches have lost their initial growth momentum and are showing signs of regression in many external aspects. To overcome this, many people, including local bishops, are working together with Asian church pastors. The leaders' efforts are gradually gaining strength, and although slow, they are entering a stage where they are making efforts to overcome this together with the church members.

The Chinese New Church is in its initial stage, and compared to this, there is a strong desire to sacrifice themselves and achieve the growth of the New Church. Therefore, as we learned through the previous church growth stages, the church "only obeys the Word and as a result, only cares about loving the Lord and loving our neighbors."

For the church's mission, we decided to focus on "missions to young people and gentiles" and to create a "heavenly community that only obeys the word of the Lord and loves the Lord and its neighbors," just as the Heavenly Doctrine teaches us.

I would like to sincerely thank all of you for your support that made all this possible, and for giving me the courage and wisdom to face challenges.

GLENCAIRN AWARD

In 2023 the Academy of the New Church re-instituted the Glencairn Award Program. Awards have been presented to 24 individuals in the past two years.

The Glencairn Award Committee began accepting written nominations on January 6 for the 2025 award. The deadline for applications is March 28.

The award is given to an outstanding teacher or member of a New Church community for past achievements and/or contributions in the fields of religion, science, education, the arts, literature, or community service.

As provided in the gift that funds the award, such achievements are the

sole criteria for the award. It may not be given as compensation for service or as a supplement to salary or based on the financial needs of the recipient.

A nomination application may be requested from Phillip R. Zuber, Secretary-General Counsel for the Academy, by calling him at 267-502-2417, or emailing him at *Phillip.zuber@anc-gc.org*. Applications must be returned by March 28.

NEW BOOK SITE

The General Church has upgraded and refreshed the site and inventory of New Church Books. Please visit the site – and order some books – at:
www.newchurchbook.com.

Announcements

Editors' note: In the interest of protecting personal information in this age of stolen identity, and respecting the laws in various countries where *New Church Life* is circulated, we can no longer include birth dates with baptisms.

BAPTISMS

The innocence of the Lord flows into angels of the third heaven, where all are in innocence of wisdom; passes on through the lower heavens, but only through the innocent affections of angels there; and so descends directly and indirectly into little children. (Conjugal Love 396)

Abou, Guillaume Oba

At Abelemkpe, Greater Accra, Ghana, November 3, 2024, Rev. George D. Dziekpor officiating.

Agnew, Aurel Metch Emess

At Grand-Bassam, Côte d'Ivoire, September 15, 2024, son of Sylvain and Agnes Berengè Agnew, Rt, Rev. Peter M. Buss Jr. officiating.

Aldridge, Robert David

At Johannesburg, Gauteng, South Africa, October 12, 2024, son of Gregory and Jennifer Woker Aldridge, Rev. Joel C. Glenn officiating.

Boyesen, Frida Brynn

At Cameron, Missouri, October 6, 2024, daughter of Eyvind and Leanna Smith Boyesen, Rev. Calvin B. Heinrichs officiating.

Fennell, Crew James

At Freeport, Pennsylvania, July 3, 2024, son of Dusty and Emily Heilman Fennell, Rev. Charles E. Blair officiating.

Franzen, Katherine Marie

At Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania, September 22, 2024, daughter of Zachary and Annalisa Synnestvedt Franzen, Rev. Dr. Thane P. Glenn officiating.

Gordor, Bless Doe

At Abelemkpe, Greater Accra, Ghana, October 27, 2024, Rev. George D. Dziekpor officiating.

Gordor, Richard

At Abelemkpe, Greater Accra, Ghana, November 3, 2024, Rev. George D. Dziekpor officiating.

Heinrichs, Andriel

At Cameron, Missouri, November 3, 2024, daughter of Calvin and Liza Jungé Heinrichs, Rev. Justin E. Schorran officiating.

King, Harper Elise

At Kempton, Pennsylvania, October 26, 2024, daughter of Levi and Kayla Swartkey King, Rev. Brett D. Buick officiating.

Leal, Adam

At Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania, November 14, 2024, Rev. Dr. Ray Silverman officiating.

Marsh, Wren Rose

At Kempton, Pennsylvania, November 30, 2024, daughter of Daniel and Alexandra Boyesen Marsh, Rev. Brett D. Buick officiating.

Marsh, Hunter Willow

At Kempton, Pennsylvania, November 30, 2024, daughter of Daniel and Alexandra Boyesen Marsh, Rev. Brett D. Buick officiating.

McGowan, Madeline

At Warminster, Pennsylvania, November 24, 2024, daughter of Matthew and Allison Doyle McGowan, Rev. Charles E. Blair officiating.

Metsoko, Martin

At Phoenix, Arizona, October 20, 2024, Rev. Jean A. Atta officiating.

Ngalwala, Richard Saleh

At Abelemkpe, Greater Accra, Ghana, October 27, 2024, Rev. George D. Dziekpor officiating.

Tracy, Lane Thomas

At Wall Township, New Jersey, October 20, 2024, son of Donald Tracy and Taylor Morrison Barry, Rev. Charles E. Blair officiating.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

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)

Bab, Joël Ephraim

At Yamoussoukro, Côte d'Ivoire,
September 22, 2024, Rt. Rev. Peter
M. Buss Jr. officiating.

de Chazal, Benjamin Simons

At Rochester, Michigan, October
14, 2024, Rev. Steven P. Gunther
officiating.

Bab, Ruth Sherry Lyn

At Yamoussoukro, Côte d'Ivoire,
September 22, 2024, Rt. Rev. Peter
M. Buss Jr. officiating.

MARRIAGES

When married partners love each other tenderly, they think of eternity in regard to the marriage covenant, and not at all of its being terminated by death. (Conjugal Love 216)

Adams-Newell, Jeremy Mason

Adams and Julia Newell

At Macungie, Pennsylvania,
November 9, 2024, Rev. Steven P.
Gunther officiating.

Chaves-Zazulak, Matheus

**Synnestvedt Cecilio Chaves and
Savannah Zazulak**

At Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania,
October 18, 2024, Rev. Matthew L.
Genzlinger officiating.

Ahotosse—Atcho-Dakpoe, Martin

**Cokou Ahotosse and Damienne
Atcho-Dajoie**

At Abomey Calavi, Atlantique,
Benin, October 20, 2024, Rt. Rev.
Bradley D. Heinrichs officiating.

Dunlap-Douglas, Connor Reeves

Dunlap and Margaret Ena Douglas

At Philadelphia, Pennsylvania,
July 6, 2024, Rev. Charles E. Blair
officiating.

Campan-Cahoon, Dale Edward

Campan and Andrea Rose Cahoon

At Lafayette, Colorado, October 19,
2024, Rev. David C. Roth officiating.

Rogers-Quinlan, Colin James

Rogers and Alexandria Marie Quinlan

At Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania,
October 19, 2024, Rev. Charles E.
Blair officiating.

IN MEMORIAM

A person lives as a person after death. The Lord, who is Jehovah from eternity and the Creator of the universe, has provided that the condition of a person who conjoins himself with Him by living according to His commandments be more blessed and happy after death than his condition before it in the world.
(Conjugal Love 28)

Curtis, Carol Ruth McCardell

November 1, 2024, of Oxford,
Michigan. 78

Lynch, Ruth Bostock

November 9, 2024, of Bryn Athyn,
Pennsylvania. 101

**Heilman, Dorothy (Dusty) Kynett
Moses**

May 30, 2024, of Cabot,
Pennsylvania. 94

Simons, (Samuel) Brian

October 31, 2024, of Trumbull,
Connecticut. 87

Lindsay, James Pitcairn

October 2, 2024, of Sarver,
Pennsylvania. 72

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