

NEW CHURCH *Life*

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

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2016



The Model for Small Groups in the Church

This image of the Lord teaching the elders in the temple as a young boy relates both to a sermon by the Rev. Michael D. Gladish, *The Growth of the Lord*, (page 9), and an article by the Rev. John L. Odhner on the history and promise of Small Groups in the New Church, (page 33). (The image, courtesy of the General Church Office of Education, is by the late Marguerite L. Acton.)

Note: There is no extra cost for the use of color on the front page.

NEW CHURCH LIFE (USPS 378-180)

PUBLISHED BIMONTHLY BY

THE GENERAL CHURCH OF THE NEW JERUSALEM

Bruce Henderson, Editor

Rev. Walter Orthwein, Spiritual Editor

SUBSCRIPTION: \$30 TO ANY ADDRESS. To order: 267-502-4990 or susan.wright@anc-gc.org.

Postmaster: Send address changes to: New Church Life, PO Box 708, Bryn Athyn, PA 19009

e-mail: datacenter@anc-gc.org

New Church Life

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

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In This Issue

In a post-Christmas sermon the Rev. Michael D. Gladish looks at *The Growth of the Lord* – what happened in His life on earth after He was first presented in the temple at Jerusalem. How much was He human, like any other young child, and how was He different because of His divinity? How did He grow and learn? And how was He tempted? Mr. Gladish says: “He knew He would overcome all these challenges. What was in question was whether we would accept and benefit from His work. In short, let us remember that His whole life right from birth was all about just one thing: helping us find our way to our ‘place’ in heaven.” (Page 9)

The Rt. Rev. Peter M. Buss Sr. looks at the story of Hagar and Ishmael for insight into the development of the rational in a sermon, *Contempt or Rebellion on the Way to Maturity*. The story “reflects the rebelliousness of every generation against the wisdom of the past,” but, he notes: “The message – for us and our children – is not to be too scared of the Ishmael quality. In truth it is not meant to linger in us forever. But it is a stepping stone.” (Page 15)

In a children’s talk in conjunction with his sermon on Hagar and Ishmael, Bishop Buss offers a cautionary message on *Looking Down on Others*. We are all born with special talents, he told the children, but also are not as good as others in some things. The lesson is never to look down on anyone but to look for what is special in each person and celebrate that. (Page 20)

In a memorial address for beloved Bryn Athyn College professor Dr. Sherri Rumer Cooper, the Rev. Dr. Jonathan S. Rose celebrates the way that her great love of science was fulfilled by her faith – especially as her lifelong faith was “clarified” when she discovered the New Church. “Scientific truth was extremely important to Sherri but was enhanced by being in balance with spiritual truth; and both kinds of truth shone the most in the presence of love.” (Page 23)

Small group study may seem a new thing in the Church, but the Rev. John L. Odhner says it really has a long history, going back to the ancient churches. The new emphasis is a way to enhance normal worship practices and enrich the experience of personal spiritual journeys. There are a lot of ways to get involved – from the annual Journey Programs to the new Sunroom Groups.

(See the article about Sunroom Groups by Kendall Hyatt in the September-October 2015 issue.) This article includes several testimonials about how small group involvement has transformed people's lives. (Page 33)

The Rt. Rev. Brian W. Keith reports on an episcopal visit to Brazil he made last fall with his wife, Gretchen. The New Church in Brazil still is developing but has its roots back in the 1800s. Bishop Keith traces the history then describes a very full visit that included an ordination, taping shows for a local television station, preaching, giving classes and conducting clergy meetings for all of the ministers growing the church there and helping to provide translations of the Writings. (Page 48. For photographs of the visit see pages 86-87)

The Rev. Dr. Ray Silverman writes about two very different kinds of zeal we may experience – both heavenly and hellish – and the vital distinction between them. Zeal often is an expression of jealousy – but heavenly jealousy wants to defend what is sacred while hellish jealousy becomes bitter and angry when it doesn't get what it wants. (Page 53)

In response to an article four years ago in *New Church Life* on *Swedenborg and Islam*, Ben Pendleton examines *Islam, Swedenborg and the Heavenly Doctrines*. He considers such questions as what Swedenborg could have known about Islam and what access he might have had to the Quran, and closely compares statements from the Writings and the Quran. (Page 60)

Joseph S. David humbly considers all the gifts we have from the Lord – most essentially in the marriage of His Divine love and Divine wisdom, and that “to represent that Divine marriage He made His creation reflect the duality of His love and wisdom, especially in the animal kingdom and most especially in the human race by creating us male and female.” And then He added the gift for each sex to be raised into the atmosphere of heaven, according to the complementary nature of their light and warmth. (Page 70)

Church News (page 74) includes:

- A new Dr. Sherri Rumer Cooper Research Fund established by Bryn Athyn College, and how you can contribute to it
- The retirement of the Rev. Frederick C. Elphick as long-time chairman of the General Church Council in Great Britain
- News about a European Assembly planned for 2017
- Memorial Resolutions for three true Sons of the Academy – Edward Franklin Allen Jr., H. Keith Morley and Col. B. Dean Smith
- A comprehensive report on the Church in Asia
- Plans for adding 11th and 12th grades at the Kempton (Pennsylvania) New Church School

IN THIS ISSUE

- A New Church teen weekend for eastern Canada and the United States, held last fall in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
- Appointment of the Rev. Mark D. Pendleton as the new pastor in Glenview, Illinois

Editorials

ON YOUNG PEOPLE LEAVING THE CHURCH

The fact that fewer young people are joining the Church these days is cause for concern for all who love the Church and believe its continuing existence is vital to the spiritual health and well-being of the world. But the situation is especially sad for those who see their own children and grandchildren failing to connect with an institution which has been such a strong source of inspiration, meaning and joy for them in their lives.

Chief among the various kinds of happiness we wish for our children is a spiritual life, based on the truths of the Lord's Word. "I have told you these things so that my joy may be in you, and your joy may be complete," the Lord said. (*John 15:11*) And He established the Church to preserve and teach and help us live by the things He has told us.

The truths the Lord teaches in His Word constitute the "formula" for a happy life. No other plan of life works as well as the blueprint the Lord has given us in His Word. And no other agency is as successful in implementing that plan as the one the Lord Himself founded upon that Rock of Truth, that is, the Church.

The whole history of the human race demonstrates the truth of that proposition. Again and again people fall for the notion that we've outgrown the need for the Ten Commandments, the seeds of all human wisdom, only to find that we haven't. Then, after much hardship and sorrow, they are "rediscovered." It's an old, old story.

But does living by the Ten Commandments necessarily require a church? It's a big question, but in a word: yes. Civil law and social custom support the order of human existence from without, but apart from the spiritual influence of Divine truth from within, the outer order will be artificial, brittle, sterile and joyless.

The Church is a community of people who acknowledge the importance of the Commandments and are striving to understand and live by them, and support each other in this way of living. The presence of that spiritual community in society is essential to the spiritual health of the whole society.

The “Church universal” – composed of all the decent, God-fearing, basically good people in a nation – requires a “Church specific” in its midst.

The New Church, founded upon the Heavenly Doctrine in which the Lord has made His second coming in His Divine Human, is the Church specific today. Although its existence is largely unknown, its influence is essential if the modern age is to be redeemed from the skepticism and materialism which are dragging it down and threatening to destroy it.

It is not just for the sake of the world, but for the sake of our young people themselves that we so fervently want them to stay in the Church and carry on its work. We know that the quality of life that they and their children will experience will be far less rewarding in a world without the Church.

“No man is an island.” We are social creatures. Our humanity is nurtured by connection with others, and a shared religion forms the deepest, most vital and most satisfying connection between people. The ties that bind the social order together are the Ten Commandments – not as ideals floating about in space, but as living principles in the hearts and minds and lives of the individuals who make up a community.

The people of the Church are imperfect, of course – they know that, which is why they know they need the Church – but all noble human enterprises (art, science, philosophy, religion, government) are carried out by imperfect human beings. If you’re going to reject the Church because it is not perfect you might as well reject science because it is not perfect; and government, and business, and human society generally, for that matter.

Our grief over young people leaving the Church is partly because we love the Church and want it to survive, but it is also, especially, because we love our children and fear that without the Church their lives will be less touched by holiness; that they will not develop an awareness of the Lord’s presence with them; and that the silver cords that connect their souls with heaven will fray and perhaps even break.

(WEO)

BUT WHAT CAN WE DO?

The most basic thing we can do is to trust in the Lord to provide for His Church. This may sound like a nice platitude that has little practical value, but it is actually very realistic. Innocence is the greatest protection and strength the Church has.

“Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness . . . do not worry about tomorrow. . . . Do not fear, little flock, for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom.” (*Matthew 6:33-34; Luke 12:32*)

We must exercise prudence in our stewardship of the Church, of course,

but we must not let anxiety about the future cause us to rely upon our own schemes to such an extent that they interfere with the operation of providence, or distract us from our primary responsibility to preach and teach the truth.

Our first priority must always be to remain true to the Heavenly Doctrine in all we do as a Church. Then our efforts to strengthen it will cooperate with providence and not subvert it. In so far as our Church is truly representative of the New Church, sincerely and faithfully serving the Lord in His second advent, He will sustain it.

We have to remember, though, that we cannot see providence operating. The Lord's ways are higher than our ways, and His thoughts are higher than our thoughts. (*Isaiah 55:9*) We can be confident, though, that there are unseen "horses and chariots of fire" waiting to help us if we stand firm. (*II Kings 6:17*)

(WEO)

THE CASE FOR OPTIMISM

"For I know the plans that I have for you," says the Lord. "They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope." (*Jeremiah 29:11*)

It is getting harder to maintain a sense of hope and optimism in a world increasingly plagued with evil and disaster.

Terrorism is the new scourge of the 21st century, threatening innocents everywhere. Our culture is increasingly secular, materialistic and self-indulgent. At the root of all of this is a spiritual crisis – turning away from the Lord, which allows evil to flourish.

People are naturally discouraged and pessimistic about where we are going. Futuristic books and movies tend to be dystopian, not utopian. They project apocalyptic chaos, with people reduced to robots, devoid of freedom. Much of this springs from a literal reading of *Revelation* with its cataclysmic, end-of-the-world visions.

That, too, is understandable. We are still dealing with the fallout of the Last Judgment – a judgment on the pervasive falsity in the world, which surely has not abated.

But the ultimate vision of *Revelation* is uplifting and promising – a new heaven and a new earth, with the Holy City New Jerusalem descending out of heaven.

We are blessed with the internal understanding of what this all means but are not immune to despair. Everyone must suffer temptations, which ultimately are festering doubts about the Lord's presence with us, His mercy and salvation – especially in times of turmoil when what we love and invest our hope in most is under attack.

William Butler Yeats captured this dark mood in his iconic poem *The Second Coming*, written just after World War One – seen in those simpler times as “the war to end all wars.” Among the more famous lines of that poem are these:

*Things fall apart; the center cannot hold;
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world;
The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere
The ceremony of innocence is drowned.*

Yeats predicted – but without any comfort about what it meant:

*Surely some revelation is at hand;
Surely the Second Coming is at hand.*

Little did he know, of course, that the Second Coming had occurred almost 170 years before and that the “anarchy loosed upon the world” came in the aftermath of the Last Judgment, which still reverberates around us. But we still have the comfort of the Lord’s teachings about His love and providence to give us hope.

When we suffer through spiritual conflict we are assured that “good spirits and angels from the Lord in every way disperse that doubting attitude, all the time preserving a feeling of hope, and in the end strengthening an affirmative outlook.” (*Secrets of Heaven* 2338, 2234.1)

Our hope and “affirmative outlook” also are nurtured by the knowledge that the Lord’s providence is operating in every least particular of our lives, leading to a good end – and that this is also true in every least particular of human history, as hard as that may seem to believe at times. “Those who are in the stream of providence,” we are assured, “are at all times carried along toward everything that is happy, regardless of the appearance of the means.” (*Ibid.* 8478.4)

This number also warns that “those not in the stream of providence are people who trust in themselves alone and attribute everything to themselves. Theirs is a contrary outlook, for they take providence away from the Divine and claim it as their own. It should be recognized also that as much as we are in the stream of providence, that much we are in a state of peace.”

That “state of peace” is constantly challenged by the choices of those who are not looking to the Lord, and a looming future that is anything but encouraging. It comes down to trust.

“People are concerned about the morrow when they are not content with their lot, do not trust in God but in themselves, and have solely worldly and earthly things in view, not heavenly ones.” But those who put their trust in God “are altogether different. Though concerned about the morrow, yet are they unconcerned, in that they are not anxious, let alone worried. They remain even-tempered whether or not they realize desires, and they do not grieve over

loss; they are content with their lot. . . . They know that for those who trust in the Divine all things are moving toward an everlasting state of happiness, and that no matter what happens at any time to them, it contributes to that state.”

(BMH)

OUR NEW CHURCH VOCABULARY

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

END, CAUSE AND EFFECT

These philosophical terms occur frequently in the Writings. End is the love, the purpose or intention of the will; cause is the means in the understanding through which the will achieves its purpose; and effect is the ultimate of speech, action, sensation or production in which the purpose is achieved through those means. (See *Arcana Coelestia* 3518)

The Growth of the Lord

The Rev. Michael D. Gladish

Lessons: *Luke 2:39-52; Psalm 139; True Christian Religion 89, Arcana Coelestia 1461*

Following up on the Advent season we read in *Luke* about what happened after the presentation of the Lord in the temple at Jerusalem:

“So when they had performed all things according to the law of the Lord, [Mary and Joseph] returned to Galilee, to their own city, Nazareth. And the Child grew and became strong in spirit, filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon Him.”
(*Luke 2:39-40*)

Then later, on another visit to Jerusalem, they left Him behind on their journey home, and He was found teaching the scholars in the Temple. We read:

“Jesus increased in wisdom and stature [or perhaps age], and in favor with God and men.” (*Ibid.* 2:52)

As you all know, the doctrines for the New Church reveal a great deal about the dual nature of the Lord, including extensive discussion of the Divine and the “merely human” states of His life. Yet questions remain. What was He like as a baby or a boy? Did He cry like other infants? Was He ever disobedient? Did He ever do anything that could be considered thoughtless or inconsiderate? What was the real nature of His doubts and temptations as a grown Man? And why does it matter anyway?

Well, to take the last question first, it matters a great deal since the idea we have about God, or the Lord, qualifies everything else about our spiritual life (see *Divine Love and Wisdom 13, True Christian Religion 113*, etc.), and so to a large extent determines how or whether we can be conjoined with Him. It’s pretty important.

We begin, then, with a fundamental principle explained in *True Christian Religion 89*, that “God assumed the Human according to His own Divine order”:

In the section concerning the Divine omnipotence and omniscience it was shown

that God at the creation introduced order into the universe and all its parts; and accordingly that the omnipotence of God proceeds and operates in the universe and all its parts according to the laws of His order. . . . Now since God came down, and since He is Order itself, as is there shown, it was necessary, in order for Him actually to become Human, that He should be conceived, carried in the womb, and be born; and that He should be educated, acquiring in due course the knowledge by which He might attain to intelligence and wisdom. Therefore as to His Humanity He was an infant like any other infant, a boy like any other boy, and so on; but with this sole difference, that He passed through those progressive states sooner, more fully and more perfectly than others.

The passages we read from *Luke* are then cited as proof of these teachings. But again, questions emerge even from this. Did He whine? Did He make mistakes? Was His judgment ever off? Did He take delight in anything mischievous? Did He ever do anything wrong? If He “grew in wisdom” doesn’t that imply that He lacked wisdom early on? What can we make of all this?

Again, the doctrines answer, but more in principle or general teachings than in detail. We read, in the explanation of the internal sense of Abraham’s journey into the land of Canaan:

In the Lord there was not any evil that was actual, or His own, as there is in all men, but there *was* hereditary evil from the mother, which is here called ‘the Canaanite then in the land.’ . . . There are two hereditary natures connate in a person, one from the father, the other from the mother; that which is from the father remains to eternity, but that which is from the mother is dispersed by the Lord while the person is being regenerated. The Lord’s hereditary nature from His Father, however, was the Divine. His heredity from the mother was evil, and this is treated of here, and is that through which He underwent temptations. (See *Mark* 1:12-13; *Matthew* 4:1; *Luke* 4:1-2) But, as already said, He had no evil that was actual, or His own, nor had He any hereditary evil from the mother after He had overcome hell by means of temptations; on which account it is here said that there was such evil at that time, that is, that the ‘Canaanite was then in the land.’ (*Arcana Coelestia* 1444:2)

This important passage goes on to note that the Canaanites lived by the sea – the Mediterranean – and represented the evils in the outskirts of the land, or the external aspects of human life that relate to the world. But what does this really mean? Are we talking about a natural predisposition to selfishness and worldly disorders? Surely *we* know all about that sort of thing, as we act on these impulses constantly (and suffer the consequences) as we ourselves grow up.

But of the Lord it is said about the Canaanite: “That this signifies the evil heredity from the mother, in His external man, is evident from what has been already said . . . for He was born as are other men, and inherited evils from the mother, against which He fought, and which He overcame.” In other words, He felt these as tendencies or inclinations in His outward life but He never gave in to them. Rather, He overcame them. All of them. Presumably without

hesitation.

So as a baby did He cry? Why not? Before a baby learns to speak he makes his needs known by crying to get attention. But as a toddler did He whine? It seems clear that He did not. As a boy did He misbehave or do anything that was in any way inconsiderate of others? The teaching seems clear that He did not. The Divine love moved Him from within to respond to every evil inclination with NO, so that He could say, “No, I will not do that.”

Now some have supposed that the incident in Jerusalem when, as it says, “the boy, Jesus, lingered behind” as Mary and Joseph set off for Nazareth, suggests some misbehavior on His part. We get this impression partly from the word, lingered, and partly from the reaction of the two parents who were clearly distressed about it and eventually confronted Him saying, “Son, why have you done this to us?” as if it were all His fault.

But remember, they had other children; Jesus was just the firstborn. And the word, lingered, suggests intent, whereas the original Greek word simply means “remained”: He had remained behind. Clearly this was a case of busy, pre-occupied parents neglecting one of their children, assuming He was with them but not checking. And the Lord, for His part, made the best of the situation by going to the Temple and teaching the scholars there.

OK, some of this admittedly is speculation, but given the teachings surely it makes more sense than the idea that the Lord was in any way inconsiderate. Indeed the message in *Luke* is that, “He went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was subject to them.” (2:51) This could not have been a change of heart, for we know that the Lord was motivated from conception by Divine love, and never wavered from that love at any time. But He did grow and mature “sooner, more fully and more perfectly than (all) others” so that He was thinking and doing things as a child that most of us cannot begin to comprehend until old age. As He said, “Why have you sought Me? Did you not know that I must be about My Father’s business?”

There are two critical implications here. The first is in the question, “Why?” Of course the Lord knew why they had sought Him! Typical of all the Lord’s questions throughout His ministry He was asking them to make them think: were they concerned for Him or for themselves? Remember, Mary represents a merely natural will, and Joseph a limited, finite understanding. As for “My Father’s business,” the word, “business” is not in the original language, it simply says, “in what is My Father’s.” The Lord from birth was “in what is His Father’s” and never stepped outside of that – which takes us to the main point of this sermon.

When the Lord “assumed the Human” in this world it was not just a material body; more importantly it was a Human mind formed from the interaction of the natural and spiritual worlds. It was a consciousness derived from the

combination of fallible, finite human genes and an infallible, Infinite, Divine soul. But like every ordinary human being, the soul governed the development of the body and the will inspired by that soul governed the understanding. So when things came to His awareness, as they do incrementally with every child, He “processed” them all from the perspective of His love – a profound love for the salvation of the entire human race.

Was He fully conscious of this love from birth? No, He couldn’t be, because the awareness of love is according to the vessels prepared to receive it, which are things we learn from experience in the world. But it seems very clear from what the doctrines show us that whenever some new information came to His awareness He interpreted and acted on it from His infinite love. This produced a kind of learning that is not possible for any other person. We read:

As regards the Lord’s instruction in general, the nature of it is very clear in the internal sense of this chapter (*Genesis* 20); namely, that it was by continual revelations, and thus by Divine perceptions and thoughts from Himself, that is, from His Divine; which perceptions and thoughts He implanted in Divine intelligence and wisdom, and this even to the perfect union of His Human with His Divine. This way of growing wise is not possible with any man; for it flowed in from the Divine itself, which was His inmost, being of the Father, of whom He was conceived; thus from the Divine love itself, which the Lord alone had, and which consisted in His desire to save the universal human race. (*Arcana Coelestia* 2500:2).

To be as clear as possible, this passage goes on to explain that the Lord’s learning was still progressive, just as it is with any other person. It points out that wisdom and intelligence actually are contained within love itself, and so in the Lord’s case provided a most perfect insight into everything He experienced. Still, as just noted, He could only get this insight in a focused, conscious, way to the extent that He acquired knowledge through the senses, and the senses were of course perfected gradually through life in the world, just as they are with any child, only in His case much more quickly and more perfectly.

But here’s the critical qualifier: because it is knowledge (or concepts) from the Word that most fully and completely contain the inflowing celestial and spiritual life, we are taught specifically “that in His childhood the Lord did not will to imbue Himself with any other concepts than those of the Word.” (*Arcana Coelestia* 1461) These are the things He both needed and wanted, and we know that He began learning them in His earliest infancy, soon after His birth. (*Ibid.*1414)

For example, it is said that the truths the Lord learned first of all involved “seeing all earthly and worldly things as created by God, seeing every single thing as having a purpose, and seeing in every single thing a certain likeness of God’s kingdom.” Further, “Such truth is implanted in none but the celestial man, and since the Lord alone was a celestial man, these and similar truths were implanted in Him in (His) earliest childhood.” (*Ibid.* 1434:e)

Such insight would be hard for us to comprehend in any child, but then, the Lord was no ordinary man. Yes, He learned as we learn; He grew as we grow; He developed as we develop, “but sooner, more fully and more perfectly than others” because He was moved and directed from birth by nothing less than the Divine love. And He was not regenerated; He was glorified. There’s a big difference. (*Ibid.* 1438)

All this leads us finally to a most important conclusion about the temptations that the Lord faced and how we should think of them. It’s a popular idea among many Christians, drawn largely from the New Testament Epistles, that Jesus was tempted just as we are, that is to say, by the lusts of the flesh and so on. We read, for example, in *Hebrews* 4:15, that “we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin.” Really?

It’s true, of course, that He was tempted by all the evils and falsities inherent in His maternal heredity, but to think of Him as having any real interest in such things seems completely inconsistent with the teachings about His inner life. Rather what concerned Him from earliest childhood was the salvation of the human race, the urgent, compelling need to re-order the heavens and the hells so that we could be raised up out of such things.

What bothered Him, if we can use that word for temptations, is that people in rejecting Him would reject the possibility of their own salvation. In fact (and it’s a whole new subject for another day) this is what caused the Lord His most grievous and painful temptations, not the relatively crude fallacies and allurements of the flesh, which He clearly overcame as soon as they came to His conscious awareness – very early on.

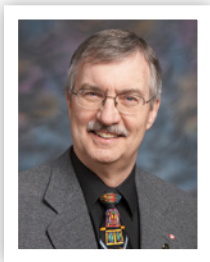
Of course, if we think of the Lord as having what we might call an easy time with the things that seem to cause us the most grief, we may wonder whether He can really understand us and help us in our struggles and pain. But this is the critical point: these things are easy for the Lord. They were the simplest things He had to deal with in the world and He dealt with them at a very early age so that He could go on in His wisdom and strength to subjugate all of the hells and liberate us all from all the compelling evils of the loves of self and the world – if we will only turn to Him.

Yes, the Lord’s life was similar to ours. “He assumed the Human according to His own Divine order;” being “conceived, carried in the womb, born, and educated . . . acquiring in due course the knowledge by which He might attain to intelligence and wisdom.” (*True Christian Religion* 89) But He was also very different, being motivated from conception by an infinite, Divine love for the salvation of the entire human race. And it is precisely that difference that makes it possible for us to call on Him in every circumstance, no matter how crude or overwhelming it may be to us.

He loves us, no matter what, and He can help us, no matter how difficult or compelling our problems may seem. He is not, in His perfection, a God far removed from us, but a Divinely Human God much more intimately concerned for us and much more deeply aware of our needs than we can possibly know.

Let us be careful not to think of Him as limited or even in His childhood as subject at any time to the evils and falsities of the world which He confronted one by one, more and more profoundly as He grew in the knowledge of the Word. He knew He would overcome all these challenges. (*Arcana Coelestia* 1812) What was in question was whether we would accept and benefit from His work. In short, let's remember that His whole life right from birth was all about just one thing: helping us find our way to our "place" in heaven. (*John* 14:3)

Amen.



The Rev. Michael D. Gladish is pastor of the Washington New Church in Mitchellville, Maryland and regional pastor for the Southeastern United States. He has been a pastor in Hurstville, New South Wales, Australia; Los Angeles, California; the Calgary New Church in Alberta, Canada; and the Dawson Creek Society in British Columbia, Canada. He and his wife, Ginny (de Maine), live in Mitchellville. Contact: mdgladish@gmail.com.

Contempt or Rebellion on the Way to Maturity

The Rt. Rev. Peter M. Buss Sr.

Lessons: *Genesis* 16:1-16; *Arcana Coelestia* 1911, 1936

And Hagar saw that she had conceived, and her mistress was despised in her eyes.
(*Genesis* 16:4)

One of the amazing things that the Lord revealed in the teachings for the New Church is how He created the human mind, and how it develops from childhood through adult life and into eternity. What is perhaps even more wonderful is that He has shown us how, with infinite mercy and wisdom, He has adjusted to humankind's choice of evil so that the mind can still develop despite the negative influences of this disorderly world.

Our topic this morning is how our rational mind develops, and the challenges parents and indeed adults face when it is beginning to show itself. The secrets about how the Lord provided for this are contained in the spiritual story of Abram, Sarai, and Hagar and her son, Ishmael.

First let's look carefully at the story. Abram and Sarai were the progenitors of the entire Jewish and Israelitish nation. All the millions now in the world sprang from these two. But at first Sarai couldn't have children. They were both desperate about this, because Abram had been promised that he would father a great nation, but where was his child? In fact, if he died childless, Eleazar of Damascus, his trusted steward, would inherit all he had.

Sarai had a solution. She took her handmaid Hagar, an Egyptian woman, and gave her to Abram as a concubine. The idea was that when the time came for delivery, the baby would be born onto Sarai's knees, and be regarded as her child.

So Hagar conceived. But clearly she was a strong-willed young woman, and when she saw that she was going to have Abram's child she despised her mistress. Try to imagine the situation. Sarai was mistress of a large encampment. Suddenly her own handmaid was treating her with contempt, and probably

All the wisdom of which you are capable is in your soul. It's not that you consciously experience it. But that wisdom works in you.

stirring up the other servants to laugh at her – for barrenness was considered a serious reproach for a woman in that earthly culture.

It was intolerable. Sarai complained to Abram, and in effect Abram said, “She’s your servant. Deal with it.” Sarai was harsh to her. But Hagar, either from fear or rebelliousness, ran away. Then the angel of the Lord found her, and told her she had been wrong. She should go back and submit to Sarai – in

effect, stop despising her.

This very human story about frail people tells the secret of how the rational mind comes into being in us today. In our minds, Abram represents the goodness of our souls. Deep within us, when we are born, the Lord has created our soul, the father of all future life in us, and it contains all the love – for the Lord and for others – that we will ever have. We’re not conscious of it, but it’s there, and it gives us life and the impetus for everything good.

In our soul is also the spiritual Sarai – wisdom, an awareness of the truth that makes love work. Once again, all the wisdom of which you are capable is in your soul. It’s not that you consciously experience it. But that wisdom works in you, and every time you see a truth or learn something, it is your soul’s wisdom recognizing a truth that causes you to understand.

At first there was no Jewish nation: just Abram and Sarai. In our minds at birth there is just our soul – and a tiny body. Then a baby grows and gets experiences and knowledges and develops an imagination. And there comes a time when he is ready to become rational. For rationality is the ability to use

our minds to be useful. The Writings teach that rationality is human nature itself. It is the power in us to love God, to love others, and to know how to show that love! This is true rationality.

The ideal for Abram and Sarai was that they would have a son, Isaac, and that would be their future taken care of. But it wasn’t to be so yet. That has a spiritual counterpart with a growing child. The ideal would be if the soul produced in the growing mind a gradually deepening rational ability.

The Writings teach that rationality is human nature itself. It is the power in us to love God, to love others, and to know how to show that love!

It would be born without conflict, and it would be a gentle, wise and strong awareness of how to make one's way in the world and how to be productive and useful. A peaceful birth, the beginning of our actual experience of goodness.

Why can't it happen that way? Because this world has chosen evil over countless centuries, and every child is born into a very confusing environment. Not only that, but she gets from her heredity a tendency to see everything in terms of herself. It's not her fault, but it's there. So the rational mind can't be born in a peaceful way, gently descending into the mind. The young person couldn't accept that.

So the Lord found another way to lead us to true rationality. There was Hagar, the Egyptian. She stands for something all children have – an affection for knowledge. Every child loves to learn some things, and loves to gain from his own experience. His learning and experience comes from outside, and he feels it as his own. It makes him feel capable, strong, clever.

What the Lord does is He causes the goodness of our soul – our spiritual Abram – to bond with this lower affection of knowledge. Out of that a child starts to develop the ability to reason. The infant growing in Hagar's womb represents our initial ability to reason, to work things out for ourselves, to approach rationality. It starts in teenage life but it is with us for most of our life on earth. (In fact, most of this story is about our adult states.)

But when Hagar saw she had conceived she despised Sarai. Now this tells us about a problem we have all experienced. Take teenagers. They start to develop the ability to reason. It is a wonderful new power in their minds. They can work things out for themselves. No longer are parents and teachers the only source of truth, they can decide for themselves.

How do they first use this new-found power? Very often they don't precisely despise the truths that their parents have taught them, but they don't think they're nearly as important any more. In fact, they use their reason in an aggressive way. Suddenly Mom isn't a source of wisdom; she's wrong. They can see her faults, and probably are not very slow to point them out. Dad is old-fashioned, doesn't understand how things are today. She wants to learn from friends and to work out herself what to believe and what to do.

It's a pretty common experience. Was it Mark Twain who first said, "When I was 17, my Dad didn't know anything. When I was 23 I was amazed at how much the old man had learned in six years."

So Hagar's contempt for Sarai, her feeling that she was superior, represents this rebellious spirit. What scares parents at times is that their children seem to be questioning some deep values. The Lord explains the spiritual cause for this. This first power of reason is born of the affection for knowledge. And the things we learn and experience are shot through with illusions and apparent facts. It wasn't so long ago that people believed the world was flat and the

Hagar's contempt for Sarai reflects the rebelliousness of every generation against the wisdom of the past, and a wish to give birth to one's own culture.

sun rose and set – basing this on their experience. When Galileo said it wasn't so he was forced to recant his views.

At first reason can't rise above appearances and even illusions. So our lessons give examples of essential truths for which the young man or woman has contempt. All life is from the Lord. "Well," says the growing rational, "*what does that make me – chopped liver?*" All good and truth come from the Lord. "*Oh, come now! Then why do I try to be good. I'll just*

wait for Him to do everything in me. But He doesn't, so that isn't true." You mustn't take credit for the good you do. "*Of course I must. That's why I do it.*"

The growing mind may not articulate it this way. It's just that when a young person finds this power of reason in her mind she uses it in the realm where she is comfortable – with earthly experiences. So theoretical ideas seem meaningless and really irrelevant to her life.

At the same time so does authority. Hagar's contempt for Sarai reflects the rebelliousness of every generation against the wisdom of the past, and a wish to give birth to one's own culture.

Now all this sounds scary. But the true message of this story is that it is not. It is the only way that children can grow into adult life in this confused world. When the Lord creates their first rational faculty it is inevitable that it will be used in argumentative, sometimes aggressive, questioning ways. (And, by the way, very often the brunt of this misuse is Mom, who has been the mainstay of the growing mind until then.)

The real message is: "Rejoice in this new power in your child, knowing that it is developing in the only way possible. It is the harbinger of true freedom and growth." It is hard for parents who are dealing with rebellious teenagers or young people to relate to the need to "rejoice" in their growing rational power when it is used against them. But remember that Sarai didn't let Hagar get away with her contemptuous behavior. She punished her. We must set boundaries, using the wisdom of the ages – the spiritual Sarai, revealed in the Lord's Word. Does the growing mind respond well to those boundaries? Hagar ran away! A further rebellion. How often have we seen that kind of persistent rebellion?

But once again there is comfort. For even if our children seem to be going in the wrong direction, they are not alone. Out there in the desert an angel of the Lord found Hagar and told her she was wrong, and she should go back, and be obedient. The angel of the Lord is a different quality in us that the Lord uses.

From our birth He has been sowing affirmative feelings in our hearts. When the young person rebels, He will find ways to stir some feelings inside her, and inspire her to see something good. This message from an angel is an insight that causes her to think: *“These things I’m rejecting are really true. I ought to reconsider.”*

How often have we experienced this? A teenager or young man seems set on the wrong path, and suddenly, for no apparent reason, changes direction, and seems to believe the things he was rejecting. We are so relieved, and we hope we find the wisdom not to say, “I told you so.”

The fact is that this aggressive rational ability is with us for most of our lives. Parents have it. When the teenager questions us, aren’t we tempted to say: *“Enough! I know what’s right, and you must just accept it. No, I don’t want to discuss it.”* Do we try to force our experience on the child, saying: *“Believe me, I’ve lived 25 years longer than you have and I know I’m right, so just do what I say.”* (Ironically, we are saying that our external experience is the authority, rather than the truth). Our aggressive rational reacts to their aggressive rational and we have a fight on our hands.

And throughout life we have this “fight” instinct. The angel told Hagar that her son would be a wild man, his hand against all. At first we misuse our rational power. But this is only a stepping stone, if we still let the Lord lead us. For Isaac was born. He represents true rationality – the ability not to win but to show love and caring and to be wise in doing so.

So the message – for us and for our children – is not to be too scared of the Ishmael quality. In truth it is not meant to linger in us forever. But it is a stepping stone. The Lord created it in us because it’s the only way we can become truly rational. We just have to learn to use it rightly, and to move beyond it. Is that a struggle? Well, yes. Is a good struggle? You bet!

So the message – for us and for our children – is not to be too scared of the Ishmael quality. In truth it is not meant to linger in us forever. But it is a stepping stone.



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Looking Down on Others

A Children's Talk by the Rt. Rev. Peter M. Buss Sr.

Lesson: *Genesis 16:1-9*

Are you perhaps really good at soccer? Are you sometimes tempted to look down on other people who are not so good, even to make fun of them? A boy is good at soccer, and he's playing with his friends and his younger brother wants to play, and he says, "You are no good. We don't want you to play with us." He might even tell his friends how bad his younger brother is at soccer. How does that make his younger brother feel?

Are there any of you who are good tennis players or good swimmers? Maybe there is someone who is not nearly as good and you are tempted to laugh at her when she tries to swim or hit a tennis ball. You see, when you laugh at someone who is not as good as you are, it makes you feel you're better than he or she is at everything. Not just soccer or swimming or tennis, but everything.

So let me tell you a story from the Word where someone laughed at and looked down on someone else, and how it caused a lot of unhappiness. Abram and Sarai were called by Jehovah to come into the land of Canaan, and told that they would be the parents of a great nation. But Sarai did not have children. Now in those days a man could have more than one wife. So Sarai took Hagar, her handmaid, and gave her to Abram as a second wife. She thought that the child would be like her child then and that way they would have a family.

Well, Hagar became pregnant. When she realized she was going to have a baby and Sarai couldn't have babies, she thought to herself: "I'm much better than my mistress. I can have babies. She's stupid, not being able to have babies." She looked down on Sarai, in fact she despised her. That means she thought Sarai was useless compared to her.

Now this was a big problem. In those days if a woman couldn't have a baby it was a very sad thing. It was also a problem because Sarai was a very important person, the woman who was in charge of the whole camp of Abram, with many people in it. If her handmaid was laughing at her, maybe encouraging other people to laugh at her, it would be very bad. So Sarai complained to Abram,

and he said, “She’s your handmaid. Punish her if you must.”

Sarai did so. But Hagar was rebellious and she ran away from Sarai – out into the desert. There an angel found her and asked her what she was doing. (Of course the angel knew.) Hagar told him her side of the story. But did the angel agree with her? No. He said Hagar should go back to her mistress and obey her. (That was what she should have done all along.) Hagar did so, and her baby was born.

It is very easy for us to notice how good we are at some things, and look down at people who are not good at the same things. But maybe if one boy is good at soccer another boy is good at school work. It’s easy to say, “Yes, but soccer is much more important than school work, so he’s just useless.”

I think you know that many times, in many places, people behave like Hagar. They like to think they are better than others, and they like to laugh at others who are not as good as they are at soccer, or schoolwork or singing or something else. The reason is that the hells love for us to look down on other people and make them unhappy. Hagar was making Sarai unhappy. There was no reason why she should do so. Hagar should have been happy that she was going to have a baby, but instead she thought she would be happy making fun of Sarai. In the end everyone was unhappy.

So the message of this story is to watch out for the temptation to look down on other children who are not as good as you are at some things. I want to suggest just two ways to fight this temptation. First of all, try really hard not to say unkind things to people who are not as good as you are at something. Second, try to remember that maybe they are good at something else, and even tell them so. If a friend is frustrated and says, “I’m no good at soccer,” don’t just agree with him. Instead find something that he is really good at and tell him about it. It will make him feel better instead of worse.

Looking down on others only brings them and you unhappiness in the long run – just as it brought unhappiness to Abram and to Sarai and to Hagar. So notice when you want to look down on other children, and try to resist that temptation.

Opening Prayer: Lord, you have made us, and look down on our weakness with infinite wisdom. We thank you for the patience with which You deal with our weaknesses, and for the mercy with which You lead us through those weaknesses toward true strength.

Children’s Prayer: We thank you, O Lord, for the many gifts you have given to each one of us. When we discover strengths in ourselves, when we find that we have talents in work or sports or friendships, let us turn to You and give You thanks. Make us strong, we pray, so that we do not look down on

others but instead to see their talents and rejoice in them too.

Closing Prayer: Lord, You have said, “Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, let not the mighty man glory in his might, nor let the rich man glory in his riches. But let him who glories glory in this that he understands and knows Me that I am the Lord, who exercises lovingkindness, judgment, and justice in the earth.” (*Jeremiah 9:23,24*) We pray that we may learn the truth of these words through our lives, that our pride may be humbled, and the harshness of our understandings may be gentled. We cannot help but begin in anger and even in contempt of others, but in Your great mercy You lead us to see that it is not in pride that happiness lies. Give us strength, we pray, to learn this lesson and to learn it completely.

OUR NEW CHURCH VOCABULARY

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

ENLIGHTENMENT

When a man who loves truth for its own sake reads the Word for the purpose of understanding truth and doing good, spiritual light inflows from the Lord through heaven into his understanding; casting new light upon the knowledges therein, and enabling him to see truths he did not see before and to acknowledge them from internal conviction.

This process is what is meant by enlightenment. Note that enlightenment is not internal revelation. It does not impart new knowledge but puts the knowledge man has already acquired in a new light and in that way leads him into new truth. (See *Arcana Coelestia* 9424; *Faith 5*; *Sacred Scripture* 57)

Memorial Address: Dr. Sherri Lynn Rumer Cooper



The Rev. Dr. Jonathan S. Rose

Bryn Athyn Cathedral, December 5, 2015

*Readings: Heaven and Hell 56; Psalm 8:1, 3-9; True Christianity 32:1,3;
Matthew 13:24-28; Divine Providence 326:10; John 14:1-3*

On behalf of Dave, Zia and Anji I would like to welcome you all to this service to celebrate the life of Dr. Sherri Lynn Rumer Cooper.

I would like to frame this talk in terms of four closely related qualities that were important to Sherri: *diversity, evenness, balance* and *harmony*.

I think she learned a lot about these qualities by studying diatoms, so if you'll indulge me, I'd like to start by telling you some of what she discovered in her research about them.

Diatoms are single-celled, microscopic, plant-like creatures encased in clear, complex silica shells of astounding beauty and variety; they live in the water but in a sense closest to the sun in the food chain. They do what no human chemist can do: they take sunlight and turn it into food. They are invisible to the naked eye, and so are easily underappreciated, but they supply about a quarter of the biomass, a quarter of the food, and almost a third of the

oxygen on the planet. Although most of us have never heard of them, their loss would be even more devastating (I'm told) than that of all the rain forest.

There are hundreds of thousands of species of them, all different, but they fall into two basic categories: so called "benthic" or bottom-dwelling diatoms, which are generally shaped like a feather and so are called "pennate"; and "planktonic" or floating diatoms, which tend to be round, at least seen from one angle, and are therefore called "centric."

Sherri devoted a lot of time to studying diatoms in the Chesapeake Bay. She found that they tell a very precise story year by year about ecological conditions in the distant past. And what she found was that for thousands of years there was a stable balance in the bay; the bottom was covered in hundreds of species of diatoms that happily coexisted and thrived through their diversity; there was plenty of sunlight for all, streaming through the clear water.

Then in the 18th century the human land use inadvertently drove up the levels of nitrogen and phosphorous in the water, with the result that one of two species of planktonic or floating, centric diatoms became dominant. In what is rather kindly called a "bloom," these floating diatoms reproduced wildly and upset the balance in the bay; they hogged the sunlight, killing all the benthic diatoms at the bottom; then ran out of silica and nutrients, died, sank to the bottom, and in the course of rotting, sucked all of the remaining oxygen out of areas of the bay, creating what is called "anoxia," or lack of oxygen, which affects everything in the food chain. It is not an irreversible condition but an extremely dire one nonetheless.

To Sherri I think the contrast between the *heavenliness* of a stable, longstanding condition of diversity, evenness and balance, and a *deadness* because just one species on land changed the land use, and just one or two others in the water became devastatingly dominant as a result, was highly instructive and attention-getting.

And what about *evenness*? Even non-scientists know that diversity is important for a rich, vibrant ecosystem, but not as many of us are aware that it is not just the *number* of different species present, but how *evenly* they are distributed that matters. In formulas used by scientists to determine diversity, the evenness of each species is part of the equation. Having a hundred or even a thousand different species in a given environment does not supply much stability or balance if just one of those species hogs 75 percent of the space and controls 95 percent of the nutrients.

Is this an issue among humans as well? Do humans sometimes want to exercise their will on each other and dictate how others should be? Do some take more than their fair share? It seems we sometimes do!

I say this at the outset because understanding how crucial *diversity*, *evenness* and *balance* were to Sherri helps us understand the choices she made

and the values she strove mightily to achieve and uphold in her life.

Let's take *faith* and *science* as key examples. Now in many ways it seems as though faith and science are hardly on speaking terms in our world. Although they quietly get along in some areas, they are widely seen as incompatible. And some scientists even despise people of faith, and some people of faith despise scientists. Yet Sherri was strong in both faith and science.

Let's take her *faith* first. She grew up a Methodist, went to Sunday school, got confirmed; asked her ministers many questions and carefully pondered whether the answers made sense to her or not (most of them did!); she read the Bible; and as a teenager attended a youth camp and gave her life to Jesus. And she meant it and stuck with it.

For evidence of the strength of her faith we need look no further than the way she carried herself during her terminal illness. She had a poise and calm, even an inner peace, and took all kinds of troubles in stride. When her doctors marveled at her attitude she told them that she knew that no matter how bad a given day was, a good day was coming soon; and she would focus on that.

Her faith was beautiful and elegantly simple at its core, but it was no wooden or static thing; at the end of her life, after gaining much wisdom and experience, she was still actively pondering many deep questions.

Yet she was also utterly devoted to *science*, deeply wedded to the scientific method, and delighted by all kinds of truth that could be unearthed from careful, disciplined study. And her hard work and stellar results made her a respected contributor to the field of science.

To touch on an issue of balance within science itself, Sherri cared about gender balance. There is much

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concern these days about the need for more women to participate in fields called STEM: science, technology, engineering and mathematics. The desired goal is surely not a flip from one dominant gender to another, but evenness, and mutual cooperation and respect. She saw it as important for the good of the whole that she and other women make contributions to the field of science, and that took a great deal of hard work on her part, and considerable support from her husband and children as well.

To get a glimpse of her work in science, let's review her *Curriculum Vitae* for a moment. Her full C.V. from 2012 is an impressive 17 pages long. I will merely summarize.

She received a Bachelor of Science degree in Botany in 1978 from Duke University; a Master of Science degree in Marine Sciences from the University of Delaware in 1982, and a Ph.D. in Paleocology from Johns Hopkins University in 1993, working with palynologist Grace Brush.

Sherri was assistant director of the Mid-Atlantic Regional Marine Research Program from 1993-1995 and a research professor at the Duke University Wetland Center from 1995-1999. Then she became an associate professor at Bryn Athyn College, head of its Mathematics and Science Division, director of its biology program, fund raiser and co-designer of its Doering Center, chair of its Research Committee, a researcher, teacher, mentor, and a member of 17 different committees at various times.

We also learn from her C.V. that she was certified as a Senior Ecologist by the Ecological Society of America.

Her C.V. lists:

- 12 papers in refereed journals, including an article published in *Science* in 1991 when she was a mere graduate student, which is still being cited
- 10 refereed reports or chapters in books
- 45 published abstracts of presentations at conferences
- 13 technical reports she authored
- Eight grants she was awarded, some for hundreds of thousands of dollars
- 40 seminars and presentations she gave, 13 workshops she participated in, and two symposia she organized
- Four professional societies in which she was an active member

- 11 honors and awards she received
- Eight graduate committees on which she served for Master's and Ph.D. students in Finland, Canada and the United States
- Two boards on which she served: the Pennypack Ecological Restoration Trust and the Atlantic Estuarine Research Society

And as part of the system of peer review, she reviewed 28 articles by others for a variety of professional journals, 12 grant or book proposals for publishers, including *National Geographic* and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), and one White House committee report on environment and natural resources.

And even this list doesn't do justice to her impact; she did figuratively and literally groundbreaking work taking core samples in estuarine sediment – areas so richly diverse that other scholars generally avoided them as too complex. The work she did has already become scientific bedrock on which much other work has been done around the world.

If we picture the land as a wedge coming to a point from left to right, and the ocean as a wedge coming to a point from right to left, the intersecting point of balance would be the estuaries in which she was studying – some of the richest and most diverse areas on earth.

Yet all that was to her just one element of her life, albeit a very significant one; that was her work. To strive for balance, it should not be allowed to overwhelm everything else in her life. She worked to have it balanced with a home life, with family and friends. These connections of the heart were very important to her.

If I may be so bold, you, dear friends who are gathered here today, are a diverse group, are you not, with a fairly even representation of science and of faith (in fact, of several different faiths. And also widely different approaches to the same faiths). And you are all connected, in one way or another, with Sherri; and she valued you and your role in her life.

So let's look for a moment at her life story among her loved ones.

She was born on January 28, 1956, to Ralph and Shirley Haynes Rumer, a couple who had met at Duke University in Durham, North Carolina – an institution that figures largely in Sherri's story later on. Sherri was the first of four girls. She was followed by Sue, Sandy and Sarah. Although her sisters were blond-haired and blue-eyed, Sherri was dark-haired and had dark, rather exotic eyes. She told me once that because of this she thought of herself in childhood as the "China baby" and always felt an affinity for things Chinese.

Her sisters admired her greatly for her excellence in school and for being a "model citizen." Hardworking, intelligent and fun – she was, they say, "a hard act to follow"!

Sherri was exposed to the joys of water in several ways in her childhood. She and her family would go to Core Point, North Carolina, to a summer place shared by members of her extended family going back to around 1740. Their properties graced the south shore of the mighty Pamlico River, a great estuary where the descending freshwater river meets the incoming saltwater tide. The Pamlico runs roughly eastward into Pamlico Bay, which extends further until it brushes up against the back of the Outer Banks.

She developed a deep love of the water and nature there. She has been there more or less every year of her life. In fact, just this past summer she went back again to visit family there.

In her childhood she also discovered that water was a subject of scholarly fun as well. Her father, who had a Ph.D. from MIT, taught civil engineering especially as it relates to water, and conducted research for many years at the State University of New York at Buffalo. He did some unique experimentation there in a rotating laboratory he has constructed to simulate the effect of the earth's rotation on the motion of large water bodies, such as the Great Lakes. It was quite a large structure – 15 by 7 feet. His students used it to investigate circulation and pollutant distribution in a model of Lake Erie and also in a model of Lake Ontario. It is not hard to imagine that this amazing device made an impression on Sherri in terms of the fun to be had in the scientific study of water.

At school Sherri made great friends and managed somehow to keep in touch with them quite actively through the years. One group of researcher friends of hers in particular has had regular reunions over the decades, including a get-together in a beach house sometime after Sherri's diagnosis.

When she was living and working in Maryland she met Dave Cooper and they became friends. In 1986 she decided to take a job in Charleston, South Carolina – an eight-hour drive to the south – but was on a shoestring budget and didn't know how she could move down there. Dave had a truck and offered to borrow a trailer and help her move. This act of old-fashioned chivalry made an impression on Sherri – and she must have made an impression on him. During the 14 months she was down there Dave made that long drive several more times just to visit.

Dave himself was and is a man of faith, and he talked to her about the particular brand of Christianity to which he belongs, known as Swedenborgianism or “the New Church.” The person whose books started it, Emanuel Swedenborg, was himself a well-known scientist in 18th century Sweden. Sherri was intrigued to find a form of Christianity that was particularly “science-friendly.” For instance, because it reads the Bible as having a deeper, more psychological level of meaning, the New Church does not espouse creationism and has no problem with evolution.

Three other teachings of Swedenborgian Christianity in particular were attractive to Sherri. One was that people of all faiths can be saved. Like the tolerant and mutually supportive attitude reflected in the lives of her benthic diatoms, the New Church actually celebrates the existence of diversity of religions. Swedenborg even says the variety of religions is important, and anyone who actually practices the teachings of a given system is doing what is needed to be saved.

Sherri didn't see her embrace of the New Church as a conversion, but rather as a clarification of the faith of her youth.

Another teaching that was important to her was the idea that we should put faith only in teachings that make sense to us. True faith is defined in this tradition as an inner recognition of the truth of something because it makes sense to us, rather than a decision to endorse something someone else tells us to believe even though we can't get it to work in our minds.

And a third teaching she liked a great deal was the idea of correspondences. Swedenborg says that beyond the physical world of matter there is another world, a world of what he calls substance, and of the two, the spiritual world is actually the more real. So this opens up a way of looking at something like microscopic diatoms as echoing what goes on in human society and even in heaven.

Here, for example, is a statement she made at the dedication of the Doering Center:

It is probably well known and perhaps obvious that the study of science teaches us to think analytically. But it also teaches us to think creatively. It can inspire us as well as educate. As scientists delve deeper into the nature of our universe, and of ourselves, we learn the incredible complexity of interactions, as well as the astounding elegance inherent in all of nature. We learn about creation and by correspondence, the Creator.

Another example of her thinking in terms of correspondences is captured in this exchange, related by Dave:

Her students would ask her about the hot-button issue of evolution – something creationism does not espouse. Sherri would respond by asking the students to reflect on their own development. “You were an egg; then a multi-celled creature with a heartbeat but no breath; then you became a breather; then your senses developed; then you developed a rational mind. Are you not evolving? Evolution is natural and happens on multiple levels. It is a consistent story.”

Sherri didn't see her embrace of the New Church as a conversion, but rather as a clarification of the faith of her youth.

She moved back to Maryland, and Dave and Sherri decided to get married and did so in 1988; and Sherri immediately started work on her Ph.D. at Johns Hopkins, finishing in 1993.

In 1995 she and Dave moved to Durham, North Carolina, where she took a position as an assistant professor at the Duke University Wetland Center. Tragically, that very same year her mother Shirley passed away suddenly.

During this time Sherri had visits from professors at Bryn Athyn College (a Swedenborgian college in Bryn Athyn, PA) in hopes that she would join their science division. Now, she had a long history at Duke and was a devoted fan of the Duke Blue Devils, and Duke is a large, well-established and respected research center, while Bryn Athyn College is small and less well known. But she knew that at Bryn Athyn College she and her colleagues could dive fully into issues of both science and faith, and how the two inform each other.

If we again picture a wedge of land meeting a wedge of sea, but this time the wedge of land stands for religion as a whole, and the wedge of sea stands for science, then Bryn Athyn College is right at the point where they meet. It is a center, a spiritual estuary, and somewhere she could pursue a broad range of interests.

Dave and Sherri were in the process of adopting their first daughter, Zia, from China when they decided to move to Bryn Athyn.

Ralph, Sherri's father, had by then married Sallie, a member of Shirley's extended family who herself had a lifelong connection to Core Point. Ralph and Sallie were very gracious to Dave and Sherri, renting Dave and Sherri's home so they could move but keep a fixed mailing address for the adoption paperwork, and even selling the house for them.

In 2002 Dave and Sherri adopted another daughter from China, Anji. Sherri's professional duties were demanding and she had to do a lot of traveling to attend all those conferences and give all those papers; yet she loved to spend time helping Zia and Anji with their homework, and took long walks with family and friends by the Pennypack, the ancient creek that meanders through this part of the Delaware Valley.

On every part of her journey on this planet Sherri made lifelong friends. For just one example, the cellist this afternoon, Tom Rosenberg, is someone she met in second grade and they have been devoted friends ever since. Many of you here today have known her for decades. She also somehow found time to go on holidays and vacations several times a year with members of her own extended family of origin and members of her husband's family. She made it work.

This balance was not easy for her to achieve. Sometimes the stress and exhaustion of being pulled in umpteen directions would be momentarily too much and she couldn't see how she could go on. But then she would think

of others and find the strength to keep going. And the tremendous support she received from her husband – not to mention her many friends as well – sustained her throughout her career. Dave went with her to international conferences as far away as Perth, Australia, read drafts of her work, and supported her in countless ways.

Sherri was diagnosed with breast cancer in 2009, which went into remission with treatment. In August 2013 she was diagnosed with an unrelated Stage IV pancreatic cancer that had metastasized to her lungs and liver. Her devotion to science was so deep that she participated in not one but three clinical trials, in the hopes, of course, of a cure, but if not, at least of contributing even then to the furthering of knowledge.

At the time of her diagnosis Sherri and Dave invited me over for a visit, and then another. It soon became a regular thing every other weekend for the two-and-a-half years of her illness. I mention this only because it allowed me to see how Dave stepped up – and how supportive his business, Antech, was in his devotion to his family.

Dave maintained an informative and even entertaining blog to keep friends near and far in the know. And I saw how family and friends from near and far rallied support and made countless meals and sent so much love and prayers. Zia and Anji, too, were amazingly supportive and affectionate and understanding. Dave and Sherri both talked to me often about how grateful they were to everyone and how much it all helped to sustain them.

Like many of you, I had the privilege of witnessing the beauty of Dave and Sherri's friendship, their marriage, and their collaboration together, and admired the balance, outward focus and spiritual depth they had achieved. I also saw her unwavering faith in the life to come. A couple of weeks before she passed, she told me that in moments when she was physically alone she had been sensing a warm, comforting presence in the room with her.

Scientific truth was extremely important to Sherri but was enhanced by being in balance with spiritual truth; and both kinds of truth shone the most in the presence of love.

Diversity is important; the evenness of each individual component of the diversity is important; and balance between them is important.

But I think what Sherri was seeking was something perhaps beyond

Scientific truth was extremely important to Sherri but was enhanced by being in balance with spiritual truth; and both kinds of truth shone the most in the presence of love.

In the sparkling diatoms
under her microscope,
in their selfless, angelic
service to the planet, in
the balance in which
so many of them
lived, in their variety
and sheer beauty and
amazingness, she saw
divine and heavenly
qualities reflected.
All around her . . . she
saw the face of God.

these three; it was *harmony*. Harmony between faith and science; work and home; truth and love; harmony among people and harmony among species. Her learning to play the violin as a child taught her about how things work together to create harmony, and so did the diatoms of the Chesapeake Bay.

And to keep things in balance and harmony you need to find their center. To Sherri that center was what she had found as a teenager. Keeping the Lord at the center helped her find a harmony of love and truth, religion and science, home and work. Now she, as the good benthic diatom she was, would never insist that others share her views. But her belief in one Creator led her to believe that all of creation, including humankind, and all creatures great and

small, even in this world and the next, have a lot in common.

In the sparkling diatoms under her microscope, in their selfless, angelic service to the planet, in the balance in which so many of them lived, in their variety and sheer beauty and amazingness, she saw divine and heavenly qualities reflected. All around her, in her husband and children, in faculty and students, in her friends, in the mud of the Pamlico River with its shells and stones and shark teeth treasures, in the richest of locations where the flowing fresh water meets the undulating salt tide, in simple sunlight and life-sustaining water, she saw the face of God.

When it was time to go, she went peacefully. On Monday, November 23, although she had been somewhat agitated earlier in the evening, her breathing became calmer, then quieter, then intermittent. Dave and Zia and Anji by her side realized at 11:23 p.m. on 11/23 that she was no longer breathing. When the hour met the day and the day met eternity, she lay gazing steadily into a high corner of the room, with a peaceful expression and an inextinguishable light in her eye.

(For information about the new Dr. Sherri Rumer Cooper Research Fund – and how to contribute to it – see pages 74-75, as well as the Bryn Athyn College website, www.brynathyn.edu.)

Small Groups in the New Church

The Rev. John L. Odhner

Over the last half century the General Church has increasingly been using small groups to help people with spiritual growth, study of the Word, and connection with each other. Just recently I participated in the New Church Journey series – seven weeks of *Living Gratefully*. This small group series brings together five laws of providence from *Divine Providence*, with stories of Israel's Exodus from Egypt. The laws of providence show how the Lord lovingly and wisely cares for us, and this spiritual growth program centers on gratitude for the care He gives us.

I find myself feeling deeply grateful, not only for the Lord's care and abundant providence, but also for the way the Lord's care comes through other people, in this case the people in the small groups I attended. In our last meeting one group member said that our workbook, *Living Gratefully*, was a fine book that he was grateful for, but by itself it was just a book. What made the program valuable was the people in our group, getting to know them and care for them, hearing various perspectives, insights and experiences. It brings to mind the way the Lord works through people:

God loves every one of us but cannot directly benefit us; He can benefit us only indirectly through each other. For this reason He inspires us with His love, just as He inspires parents with love for their children. (*True Christianity* 457.3)

The General Church Outreach Department is in its tenth year of supporting and encouraging participation in small groups through New Church Journey programs. Though we still have a lot to learn, it has become increasingly clear that small groups are a vital part of a healthy congregation, *especially a congregation in the New Church*.

Ancient Churches

Elements of small groups have shown up in churches throughout history. The people of the most ancient church lived in tents and worshiped there. (*Secrets of Heaven* 3312) They did not gather together in large nations, or build

large buildings, temples and cities. They worshiped together in families, with the parents of each family providing spiritual guidance and nurture. (*Divine Providence* 215, *Apocalypse Explained* 799)

Nuclear families would join together to form extended families, clans and tribes. The family connections provided a social structure that represented the spiritual structure of different kinds of love and wisdom in heavenly communities.

In fact, the varieties of love and wisdom that make up the communities of heaven were actually embedded in their family structures, so that “those who lived in the most ancient times live today in the heavens, arranged by households, by families and by tribes, in much the same way as they had lived on earth, with hardly any missing from their households.” (*Married Love* 205; compare *Secrets of Heaven* 2739)

They lived this way so that “the church on earth might represent the Lord’s Kingdom, where all are distinguished into communities; and these communities into greater ones; and these again into still greater ones.” (*Secrets of Heaven* 1259)

Later, after Israel escaped from Egypt, they continued to live by families and tribes, so that they could represent the structure of heaven.

Thus every separate family within a tribe meant a specific kind of good, and therefore the good of one specifically, distinct from another’s good. But the household of the fathers within a family meant an individual type belonging to one specific kind. The reason why all these kinds of good were meant by the tribes, families and households into which the children of Israel were divided was in order that they might represent heaven; for the varieties of good there are divided into general, specific and individual. (*Secrets of Heaven* 7833)

I suspect that when Moses put everyone in Israel into small groups of 10, and also larger groups 50, 100 and 1,000 (*Exodus* 18), they were divided up along family and clan lines, to represent the structure of heaven in a similar way.

The Lord’s Concern for the Spiritual Family

When the Lord came into the world, the symbolic or representative church ended. Although the Lord was very supportive of families, His primary focus was on the spiritual family. He repeatedly told people to keep the commandment to “Honor your father and mother,” yet He also said, “Anyone who loves father or mother above Me is not worthy of Me, and anyone who loves son or daughter above Me is not worthy of Me.” (*Matthew* 10:37)

He even said you must hate your family: “If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple.” (*Luke* 14:26) We aren’t

supposed to take this literally and actually hate our family. (*Secrets of Heaven* 10490, *Apocalypse Explained* 724.5) What it means is that we should hate the evil inclinations and dysfunctional patterns that we inherit from our family of origin, and hate the selfishness within ourselves from which hurtful intentions spring. When we give up those evils we can love our family in a genuine, spiritual way.

In a sense charity begins at home, since we have to take care of ourselves and our family in order to be able to be of service to others. But if charity *ends* at home, it really isn't going beyond love of self. (See *New Jerusalem* 97-99) To love only oneself includes loving one's own family and friends to the extent that they go along with one's selfish desires. (*New Jerusalem* 66, 67) To love the neighbor is to treat others as true family according to the good that is in them, regardless of their relationships or benefits to oneself. (See *True Christianity* 431)

The Lord set an example in giving the priority to one's spiritual family. When He was told that His own mother and brothers wanted to talk with Him, He replied, "Who is My mother and who are My brothers?" And He stretched out His hand toward His disciples and said, "Here are My mother and My brothers! For whoever does the will of My Father in heaven is My brother and sister and mother." (*Matthew* 12:48-50, *Mark* 3:31-35, *Luke* 8:19-21; see also *Matthew* 19:29, *Mark* 10:28-30, *Luke* 14:26) In a similar way He invited John, His disciple, and Mary, His mother, to be a spiritual family to each other. (*John* 19:26-27, *Apocalypse Explained* 9:6, 250:8, 785:5, 821:7, *New Jerusalem* 122)

During the Lord's ministry He sometimes preached to thousands, He sometimes ministered one-on-one, or even went off by Himself to pray, and very often He worked with small groups. He called 12 disciples, sometimes meeting with all 12 (as at the Last Supper), and sometimes just with Peter, James and John (as in the Garden of Gethsemane).

Often he would eat at someone's home, ministering to the family and friends who had gathered. When he healed the 12-year-old daughter of Jairus, He wanted privacy and allowed only seven people in the room. Small groups of friends gathered in someone's home were a vital part of the Lord's ministry, and when He sent out His disciples, it was two by two. (*Mark* 6:7, *Luke* 10:1) He said, "Where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them." (*Matthew* 18:20)

Early Christians

After the Lord's coming into the world, representatives ceased, and the church was no longer divided into families by natural blood relationships. Instead, relationships in the church were based on spiritual connections. The church continued to be based on family relationships, but as a spiritual family, not a genetic one. (See *Secrets of Heaven* 5598)

In those days [of the Early Christian Church] all members of the Church lived with one another as brothers; they also called one another brothers, and loved one another mutually. (*Secrets of Heaven* 1834.2)

This has its origin among angelic communities, in which angels love one another, acknowledge one another, and live in association with one another, depending on how similar and close together their kinds of goodness are. (*Secrets of Heaven* 9079)

Heaven is structured in families, but they are spiritual families that may have no connection with our birth families.

They recognize each other, not from any relationship that had existed in the life of the body; but solely from good and the derivative truth. A father does not recognize a son or a daughter, nor a brother or a sister, nor even a husband a wife, unless they have been in similar good. They indeed meet when they first come into the other life, but are soon dissociated; for good itself, or love and charity, determines and assigns everyone to his or her own society. (*Secrets of Heaven* 3815)

The early Christian Church reflected this structure of heaven. They met in both large groups (in the temple) and in small groups (in people's homes).

So continuing daily with one accord **in the temple**, and breaking bread **from house to house**, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, praising God and having favor with all the people. (*Acts* 2:46-47)

Day after day, **in the temple courts** and **from house to house** they never stopped teaching and proclaiming the Good News that Jesus is the Christ. (*Acts* 5:42; compare 20:20)

In their social gatherings they saw themselves as being spiritually related as a family. These gatherings gave them consolation in the adversities of the church, joy for its increase, and also recreation and conversation, all springing from the love they had for one another. (*True Christianity* 434)

In the beginning of the Christian Church there were no church buildings. They sometimes preached in the Temple in Jerusalem (before it was destroyed in 70 AD), and sometimes in established synagogues, or public squares, but most Christian gatherings were house churches – small groups meeting for worship, instruction and social life in someone's home – for example in the homes of Nympha (*Colossians* 4:15), and Aquilla and Priscilla (*1 Corinthians* 16:19, *Romans* 16:5).

Changes in the Church

As time went on, love diminished in the church, and those gatherings of love disappeared. People still had parties, but they were not focused on the Lord and His command that we love one another. The church began to argue doctrinal positions, placing a higher value on authorized doctrine than on compassion.

At the same time the church came to see worship more as ritual sacrifice

and less as an opportunity to love one another. The focus came to be on the ritual actions of the priest in offering mass, more than on the people's relationships with one another. Ritual has its place, but the doctrine of "salvation by sacrifice" led to worship that was pretty much "ritual alone." As ritual is more impressive in large groups, church became focused on large, beautiful cathedrals, and there was less need for small groups.

Centuries later, the Reformation brought significant changes, such as allowing the common people to read the Bible, and having sermons in church services, and speaking in people's native languages (instead of Latin) so people could actually learn something in church.

Unfortunately, the focus was still not on love and good will, but on faith alone, and since faith in God as three Persons is actually incomprehensible, the focus was not on understanding the truth, but upon persuading people to give emotional assent to a set of beliefs that they did not really understand.

In the Protestant world for the most part church services were not set up for dialog or questions because the clergy really didn't want people to doubt or question – they didn't have answers – but simply to have faith that what the minister said is true. As a result, in the Protestant world the focus came to be on the sermon as the center of worship.

Sermons have an important place; the Lord Himself gave the Sermon on the Mount and other discourses. Yet the doctrine of faith alone led to worship that was almost "sermon alone." If only one person is talking, a large group is more efficient than a small group, and also a large group allows for group thinking where each person thinks that what the minister is saying must be true, because everyone else present seems to believe it. (See *True Christianity* 796:1-2)

The New Church – New Priorities

In the New Church we find a renewal of the early Christian values. Love for the Lord and other people is in the first place, our highest priority. We also value truth, which involves not just believing a creed, but questioning, digging, really understanding and applying the teachings of the Word. Again, we value uses, knowing that the Lord's kingdom is a kingdom of uses. These values affect the way we look at small groups in the New Church.

The New Church teaching is that our neighbor is not only other individuals, but also groups of people, and the more people there are, the more we are to love them. So we should love a small group more than an individual, and a large group more than a small group. This doesn't mean that we feel especially mushy and emotional when in a large group, but rather that we put the good of a large group ahead of the needs of the smaller groups within it.

It also does not mean that we leave unmet the needs of smaller groups,

other individuals and ourselves. Rather, it means that the good of the larger group provides the motivation for caring for the smaller units. We first take care of ourselves so that we can help other individuals. We help individuals so that they can serve the groups they belong to. We meet the needs of smaller groups so that they can benefit the larger group, and so on. (See *New Jerusalem* 97-99, *True Christianity* 412-416).

Small Groups in the Spiritual World

Swedenborg spoke with hundreds of thousands of people in the spiritual world, sometimes in large groups, sometimes in small groups or individually. The work *Married Love* begins with a description of an assembly of people who gathered to talk about what heaven is like. The assembly broke into six small groups, with each group sitting in a circle so they could talk about heaven face to face. Afterwards each small group went through an experiential process to discover what their imagined heaven would really be like. Finally, a small group of 10 people chosen from the larger group were invited on a three-day tour of heaven. (*Married Love* 2-26)

A similar assembly gathered to talk about conscience. They were divided into smaller groups based on their worldly occupations, though after their discussions the groups recombined based on their attitudes towards conscience. (*True Christianity* 665-666) Another assembly discussing the origin of marriage love divided into small groups based on their national origin. (*Married Love* 103-114) Swedenborg visited a small group of three angel couples who lived together in a common home (*Married Love* 155r, 208), and another similar group of couples from the Golden Age. (*Married Love* 75)

These experiences illustrate a universal pattern in heaven, which is one community like one person made up of many organs and members, each of which is in turn made up of smaller communities. (*Secrets of Heaven* 7836)

Small Group Beginnings

The first New Church gatherings were small groups that met to discuss the books of the Writings. One of the first New Church congregations (nominally Anglican) was led by John Clowes, who formed many small societies in and around Manchester. These small study groups were the primary way for the church to grow at that time.

After Clowes' death many of these societies became New Church congregations, and as a result the New Church is strong around Manchester to this day. The first formally New Church congregation was led by Robert Hindmarsh, who started with a small group of just four people.

Many small New Church groups grew into larger congregations, and many of them remained as small groups for long periods of time, or gave birth

to new small groups. When John Chapman spread the seeds of truth through the frontier he went house to house like the Lord's first disciples, meeting in families' homes and forming small groups.

"Father" Fred Waelchli used the same strategy when travelling through the United States and Canada. Harold Cranch relied on small groups when he was the only General Church minister west of the Mississippi. Some of the small groups he started became congregations that could support a resident minister, as in San Diego, Tucson, Los Angeles and San Francisco. Others continued as small groups for years or decades. Small groups were also a key strategy used by Frank Rose and others in camps such as Laurel, Maple Leaf and Arizona Mountain Camp, and also in building the Sunrise Chapel congregation.

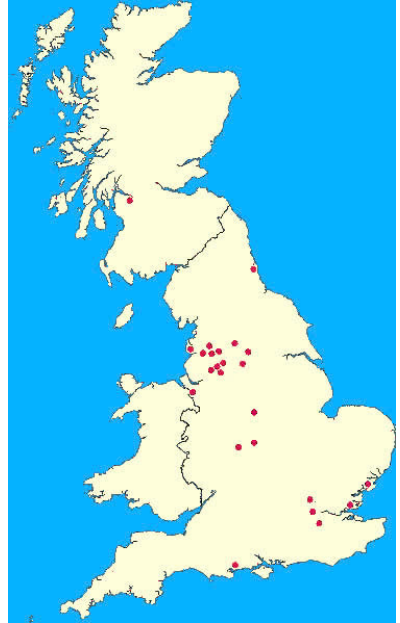
The Academy Movement also started as a small group of just six people: W. H. Benade, J. P. Stuart, N. C. Burnham, Thomas Wilkes, J. R. Hibbard and R. L. Tafel. It soon grew to more, but it was the small group that gave birth to the vision and the zeal.

Small Groups in Large Congregations

The largest New Church congregations have always had reflections of smaller groups within them, such as home doctrinal classes and study groups, committees, choirs, chancel guilds, Sunday School classes, boards, school teachers and students, Theta Alpha and Sons of the Academy, in addition to the nuclear and extended families that sometimes grew from small groups into quite large ones.

There are many uses that can be done by individuals working alone. A treasurer may do the books when no one else is in the room. A volunteer might mow the lawn or the pastor might fix a toilet with no one else around. But most of the uses of the church can be done best when people work together in small groups.

One advantage of a large congregation is that they can accomplish large projects that are beyond the capabilities and resources of a small congregation. For example, the Bryn Athyn Church has often hosted General Church Assemblies because it has had enough resources to do so. There is no way



This map shows current societies of the General Conference of the New Church, with the largest cluster around Manchester.

that one person doing most of the work alone could put on an assembly, nor could we do it by everyone doing the same thing at the same time. The only way to function effectively as a large group is to divide the work among many committees and organized small groups, so that one group can focus on publicity, another on food service, another on transportation, another on music, etc.

Virtually every large group of human beings is divided into smaller groups, because this is the human form – the human body is divided into various organs and viscera, and each of these is formed of still smaller groups. A large group of people seen functionally is in the same form.

The United States army (like almost every army) is organized into small groups (squads) of about 10 soldiers, which together form larger platoons and companies. Every large corporation is divided into various departments, work crews and office groups. Every orchestra has sections for woodwinds, brass, strings and percussion, and every choir has sections singing higher and lower parts to create harmony. Every school divides into a number of classes.

In fact, everything in the universe is structured this way. Everything from molecules is groups of atoms, which contain protons and neutrons, which are groups of quarks; all the way up to galaxies that are grouped into clusters that in turn are grouped into superclusters.

Throughout Nature there is nothing which is not composed of bunches to form groupings. Every tree, every bush, plant and vegetable, indeed every ear of corn or blade of grass is both generally and in detail so constructed. The universal cause of this is that this is the way Divine truths are structured. (*True Christianity* 351)

New Church Teachings

The New Church is like many other churches and religions in teaching that we should love our neighbor.

Love for the Lord and good will toward the neighbor make the church. (*Secrets of Heaven* 4723, *New Jerusalem* 60)

Intellectual things, or those which are of faith, do not make up the church, but the voluntary things which are of love. (*Secrets of Heaven* 709)

The New Church offers many clear, specific teachings about how to love one's neighbor. These teachings help us see how small groups can provide a useful context for loving the neighbor in a spiritual way.

Genuine Love Is Mutual and Reciprocal

Large groups naturally divide into smaller groups. Invite 50 people to a party and you will most likely see them divide into groups of two to 10 people having separate conversations. An obvious reason for this is that in a small group

it is easier to have a conversation. An individual who is alone can do many useful things, such as praying, studying the Word, caring for plants or animals, or fixing a car; but real dialog requires being with others. Likewise, in a large group one person or a few people can talk, but in a gathering of more than 15 or 20 people, it is almost certain that some (if not most) people will not have an opportunity to contribute meaningfully to the conversation.

Communication in large groups tends to be one direction, with one person or a few people having the spotlight while everyone else listens and watches. In a small group it is easier for everyone to have a turn, to hear and be heard, see and be seen.

Every partnership in the entirety of heaven, in all the world, and throughout the human form is the result of two parties moving into a closer relationship with each other until both parties intend the same things. This leads to a similarity, harmony, unanimity, and agreement in every detail between the parties. . . . This is how the minds of people who deeply love each other form a partnership. It is an integral part of all love and friendship. Love wants to love and it wants to be loved. (*True Christianity* 99)

In small groups we can have two-way conversations, we can both know and love others and be known and loved by them. In heaven everyone gets the spotlight. They are all brought together by mutual love in such a way that “the happy feelings of all are communicated to each one, and those of each one to all. As a result in the basic structure of heaven it’s as if everyone is a kind of center – a center of communications, and the resulting happy feelings.” (*Secrets of Heaven* 2057) In New Church Journey small groups we encourage giving everyone equal time, so that everyone gets a turn to be the center of attention and the focus of the group’s love.

Our Neighbor Is the Good in a Person

In the New Church it is very clear that loving other people spiritually does not mean loving them for their appearance, their personality, or for their approval; rather we love them for the good that is in them. (See *True Christianity* 417-419, *New Jerusalem* 86-90)

TESTIMONIAL

Small groups allow us the opportunity to share our authentic self with others. There are times when I really need to open up about deep personal struggles, and small groups provide the appropriate space for that.

Small groups are a platform for having authentic, meaningful relationships with others. I’ve found that as we open up to each other, there is an organic trust that builds, forming the foundation of a healthy friendship.

Small groups foster personal and spiritual growth. Having the support and encouragement of others, who know your struggles and pain, is deeply empowering.

– Chris Dunn

Every created thing is considered valuable if it is inwardly good, and worthless if it is inwardly bad, even where inner badness lies within outer goodness. Every wise person in the world and every angel in heaven evaluates people and things in this way. (*True Christianity* 595)

The Lord said, “Do not judge according to appearance, but judge with righteous judgment.” (*John* 7:24) Judging rightly means judging them by their will and intentions. (*Married Love* 453) A person who is wise pays more attention to a person’s intentions than the person’s actions. “One who is spiritual pays even less attention to the deeds, but explores the will.” (*Apocalypse Explained* 98) “All angels pay attention to these things, as do all wise people in our world.” (*True Christianity* 96; see also *Secrets of Heaven* 5094.4, 8855, *New Jerusalem* 56)

Genuinely loving one’s neighbor does not mean loving everybody in the same way, regardless of the quality of goodness that is in them. It is more spiritual to “examine carefully the quality of a person’s life, and show good will accordingly.” (*New Jerusalem* 85) To love our neighbor we should know what is going on inwardly – “examine carefully,” “search out,” “explore,” and “pay attention to their intentions and will” (especially their good intentions – *Secrets of Heaven* 1079, 1088), so that we can know how to show love to them.

To love another person is to feel his or her joy as our own (*Divine Love and Wisdom* 47), and, if he or she is suffering, to have compassion (compassion literally means “suffering together”).

All compassion is a feeling of love, for someone who has love or good will also has compassion, and our love and good will become compassion when our neighbor is poor or miserable and in that situation we bring him help. (*Secrets of Heaven* 6180)

Small groups provide a context for getting to know people more deeply than we can in a five-minute visit after church. We may hear people’s hopes and dreams, or stories of their struggles and successes. So we can know them more deeply and love them more truly.

Loving Others Requires Wisdom and Truth

In order to love others we need to know how to love them. The more we know, the more genuinely helpful we can be. So in the New Church we focus not just on believing the truth, but understanding it, and seeing truth for ourselves. If there is something we don’t understand, we are encouraged to question it. (*Faith* 1-2) A motto of the New Church is that “We are now allowed to enter with understanding into the mysteries of faith.” (*True Christianity* 508)

As noted above angels often use questions and discussion in small groups as a way of teaching. (You can read more about this in the Rev. Dan Goodenough’s excellent survey, “Angelic Methods of Instruction,” *New Church Life*, 1977, p. 68.) After talking with a gathering of couples about married love

some angels said, “Let the interchange in our discussion be by questions and answers, because although a perception of something does indeed flow in when gained solely from listening, still it does not remain unless the listener also thinks about it for himself or herself and asks questions regarding it.” (*Married Love* 183.2)

In churches the sermon is important (which is why our New Church Journey series have included a focus on sermons in church services as a basis for each week’s discussion). Yet if sermons are the *only* instruction people receive, it is likely (as the angels said) that they will understand it but not remember it later.

Most New Church schools open the day with a worship service that most of the students attend. In that large gathering we have a short talk from a minister (as well as singing and prayer), and then students divide up into their classes for the majority of their instruction. Our students learn best when most of their instruction comes in the smaller classroom groups, where the teacher can give them some individual attention, direct the teaching to the specific states and needs of the students, ask and answer questions, and encourage discussion among the students. A teacher may divide a larger class into smaller groups to increase the level of students’ participation. The students would not learn well if the majority of their instruction came by lectures to the whole school.

Small groups provide an excellent context for learning, because they allow for discussion and questions, active participation by everyone present, accommodation to specific needs and levels of understanding, and application to specific situations.

Love Requires Repentance

The first step in loving others is to make sure we are not hurting them. (*True Christianity* 535, *Life*

TESTIMONIAL

I’m looking back at how Sunroom Group has literally changed my spirit. I started going after church to discuss with others the sermon we all just listened to. I wanted to be a part of a group where we would be discussing spirituality. I was hooked, then Gary Campbell and I had the great privilege of “leading” (anyone can lead by the way) Sunroom Group after church for a few months. This group was the highlight of my week. New friendships were formed. Spiritual growth blossomed inside each of us, together.

This is a sacred space created by each person’s presence – to share deeply, be supported and honored, simply to listen. A sacred space where trust in each other was without question, where everyone was valued for exactly who they were.

After church each week and going forward, we have been blessed with a sweet leader who is deeply passionate about Sunroom. His name is Chris Dunn. I realize if I didn’t go to New Church Live and then get involved with Sunroom, I wouldn’t know the beautiful people I’ve come to know and grow with. I’m feeling pretty grateful and seriously blessed.

–Sharon, a Sunroom
Group member

18-31, *Charity* 199) We have a natural tendency to do what feels good and is to our own benefit without thinking of how our selfishness may be damaging others. In repentance “we are to examine ourselves, recognize and admit to our sins, pray to the Lord, and begin a new life.” (*True Christianity* 530) This is primarily a process that is between ourselves and the Lord. In praying to the Lord for help in overcoming our hurtful habits, we may want to go into our room and shut the door. (*Matthew* 6:6)

At the same time, repentance is not only changing our relationship with the Lord but also changing our relationship with our neighbor. The Lord said that if we come to worship and remember that our brother [or sister] has something against us, we should first go and be reconciled with our brother [or sister], and then return to worship. (*Matthew* 5:23-24) The way we relate to others can help them in the process of repentance:

If your brother sins against you, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him. And if he sins against you seven times in a day, and seven times in a day returns to you, saying, “I repent,” you shall forgive him. (*Luke* 17:3-4)

This kind of repentance and forgiveness may take place between two individuals alone, but it may also need the support of a small group, and particularly a church group:

Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother. But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more, that “by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.” And if he refuses to hear them, tell it to the church. (*Matthew* 18:15-17)

It is in this context of two or three witnesses forming a small group to support the process of repentance that the Lord says among two or three gathered in His name He is present. (*Matthew* 18:19-20) It was in the Lord’s small group of His disciples that He washed their feet, saying that they should follow his example. Washing feet was an act of love and humility that involved not reflecting on others’ evils, yet helping them come clean. (*Secrets of Heaven* 3147.8)

The same idea is symbolized by Noah’s sons Shem and Japheth going backwards to cover their father’s nakedness, meaning that people who have good will toward others “observe what is good, and if they see anything evil and false, they excuse it, and if they can, try to amend it in him.” (*Secrets of Heaven* 1079) Some people may have trouble seeing their own evils, and if they want to they can get help “from others who are wise, and who see what they themselves do not see.” (*Heaven and Hell* 487)

Small groups can provide support for learning and practicing the process of repentance and forgiveness. This has been one of the primary goals of our spiritual growth groups and New Church Journey small group series.

Love Serves

In the human body every organ and part serves a use. The body would not be able to function if it were a mass of cells that were all alike. Being divided into groups that are functional units means that all the parts can cooperate. Large groups of people can accomplish things that individuals would never be able to do.

Think how many people had to work together to get people to the moon! Yet such large projects can only be accomplished by dividing them into many small tasks that can be done by small groups working in coordination with each other.

Many small groups in large congregations are focused on specific uses, such as boards, committees, maintenance crews, musical groups, and many others. Small groups give people in the church opportunities to do good for their neighbor. And doing good is one of the main functions of the church.

The external of the church consists in the devout performance of rituals, and **in doing works of good will.** (*Secrets of Heaven* 6587.3; see also 4766.4, 6299.3, *Apocalypse Explained* 785.5)

There are some charitable tasks that large groups can participate in together, such as large fundraisers where everyone gives money, or collecting food at Thanksgiving. Many other uses can best be done by small groups that work in a variety of ways on a variety of tasks that all contribute to the goals of the congregation as a whole.

When Moses tried to minister to the whole congregation of Israel it was too much for him, and his father-in-law Jethro advised him to choose leaders of tens, leaders of fifties, leaders of hundreds and leaders of thousands. On a natural level a pastor is a leader of 50, 100 or 1,000, and really needs the help of the leaders of tens (small groups).

On a spiritual level, the meaning is that the Lord (represented by Moses and Jethro) does not need any help, yet the Lord still gives angels ministries.

He acts indirectly through heaven not because He needs their help but in order that the angels there may have functions and duties, and therefore life and happiness in keeping with the duties and services they perform. This accounts for the appearance to them that they act independently; yet they perceive that what they do comes from the Lord. (*Secrets of Heaven* 8719)

Just as Moses' small groups represented opportunities for angels to minister, small groups in the church today provide opportunities for lay people to engage in useful service.

TESTIMONIAL

Growing up, one of my brothers was profoundly retarded. He couldn't even speak. I felt like I was the only one who could understand him. Now, being in small groups, I see how much we all need to be understood -- whether or not we know how to speak. Small groups are a wonderful opportunity to really pay attention to each other.

– Small group member

In a large worship service a pastor seeks to meet the needs of everyone in the congregation as much as possible, but it is hard to accommodate to specific people when speaking to the whole congregation. Some people are well-educated in church teachings, while others are not. Some are going through difficult times. Some are distracted with worldly interests. Some are stuck with misunderstandings and false beliefs. Some are just lonely. Some are eager to do something to help others.

The Ancient Church distinguished the neighbor to whom kindness was to be done into many separate groups. Some they called the poor, some the wretched and afflicted, some the bound and in prison, some the blind and the lame, and others strangers, orphans, and widows. The church performed different works of goodwill, whichever were appropriate to the character each group possessed. The teachings of that church showed them what those works were, for that church had no other teachings than these. (*Secrets of Heaven* 4844.3)

A pastor can try to include a little bit for each of these groups of people, and a small group can focus in on the specific need that a person has. One group might focus on sharing and building community, while another group wants to dig deeply into the Lord's teachings. Another group might prefer the path of spiritual growth and repentance, or perhaps reaching out to those outside the community. By having a variety of small groups there can be a variety of ways that people can love and be loved, understand and be understood, serve and be served.

The Place of Small Groups

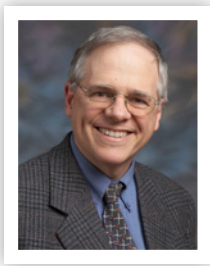
I am very interested in promoting small groups in the church because I see people who really need what small groups can offer. Like the person who comes to church and leaves immediately afterward because it is painful to stand in a corner and wonder how to break the ice. Or the person who has come to church for three years but still doesn't understand the basic teachings, never having been in a comfortable situation for asking questions. Or the person who is having trouble with parenting and needs to connect with other parents who can help them parent in a spiritual way. Or the person who wants to cooperate with others in the work of the church and doesn't know how or whom to serve.

There are important elements of the church that we can receive by reading, reflecting and praying at home alone, and important things that we can receive from a large group, such as heightened sense of identity, belonging and celebration. And there are things we can especially get from a small group, such as a meaningful discussion, support in our spiritual trials, close friendship and opportunities to help meet others' specific needs in specific ways.

Small groups are not a cure for the ills of society or the church. Starting

a small group program will not make an unhealthy church suddenly become healthy. Just like individuals and large corporations, small groups can be selfish and uncaring. An unhealthy church will have unhealthy small groups that are cliques, in-groups, factions and posses. Small groups will not automatically make love for the Lord and love for the neighbor thrive in a selfish church.

On the other hand, love for the Lord and good will toward the neighbor with deep understanding and commitment to use will make small groups thrive, just as they make individuals and congregations thrive. Our goal with the New Church Journey programs is to provide opportunities and encouragement for people to love one another, learn together what the Lord teaches, and support each other in their spiritual work.



The Rev. John L. Odhner has served as a pastor in Florida and California, and was a key person in revising the General Church *Liturgy*. He is assistant to the pastor of the Bryn Athyn Church, teaches in the Bryn Athyn Church School, works on the Office of Outreach Internet Project, and is one of the directors of the Stephen Ministry Program. He lives in Bryn Athyn with his wife, Lori (Soneson), and their family. Contact: John.Odhner@newchurch.org

Episcopal Visit to Brazil

The Rt. Rev. Brian W. Keith

Last October Gretchen and I visited our church congregations in Brazil. The purpose of our trip was to better connect the Bishop's Office with the church uses there, perform an ordination into the second degree, and participate in local clergy meetings.

Background

The beginnings of the New Church in Brazil harken back to the late 1800s. Senhor Levindo Castro de la Fayette, Chancellor of the Brazilian Consulate General in France, had found the Heavenly Doctrines in 1892 while in France. The New Church people there supported him in starting groups back in Brazil in 1893, primarily in Rio de Janeiro, and publishing a monthly journal. French was widely enough known in Brazil at the time that French translations of the Writings could be easily read by many. He also was instrumental in promoting the translation of the Writings into Portuguese.

In 1898 he reported about 100 receivers in Rio de Janeiro and about 20 more elsewhere in Brazil, all of whom were very poor.

In 1915 John Pitcairn visited Brazil and wrote an extensive report for *New Church Life*. He also created a fund to promote translation and publication of the Writings into Portuguese, which continues to be a tremendous help to this day. The church had developed in those years and when Mr. Pitcairn visited it was noted that there were nearly 400 receivers of the Heavenly Doctrines throughout Brazil, from all walks of life. Attendance at church in Rio de Janeiro was typically about 50.

After that, Senhor de la Fayette visited Bryn Athyn for six months to obtain formal theological training. He shared that experience with newcomers Henry Leonardos and Joao de Mendonça Lima, who were soon recognized as ministers, pending ordination. Carlos Braga was also authorized to function as a priest, but died before he could be inaugurated into the priesthood.

The church continued to develop, but experienced significant difficulties. Spiritism, prevalent in Brazil, was embraced by Senhor de la Fayette in 1919, causing a split in the Rio congregation. Leonardos and Lima allied with the

General Church and that has been the basis for all future development of the New Church there.

In 1921 the Rev. and Mrs. E. E. Iungerich visited Brazil for seven-and-a-half weeks. He preached, gave lectures, baptized many, and had an active social life with church members and friends. By 1923 the Rio de Janeiro congregation is listed as a congregation of the General Church, as it continues today.

In 1940 the congregation was able to erect their church building in downtown Rio. Bishop de Charms visited to dedicate it. This is the Fatima congregation and the building is beautifully serviceable today.

The Revs. Leonardos and Lima provided weekly services, as they could fit them in with their secular employment. In 1950 Rev. Leonardos died in a car accident. As Rev. Lima became older he had to withdraw gradually but continued translating until his death in 1965. Fortunately, in 1951 Mr. Jose Lopes De Figueiredo was recognized as a candidate for ordination. He would take up the torch from the founding pastors and serve many years. Bishop Willard Pendleton ordained him during an episcopal visit in 1965.

In 1978, the newly ordained Rev. Andy Heilman learned Portuguese and went to Brazil to assist the Rev. De Figueiredo and to train a newcomer for the priesthood, Cristovao Nobre. The next year the Rev. De Figueiredo retired and Andy assumed the pastorate there.

In 1983 Andy returned to the United States, but has maintained a strong pastoral connection with the church there. Cristovao then took over the pastorate. However, he has retired and following the noble tradition of previous pastors is translating the Writings into Portuguese.

Andy once again has stepped in to give overall leadership and train others for the ministry, visiting several times a year. His superb leadership has not only been developing the church congregations, but training clergy who will soon assume leadership roles from him.

Our Trip

We arrived on a Wednesday evening in Curitiba. The Rev. Andy Heilman and the Rev. Eduardo Berith, with his wife, Patricia, met us and took us to a traditional charrascaria restaurant for dinner. Curitiba is about two hours flying time south of Rio de Janeiro. It has the feel of a European city, with businesses, parks and universities.

We started there in order to ordain Eduardo into the second degree of the ministry. Eduardo, about 50 years old, found the church 10 years ago and was trained by Andy for the priesthood. He is in the early stages of developing a congregation. He owns and operates a small art gallery, prominently displaying a case with all the Writings translated into Portuguese.

He recently married Patricia who most helpfully speaks excellent English. (Brazil is similar to the United States – very large and geographically somewhat isolated, so few people feel the need to learn any language other than Portuguese.)

On Saturday Andy, Eduardo and I taped two shows on the New Church for a local public television station, which can also be found on the website www.arcanoscelestes.com. This has been an ongoing outreach effort. Each segment discusses a different doctrine of the New Church.

That evening I gave a class on what is legitimate guilt and what is false guilt, and then we held the ordination service at the art gallery. While the gathering was small – about 20 – Eduardo has developed a strong core from which to build.

We also had the opportunity to meet Daniel Rodrigues there. He is an ordained minister who has found the New Church and is trying to bring his congregation into it. His church is about a one-and-a-half-hour drive away, but he made the trip to meet us and see the ordination. His efforts with his congregation have met with some resistance, but he continues to learn more about the Heavenly Doctrines and lead from those truths.

On Friday we traveled to Rio de Janeiro. Rio is one of the most beautiful cities in the world. It has a large natural harbor and several long luxurious beaches which are used year round for recreation. And with a backdrop of lush mountains it creates a stunning visual setting. Our hotel overlooked the Copacabana beach, was close to the church, and was within walking distance of the church member's apartment where clergy meetings were to be held.

On Saturday we traveled to Campo Grande, a far western suburb of the city. It is between a one- and two-hour trip, depending upon traffic. We have a church congregation there in addition to the original one at Fatima in Rio. The Rev. Johny Villanueva and wife, Luciana, have set up a large downstairs room as the church, with a magnificent stained glass window depicting the two angels beside the golden table, upon which was the open Word. (See *Brief Exposition* 120)

Johny came into the New Church as an adult and Andy trained him for the priesthood. He is originally from Peru but now lives in Rio. He preaches in both congregations every Sunday.

That morning the ministers, Andy, Eduardo, Johny and myself, and several others studying for the ministry, met for the first of the clergy meetings in the room where worship is held. Gretchen was invited to work with a number of the wives on developing a Sunday School for both congregations, which was held on a lovely upstairs veranda. A number of the Fatima congregation also were present for this.

After a sumptuous luncheon, I gave a class on temptation, with everyone together, to round out a very full day.

On Sunday a few from the Campo Grande congregation joined with the Fatima congregation in Rio for the church service. Perhaps 30 were present, spanning all age groups. Several of the congregation speak English, but most do not. Thus Andy gave the children's talk and I preached afterward, with him translating. (Andy was my faithful and tireless translator throughout.) After church and some refreshments I gave another class to further explore the theme of guilt to the assembled group.

On Monday morning the clergy meetings continued, as they did on Tuesday. But after lunch Gretchen and I had to make our way to the airport for our return flight. (And as much as they appreciated us being there, I suspect it took some pressure off by not having to translate everything for us!)

A word about the local clergy meetings. They serve several purposes. For one, they provide for the far-flung clergy to re-connect (or get to know each other better), talk about their studies and the uses of the church in Brazil. Several could not make it this time, but those who attended found it stimulating and useful.

Another use stems from the students who are invited to attend. For them, it is a way to expand their knowledge and also provide them with an opportunity to present ideas and get clergy feedback. There are four students at various stages in their studies, plus a couple of older gentlemen who participate sporadically and relish the learning they get there.

Their translation efforts have produced a number of works in Portuguese. All of the works Swedenborg published are now in print, and many more are translated and available in electronic format. All that really remains to translate is the *Spiritual Experiences* (previous name, *Spiritual Diary*), which Cristovao Nobre will hopefully begin work on very soon.

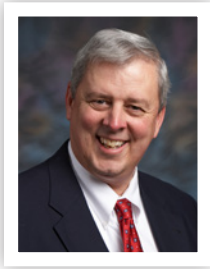
Although the French copies of the Writings served the New Church in the beginning, it is essential to have the Heavenly Doctrines in the Portuguese language for future training, outreach and development of the New Church in Brazil, and perhaps someday in countries like Angola, Mozambique and Portugal.

Throughout we were warmly received by all. It was delightful to see people at all stages of development in the New Church – from long-term members who cherish the Heavenly Doctrines and know them well to those who have recently found them and are affirmatively exploring them.

The numbers are relatively small in Curitiba, Campo Grande and Fatima. This is not surprising since the first two are relatively new. And the Fatima congregation in Rio keeps re-inventing itself with new people finding the Heavenly Doctrines (or the church building) and becoming steady members.

As elsewhere in the development of the New Church, we see beginnings and strive to nurture those precious seeds and seedlings for the future.

(See photos of the Brazil visit, by Gretchen Keith, on pages 86-87.)



The Rt. Rev. Brian W. Keith is Executive Bishop of the General Church, General Pastor of the General Church and Chancellor of the Academy of the New Church. He is also President of the General Church in Canada, the General Church in South Africa, and the General Church International, Incorporated. He lives with his wife Gretchen (Umberger) in Bryn Athyn. Contact: Brian.Keith@newchurch.org

OUR NEW CHURCH VOCABULARY

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

EQUILIBRIUM

If two forces exert opposite and equal pressures upon a third thing, each cancels the other; and the third, if endowed with the power of action, is free to yield to one or the other as it chooses. Therefore it is said to be in equilibrium. As used in the Writings, the term refers to man's state as being so placed between heaven and hell, and also to the equal balance between heaven and hell which has its plane in the world of spirits. Angels and evil spirits are in the equilibrium they have made their own on earth. (See *Heaven and Hell* 537, 589, 591)

Two Kinds of Zeal

The Rev. Dr. Ray Silverman

The subject of zeal (also translated “jealousy” from the Latin word “*zelotypia*”) refers to an emotion that comes over us when we feel that something precious is being threatened.

This emotion can be either a noble one (defending what is sacred) or an ignoble one (prompted by our lower nature). Either way, whether inwardly noble or ignoble, the outward appearance is often indistinguishable.

In the very first commandment, the Lord describes Himself as being a “jealous God.” (*Exodus 20:5*) In this case, and in every other case, when the word “zealous” or “jealous” is used to describe the Lord, it always refers to a desire to protect and defend that which is sacred. Indeed, it can even be called “possessive” in the best sense, for we are all children of God, and each of us is a sacred “possession” that the Lord wants to defend and protect.

This kind of protective love has nothing to do with what we normally associate with jealousy, as, for example, when a person becomes possessive to the point of being controlling. Similarly, it is not the kind of jealousy that is envious of another person’s wealth, or jealous of someone’s musical aptitude, athletic prowess, or speaking ability. As Paul puts it, “Love is not jealous or boastful or proud.” (*I Corinthians 13:4*)

Jealousy and envy, along with the bitterness and resentment associated with those emotions, show up when we are unable to feel the joy of others as joy in ourselves. (*Divine Love and Wisdom 49*) In other words, because of our extreme focus on ourselves, we find it difficult to be genuinely happy for others. For example, if we hear about someone getting promoted, or getting a raise, instead of thinking, *I am really happy for this person*, we think, “*Why don’t I get promoted? How come I didn’t get a raise? I deserve a break, too.*”

This form of jealousy, so filled with envy, is also called covetousness, and is the focus of the final commandment: “You shall not covet your neighbor’s house, your neighbor’s wife, manservant, maidservant, ox, donkey or anything that is your neighbor’s.” (*Exodus 20:17*) As Jesus said, “Take heed and beware of covetousness.” (*Luke 12:15*)

The passages which follow deal with both types of jealousy: the heavenly

jealousy that wants to defend what is sacred, and the hellish jealousy which becomes bitter and angry when it doesn't get what it wants. Hellish jealousy may look like it is merely defending something that is precious, but inwardly it is self-serving and possessive. Heavenly jealousy also defends what is precious, but it never becomes possessive and controlling.

Another important distinction is that heavenly zeal, like hellish zeal, will indeed flare up when something precious is attacked, and it will vehemently defend whatever is being attacked. But immediately after the attack, it will calm down and return to a state of inner peace, always looking toward reconciliation. Hellish zeal, however, continues to harbor hatred long after the attack is over and the danger has passed.

To use a familiar example, two teams might fight furiously for the league championship, but then, after the game is over, they will graciously line up to congratulate each other. This is an outer expression of what is a heavenly ideal.

The distinction between heavenly and hellish zeal is a vital one. This is especially true because so many Old Testament passages give the impression that God is angry, vindictive and vengeful. The truth is that the Lord never ceases to love and, therefore, is incapable of anger. As it is written:

From these few statements it can be seen how deluded those are who think, and still more those who believe, and still more those who teach, that God can damn anyone, curse anyone, send anyone to hell, predestine any soul to eternal death, avenge wrongs, be angry, or punish. He cannot even turn Himself away from man, nor look upon him with a stern countenance. These and like things are contrary to His essence; and what is contrary to His essence is contrary to His very Self. (*True Christian Religion* 56)

It would be incorrect, however, to assume that the Lord is indifferent when it comes to the terrible things that happen to people. For example, when innocent people are mistreated, abused, exploited or murdered, it would be insensitive and inhumane to remain untouched by such tragedy. Something within us wants to respond, indeed, needs to respond. And sometimes that response can look – outwardly at least – as though it is full of passionate fury. Yes, it can certainly look like anger. And sometimes, when what we love gets hijacked by the hells, we really do get filled with anger. Holy zeal (the Lord's zeal in us) gets twisted into hellish rage. Good zeal, or "holy anger" if you will, becomes evil zeal, or hellish anger.

Here's the difference: as angry as our external response may seem, it still has love and tenderness within it. It refuses to be hijacked by hell; it remains steadfast in love for all, even while vehemently defending that which is precious and sacred.

This is most clearly seen in a selection of passages from *Conjugial Love*. In studying them I have relied mostly on the translation of the Rev. William

Wunsch (1937). But I have also incorporated the work of the Rev. Bruce Rogers (1995), along with some of my own translation attempts. In a few cases, I have slightly reworded, or combined what I thought was the best of Rogers and Wunsch. Their original translations are available at www.heavenlydoctrines.org along with translations by the Rev. Alfred Acton (1952), Professor John Chadwick (1996), and a joint translation by the Rev. Samuel Warren and the Rev. Louis H. Tafel (1915).

Here are the passages:

358. Zeal, in essence, can be compared to a fire that has been set ablaze. . . . This is because zeal arises from one's love, just a blaze arises from a fire.

When it first arises, zeal does not look at all like love, but rather like a hostile enemy, for it vehemently fights against the person who threatens to hurt what one loves. For this reason, heavenly zeal can be called the defender and protector of love.

It is the nature of all love to erupt into anger and fury when that which is loved is threatened in some way, or taken away. If, therefore, a love is touched, especially a ruling love, it becomes an emotion of the lower mind, and if in being touched it is wounded, it can turn into anger.

It can be seen from this that zeal is not the highest degree of love but is love blazing. This is because love is the very being of a person's life. Therefore, when anyone attacks or threatens that love, it is perceived as an attack on that person's inmost life. A state of wrath ensues against the attacker, like a person's state when another approaches to kill him.

Even the most pacific love knows such wrath, as is plain from hens, geese and birds of all kinds, which rise fearlessly and fly against those who molest their young or carry off their food. It is common knowledge that certain beasts show wrath, and wild beasts rage, if their whelps are attacked or their prey is taken away.

359. Whenever the life's love is attacked, the life's heat kindles, flares up and breaks out against the assailant. The love which has been attacked acts like an enemy in its vehemence and power, which can be compared to flames leaping from a fire and scorching someone who attempts to stir it.

This fiery nature is apparent from the flashing eyes, the inflamed face, the tone of speech, and the accompanying gestures. This is how love, which is life's heat, acts. And it does so in order that it may not be extinguished – along with all the enthusiasm, liveliness and enjoyment that are associated with that love.

360. We will now explain how love, in response to being attacked, ignites and blazes into zeal, just as fire bursts into flame. Love resides in a person's

will; yet it does not blaze up in the will itself, but in the intellect. For in the will it is like a smoldering fire, and in the intellect like a flame. . . . When, therefore, love is attacked, it rouses itself to anger in the intellect, doing so by various kinds of reasoning.

These various kinds of reasoning are like sticks of wood which are ignited by the fire and then blaze up. They can be compared to many pieces of kindling or combustible material. This is what causes the spiritual flame of which we are speaking, in all its many varieties.

361. The deep reason why a person is set afire by an attack on his love shall be disclosed. By creation the human form, in essence, is a form of love and wisdom. All affections of love and all perceptions of wisdom therefrom are arranged in a person in a most perfect order, so as to constitute what is unanimous and thus a one; they assume substance, for their subjects are substances.

Since the human form is thus composed, it is plain that if a love is attacked, the whole form with everything in it is attacked at the same instant. By creation a desire has also been induced on all living things to persist in their own form; the general composite therefore wills this from its parts, and the parts from the general composite.

When then a love is attacked, it defends itself through its intellect, and the intellect makes rational and imaginative conjectures, picturing the potential outcome. Were this not so, or if there were a lack of such love, the whole form would be overthrown. In order to resist attacks, then, love hardens the substances of its form, and erects them as it were into so many tufts or crests; that is, it bristles. Such is the nature of love when provoked, which is called zeal.

If power to resist is not available, anxiety and grief arise, because the person foresees the extinction of inner life with its enjoyments. But when, instead of being assailed, love is cherished and caressed, the form relaxes, softens and expands, while the substances comprising the form become soft, smooth, gentle and pleasant.

362. A person's zeal is such as one's love is. Therefore, it is one thing with the person whose love is good, and another with the person whose love is evil. As zeal is of love, it follows that it is such as the love is. This is because there are, in general, two kinds of love: a love of goodness and so of truth, and a love of evil and so of falsity. In general, there is a zeal for goodness and so for truth and a zeal for evil and so for falsity.

It is to be known that each love has infinite variety. This is plain from the angels of heaven and the spirits of hell. Both of these in the spiritual world are forms of their love, and yet no angel of heaven is absolutely like another, in face, speech, gait, gestures or ways, nor any spirit of hell like another; none

indeed can be alike to eternity, no matter how many times they are multiplied to myriads of myriads.

It is plain then, in view of the variety of form among angels and spirits, that loves have infinite variety. The same is true of zeal, because this attaches to love; that is to say, the zeal of one person cannot be absolutely like another's or the same as it. In general there are the zeal of good love and the zeal of evil love.

363. The zeal of a good love and the zeal of an evil love resemble each other in externals but are utterly unlike in internals. In the external expression, zeal has the appearance of anger and wrath, and this is the case with everyone. For it is love on fire and inflamed to protect itself from a violator and to drive away that violator.

The zeal of a good love and the zeal of an evil love appear alike in their external expression because when love is in a state of zeal, it blazes forth. With the good person it blazes only in externals. With the evil person it blazes in both externals and internals. However, since internals are not visible, the two kinds of zeal look the same in their external expression.

Nevertheless, they are utterly unlike in internals. The resemblance of zeal to wrath and anger in externals is plain to see and hear in all who speak and act from it. Take, for example, the zealous priest who exhorts the congregation. While doing this, the sound of his voice is loud, vehement, sharp and harsh; his face heats and perspires; he throws himself into his sermon, pounds the pulpit, and invokes fire from hell against evil doers. This is zeal, and there are many other examples.

364. To get a distinct idea of zeal with the good and of zeal with the evil, and of their dissimilarity, one must have some conception of internals and externals in man. Let it be a concept that anyone can understand. Take, for example, a nut, an almond, say, and its kernel. With the good the internals are like sound, good kernels, enclosed in their usual and native shell. With the evil, on the contrary, the internals are like rotten or wormy kernels, or so bitter they are inedible, but their externals are shells or coats either like the native shell of the almond, or like shiny conchs, or like multicolor rainbow-stones. So do their externals look, in which are concealed the internals we have just described. It is the same with the two kinds of zeal in people.

365. The zeal of a good love harbors love and friendship in its internals, but the zeal of an evil harbors hatred and revenge in its internals. We have said that zeal in externals looks like anger and wrath with those in a good love as well as with those in an evil love. But as the internals are different, the anger and wrath are, too. The differences are as follows:

1. The zeal of good love is like a heavenly flame which never bursts forth against another, but only defends itself, doing no more than

this against an evil person; it is the latter who rushes into the fire and is consumed. But the zeal of evil love is like an infernal flame; it bursts forth and rushes out and wants to consume the other.

2. The zeal of a good love immediately dies down and softens when the other retreats from the attack; but the zeal of an evil love persists and is not extinguished.
3. The reason for this is that the internal of a person in a good love is in itself gentle, mild, friendly and benevolent. Therefore the external, though it grows rough, bristles, draws itself up, and thus deals severely to defend itself, is still tempered by the good in which its internal is. The case is otherwise with the evil. With them the internal is unfriendly, fierce, hard, breathing hatred and revenge, and feeds on the delight of these emotions. Even when there is reconciliation, these feelings hide like a fire under ashes. And even if these fires do not break out while the person is in the world, they break out after death.

366. Since zeal in outward expression looks the same in the good person and in the evil, and as the literal sense of the Word consists of correspondences and appearances, it is often said of Jehovah in the Word that He becomes angry, is wrathful, avenges, punishes, casts into hell, besides much else, which is the way zeal appears in outward manifestations; it is for the same reason that He is called jealous – even though there is not a particle of anger, wrath or vengeance in Him. For He is Pity, Grace and Mercy itself, thus Goodness itself, in whom nothing like what has been described [anger, wrath, etc.] is possible.

* * *

As a practical matter, it might be useful to consider to what extent our moments of “righteous indignation” have within them feelings of pity, grace and mercy – even toward those who threaten that which we love.

As the Lord said to His disciples: “Unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and the Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven.” (*Matthew 5:20*)

One application, especially in the light of these teachings about two kinds of zeal, is that our righteousness – our zealous defense of all that is true and good – must always be inwardly tempered by the Lord’s love. In this context it might be useful to ask ourselves, even in the midst of an anger-arousing event, questions like these: *Where is this anger coming from? How I am I feeling on the inside? Is this good zeal or evil zeal? At what point is a good, defensive love getting hijacked by hellish influences? Is this the kind of righteousness that exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, or am I being just like them?*

Every edition of the *Arcana Coelestia* begins with the inscription, “Seek

first the kingdom of God and *His righteousness*, and all these things shall be added unto you.” (*Matthew 6:33*; emphasis added) This, I believe, is the kind of righteousness – *the kind of good zeal* – that exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees. May it become a part of our daily practice.



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OUR NEW CHURCH VOCABULARY

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

ESSE, EXISTERE, ESSENCE

Here we have another series of philosophical terms. *Esse* is the being of a thing; *existere* is the manifestation or forthstanding of the *esse*; and *essence* is that in which the real character of a thing consists – the attributes which make it to be what it is. These attributes are spoken of individually as *essentials*.

Thus the Divine *esse* is the Divine love; the Divine *existere* is the Divine wisdom, and the Divine *essence* is the Divine love and wisdom together and related as *esse* and *existere*. The Divine love and wisdom may also be spoken of separately as *essentials* of the Divine. Note that *esse* is more universal than *essence*, and that *existere* should not be rendered as “existence,” which refers to things by which the *essence* comes forth. (See *Arcana Coelestia* 4985, 1096, 1807; *True Christian Religion* 36)

Islam, Swedenborg and the Heavenly Doctrines

Benjamin Pendleton

In his January-February 2012 *New Church Life* article, *Swedenborg and Islam*, William Weaver questioned what Swedenborg could have known about Islam, then says that several fundamental statements in the Writings on Islam are “simply not true.” I’d like to belatedly respond.

I have tried to condense the author’s article into six basic questions; please read the original for clarification:

1. What could Swedenborg have known about Islam?
2. Could Swedenborg have had access to the Quran?
3. Is the God of the Quran an illegitimate or idolatrous god, as the author suggests?
4. Are the Heavenly Doctrines correct in stating that from the Quran Muslims acknowledge Jesus to be the Son of God?
5. Are they correct in stating that Muslims regard Jesus as the Greatest Prophet?
6. Are they correct in saying that the Quran contains the Commandments of the Decalogue?

1. What could Swedenborg have known about Islam?

Swedenborg was an 18th century Scandinavian, whose state religion since the mid-16th century was the Lutheranism of the Church of Sweden. What could he have known about Islam? A reasonable answer might be: “Not much.”

The Heavenly Doctrines have some amazing things to say about Islam; some straightforward, others hard to understand, some mysterious and some quirky, if not bizarre. One of the stranger statements is:

*“He (Charles XII of Sweden) praised the Mohammedan religion above the Christian.”
(Spiritual Diary 4748)*

What could an 18th-century Scandinavian have known about Islam? What could the Writings be talking about? A brief internet search reveals a

surprising story.

During the Great Northern War (1700-1721), following his disastrous defeat by the Russians at the Battle of Poltava, the warrior King Charles XII and 543 Swedes sought refuge in Moldavia from Ahmed III, the Sultan of the Islamic Ottoman Empire. The Swedes and the Muslim Ottomans were allies against their mutual arch enemy, Czarist Russia.

Given that they were military allies, it seems likely there would have been military men, government officials, religious scholars, merchants, etc., with personal or accurate information on Muslims and/or Islam.

Diplomatic contacts between Sweden and the Ottoman Empire had been initiated 100 years before Swedenborg was born. The first official Swedish envoy was sent to the Ottoman Empire in 1631. Are we to believe there was no reliable information on Islam in 18th-century Sweden? Would any first-hand information have been available to Swedenborg?

Charles XII and his men remained under the protection of Ahmed III for five years.

Charles ran up enormous debts to local merchants and the Ottoman government. When he finally left for Sweden, many Jewish and Muslim creditors followed him. In 1718, he issued a royal edict allowing them to practice their religions in Lutheran Sweden.

Beginning in 1727, the Ottoman government, also seeking repayment of debts, sent two emissaries to Stockholm. Mustapha Aga arrived in 1727 with a retinue of 23 and stayed for 15 months. Mehmed Said Effendi, with a retinue of 43, arrived in May of 1733 and stayed into 1734. College of Mines attendance records show that Swedenborg was in Stockholm during Mustapha Aga's visit. It is unclear if he would have had access to the second emissary.

Records indicate that the two Ottoman emissaries were enormous celebrities. Mehmed Said Effendi wrote of his reception in Stockholm: "They filled up all the spaces in the houses, shops, rooftops . . . and even the ropes tying the ships to the port, where they looked like bunches of grapes. . . . The people waved their hats in the air and cried out, 'Long live the Padishah of the Ottomans!'"

Swedenborg, as a well-connected, influential nobleman, presumably could have had access to them if he so desired, and to the many private Muslim creditors in Sweden.

The assertion that Swedenborg could not have had any knowledge about Islam appears based on assumption, not historical fact.

2. Could Swedenborg have had access to the Quran?

The author says the Quran wasn't widely available in 18th-century Europe. The historical record indicates otherwise.

The first Latin translation of the Quran, overseen by Robert of Ketton, was produced in 1143, more than five centuries before Swedenborg's birth.

In the early 13th century, Mark of Toledo produced a more accurate Latin translation. In the 15th century, Juan of Segovia produced another. In the 16th century, Juan Gabriel Terrolensis and Cardenal Eguida de Viterbo produced yet another. In the early 17th century, still another was made by Cyril Lucaris.

In 1698, ten years after Swedenborg was born, Ludavico Marracci, a teacher of the Arabic language at Sapienza University in Rome and confessor to Pope Innocent XI, issued a Latin translation with the Arabic text, plus comments and notes from Islamic sources. This was the result of 40 years of exhaustive research and labor by Benedictine monks. Various Catholic centers of learning throughout Europe had been studying the Arabic language since the 13th century.

Although Swedenborg apparently did not own a copy of the Quran, he could have had access if he wanted – from an educated acquaintance or the National Library of Sweden. He could have discussed the Quran with the Ottoman ambassadors, their retinues or Muslim creditors living in Sweden.

If the Quran was not legally available, he could have found it on the black market or on his travels to Holland, England, Germany, France and Italy.

3. Is the God of the Quran an idolatrous or illegitimate God?

The author says the God of the Quran is indeed a god, as the Writings state, but that He is not the God of the Old and New Testaments. He says that the one God of the Quran is similar to that of sun worshippers.

The Writings state that the God of the Quran is one:

"A Mohammedan sees from the Quran that God is one." (Apocalypse Explained 1180; see also True Christian Religion 8)

The Quran emphatically agrees:

"La ilaha ill-Allah."

"(There is) no god but God." (Quran 47:19) "And your God is One, there is no god but Him, the Most Merciful, the Especially Merciful." (2:163)

The Writings state that Islam acknowledges God as the Creator of the universe:

"The Orientals acknowledged God the Creator of the universe." (Divine Providence 255)

The Quran agrees:

"Such is Allah, your Lord! There is no god but Him, the Creator of all things. Worship then Him alone, for it is He that has everything in His care." (6:102)

The Writings state that Islam was raised up to destroy idolatry:

Mohammedanism “was raised up by the Divine Providence of the Lord to destroy the idolatries of many nations.” (Divine Providence 255)

The Quran agrees:

“If you associate others in worship with Allah, (then) surely (all) your deeds will be in vain, and you will certainly be among the losers.” (39:65; see also 4:48, 4:116, 5:72 and 21:8)

As for idolatry, the Quran specifically states that planetary objects are not to be worshiped;

“If you asked them, ‘Who created the heavens and earth and subjected the sun and the moon?’ they would surely say, ‘Allah.’ Then how are they deluded?” (29:65)

It is clear from both the Quran and the Heavenly Doctrines that the God of the Quran is not an idolatrous god. Islamic doctrine tells us that the God of the Quran has certain Divine Names and Attributes:

“He is Allah, besides Whom there is no god; the Knower of the seen and the unseen; He is the Most Merciful, the Especially Merciful. He is Allah, besides Whom there is no god; the King, the Holy One, the Peace, the Granter of Security, the Guardian over all, the Mighty One, the Supreme, the Possessor of every Greatness; Glory be to Allah! (High is He) above any partner that they associate with Him. He is Allah, the Creator, the Maker, the Fashioner; to Him belong the most excellent of names; all that are in the heavens and the earth glorify Him; and He is the All-Mighty, the All-Wise.” (59:22-24)

Two of the most common names for God in the Quran are ar-Rahman (the Most Merciful) and ar-Rahim (the Especially Merciful). “In the name of God, the Most Merciful, the Especially Merciful” begins every chapter of the Quran but one.

The names ar-Rahman and ar-Rahim are based on the Arabic word *rahmah*. It means mercy and is related to compassion, kindness, gentleness, tenderness, sympathy, love, caring, nourishment, kinship and family. The primary meaning of the Arabic root word *raham* is womb.

The Heavenly Doctrines say much about attributes like mercy, such as *Divine Love and Wisdom* 286.

The Writings indicate that the Most Merciful God of Islam must ultimately be seen as a Man. Among many quotes in support in the Quran are:

“And there will remain the Face of your Lord, Owner of Majesty and Honor.” (55:27)

“So wait patiently for the decree of your Lord, for truly you are under Our Eyes.” (52:48; see also 39:67 and 5:64)

The Heavenly Doctrines tell us that good Muslims do have something of an idea of a Human Creator God. (See *Spiritual Diary* 5668)

Muslims believe that man cannot see God in this life, as Moses was not permitted to see God (*Quran* 7:143), but that they will be able to see Him in heaven on the Day of Resurrection.

Does the name Allah originate from pre-Islamic idol worship?

The Arabic word Allah (the God) is closely related to the Scriptural Hebrew El, Elohim and Eloah, and to the Scriptural Aramaic Elah, used in the book of *Daniel*. Other Semitic words for God are thousands of years old, and undoubtedly came from the Ancient Church:

“This Noachian or Ancient Church was diffused throughout Asia . . . and also into Arabia.” (Coronis 39)

Arab Christians were using the word Allah for God before the rise of Islam.

Is the Quran to some extent based on the Old and New Testaments, as the Writings say?

“The religious principle with the Mohammedans was in some respect taken from the Word of both Testaments.” (Apocalypse Explained 1177; see also Divine Providence 25)

“He has sent down the Book to you with truth, confirming what came before it. And He sent down the Torah and the Gospel.” (Quran 3:3)

The God of the Quran is the God of Aaron, Abraham, Adam, Caleb, David, Eber, Elijah, Elishah, Enoch, Ezekiel, Isaac, Ishmael, Jethro, Jesus, Job, John the Baptist, Jonah, Joseph, Joshua, Lot, Mary, Moses, Noah, Samuel, Saul, Solomon, the Sons of Jacob, Terah and Zechariah. Not exactly a foreign, idolatrous god, from a Judeo-Christian perspective.

There is no question that God as portrayed in the Quran would not fit in with New Church doctrine: He is Most Merciful to those who worship Him alone, and burns in hell fire for all eternity those who worship anyone but Him. But to say that He is not the God of the Old Testament seems wrong. The God of the Quran in fact appears to be a consummate example of God presented in the Old Testament.

4. Are the Heavenly Doctrines correct in stating that from the Quran Muslims acknowledge Jesus as the Son of God?

“The Mohammedan religion acknowledges the Lord as the Son of God.” (Divine Providence 255)

Does the Quran agree?

“. . . and the Christians say, The Messiah is the son of God! That is the saying in their mouths; they but imitate what the unbelievers of old used to say. The curse of Allah be upon them! How they are turned away from the truth!” (9:30-33; see also 19:88 and 19:92)

There appears to be a problem here. The first thing that needs to be understood is that the Heavenly Doctrines are aware of the fact that the Quran outright rejects a tri-personal God:

“All who dwell outside the Christian church, both Mohammedans and Jews, and besides these the Gentiles of every cult, are averse to Christianity solely on account of its belief in three Gods.” (True Christian Religion 183; see also 831)

The Heavenly Doctrines completely reject this idea themselves:

“He who confirms his belief in a plurality of gods from a plurality of persons, gradually becomes like a statue made with moveable joints, within which Satan stands, and speaks through its artificially constructed mouth.” (Ibid. 23)

So what are the Writings talking about when they say “the Son of God.” The *Doctrine of the Lord* 19 provides three different definitions for the Son of God.

The Old Church definition:

“In the church, the Son of God is supposed to be the second person of the Godhead.”

The Jewish Church definition:

“In the Jewish Church there was understood by the Son of God the Messiah whom they had expected.”

The New Church definition:

“The Lord’s Human, conceived of Jehovah the Father, and born of the virgin Mary, is the Son of God.”

The Quran obviously does not accept the Old Church definition; does it accept the Jewish definition?

“Oh Mary! Allah gives you glad tidings of a Word sent from Him: his name will be al Masih (the Messiah), Jesus.” (3:45)

The Quran states that Jesus was the Messiah. Does it teach that Jesus was “conceived of Jehovah the Father, and born of the virgin Mary,” the New Church definition?

“And when the angels said, ‘Oh Mary, Indeed Allah has chosen you and purified you - chosen you above all the women of the world...’ Behold the angels said, ‘Oh Mary, surely Allah gives you good news of a Word from Him, his name will be Messiah Jesus, the son of Mary, held in honor in this world and the Hereafter, and of those nearest to Allah.’ She said, ‘My Lord, how will I have a child when no man has touched me?’ He said, ‘So (it will be); Allah creates what He wills. When He decrees a matter, He only says, Be, and it is.’” (3:42,45,47)

The Quran rejects the Old Church definition of the Son of God, but completely accepts the Jewish and New Church definitions, although not the wording themselves. The Heavenly Doctrines are correct: the Quran does acknowledge that Jesus was the Messiah and that He was conceived of Jehovah

the Father and born of the Virgin Mary.

5. Are the Heavenly Doctrines Correct in stating that Muslims regard Jesus as the Greatest Prophet?

“The Mohammedans . . . acknowledge the Lord as the Greatest Prophet and as the Son of God.” (De Verbo 17; see also Divine Providence 255)

The author quotes this verse from the Quran in an attempt to show that the Writings are wrong:

“We believe in Allah and what has been revealed to Abraham and Ishmael and Isaac and Jacob and the Descendants and what was given to Moses and Jesus and what was given to the prophets from their Lord. We make no distinction among any of them.” (2:136)

But he neglects to provide this quote that says something quite different:

“These are the verses of Allah which we recite unto you (Oh Mohammed), in truth. And indeed, you are one of the messengers. These messengers we endowed with gifts, some excelling others; to some of them Allah spoke, and some of them He exalted in rank: to Jesus the son of Mary we gave clear signs and strengthened him with the Holy Spirit.” (252, 253)

This verse states that some prophets did excel and were exalted over others, and that Jesus is the example given.

The Quran testifies that Mohammed is:

A Messenger, a Messenger of Allah, a Prophet, a Servant of Allah (2:23), the Seal (or Last) of the Prophets (33:40), a Warner (33:45), a Witness (33:45), a Bearer of Glad Tidings (33:45), a Reminder. (88:21), a Light (5:15), a Light Giving Lamp (33:46), One who calls on Allah (12:108), One who invites to Allah (33:46), One who invites to a Single God (21:106), the One who has brought the Truth (39:33), One possessed of an “exalted standard of character (68:4),” an excellent example of conduct (33:21), to be obeyed (3:132), a Mercy for all created beings (21:107).

Mohammed is associated with two miracles: the Night Journey from Mecca to Jerusalem and his ascent into heaven to God; and the splitting of the moon:

“Exalted is He who took His Servant by night from al-Masjid al-Haram to al-Masjid al-Aqsa, whose surroundings We have blessed, to show him of Our signs. Indeed, He is the Hearing, the Seeing.” (17:1)

“The Hour has drawn near, and the moon has been cleft asunder.” (54:1)

Most Muslims apparently believe the Night Journey was a bodily miracle, not a dream. While many believe that Mohammed actually did split the moon as a sign to unbelievers, some Islamic scholars say the verse in the Quran clearly refers to the Day of Judgment, when the moon will be split. The Quran also points out that while other prophets performed miracles, Mohammed did

not, other than the receiving of the Quran:

“And the unbelievers say: ‘Why is not a sign sent down to him from his Lord?’” (13:7, 15:8; see also 11:12, 3:184 and 29:50,51)

The Quran testifies that Jesus:

Is a Prophet (19:30), is a Messenger (3:49), is in the ranks of the righteous (6:85), is blessed by Allah wherever he is (19:31), is held in honor in this world and in the Hereafter (3:45), is of those nearest to Allah (3:45), is enjoined upon by Allah with prayer and almsgiving as long as he lives (19:31), is a receiver of peace the day he was born and the day he will die and the day he will be raised alive (19:33), and many, many other references.

Could a Muslim come to the conclusion that Jesus is in fact the Greatest Prophet? The Quran clearly shows that he could. Once again, the Heavenly Doctrines are correct.

6. Are the Heavenly Doctrines correct in saying that the Quran contains the Commandments of the Decalogue?

The Heavenly Doctrines state:

“It may be seen that the Mohammedan religion also arose from the Divine Providence of the Lord; and that all persons of that religion who acknowledge the Lord as the Son of God and at the same time live according to the precepts of the Decalogue, which they also have, by shunning evils as sins, come into a heaven called the Mohammedan heaven.” (Divine Providence 255)

Here is what the Quran says about the Ten Commandments:

“And certainly Allah made a covenant with the Children of Israel.” (5:12)

“We wrote for him (Moses) on the tablets an admonition concerning all things and an explanation of all things. ‘Take them firmly and command your people to observe their most excellent teachings.’” (7:145; see also 7:154, 2:63, 19:51,52, 14:5 and 4:164)

The Quran does not have an exact duplicate of the Decalogue, but there are two sets of verses that cover a lot of the same ground:

“Say, Come, I will recite what your Lord has prohibited you from: Do not associate anything in worship with Him; be good and dutiful to your parents; kill not your children because of poverty - we provide sustenance for you and for them. Do not come near to lewd deeds, whether open or concealed; slay not the life that Allah has made sacred, except in the course of justice; this does He command you, that you may learn wisdom. And do not approach the orphan’s property, except to improve it until he attains the age of full strength; and give full measure and weight with justice; We do not burden any person but that which he can bear. And when you testify, be just, even it concerns a near relative. And the covenant of Allah fulfill. This He has instructed you that you may remember. This is His straight path, so follow it. (6:151-153; see also 17:22-24, 26, 28, 31-35, 37-39)

There are three sins the Quran singles out for a double punishment:

“And the servants of Allah are . . . they who do not call upon a god other than Allah, nor slay such life as Allah has made holy, except in just cause, nor commit unlawful sexual acts. But whoever does these shall receive the punishment: the torment will be doubled to him on the Day of Resurrection, and he will live in disgrace.” (25:63,68,69)

Although the Quran does not have all of the Ten Commandments in one location, it does have them all in various places throughout the Quran:

You shall have no other Gods:

“Your Lord has decreed that you should worship none but Him.” (17:23)

You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain:

“And do not make Allah a target for your oaths.” (2:224)

Remember the Sabbath day:

“And We said to them, Do not violate the Sabbath, and We took from them a solemn covenant.” (4:154)

Honor your father and mother:

“ . . . and do good to your parents.” (17:23)

You shall not murder:

“(Those who) slay such life as Allah has made sacred . . . not only meet punishment, but the penalty of the Day of Judgment will be doubled unto him, and he will dwell therein (in Hell) in disgrace.” (25:68,69; see also 17:33)

You shall not commit adultery:

“And do not even go near to adultery; it is an open vice and an evil way.” (17:32)

You shall not steal:

“As for the thief, let their hands be cut off in retaliation for what they have done, a punishment from Allah.” (5:38)

You shall not bear false witness:

“And they (the servants of Allah) do not testify falsely.” (25:72)

You shall not covet:

“And do not covet what Allah has” (4:32)

The author questioned the accuracy of the Heavenly Doctrines' statements on Islam. These statements presumably were given in part so that we could have some way of responding to the challenges Islam presents. What is lacking are any ideas/solutions for dealing with the situation we find ourselves in.

Does he believe that dead Christianity's version of idolatry – the irrational, tri-personal/three-headed gods/god – is an adequate response to Islam's strictly focused monotheism?

Does he believe that the corrupt and weak result of faith alone is sufficient to counter a muscular, militant way of life? Or that a nihilistic atheism is the key to responding to a belief system that has fired the hearts and minds of one-quarter of the earth's population?

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Gifts from the Lord

Joseph S. David

The Lord has gifted us with everything that exists in the universe: the galaxies in far space at which we marvel, the sun that warms our earth and all the things we use that abound upon the earth. He did this by marrying His Divine love to His Divine wisdom. Without that marriage there would be nothing at all, not even empty space, just . . . nothing.

To represent that Divine marriage He made His creation reflect the duality of His Love and Wisdom, especially in the animal kingdom and most especially in the human race by creating us male and female. And then He gave out two more gifts – one to female humans and a different one to male humans. Each of the sexes was given a quality that could be raised up into the atmosphere of heaven – the gift to the males into heavenly light and the gift to the females into heavenly warmth, each sex with its own gift.

Her gift is an inherent love for conjunction with a male whose wisdom she can attach to, which love can be lifted up to share the love of marriage that the angels have or “into heavenly warmth.” His gift is a love of knowledge to store in an understanding which can be “raised into the light of heaven” or the wisdom that angels have. This difference in the two gifts is given expressly for the purpose of making the two able to be conjoined.

Her gift is inherent such that she can scarcely avoid it, while his is much more easily mired down in what is natural and he has to work harder to raise his knowledge to the level of wisdom.

This basic set-up is important enough that it is given over and over again in our primer for marriage, the book *Conjugal Love*. The concept is usually worded: “The male is created to be a form of wisdom and the female to be a form of love of the wisdom of the male,” with some variation. By rough count it is openly expressed 12 times in the first part of the book in six of the 17 chapters there, so it is not an insignificant idea.

So the idea is that in marriage the gifts are shared. She grants to him her love so that it may be in him as well, and he shares with her his wisdom so that her loves may be effected. However, in both cases the gifts must be accepted. He must accept her love and shy away from his natural desire to wish for other

loves until he can come to have her as his only love, and she must accept his wisdom rather than continue to love her own or look around for something “better”.

We may never grow to the celestial point of being able to say, “She is my heart and I am her lungs.” But that is the ideal we can strive for. The idea must also contain the acknowledgment that both the husband and wife must continue to reform by shunning evils so the Lord can regenerate them. The husband should continue to try to become wiser to give his wife more to love, and she should shun any desire to look elsewhere for love or a conjoining wisdom. And because conjugal love grows in lockstep with regeneration his wisdom should come from the truths of the Church, not from natural truths.

When Swedenborg visited the angels of the Golden Age where he spoke with a married couple (mentioned above), upon seeing them he said, “you two are one” and the angel husband replied, “We are; she is my heart and I am her lungs.” Of course, that was the age of the most ancient church where people had direct perception of what is good.

We are living in a natural and secular age, and it is long since any people on earth could talk directly to angels. But the Lord does give us a promise that, with the doctrines He has given to the New Church, the love of marriage that couple had can be felt again by couples here on earth. If we ask how, the answer is: through the doctrines He has given us. And as in all doctrines the Lord has ever given, they must be read, trusted and followed. There isn’t any other way.

I am intrigued by the image or correspondence of the heart and lungs in the angel husband’s reply to Swedenborg. Aside from the brain these are the two most needed organs to continue life. The heart always keeps nutrients flowing to all parts of the body so that it can do all the things it does. In our natural bodies it starts beating way before we are born and never stops until we go to the spiritual world.

The heart is hidden in the midst of the body, cushioned by the lungs and in intimate contact with them, and protected all around by the ribs. And unless you feel in the right place for a pulse, there is no evidence on the outside that the heart is doing its work.

The lungs work at one remove; they have no muscles to pull in air. It’s the diaphragm that causes them to inspire air down into the alveoli, and so allow that air to come almost into contact with the heart’s blood. This allows the lungs to have contact with what is outside the body, taking in oxygen and discarding used gases. It is the lungs that keep the blood refreshed and pure. And we can see the lungs at work. We see the chest rise and fall, slow if at rest and fast under exertion. We can hear someone panting. That the lungs are doing something is out in the open.

All the blood that the heart pumps to the body has first gone through the

lungs to be purged and refreshed. And in some of this the heart sends blood right back to the lungs through a separate channel to keep the lungs healthy and living, just as it does for the rest of the body.

Ideally this reflects the way the will of the wife interacts with her husband's wisdom. Her love for him flows to him separately in order to keep him happy and healthy, but also all the affections of her love are routed through his understanding for purging and refreshment before being brought to birth as uses.

In turn, the fresh affection that returns to her contains the wisdom that she loves. She gives him the gift that he needs and loves, and he gives back to her the gift she needs and loves.

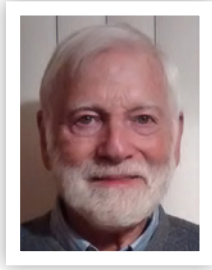
Can we mess this up? Oh yes, of course we can. Our proprium is constantly pulling us that way. The husband can turn away from wisdom. He may simply not be interested in raising his mind above what is natural, or he can put truths into his memory but leave them there without putting them into action in his life, so preventing his knowledge of truth from becoming wisdom. In this way the love his wife might want to give him becomes of indifference to him; he doesn't accept it. He can do worse; he can let his mind sink down into what is only corporeal and sensual.

The wife can do the same kind of thing. His understanding may come to seem to her a restriction on the actions she wants to do, so that she pays no attention and may come to see it as inferior to her own. Or she may seek to dominate him by imposing her will upon him regardless of his thoughts.

And maybe the most common problem is the fear each one has that "I would be willing to give my gift, but maybe my spouse won't respond."

We all do start out unregenerate and need a lifetime to go as far as we can down here. Often we marry when we are young and haven't advanced very far. Look at *Conjugal Love* as a guide book to find a way to a happy marriage, not as a book to prove something else. Maybe, echoing the wives Swedenborg saw in heaven, wives down here will say, "Perhaps in the early days of our marriages we were married women, but now we are wives." And their husbands could say, "And we were married men, but we have become husbands."

Rather than linking references to individual ideas above I am simply going to list them numerically as I came to them while reading. All are from the first half of *Conjugal Love*, or *Marriage Love*. (See numbers: 37,42-4, 47R, 52, 54-5, 61, 65, 66, 69-2, 74, 75, 76-7, 90, 91, 100, 115-5, 125, 137-6, 159, 161-3, 165, 166, 176, 180, 187, 188, 190, 196, 198, 199, 222, 223, 293-3, 296, 331-2, 332, 339-3 and 353)



Joseph S. David was born in Bryn Athyn in 1936 and attended the schools there through one year of college, then transferred to get an engineering degree. In 1958 he married Pat de Maine, and moved to Franklin, Pennsylvania, where he worked for a company that made coal mining machinery. They raised five children and sent them all to the Academy. Joe notes that “Pat left me for the spiritual world in 2010, but I still feel quite married to her.” In 2012 he moved to Indianapolis, “to get to know the youngest group of grandchildren, and that has worked well. With a scattered family you can’t be near everyone.” Contact: joe.david.36@gmail.com

Church News

Compiled by Bruce Henderson

DR. SHERRI RUMER COOPER RESEARCH FUND

A special research fund has been established at Bryn Athyn College in memory of beloved and long-time faculty member, **Dr. Sherri Lynn Rumer Cooper**, who passed into the spiritual world November 23 after a courageous battle with cancer. Sherri is the wife of **David Cooper** and the mother of **Zia** and **Anji**. You can read the memorial address for Sherri, given in the Bryn Athyn Cathedral on December 5 by the **Rev. Dr. Jonathan S. Rose** on page 23. The following is from the Bryn Athyn College website, www.brynathyn.edu:



Sherri Rumer Cooper Research Fund

The Sherri Rumer Cooper Research Fund honors the vision and legacy of Dr. Sherri Cooper by supporting undergraduate science research at Bryn Athyn College. The fund focuses on three areas:

1. Support for undergraduate students engaged with science projects
2. Support for faculty members mentoring students or leading projects
3. Support for research expenses

Dr. Cooper joined the faculty at Bryn Athyn College in 1999, after establishing an impressive record of paleoecology research at the University of Maryland, Johns Hopkins and Duke. Her publications on diatom assemblages in estuarine sediment cores brought her international attention and continue to influence scientific research in her field.

At Bryn Athyn College Dr. Cooper taught courses in biology, ecology, limnology and environmental science and mentored many students through

their undergraduate research projects. She continued to conduct and publish research while at Bryn Athyn College and shared her passion for research and science unstintingly with her students, developing a powerful and unique research program for undergraduates. Among her many contributions she chaired the College's Research Committee, established an annual student poster session for students in all majors, and guided the College's joint research program with the Pennypack Ecological Restoration Trust.

The *Sherri Rumer Cooper Research Fund* honors Dr. Cooper's passion for faculty mentored undergraduate research and continues the work she began.

To make a donation honoring Sherri Cooper's work and legacy, please go to www.newchurchgiving.org/bac and select *Sherri Rumer Cooper Research Fund* in the Designation dropdown menu, or contact **Susan Wright** at 267-502-4895 or email advancement@anc-gc.org.

CHRISTMAS SPOTLIGHT ON CAIRWOOD

Shannon Walko

In December, Cairnwood Estate was featured on television, in newspapers, on social media and in a new hardcover book as one of the best historic homes in the country to visit during the holiday season.

CBS Philly reported on the beautiful Christmas décor and historic tour program on December 16. Local channel 3 reporter Vittoria Woodill toured the house with Director of History and Education, **Lisa Parker-Adams**, and learned about the home and collection. Woodill then interviewed Cairnwood Director, **Shannon Walko**, via live broadcast from the Estate.

Cairnwood was also written about in *The Intelligencer* (a local daily newspaper) and has been listed among *USA Today's Best Decorated Historic Homes for the Holidays*. The Estate ranked as one of the top three sites in the country and tracked ahead of the Biltmore in North Carolina and Hearst Castle in California in the *USA Today* poll.

The holiday spirit of Cairnwood and the history of the house as a New Church home have been captured within the pages of the recently published *Christmas at America's Landmark Houses* by Patricia McMillan and David Strahan. The hardcover book features Christmas decorating, history, architecture and interior design wrapped in one festive package. Inspiring images provide a leisurely look at historic house interiors decorated for the holidays.

The team at Cairnwood was honored to receive this positive response toward its holiday programs and thrilled to share the Bryn Athyn holiday spirit with the public. A crew of 75 volunteers, including several members of the Bryn Athyn community, spent an early December morning decorating

the 20-foot Christmas tree in the Great Hall during the *Trim the Tree* event. Another 225 guests enjoyed music and refreshments while viewing a special exhibit of historic gowns during the annual *Cairnwood by Candlelight* event. All of these make a visit to Cairnwood and the Bryn Athyn Historic District a holiday tradition!

(See photos on page 88.)



WELL DONE, GOOD AND FAITHFUL SERVANT

The Rev. Frederick C. Elphick has retired as chairman of the General Church Council in Great Britain, after 19 years of valued service.

In a newsletter write-up **Dale Morris** noted: “When Fred finished his final report, **Mark Burniston** (Council Treasurer) paid eloquent tribute to his long, steady, wise leadership and expressed the thanks and gratitude of the entire United Kingdom church membership. Fred and **Jane** were given a white orchid plant, a gift card and a check to use for whatever they choose – ‘an amazing surprise gift,’ Fred said afterwards. Small enough thanks, Fred, for your generous long service.”

Fred added his own words of thanks to the board and membership, noting that he has been a member of the Council Board for 31 years, and chairman since 1996.

“This might be the cue,” he wrote, “for some not very interesting reminiscences but I would just like to point out that the chairman actually relies heavily on his officers, especially the secretary and treasurer. So in addition to our devoted board members, it is **Mary Warwick** and **Roy Evans** to whom I have looked for most of my time and I must record my gratitude for the many years of hard work they have put in behind the scenes.

“Also, it has been a joy to have Dale Morris so completely take over the secretarial reins from Mary and to have Roy’s equally competent daughter **Ro Costello** take over responsibility for the great amount of day-to-day financial work. Meanwhile, Mary’s son Mark Burniston has turned his skillful hand to taking the pulse of our investments . . .

“Which leads me to record my pleasure that **Geoff Wyncoll** has agreed to take my place. He has been working with Mark keeping a weather eye for investment opportunities in a volatile market. I’m sure that with all his experience and unruffled, practical approach to life, he will be an excellent chairman. And his wife **Kathy** is secretary of the British Academy. Perfect!”

EUROPEAN ASSEMBLY 2017

From the Newsletter for the General Church in Britain:

“After consultation with the **Rt. Rev. Brian W. Keith**, Executive Bishop of the General Church, we have begun the process of planning for a European Assembly in 2017.

“An initial, informal and enthusiastic group met during our recent All-Age Weekend at Purley Chase Center to begin this planning process. Much of our discussion revolved around necessary initial steps, including formation of a formal organizing committee, setting a date, and possible venues.

“A decision was made to convene the first meeting of the 2017 European Assembly Organizing Committee in late January 2016. This meeting is likely to be at Swedenborg House, London.”

Anyone interested in serving on the committee or supporting its work was asked to contact the **Revs. Göran R. Appelgren, Alan M. Cowley or Howard A. Thompson.**

TRULY THEY ARE SONS OF THE ACADEMY

At the Charter Day annual meeting of the Corporation of the Academy of the New Church, Memorial Resolutions were presented for former Corporation members **Edward F. Allen Jr., H. Keith Morley** and **B. Dean Smith**. Following is the bulk of these Resolutions:

Edward Franklin Allen Jr.

Ed Allen died October 6, 2014, in Anchorage, Alaska, at age 81. He was the son of **Edward F. and Sue Allen**. Ed graduated from the Academy of the New Church Boys School in 1952 and earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Mechanical Engineering from Colorado A&M (now Colorado State University) in 1956. After graduation he entered the United State Air Force. He served as an ANC Corporation member from 1989 to 2001.

Although Ed liked to say he graduated from the Boys School “without distinction,” he was very much the student throughout his life. In his memorial address the **Rev. Kurt Ho. Asplundh** said: “It would appear that Ed did not slack in the matter of seeking intelligence from the Word to be able to serve the Lord. One of his stated goals as the newsletter editor in Phoenix was ‘to relate church teachings to life.’”

Ed liked to say of his father after a breakfast or lunch that he received his one-hour dissertation credit. If you ever had that time with Ed Junior you could say the same about him. He always had a book or pamphlet to give that was his latest interest. It could be from Emanuel Swedenborg, St. Thomas Aquinas, Emanuel Kant, Hugo Odhner or any bishop named Pendleton, among many

others in the fields of religion and philosophy.

Ed's professional career was truly amazing and Rev. Asplundh had this to say: "Most men don't have the opportunity for careers this challenging and exciting. However, the important thing for all of us is to recognize that our happiness in life comes through serving the neighbor and the performance of use for others. Ed appeared to live this principle."

Ed and his wife **Beverly** moved to Phoenix, Arizona, in 1964 where they raised their four children, **Katherine Nail, Joel, Brent** and **Scott**. There he helped establish Space Data Inc., which later became a part of Orbital Sciences Corp. These companies were in the business of developing and launching rockets to provide affordable space launch capability for the nation.

Ed later helped establish a state-of-the industry Spaceport on Kodiak Island in Alaska, now a part of Alaska Aerospace Corporation. The Ed Allen Launch Operations Control Center is a part of this Spaceport. It can be accurately said that Ed was indeed a "rocket scientist."

Those who knew Ed were astonished that he spent the entire last week of his life without once going to the office! It can also be accurately said that Ed's primary motivation was being "Of Use," and he lived that in his life every day to the end.

H. Keith Morley

H. Keith Morley was elected to the Academy Corporation in 1969. First joining the Board in 1976, he served three successive terms and finally stepped down in 1987 having served on numerous committees. He became an Emeritus Member of the Corporation in 1998, maintaining an active interest in Academy matters for the rest of his life. He also served on the General Church Board for 17 years and held various leadership positions in the Olivet Church Society in Toronto.

Keith was born in Derby, England, on December 28, 1920, the son of **Harold Stephen and Elsie May Morley**. His family had strong ties to the New Church. His father's company, Morleys (Builders) Ltd, constructed the current church building in Derby, and his parents worked with Rev. Schreck to establish the Purley Chase New Church Center, a facility still popular for church activities of all kinds.

With a strong sense of duty, a consistent theme throughout his life, Keith enlisted in the war effort with the Royal Air Force and received his pilot officer wings in 1943. He had learned to fly on the Canadian prairies, his first taste of North America and first opportunity to visit Bryn Athyn. He flew B-24 Liberators and one of his first missions, as co-pilot, was to patrol the English Channel on D-day.

As the European theater wound down, he was re-assigned to Ceylon and

captained Liberators on long-range supply missions to support Allied guerillas in Japanese-occupied Malaya, involving round trips of more than 20 hours, non-stop, in part under the cover of darkness at altitudes as low as 1,000 feet to conserve fuel. He achieved the NCO rank of Flight Lieutenant, RAF Coastal Command, and was discharged in 1946.

Returning from active duty, Keith obtained an engineering degree from the University of Manchester, returning to work in the family business in 1949. In this time he met and married **Rachel Howard**, settling in Derby. In 1956 they moved the family to Toronto where Keith took over the Canadian operations of Costain Group, a British engineering firm with operations across the Commonwealth.

He built Costain from a mid-size Canadian home-builder into a leading North American residential and commercial development firm, taking it public in 1968 and then engineering the sale of the Costain stake to Brookfield in 1985. He stepped down from the Board a number of years later.

In addition to his corporate role, he represented the home building industry in Ottawa, the seat of the federal government of Canada, and across the country, serving as President of the National Homebuilders Association in 1973. He also served on the boards of Aetna Canada, Excelsior Life, The Carswell Company and a number of charitable organizations including the General Church in Canada and Olivet Church. He was for many years a Governor of the Corporation of Roy Thomson Hall and Massey Hall and a Board Director of The Toronto Symphony Orchestra.

Keith never exploited his business and philanthropic leadership roles and maintained an extremely low public profile after his retirement, eschewing accolades and honors. A man of integrity, determination, faith and wit, he never broadcast his beliefs nor forced them on others, always pushing himself to lead by example.

Keith was a student of New Church doctrines, particularly in how to apply them in everyday life. Three themes preoccupied him. First was the question of how to reconcile personal integrity with business. Second, he saw life in this world as a continuous series of conflicts caused by the existence of evil, influenced perhaps by the tumult of a World War and then the Cold War. His informed faith was to shun evils as sins with the help of the Lord. Finally, he saw that things (or people) did not have to be perfect to be useful. You worked with what you had, not what you wished you had, and progress could still be made toward the goal. That also meant looking for the good in people despite their flaws and encouraging them to improve, recognizing as he did his own failings.

Keith was at his best when quietly helping those around him. He was extremely effective at mentoring the young and deploying management

techniques to develop the skills of those who worked with him. He was a man of principle and action and deep faith in the mercy of the Lord.

Col. B. Dean Smith

Dean Smith was an Academy man. He grew up in a house next to de Charms Hall, spent his childhood roaming the Academy grounds, and attended the Boys School where he became a local football legend, winning the Robert W. Maxwell award for scholarship and play on the field before graduating in 1948. In later years, Dean served on the Executive Committee of the Sons of the Academy in 1966, was elected to the Academy Corporation in 1975, and served on its Board of Trustees from 1982 to 1991. His wife, **Catherine (Arrington)**, graduated from the Academy Girls School, and their four sons also graduated from the Boys School.

Dean was born in Bryn Athyn on November 20, 1929, and lived there until he went off to the U.S. Naval Academy, where he graduated in June 1953. He elected to take his commission as a Second Lieutenant in the U.S. Air Force, and embarked on a remarkable career that included flying multi-engine aircraft with the Military Air Transport Service, a stint in Japan with the Air Rescue Service, service in the Atlantic Missile Range, and participation in the GEMINI space program.

He worked at Air Force headquarters on the development of computer war-gaming programs, spent time at the George Washington University to obtain a Master's degree in Business Administration, and then served a tactical airlift tour of duty in Viet Nam. After serving as Chief of Weapons Development Plans for the Air Force and attending the Air Force War College, he ended his military career with a tour at the Office of the Joint Chiefs of Staff at the Pentagon, all of this while assisting Cathy with the upbringing of their four sons.

When Dean retired from the military in 1974, he made his home in the Washington Society, where he turned his considerable energy and talents to active support of the Academy, the General Church, and the Washington Society. He served on the General Church Board from 1973 to 1978. After he and Cathy built their home in Acton Park, they sent their young children to the budding Washington Society School. For many years Dean served on the Washington Society Board of Trustees, many as Vice Chairman. He also served as Vice President of Cranston Research for three years before starting his own business, Capital Safety Associates. Dean was active in local politics, as well as in the Military Order of the World Wars where he served in many leadership capacities, culminating in his election as its Commander in Chief in 1995 and 1996.

Col. Smith passed away on January 29, 2015, and was laid to rest at

Arlington National Cemetery with full military honors. Dean was a strong New Churchman throughout his career, bringing to his work, as well as to his family, his Church, and the Academy, a deep understanding and love of the doctrines of the Church and of their practical applications.

He was unafraid to speak out for what he knew was right, was a strong leader for the New Church, and was an unstinting supporter of the Academy. With all that, he was a man of great humor and gentleness, a story-teller, and a man unafraid to show his affection for his children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren, and particularly for his wife of 62 years, Catherine.

THE CHURCH IN ASIA

The following is from a year-end report and fund-raising appeal from the **Rev. Yong Jin**, pastor of the Philadelphia Korean New Church and regional pastor for Asia:

Philadelphia and California

The Philadelphia New Church continues to work diligently on our spiritual growth and has witnessed progress. This year we studied the Lord's Prayer and the laws of Divine Providence, with follow-up discussions of how to apply these gifts in our lives. As a result members have become closer to the Lord and have changed their attitudes toward others.

Our sister church in California is growing and sustaining its work under strong lay leadership.

The Rev. Yong Jin is retiring as pastor of the Philadelphia New Church in January and will serve as a teaching pastor. This is due to an increased need for him to spend time in Korea and China as regional pastor, as well as to meet with ongoing demands – such as translation projects – throughout the Asian churches as a whole.

Asia

This past October, 10 Asian ministers gathered in Korea. We shared friendship and engaged in professional development opportunities, with topics including researching and preaching, church management and caring for members, and attracting young people into the Church.

In 2016 there will be a regional clergy meeting in Tokyo with pastors from other parts of Asia as well as from Australia, New Zealand and India.

China

Tim, the first General Church minister in China, continues beautifully to direct his student care center. This program supports the poorest areas in China by offering education and New Church teachings. It has already been three years since Tim started this program with 12 students and now he has 54 students under his wing! In addition to the regular academics, they are learning New Church teachings and English on the weekends. Seventeen senior high school students are studying in Jiujiang and 37 junior and senior students study in Quanzhou.

Tim is preparing to open a public church under the name of Swedenborgian Society as a first step in Jiujiang, where members will meet and worship.

The New Church in China has also been working on translating and publishing the Writings, as well as uploading them onto the internet. This year the China New Church published *Heaven and Hell* and *True Christian Religion*, volume one, and is working on translating *Divine Love and Wisdom* and *Divine Providence*. One very exciting development has been a group of about 300 young people who meet online to discuss the Writings.

In October Rev. Jin visited China and the four cities where New Church people live. As a result he and Tim decided that there will be an annual gathering every October to bring these people together to discuss the Writings.

Japan

The Tokyo group, under the **Rev. Seiich Sakae**, continues to worship twice a month. The Hokkaido group, under the **Rev. Shiro Matsumoto**, continues to worship once a month. Since the Japanese groups are still quite small – in part due to the fact that fewer than 1% of the Japanese population is Christian – Japanese ministers and lay leaders have a small group that continues to gather and diligently discuss ways to grow the New Church in Japan.

One of the best ways this is happening is through translation work. Lay members, such as **Mr. Suzuki's** team, have been working on translating and publishing the Writings, which they have been able to do without any financial support from the General Church. The team has translated and published several books of the Writings and secondary books into Japanese every year.

Korea

The Korean New Church is relatively larger than the other Asian New Churches, with eight churches and three groups that sustain themselves without financial assistance for the minister from the General Church. For this reason they have begun to work on a self-supporting project – called the Korean Project – with the help of the General Church Healthy Church Match. The goal is to raise \$3 million and truly become a self-supporting church model.

This will be an exciting milestone for the Asian New Church to achieve. Once the project is completed it will serve as a support center for the Asian New Church Theological School, as well as the epicenter for research and further development of the Asian Mission. The Korean Project is projected to be completed in 2017.

At this point the Korean Church Theological School plans to ordain two more ministers into the first degree and the China New Church plans to ordain one minister into the second degree. It is also training two students for the ministry and one student for a missionary role.

Support

This letter concludes: “We want to express our gratitude for all of your continued love and support. We really cannot do the work without that love and support. Thank you in advance for your loving generosity and may the Lord’s presence in each of your lives be felt throughout this blessed season and into the New Year.”

If you would like to contribute to the work of the Church in Asia please send a check to:

Philadelphia Korean New Church
 Attn: Hwayeon Kim, Treasurer
 537 Anne Street
 Huntingdon Valley, PA 19006

KEMPTON NEW CHURCH SCHOOL EXPANSION

Bradley King

Since 1979, the Kempton New Church School has taught more than 300 students in the light of the Lord’s Threefold Word. We are blessed to be experiencing growing pains, both in the number of students and in the number of grades offered. We are completing the school by adding 11th and 12th grades.

If you are one who believes in the power of New Church education to better our world, if you are excited about a K-12 New Church school supporting the development of a new generation of the New Church, or if you want to know more about us and our commitment, come see us at www.KNCS.org. Click on “Expansion” and join in our future.

If you prefer a personal contact, School Expansion Fund Committee Representatives, **Chris Judson** (215-421-1375) and **Bradley King** (610-756-6343), are eager to talk to you.

“All instruction is simply an opening of the way; and as the way is opened . . . heavenly things flow in.” (*Arcana Coelestia* 1495)

NEW CHURCH TEEN WEEKEND

The General Church in Canada, along with the Carmel New Church in Kitchener, Ontario, and the Olivet Church in Toronto, sponsored a New Church Teen Weekend in mid-October in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

It had been several years since the event had been hosted in Pittsburgh, which is more centrally located for teens in the United States. In addition to Kitchener, Toronto and Pittsburgh, teens attended from Glenview, Illinois, Detroit, Michigan, and Kempton, Pennsylvania.

Leadership for the weekend was provided by: the **Rev. Pearse Frazier**, hosting pastor; the **Revs. Nathan Cole** and **Ron Schnarr** from Kitchener; **Naomi** and **John Reid** from Toronto; **Alan David**, Detroit; the **Rev. Brett Buick**, **Mark Wyncoll**, **Katrin Jungé**, **Bracken Brown** and **Jordan Cooper** from Kempton, plus many volunteers from Pittsburgh.

Forty-five teens attended the weekend, plus several others part time from Pittsburgh. Activities included:

- Trash clean-up at a local watershed park
- A class on “Good and Bad Authority and Love of Ruling”
- A community sponsored hayride and bonfire
- Games, a craft project and a movie, “God is Not Dead”
- A Sunday worship service led by Pearse Frazier and good-bye socializing

These weekends, which usually occur in early April and late October, are open to teenagers in 7th through 12th grades. The next will be hosted by Kitchener.



NEW PASTOR

The Rev. Mark D. Pendleton has been called and accepted as the new pastor of the Immanuel Church in Glenview, Illinois, where he has been serving as associate pastor for the past 13 years.

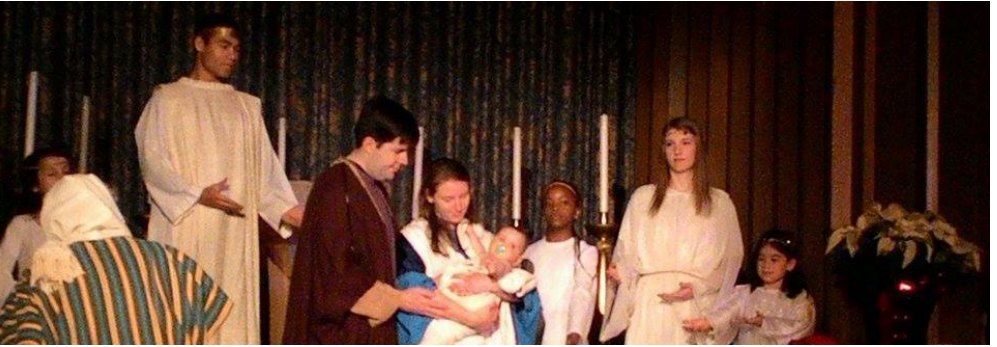
CHRISTMAS TABLEAUX AROUND THE CHURCH



Buccleuch, South Africa



Concord, Massachusetts



Olivet New Church, Toronto, Canada



Oak Arbor, Rochester, Michigan



Oak Arbor, Rochester, Michigan



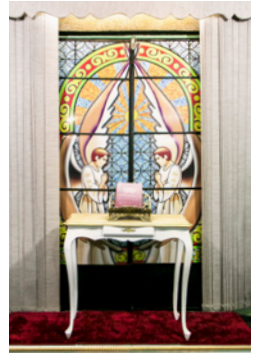
Colchester, England



Hurstville, Australia



Clergy and Theologs Gathered in Campo Grande



Campo Grande Chapel



Regional Clergy Meeting



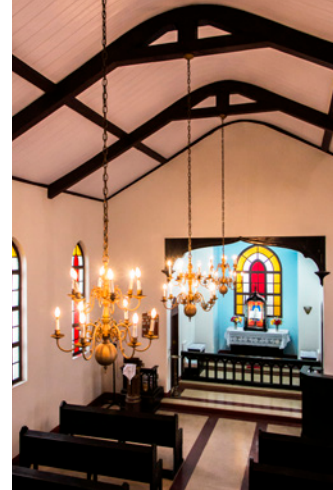
Group photo at Campo Grande



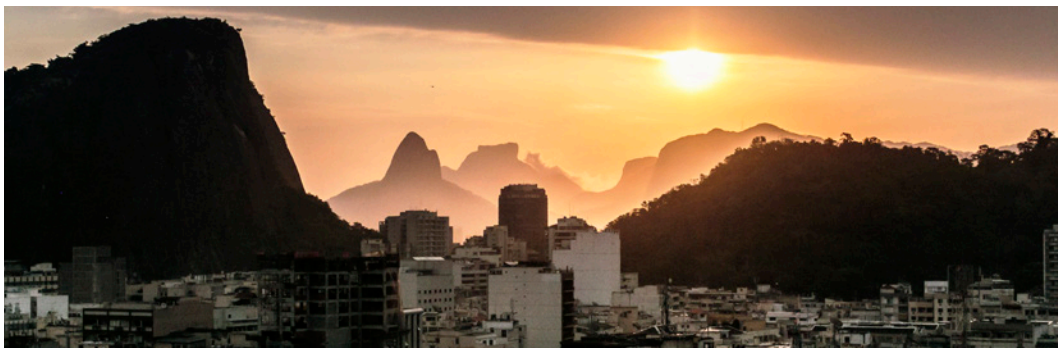
Sunday School Meeting in Campo Grande



Street in Curitiba



Fatima Church in Rio



The city of Rio de Janeiro at sunset



View of the Fatima Church



Garden in Curitiba, Brazil



After Eduardo's ordination



Left to right: Johny, Andy, and Eduardo



Fatima Church Bell Tower



Close up of the chancel at the Fatima Church in Rio



The TV news van where all the filming was edited for the newscast



Vittoria Woodill of Philadelphia's CBS affiliate doing her live tour of Cairwood Estate on the 11 p.m. newscast, December 16



A special display from Cairwood's dress collection



A special display from Cairwood's dress collection



Former intern and Cairwood volunteer Hannah Simons with guests



Fireplace mantel decorations



Visitors enjoying a display of Christmas cards

Life Lines

JANUARY

The first month of the year, January, is named after Janus, the Roman god of beginnings and endings, doorways and gates. He had two faces, one looking back to the past, the other looking forward into the future.

Looking back on the year just ended, marred by “wars and rumors of wars,” including violent attacks on civilians, may well make us anxious as we look forward and wonder what the new year will bring.

But there is another direction we can look – namely up, to the God whose providence is eternal and who watches over us every moment of every year.

The following is an account of a spiritual experience Swedenborg reported. It is reassuring and gives us reason to be hopeful when the world seems to be falling apart.

He says there was a crowd of many spirits about him making a noise that sounded “devoid of order.”

They were complaining that everything was going to destruction; for in that crowd nothing appeared consociated, and this made them fear destruction. They also supposed that it would be total, as is the case when such things happen.

But in the midst of them I perceived a soft sound, angelically sweet, having nothing in it that was out of order. Angelic choirs were there within, and the crowd of spirits devoid of order was without.

This angelic strain continued a long time; and I was told that it represented how the Lord rules confused and disorderly things which are without from what is peaceful in the midst, by which the disorderly things in the circumference are brought back into order, each from the error of its own nature. (*Spiritual Experiences* 5396)

Looking back at world history we see that there has always been plenty of noise and disorder. But we can also see, in the light of revelation, that within the outer world of conflict and turmoil there is another world, a world of peace and harmony, from which the soft voice of heaven is ever calling the world back into order.

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

(WEO)

WHERE WAS GOD IN PARIS?

When innocent people are wantonly killed – in the terrorist attacks in Paris in mid-November, the blowing up of a Russian airliner over Egypt’s Sinai Peninsula, and the shootings in San Bernardino, California, in early December – tests of faith are immediate and insistent. Where was God? Why does He allow such horrors to happen?

We are blessed to know from the Writings that evil is permitted by God for the sake of our freedom and that nothing is permitted that cannot be bent toward good. But amid the shock and mourning of the grisly aftermath it is understandable that even religious people can wonder about God’s love and presence with us.

In the wake of a devastating earthquake in Lisbon in 1755, the famous French writer and philosopher Voltaire wrote his withering satirical novel, *Candide*, mocking those who found comfort in God. He looked for God amid the chaos and found Him wanting. But God’s love and providence began leading to good outcomes all over Europe. That’s where God was and is – not in the tragedy but in the response to it. We see it all the time – if we look for it.

Today it is still encouraging to witness the instincts of the grieving: offering comfort and kindness, praying and going to churches, lighting candles and creating memorials of flowers. People turn to God and find that even when the pain is raw and spirits are broken, He is there, already bending hearts toward good.

We often hear relatives of those who have died suddenly who instinctively are comforted by the confident faith that they are “with God in heaven.” The father of a young woman who died tragically with her husband in 1996 when their plane blew up after takeoff from New York – on a dream trip to Paris – said among his tears: “We wake up to a sunrise, but they wake up to a sunrise many times more glorious. We know where they are and we will see them again.”

We have the comforting assurance in the Writings that: “When we suffer physically, our soul does not suffer, it merely feels distress. After victory God relieves that distress and washes it away like tears from our eyes.” (*True Christian Religion* 126) We also are told that when people die violently they awaken in the spiritual world to a sphere of absolute love and peace, with no memory of fear, suffering, violence, pain or terror.

We got a glimpse of God's presence in the midst of terror in the testimony of a Paris survivor – Isobel Bowdery, a 22-year-old South African. She was in the concert venue Bataclan when terrorists burst in, quickly massacring more than 80 people and holding others hostage before being killed themselves.

“Shocked and alone,” she said, “I pretended to be dead for over an hour, lying among people who could see their loved ones lying motionless. Holding my breath, trying not to move, not cry – not giving those men the fear they longed to see.”

She described what went through her mind as she “lay down in the blood of strangers, waiting for a bullet to end my mere 22 years.”

But she was not consumed by the horror. Instead, “I envisioned every face that I have ever loved and whispered, ‘I love you,’ over and over again, reflecting on the highlights of my life. Wishing that those I loved knew just how much, wishing that they knew that no matter what happened to me, to keep believing in the good in people, not to let those men win.”

She expressed gratitude to all the strangers who showed her kindness during and after the ordeal – who “made me believe that this world has the potential to be better, to never let this happen again.”

And for those who were not as lucky as she, and for their loved ones, she offered this: “I am so sorry. There's nothing that will fix the pain. I feel privileged to be there for their last breaths, truly believing that I would join them. I promise that their last thoughts were not on the animals that caused this. It was thinking of the people they loved.”

So where was God? He was with Isobel and all those who died and suffered in the carnage around her, already bending hearts to goodness with His love.

The terrorists claimed a small, fleeting victory. But God's love always wins. Always.

(BMH)

THE GOSPEL OF LOVE

In the wake of terror the inevitable plaintive appeals to “love one another” often are dismissed as hopelessly naïve. Indeed, the love that swept over Isobel Bowdery in the very face of terror did not protect her or anyone else in that concert hall from the terrorists' hatred and bullets.

So, we wonder, what can we do as individuals against this existential threat? We know that we are commanded to love the Lord and love our neighbor above all things, but how does that help in the face of evil?

We put our hopes in the military and police to protect us, but our prayer is to the Lord: “Deliver us from evil.” His love and providence are our greatest protectors, even if they do not make us immune to tragedy. And the way we

mirror that love in our lives helps to make a difference.

When he was leading the fight against discrimination and oppression, the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., chose not to use violence but love. “Darkness cannot drive out darkness,” he said. “Only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that.”

We are all created to reflect the Lord’s love in our lives, not always on the grandest stage but in the quiet, private moments of our lives – with kindness, with service, with love. Our tiny spheres of influence join with others to create a force for change. Mother Teresa was a model. She lived her life among the world’s outcasts in Calcutta and was a heroine just because she lived what she believed. “We can do no great things,” she said. “All we can do is small things with great love.”

As caring, concerned individuals we have no direct power against terrorists, but put our trust in the Lord. Helen Keller understood: “No matter from what angle Jesus started, He came back to this fact, that He entrusted the reconstruction of the world, not to wealth or caste or power or learning, but to the better instincts of the human race: to the nobler ideals and sentiments of people; to love, which is the mover of the will and the dynamic force of action. He turned His words every conceivable way and did every possible work to convince doubters that love – good or evil – is the life of their life, the fuel of their thoughts, the breath of their nostrils, their heaven or their destruction. There was no exception or modification whatever in His holy, awesome, supreme Gospel of Love.”

(BMH)

LET US PRAY

The day after the carnage in San Bernardino, the tabloid *New York Daily News* shrieked on its front page, in four-inch letters: “**GOD IS NOT FIXING THIS.**” The story mocked the call of some to pray for victims and their families, and sided with those who were beating the drum for gun control to combat terrorism.

These are really separate issues and are not mutually exclusive. We certainly need the prayers – turning to God in the face of evil – as well as solutions.

The lead sentence in the Daily News story – which sparked immediate controversy – was: “Prayers aren’t working.” An accompanying column was headlined: “Prayers don’t stop bullets.”

Still the instinct of those dealing with the terror was to call on God. One woman trapped and hiding in a closet as the horror played out around her pleaded simply on her cell phone: “Pray for me.”

We are blessed to know how God’s love, mercy and providence work; to

know that as we live in freedom and in equilibrium between heaven and hell, there will always be evil in this world; to know that all of our challenges are fundamentally spiritual; and to know that there is real hope in prayer – that God, in His providence, is “fixing this” and leading to a good end.

I have been driven to my knees by the overwhelming conviction that I had nowhere else to go. (Abraham Lincoln)

Hear my prayer, O God; give ear to the words of my mouth. For strangers are risen up against me, and oppressors seek after my soul: they have not set God before them. (Psalm 54:2,3)

(BMH)

SWEDENBORG THE INVISIBLE

The intellectual seeds of the modern worldview – scientific, philosophic and theological – were planted during Swedenborg’s lifetime, some by him. (I hasten to add, although I guess it’s hardly necessary, that *some* modern attitudes and ideas are antithetical to Swedenborg’s.)

New Church people might wish that Swedenborg would get more credit, but I think it is providential that he remains a hidden, behind-the-scene source of ideas which are now generally accepted and recognized as fundamentally important.

The very way I have stated this point shows why I think it is a good thing Swedenborg is not better known – namely, the references to *his* ideas, *his* influence, *his* importance. Discussion of Swedenborg’s place in modern thought inevitably focuses on *him*. And this is something that those who are actually familiar with him know that he, more than anyone else, would object to most strenuously.

When it came to his theological Writings, he went out of his way to deflect attention from himself as the source of the truths revealed in them. The first and lengthiest work, the 12-volume *Arcana Coelestia*, was published anonymously (which would seem to make “Swedenborg’s masterwork,” as it has sometimes been called, an unintentionally ironic accolade).

The distinction between “Swedenborg’s ideas” and “truths revealed by the Lord through Swedenborg” was crucial for him and remains so for us.

(WEO)

A ONE-WORD OXYMORON

The term “Swedenborgian” might be called a one-word oxymoron; a self-contradiction. It implies that we follow Swedenborg, and yet Swedenborg

himself objected to that term (which was occasionally used even during his lifetime), saying that the religion of the New Church is Christianity, purified, clarified and renewed by the Lord by means of the new revelation Swedenborg was called upon to publish – which was the product of the Author’s wisdom, not that of the publisher.

(WEO)

HUMANISM

“Humanism” (as that word is generally used) is another example of a one-word oxymoron. It exalts human goodness while at the same time denying its Divinely Human source. It exalts human reason while at the same time denying the Divine Wisdom that makes human reason possible. *Human* rationality emerges at the nexus of spiritual and natural knowledge, and consists in relating those two levels of reality (computing their “ratio”). To ignore or deny the spiritual half of the equation derails the train of reason before it ever leaves the station.

(WEO)

FROM HERE TO ETERNITY

The books of Bill Bryson – such as *A Walk in the Woods*, *One Summer*, *Notes from a Small Island*, *The Lost Continent* and *A Short History of Nearly Everything* – have been delighting readers for years. He mixes keen observations with endearing wit, and educates along the way with relevant bits of biology, history, philosophy and science.

In his charming paean to Australia – *In a Sunburned Country* – he offers a wonderful perspective on creation and eternity.

On the western edge of Australia – in Shark Bay, some 800 miles north of Perth – he went in search of stromatolites, hardly a must-see in tourist brochures. Indeed, stromatolites have been found in only three places on earth and were not even discovered in this treasure of the dawn of creation until 1954.

“Nowhere in any direction,” he writes, “was there a sign of human intrusion except directly ahead where a nifty wooden walkway zigzagged for 150 feet or so out into the bay over some low, dark, primeval-looking masses that didn’t quite break the water’s calm surface. I had found my living stromatolites.”

He describes stromatolites as “primitive, slightly undulant platforms – rather like very old, poorly laid asphalt.” So what’s the attraction?

Well, it seems they release tiny bubbles of oxygen through primitive algae-like microorganisms called cyanobacteria, which live on the surface of rocks – about 3 billion of them per square yard. They take in bits of carbon

monoxide and, with a splash of sunshine, emit puffs of oxygen. Each puff is not significant “but get enough stromatolites respiring away over a long enough period, and you can change the world. For 2 billion years this was all the life there was on earth, but in that time the stromatolites raised the oxygen level in the atmosphere to 20 percent – enough to allow the development of other, more complex life-forms.”

Imagine that – 2 billion years to get us from primeval nothingness to the highly developed civilization we have today. And all during this time of apparent neglect, “the Spirit of God hovered upon the face of the waters.” (*Genesis 1:2*)

Bryson also notes that the native Aborigines have been in Australia for “perhaps 45,000 years, perhaps 60,000, but certainly before there were modern humans in the Americas or Europe.”

And those primate aborigines of 45,000 or 60,000 years ago – so forgotten by history but with descendants living similar lives today in the Outback – still live on in the spiritual world.

We sometimes wonder where the Church and the Academy might be in 100 or 500 years, and what our country and world might look like then. But another 2 billion years!

And while our lives may seem long enough in this world – especially for those nearing the end – we will all still be living in the spiritual world 45,000 and 60,000 years from now, but without any concept of passing days, years and millennia.

To the Lord, it is all a seamless continuum – 2 billion years in the past, 2 billion years in the future – without any sense of time constraining His vision. To us it is all just mind boggling.

Eternity sure is a long time.

(BMH)

COUNT ME IN

The word “atheist,” I read recently, originally meant people in ancient times (especially Christians) who didn’t worship the pagan gods of Greece and Rome. Christians were the original atheists! I see an opportunity here to borrow some of the cachet of an increasingly popular movement in our time. When asked to bow down to the secular gods of our age – nature, science, “progress” -- I’ll just say, “no thanks, I’m an atheist.”

(WEO)

TWO VIEWS OF OTHER PEOPLE

In his play *No Exit* the existentialist writer Sartre says: “hell is other people.” He claimed that what he meant wasn’t as bad as that translation from French makes it sound. In any case, there’s a certain dismal truth in it.

Hell is an overweening love of self that views other people with contempt and as enemies. So yes, for those consumed by love of self, the presence of other people is a perpetual torment.

On the other hand, heaven is also other people. Those who find happiness in the happiness of others love having other people around because they see the goodness and beauty in them, and delight in following the example set by the Lord, who said He came not to be served, but to serve others. (*Matthew 20:27*)

When heaven speaks the message is clear and uplifting: “love one another as I have loved you.” (*John 13:34, 15:12*)

(WEO)

PROJECTION

How we see things, especially other people, is colored by our own spiritual state. Here is a striking example from Scripture:

After their father Israel died, Joseph’s brothers were worried that Joseph would hate them and pay them back for the evil they had done to him years before when they sold him into slavery. (*Genesis 50:15*) They should have known better, for when they first came to Egypt seeking food and were brought into his presence, he forgave them, and was so moved by compassion for them that he wept. (*Genesis 45:2-5*)

But once their father was gone, they worried that Joseph secretly hated them and would avenge himself upon them. They begged forgiveness, and again Joseph wept upon hearing their words, and “comforted them and spoke kindly to them.” He told them: “You meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, in order to . . . save many people alive. Do not be afraid. I will provide for you and your little ones.” And he did. (*Genesis 50: 17-21*)

He didn’t deny that they had done wrong, but there was no hate in Joseph. Why did they think there was? *Arcana Coelestia* 6558 says:

“(It was) not that Joseph rejected them, but that they rejected Joseph. There is attributed to the internal (which is ‘Joseph’) that which is of the external (his ‘brethren’); this is according to the appearance in the same way as hatred and revenge are attributed to Jehovah, although they pertain to man.”

Whenever we are inclined to judge another’s motives harshly we should

ask ourselves whether we might be projecting a quality onto their “internal” which is actually coming from our own “external.”

(WEO)

POINTING THE WAY

David Brooks, author of the best-sellers *The Road to Character* and *The Social Animal*, wrote a column for *The New York Times* recently on “The Big University” and how it has lost its way.

“Many American universities,” he wrote, “were founded as religious institutions, explicitly designed to cultivate their students’ spiritual and moral natures. But over the course of the 20th century they became officially and effectively secular.

“Religious rituals like mandatory chapel services were dropped. Academic research and teaching replaced character formation at the core of the university’s mission.

“Administrators and professors dropped spiritual language and moral prescription either because they didn’t know what to say or because they didn’t want to alienate any part of their diversifying constituencies.”

As a result, he said, “Universities are more professional and glittering than ever, but in some ways there is an emptiness deep down. Students are taught how to do things, but many are not forced to reflect on why they should do them or what we are here for.”

When this was posted online a reader wrote in the comment section: “What Brooks describes is what can be found at our better small religiously affiliated colleges today. Big universities have all but abandoned the pursuits that spark the human spirit and link us to the sublime. Teens coming out of high school should be encouraged to explore these small colleges and seek out ‘name’ universities for graduate level work, after a foundation has been set in liberal arts.”

She could have been writing about Bryn Athyn College. A liberal arts education infused with spiritual values to guide students throughout their lives – and to eternity – is the unique niche of the College.

The hope, as the College reaches out to attract more students looking for such an “old-fashioned” education with a whole new approach to life, is that they will land on the College’s website – www.brynathyn.edu – and be drawn in by the Mission Statement:

“Bryn Athyn College of the New Church serves as an intellectual center for all who desire to engage in higher education enriched, guided and structured by the study of the Old Testament, New Testament and the theological writings of Emanuel Swedenborg. This education challenges students to develop spiritual

purpose, to think broadly and critically from a variety of perspectives, and to build intellectual and practical skills. The ultimate purpose is to enhance students' civil, moral and spiritual lives, and to contribute to human spiritual welfare."

This is "The Road to Character" and Bryn Athyn College has not lost its way.

(BMH)

YOU'RE WELCOME

I heard a man on talk radio saying that he had been raised in a very religious family but had turned against religion as an adult himself. Why? Because he heard too many Christians condemning others to hell because they were not "saved," had not been baptized, didn't believe in Jesus, belonged to the wrong religion, or had no religion at all. This, he thought, is not what religion should be all about. It had no attraction for him.

One of the most comforting teachings of the New Church – and one of the most appealing for visitors and newcomers – is that everyone is born for heaven and that everyone who loves God and the neighbor can enter.

The image in *Revelation* is reassuring: the Holy City has 12 gates – numerous ways for any and all to enter heaven who have loved God and lived lives of charity and conscience.

And that is what religion is really all about.

(BMH)

A CORRECTION AND APOLOGY

The quotation from *Isaiah* 11:1-3 on page 618 of our November-December issue was erroneous, substituting "her" for "Him" and "she" for "He" throughout. The original language is unambiguous and the passage is a prophecy of the Lord's own advent and refers to Him. As spiritual editor I should have spotted this error.

The wording was obviously intended to communicate the Lord's love for women, which is a good message, but as a direct quote from Scripture the translation of the Hebrew is simply inaccurate. Every translation I have found has "he" or "He" as the pronoun. Here is how the passage appears in the *New King James Bible*:

There shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse,
And a Branch shall grow out of his roots.
The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him,
The Spirit of wisdom and understanding,
The Spirit of counsel and might,

The Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord.
His delight *is* in the fear of the Lord,
And He shall not judge by the sight of His eyes,
Nor decide by the hearing of His ears. (*Isaiah 11:1-3*)

(WEO)

Event Announcement

*All are cordially invited to attend the second annual:
- Book Expo 2016 -*

Spirituality, Science, and Swedenborgian Theory Throughout History

April 16, 2016, 9 am to 4 pm
Bryn Athyn College, Bryn Athyn, PA

Subjects:

Spirituality and Science, The New Church,
Swedenborg's Scientific Works, Collateral works

From last year: April 11, 2015 Bryn Athyn College hosted, in its beautiful facilities, an open-to-the-public Book Expo to celebrate and explore **Science, Spirituality, and Swedenborgian Theory throughout History**. Hundreds of books of a vast variety were available and speakers were engaging attendees throughout the day. The theme of the Book Expo, via books and talks, was to follow spirituality weaving through ancient history, sciences, philosophy, medicine, naturalism, abolition of slavery, child labor rights, covering new spiritual paradigms, envisioning the afterlife, Swedenborg's works (scientific and theological) and much more.

2015 talks can be seen by searching for "NCAP Swedenborg" at [youtube.com](https://www.youtube.com).

Publishers and Sponsors:

Bryn Athyn College Press, Swedenborg Foundation,
Swedenborg Scientific Association, Cole Foundation,
General Church Publications, New Christian Bible Study, and more.

Books can be purchased directly at the Book Expo, the Cathedral Bookstore, and [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com)

OAK ARBOR SCHOOL TEACHING POSITION

Oak Arbor is accepting applications for a one-year, full-time teaching position for the 2016-17 school year. The successful applicant will be responsible to cover core courses in third and fourth grades five days a week. Additional duties include attendance at faculty meetings and designated school events.

Minimum requirements for applicants are:

1. A commitment to teach content in light of the teachings of the New Church
2. Teaching from and about the principles of the New Church
3. A Bachelor's Degree, preferably in elementary education.

We are looking for a motivated individual who enjoys working with young children and would like to join a committed team of colleagues.

Please send inquiries or résumé with a cover letter to the Rev. Derek Elphick, School Director, 495 Oak Arbor Circle West, Rochester, MI 48306: email – delphick@oakarbor.org.

Applications due by January 31, 2016.



OFFICES Bryn Athyn, PA 19009

PUBLISHED BY General Church of the New Jerusalem

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SUBSCRIPTIONS New Church Life, Box 708, Bryn Athyn, PA
\$30 for any address, \$5.00 a single copy

TELEPHONE 267-502-4990

New Church Life

Published bimonthly by
the General Church of the New Jerusalem
Box 743, Bryn Athyn, PA 19009
U.S.A.

www.newchurch.org
www.newchurchlife.org
January/February 2016

NONPROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
LANGHORNE, PA
PERMIT NO. 81