

NEW CHURCH *Life*

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

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2022



*As **God** reaches out to touch Adam in this famous Michelangelo painting in the Sistine Chapel, so He reaches out to us – **and asks us to stay connected.*** (Page 393)

NEW CHURCH LIFE: SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2022

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New Church Life

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

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In This Issue

Editorials (page 370) include:

- **Propaganda:** This word often has a negative connotation but repetition of truth is useful and necessary in our lives, from church services to New Church education. “This is how formal religion works, attempting to create an environment that leads people to hear, accept and love what the Word teaches in the belief that this will change our lives.”
- **Lost and Found:** King Josiah stood out among a long line of corrupt kings of Judah because he ordered a restoration of the temple in Jerusalem and rediscovered the forgotten Book of the Law. But history and our own lives are replete with examples of forgetting the Lord and His Word and being called to “find” Him again – to shine a new light of truth so that we may really see and follow Him.

Three lengthy but very useful letters contribute to the discussion of gender and sexuality issues in the church. Are we “Hiding Our Eyes” to the evils of profanation? Let us apply the context of “The Lord’s ‘Plain Teachings’ and the Lord’s Love.” And “A Vision for the Church” that is bold and challenging. (Page 378)

In a sermon, *Touched by the Lord*,” the Rev. Philip Schnarr notes: “Although our senses bombard us with data which sometimes can seem overwhelming, the ones we choose to embrace, foster and so love are the ones which will govern our circle of relationships and connections to eternity. . . . So let us get in touch and stay in touch with the Lord: read His Word, talk to Him in prayer, and do our best to touch the lives of others with kindness and helpfulness.” (Page 393)

The Lord not only sees the future but knows our future and guides us through it, all the while leaving us in freedom. The Rev. Lou Synnestvedt says in a sermon: “The Lord has us in mind from moment to moment. He is not over there with other people while we are here all by ourselves lacking the care

and direction of God. He has thoughts for our future: a future of peace and hope.” (Page 399)

The Rev. Glenn “Mac” Frazier offers a report on the General Church Council of the Clergy Meetings in Bryn Athyn in June – the first in years since the covid pandemic. These meetings came at a time of unrest in the church over gender and sexuality issues and the church’s teachings on marriage. “We spent a lot of time,” he says, “looking in fine detail about what the Word says about marriage, about sex, and about ideals vs. permitted accommodations. And while there are disagreements, it is my impression that the doctrinal points where we all fundamentally agree are far more common than the areas where we differ.” (Page 404)

Writing From the Bishop’s Office, the Rt. Rev. David Lindrooth asks, “What is Truth?” We go to the Word, of course, for answers. But “going to the Word, looking for the truths that will lead us to heaven isn’t always easy. We don’t always see what we want to see when we are thinking from our natural selves.” We must allow the light of heaven to illuminate and lead our thinking. (Page 408)

The Rev. Christopher Barber spent part of the summer on a pilgrimage in England and Sweden, “In Search of Swedenborg” among historic places of his life, thereby discovering the transcendent “power of place.” (Page 411)

Dr. Dan Synnestvedt, Head of the Philosophy Program at Bryn Athyn College, reports on an Institute for Swedenborgian Studies Seminar, held at the College in April. “This Institute is discussing spirituality and Swedenborg from an academic perspective and very, very few people are doing this” – so far. There is a lot of work to be done to make the academic world more aware of Swedenborg and the impact of his work. (Page 417)

The Rev. Dr. Erik Sandstrom explains “Why We Worship”: because it is required by the Lord for our own spiritual welfare’s sake. “As such, it is separate from regeneration or rebirth – the pathway to heaven.” (Page 434)

Church News (page 442) includes:

- An update from Bishop Peter Buss Jr. on the Task Force response to an open letter and petition related to issues of gender and sexuality in the church
- A report on the General Church Board of Directors June meeting
- A report on the annual meeting of the General Church Corporation
- Charter Day preview
- The outlook for Bryn Athyn College in the new academic year
- Enrollment figures and staff changes for the Academy Secondary Schools
- The British Academy Summer School back after a two-year pause for covid
- A new experimental worship service in Bryn Athyn
- Impressive progress at the New Christian Bible Study website

***New Church Life* in Large Print**

Thanks to a generous and thoughtful contribution we are able to offer large print issues of *New Church Life*. If you would like to receive your copy in large print, please contact Susan Wright, General Church Database Director: 267-502-4990 or susan.wright@anc-gc.org.

Editorials

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

PROPAGANDA

Propaganda is a remarkably powerful tool. The war in Ukraine has shown us all how even the most blatant falsehoods can be persuasive to millions of people if they are repeated often and widely enough. The Writings are emphatic about the value of a free press, and yet even with a free press the information that is most widely publicized can amount to one-sided propaganda. It is good for all of us to look to varying sources for information and to see things from different points of view.

What we may not realize is that we absorb whatever it is that we frequently hear and read. Even though we feel that we can tell what is true and what is not, or what leads to good and what does not, we can be deceived. Constant exposure changes our thinking. The Lord says something similar in Isaiah about the effect that the Word has on us:

For as the rain comes down, and the snow from heaven, and do not return there, but water the earth, and make it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall My Word be that goes forth from My mouth; it shall not return to Me void, but it shall accomplish what I please, and it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it. (Isaiah 55:10, 11)

Just as the rain and snow come down from heaven and water the earth, so the Lord's Word is continually coming down from Him and having its effect. If we willingly expose ourselves to it we will be affected by it. That is, we will be affected in a good way, not like propaganda, but as something that frees us from the effects of propaganda.

While the mechanism may seem similar, the effect of the Word on our thinking is completely different. The thing that makes it different is that the Word is directly from the Lord, and its truths hold His love within them. In

our minds they are what the Writings call “*vessels receptive of the good of love from the Divine.*” (Arcana Coelestia 10099) This means that when we are exposed to them, and especially when we believe, love and do them, the angels associated with them affect everything about our lives in positive ways. It improves our judgment, it softens our heart, it inclines us to love and help other people, it makes us free.

This is how formal religion works, attempting to create an environment that leads people to hear, accept and love what the Word teaches in the belief that this will change our lives. This is also why we have New Church schools, summer camps, and similar things, where children and adults can learn these things in an environment that is loving, and that encourages moral, kind and useful behavior.

The Lord’s words have a mission and purpose, and in Isaiah 55 He is saying that this mission will be accomplished and will prosper. He compares His Word to the water cycle, falling as rain or snow from the sky, watering the earth and making it bring forth and bud. We know that this water then evaporates and returns to the sky, to repeat the cycle. The Lord’s words also return to Him, but He says that they will not return to Him “*void*” or without doing anything. He says, they “*will accomplish what I please.*” When they return to Him they will return to Him in the form of love, our love for Him and for one another. What they accomplish is the happiness of humanity, a heaven from the human race, a kingdom of uses. Our topic here is how this happens.

The Word is not propaganda

We are told that the Word of the Lord has unspeakable power.

By the Word of the Lord the heavens were made, and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth. (Psalm 33.6)

Scarcely anyone has any other idea of Divine Truth than this – a word or utterance issuing from a speaker’s mouth and transmitted into the air. This idea about Divine Truth leads to the notion that ‘the Word’ means simply a command, so that all things that have been made exist solely because a command has been delivered, not because of some reality that has come forth from the Lord’s Divine. But the Divine Truth going forth from the Lord is the ultimate reality and essential being from which all things derive their existence. Every form of what is good and true owes its existence to this. (Arcana Coelestia 5272)

In short, Divine Truth holds all power within itself, so completely

| *that it is power itself. (Arcana Coelestia 8200)*

This is the reality, but this is not necessarily the way that it seems to us.

In *Genesis 15* Abram complains to the Lord that he has no children, and the Lord reassures him that he will. The meaning is that it often seems that the truth does not bear fruit, and that genuine goodness will not come from what the Lord teaches in the Word. (*Arcana Coelestia 1797-1800*) But the Lord reassures us that it will. He said to Abram:

“Look now toward heaven and count the stars if you are able to number them.” And He said to him, “So shall your descendants be.” And he believed in the LORD, and He accounted it to him for righteousness.” (*Genesis 15:4*)

That is, the truth will bear fruit in goodness so great that we can't even count it. It is important for us to believe in it. This is why Luke begins his gospel the way that he does.

Repeated reassurance

Luke begins his Gospel with the explanation that he is going to set out an “*orderly account*” of what happened. He says that he has had a good understanding, a “*perfect understanding*” of everything about it from the very first, “*just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the Word delivered them to us.*” He then proceeds to tell us the story “*that you may know the certainty of those things in which you were instructed.*”

Notice that Luke is not telling Theophilus anything that he thinks that he doesn't already know. He is reinforcing what he has been told “*that you may know the certainty of those things in which you were instructed.*” The truth is that the things that we believe require constant reinforcement.

When we attend church services or doctrinal classes, or read directly from the Word or collateral literature, we often have the thought that we will learn something, or that we will hear or read something new. Yet we often don't hear or read new things. We hear the same things over and over again. This can even be irksome, and yet there is value in things that are repeated. In a recent Wall Street Journal podcast a political commentator named Yoram Hazony points out:

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

He is saying that the things that are stated in public “*constantly and repeat-*

edly” are the things that are “honored and endorsed.” This is true whether these things are pure propaganda or the truth itself. In the church we continually remind people of the things that we see as true and valuable. By contrast, if there are significant ideas that used to be mentioned often but no longer are, we may wonder if they are still believed.

It is one thing, for example, to know that this church, the General Church of the New Jerusalem, is founded on the belief that the theological Writings of Emanuel Swedenborg are Divine revelation and are authoritative in all doctrinal matters. It is another thing to hear this stated repeatedly and endorsed in times when there are doubts about it. Points of emphasis in any organization will tend to change over time. If we are not reminded of this founding principle, we may slip into the belief that other factors may be of equal value in discussing the issues of the day.

The point of Luke’s introduction to his Gospel is to reassure people about the truth of what they have heard. Similarly, Swedenborg frequently asserts that what he is writing is the truth. One of the key assertions of the Heavenly Doctrine is that it is composed of “*spiritual truths rationally understood that are advanced by the Michaels of whom the New Church is formed.*” (*Apocalypse Revealed* 564) By “*rationally understood*” it means that it can be fully explained so that it can be understood and believed.

The “*single evil*” that has afflicted every church

Belief, however, is not an easy thing, and the lack of it is said to be the “*single evil*” that has afflicted every church from the beginning. We read:

A single evil afflicted not only the earliest church, before the Flood, but also the ancient church, after the Flood, and the Jewish church, and then the (Christian) church or the church among non-Jews that came after the Lord’s arrival into the world, just as it afflicts the modern church. It is the evil of not believing the Lord or the Word but trusting oneself and one’s senses. The result is an absence of faith, and when faith is absent, so is love for others – a situation that leads to all falsity and evil. (Arcana Coelestia 231)

Love is always the most important thing, but the lack of belief takes love away, and prevents it from being implanted. What’s more, the passage continues:

Conditions are much worse today than they once were. People can now employ knowledge unavailable to our ancestors in justifying the skepticism bred by their senses. In doing so, they produce so great a darkness that it could never be described. (Arcana Coelestia

| 232)

That is, our confidence in science has become so great that we want to employ it in answering moral and ethical questions, where it sheds no light. It leads us to be skeptical of the teachings of the Word, and to ignore spiritual questions altogether.

People's desire to rely on sensory evidence or secular knowledge when investigating religious mysteries caused the fall of the earliest church. But more than that, it causes the fall of every church, because it breeds not only falsities but also wickedness in life. (Arcana Coelestia 127)

It breeds wickedness in our lives because science doesn't concern itself with moral issues, especially when their harm is not easy to demonstrate. So, it is important to believe in what the Word teaches:

The Word is the one and only teacher of how a person should live in the world in order to be happy for evermore. (Arcana Coelestia 8939)

When the Lord promises that His Word will not return to Him “void, but it shall accomplish what I please,” it is this happiness that He is referring to. That is, He is promising that in the future people will understand and believe, they will do as He teaches, and they will find happiness. This can be true for every one of us. While there are many obstacles to belief, and while it sometimes seems as though few people actually do believe, the future is in the Lord's hands. His sheep hear His voice, and He knows them, and they follow Him. Abram worried about having an heir, but the Lord showed him the stars in the heavens, and he was reassured, and he believed Him. Not propaganda, but free choice.

(JFS)

LOST AND FOUND

L*The Second Book of Kings* tells the story of Josiah, who assumed the throne of Judah at age eight, following a succession of corrupt kings who “did evil in the sight of the Lord” and turned their people to paganism. Josiah was troubled by all this and ordered a restoration of the temple in Jerusalem. A high priest came to him and said they had “found the Book of the Law in the House of the Lord.” Josiah was so distraught that the Book of the Law – the Word of the Lord – had been neglected and forgotten that he rent his clothes.

“Great is the wrath of the Lord that is aroused against us,” he said, “because our fathers have not obeyed the words of this book.” Josiah restored true wor-

ship in the land and made a covenant with the Lord to follow His commandments “with all his heart and with all his soul. And all the people took their stand for the covenant.” (*2 Kings 23:3*)

This reads, of course, like ancient history, distant and irrelevant, but like everything else in the Word it speaks to our own lives. How well we know when we have “forgotten the Book of the Law” and just “did that which was right in our own eyes.” We have been there – with the Children of Israel, with the guilt and regret, with the promises to do better, and with the backsliding. And we witness the enduring challenges. Josiah died in battle at age 39 and was replaced by his son, Jehoahaz, who quickly forgot the Book of the Law again, and the example of his own father, and – like the rest of his ancestors – returned to doing “evil in the sight of the Lord.”

This story of the lost Book of the Law still echoes in our culture. In 1983 the great Russian writer and philosopher Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn (*Gulag Archipelago, One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*), said while accepting an award in Philadelphia: “More than half a century ago, while I was still a child, I recall hearing a number of older people offering the following explanation for the great disasters that had befallen Russia: ***Men have forgotten God; that is why all this has happened.*** Since then I have spent well-nigh 50 years working on the history of our Revolution; in the process I have read hundreds of books, collected hundreds of personal testimonies, and have already contributed eight volumes of my own toward the effort of clearing away the rubble left by the upheaval. But if I were asked today to formulate as concisely as possible the main cause of the ruinous Revolution that swallowed up some 60 million of our people, I could not put it more accurately than to repeat: ***Men have forgotten God; that is why all this has happened.***”

Earlier this year, Cardinal Timothy Dolan of New York repeated the refrain: “Simply put, we’re in trouble because we as a people have forgotten God.”

Solzhenitsyn saw “the failings of human consciousness, deprived of its Divine dimension, (as a) determining factor in all the major crimes of this century.” He traced it back to World War I, when Europe, “bursting with health and abundance, fell into a rage of self-mutilation which could not but sap its strength for a century or more – and perhaps forever.” The only possible explanation, he felt, was “a mental eclipse among the leaders of Europe due to their lost awareness of a Supreme Power above them.”

Cardinal Dolan was responding to a similar lapse pervasive in our lives that not only forgets the Book of the Law but is openly hostile to religion and faith as shapers of our destiny. This is an inevitable consequence of the Last Judgment and the decline of the traditional churches. The hope and vision of the New Jerusalem descending from God out of heaven have never been more insistent.

But we are cheered by the way the Lord leads through His providence. One inspiring example is the story of John Bigelow, a prominent American journalist, lawyer and statesman in the mid-1800s. He was fiercely anti-slavery in this run-up to the Civil War and traveled to Haiti to investigate how this nation of former slaves was coping with self-government. There he would have a remarkable spiritual experience that would shape the rest of his life, told in his wonderful book: *The Bible That Was Lost and Is Found*.

Soon after his arrival, Haiti was devastated by yellow fever, which wiped out all but two of the crew who had brought him there. He escaped to St. Thomas but was stranded there when cholera also broke out. The only other guest in his hotel was a Danish lawyer, identified only as Mr. Kjerulff. They both read a lot and Bigelow was often immersed in the Bible, which he had been reading from his youth. He not only read with devotion but also skepticism and doubt over “inconsistencies and improbabilities within its pages.”

One night he was reading *Genesis 12* and asked his friend, with some exasperation, why Abram, “a man deserving of God’s favor,” would have his wife lie and tell the pharaoh she was his sister? This made no sense to him. Kjerulff asked if he had ever read Swedenborg and handed him a copy of *Arcana Coelestia*. Bigelow was immediately taken with the opening passages about the internal sense of the Word and the description of the spiritual meaning of this strange passage about Abram and Sarai.

He set about devouring everything of Swedenborg’s that he could get his hands on – while still in St. Thomas and once he returned to the United States. As with his reading of the Bible, he was a fascinated but also a determined skeptic, certain he would come across something so outlandish that he could return the book to his friend with thanks – and scorn. But he never found that flaw and instead became convinced that this could only be revelation from the Lord – not the imagination of a learned mind given to fantasy. He said he felt literally like a blind man who suddenly could see.

Like John Bigelow, there are countless seekers out there – people who are open to revelation and willing to recognize it as true because it comes from the Lord. There are also many, many people who are still searching for answers to the “mysteries of faith.”

One who speaks to them is Dan Brown, author of such spellbinding best-sellers as *The Da Vinci Code* and *Angels and Demons*. These popular books bristle with spiritual themes of heroes and villains, driven by mystery, symbols and danger. One of those books is *The Lost Symbol*, a frantic search through Washington, DC, propelled by mysterious Masonic symbols, for the “Lost Word” – similar to what we call the Ancient Word. This “Lost Word,” he claims, was once known by ancient peoples for the inner, spiritual meaning of the Bible.

“Few people in history have understood its true message,” he writes. “Within this ancient book are hidden powerful secrets – a vast collection of untapped wisdom waiting to be revealed.” Ever since we began separating ourselves from God and turning away from Him, he says, “We have lost the Word, yet its true meaning is still within our reach, right before our eyes.”

Little did he know that this “true meaning” really is right before our eyes – not buried under the Washington Monument, as he fancied, but revealed through Emanuel Swedenborg. The Book of the Law, *The Bible that was Lost and is Found*, the “Lost Word” – all is revealed now to those willing and able to see.

The Children of Israel grew impatient as Moses spent 40 days on Mt. Sinai receiving the Ten Commandments and pleaded with Aaron to make them an idol so they could pray to a golden calf. How could they forget so easily, so quickly? But as witnessed by Josiah, and Solzhenitsyn, and Cardinal Dolan, it is all too easy for any of us to “forget God” in moments of distraction. We are all vulnerable to forgetting the Lord and are called to make – and live – our own covenants.

We are blessed in the New Church with the revelation of the Second Coming, taking away our blindness and shining a new light of truth so that we can really “see” and know the Lord – and follow Him. We are invited to be made new, as John Bigelow felt himself to be: “people who walked in darkness who have seen a great light.” We are all called to help save our world from the curse of: “Men have forgotten God. That is why all this has happened.”

We have been given what was lost: a great gift for our lives – a gift to share with those still searching.

(BMH)

Letters to the Editors

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

Hiding Our Eyes?

To The Editors:

I'm not a member of the church, but I love the Lord, His Most Holy Word, and the blessed revelation of Him in the Writings. I'd like to share thoughts (all thoughts flow in from others) about the discussion on true marriage (*Standing for Marriage*) and its opposite, profanation. Are there many in the church who are "hiding their eyes" from the horror of profanation?

Leviticus 20 speaks of those of the church who are "giving the seed to Molech" and those who are "hiding their eyes" from that evil. The Writings clearly teach that this evil represents profanation of the truth in *Apocalypse Explained* 768 [25]:

"To give of his seed to Molech" signifies ***to destroy the truth of the Word and of the doctrine of the church therefrom, by application to the filthy loves of the body, as murders, hatreds, revenges, adulteries, and the like, which leads to the acceptance of infernal falsities instead of things Divine***; such falsities are signified by "the seed given to Molech." Molech was the god of the sons of Ammon (*1 Kings* 6: 7), and was set up in the valley of Hinnom, which was called Topheth, where they burnt their sons and daughters in the fire (*2 Kings* 23:10); the loves mentioned above are signified by that fire.

In *Apocalypse Explained* 578, we're told that Topheth, where this abominable child sacrifice was performed, means "the cruel lust of destroying the goods of innocence."

“Topheth” signifies the hell in which the *direful and cruel love of destroying all the truths and goods of the church reigns, especially the cruel lust for destroying the goods of innocence*; that this direful hell is from the falsities of evil is signified by “he shall go down into a deep and wide place;” the “king for whom it is prepared” signifies infernal falsity itself; “the pile thereof is fire and wood,” signifies evils of every kind belonging to that love; and because *that hell burns with a lust for destroying*, it is said, “the breath of Jehovah like a stream of brimstone doth kindle it;” for there, as soon as they hear from anyone the truths of the church and perceive its goods, they are inflamed with a frenzy for destroying and extinguishing them.

In his commentary on *Leviticus 20*, Henry Maclagan describes giving the seed to Molech as those who “*profane the truth by devoting it to the service of selfish love.*” These profaners are “cut off” from the Lord and His church because “*the profanation of the truth of the church through selfish love corrupts all holy good from the Lord, and all holy truth which is the expression of good.*”

In his comments on verses 4 and 5, Maclagan goes on to warn those who excuse or “hide their eyes” from such profanation:

And if the man of the church, in any way, excuses such enormity, and does not reject utterly this profanation, then also *he himself will lose the perception of heavenly love from the Lord*, both in particular and in general, and will be separated from the church, with all those who falsify the truth through selfish love, *nor will he be any longer able to perceive truths.*

According to correspondence, the goods and truths of innocence are represented by *children*. It is the innocence of children, and ultimately the Lord Himself since children represent His innocence, who are the target of the insane, cruel, cunning deceitfulness of gender perversion.

Critical Race Theory (CRT) in schools, drag queen story hour in libraries, and the unending affirmative gender perversion messaging in children’s TV programs, books, movies, etc. – even directed to toddlers – all come from the gender perversion movement.

Where is the horror in the church for the incessant “lust for destroying” the innocence of children? Is there knowledge in the church of Alfred Kinsey, and his abominable “work” that has become the basis of sexual perversion acceptance and teaching in our nation? Where is the horror in the church at the child-abuse of transgender treatments on those who are too young and unprepared to understand the full consequences of their choices?

Is the church “hiding their eyes” to this evil of profanation?

The eyes represent the understanding, as do the lungs. Spiritually, to “hide the eyes” is to cut off the understanding from seeing/perceiving good and truth from the Lord. Profanation of the truth, and hiding the eyes from that profanation, **“leads to the acceptance of infernal falsities instead of things Divine.”**

We cannot **watch** if we hide our eyes, and we cannot defend ourselves, nor the “least of these” defenseless children, against the cunning deceitfulness of evil unless we **watch**. (*Matthew 24:42*)

According to a Science News article last year, in the Covid 19 infection, the cilia in the lungs are cut off or truncated, prohibiting the lungs from sweeping impurities from the blood and air. The Writings teach that cilia in the nose and the lungs represent the “ability to perceive” things contrary to genuine Love and Truth. (*Divine Love and Wisdom 10, Science of Correspondences, Nose*).

Spiritual cilia, the perception of good and truth, sweep impurities from the understanding, like natural cilia sweep the nose and lungs from impurities in the blood and air. Is this coincidence or correspondence? Is the epidemic of sexual perversion and the acceptance of such profanation in the church, a spiritual cause of the epidemic in the natural world of the covid infection of the lungs?

The Lord our God is Holy. His Name is Holy, His Word is Holy, His Way is in Holiness, His heaven is the habitation of holiness, He calls His people to Be Holy as He is Holy, He is the Spirit of Holiness. No one who refuses to be washed by the Lord from the filthiness of our sins, has any part with Him. (*John 13:8*)

It is the **Lord’s loving mercy** that He provides that evil carries its own punishment. (*Arcana Coelestia 696*) Punishment for our evil is the means of amendment of our evil. **Blessed** are those who are disciplined by the Lord! (*Deuteronomy 8:5, Job 5:17, Psalm 94:12, Hebrews 12:6*)

The Holy City coming down out of heaven from God, is the doctrine of holiness. Holiness in the internal man, descending and extending into all aspects of the life of the external man, is how a person (who is the church in least form) is prepared and made ready for the marriage supper of the Lamb.

Praying for repentance, watchfulness and holiness, to the glory and honor of the Lord.

Karen Mazzotti
Acton, Maine

The Lord's 'Plain Teachings' and the Lord's Love

To The Editors:

I am responding to the articles by the Rt. Rev. Peter Buss Jr. on “*Standing for Marriage in Today's World*” in the January/February issue of *New Church Life* and by the Rev. Derek Elphick on “*A Pastor's Message on Healing*” in the May/June issue, and previous items on marriage.

I found Bishop Buss's article excellent as it was based on the teachings of the Word in its three revelations and included a lot of sound teaching on the subject of marriage. However, I am concerned that he then needed to follow up with a video, seemingly to calm the feelings of General Church members who were hurt by his article. Why would anyone in the General Church be hurt when the article was according to the teachings for the New Church? Then the Rev. Elphick wrote about “listening sessions” for those both for and against same-sex relations. Why would anyone in the General Church be against the teachings for the New Church?

Arcana Coelestia, Life, Conjugal Love and *Heaven and Hell* tell us that the order of heaven that comes down to earth is the marriage of one man and one woman only. That builds on the teachings of the Old and New Testaments. The teachings in the Old Testament very explicitly command against sexual relations between two individuals of the same sex. We are also told that by our actions and thoughts we can invert that order of good and truth from heaven into the disorder of evil and falsity.

The Writings also tell us that all sexual relations other than in the marriage of one man and one woman are disorderly and have connection, not with heaven but with hell. This is particularly important to know and acknowledge in the New Church since the New Church alone in the whole world teaches about conjugal love and its sanctity.

We are told that conjugal love is “the fundamental love of all celestial and spiritual loves, and thence of all natural loves” (*Conjugal Love* 65 V) and that “all the delights of heaven stream from the delights of conjugal love” (*Ibid.* 229) and “all delights from their first to their last are gathered into [conjugal] love . . . because of its use above all other uses . . . [which use is] the propagation of the human race, and thence of the angelic heavens” (*Ibid.* 68 VI) and “in heaven the procreation of good and truth takes the place of procreation of offspring . . . [and] in the Word births and generations signify spiritual births and generations.” (*Heaven and Hell* 382:b)

However, same-sex relations are the exact opposite of conjugal love, just

as are heaven and hell and good and evil. (See *Life* 70, 75) There is no possibility of same-sex relations resulting in procreation of offspring and so no chance of fulfilling the use or spiritual signification told of above in *Conjugal Love* and *Heaven and Hell*. No matter what brief worldly pleasures these disorderly unions may offer, there will follow no joys and delights to eternity since those belong exclusively to conjugal love. As well, since from their anatomy two men or two women cannot be conjoined, sexual relations can only occur by obscene and filthy means.

The Doctrine of Life is written from the standpoint of the Decalogue. *Life IX* examines the shunning of “adulteries of every kind.” We are told: “To ‘commit adultery’ . . . means . . . not only to commit whoredom, but also to do obscene things, to speak lascivious things, and to think about filthy things . . . adultery means also to adulterate the goods of the Word and to falsify its truths . . . and to profane the Word . . . adultery is so great an evil that it may be called diabolism itself.” (*Life* 74)

Again, “the lasciviousness of adultery makes hell in a man, and the chastity of marriage makes heaven. But the chastity of marriage exists solely with the man who shuns as sin the lasciviousness of adultery.” (*Ibid.* 77) Then *Life* 78: “That to ‘commit adultery’ means also to do obscene things, to speak lascivious things, and to think about filthy things is evident from the Lord’s words in *Matthew* 5,” and there follows a quote from *Matthew* 27, 28.

I have no doubt whatever that adultery as it is taught in *Life* 74, 77 and 78 and in all of *IX*, also in *Arcana Coelestia*, *Conjugal Love* and *Heaven and Hell*, applies to any sexual relationship in thought, act or speech outside of a marriage that is exclusively between one man and one woman. The anatomy of males and females is such that they can be conjoined. This is right and proper between one man and one woman in marriage as we are told that it is the ultimatum in the natural of the spiritual conjunction of good and truth. Also, “That from creation there has been implanted in each sex, a faculty and inclination, giving them the ability and the will to be conjoined as into a one . . . [in the] conjunction of one sex with the other.” (*Conjugal Love* 157 1) There is no such God-given faculty toward conjunction with those of the same sex.

Apart from the obvious physical conjunction between male and female, the conjunction of one man with one wife is explained thus in *Conjugal Love* 159: “The wife’s will conjoins itself with the man’s understanding and hence the man’s understanding with the wife’s will. . . there is the closest conjunction of the understanding and the will.” However, there can be no similar conjunction between two wills or two understandings in same-sex relations.

In addition, “The Lord’s Providence is most singular and most universal in regard to marriages . . . because all the delights of heaven stream from conjugal love. . . . Therefore it is provided that conjugal pairs be born.” (*Ibid.* 316:3)

Later in that passage it is also made clear that each pair consists of one male and one female only.

I see the terms “obscene” and “filthy” in *Life* 74 and 78 as applicable not only to various instances in marriage but also to same-sex relations, which puts them clearly among evils to be shunned. This backs up the earlier instructions from the Old and New Testaments. Also, in the Old Testament the Lord explicitly commands against sexual relations between two men or two women, as well as prohibiting a number of other sexual interactions. As well, in *Genesis 19* there is the lesson to us of God’s total destruction of the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah because of the sins of the men in committing sodomy.

The internal sense, so special to the New Church, tells us why same-sex relations are so heinous: “Sodom denotes the evil of the love of self, and Gomorrah denotes the falsity therefrom.” (*Arcana Coelestia* 2220, 2246, 2322) There are plenty of other horrible things said in the Old Testament like stoning to death but they are all there for the sake of the internal sense, as is said repeatedly in *Arcana*. There we are told that the supreme sense of the Word relates to the Lord’s life and His battles against and victories over the hells.

So there are bound to be some horrible parts but their omission would lead to a break in the internal sense, which is a continuous series running unbroken through the Word: “The internal text is so continuous that not a particle even [of the external sense] could have been omitted without an interruption of the series.” (*Ibid.* 7933e) Moreover, “that the internal sense is such as has been set forth, is evident from all the details that have been unfolded, and especially from the fact that it has been dictated to me [Swedenborg] from heaven.” (*Ibid.* 6597)

The internal sense from the Lord through heaven rests on the foundation of the sense of the letter. So, all parts of the sense of the letter are essential and no teaching should be omitted as that would do violence to the Word. Likewise, no teaching should be dismissed as inconsequential or no longer applicable and no attempt should be made to alter the obvious meaning of the sense of the letter to suit or excuse human misconceptions and desires, as all teachings are given for our benefit and for our contact with the heavens.

Regarding the Sodom account, I have been told that for many people the issue is gang rape and violent sex. On a civil level, those would be criminal offences. On a spiritual level, both the Old Testament and the *Arcana* make no allowance for such as the number of offenders or degree of violence involved. In *Leviticus 18:22* there is no possibility of the excuse of gang rape or violent sex as there is just an outright prohibition: “Thou shalt not lie with mankind as with womankind; it is an abomination.” Also *20:13* which likewise prohibits without any exceptions and continues, “they shall surely be put to death.”

However, that there are degrees of disorder is evident from the various

degrees of adultery set out in *Conjugal Love* and the reasons for such. As described in *Conjugal Love* and elsewhere in the Writings, heredity, environment, upbringing, intent, violence and more might also be taken into account as the cause of, or as contributing or mitigating factors to, disorder, all of which would shift the degree of disorder and of responsibility. We know only a fraction of the “illimitable” factors and minutest details that the Lord alone knows, so we should not judge, which is what we are commanded anyway.

Although same-sex relations are clearly wrong and New Church teachings cannot be compromised, I still believe we should reach out with compassion to anyone involved in gender issues. These people are in a hard place, faced with New Church teachings, emotional drives, changing world values and possibly peer pressure. In addition, these people, who are already under pressure, sometimes meet with insensitivity and misunderstanding of the struggles they are having.

To me, the infinity of the Lord’s love, mercy, understanding and compassion for those involved in these issues, as indeed for each of us since we are all subject to love of self and its falsities, is evident in this passage: “The Lord leads man according to his delights, and also according to fallacies and the principles received therefrom; but gradually He leads him out from these. . . . Thus the Lord does not break these things, for this would be to do violence to freedom, which, however, must needs exist, in order that the man may be reformed.” (*Arcana Coelestia* 6472)

However, the teachings from the Word/Writings which forbid same-sex relations are direct and strong and we should strive to abide by them. It is also worth remembering that we should “shun evils because they are hurtful to the soul . . . and do goods because they are beneficial to the soul. . . . This is the wisdom . . . with which conjugal love binds itself; for it binds itself by shunning the evil of adultery as the pest of the soul.” (*Conjugal Love* 130:4)

In the Bible, the book of Romans is not one of the canonical works for the New Church but it is one of the works described by Swedenborg as “good books for the Church.” Romans is obviously speaking about lesbianism as the “vile affections: for even their women did change their natural use into that which is against nature.” (1: 26) “And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman burned in lust toward another: men with men” (1: 27) which is definitely speaking about homosexuality. Then, “they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do it.” (1: 32)

So not only those who commit such acts but also those who don’t act but just approve of them are those “who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshiped the creature more than the Creator.” (1: 25) That is strong condemnation from a “good book for the Church” that the New Church might take

heed of. The wording in *Life 74* has the same meaning, namely that they are those who “falsify its truths . . . [and] profane the Word.” That is strong condemnation from the New Church too. I understand these passages to mean that those who commit these acts or hold them acceptable, “adulterate the goods of the Word and falsify its truths . . . deny the divinity of the Lord . . . [and] profane the Word. These are the ‘adulteries of every kind.’” (*Life 74; Life IX*) is only a few pages long and is a concise appraisal of the Sixth Commandment: “Thou shalt not commit adultery” and its extension into “adulteries of every kind.” I think it is well worth reading.

The Lord’s Word that came down through heaven to the earth tells us that there is no other way to marital happiness to eternity than through the marriage of one man and one woman exclusively. I feel sad for people involved in same-sex relations since, if they continue along that path, they are denying themselves joy to eternity by seeking an alternative to orderly marriage.

I think anyone who thinks other than in orderly marriage does need to be held tenderly and treated compassionately but I hope the leaders of the General Church can find some way to give guidance on the truths of the Word in all its revelations in this regard. Certainly we shouldn’t judge and we might even commiserate with people who see no harm in same-sex relations. However, all three revelations of the Word teach strongly against any sexual relations other than in orderly marriage and warn of the consequences of disorderly unions and relations.

Conjugal love “was the love of loves with the ancients.” (*Conjugal Love 73 V 111*) How can conjugal love be “raised up anew as it was with the ancients” except by abiding by the commandments and teachings that the Lord has given us? How do proponents of same-sex relations hope to aspire to conjugal love, the love that is the fundamental love of heaven, when it is only possible in a marriage between one man and one woman?

I have not had gender issues but have great compassion for my fellow travelers on the path to eternity who do have these issues. However, gender issues do not negate the plain teachings on what constitutes orderly marriage and what constitutes disorderly relations.

Transgender and gender fluidity are not mentioned by those names in the Writings. However, we are told that our birth gender is in every minutest particle of our body and also that male and female cannot be changed into the other sex: “Nothing in them [male and female] is alike: and yet, in their single parts, there is what is conjunctive; yet in the male the masculine is masculine in every part of his body, even the most minute, and also in every idea of his thought, and in every grain of his affection; and so likewise the feminine in the female. And since the one cannot be changed into the other it follows that after death the male is a male and the female a female.” (*Conjugal Love 33*)

Fixed gender is also known from science since gender is embedded in the sex chromosomes of our DNA, which cannot be changed.

LGBTQIA+ thoughts and practices are contrary to the Lord's teachings in the Old Testament, New Testament and the Writings for the New Church, have nothing in them of heaven and eternal life and are communicating with evil spirits in the world of spirits who, in turn, communicate with hell. That might seem a very strong statement. Although I doubt that anyone would knowingly court interaction with evil spirits or hell, I am basing that statement on the following: "It is an eternal truth that the Lord rules heaven and earth, and . . . that everything of life flows in – the good of life from the Lord, and the evil of life from hell." (*Arcana Coelestia* 6325)

I cannot see how consensual same-sex relations, which are always disorderly and opposed to orderly marriage and conjugal love, can possibly receive the good of life from the Lord. I can only see that these are communicating with evil spirits in the world of spirits, who in turn are communicating with hell. However, "The Lord does not compel man to receive what flows in from Himself; but leads in freedom." (*Arcana Coelestia* 6472)

There are also many factors, known to the Lord alone, that alter the equation and I believe we should never lose sight of that and we should be non-judgmental of people who endorse same-sex relations; we can never know why they are in this situation and they too might never fully understand the reason.

Even given that there are extenuating circumstances that moderate these thoughts and actions, they are still contrary to the plain teachings on orderly marriage. So, I do hope that the General Church leadership and other clergy can find a way to lead same-sex advocates toward an acceptance of orderly marriage before they totally reject a core teaching of the New Church and possibly face a hard time in the spiritual world.

Perhaps the following passages could be helpful deterrents for all of us as we face life's challenges: "While a man lives in this world he induces on the purest substances that belong to his interior a quality, according to which the Lord's life is received." (*Arcana Coelestia* 6467) Also, "everyone has life in accordance with the form of the interiors which he has acquired by willing and acting, thinking and speaking." (*Ibid.* 6468)

I would think that anyone who is trying to reach heaven would not want to impede reception of the Lord's life and would strive to will, act, think and speak according to the teachings of the Threefold Word, although sometimes it can seem a hard road to walk and a lifelong challenge. However, it is clear that if we choose to oppose the Lord's teachings, according to the passages just quoted, we will impede to eternity our reception of the Lord's life.

Some people may bypass the plain teachings on orderly marriage and interpret the Word according to their own affections. "There are infinite and un-

utterable things [in the Word] which cannot be perceived by those whose ideas are closed, and who admit nothing but the literal sense, which they interpret in favor of their own principles and cupidities, and thereby close to themselves access to what is stored within." (*Ibid.* 6619)

It is possible that same-sex advocates will consider that they do believe that the Word has an internal sense, but is that just lip service because it is the accepted belief of the New Church/General Church? If not, then why don't they follow the plain teachings on orderly marriage? Although this seems to be what these passages are saying, I am aware that many people are bearing a difficult load.

Also, "He who is in evil as to the life, is in the falsity of his own evil, although he believes himself to be in the truth [because] . . . he is in persuasive faith." (*Ibid.* 7627) I don't know if I am correct in assuming that this applies to someone who is actively living a life of evil rather than to someone who is trying to lead a good life but has a false idea of the principles that constitute orderly sexual relations. In either case I think it is a passage worth thinking about.

We are told many times in the Writings that good and truth have relation to masculine and feminine, for example: "Male and female were created to be the very image of the marriage between good and truth." (*Conjugal Love* 100) So we can read that into the following passages from *Arcana Coelestia* 7752: "All things in the universe have reference to good and truth. All things that have not reference to these are not in Divine order; and those things which have not reference to both together produce nothing." (7753: "This may illustrate how the case is with spiritual good and truth . . . namely that all things which are of the Church have reference to them, and those things which have not reference to them, have nothing of the Church in themselves." (7754): "In order that anything may be produced, there must be two forces, one of which is called active, another which is called passive; one without the other brings forth nothing."

These passages are relevant to orderly marriage with its two opposite forces and to disorderly same-sex relations with two of the same force. The latter "are not in Divine order," have "nothing of the Church in themselves" and "bring forth nothing." Also, these passages give the spiritual reason why only male with female sexual relations can produce offspring. As well, they are relevant to all things in the universe. In our world they explain why a compass points north: all magnets have two poles of opposite force, a north pole and a south pole, and the one is always attracted strongly to the other, so the compass needle swings to a north/south alignment to give the direction of north precisely.

The same is true of why refrigerator magnets stick to the door, with the magnetic attraction of the steel door lining being the north pole force and the

magnetic door image the south pole force with their consequent attraction, so these magnets stick to the door. In today's world we benefit in many ways from the attraction of two opposite forces, for instance electric currents are produced, motors turn, generators work and, much more importantly, for the reproduction of myriad species of life on Earth.

On the other hand, two identical forces repel each other and produce nothing. Why? Because the former relate to the conjunction of good and truth or male and female in orderly marriage. This truth is from the Lord through heaven to Earth, is orderly, enduring and inescapable in all things of life, of the Church and of the universe. The latter relate to the disorderly union of two people of the same sex; there may be natural attraction but there is no spiritual attraction, the two identical forces repel each other spiritually, which is disorderly and contrary to heaven.

The teachings from the Lord's Word on gender choices as well as other life choices are all teachings of the Lord's Second Coming and are given so that our joy may be full to eternity. Bishop Buss's article gave sound teaching from the Word but has been poorly received by some. Yet these gender disorders oppose orderly marriage and conjugal love and strike like an axe at the root of New Church teachings, so they also strike at the core of the General Church organization.

So, what more can be done by the General Church leadership and other clergy that will guide those with gender issues to accept, at least in principle, that the teachings that make the New Church new have been given by the Lord and there are no alternatives? This is surely the biggest challenge that the General Church organization has faced since its inception because it is a challenge to core teachings.

I am sympathetic toward anyone caught between New Church principles and alternative life choices, whether personally or through family connections or friendships. However, if the General Church organization is to continue to represent the New Church faithfully, then it is critical that the pillar principle of the marriage of one man and one woman exclusively as the only male/female sexual relationship permitted by the Lord is both acknowledged and honored and that this principle is also acknowledged to be unchangeable for all time.

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A Vision for the Church

To The Editors:

I would like to contribute to the discussion of the issues addressed in Bishop Peter Buss's article, *Standing for Marriage in Today's World*. (*New Church Life*, January/February 2022) We in the New Church, led by our clergy, have an enormous burden on our shoulders, to create a church that is true to its name and part of the Lord's purpose, to establish a new church represented in the *Book of Revelation* by the holy city New Jerusalem descending from heaven.

We live in a world that has only the vaguest concepts of things spiritual, even among Christians: core aspects of religion like an understanding of the Divine, what heaven is like, the path to salvation, what it means spiritually to be a man or a woman, and, of course, the nature of heavenly marriage. The task is made all the more difficult by the cultural divisions in the United States, which are present in the Church, as well.

I'd like to offer thoughts on several points: first, that the clergy's role is faithfully to teach the Heavenly Doctrines, not something less, modified by earthly concerns.

An Alternative Doctrinal Approach to Same-Sex Relationships

In the section of his article, "What about disorders?" Bishop Buss brings to bear doctrine showing that adultery, pornography, promiscuity, child abuse and rape are evils that must be shunned as sins. So far, so good. In the following section, however, "What about the LGBTQIA+ identity spectrum," he continues: "I offer the thought that the very same construct that we just went through applies."

I do not see the connection between same-sex activity and, say, adultery, either in the numbers cited (*Arcana Coelestia* 4434 and 6348) or my own reading of the Writings. Of course, it is possible for a gay or lesbian person to engage in adultery, pornography, or promiscuity, but then we are discussing those things, not the sexual activity per se. It is with the greatest of caution that we should read meaning into the Writings that is not clearly present.

The Writings describe conjugal love, a relationship between one man and one woman, not as a theoretical ideal, but as the state of life in heaven. It is therefore a way of life to be sought on earth. A same-sex union is not a marriage, in the way marriage is defined in *Conjugal Love/Marriage Love*. Can we agree on that? Then how are we to regard same-sex relationships?

I'd like to suggest, and wonder if others find it reasonable, that Sweden-

borg treats of same-sex relations in the chapter on Fornication. Fornication is an ugly word, people hardly ever use it, perhaps don't know what it means. It means consensual sex between single adults. Thus, in a literal, factual sense, it does apply to gay relationships. It is crucial to bear in mind, when speaking of same-sex partners seeking marriage, that we are addressing consensual sex. Same-sex partners seeking marriage out of mutual love have nothing to do with Old Testament stories about Sodom.

In the section on Fornication, Swedenborg says: "The lust of fornicating is light so far as it looks to conjugal love and prefers it" (#452), and "the lust of fornicating is grievous so far as it looks to adultery" (#453). Besides these, many other teachings throughout the Writings could apply to people in same-sex relationships. Quoted in Bishop Buss's article, "Conjugal love comes only from the Lord, and it is found in people who are made spiritual by Him through His Word." (*Conjugal Love* 81.5) Can't gay people turn to the Word; how could we possibly assume the opposite? Really, could we possibly deny that the entire body of doctrine on regeneration applies to everyone?

But let's be clear. In this chapter of *Conjugal Love*, Swedenborg is dealing realistically with a difficult situation. Being sexually active has become a widely practiced way of life among young people in the United States and many other countries. That lifestyle is promoted in literature, film and popular music. But it is a permission at best. When it leads to promiscuity or worse, the path toward conjugal love can be closed off, for anyone, gay or straight.

Bishop Buss uses the word, "disorder" in his article. I'd like to repeat a point that others have probably made. Monogamy is more orderly than promiscuity, and life-long monogamy is more orderly than serial monogamy. For that reason, civil union for same-sex couples should not only be recognized as a legal status but encouraged in civil law.

A decade back, President Obama briefly endorsed a concept of civil union for same-sex couples, but the gay community would not accept an implied second-class status, and Obama, the U.S. Government, and soon after, a large majority of the U.S. population accepted that same-sex couples could be married. Is there any intellectual difficulty in distinguishing what marriage is in heaven, as taught in *Conjugal Love*, and what marriage is on earth, as defined by civil law? I hope that the General Church can accept the usefulness of civil law in the case of same-sex marriage, law that promotes a more orderly society.

Unhappiness with the Sex You Were Born With

Bishop Buss is correct to treat the gay community and the trans community separately. To my mind, the Church should be extremely cautious about mak-

ing any blanket doctrinal statement about people displeased with their sex and wanting to change it. People in that unfortunate state are likely to have been affected deeply by bruising experiences in the natural world, lives unique to the individuals. When they blame their sex for their unhappiness, they may often be blaming the wrong thing.

To confront this directly, people have little idea what it means to be male or female. Most people, when asked, will begin with sexual organs. If you ask someone on the street how to distinguish masculinity from femininity, how often will the reply be, “a true man’s passion is pursuit of the truth,” or “the essential female is the love of applying truth to life,” or the like?

Before speculating about others, let’s confront the elephant in our room. Swedenborg says that the masculine and the feminine are totally distinct, down to the last cell of the body. But what do we observe in the world? Given a level playing field, women are the intellectual equals of men, in medicine, law, government and civil achievements of every kind. So how are we to understand the doctrine and explain it to young people?

The Church and Politics

I’m sure the purpose of Bishop Buss’s article was doctrinal clarity, not to become ensnared in politics or culture wars, but the fact is that the gay and trans communities are under attack by one political party and are defended by the other on the basis of equal rights. I would like to make a bold proposal, that the Church as an organization and the members of the clergy avoid politics and the issues of the day. More than that, strive to avoid even an appearance of getting involved, taking sides. If a pastor takes sides in politics, even on one hot issue, he runs the risk of offending members of the congregation who hold the opposing view. This is obvious, right?

I call this idea bold, not because it is extreme, but because it is difficult; and I have a vision. My vision is that the General Church be true to its name, the new church which the Lord has established on earth through the theological writings of Emanuel Swedenborg, and in time become a worldview that unites; a third way, to replace ideologies on the right and the left with the pursuit of truth as the guiding principle. What if we could become the solution to the cultural divide afflicting the United States? Can we sacrifice other ideological commitments, and just seek the good and the true in earthly affairs?

This is no small task, because many of us hold our political and cultural views with passion. But as Henry David Thoreau said, “It is never too late to give up our prejudices.” All of us, clergy and laity, can approach contentious issues by looking for what is useful and what is harmful in each point of view. To skillfully avoid entanglement in temporal issues, the General Church, as an

organization, will need to be well-informed on those issues.

A New Church

I've said enough but permit me to add a piece of special pleading. I would like preaching and theological discussion to be based on the heavenly doctrines. The article by Bishop Buss is typical in that he cites the Word as his source. And it is, since "Word" refers to Divine truth and to the Lord. But also to the Old Testament, the New Testament, and the Writings. Of 27 citations in the article by my count, six are from the Old Testament and three from the New Testament. I would prefer to be taught from our new revelation. The more so when "hard truths" or controversial topics are the subject at hand. It would be great if everyone could be very careful about using the literal text of the Old Testament as the basis for teaching.

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Touched by the Lord

A Sermon by the Rev. Philip B. Schnarr

Readings: Luke 8:43-48; Revelation 1:12-18

Apocalypse Explained 79; Arcana Coelestia 8865:2

To touch with the hand is to communicate and transfer to another what pertains to oneself.

(Apocalypse Explained 79)

Our subject is “Being Touched by the Hand of the Lord” – to be on the receiving end of the Lord’s Divine power; the hands of the Lord; symbols of His power.

In our first lesson from *Revelation* the disciple John saw with his spiritual eyesight a vision of the Lord. He was so awed, humbled and terrified that he fell on his face before “the Son of Man.” He lay virtually lifeless before Him. But immediately afterward, John was touched by the right hand of the “Son of Man.” His fears were calmed. Right away John was given an incredible mission to write the *Book of Revelation*, which encapsulates the fulfillment of all prophecies: that the Lord would establish a new heaven and a new church on earth that would endure forever.

Yes, the Lord touched John’s body with His hand and His life was infused into him. This brought a whole new perspective and mission for John’s life. And it shows in dramatic fashion how the Lord’s touch, the inflowing of His Divine truth and goodness, changed the life of His disciple John. And in analogous ways this illustrates how human touch also has great power to change our lives.

As we read earlier from the Heavenly Doctrine: “To touch with the hand is to communicate and transfer to another” something of ourselves. (*Apocalypse Explained 79*) So let’s talk about human communication through the sense of touch.

Picture a grandmother and a 10-year-old granddaughter. They live far apart but visit as often as possible. They love each other very much. But then

a pandemic arrives and month after month it is impossible to sit close or hug. More than a year goes by. No sharing meals, swimming in the lake together, doing projects – and yes, holding hands. These are all gone. And there is a cost to this. There is something missing in the communication, in the transfer and in the reception of thoughts and feelings these two people want to share.

It's true, video phone calls and chats have been regular and fun for many families throughout the pandemic. But the palpable communication that happens in shared space has been seriously missing. We all know that empty feeling deep inside when the ones we love are no longer within arm's reach. Many of us are becoming more aware of just how much we depend on the physical spheres and tangible touch of others, to feel right with ourselves and properly, emotionally adjusted to the physical world we live in.

When we touch physically, specifically for the sake of communicating an unselfish love, a connecting channel unlike any other is opened. Throughout Scripture we are given numerous illustrations of this.

Jehovah told Moses to lay his hand on Joshua and so transmit and transfer some of Moses' glory and power to Joshua so that all of the Israelites would follow him. (*Numbers 27: 18-20; see Arcana Coelestia 10023:2*)

When the prophet Daniel received a vision of the Lord, he lost all of his strength, just like John. Daniel fell into a deep sleep with his face to the ground when an angel touched him and told him not to be afraid. (*Daniel 10: 8-12*)

Time after time in the New Testament Jesus laid His hands on people, touched them or took them by the hand to restore their sight, their hearing, cure them of disease, or bring them back to life from death's door.

One particularly illustrative incident happened in our first reading from *Luke 8: 42-48*.

When the Lord was surrounded by a crowd of people seeking His help, a woman approached Him from behind and touched just the fringe of His clothing. Immediately her blood disease was cured. And we heard Jesus say: "Somebody touched Me, for I perceived power going out from Me."

The woman came forward physically trembling: "And falling down before Him, she declared to Him in the presence of all the people the reason she had touched Him and how she was healed immediately.

Here is an example of how touch can be a formidable force for good. Wherever and whenever the Lord Jesus Christ is in a touching connection with someone, we can know that a life-giving communication is flowing forth. But notice this very important detail in how the story ends. Jesus said to her: "Your faith has made you well." It was not a purely magical, miraculous, physical touch. The woman's desire and consent made her a willing and faithful recipient for the Lord's healing power. Above all, the Lord respects a person's free will and the self-determination of their own spiritual identity and destiny.

Reflecting on the original terms used for the word “touch” in the Old and New Testaments we can see how the Lord’s communication, His connection with His church on earth, shifted after His incarnation. In the Hebrew of the Old Testament the verb “touch” is “[naga].” Its use often connotes the idea of extending one’s power over another – or to smite or to strike or even to beat down or defeat. But in a more positive sense “[naga]” can also refer to more positive touching.

In *Exodus* where priests were to touch holy things such as the altars and utensils in the Tabernacle to bring about sanctification, this spiritually signified a holy purified state. (*Exodus 29:37*) This kind of touching represented the reception of the Divine of the Lord resulting from the communication, transfer and reception of His life into human minds. (*See Arcana Coelestia 10023:5*) It is important to note that this word for “touch” frequently connects to prohibitions such as touching unclean animals and things such as dead bodies, as well as profane kinds of sacrifice. (*Apocalypse Explained 79*) The spiritual meaning of this kind of touch refers to the kind of “contagion” which “infects the soul.” This happens when evils and falsities derived from them are communicated to us by our connections with evil spirits. (*Arcana Coelestia 10130:10*) This provides us a stern warning. In the hands of self-serving, morally corrupt influences, the abuse of power with a person’s hands and with touch can lead to very bad physical and spiritual outcomes.

Now contrast that kind of touch with the Greek of the New Testament for touch, “ἅπτομαι [haptomai]” which relates to adhering or fastening oneself to – even clinging to — another person. So, when we hear from the Gospels (*Mark 10:13-16*) that families brought little children to the Lord “that He might touch them” and “He took them up in His arms, laid His hands on them, and blessed them,” this is a much gentler, more loving kind of touch. It’s a kind of connecting link that exists among angels throughout the Lord’s kingdom and wherever true innocence exists in the natural world.

It is truly wonderful that the Lord has given us the light of the Heavenly Doctrine to unfold the realities of the inner workings of the sense of touch and indeed of all of our physical senses. It might surprise you to conceive of each of our senses – taste, smell, hearing and sight – having some element of the sense of touch, making this special sense a sort of composite of all of them. Listen to this amazing teaching from *Arcana Coelestia*:

It is not the body which sees, hears, smells and feels through touch, but a person’s spirit. That being so, when the spirit sheds its body, it retains the sensory powers it possessed when within the body; indeed, these are now far keener. For that which belongs to the body, being coarse compared with that belonging to the spirit, has

blunted those sensory powers; and these have been made even blunter because of the person's immersion of them in earthly and worldly interests. (4622:3)

This notion that our five senses are even keener in the next life should come as no surprise. We expect that the good life – at least the life of heaven – will be far more sensational than life in this world. But what is distinctly different in New Church teachings about this is that all of our sensations in this world are connected by correspondence to those of our spirit which resides in the spiritual world as we go about our daily lives. The Writings explain this connection by saying that the senses we have on earth “come forth” from our imperceptible spiritual powers of sensation. We read that our spiritual body feels

every sense [to be] more exquisite and more perfect, because it is the sense of the internal of a person freed from the external; for the internal is in a more perfect state, because it gives to the external the power of sensation; but when our internal acts into

the external, as is the case in the world, internal sensations are dulled and obscured. (Arcana Coelestia 5078:4)

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Although our conscious mind is usually unaware of this inflowing relationship, we are told that all of the physical sensations that reach their various destinations in the human brain are only perceptible to our minds because the inner sensory powers of our spirits lie behind our physical ones. This apparent duality of sensation allows for us to live simultaneously in two worlds and to be influenced by angels and spirits who are within our spiritual/mental sphere.

The Lord has set up His communication network, His ways of touching or communicating with us, with careful oversight of our spiritual freedom. Therefore, while we are subject to the influence of good and evil spirits, we have been given the gift of what might be called a sixth sense – a rational mind

that can step back from the influences of our senses and predilections to make autonomous personal choices, which over a lifetime shape the nature of our ruling/dominant love. Although our senses bombard us with volumes of data which sometimes can seem overwhelming, the ones we choose to embrace, foster and so love are the ones which will govern our circle of relationships and connections to eternity.

Returning to earlier examples of the Lord's powerful touch in the Word, did you notice the physical body positions of the people in these accounts? Daniel and John were both face down before being Divinely touched. The woman who touched the Lord's garment bowed down before Jesus after she was healed.

To experience the true joys and healing of the Lord's inflowing, spiritual touch requires humility. It requires a respectful acceptance and acknowledgment that our power and authority are as nothing compared to that of the Infinite God. When we have reached this level of spiritual maturity, we too will find ourselves being lifted up, healed of life's afflictions and given a new and exciting purpose, along with deeper pleasures and delights that will make former earthly pleasures seem muted, even trivial.

We began with the inner meaning of "touch." "To touch with the hand is to communicate and transfer to another what pertains to oneself." (*Apocalypse Explained* 79) The Lord demonstrated how sincere, selfless, loving touch is a vehicle for the transfer, the "coming forth" of spiritual power from Him to us. This power of the Lord inflows as Divine truth and Divine love and is unconditional in that it reaches out to all of humanity.

"He makes His sun to rise on the evil and on the good and sends rain on the just and on the unjust." (*Matthew 5: 45*) Yet the quantity and quality of a person's reception of this empowerment from the Lord is conditioned by the state of the receiving vessels of those whose free will response is essential.

Our senses are essential transmission lines for us to be educated, informed, stimulated, even entertained in countless ways. Without our senses, we have no way to communicate our deepest loves for our spouses, our families and our friends. But these same senses can also be conduits for illusions, fakery, miseducation and evils which must be filtered out.

This filtering process is conditional on three things. It is conditional on our humility and willingness to be led by the Word and the Lord. It is conditional on the judicious use of our rational faculties and upon our day-to-day effort to shun evils as sins so that our loving embraces can be genuine expressions of the Lord's love. Nowhere is this more important than in the chaste and appropriate use of the sense of touch in the ultimate expressions of love in marriage.

May we become as the one with leprosy who came to the Lord with humility, kneeling down, imploring:

“If You are willing [Lord], You can make me clean.”

Then Jesus, moved with compassion, stretched out His hand and touched him, and said to him, “I am willing; be cleansed.” (Mark 1:40-42)

So let us get in touch and stay in touch with the Lord: read His Word, talk to Him in prayer, and do our best to touch the lives of others with kindness and helpfulness. Then we will be opening ourselves in spirit to receive His Divine power and the many blessed states and sensations that He longs to give us.

So let us get in touch and stay in touch with the Lord: read His Word, talk to Him in prayer, and do our best to touch the lives of others with kindness and helpfulness.

Amen



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The Lord Sees Our Future

A Sermon by the Rev. Louis Synnestvedt

Readings: Mark 9:30-36; Psalm 41:5-13; Divine Providence 178, 333

***For I know the thoughts that I think toward you,
says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil,
to give you a future and a hope. (Jeremiah 29: 11)***

God is present in space without space, and in time without time, because He is always the same, from eternity to eternity.

This is a teaching from *True Christian Religion* 30. Let us reflect on the nature of time and consider what lies ahead of us in what we call the future.

Space and time are part of our finite world. God, as Creator, is in space but not limited by it. He is in time, yet above time such that all the future is present to Him. (*Divine Providence* 333)

Consider this view of reality: up above is God; down below is the earth and material things, the things of time and space. Is there anything in-between? Is it just God on the one hand and matter on the other?

There is something in-between. At the outset of creation, the Lord made the heavens and the earth. (*Genesis 1:1*) In between are the heavens, or what we might broadly call the spiritual world. This is the realm of the human mind. It partakes of the limitations of nature, yet it is expansive: it is designed for eternity.

The human mind: here is where we really dwell. Our body may be in one place. It may be old or young. Physically we are all limited, whether disabled in some way or even if perfectly healthy. Yet the mind, if not overwhelmed by bodily things, is without limits. In our minds we can be in a different time and a different place. This inner reality has been demonstrated in extreme cases of depredation or hardship. In the face of physical suffering or trauma, it is known that one may summon an inner strength to experience a sense of peace or the warmth of forgiveness.

The Lord demonstrated this phenomenon when on the cross He said: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." (*Luke 23: 34*)

Is it not common for us to be physically in one place but mentally in another? We are at the grocery store, but in our minds we are trying to solve a

problem. Our loved ones may be separated by miles, but a phone in our hand can put them miraculously in the same room with us.

And what is it about the way we are drawn to babies or how we might find a simple pleasure when seeing children happily at play? Are we not granted a God-given glimpse of the timelessness of their innocence and humanity? Do we not sense on some level the wonder of a child's whole life from being tiny people through the years of growing into their adult life? Even our connection with friends and loved ones holds within it the hope of the future, of shared times together, and, for those especially close, the expectation of a reunion in the world to come?

Here we are in church together. Each of us has our own routine, our own reasons, our own thoughts and human experience. Do we reflect on our deeper purpose, perhaps a hidden Hand that sees and knows each one of us intimately, creating for us a moment that contains within the seeds, the embryo, that will emerge in the yet-to-be seen future that lies before us?

The operation of the Divine Providence for the salvation of man is said to begin at his birth and to continue right on to the end of his life. (*Divine Providence* 333)

To the Lord, all the future is present. He sees our nature. He provides for our freedom so that the future will be our future. As we read in our lesson:

The Lord . . . foresees what [a person] desires to be, and thus what he will be; and in order that he may be human and therefore immortal, the freedom of his will cannot be taken away, as has been shown above in many places. Therefore, the Lord foresees man's state after death and provides for it from his birth right on to the end of his life.

In the New Testament, we get this take on the Lord's providence:

In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also. (John 14: 3,3)

Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing?

So why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; and yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. (Matthew 6:25-29)

The Lord knows our past. He wisely and patiently guides us into a future which He alone sees.

There is a good reason why we cannot see the future. If we were to know the future, we would cease to be human! That may seem like a strong statement. Would we not love to know what our future will bring? Will we move into a new house? Will we marry? Have children? Will there be a great war in our lifetime? If ill, do we not wish to know the path to recovery, or even if we will recover? When we love someone, do we not want to know with certainty whether it will be well with them or not?

But just imagine if we did know the future and it was certain. Would we have any striving to move forward? When tired, why pull yourself out of bed, if you knew that your employer would pay you anyway?

To be human means to act from freedom according to reason, at least reason as we best understand it. To be human means that our wishes need to be worked out by means of our reason in such a way that we take whatever actions we choose to obtain the ends we desire.

The Lord has us in mind from moment to moment. He is not over there with other people while we are here all by ourselves lacking the care and direction of God. He has thoughts of our future: a future of peace and hope. But that future will unfold, whether we like it or not, with or without our active participation. Even if we would rather not partici-

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*The Lord has us in mind from **moment to moment.** He is not over there with other people while we are here all by ourselves lacking the care and direction of God. He has **thoughts of our future: a future of peace and hope.***

pate, we are making choices that will affect our future.

Do we not have the experience of planning for a future event – a party, a fund-raiser, a holiday, a presentation we will make?

What fun is that? At least half the fun is in the anticipation, is it not?

Do we not find energy, excitement and joy in planning? When we are preparing for an event with our colleagues and family members, do we not draw closer in friendship? Do we not learn at least a little bit more about ourselves and others in the process? Do we not gather information that serves as a foundation for the growth of our minds and hearts? For this reason we are given a glimpse of the future. We are given hope; but not with any certainty of our own plans or any definitive knowing of the outcome. If we are wise, we defer any certainty to God. If we have any sense of humility, we will place the outcome in His hands.

After all, this gives us something to do. It allows us to be creative. It offers us a sense that any good which may result from our efforts has been the Lord's doing. And conversely, anything that is amiss or less than perfect, is our doing or else a result of the limitations of time and space.

But God does foretell the future, right? He can predict events that actually do come to pass, correct? Yes. In His Word we can find many examples of His prediction of the future which He has shared with man. But even though it is God Himself making the predictions, we pause and take note that His predictions are not always accepted, understood or welcomed. Generally prophetic utterances are only understood after the fact, and even then, only with those who have the eyes to see.

Even the Lord's own disciples were unable to process the clear predictions that Jesus would suffer, be crucified and rise from the dead. We can hardly imagine that we are much better than they. We will resist, close our eyes, and try to proceed in a way that leaves out the Lord's clear advice and direction.

Here we are in a time-and-space world. With the unlimited potential of the human mind, we make the best of the confines of our outer world. The Lord has given His Word that a joining together of God and man can take place within each one of us.

*If we are **wise**, we defer any certainty to God. If we have any sense of **humility**, we will place the **outcome** in **His hands**.*

The Lord's own life, death and resurrection reveals to us a pattern that is predictive of our own lives: it is an illustration of our very relationship with Him and even our relationship with our human cir-

cumstance. We will have our trials. We will deny and reject even the most generous Love shown us. And through our own version of error and wrongdoing, we may come to a resurrection, a better state: a life transformed and uplifted.

Let us not fear the future. To do so would be to forget that the Lord our God is with us in that future. Fear not. The Lord is with us even to the end of the age.

For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope. (*Jeremiah 29: 11*)

Amen.



The **Rev. Louis Synnestvedt** came out of retirement to serve for two years as interim pastor for the Colchester New Church in Essex, England, and now is doing the same for the Boynton Beach New Church in Florida. He and his wife, Aileen (King), live in Kempton, Pennsylvania. Contact: lou.synn@gmail.com

General Church Council of the Clergy Meetings

June 19–25, Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania

The Rev. Glenn “Mac” Frazier

(Reprinted with permission from The Echo newsletter of the
Washington New Church)

The Council of the Clergy of the General Church gathered in Bryn Athyn, June 19–25, to discuss doctrine and the church. This was the first real meeting of the full international Council since the pandemic broke out several years ago, although there have been smaller regional meetings here and there in the past couple of years.

At this year’s meetings there were two major areas of focus for discussion: the doctrines surrounding the subject of married love (especially as it relates to LGBT concerns), and the processes by which the clergy govern and conduct themselves as a body, with regard to what is called “the doctrine of the church.” These meetings were important. And complicated. And exhausting. And useful. And they were part of a much larger process that is still unfolding. It would be strange for me to say nothing about them. But it is also difficult to give a full, clear, succinct report of the proceedings in one article. There are ongoing processes within the clergy and the church that take time, and that I can neither speak for, nor do I wish to undercut them by running out ahead of them. So, with a certain sense of holy fear and humility, let me just present a short narrative of my experience of these meetings. Nothing I say is official, or binding, or definitive. Rather, [this was written just after the meetings], these are the impressions of one somewhat worn-out human being’s perception of some of what happened.

Several papers were presented to the clergy on the topics of married love, sexuality and gender. Some of them were exceptionally long and com-

plicated, as one might expect given the complexities of the subject matter. The doctrines presented in them were discussed on the floor of the meeting, in online discussion groups, in small groups, in quick gatherings during breaks, and over meals throughout the week. It is my impression that every single priest – every single one of them – engaged with the topic with two goals in mind: lovingly helping people connect with the Lord, and obediently turning to the Word as the supreme authority over what is true and good.

Sometimes the temptation arises to characterize priests into opposing camps: truth-focused vs. good-focused, wise vs. loving, pastoral vs. doctrinal, affectional vs. intellectual. And while every person, at any given moment, is likely to be emphasizing one or the other half of each of these pairs, the oversimplification of this division does a horrible disservice to everyone involved. There were no priests who habitually ignore the Word. There were no priests who just hate certain people. Those are both ideas that hell would delight in putting to use in our destruction.

I'm not saying hate isn't a real danger in the world, or that false teaching can't ever happen anywhere. But the proceedings I witnessed were not that. I saw dozens and dozens of priests from all over the world united in the desire to go to the Word, to submit to the Lord's teaching, and to love the neighbor that is in every person. There were sometimes disagreements over how to understand some of what the Word says. And there are real challenges when what the Word says can feel like "hard sayings." And all this is happening in an environment that is supercharged by the surrounding context of American politics right now. Plus, there is a lot of hurt all around. So, it's complicated, and emotions can run high.

We spent a lot of time looking in fine detail about what the Word says about marriage, about sex, and about ideals vs. permitted accommodations. And while there are disagreements, it is my impression that the doctrinal points where we all fundamentally agree are far more common than the areas where we differ. And where those differences are most radical, it seems to me

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usually to come down to a very small minority of dissenters. Where the differences are more nuanced, the split gets closer to 50-50. But overall, the splits are rarer than the areas of agreement. I think.

And that raises a separate problem: How does one know what a group of people thinks? How do you measure consensus? A principle in the Order and Organization of the General Church – a sort of evolving charter that is not doctrine, but nevertheless is seen by many as an important guidance to our proceedings – is that we, as a clergy, do not “vote on doctrine.” So, we historically have been extremely hesitant to do anything that even approaches the appearance of determining doctrine by vote.

And yet, we have clear teachings in the Word that a priest is to teach, not his personal understanding of doctrine, but “the doctrine of their church.” So how does one determine what that doctrine is when things get complicated? This is a vital question for priests trying to do their job justly and faithfully

When the clergy was a much smaller body, it was somewhat possible for everyone in the council to get a “read” of the room through conversation, to find out what was generally accepted as the standard doctrine everyone could agree on for the time being. But today our membership is in the triple digits. There’s no way for each person to talk to each other person over the course of four and a half days to really know what everyone thinks.

So I say this is my impression of things, but I don’t really know. And this touches the other subject of the week: how do we operate as a clergy? As a result of discussions, we’ve embarked on the design of a process that hopefully will help us not so much determine the doctrine of the church, but to discover it. But it’s going to take some time to get it working right. So stay tuned.

I know that some would like to have more certainty about what (and how) the church teaches on the subject of sexuality. I understand that. It’s a subject that touches a lot of lives. This was shown in a petition that was sent to the Bishops, Board and Council that week, and in two friendly demonstrations carried out during the meetings. It was demonstrated in the hundreds of letters of support sent to us priests. And, of course, the married love of “one man with one wife is the precious jewel of human life and the repository of Christian religion.” (*Married Love* 457)

As a result of discussions, we’ve embarked on the design of a process that hopefully will help us not so much determine the doctrine of the church, but to discover it.

This is important stuff. Responses to the proceedings will start at the office of

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the Bishop, and I don't want to speak out of turn. As I said, things are still in development. We look forward to offering a more detailed follow-up at some point in the future.



(In this report to his society, **Pastor Mac Frazier** encouraged anyone who wants to reach out to him to do so, saying he would be happy to answer any questions, and to hear any thoughts or concerns. Ministers throughout the church echo this invitation.)

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FROM THE BISHOP'S OFFICE

What is Truth?

The Rt. Rev. David H. Lindrooth

“What is Truth?” (John 18:38)

Pilate asks Jesus that question during His trial in the Easter story. I have always wondered what he meant by it. Perhaps he was being sarcastic, suggesting that there is no such thing as “truth.” Or, was he saying that he and other influential people can define truth to be whatever they want it to be in order to serve some expedient end? Or was Pilate actually genuinely moved by his meeting with Jesus, and he was articulating his conclusion that, while the Lord was set up by the Pharisees to die, nothing could be done to stop the cruel death of the innocent? Perhaps Pilate simply was admitting that he didn’t know the difference between truth and falsity, or, for that matter the difference between good and evil.

The *Heavenly Doctrines* don’t clearly answer this question but there are passages noting that when the Lord came to earth there was such deep spiritual darkness that people struggled with differentiating between truth and lies of falsity. In fact they note that it is an ongoing struggle.

One inspiring answer to the question of “what is truth?” comes the manuscript now called *Spiritual Experiences*. “Truth,” we read, “is whatever looks to the Kingdom of the Lord, so that truths are all the means that look, tend and lead to it. (No. 60)

I love the utility of the statement. Truths are the concepts that show us what it is like to live in heaven. Truths show us how to live a life that leads us

to heaven. They show us how we can care for heavenly things. They show us aspects of the Lord's love and how to access that love.

Part of the point is that truths describe a heavenly universe and its related states that we (without truths) would know nothing about. Without 'the good news from heaven,' as Johnny Appleseed used to say, or without truths that come from the Lord through heaven, we can know nothing of spiritual life, how it operates in us, and how we can come into partnership with the Lord.

A passage in *Conjugal Love* 233: "There a group of spirits appear who are excellent at reasoning about concepts and things from the 'light of nature.' People around them observing their arguments explain 'O how wise!' when they see their intricate arguments. Later, however, the absurdity of their arguments is shown when they argue that a raven is white, and that night is day. When asked if he could argue that he was insane, the spirit replied that he could, but he didn't wish to."

As the story progresses, we are shown its point: "The level of [true] reason is in the light of heaven. The light of nature can confirm whatever it pleases. However, if the light of heaven does not flow into the light of nature, a person does not see whether any truth is true, and so neither whether any falsity is false." The conclusion is that only when the light of heaven flows from the Lord alone into one's thinking in the natural world can a person see truth.

We cannot learn anything about spiritual reality by simply looking at nature. This truth points to why the Word is so important. We need that window to see into the spiritual world, its realities, the principles which open a person up to receiving the Lord's spiritual life, and to see the way to heaven.

In John we read: "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God." (*John 1:1*) Later Jesus says that He "is the way, the truth and the life." (*14:6*).

The point is that going to the Word, looking for the truths that will lead us to heaven isn't always easy. We don't always see what we want to see when we are thinking from our natural selves. In fact, there are times when we simply are not able to see the truth because we live in a natural world that is filled with false ideas about what is good, and we are at times influenced by purely natural self-oriented motives.

In order to see the truths Pilate was asking about one must allow the light of heaven to shine into one's thinking and recognize that the truths of heaven are heavenly in nature. They come from the Lord and are, as to their origin, coming from what is above our conscious worldly awareness. (*Arcana Coelestia* 3223)

It is the Lord who opens the way and allows us to see truths. It starts by going to Him in the Word. When we take to heart the teaching that we are to "love the Lord our God, with all our hearts, with all our minds and with all

our spirits and love our neighbor as ourselves,” and that “on these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets,” and begin our investigation of truth with these commandments in our minds, the Lord will open the door. (*Matthew 22:37-40*)

It can take time, and that’s okay. But we need to stay committed to understanding what is there in the Word. It is the only way the New Church can thrive. We as members need to go back again and again and acknowledge what is given to us by the Lord in the message of His Word, and to seek to understand how these teachings lead us to love Him and the neighbor.

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In Search of Swedenborg: Pilgrimage Reflections and the Power of Place

The Rev. Christopher Augustus Barber

For years, readers of *New Church Life* have made pilgrimages to sites of early New Church history import. Reports from these adventures have focused the mind on natural havens for the New Church in this world. As a theologian with an equal fascination with history, it was truly only a matter of time before I made my own such journeys to Sweden, the homeland of our wondrous seer, Emanuel Swedenborg (1688-1772), and England, where so much fervor stirred in the hearts and minds of early New Church people.

In 2020, my first voyage was interrupted by the impending covid lockdown. Naturally, I was eager to return. This summer, I made it back across the Atlantic for the month of July, during which time, as part of and in addition to a research fellowship, I explored archives, museums, graveyards and monuments, and met historians, librarians, authors and more. I present here a few selected sites and events with my reflections.

The Power of Place

Place is powerful. The Word tells the story of our spiritual lives with cartographical precision. People around the world hallow certain places on account of solemn events and what they represent. For myself, being able to hold tomes penned by early devotees of New Church doctrine who were forging their own way into a new and yet eternal theological frame of mind, sometimes at great risk and expense – or being able to sit at a restaurant once enjoyed by Swedenborg at a critical point in his shift from scientist to seer – were natural touchstones that brought me into transcendent communion with the optimism and holy fear of New Church people past, present and future.

The Grave of Rt. Rev. William Henry Benade, Highgate Cemetery, London

Established in 1839, Highgate Cemetery is a sprawling 37-acre necropolis, boasting such permanent residents as Karl Marx, Douglas Adams, Jean Simmons and our very own William Henry Benade (1816-1905). Father Benade's vision of distinctly New Church communities persists in pockets of the United States.

The final chapter of his life played out in London, where some of his personal library and effects can still be found at Michael Church. I was glad to pay my respects at his resting place. Graves are important pieces of church history. Sadly, many New Church cemeteries are now the sites of car parks, condos and new uses.

St John's Church, Manchester

The Rev. John Clowes (1743-1831), translator of Swedenborg's Writings and advocate for New Church thought, was rector of a large Gothic Revival church that once stood proudly on what is now a beautiful public park. (I was surprised to learn just how close the church was to the site of the "Peterloo Massacre" of 1819!)

Clowes served as rector here for more than six decades, some of which time is captured in his well-known posthumously published memoir. Before my trip, the Rev. Stephen Cole had alerted me to the existence of the original manuscript of this memoir, preserved at nearby Chetham's Library, founded in 1653. By advance appointment, I was able to peruse his work at my leisure.



Chris Barber with Derek Antrobus in front of Manchester Cathedral

I beheld the famous "Divinum Humanum" from his conversion experience, written in his own hand. As I was leaving the historic stacks of the old library, I looked up and happened to see, high up and dimly visible in the rafters, a portrait of Rev. Clowes. He looked down at me with outstretched hand

as if to say, “We meet at last.”

Christ Church, Salford

Just across the River Irwell from the Manchester Cathedral sits in the city of Salford, the site formerly of Christ Church and burying ground. This church was home to a Swedenborgian sect called the Bible Christians, founded by the Rev. William Cowherd (1763-1816), who had once been Clowes’s curate at St. John’s.

Cowherd’s Salford establishment was a hub of service in the industrial city: providing a soup kitchen, burials for the poor, education and more. One of the most distinctive aspects of this church was that it was vegetarian! Cowherd believed it to be immoral to eat the flesh of living things. My study of Cowherd’s operation in Salford had previously brought me into contact with two fascinating people there: Derek Antrobus, author of “A Guiltless Feast,” a book about the vegetarian movement and its Swedenborgian roots, and Oliver Cook, an archaeologist at Salford University who in 2019 excavated and documented the remnants of the old burying ground and church foundation.



Chris with Oliver Cook in front of the stairs formerly to Christ Church

The grounds will, like those formerly of St. Johns, become a public park. I was able to meet separately with both of these generous souls, and from them I learned even more about the city, its history, and the Swedenborgian movement there. I even had a vegan meal with Antrobus! A very fine occasion.

Baptismal Font, St. James’s Church, Stockholm

Just north of Old Stockholm, where Swedenborg spent much time, can be found St. James’s Church, a magnificent building wherein Swedenborg was baptized on February 3, 1688. Much of the church’s interior has changed over the years, but one of the few pieces of furniture that remains from the 17th century is the baptismal font. I was unexpectedly overcome with emotion when in the presence of this piece.

Baptism is a promise and Emanuel’s was made by his parents – to bring him up in the fear of the Lord. That baby would later grow up to write these words: “Let those then who have been baptized know that baptism does not by itself confer faith or salvation; but that it bears witness that they are in receipt of faith and are saved, if they are regenerated,” (*New Jerusalem and its Heavenly*



The Baptismal Font at St. James Church in Stockholm

Doctrine 207).

As I sat in the baptismal chapel at St. James's, I mused on the fullness of the man's life and promise. Though 300 years passed between his birth and mine, we all can bear witness to his baptism, not because of a font, but because of his life.

Falun Mine, Falun, Sweden

In his theological writing, Swedenborg makes masterful use of natural world imagery to convey concepts revealed to him by the Lord. Doing so, he drew on his own experiences, some of which likely came from time spent at a site that can be visited today: the Great Copper Mountain in Falun, 120 miles northwest of Stockholm. Swedenborg's family came from this area and had interest in the mining operation at Falun, the source of much of Sweden's wealth and Europe's copper.

As an assessor of mines, Swedenborg spent a number of summers at Falun, engaging in many aspects of the work there, including going down into the mines where the dangerous work was done. In his theological works, imagery pertaining to mines, caves and minerals are deployed at times to convey spiritual visions and principles. The sights and sounds of the mines clearly made a lasting impression on Swedenborg. My visit gave me a tangible experience of some of the often hellish things described by way of mining.



Chris in the Falun Mine in Sweden

Swedenborg's Sarcophagus, Uppsala Cathedral, Uppsala, Sweden

The last reflection I will share, is that of visiting the mortal remains of Swedenborg. When Emanuel was young, his father Jesper was in charge of the Cathedral. Emanuel died in London and was initially buried in a church that no longer stands (I did visit that site), but his remains were moved with great pomp and circumstance to Uppsala, now resting in a pink granite sarcophagus. His mother and brother Albrecht are entombed in the building as well.

While visiting, a question consumed me: was I closer to him when standing beside his remains, or when reading his writing? So much of who I am is wrapped up in this man: how I see the world, what I believe is right and wrong,

how I am as a husband, how I strive to be as a citizen.

I was surprised to find that being near his sarcophagus was both over- and underwhelming. Before me was a dead man's bones, and yet, they were the remnants of the hands which penned the doctrines which inform my existence. The cranium which held the brain that pondered the mysteries of life and death. I expected to feel a lot more moved to be in their presence. Though it was a solemn visit and an essential part of my pilgrimage, I could not let the man eclipse his mission and purpose. He as a servant of the Lord; may we find ways to be the same.

I have found that few things connect you with another person better than spending time in their physical space. Presence is powerful. While physical history not only provides an opportunity to connect with people and ways of old; it forces us to step into the now with fresh eyes. We don't need to travel to engage this part of our mind. In the spiritual world, we are told, thought brings presence.

I hope these reflections brought some sense of connection with these important sites and people, but more importantly I hope they stirred within you some reflections on your own relationship with the New Church: Why is it important to you? What keeps you coming back? What sacrifices have you made to keep it alive in your life? How do you hope to help it grow and improve?

Someday people will look back

While visiting, a question consumed me: was I closer to him when standing beside his remains, or when reading his writing? So much of who I am is wrapped up in this man: how I see the world, what I believe is right and wrong, how I am as a husband, how I strive to be as a citizen.

on you and me and us and feel connected in some real yet intangible way that reaches without delay beyond the years and miles that only this world demands. I hope they will find in us the same eternal values that have driven our Church for centuries.



Chris with his wife, Annika,
at Swedenborg's tomb

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Spirituality, Religion and Swedenborg

Dan A. Synnestvedt, PhD

Institute for Swedenborg Studies Seminar
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This institute is discussing spirituality and Swedenborg from an academic perspective and very, very few people are doing this. After conducting a survey of academic books on spirituality a couple of years ago, I found that Swedenborg is almost entirely absent from books that contain what seems to be the canon of Christian spiritual writers.

Given the abundance of spiritual subjects in his theological books, this absence might strike Swedenborgians as strange. There are at least two reasons for the neglect. One is that authors in the canon are gauged as having made a substantial impact upon others, and Swedenborg has apparently not met that standard. The other reason is that he is not seen as a Christian. However, Swedenborg does make brief appearances in books on the history of American spirituality.

This paper explores the topic of spirituality by developing a Swedenborgian perspective on spirit, spiritual and spirituality, by summarizing research on the distinction between religion and “spiritual but not religious” (SBNR), by considering the criticisms and causes of SBNR, and lastly by applying two ideas from Swedenborgian theological works to SBNR spirituality in response to this question raised by a scholar in the field:

Do the trends in America and the differences between religion and spirituality constitute a religious crisis or a spiritual revolution? While I have experience in the philosophy of religion, I am a newcomer to the field of spirituality studies. My interest in spirituality was piqued when I noticed that well-known secular humanists in philosophy and even one of the so-called “new atheists” began publishing books about spirituality.

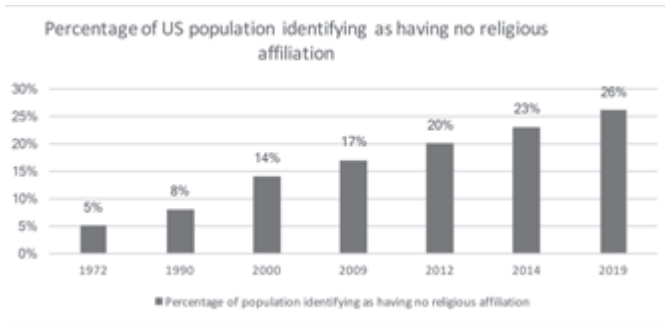
The focus of this paper is the “spiritual but not religious” phenomenon. There are three reasons for this. First, it is a growing trend in Western culture. We will begin with a famous, or infamous, example of spiritual but not

religious given in the national bestselling book, *Habits of the Heart*. One respondent to the sociologists' questions is called Sheila Larson (not her real name). All we are told is that she was a young nurse who received a good deal of therapy.

"I believe in God. I'm not a religious fanatic. I can't remember the last time I went to church. My faith has carried me a long way. It's Sheila-ism. It's just: try to love yourself and be gentle with yourself. You know, take care of each other. I think He would want us to take care of each other."

Perhaps unfairly, for her and the authors, she came to epitomize the privatized, individualized, narcissistic American "do it yourself" kind of spirituality. While "Sheila" was part of a very small minority in the 1980s, many more people have since adopted a similar outlook.

As the graph below shows, the number of Americans who check "none" on surveys when asked to what particular faith group they belong has increased.



(Pew Research Center; see also *Belief Without Borders* by Linda Mercadante, Oxford, 2014, 1-2)

Also, between 1971 and 2001 the number of Canadians identified as having no particular religion rose from 4 to 16%. This trend has consequences for people in religious institutions; in business fields, for government officials, lawyers, public policy developers, people in healthcare fields, and academia – from admissions management personnel to professors in departments of religion, sociology, anthropology and psychology. The trend is so strong that, according to one scholar: "Unchurched spirituality is gradually reshaping the personal faith of many who belong to mainstream religious organizations."

Second, polarization between religion and spirituality has developed among some people and this has challenged toleration. Unsurprisingly, conservative religious people and organizations have expressed some intolerance of people who are SBNR. What may be surprising to learn is that the reverse

also occurs – though much less frequently.

Third, spirituality is important because, according to Swedenborg, being spiritual is what we long for and it is what we are born to become. He also asserts that it is something about which most people in the Christian world are ignorant.

To understand what is happening in Western societies, it is useful to grasp the ways that people distinguish spirituality from religion. There are many definitions of both “religion” and “spirituality” and the latter term is especially contested. One might be tempted to put aside all talk of defining terms in order to explore the subject. However, that is a mistake.

Without an agreed upon definition of terms it is impossible for researchers in healthcare, psychology, sociology and political science to conduct accurate comparative studies of phenomena and to assess their causes and effects, benefits and harms. Also, legal documents, such as the U.S. Constitution, speak of government not making laws about establishing a religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof, but they often contain no explicit statements about spirituality.

Swedenborg’s View of Spirituality

Most definitions of “spirituality” that I have read don’t include an attempt to also define “spirit.” What Swedenborg means by “spirit” is our mind. Of course, “mind” is also a contested term in academia. By “mind” Swedenborg means our interior essence. It is a living force organized into a vessel that receives life from the Lord. Among its abilities, the mind can understand truth and will what is good to eternity. As counterintuitive as it may seem, Swedenborg’s concept of spirit does not exclude the concept of body.

In the early Christian church of the Epistles, “spirit” and “spiritual” are not the opposite of “physical” or “material” (Greek *soma*, Latin *corpus*) but are the opposite of “flesh” (Greek *sarx*, Latin *caro*), which sometimes refers to everything that is contrary to the Spirit of God. The intended contrast is not therefore between body and spirit, but between two different attitudes to life. A “spiritual person” was someone within whom the spirit of God dwelt or who lived under the influence of the Holy Spirit.

One reason that “spirit” is not the opposite of “body” is that the interior person also has a body, with members and organs, consisting of spiritual substance. Once born, minds are always embodied in this metaphysic. Swedenborg is aware of alternative views of spirit but rejects them: spirit is not abstract thought without extension; it is not a cogitative something of flame or ether; it is not a particle deeply hidden in the brain, nor a purer form of physical matter. As we have just seen, one way Swedenborg defines human “spirit” is to contrast it with what is merely natural, external, or physical in the metaphysi-

cal sense of these terms.

The axiological and ethical distinction between spiritual and natural is connected to the prior metaphysical definition of spirit by way of definitions of “spiritual” in Swedenborg’s works. Here is the first definition:

The spiritual, *in its first origin*, is the divine truth proceeding from the Lord’s Divine Human, which truth has good in it, because Divine truth comes forth from the Lord’s Divine Human, which is Divine good. This Divine truth, in which is Divine good, is the spiritual itself in its origin, and it is the very life that fills heaven, yes, which fills the universe. . . . Hence now it is evident what spiritual life is, namely, that it consists in being in the truths from good which proceed from the Lord. (*Arcana Coelestia* 6685; emphasis added)

We are in the midst of a metaphysical vision here. Divinely human good and truth are so real that they are the stuff of life in both worlds, and they should be our highest values. Despite its Platonic tones, this is not a vision of a static God and ideal Platonic forms that are to be admired. Instead, it is a vision of a dynamic Lord who is constantly giving Himself away to us, to all creation.

The last line of the quotation reinforces the connection between the metaphysical and ethical aspects of this spirituality: Spiritual life consists in being in the truths from good which proceed from the Lord as ultimate reality. And what does it mean to be? Swedenborg’s *Arcana Coelestia* provides a profound answer to this question: it means to be conjoined, conjoined to the Lord, to the good in our neighbors, to heaven, and to good, truth, and use in our lives.

While the spiritual defined by its origin is cognitively challenging, there is a second definition of “spiritual” that is easier to comprehend:

In its essence the spiritual *with a person* is the very affection of good and truth for the sake of good and truth, and not for the sake of self, and also the affection for what is just and fair for the sake of what is just and fair, and not for the sake of self. (*Arcana Coelestia* 5629.2; emphasis added)

Many people have this kind of spiritual experience. We have probably craved what is true and good (an affection *for*) and we have probably been struck by what is true and good (affected *by*). This is what spirituality in essence is with us mortals. It can occur within a wide variety of contexts ranging from a sense of duty and the voice of conscience to the emptiness felt in moments of loss or the fullness felt in moments of achievement.

Clearly, Swedenborg extends the contrast between natural and spiritual to the realm of axiology (values), especially normative ethics. This second definition of “spiritual” can be illustrated by summarizing the differences between spiritual people and natural people in a table. Both St. John and St. Paul wrote of the distinction between “spirit” and “flesh” or the spiritual person and the natural person. So, this is not a Swedenborgian innovation.

The table below has the obvious limitation of ignoring the way that we are a mixture of spiritual and natural, but visually it helps draw the contrasts. Please keep in mind that the primary use of these distinctions between spiritual and natural lies in helping us set a destination and course for the journey of our lives. It helps us monitor our progress and enables us to help others in charitable ways. These distinctions are *not* meant to divide the population of the planet into two incompatible groups.

Table I. Qualities of Spiritual People in Contrast to Natural People from a Swedenborgian Perspective

Spiritual People	Natural People	Reference
Consider how they are going to benefit others by doing what is useful	Consider how they are going to benefit themselves	<i>Arcana Coelestia</i> 5025
Make ethical decisions based upon the common good, the good of the church and the kingdom of God	Make ethical decisions based upon themselves and their relatives	5025.2
See the public good and the good of the church as ends in themselves	See the public good and the good of the church as means to their own selfish ends	5025.2
Regard everyone who is in good as conjoined with themselves, whether they know them personally or not	Despise and reject whatever they regard as separate from themselves	5025.2
Have an affection for what is good and true, charitable and faithful, just and fair for their own sake	Either don't have this affection or if they do, treat these ideals as means to their own selfish and worldly ends	5639.2
Think that faith, charity, conscience, the soul and heaven are real	Think that faith, charity, conscience, the soul and heaven are <i>not</i> real	7217
Are distressed when deprived of truth and good	Think that anxiety over lack of truth and good is from a delirium of fantasy, especially in contrast to the pleasures of wealth and distinction	7217
Have good thoughts and intentions toward their neighbors from a heavenly origin	Have evil thoughts and intentions toward their neighbors from a hellish origin	<i>New Jerusalem and Its Heavenly Doctrine</i> 42
Shun evils as sins	Do not shun evils as sins	<i>Doctrine of Life</i> 42-52
Live according to the Ten Commandments	Do not live according to the Ten Commandments or do so for worldly reasons	<i>Married Love</i> 340.3
Are motivated by love of God and the neighbor	Are motivated by love of self and the world	<i>True Christian Religion</i> 754

What can we conclude from the above? First, that Swedenborg has a concept of spirit, spiritual and spirituality. Second, that these concepts are both metaphysical and ethical with the ethical norms grounded in the reality of the Lord. Third, a necessary condition for spirituality is intending and doing what is good and true for its own sake, not for the sake of the world or for self.

**Swedenborg and the Phenomenon
Known as Spiritual but not Religious**

With this foundational understanding of what Swedenborg means by “spiritual,” let us broaden our perspective by considering “spiritual” from today’s spiritual but not religious (SBNR) perspective. To save time and provoke thinking, the following table summarizes characterizations of religion as “vices” in contrast to the “virtues” of spirituality to reflect SBNR points of view.

**Table II. Criticisms of Religion
from Spiritual But Not Religious (SBNR) Perspectives***

SBNR: Religion's Vices	SBNR: Spirituality's Virtues
1. Too doctrinal & belief oriented, creedal	Emotion and experience-based, no creed
2. Too regulated, authoritarian, hierarchical, elitist, exclusive, transcendent authority	Freedom, democratically structured and available, inclusive, internal authority
3. Promotes perfection	Promotes wholeness, complexity and meeting our basic spiritual impulses
4. One-sided, imbalanced	Promotes balance, holistic approach
5. Patriarchal and masculinist	Welcomes women and their authority; does not repress feminine element in men nor in the divine
6. Pre-modern cosmology and archaic vision of reality	Welcomes modern cosmology and discoveries
7. God is external	God is internal or within
8. God is interventionist	God does not interfere
9. Conception of spirit is supernatural	Spirit is an inside agency without a “kingdom”
10. Otherworldly and ignores the sacred in creation	Teaches us how to live harmoniously with nature, not dominate it
11. Dualistic and instructs spirit to triumph over body	Brings spirit and body, sacredness and sexuality, together
12. Dogmatic and external to life, imposes rules, demands conformity	Experimental; offers many pathways by which people can be transformed
13. Imposes big story of theology upon our experience	Welcomes little stories of individuals and their experience
14. Fused with establishment (government and big business) and cannot/does not offer critique	Can and does offer radical critique of societal status quo
15. Too static, maintains boring traditions	Dynamic, inventive, explores new ideas and practices
16. Too institutional, orthodox, ritualistic	Personal, unorthodox, mystical
17. Attempts to be objective, rational	Welcomes subjectivity, heart-felt
18. Makes people doubt their inherent goodness, condemns them and their problematic behavior	People must uncover their inherent goodness and divinity
19. Religious loyalty promotes group-think, isolation, manipulation, abuse	Commitment to individualism; promotes personal growth, authenticity, happiness
20. Belief in traditional heaven and hell is immature, a false hope, manipulative, exclusivist, unfair	Personal choice determines where one ends up; the only judgment allowed is by self; more than one lifetime to get it right is fair

*The information in the table is drawn from *The Spirituality Revolution: The Emergence of Contemporary Spirituality* by David Tacey (Routledge, 2004); *Belief Without Borders: Inside the Minds of the Spiritual but not Religious* by Linda Mercadante (Oxford, 2014); “*Religiousness and Spirituality*” by Brian J. Zinnbauer and Kenneth I. Pargament in *Handbook of the Psychology of Religion and Spirituality* (Guilford, 2005); and *Spiritual but not Religious: Understanding Unchurched America* by Robert C. Fuller (Oxford, 2001). To be clear, these characterizations of religion and spirituality originate with the general public primarily, *not* academics. Also, the table does not reflect my view of religion and spirituality, *nor* does it reflect Swedenborg’s views of these subjects.

Would Swedenborg agree that these are “vices” of religion? One way to answer this question is to use a sociological distinction between a substantive or normative definition of “religion” and a functional definition of “religion.” This distinction is expressed in common parlance this way: “Mother Teresa is religious” (substantive) vs. “Football is his religion” (functional).

If we use Swedenborg’s substantive definition of “religion” (*religio*) then religion does not have any vices. His substantive or normative definition of religion is an acknowledgment of God and living a good life. If we use Swedenborg’s *functional* definition of “god” and his term “religiosity” (*religiosum*) as what we love the most and believe in, then yes, “religion” will have vices if people have either love of self or love of the world as their primary love. The term in most English translations of Swedenborg’s works that frequently lines up with what SBNRs mean by “religion” is “church.”

Swedenborg makes many criticisms of the traditional Christian church and some of them appear on the list above. For example, he criticizes the Christian church or specific denominations within it for over-emphasizing doctrinal uniformity and epistemic orthodoxy, for elitism, for exclusivism regarding who can be saved and go to heaven, for manipulation and abuse of people, for over-involvement in civic matters, and for not respecting people’s freedom and reason. He is critical of aspects of the traditional Christian conception of heaven and hell, of the traditional Christian view of human nature and original sin, and of doctrines regarding the Lord. It is tempting to read the following statement made by Swedenborg in 1769 as foretelling the SBNR phenomenon: “The faith of the present day has separated religion from the church.”

From the term “church” we turn to the related term “piety.” This term refers to praying, attending church, listening to sermons, participating in rites and sacraments, and speaking in a way that shows respect for religion. By “spiritual life” or “religion,” Swedenborg does not mean piety. Pious actions and thoughts help us live a spiritual life, but (as we have seen) they are not the essence of a spiritual life. Instead, charity – as willing good and doing good

prudently to the neighbor, acting from what is just and equitable, and good and true for their own sake in all our work – is the essence of a spiritual life.

Just as religion has been criticized for its shortcomings, so the SBNR approach to spirituality has attracted critical scrutiny from academics as well as people from both liberal and conservative ends of the political and theological spectrum. Let us briefly consider criticisms and concerns. The criticisms stem from a variety of perspectives, not just religious points of view.

List I. Criticisms and Risks of SBNR Spirituality

1. Some people in the SBNR population have placed themselves in the hands of commercial interests. “In a sense, the most troubling aspect of many modern spiritualities is precisely that they are not troubling enough. They promote accommodation to the social, economic and political mores of the day [neo-liberalism] and provide little in terms of a challenge to the status quo or to a lifestyle of self-interest and ubiquitous consumption.” In other words, they don’t challenge the love of self or the love of the world. “Spirituality has become the primary means facilitating the corporate takeover of religion.”

2. The increasing individualism of SBNR does not lead to liberation but to alienation. The thin gruel of do-it-yourself spirituality turns out to be isolating, lonely, and unable to endure crises.

3. The idea that “spirit” is a kind of personal possession or inward endeavor is a curious myth of our time. Poetry and philosophy indicate that spirit is universal and collective. The idea of a “private” spiritual is fraudulent and deceptive.

4. “Privatized spirituality emerges here as the new cultural Prozac bringing transitory feelings of ecstatic happiness and thoughts of self-affirmation, but never addressing sufficiently the underlying problem of social isolation and injustice.” The magnitude of the problems we face requires an engaged spirituality rather than simply a privatized one. Sociological research shows that people with strong religious beliefs have “pro-social behavior” and are more likely to volunteer, take on civic obligations, and generally work to improve society.

5. The new spirituality is overly self-focused and a harbinger of societal breakdown. “The one thing nearly everyone [SBNRs] said – the one thing they most often started their comments with – is that human nature is inherently good.” By borrowing or “poaching” from organized religions, spirituality may unknowingly create what Will Herberg called a “cut flower culture” in which the “flower” of morality dies because it has been severed from its roots.

6. The naïve notion of an inherently “good” spirituality may lead researchers and the general public to ignore the potentially destructive side of spirituality.
7. Taken to extremes, SBNR can make people reluctant to form healthy long-term personal commitments. Yet such commitments are a necessary component of personal change.
8. Separating religion from spirituality is a false dichotomy. The spirituality of SBNR often imitates incarnate religion. Spirituality becomes a couple of poignant one-liners to keep significance alive.
9. Attempting to harmonize all religions into a common spirituality moves us further away from them and it will not bring peace. It disrespects religions’ distinctive characteristics, history, visions, and normative claims. The notion that there is an “essence” or “common core” of spirituality which is instantiated in different historical circumstances, both Christian and non-Christian, religious and not, is open to the ethical objection that it fails to respect difference and to allow what is strange and other to be strange and other. Aspects of ancient religions are “translated into modern western contexts, but there is generally a failure to appreciate that this is not the total picture. The result is that the wisdom of diverse ancient civilizations becomes commodified in order to serve the eclectic interests of spiritual consumers.”
10. Conceptual confusion: The polarizations promoted by SBNR are related to an errant choice of words. There are four terms, not just two: religion should be compared to spirit and religiousness to spirituality.

Despite these criticisms and risks, the percentage of “nones” in Western countries continues to increase. Why? What is causing people to reject religion and favor spirituality instead? Let us briefly consider some answers.

List II. Some Putative Causes of the SBNR Phenomenon

1. The increasing prestige of the sciences, the insights of modern biblical scholarship, and greater awareness of cultural relativism have all made it more difficult for educated Americans to sustain unqualified loyalty to traditional religious institutions. The secularization thesis is that modernity (urbanization, industrialization, scientific application) inevitably marginalizes religion. Three types of secularity are identified by the Canadian philosopher Charles Taylor. However, instead of the secularization thesis and radical detraditionalization,

the coexistence thesis has been proposed.

2. “The two most important macro-level trends are undoubtedly the loss of trust in social institutions in general and religious leaders in particular and the perception that religious institutions are no longer tied into the daily life of individuals as intimately as they once were. In other words, they are increasingly considered irrelevant.” People in Europe have no confidence in the capacity of traditional Christian institutions to provide effective channels for the contemporary spiritual quest and for people’s spiritual needs.

3. Religion is just one more choice in a market-driven society. As with other consumer products, brand loyalty lasts only until the consumer is no longer satisfied or finds novelty elsewhere.

4. People are dissatisfied with traditional religious concepts, such as a wrathful interventionist God, a static afterlife, original sin and authoritarian Christian theology.

5. Spirituality is strongly shaped by American values – often derived from Western religious roots, especially mainstream Protestantism – like progressivism, egalitarianism, free choice, pragmatism and individualism.

6. A romantic idealization of the self and a revulsion at making moral judgments. According to the philosopher Charles Taylor, this is part of an incoherent ethics of authenticity.

7. Drug and alcohol addiction and addiction recovery programs such as Alcoholics Anonymous can foster an SBNR outlook. (This is not to claim that these programs can’t encourage a return to religion and church, for some people, they do.)

8. Looking at the causes of SBNR phenomena through a Swedenborgian lens, we can include the rise of the faith alone doctrine in Protestant churches, corruption in the Catholic church, empty worship, a lack of knowledge about the spiritual world along with a lack of acknowledgement of one God, naturalism within the Christian church and the Last Judgment. Regarding the effects of the Last Judgment, Swedenborg predicted greater freedom and light in spiritual matters and that the new Christian church will be an internal, spiritual, church compared to the relatively external traditional Christian church. Both of these predictions are congruent with Charles Taylor’s observations of the “nova effect” (the “ever-widening variety of moral and spiritual options”) and

the rise of the ethics of authenticity in Western cultures. Taylor asserts that “we are now living in a spiritual super-nova, a kind of galloping pluralism on the spiritual plane.”

Spirituality and Religion: A Crisis or a Revolution?

One scholar notes that, depending upon where one stands, the trends in America *and* the differences between religion and spirituality constitute either a religious crisis or a spiritual revolution. I propose that when seen through a Swedenborgian lens, they constitute both a crisis (a problem filled with peril, a decision point) and a revolution (the overthrow of an existing regime and a turning filled with promise). One application of New Church teachings regards the sifting of what is promising from what is imperiling.

I have already mentioned some of the criticisms of religion that are compatible with Swedenborg’s point of view and there are some virtues of spirituality that are compatible also. These include the emphasis upon the internal aspects of people, especially their affections and motivations, the emphasis upon a holistic and balanced approach to life, the need for people to use their reason in freedom and develop an internal locus of control instead of being overly reliant upon external authorities, the emphasis on personal growth, the idea that a variety of people and religions are a necessary part of heaven and the Divine order of creation, that to a large extent we end up judging ourselves spiritually speaking and that people cannot and ought not to judge one another spiritually. A Swedenborgian can also welcome and support the interest in spiritual experiences and mysticism, especially in cultures dominated by crass materialism and more subtle forms of naturalism.

The aspect of SBNR spirituality that is most imperiling is the notion that the self is God. I don’t know how widespread this belief is among people who are SBNR, but, unfortunately, it appears as “spiritual wisdom” in the book on spirituality that is part of the well-known “for Dummies” series. It also appears in the re-titled version of this book by Sharon “Kumuda” Janis.

In *Spirituality For Everyone*, the notion that Atman (self) is Brahman (God), starts to make its appearance in assertions such as “everything around you is a reflection of your inner being” (32) and “The transformation of your limited self-identification into a greatness and magnificence you may never have imagined exists in you, as you (33; emphasis in original).

A few pages later Janis recounts the story of a spiritual seeker who travels to a “distant town to receive initiation from a highly respected guru.” The seeker asks the guru for “the secret of life” that will free him from bondage. The guru tells him: “Thou art that,” or “*Tat tvam asi*,” in Sanskrit. Janis explains: “In this statement, “That” refers to the unnamable divine source of all, and “Thou”

represents all the different faces that make up you.” (38) The idea that the real “you” is, at bottom, the same as God, is asserted repeatedly (47, 48, 49, 53, 54) until we reach this breath-taking claim:

Your knowledge expands to fit into the universal knowledge, just as a hand fits into the perfect glove. Your limited powers expand back into their universal powers. Your limited ability to do or not do some things expands into perfect omnipotence. Your limited knowledge becomes omniscient universal awareness. The time and space you had lived in is now revealed to be merely a construct of the mind, as you become all-pervasive and eternal. (75)

To ascribe omnipotence, omniscience, omnipresence and eternity to humans, or more narrowly, to the human soul, is unorthodox from a New Church, Christian, Islamic or Jewish perspective. From the point of view of the great monotheistic faiths, only the infinite God has these qualities, not mortals. To claim otherwise, as Janis does, is idolatry. Indeed, she counts as spiritual wisdom the following quotation from Baba Muktananda: “Meditate on yourself, honor yourself, and *worship* yourself. God dwells within you as you.” (48; emphasis added) Swedenborg teaches that God dwells within us as God, not as us.

By contrast, Swedenborg warns his readers:

If a person from self could have known that there is a God and a life after death, why have people not discovered that a person is a person after death? Why do we imagine that the soul or spirit is like wind or ether, which neither sees with eyes, nor hears with ears, nor speaks with a mouth, until it is reunited with its own dead body and skeleton? Imagine therefore, doctrine for worship derived from the light of reason alone; would it not teach that self should be worshipped, as has been done for ages, and is still done today by some who know from the Word that God alone is to be worshipped? No other kind of worship can be derived from a human’s proprium [unreformed self], not even that of the sun and moon. (*Sacred Scripture* 116: 2-3)

When combined with the idea that self is inherently good, which some SB-NRs believe, there is very, very little openness to change and correction from an external source. Add to this their subjectivism regarding moral values and it is unsurprising that “a significant number of [SBNR] interviewees took the seemingly clear-cut path of disavowing ‘good’ and ‘bad’ altogether.” These beliefs hold the potential for not only individual, but also collective, damage in

both this life and in the next. Still, claims about the relationship between self, goodness and God can serve as an opportunity to introduce people to profound teachings about the proprium or unreformed self.

What about the opposition created between religion and spirituality? While we can be sympathetic with the criticisms of religion, especially the corruption within the Christian church, in Swedenborg's worldview religion and spirituality are not opposed to one another. Instead, spirituality is, or should be, a vital part of religion.

Here we can apply a teaching on externals and internals. Like persons, churches have an internal and an external. It is the internal things, the character and disposition of the mind, that determine the worth of what is external, that give it soul and life. When the external things of a church lack what is internal, then they are of no value.

So, do we only need what is internal or spiritual? Can we do away with communal worship, rituals, sacraments, clergy, church organizations and religious institutions? No, that is not Swedenborg's view. Without the external, the internal lacks form, is left unprotected, and is not "ultimated." This doesn't mean that we must retain either high church or low church externals in their current form, for the externals are supposed to serve the internals.

An additional reason for maintaining some form of externals is that organized religion is an essential part of human society. In fact, this connection between religion and spirituality is what many people in the United States report. In an empirical study from 1997, Zinnbauer and others

found that most of their respondents identified themselves as both spiritual and religious (74%); in contrast, 19% identified themselves as spiritual but not religious, and 4% labeled themselves as religious but not spiritual. Similarly, in a large-scale study conducted by Corrigan, McCorkle, Schell, and Kidder (2003), 63% of respondents identified themselves as both spiritual and religious, 22% identified themselves as spiritual but not religious, and 4% identified themselves as religious but not spiritual.

Based upon these studies, many Americans view themselves as both religious and spiritual and spiritual development often occurs within the context of a religious environment. This social data comports well with the emphasis upon spiritual practices and discipline that has grown in the United States over the past 60 years. Protestant authors such as Dallas Willard and Richard Foster borrow from various denominations and from Catholicism to encourage spiritual formation. And there is a new emphasis upon spiritual practices in Swedenborgian circles too. There is reason to hope that in the future humanity will be helped by both religion and spirituality together.

Where does Swedenborg fit into today's literature on spirituality? Swedenborg is largely absent from it. He is neither discussed, mentioned, nor listed in the following books: *Christian Spirituality: The Classics* (30 authors); *God Seekers: Twenty Centuries of Christian Spiritualities* (32 authors); *Christian Spirituality: The Essential Guide to the Most Influential Spiritual Writings of the Christian Tradition* (120 authors); *The Brazos Introduction to Christian Spirituality; Spirituality and Mysticism: A Global View; Spiritual Classics: Selected Readings on the Twelve Spiritual Disciplines; Four Views on Christian Spirituality; and Christian Spirituality: Post-Reformation and Modern* (1989; volume 18 of the Crossroad World Spirituality series); *Water from a Deep Well: Christian Spirituality from Early Martyrs to Modern Missionaries; Invitation to Christian Spirituality: An Ecumenical Anthology; Christian Spirituality: Themes from the Tradition*. An electronic search in the journal *Spiritus*, which began publication in 2000 as the official journal for the Society of the Study of Christian Spirituality, did not result in any positive results for terms such as "Swedenborg" or "Swedenborgian."

However, Swedenborg is not completely absent from the literature. He is mentioned (but not discussed) in two places in the *Blackwell Companion to Christian Spirituality*. In a chapter on the social sciences and spirituality, there is a discussion of the work of Robert Fuller's monograph on spiritual but not church-related traditions in America. The chapter's author, John A. Coleman, writes: "From the work of Emanuel Swedenborg, through Transcendentalism, Mesmerism, Spiritualism, Theosophy, New Thought, and Harmonial Religion, various metaphysical movements...have a long and legitimate subaltern cultural history in American spirituality." (303) Swedenborg is also mentioned in connection with William James' father, Henry James Sr. (421).

However, Swedenborg's name is not listed in the index of this book. Swedenborg is mentioned in connection with William James's contrast between personal religious experience and institutional religion in *The Spirituality Revolution: The Emergency of Contemporary Spirituality*, by David Tacey (Routledge, 2004, p.139). Swedenborg's name is also listed in the index. Both his name and the Swedenborgian Chapel of Cambridge, Massachusetts are listed in the index and discussed briefly in a book by sociologist Courtney Bender entitled *The New Metaphysicals: Spirituality and the American Religious Imagination* (Chicago, 2010, pp.30-34). Swedenborg's influence upon American spirituality is briefly discussed by Catherine L. Albanese in "*The Subtle Energies of Spirit: Explorations in Metaphysical and New Age Spirituality*," which is in *American Spiritualities: A Reader* (Indiana University Press, 2001). Swedenborg is mentioned in *Modern Esoteric Spirituality* (volume 21 in the Crossroad World Spirituality series) in chapter 11 on theosophy and the Theosophical

Society and in the index. The authors of this chapter state that, “In the modern period, the term theosophy is most legitimately associated with such figures as Meister Eckhart, Giordano Bruno, Emanuel Swedenborg, and Jacob Boehme.” (311)

A short paragraph on Swedenborg’s relation to Mesmerism occurs in *Spirituality and the Secular Quest* (volume 22 in the *Crossroad World Spirituality series*). The paragraph is in a chapter on holistic health practices (p.233) and the description of Swedenborgian metaphysics is not quite accurate. Swedenborg’s name also appears in the index. There is a short entry on Swedenborg in the *Dictionary of Christian Spirituality* published by Zondervan in 2011. Written by James A. Beverly, a professor at Tyndale Seminary in Toronto and a specialist in new religions, the entry is fair and nearly completely accurate (the one error consists of listing the title of the work on marriage as *Conjugal Love* instead of *Conjugial Love*).

Another book we should consider is entitled *50 Spiritual Classics: The Greatest Books Distilled* (2005). It is part of a series of books with the same kind of title on subjects that range from business and economics to psychology and philosophy. They are all written by Tom Butler-Bowdon, a political advisor who was so captivated by Stephen Covey’s book, *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, that he decided to write 50 Self-Help Classics as a guide to the genre.

In the introduction of *50 Spiritual Classics*, the author lists most of the classics under one of five themes to assist readers in finding what they want quickly: great spiritual lives; practical spirituality; the great variety of experience; opening the doors of perception; and divine relationship and life purpose. (2-7) Emanuel Swedenborg and *Heaven and Hell* are listed under this fifth theme. (7) The contents of the book, however, are arranged alphabetically by author, with a summary of *Heaven and Hell* and Swedenborg’s brief biography appearing as chapter 40. The information in the biography is accurate. The information in the summary of *Heaven and Hell* is fairly accurate but it contains a couple of misleading statements (e.g., “Our thoughts are limited because they involve time and space, but celestial beings are unlimited mentally and spiritually because they transcend time and space” (249)). The author also misspells George Dole’s name (Butler-Bowdon has “George F. Dale,” 247), but does call his translation “excellent.” In general, the tone of the entry is appreciative to the point of being affirmative.

Why does Swedenborg appear in this book but not in the other ones devoted to spiritual thinkers? In contrast to similar books, *50 Spiritual Classics* contains very few ancient authors; indeed, only three could be classified as “ancient” (Epictetus, St. Augustine, Chuang Tzu) and two as Medieval (al Ghazzali, Margery Kempe). Swedenborg is the only 18th century thinker

in the book. Mr. Butler-Bowdon shows a strong preference for modern authors: 39 books out of 50 (78%) are from the 20th century. A few books (e.g., Rick Warren's 2002 book, *The Purpose-Driven Life* and Pema Chodron's 2001 book, *The Places that Scare You*) are so recent as to place the label "classic" into doubt. Moreover, the author did not confine himself to Christian spirituality, but chose authors from world religions (Muhammad Asad, Abraham Josua Heschel, Idries Shah, Shunryu Suzuki, Paramahansa Yougananda), philosophy (Aldous Huxley, William James, Robert M. Pirsig), psychology (Carl Jung, R.M. Bucke), and from the New Age worldview (Ken Wilber, Gary Zukov, Ram Dass, Richard Bach). Thus, Mr Butler-Bowdon is not constrained by the orthodox Christian tradition, nor is he constrained by an academic's sense of canonicity.

What can we conclude from the above regarding Swedenborg's works and spirituality? In general, Swedenborg's books have not made enough of a historical impact to be granted sustained consideration by most scholars in the field of Christian spirituality. In academic circles, and probably beyond these, Swedenborg is seen as unorthodox and more of a theosophical mystic than a Christian theologian or spiritual leader.

This perspective, however, has not stopped Swedenborgian authors from using the concept of spirituality to promote Swedenborg's views. Grant Schnarr has written two books in the category of applied spirituality: *Spiritual Recovery* (Chrysalis, 1998) and *The Art of Spiritual Warfare* (Theosophical, 2000). The Swedenborg Foundation has published two books on the relationship between science and spirituality: the first one was *Healing Our Worldview: The Unity of Science and Spirituality* by John L. Hitchcock (Chrysalis, 1999) and the second is *The Universe and I: Where Science and Spirituality Meet* (2018) by George F. Dole.

The Foundation also published *Voices of Light: Conversations on the New Spirituality* by Nancy Lee (Chrysalis, 2003) and *Spirituality that makes Sense* (Swedenborg Foundation, 2000) by Douglas Taylor. Swedenborg also appears a number of times in *Shadow Culture: Psychology and Spirituality in America* by Eugene Taylor, the late professor of psychology at Saybrook University and Harvard University (Counterpoint, 1999). The concept of spirituality is also used in *Healing Words: A Sampler of Wholeness Theology*, edited by Roslyn Taylor (Xlibris, 2005).

There are many other ways scholars speak of contemporary religious phenomena. For example, some distinguish between SBNR and MRB (multiple religious belonging) and MRO (multiple religious orientation) and BBNB (believing but not belonging). See "How Does it Fit? Multiple Religious Belonging, SBNR, and The Dances of Universal Peace" by Linda Mercadante in *Open Theology* (Jan. 2017 3,1) 10-18. <https://doi.org/10.1515/opth-2017-0002>

SPIRITUALITY, RELIGION AND SWEDENBORG

In other words, this paper is not a typical philosophy paper in the Anglo-American analytical style. The scholar I refer to is Linda Mercadante. See Linda A. Mercadante, *Belief Without Borders: Inside the Minds of the Spiritual But Not Religious* (Oxford, 2011).

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Why We Worship

The Rev. Dr. Erik E. Sandstrom

Worship of God has existed since the human race began. Sanctuaries and holy places or objects are referred to in all religions. The Ancient Word names several regions, “Sihon, Arnon” and their “high places” in an “Eden” geography since ancient times. (*True Christian Religion* 265, *Arcana Coelestia* 3686, 4447) All of this because the seventh day of creation is called the Sabbath: for the “Lord God rested on the seventh day and blessed it.” (*Genesis* 2:2,3) And since most of humanity counts the days of the weeks the same, worship of God is built into us, from the cradle, whatever our place or culture of origin.

The Writings explain why. Worship is a requirement by God: we worship Him, under His countless forms, in all religions. “All gentiles worship a Supreme Being.” (*Arcana Coelestia* 3263.2) Often, God becomes part of a pantheon of deities, but almost always, there is a Supreme Being identified as the One above all. (e.g. Zeus, or Odin; in Hinduism it is Purush, breath, and then the approachable Brahman. To Muslims, it is Allah. In Hebrew script, it is Jehovah, Yahweh. To Christians, it is God Our Father, identified with the Old Testament Jehovah. It is the Lord God.

For Our Sake

Why does God require worship? In the Old Testament it is the third Commandment: “Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.” (*Exodus* 20.7) It means the Lord’s victory over hell and redemption, when He rested. (*True Christian Religion* 301)

In the New Testament, the Lord explains: “The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath . . . therefore the Son of Man is Lord also of the Sabbath.” (*Matthew* 12.8, *Mark* 2.27, *Luke* 6.1-5) It means the “union of the Divine and Human” reminding us of the glorification. (*Heavenly Doctrine* 287.3) Lit-

erally, we suit ourselves to it, we don't suit the Sabbath or worship to our own set of standards. So, we obey the commandment, from both Testaments.

The Writings explain further: It seems that the Lord requires us to “worship Him for His own sake,” as if He can gain from our obeisance. But what glory can humans add to the Creator? So nothing could be further from the truth: “He requires worship for our own sakes, for in humility we are parted from evils which obstruct.” (*Arcana Coelestia* 5957, cf. 7550, *Heavenly Doctrine* 129) “He loves adoration and worship for our sake, because by means of them we come into a state in which the Divine can flow in and be perceived.” (*Divine Love and Wisdom* 335) We become receptive of the good from the Lord. (*Arcana Coelestia* 2811)

From Scripture, According to Doctrine

Worship is thus for our own spiritual welfare's sake. As such, it is separate from regeneration or rebirth – the pathway to heaven. “Worship is one thing, regeneration another.” (*Arcana Coelestia* 10206) Although attending church does not regenerate us, still the “quality of our worship is according to the state of our regeneration.” (5957) So in that state of mind our worship turns to the Lord, with liturgical forms from Scripture; only the Word of Sacred Scripture can be used as forms for worship, nothing else. (8943)

Biblical wording and images have always been standard for Christian liturgics. For the New Church, however, all worship forms must in addition be “specified by doctrine”: “Doctrine precedes, worship follows.” (*Apocalypse Revealed* 777, 880, *Lord* 64) We could say that doctrine “specifies all the things of worship”: the Writings openly, plainly, teach all the elements of worship.

Of course they do. “The Word read, sermons, singing, recitations from the Word, praise, thanksgiving, hearing Scripture and Doctrine.” (*Charity* 174) And kneeling originally began from collapsing, our knees buckling, out of sheer terror, i.e. “holy fear.” (*Arcana Coelestia* 5323) Hence the angels “Fear not.” All of worship is thus specified in the Writings: our General Church Liturgy shows all references to Scripture in the rubric. We take the wording from Sacred Scripture, and all acts of worship follow the initiation by Heavenly Doctrine. “Worship follows doctrine.”

And only ordained priests may officiate (*Heavenly Doctrine* 317, *Arcana Coelestia* 9809) or “instruct in truth.” Heresies follow if not. (*Ibid.* 6822)

The purpose of worship is also central, known to most: conjunction with the Lord, and with heaven, by means of the Word (*Apocalypse Explained* 392, *True Christian Religion* 730) for societies of angels rest on each verse of Scripture. (*Sacred Scripture* 113)

If we could only see! Scripture conjoins. And consociation with angels takes place by means of doctrine. (*Apocalypse Revealed* 818, 946) “I am your

brother and companion; worship God.” Doctrine consociates. “The internal sense of the Word for angels . . . is of the Lord’s Divine mercy allowed to be seen by men during their lifetime in the world, and to be as the angels.” (*Arcana Coelestia* 2242.3) We see what angels see, Heavenly Doctrine. Angels and humans hear and kneel side by side. So humility, reducing what is “natural to be under what is spiritual,” keeping is “in order to receive higher things” (1618) is while instruction is received.

Instruction by The Master

In toto, worship is to receive instruction in doctrine. (*Arcana Coelestia* 10360) The Lord inaugurated the Christian and thus also for New Christian Church worship on the Sabbath, when, on the Sabbath day, He commanded the sick man: “Take up thy bed, and walk.” (*John* 5:8-11,18) This means “instruction in doctrine on the Sabbath.” (*Arcana Coelestia* 10360.8, *True Christian Religion* 301, *Apocalypse Explained* 537) Thus in one fell swoop, “He did away with representative worship . . . (at that time) and made the Sabbath a day for instruction in religious teachings about faith and love.” (*Arcana Coelestia* 10360.8)

Instruction in doctrine is teaching by the Lord from the Word. The Lord, we are told, is “Doctrine Itself” (*Arcana Coelestia* 3364, 5321), which is why He said: “You call Me Master and Lord, and you say correctly, for I AM.” (*John* 13.13) The I AM, whenever the Lord says it, refers to Himself as Jehovah: “I am that I am” as He named Himself to Moses at the burning bush. (*Exodus* 3.14)

It is the risen Lord, the Divine Human, the Human made Divine by the process of glorification all through the Lord’s life on earth, first on the Cross as to truth and the sensuous level; and secondly as to good or the physical body itself in the tomb and “when departing the earth.” (*Arcana Coelestia* 9670, 2025, 2083, 5078, 6371 6872) But the physical body was “extirpated, and Divine forms received in their stead.” (6872)

The Divine Human on this more proximate degree to creation, was given “life” from the Divine, and “between Life and Life there is a Union.” (*Ibid.* 2021) And this union is the Divine and Human, consequently made “actual or real” – the degree in the Lord called “the Divine Natural.” (*Divine Love and Wisdom* 233) Therefore, or I AM, is now “Master – Teacher – and Lord.”

Again, the “Divine natural” which before the Advent had been a “potential,” is filled by the Angel of Jehovah all through Old Testament times. (*Arcana Coelestia* 6280) It was glorified by temptations and victory on earth, whereby He finally replaced that “maternal” substance, with Divine substance, “in its stead” (6873), from having been potential, He actualized the “Divine natural” – glorifying it. (*Divine Love and Wisdom* 233)

The actualized fully Divine Human is now an “Essence by itself” throughout the universal heaven: “Our Father who art in the heavens.” (*Arcana Coeles-*

tia 3061, 1466) He is “the Lord God Jesus Christ who reigns” (*True Christian Religion* 791), whom we worship in the New Church. He is “God, in one Person and one Essence, the Trinity is in Him.” (*Divine Providence* 262, *Divine Love and Wisdom* 146, *Lord* 46, *True Christian Religion* 164, *Brief Exposition* 32)

The Face of God

Stated yet again: Father, Son and Holy Spirit are “three discrete degrees in God” (*Divine Love and Wisdom* 230) The Father is the Divine Itself or Divine Love. The Son is Divine truth or Word, “the Divine Human from eternity.” (*Arcana Coelestia* 5663) And third, the Divine proceeding is both Divine Providence and the Holy Spirit. (*Divine Providence* 58, 59) “Thus from the Divine Itself and the Divine Human through the Holy that proceeds from them He – the Lord – governs the Universe.” (*Arcana Coelestia* 2288)

The first commandment, “Have no other gods before My face,” means for the New Church, “worship no other God except The Lord Jesus Christ because He is Jehovah Himself . . . in human form.” (*True Christian Religion* 294, 296)

The simplest way to state the New Church distinction of the Divine Human, the visible God, is that the Lord Jesus Christ is “the face of Jehovah.” (*Arcana Coelestia* 10579) Jesus is the face of God.

It is important in the New Church to understand the God whom we worship. It is the Lord; no other names are needed. (*Arcana Coelestia* 14)

We are all created in the “image and likeness” of the Lord and have the same Trinity: first, soul. Look yourself in the eye – the window to the soul – in the mirror. Second, body: your face, you know your image best of all. And third, your spirit, your outgo, your personal résumé, all your activities, all you say, all your influence, your character expressing itself. Soul-Body-Activity in One Person. You.

And worshipping Him is for our own spiritual benefit. It is therefore required of us, with a twist: adult worship must be voluntary! (*Divine Providence* 136-137) Forced worship does not count, since our will is not in it. But by “compelling ourselves” we removed the compulsion. (*Ibid.* 145) “Compelling yourself is not to be compelled.” (*Arcana Coelestia* 1937.7) Only “adults can reflect on – examine – themselves.” (*True Christian Religion* 527) That is why the law of Divine providence regarding worship is that “we must at times compel ourselves to the things of religion.” (*Divine Providence* 145) When we drive ourselves to church, it is voluntary! That is just the way the Lord wills it. “Worship in freedom is true worship. What is spontaneous is pleasing to the Lord.” (*True Christian Religion* 495, cf. *Arcana Coelestia* 4029, 4031)

This is meant by: “Bring a freewill offering to the Lord.” (*Deuteronomy* 12:6, 17, *Numbers* 29.39, *Leviticus* 23.36, *Psalm* 119:108) “Take from among

you an offering to the Lord.” (*Exodus* 35.5) We come on our own, volunteering the offertory to the Lord.

No External without an Internal

Just because the Lord made His Human Divine, and we worship Him alone, therefore in the “New Church there is to be no external without an internal.” (*Apocalypse Revealed* 918) That is how who is worshipped combines with how to worship. If we don’t correct the form of worship, “self-intelligence and self-love” will follow. (*Ibid.* 919) It will be idolatry.

Idolatry is the age-old enemy of true worship. Worship for entertainment or enjoyment is the most “universal form of idolatry.” (*Arcana Coelestia* 1357, 994.7, *True Christian Religion* 508) That’s Terah and Nahor. Or there can be “powerful almost proverbial argumentation,” meant by Nimrod, a “mighty hunter” (*Arcana Coelestia* 1173, 1179) – using reasonable arguments that are taken as proverbial, or as a slogan: Nimrod.

So, we need to be reminded that the Lord in His Word decrees worship. Revealed truth always precedes each church and its form of worship. And that is why both church and worship are set up to be for the sake of “receiving instruction in doctrine.” (*Ibid.* 10279) From Whom? The Lord, for He is “Doctrine Itself.” (3364, 5321)

What is Doctrine?

We are to be taught doctrine during worship. The first people on this planet, in Genesis chapter 1, before there were angels from people, (*Spiritual Experiences* 2591), were taught “face to face” by the Lord Himself. (*Arcana Coelestia* 49) The very first truth, “the Spirit of God hovering over the face of the waters,” (*Genesis* 1.2), was given right after birth, as “remains” (*Arcana Coelestia* 8, 19, 20), and the first effect of this gift was “inmost thought.” (*Divine Love and Wisdom* 2), namely that there is a God and He is one. (*True Christian Religion* 8, *Arcana Coelestia* 1308, *Heaven and Hell* 82, *Divine Providence* 329) That was how the first people became “human” and not animals: by receiving a “rational” mental level. (*Arcana Coelestia* 530, 560) The same still happens to everyone born.

After the first angels had come to heaven, i.e. the seventh day, people detailed as “Adam formed from the dust of the ground,” (*Genesis*2) instruction was then by angelic means. When much later all this was in danger of being lost, writing was invented – the “mark of Cain” – and doctrine was then taken down from the last generation that knew it all (*De Verbo* 7), and preserved as doctrinal outlines “in a manuscript” by Enoch, (*De Verbo* 18, *Apocalypse Explained* 728), meant by “Enoch walked with God and was not, for God took him.” (*Genesis* 5.22-23) This preservation was in fact Noah’s Ark, and the hu-

man mind of those folks was greatly altered by this Word of Enoch. It was their doctrine.

The new mind of Noah had difficulties applying the wisdom of Adam: Shem and Japheth covering Noah's nakedness which Ham mocked; but with new revelation from celestial angels, but in an "entirely new manner" (*Arcana Coelestia* 784), because their mentality was now totally different from before (4493), which led to a far superior intelligence than that of today. (1224, 6534).

From this influx the Ancient Word was composed, in very remote style of correspondences, (*Ibid.* 920) using enigmatical things put into a fictitious history. (4442) "In the beginning God created heaven and earth" begins this fictitious history, down to Abram, a real person. Eber was the first actual person in this made-up narrative. (1238, 1246) When this Word was in turn lost due to its remoteness – people still think Adam and Eve were the first two people! – a "new Word less remote" (*Sacred Scripture* 102) was given by "dictation not influx." (*Heaven and Hell* 256)

The Ten Commandments

The Old Testament, or "new Word" – an entirely new undertaking – began with the most majestic event since creation itself: the Ten Commandments. (*Apocalypse Explained* 939) The finger of God wrote the "first of the Word," of the entire Old Testament: the first tables of stone. No other Word was effective at that moment in time. After that, human affairs "by special providence had every detail arranged so as to represent." (*Arcana Coelestia* 5291.7, 6025) In other words everything occurred first just so that they could later be recorded, e.g. "Joseph sent to Egypt" etc.

"These events happened by Divine Providence so that Joseph might come to represent . . . the Lord when He was in the world." (*Ibid.* 5316, 5307) This is meant by Joseph saying, "God sent me ahead of you to preserve a remnant." (*Genesis* 45.7) Later, selected accounts were told through angels, by "dictation into the ear" of whoever held the pen, (*Heaven and Hell* 256, *Arcana Coelestia* 7055), which were patched together, "using only such words as could contain these (heavenly) arcana" (1468), namely "all doctrinal things of good and truth." (3786) From Abram through Joseph, the "Lord's entire life on earth, such as it was to be" (2523), was inserted into actual snippets of history. Moses then inserted the Ancient Word – Genesis 1-11 – up front.

So, book after book of the Old Testament, containing the same doctrines, was composed for each new generation. When the whole lot were forgotten and ineffective, during the last four centuries before the Advent, the Word as the sole "connection between heaven and earth was altogether broken." (*Arcana Coelestia* 2243) And in this emergency of "total annihilation of humanity" pending, (1673 *et al*), the Lord made His Advent as the "Word made flesh."

He in that instant reestablished the link in Himself. (2243)

He then fulfilled all the “Law and Prophets” – “His entire life” already written - from infancy (“born this day in the city of David”), up to the Cross (“It is finished”). He taught the New Evangel in public, and all the doctrines – “expounding all things” – in private “when He was alone with them” – the disciples. (*Mark 4.34*) After the resurrection, He taught it all again: “He opened their understanding to comprehend the scriptures, Moses, Prophets, Psalms, how Christ suffered, was crucified and rose again.” (*Luke 24.45*).

“He Himself taught Divine truth on earth.” He breathed His Holy Spirit on the human race, to “understand Divine Truth,” (*Arcana Coelestia 9818:14-16*), but now “enlightening both the internal and external man” (*True Christian Religion 109, Arcana Coelestia 2776.3, 3195.3, 4145*), thus both as to the “Word and science:” (*Spiritual Experiences 4782*) – no doubt leading to the modern world.

However, this new light too failed when Church councils – Nicaea I 325 A.D. to Nicaea II 787 A.D. – made the Trinity impossible to comprehend. Darkness set in and spiritual temptations were no longer possible. (*True Christian Religion 597, 638*) The Second Advent, with the city New Jerusalem descending, was prophesied: the New Jerusalem. “New Church as to Doctrine” (*Apocalypse Revealed 896, Lord 63*), “in this book,” (*New Jerusalem and its Heavenly Doctrine 7*), “the second advent” was “published by the press,” (*True Christian Religion 779*), in 18 different titles, from 1749 through 1771.

The Lord’s enlightening breath finally gained a permanent foothold. Doctrine finally came, in plain language: from the Master, I AM, doctrine itself. The Writings expound and gather up the same messages – same doctrine – as spoken from the first day of creation, through Enoch’s Word, the Ancient Word, the Ten Commandments and subsequent Old and New Testaments. This is the “doctrine to be taught on the Sabbath day,” first to the Christian Church – “when He was alone with them” -- and now in the “dawning New Christian” service of worship. (*True Christian Religion 700*)

Genuine Christianity Dawning

So, we gather to worship the Lord in His Second Coming. We rejoice in the fact that “others than ourselves are also going to heaven,” (*Arcana Coelestia 2284*), and that “worship itself is performing uses to the neighbor, for their sake, with no thought of reward.” (7038) We gather as a congregation, and our outward behavior and appearance are “removed from offending” the Lord, i.e. “turn your foot away from the Sabbath.” (*Isaiah 58.113*) We voluntarily “remove anything natural which favors self-or-world loves,” (*Arcana Coelestia 10360, 10362*) and using liturgics from the Word, and according to doctrine, “external things keep us in what is holy to enable internals to flow in” (1618) –

internals, which are instruction in doctrine.

Baptism and the Holy Supper are holy acts of worship; the reason the New Church is “genuine Christianity dawning for the first time,” (*True Christian Religion* 700), is that it knows the internals that are within the external sacraments. The New Church is to enter into the “use itself” of them.

And when “from doctrine, through insight, members are stirred to live according to them which is the good of life,” (*Arcana Coelestia* 3332) then the very purpose of the priesthood teaching “truths of faith and leading thereby to the good of life” is fulfilled. The “members of the church” then are called “human angels.” (*Divine Providence* 30)

Because we worship the Lord in His “Human made Divine, that is how in the New Church there will be no external without an internal,” (*Apocalypse Revealed* 918), and why the Word is placed in a Sanctuary.

It is worship of the Lord, and it is free.

The **Rev. Dr. Erik E. Sandstrom** is retired after service in Toronto, Canada; London, England; Hurstville, Australia; Bryn Athyn College and Theological School; and as Director of Swedenborgiana in the Swedenborg Library in Bryn Athyn. He and his wife, Lynn-Del (Walter), live in Huntingdon Valley, Pennsylvania. Contact: Erik.Sandstrom@brynathyn.edu

Church News

Compiled by Bruce Henderson

**FROM THE BISHOP'S OFFICE:
OPEN LETTER RESPONSE TASK FORCE**

The Rt. Rev. Peter M. Buss Jr.

The Bishop's Office, the General Church Board, and the General Church Clergy were recipients of an open letter petition signed by some 850 people, respectfully asking for consideration of those in the LGBTQIA+ community. The letter, titled, "*Open Letter – Requests to the General Church of the New Jerusalem Regarding LGBTQIA+*", came to us on June 21, just before the Clergy and the Board were about to meet. An outcome of those meetings was the request to form this joint Task Force.

In response I worked with some advisors to identify candidates, and I am grateful that the following people were willing to serve:

Board members:

- John Berridge (United Kingdom)
- Chuck Ebert (Boulder, Colorado)
- Charlotte Gyllenhaal (Indiana) – Co-Chair
- Stephanie Klippenstein (Kansas City, Missouri)
- Cathy McQueen (Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania)
- David Radcliffe (Mitchellville, Maryland)

Clergy Members:

- Jared Buss (Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania)
- Eric Carswell (Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania)
- Barry Halterman (Academy of the New Church)

- Mark Pendleton (Glenview, Illinois)
- Brian Smith (Mitchellville, Maryland)
- Justin Schorran (Caryndale, Ontario, Canada)

Bishops:

- David Lindrooth
- Brad Heinrichs
- Peter Buss Jr. – Chair

The aim of the Task Force is to accomplish two things: first, to respectfully respond to the open letter; second, to consider an intentional process for fielding ongoing communication needs, through which people would be able to put things on the docket for consideration by the church. An initial target date for completion of this work was set for the second half of September.

Please join me in thanking the people listed above for their willingness to help the church by means of this effort. Let us pray for outcomes that bring us closer to the Lord and closer to each other.

GENERAL CHURCH BOARD OF DIRECTORS

(Highlights from meetings of June 24, 25, 2022 in Bryn Athyn, PA)

President's Report

Rt. Rev. Peter M. Buss Jr.

Bishop Buss has devoted time recently to:

- Council of the Clergy meetings which reunited the priesthood of the church in the previous week after a four-year hiatus due to the covid pandemic.
- An open letter, with some 850 signatures, sent to the Episcopal Office, Clergy and Board of Directors, which included a petition for the leaders of the church to approach all people with compassion and to consider various doctrinal interpretations on issues of sexuality and gender.
- Work as Chancellor of the Academy, including heading the search for a new Bryn Athyn College President (to take office July 1, 2023), and working with the Principals of the Secondary Schools on faculty concerns about the church's stance on marriage.
- Valued work with the Bishop's Council, with members from around the world who meet regularly with a variety of perspectives on important church matters.

Later in the meeting a motion was approved that “the President and the Board convene and lead an Open Letter Response Task Force, including members of the clergy and the board, to examine and recommend an organizational response to the Open Letter, and for that task force to provide a progress report at an upcoming special meeting of the board.”

Joint Board-Clergy Session

The Board joined the clergy to build relationships and to generate ideas from these leaders to help in the work of the church. The theme for the session was: Why Engage?

It is hoped that the answers generated to that question will help ongoing work within Communications (led by **Marijke Bau-Madsen** and carried forward within the Bishop’s Office), Member Engagement (facilitated by **Freya Williams**), and Outreach (led by the **Rev. Pearse Frazier**).

To facilitate discussion, 16 breakout groups were formed, with each considering these questions:

- Why am I engaged in the General Church?
- What things have people expressed about the church that could inspire others?
- What do people think would deter people from engaging?

Global Church Report

Rt. Rev. David Lindrooth

Bishop Lindrooth reported that we are continuing to work in supporting the global church under different models in two areas – the United Kingdom and West Africa.

The **Rev. Erik Buss** reported that people in the United Kingdom are trying new activities with youth groups, which show early signs of positive engagement, and with online offerings.

In West Africa, the **Rev. Martin Gyamfi**, as regional pastor, outlined four areas of support and growth:

- Church planting: The General Church has a presence in six of the nine countries of West Africa, focusing on disseminating and reading the Lord’s Word.
- New Church education: There are two theological schools (in Ghana and the Ivory Coast) and two elementary schools in Ghana, each with more than 250 students. Through New Church education we will have priests, educators and potential members.

- Governance structure: Rev. Gyamfi is working with national pastors in the region to establish proper boards, constitutions, bylaws, etc., and preparing guidelines and policies to support the church.
- Infrastructure for buildings and a financial basis to serve future generations: the hope is to break financial dependency on western resources over the long term.

General Church Education

The Rt. Rev. Bradley Heinrichs and Charlotte Gyllenhaal

The retirement of **Scott Daum** was recognized, after 40-plus years of serving New Church education. He was thanked for his service and presented with a gift.

Bishop Heinrichs reported on various Religious Education Programs, including the Family Gift Mailings and the Treasury of Children's Books.

Advancement

Mark Wyncoll

Contributions of \$961,000 are down from last year due to several non-recurring major gifts to endowment. The number of gifts (2,014) decreased by 14 and the number of donors (811) was 81 less than the prior year.

Real Estate Finance

David Frazier, Executive Director

Six items relating to real estate development in the church, totally \$117,000, were approved, including:

- Ningo Kope, Ghana: \$25,000 for land purchase to support a New Church community
- Togoville, Togo: \$21,000 to build a retreat/spiritual group building on land we own
- Bassam, Ivory Coast: \$43,000 for a church building project on land we own to support a New Church community

GENERAL CHURCH CORPORATION

At the annual meeting of the General Church Corporation June 25, 2022, in Bryn Athyn, six incumbent Board members were re-elected to three-year terms and four new members were elected to three-year terms.

The re-elected incumbents were:

Darren Bau-Madsen, Berthoud, Colorado

Beth Brock, Huntingdon Valley, Pennsylvania

Jesse Cole, Glenview, Illinois

Charlotte Gyllenhaal, Valparaiso, Indiana

Kirk Hasen, Huntingdon Valley, Pennsylvania

David Radcliffe, Mitchellville, Maryland

Newly elected were:

Craig Bostock, Treasure Island, Florida

Rhett Brown, Oslo, Norway

Grant Heinrichs, Huntsville, Alabama

Torrance Pitcairn, Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania

Two Board members thanked for serving three consecutive three-year terms were **Darryl Hasen**, Huntingdon Valley, Pennsylvania, and **Brent Hyatt**, Bowie, Maryland.

Choosing not to run for re-election were **Allen Bedford**, Bimidji, Minnesota, and **John Walko**, Jenkintown, Pennsylvania. Proposed bylaws revised to improve clarity and relevance through cleaned up formatting, updated language and more current voting procedures were approved.

A moment of silence paid respect to two General Church ministers who had passed into the spiritual world in the past year: the **Rev. Dandridge Pendleton** and the **Rev. Richard Keyworth**.

General Church Support

Mark Wyncoll, Director of General Church Advancement, reports a successful fund-raising campaign for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2022. There were 974 donors throughout the church contributing \$1,065,495 to the General Church, surpassing the goal of \$991,000. In addition, \$1,801,186 was contributed directly to support our New Church societies.

The gifts to the General Church Annual Fund support New Church congregations, education, outreach and ministry. "Because of this faithful support," Mark says, "we can maintain programs that positively impact many individuals and continue our work through complicated times without com-

promise.”

CHARTER DAY

The Charter Day celebration will return to near normal this year after several years of disruption due to the covid pandemic. The Academy weekend in Bryn Athyn will begin on Thursday, October 6, with the scholarship fund-raising golf tournament a week later, October 17, at Huntingdon Valley Country Club.

The academic procession and Cathedral service will take place on Friday, October 7, led by the **Rev. Coleman Glenn**, chaplain and teacher of religion in Bryn Athyn College.

There will be no banquet this year but two events on Saturday evening – one at the Bryn Athyn Cathedral, the other at Cairnwood estate and the grounds of Glencairn Museum.

For the full schedule go to the websites for Bryn Athyn College (www.brynathyn.edu) and the Academy Secondary Schools (www.ancss.org.)

BRYN ATHYN COLLEGE 2022-23

Brian Blair, President

The College is expecting one of the largest and most diverse groups of new students in history. This increase is thanks to the authentic relationship-building at the heart of the College’s New Church mission. Of special note is that 78% of applicants with a New Church affiliation decided to enroll this year – an all-time high enrollment rate. These new students join returning undergraduate and graduate students to make a student body of between 280 and 290 students this fall, indicating return rates are bouncing back to pre-pandemic levels.

Staffing changes for the 2022-2023 academic year include:

- **Caira Bongers** as the new Associate Dean of Academic Affairs in addition to teaching mathematics courses
- **Jena Frey** joins the College as the Director of Residence Life.
- **Duane Hyatt** has become Chief Financial Officer while also retaining his position as Academy Treasurer.
- **Daniela Keenan** has been promoted to Head of Academic Advising.

In anticipation of **President Blair’s** planned retirement from Bryn Athyn College, the search for a new president is underway, led by **Chancellor Buss** with the Board of Trustees.

ACADEMY SECONDARY SCHOOLS 2022-23

James M. Adams, Managing Director
Kira R. Schadegg, Girls School Principal
Jeremy T. Irwin, Boys School Principal

Enrollment projections for the 2022-2023 school year:

Girls School		Boys School	
Seniors	29	Seniors	39
Juniors	26	Juniors	40
Sophomores	23	Sophomores	22
Freshmen	26	Freshmen	25
Dorm	19	Dorm	30
Day	85	Day	96
Total	104	Total	126

New programs:

This year we will add an elective Educational Technology course.

New staff members:

The Boys School said “happy retirement” to **Erik Odhner**. He will be missed for his institutional knowledge, his wisdom, and his ability to wear many hats.

The Boys School is happy to welcome two new members to the staff: **Ray Weissler** (full time) and **John Thygeson** (part time). Ray will be teaching Accelerated Geometry to freshmen and sophomores, team teaching Senior Seminar with **Kevin Junge**, will serve as a permanent in-house substitute, and will continue as head coach of the boys ice hockey team. John will be teaching an elective Educational Technology course and will be the substitute teacher coordinator and do some subbing.

The Girls School said goodbye to **Meryle Hern, Becca Kunkle** and **Lori Odhner**.

Becca leaves us to try a new form of education as the upper-level coordinator with **Brianne Good**'s outdoor education program.

Lori joined the ANC faculty in 2017 as the costuming instructor. Not only did she teach a bundle of students how to sew in her time here but she also costumed 10 productions, among them: *Shrek, Little Women, The Lion, the*

Witch, and the Wardrobe, Annie, Humbug, Alice's Adventures in Wonderland, and Beauty and the Beast (which was never performed!) She is also retiring.

Meryle has capably assisted Meryl Simons as assistant Dekka advisor since 2012. She has decided it is time to step down from this role.

We have three new faculty members this year in the Girls School:

Laura Clymer will be teaching three sections of Spanish 2, student support, and freshman class advisor.

Sonja Kistner Glenn will be teaching four days per week of costuming, costuming the play and the musical, and serving as assistant director for the play. She will also be the assistant to **Naomi Haus-Roth** at MPAC.

Caitlin Irwin will be teaching Algebra 2 to junior girls, Geometry to sophomore girls, two student support classes, and will be the marshal.

Other staffing changes in the coming year:

Dylan Glenn is dropping Ancient History for freshmen boys and adding Accelerated Algebra 2 for sophomores and Applied Algebra for freshmen.

Erica Stine is teaching Ancient History to Freshmen boys.

Liz Fuller is dropping Accelerated Algebra 2 to pick up curriculum work, as well as increased duties as Registrar and Assistant Principal.

Ben Cole is dropping Spanish 1 and student support to pick up Latin 3/4. He will also be mentoring Caitlin and Ray in teaching Geometry and doing Boys School minutes.

Sarah Cooper Waelchli will be mentoring Laura Clymer in teaching Spanish. She will also add a section of Spanish 4.

Sarah Gladish is moving to part-time. She will be dropping student support and Academian Advisor.

Molly Cronlund and **Cheryl Cooper** will be co-advisors of Delta Mu.

Kendra Knight is dropping AKM head advisor and picking up Academian Advisor.

Megan Smith will become head AKM advisor.

Erica Stine will be dropping freshman class advisor and will become assistant AKM advisor.

Dave Hyam is assisting **Hilary Bryntesson** in Self Defense.

A replacement for **Meryle Hern** as assistant Dekka advisor has yet to be hired.

Derek Cronlund is replacing **David Steen** as assistant Phi Alpha advisor.

BRITISH ACADEMY SUMMER SCHOOL

*From the September 2022 Newsletter of the New Church,
United Kingdom, Lucy Davies*

After two long years, **Purely Chase** once again opened its doors to a full-scale British Academy Summer School. Everyone had an amazing time, meeting new people, attending classes, worship and activities.

The classes were interesting and sparked discussions among students. They were also educational and got the students involved. The worship services were moving and got everyone playing music and reading.

There was a wide range of activities, with something for everyone, including woodcarving, sports, art, chess, coding and many more.

In the middle of the week everyone enjoyed a gala dinner and dance, followed the next day by a church service and the BASS Olympics.

Throughout the two weeks other events included trips to Cadbury World, the Black Country Living Museum and Stratford-Upon-Avon.

Many students said BASS was amazing, that they really enjoyed it and would love to come again.

AN EXPERIMENTAL NEW WORSHIP SERVICE

The **Rev. Derek Elphick**, pastor of the Bryn Athyn Society, is introducing a new worship service, designed to bring the community together. This one-year experiment in “community worship” is designed to bring everyone together – all ages.

It will follow a format familiar in many of our congregations, beginning with a children’s talk, followed by organized activities for children in other parts of the cathedral, then an adult talk. The first of these monthly services was scheduled for September 11.

Rev. Elphick says that “one of the long-standing traditions (and strengths) of the Bryn Athyn Church congregation is a variety of worship offerings on any given Sunday.” This new service is not intended to replace these services but is designed instead to add a new dimension by gathering the whole community together, which generally happens only at Christmas, Thanksgiving, Easter and New Church Day.

When there were fewer services to choose from the cathedral was quite full; now it averages just 75 or so each Sunday – as well as online attendance. “We live in a fractured, siloed society,” he says, “breaking off into small groups, doing our own thing, not tending to mix with each other. There is value in variety and small groups but this is an attempt once a month to bring everyone

together.”

The hope is that “these community worship services generate a similar feel to our festival services where the singing is that much stronger, the mood is that much happier because, despite or differences, we have come together as one to worship and give thanks to the Lord. There is strength in numbers, a beautiful reminder that we are a part of something bigger than ourselves.”

THE NEW CHRISTIAN BIBLE STUDY

Steve David

The New Christian Bible Study Website Project is connecting a worldwide audience of Bible readers to the New Church’s unique knowledge of the internal sense.

We are on pace to welcome more than 1.2 million visits this year. The site provides interfaces in English, Chinese, Spanish, French, Portuguese, German, Korean and Swedish, with more coming. Passages from the Word are presented side by side with the internal sense from the Writings. The Word is offered in 42 languages, and at least parts of the Writings in 15 languages so far. All are linked via cross-referencing.

The site includes 579 story explanations by New Church writers and speakers. There are complete chapter-and-verse level explanations for large sections of the Word. And there are more than 3,000 explanations of the significations of terms used in the literal sense of the Word.

The site offers powerful multi-lingual search capabilities for the Word, the Writings and explanations. There is a global database of churches and schools, with a Google map of locations.

Synergies are developing between the website project and other Church and Academy efforts.

Our work provides a huge boost to church growth efforts in non-English speaking countries, with the Word and the Writings online together in multiple languages. Ministers working in these countries now have the backing of all that the website offers. They can publicize sermons far beyond the scope of local congregations and attract people to their churches.

All ministers have ready access to cross-linked translations of the Word and the Writings, with links to the original Hebrew, Greek and Latin texts. They can search the works of previous New Church scholars and their own contemporaries. Ministers working in non-English languages can use the tools available to help translate collateral literature into their own languages.

We are working with translators in 18 languages. We have enabled faster translation, easier updates and corrections, and much wider publication. We

have the platform to crowd-source the translation of collateral explanations and the church has the people who can volunteer to use it.

Anyone who would like to help there are a lot of opportunities: researching and writing explanations; help select or create art to illustrate concepts from the Word; help translate explanations.

Contact: sdavid@skymark.com

Visit the website: www.newchristianbiblestudy.org

CORRECTION

A photo on page 349 of the July/August 2022 New Church Life identified an Honorary Diploma recipient as Dr. Keri Heickert. Keri did receive the honor but the recipient in the photo is Beth Bochneak. Our apologies.

Life Lines

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

THE LORD GOD MADE THEM ALL

From the mind-boggling enormity of space to the “solar system” of a single atom, we are dazzled by what we can see – and humbled that so much is still beyond our most powerful telescopes and microscopes. We are making progress – which only humbles us all the more.

In early July the \$10 billion James Webb Telescope took us farther into space than we have even imagined. This glimpse into just a speck of outer space took us back in time billions of years – the “light years” it has taken for those images to reach our earth. That dazzlingly clear, bright spectacle revealed unknown galaxies, a giant star nursery, colossal cosmic clouds. And as one astronomer exclaimed: “This is only the beginning. The best is yet to come.”

The universe is like a stage on which proofs are constantly being demonstrated that God exists and that there is one God. (True Christianity 12)

Indeed, the more we begin to grasp the boundlessness of space, the more it is evident that – “Big Bang” or whatever – God is the Creator and ruler of the universe. In the wake of this discovery, astrophysicist Hugh Ross exclaimed: “This is where we get the most compelling scientific evidence that a God beyond space and time must have created the universe.”

What he and like-minded, open-minded observers recognize is just confirmation of *Divine Love and Wisdom* 73: “The Divine is present through all time independently of time.”

What we call “the visible universe” is a million-million-million-million miles across, and we still do not know the boundaries – or even if there are

boundaries. The number of light years to the edge of the larger unseen universe – just being penetrated by the Webb Telescope – is written not with 10s of zeroes but millions. The average distance between just the stars beyond our solar system that we see is 20 million-million miles. Nobody knows how many stars are just in our Milky Way – estimated between 100 and 400 billion. And the Milky Way is just one of an estimated 140 billion galaxies.

All of this, of course, is God’s natural kingdom, created by His love and ordered by His providence.

*The Lord arranges and keeps in order all things down to the least detail.
(Spiritual Experiences 2267)*

As that insightful children’s hymn reminds us

All things bright and beautiful . . . the Lord God made them all.

The more we learn about God’s Creation, the more we comprehend that it is an ongoing process, without beginning or end – and that it is anything but random.

We on our little earth like to think we are at the center of it all. But we got another important perspective from the Webb Telescope’s reach into deep space with an equally dazzling and humbling photograph taken from Apollo 8 as it returned from the first loop around the moon – just prior to the landing in 1969. That photo – Earth Rising – showed our Planet Earth as a lonely blue-and-white sphere suspended in the vast and dark enormity of space, looking oh-so-vulnerable, but forever tethered to its Creator.

When I consider Thy heavens, the work of Thy fingers, the moon and stars which Thou hast ordained, what is man, that Thou art mindful of him, and the son of man that Thou visitest him? (Psalm 8:3-4)

(BMH)

THAT THOU ART MINDFUL OF US

It is simply beyond our comprehension that even the enormous reach of a powerful new telescope still has not taken us to the outer limits of space. Even “seeing” billions of light years into the abyss we still do not know the limits.

It is beyond our comprehension to imagine trillions of stars “out there.” We have not even entirely grasped our “little” solar system. In 1930 Pluto was discovered as our ninth planet, but since 2005 has been downgraded to just a “dwarf planet.” There are similar “objects” out there that we still are not certain about.

It is also beyond our comprehension that all of this was created by the one God of heaven and earth – the one God of the universe – Who keeps it all in order and within His purpose.

It is beyond our comprehension as well that of the 8 billion people populating our earth, He knows everything about each one of us and is with us through every moment of our lives, leading us to heaven – if we will but follow. His love and His providence are in every least particular of each of our lives.

Before I formed you in the womb, I knew thee. (Jeremiah 1:5)

O Lord, Thou hast searched me and known me. Thou knowest my thought afar off . . . and art acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a word on my tongue, O Lord, but Thou knowest it altogether. . . . Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain it . . . I will praise Thee: for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. . . My substance was not hidden from Thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. (Psalm 139:1-15)

It often is said that nothing makes you feel more insignificant than to stretch out in an open field under an endless canopy of stars. Indeed, “what is man that Thou art mindful of him?” But He is mindful of every one of us. And He does not need a high-powered telescope to find us.

(BMH)

A SENSE OF DIRECTION

There's a scene in *Alice in Wonderland* where Alice plunges down a rabbit hole after the White Rabbit only to become lost in Wonderland. When her path splits into two she frantically wonders which way she should go. The Cheshire Cat appears on the branch of a tree and says: “That depends on where you want to go.” Alice wails, “But I don't know.” And the Cheshire Cat says simply, “Then it doesn't matter which way you go.”

When it comes to times in our lives when we must choose one way or another, we need a sure sense of where we are going. And where we are going has a lot to do with where we have been – the trajectory of our lives and where it is pointing us.

Oliver Wendell Holmes in his *Autocrat at the Breakfast Table* observes: “I find that the great thing in this world is not so much where we stand as in what direction we are moving. We must sail sometime with the wind, and sometimes against it, but we must sail, and not drift, nor lie at anchor.”

Making choices about our direction in life – where we stand and where we are headed – is ideally all about our path of regeneration and the goal of getting to heaven. All of our life choices should revolve around that.

It is the same for the church – sailing sometimes with the wind, sometimes against it, but never drifting or lying at anchor. And the direction of the church

– where it is headed – must always be guided by the vision and the goal of the Holy City New Jerusalem descending from God out of heaven.

We find our way – as individuals and as a church – by following the Lord.

Present in an angelic character is a knowledge of the way from walking in it, and a walking in the way through a knowledge of it.
(Divine Providence 60)

(BMH)

THE SOUNDS OF SILENCE

The Rev. Derek Elphick preached a sermon on *Silence in Heaven* in the Bryn Athyn Cathedral in June that talked about the importance of silence in our lives. We crave it for our peace of mind. And it is essential for our spiritual growth.

The text for the sermon was from *Revelation 8:1*: “When He opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour.”

There was this silence because the angels were astonished at the lack of faith in the world – that the Lord’s Word was being ignored and forgotten. Would they still be “astonished” today?

Noise has become the soundtrack of our lives. We are overwhelmed with stimuli – much of it insistently pulsing through social media devices. Sometimes we are not comfortable with silence, forced to confront our own thoughts and demons. But silence often is a welcome respite – a peaceful garden, a night sky, a walk in the woods. One of my most powerful experiences with silence was visiting the Omaha Beach Cemetery in Normandy, France, where voices are humbled to whispers by those endless stark white rows of crosses and Stars of David.

The sermon reminded us that this is how the Lord speaks to us – “not in the wind, not in the earthquake, not in the fire, but with a still, small voice.” (*I Kings 19:12*)

We need to be still and listen to what the Lord is teaching us in His Word. – especially in stormy times. That is why we have quiet interludes after readings from the Word and at the end of the service, inviting us to find meaning and purpose in what we have heard.

This is the power of reflection.

Some 50 years ago the Rt. Rev. George de Charms wrote a 35-page paper on *The Doctrine of Reflection*, which begins with this remarkable quote from *Spiritual Experiences 73*: “There are more arcana in the doctrine of reflection

than in any other whatever." (This study was never published or dated. It is assumed that it was written in the 1970s.)

Bishop de Charms says this quote "seems to challenge the generally accepted view, for we have been prone to think of reflection as merely one form, among many, of mental activity. However, when we analyze the teachings of the Writings on reflection, we learn that it has a universal application because it underlies all the other operations of the human mind."

We may take idle reflection for granted but, he says: "All consciousness depends upon it. Without it there can be no sensation, memory, imagination or thought. And reflection is absolutely essential for connecting us with the spiritual world."

This is especially true when we read and hear the Word – the Lord talking to us and teaching us. Through this process of reflection, we deliberately channel our thoughts and affections – and begin to approach wisdom.

Bishop de Charms concludes: "The Word, as it exists in heaven, is the sole medium whereby spirits and angels can progress spiritually, and this by reflecting upon what the Word teaches, and learn thereby how to change the states of the internal mind and grow in the understanding and life of the Divine and the eternal laws revealed."

So, there is real power in silence – the power to change your life. Think about it.

(BMH)



THE NEW CHURCH IN WEST AFRICA AND ASIA

Forty-five years ago, on Christmas Eve, 1977, the camion that I was traveling in broke down on a two-lane road about 10 miles outside of Fada N’gourma, Burkina Faso, in the West African Sahel. In this picture I am in Fada, waiting with friends to resume my journey to Niamey, Niger, for Christmas. [This was while Jeremy Simons served in the Peace Corps.]



The children in the picture would now be in their 50s or 60s, and it is possible that they are part of the francophone New Church congregation that is being started there by the Rev. Samuel Lompo, the General Church pastor in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso’s capital city. He was in Bryn Athyn this past June for the clergy meetings and is quite excited about this group. He is at the right in the other picture, taken recently in Fada N’gourma.

At these clergy meetings there was a program about the church in Asia and West Africa. Here are some interesting facts that pastors John Jin, Kodjo Ayi, Joel Kouame and others shared.

Asia: In Japan there are two pastors, one candidate, one congregation and five groups and one internet meeting. In Korea there are nine pastors with three congregations and five smaller groups. There is also a theological school with four students in Korea. In China there is one minister serving one congregation and four internet groups every week. In China there is also a school of theology with six students.

There are also many New Church members and readers spread throughout Malaysia, Nepal, Taiwan and other countries in Asia.

West Africa: In Ghana there are ten pastors and eight congregations. In Côte d’Ivoire there are 14 pastors and 15 groups. In Burkina Faso there is one pastor and two groups. In Togo two pastors and two groups, in Benin two

pastors and one group, and two groups in Nigeria. Ekow Eshun supervises.

In Ghana there is a theological school with 10 students in Accra led by George Dziekpor with Jacob Borketey as Dean. There are also two schools in Tema and Asakraka, with about 600 students between them. In Côte d'Ivoire there is one full-time theological school with four students in Divo and two part-time schools in Yopougan and Bassam under the leadership of Sylvain Agnes in the south and Doukourou Moise in the north.

The outlook for the New Church in Africa and Asia is good. When I lived and traveled around in West Africa in the 1970s, while in the Peace Corps, I had no doubt that the church would grow there once it got started, and this is what has happened. But I never expected that it would reach one of the most remote places that I have ever been.

On that Christmas Eve the truck that I and my friends were traveling in broke down in the middle of the vast Sahel, with nothing but open savannah studded with bushes as far as the eye could see. We camped out off the road for the night, and a little exploring led me and a friend to a camp of about 100 Fulani, or Peul, herders, all of one family, with about eighty cattle. Their low, rounded grass houses blended in perfectly with the bushes, and they received us very cordially.

Although they mostly spoke only Fulfulde, or Fula, one spoke some French and they gave us water and traded with us for a few chickens, which we took back to the camp for supper. My thought was that these were the people of the African interior spoken about in *Last Judgment* (posthumous) 124. And now there is a New Church congregation not far from that very spot.

The next day the truck was fixed, and after some delay in Fada, where the picture was taken, we made the trip to the ancient city of Niamey, the capital of Niger, 200 miles north into the Sahara Desert. There we had a memorable Christmas in this city of flat stucco houses, people wearing long robes, with camels and sand everywhere. We slept outside at the Peace Corps hostel, in thick sleeping bags because of the freezing desert night, and watched the most amazing display of stars that I have ever seen. It is the closest thing to a biblical Christmas that I have known.

(JFS)

Announcements

BAPTISMS

*Baptism was instituted for a sign that a person is of the Church, and for a memorial that he (or she) is to be regenerated; for the washing of baptism is a spiritual washing, which is regeneration.
(New Jerusalem and its Heavenly Doctrine)*

Dakouri, Eden – At Abidjan, Côte d’Ivoire, August 12, 2022 (born August 9, 2022), son of Dakokuri Daligou Evariste and Gougou Mazo Esther, Rev. Henry J.K. Kouame officiating.

Danilyuk, Valentina Mia – At Rochester, Michigan, June 12, 2022 (born June 27, 2021), daughter of Viktor and Ivana Danilyuk, Rev. Alan M. Cowley officiating.

Danilyuk, Viktor Vladimirovich – At Rochester, Michigan, June 12, 2022, Rev. Alan M. Cowley officiating.

Djomasse, Ange Salome – At Bouake, Broukro, Côte d’Ivoire, July 2, 2022 (born October 12, 2005), daughter of Djomasse Ekissi Arthur and Koffi Aya Rose, Rev. Honoré A. Aka officiating.

Gnamien, Rhassou Moise Geraud – At Bouake, Broukro, Côte d’Ivoire, July 6, 2020 (born November 7, 2010, son of N’Guessan Brou Adolphe and Toure Apeyo Nadege, Rev. Honoré A. Aka officiating. Delayed report.

Gnepa, Nathanael – At Bouake, Broukro, Côte d’Ivoire, May 30, 2020 (born October 13, 2015), son of Duelle Gnepa Fidele and Dagbassoue Jonathine, Rev. Honoré A. Aka officiating. Delayed report.

Guei, Winnie Wahiguinon – At Bouake, Broukro, Côte d’Ivoire, April 20, 2019, Rev. Honoré A. Aka officiating. Delayed report.

Heickert, Ryan – At Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania, July 10, 2022, Rev. Charles E. Blair officiating.

Koffi, Aya Rose – At Bouake, Broukro, Côte d’Ivoire, July 2, 2022, Rev. Honoré A. Aka officiating.

Kouakou, Adjoua Flore – At Bouake, Broukro, Côte d’Ivoire, July 6, 2020, Rev. Honoré A. Aka officiating. Delayed report.

Kouakou, Guy Stephane Emmanuel – At Bouake, Broukro, Côte d’Ivoire, July 6, 2020 (born September 30, 2006), son of N’Guessan Brou Adolphe and Toure Apeyo Nadege, Rev. Honoré A. Aka officiating. Delayed report.

Kouassi, Lynda Estelle – At Bouake, Broukro, Côte d’Ivoire, May 30, 2020 (born July 7, 2009), daughter of Loukou Kouakou Jean and Koff Amenan Natacha, Rev. Honoré A. Aka officiating. Delayed report.

Mackley, Allen Jay – At Park City, Utah, July 10, 2022, Rt. Rev. David H. Lindrooth officiating.

Mdladla, Luyanda Sebenzeka – At Clermont, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, June 19, 2022 (born September 7, 2007), daughter of Melusi Job Mdladla and Penelope Buthelezi, Rev. J. Becki Dubé officiating.

Mdladla, Ngubelho – At Clermont, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, June 19, 2022 (born November 10, 2003, Rev. J. Becki Dubé officiating.

Mdladla, Qeda Vincent – At Clermont, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, June 19, 2022, Rev. J. Becki Dubé officiating.

Mdladla, Sisekelo Hlumelo S. – At Clermont, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, June 19, 2022 (born July 16, 2010), son of Qeba Vincent Mdladla and Themjiwe Lorna Sizele Mdladla, Rev. J. Becki Dubé officiating.

Moore, Dorothy Kynett – At Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania, August 4, 2022 (born October 14, 2021), daughter of Matthew and Gretchen Pitcairn Moore, Rev. Brett D. Buick officiating.

Ngcobo, Khulubuse Thingo – At Clermont, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, June 19, 2022 (born November 19, 2018), son of Solomon Vela Ngcobo and Andisiwe Amanda Cele Ngcobo, Rev. J. Becki Dubé officiating.

Ottien, Affoue Mathilde – At Bouake, Broukro, Côte d’Ivoire, May 30, 2020, Rev. Honoré A. Aka officiating. Delayed report.

Ouattara, Klinnaga Aime – At Bouake, Broukro, Côte d’Ivoire, May 30, 2020, Rev. Honoré A. Aka officiating. Delayed report.

Sekongo, Ouamble Martine – At Bouake, Broukro, Côte d’Ivoire, May 30, 2020, Rev. Honoré A. Aka officiating. Delayed report.

Shangase, Muhle Nokulunga – At Clermont, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, June 19, 2022 (born January 21, 2013), daughter of Nkosinatni Bethel Shangase and Babongile Pretty Mbhele Shangase, Rev. J. Becki Dubé officiating.

Soro, Isaac – At Bouake, Broukro, Côte d’Ivoire, May 30, 2020 (born January 1, 2012), son of Soro N’Dahatien and Sekongo Ouamble Martine, Rev. Honoré A. Aka officiating. Delayed report.

Zuma, Mweli Juniour E. – At Clermont, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, June 19, 2022 (born August 8, 2019), son of Lindani Victus Zuma and Thembeke Fortunata Mweli, Rev. J. Becki Dubé officiating.

CONFIRMATION

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

Nzimande, Minenhle
Vuyelwa – At Clermont,
KwaZulu-Natal, South
Africa, June 19, 2022, Rev.
J. Becki Dubé officiating

BETROTHAL

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

Elder-Deweese, Landon
Kirk Elder and Hannah
Deweese – At Bryn Athyn,
Pennsylvania, June 18,
2022, Rev. Derek P.
Elphick officiating.

MARRIAGES

The delights of conjugal love surpass the delights of all other loves, and conjugal love also gives delight to these other loves according as it is present and at the same time united with them. (Conjugal Love 68)

Brorson-Appelgren,	Elder-Deweese, Landon
Erik Gustav Brorson and	Kirk Elder and Hannah
Susanna Felicia Appelgren	Deweese – At Bryn Athyn,
– At Arboga, Sweden, July	Pennsylvania, July 30, 2022,
23, 2022, Rev. Göran R.	Rev. Derek P.
Appelgren officiating.	Elphick officiating.

Buick-Cole, Bennett	King-Bails – Halterman,
Robert Buick and Alison	Walter Isaiah King-Bails
Aubrey Cole – At Kemp-	and Kendra Grace Hal-
ton, Pennsylvania, July	terman – At Bryn Athyn,
2, 2022, Rev. Lawson M.	Pennsylvania, July 23, 2022,
Smith officiating.	Rev. Barry C.
	Halterman officiating.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

IN MEMORIAM

And behold, I come quickly and My reward is with Me, to give to everyone according to his work. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last. Blessed are those who do His commandments that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city. (Revelation 22:12-14)

Baekstrom, Marianne – July 15, 2022, of Cherry Hill, New Jersey. 97.
Phillips, Karen Katherine Karolich – April 24, 2022, of Longmont, Colorado. 72.

Brown, Michael Alan – April 9, 2022, of Tucson, Arizona. 83.
Sellner, Elizabeth (Bussy) Hasen – August 8, 2022, of Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania. 89.

Henderson, Rebecca Deanne Rogers – August 10, 2022, of Hatboro, Pennsylvania. 52.
Stewart, Roy Paul – July 4, 2022, of Kitchener, Ontario, Canada. 75.

Maciaczyk, Marion John – August 7, 2022, of Kitchener, Ontario, Canada. 84.
Wathen, Lucy Marty – November 3, 2021, of Northbrook, Illinois. 99.

Pearson, Barbara Elaine Ernst – August 5, 2022, of Edina, Minnesota. 70.

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