

# NEW CHURCH *Life*

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

**MAY/JUNE 2023**



*In a scene from last year's **19th of June** pageant at the Bryn Athyn Cathedral, the Woman Clothed with the Sun is attacked by a menacing dragon – **representing a threat from which the New Church needs constant protection.***

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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 164) include:

- *Witness to the Revelation*: The familiar words, “Now it is permitted to enter intellectually into the mysteries of faith” are both an invitation and a gift. What has been revealed to us about the book of Revelation is reassuring about the survival of the New Church in a hostile world.
- *The New Church is About Service*: When the Lord called together his 12 disciples in the spiritual world on June 19, 1770, this was not only announcing the Second Coming and the New Church but defining our own role as serving the Lord and our neighbor.

This past November the Rev. Dr. Andrew Dibb, Dean of Bryn Athyn College Theological School, led a pilgrimage of ministers and theologians on a tour of Israel. He and some of his fellow travelers describe the intense experience of “feeling the presence of the Lord” in the Holy Land – something he hopes all New Church ministers will experience in their lifetimes. (Page 179. See photos from this trip beginning on page 235.)

The Rev. Grant Odhner, one of the group traveling in Israel, offers a sermon based on the experience: “*There They Will See Me.*” We all need to “go up” to Jerusalem with the Lord, he writes, because: “Our faith is formed by going periodically to the Word, lifting our thoughts to what is ideal, getting out of our ordinary modes of thought and life, getting inspiring tastes of heavenly life.” (Page 187)

The Rev. Grant Odhner also recounts his feelings about touring the Holy Land: “*To a Mountain in Galilee.*” It is impossible to pinpoint exactly where many biblical events took place, but enough to know the general area where the Lord walked and where what He did and what He taught still resonates and inspires. (Page 192)

We were not there to witness the First Coming of the Lord in this sacred

place but, the Rev. Mark Pendleton asks in a sermon, would we have believed if we had been there? “What must it have been like at the time of the Lord’s First Coming on earth for people to adjust themselves to the reality of that coming, especially those who had expected something different?” he asks. And, “What will it be like for people now, and on into the future, when they first encounter the Lord’s Second Coming, especially if it is different than what they’ve expected?” (Page 194)

The Rev. Calvin Heinrichs, in a sermon – *Praying and Sacrificing for the Church* – notes that those who know of the Lord’s coming and the New Church are commanded in *Apocalypse Revealed* to “pray that it may come.” Therefore, “We all, priests and laity alike, have sacrifices we continue to make to help support the Lord’s Church on earth.” (Page 199)

The Rev. Guillaume Anato, a popular and extremely useful priest in Benin, West Africa, passed away suddenly in February, leaving his wife and young family. The Rt. Rev. Bradley Heinrichs officiated at a memorial service, which noted solemnly that “a great Iroko tree has fallen in West Africa.” What a perfect image for Guillaume, he said – “a strong upright tree, with his roots firmly planted in the soil of this earth and his arms continually stretching and reaching up toward heaven.” (Read the Memorial Address on page 203, and see photos on page 238)

In a message From the Bishop’s Office, the Rt. Rev. Bradley Heinrichs asks, “How Does Your Book of Life Read?” The prospect of having our Book of Life revealed when we enter the world of spirits can be terrifying. But, “If you’re worried about how your book will read, then start shunning evils as sins against the Lord, and do the good things He teaches, and your book will have a happy ending!” (Page 209)

The Rev. Prescott Rogers, a much-loved teacher in Bryn Athyn College for many years, writes about *Education and the Development of the Rational for Individuals and the Human Race*. “The Lord did more than reveal truths,” he writes. “He provided for the means by which those truths could be seen and received, especially by means of education.” (Page 214)

The Rev. Mac Frazier, who came to the ministry from the world of high tech, writes about “booting up” the Word – how really reading and understanding the Word is similar to how a computer works. (Page 221)

Church News (page 224) includes:

- The passing of the much-loved Rev. Guillaume Anato in Benin, West Africa
- Highlights from the General Church Board meeting in March
- The upcoming General Church Education Conference in June
- A preview of the General Church Corporation annual meeting in June
- Highlights from the Academy Board of Trustees February meeting
- Announcement of temporary closing of Academy Secondary Schools dormitories
- A report on Helping Children in Crisis in Kenya
- The Kainon School's 100th anniversary in South Africa.
- A report on episcopal travel
- Family summer camps for Jacob's Creek and Maple Leaf

# Editorials

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

## WITNESS TO THE REVELATION

Inscribed above the doors leading into the Bryn Athyn Cathedral are the words from Emanuel Swedenborg's vision of the New Church Temple in heaven: "*Now it is permitted to enter intellectually into the mysteries of faith.*"

These words are an invitation. And they are a gift.

When Jesus was preparing His disciples for what was to come, He said to them – and to all of us:

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

This "new truth" is all that has been revealed to us through Swedenborg. It is our blessing. And it is a promise to all who love the Bible but do not understand its hidden meanings.

That the Bible has been the best-selling book throughout history – and still is despite the decline of religion in the world – shows that people revere its holiness, while also hungering for explanations of its "mysteries." Nowhere is the arcane symbolism of the Bible more important, enigmatic, inscrutable and in need of explanation than the *Book of Revelation*.

From scholars and theologians to folks in the pews and Bible study *Revelation* is like an abstract painting that invites interpretation but defies consensus. It seems an unfathomable mystery, perhaps not even meant to be understood. But why would the Lord give us such a profound vision without wanting us to understand? When the time is right, the Spirit of Truth provides the key to all truth. We are blessed with that key and have much to share.

As Christians hunger for explanations of *Revelation*, they believe that God has given this truth to lead and guide their lives. But they are left with dark images and symbols of foreboding: seven-headed beasts, stars falling from heav-

en, a darkened sun and moon, heaven and earth “passing away.” It reads like chilling prophecy – a dystopian end of days. But it’s really all about judgment and deliverance.

What John saw and transcribed on the Isle of Patmos was actually occurring in the spiritual world. This was a judgment on the state of the church and the quality of that church within its people. His “revelation” – or uncovering – ends with the Lord reestablishing His kingdom in heaven and on earth. Rather than a doomsday scenario, it is a message of love and hope.

All of those dragons and plagues are scenes from a pitched battle in the spiritual world between heaven and hell – good and evil – leading to the Last Judgment and that crowning promise of a new church in heaven descending to earth.

That Last Judgment is not just an event portrayed in Revelation and taking place in this world in 1757 but a process – like our own regeneration. What is revealed is the fall of the Christian churches and the judgment on them – with clear warnings about our own lives.

Revelation begins with letters to seven churches – representing the quality of faith within us – with clear teachings about how to grow spiritually and become part of this new church.

A beloved symbol we celebrate in New Church Day pageants is the Woman Clothed with the Sun, representing spiritual truth giving birth to the heavenly doctrines of this new church. The dragon is a threat to this new understanding of faith – a threat that never goes away in our lives as well. She and her baby are saved by Michael and his angels, who fight for us as well. And there will always be dragons.

The Woman is given the wings of an eagle to fly into the wilderness where she is protected “for a time, and times, and half a time” – a curious phrase about the end of the former church and the beginning of the new. This is still a test for us. How long, Lord, as we witness a world drifting into chaos, sorely in need of deliverance? How long for our own lives?

The dragon, still intent on killing the Woman and her child, spews a flood of water out of its mouth – symbolically drowning all hope of salvation. But truth always overcomes falsity, as that water is swallowed up. But like the Woman, we are never safe in this world, where the hells always attack. It is in recognizing evil and shunning it, then choosing to follow the Lord, that we are delivered.

The fall of Babylon is an important symbol too because Babylon represents the desire for power and control – something that also has corrupted churches, and we witness its corrosive effect in our politics and culture.

All of this is a precursor to the Last Judgment upon the fallen church – and the state of the church within us. This is played out in Revelation with seven



angels pouring plagues from seven bowls, including water turning to blood, men scorched by fire, and frogs bursting out of the mouth of a dragon. As each bowl is poured out, a judgment is rendered through Divine love flowing from the Lord. It only becomes horrible when poured into people clinging to selfish loves. We are called to reject the allure of Babylon – all that is potentially fallen in our lives – through regeneration and to come into heaven.

*The Last Judgment is nothing else than the end of the church with one group of people, and the beginning with another. This end with one and beginning with another occurs when the Lord is not acknowledged any longer, and when there is no longer any charity. (Arcana Coelestia 3353)*

While much of *Revelation* is scary and disturbing, it all turns lyrical at the end: a white horse, the marriage of the Lamb, the Holy City descending from God out of heaven. This is what happens when evil and falsity are exposed and rejected, and the Lord and heaven are seen and embraced. This is the answer to the prayer: “deliver us from evil.”

The last chapter of *Revelation* opens with a pure river of water flowing from the throne of God – a whole new spiritual enlightenment. The New Church is established as people learn to love this new truth. This is happening in the midst of all the turmoil and depravity coursing through our culture that dampens our hope. The visions of John in *Revelation* are a continuing prophecy for the New Church – for all of us.

*Revelation* begins with a promise: “After this I looked, and there in heaven a door stood open.” (4:1) It ends with an even fuller promise of eternal blessing:

*I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and offspring of David, the bright and morning star. And the Spirit and the Bride say, Come. And let him that hear, say Come. And let him that is athirst, Come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely. (22:16-17)*

In our time-bound world we are enveloped in darkness that threatens to blot out all light and hope. It is easy to feel discouraged and impatient. After all it has been more than 250 years since the Last Judgment in the spiritual world, and the fallout seems more threatening than ever. But the Lord sees all of this playing out in a spiritual continuum free of time and space – and the New Church truly becoming “the crown of all churches that have ever existed upon the earth.” Our faith in Him should always transcend the apocalyptic vision of *Revelation* with that hope. The whole purpose of the Second Coming and the Last Judgment is to take away our blindness and be made new by the light of the morning star and the water of life.

*These things I have spoken unto you, that in Me you might have peace. In the world you shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer, for I have overcome the world. (John 16:33)*

The *Book of Revelation* was never meant to be an end-of-the-world prophecy of doom and destruction but a transcendent message of mercy and hope. In our impatience with the drawn-out course of the Last Judgment we may doubt that we will ever overcome the depravity of our culture. But remember when Elisha was threatened by a mighty Syrian army and his terrified servant asked what they could do. Elisha answered calmly: “*Fear not, for they that be with us are more than they that be with them.*” (*II Kings 6:16*) Then his servants’ eyes were opened and he saw that the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire around Elisha. And when Elisha prayed to the Lord, the army was smitten with blindness and they were delivered.

Now we and the Lord’s New Church are threatened by another “great army” and may feel like that servant, fearful and hopeless. But when we pray to the Lord and keep faith with Him, we are assured that “those that be with us are more than they that be with them.” The Spirit of Truth has come to lead us into “all truth” – and deliver us into heaven.

(BMH)

#### THE NEW CHURCH IS ABOUT SERVICE

*After this work was finished, the Lord called together the twelve disciples who followed Him in the world. The next day He sent all of them out to the entire spiritual world to preach the gospel that the Lord God Jesus Christ reigns and that His kingdom will last for ages of ages. (True Christianity 791)*

The reason the message that the disciples were to preach was about who reigns, and that this is the announcement of the Second Coming and the New Church, is that it is about who we should serve. To serve Him is to keep His commandment to “*love one another as I have loved you.*” (*John 15:12*)

By defining the New Church in terms of who reigns, the Lord is saying that our part is about service. It is not that good people serve the Lord, but that people who serve the Lord become good people. The strong connection between uses and happiness is one of the great insights of the New Church.

There is some magic, or something miraculous, involved in how this works. One way to illustrate the miracle is to look at this somewhat counterintuitive teaching in *True Christian Religion*, speaking about the things that we do for our families:

*It is a different kind of love which urges each person to these duties (toward our family) from that which urges them to the duties of their employment. In the case of a husband's duties to his wife and a wife's to her husband it is the result of conjugal love and dependent upon this. In the case of a father's and mother's love for their children, it is the result of the instinctive love everyone has, what is called parental affection. . . . [2] But conjugal love, and the love for children, together with their duties and the fulfilment of these duties, do not create love toward the neighbor the way the fulfilment of our work-related obligations does. (True Christian Religion 431)*

This last part may seem like a surprising teaching given how central conjugal love is said to be in every person's life. It is "*the fundamental love of all loves in heaven and the church.*" (*Conjugal Love* 65) So in what sense are its duties less beneficial than the duties of our employment?

The passage goes on to say that these duties are less beneficial because they are the result of instinctive loves that everyone has, whether bad or good, or because they depend on the state of the relationship between husband and wife. Other passages describe these things as being related to taking care of what is our own, even as an extension of taking care of ourselves. (*cf. Arcana Coelestia* 6933-6938)

This is why these things "*do not create love toward the neighbor the way the fulfilment of our work-related obligations does.*" It is an amazing thing that the work of an employment can "*create*" or "*produce*" in us something that was not there before. Surprisingly, the fact that we are paid for our work, and that we often do it mainly because we are obligated to do it, does not seem to remove this effect.

### **How does work change us?**

This is not to say that the motivations that lead us to work are always good. There are even employments themselves that are bad – jobs that actually do harm. We may not even like our work. But most forms of employment serve a genuine purpose, and there are aspects of working that mitigate our natural desire for credit and reward.

*It is easy for the Lord to erase people's idea that they deserve (reward and) credit, provided those people attain (this love or) goodwill primarily through working justly and faithfully in the position, business, or line of work they are in and with the people with whom they interact. (True Christianity 442)*

That is, as people do their jobs and fulfill their obligations their natural

desire for reward and credit will tend to diminish.

This follows from the definition of charity that is given to us, which is that it

*is doing good to our neighbor daily and constantly – not only to our neighbor as an individual but also to our neighbor collectively. The only way to do this is through practicing goodness and justice in our position and work and with the people with whom we have any interaction, because these are things we do every day. When we are not doing them, they still stay in our minds all the time; we think about them and intend to do them. (True Christianity 423)*

The emphasis here is on what we do constantly and repeatedly. The constant repetition of useful actions tends to change us. “Act precedes, our willing follows.” (*Arcana Coelestia* 4353) Over time we become accustomed to whatever work it is that we do; we become better at it, and we may come to have an affection for it that may not have been there at the beginning. We will miss it when we stop.

The same must also be true of the work we do for our own families, which would otherwise be unfair to homemakers. This is said to “create” charity in us to a lesser degree only because it is instinctive and because it is an aspect of taking care of ourselves. But if our purpose in doing this work is to have a household and family that serves the Lord and society in general, then the effect is ultimately the same. Love for the neighbor is created.

### **The miraculous effect of effort**

The Writings talk about how things become second nature to us:

*It is well known that habits form a kind of second nature, and therefore what is easy for one person is difficult for another. It is easy for manual laborers, porters, and farm workers to work with their arms from morning till evening, but a delicate person of the nobility cannot do the same work for half an hour without fatigue and sweating. It is easy for a forerunner with a walking stick and comfortable shoes to ply the road for miles, whereas someone used to riding in a carriage has difficulty jogging slowly from one street to the next. [2] All artisans who are devoted to their craft pursue it easily and willingly, and when they are away from it they long to get back to it; but it is almost impossible to force a lazy person with the same skills to practice that craft. The same goes for everyone who has some occupation or pursuit..”( True Christianity 562)*

Many people have had the experience of watching someone at work and

realizing that they couldn't do that job for half an hour. Or when we first experienced having to work an eight-hour day or longer at some kind of physical labor we may have wondered if it was even possible. Yet within a few weeks or months we got used to it. The effect of doing something repeatedly or being involved long term in some kind of cause or project, changes us in ways that we do not realize. What may be happening is that the old person is fading away and a new person is being born. This is what is meant by taking up our cross and following the Lord.

The mechanism for this to happen has to do with effort. It is put this way in *Arcana Coelestia* 1937:

*A person ought to compel himself to do what is good and to speak what is true. The arcanum lying within this is that in so doing a person has a heavenly proprium bestowed on them from the Lord. This heavenly proprium is formed within the effort of their thought.*

The new person is formed within effort. The effort itself is not ours but is from the Lord. Still, we choose in freedom to use it, and the Lord attributes it to us. When effort is employed to do something useful, love of the neighbor is being created where it did not exist before – in a miraculous way.

This same passage notes that we don't feel this freedom or this love while this is going on, because it is masked by the discomfort and feelings of compulsion that go along with most forms of effort.

### **Enter by the narrow gate**

We commonly want to avoid excessive effort, which is why the Lord said:

*Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and confined is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it. Matthew 7:13, 14)*

That is, it appears to be easier to avoid work than to do it, and it is natural to chafe against the confining sense of obligation that work imposes on us. It is impossible to avoid this appearance and these feelings, and there is such a thing as working too hard. Rest and recreation are important. But there is no new life without effort, and the happiness of heaven is closely linked with a willingness to serve.

*Unless one is active there is no happiness in life. Angelic life consists in use, and in good deeds of charity. . . . Consequently, angelic happiness consists in use, stems from use, and is proportionate to use, that is, to the good deeds of love and charity. (Arcana Coelestia 454)*

This principle applies to every area of life. In marriage, for example, we read

in *Conjugal Love* that “an absence of focus on any pursuit or business” is a significant cause of unhappiness:

*By pursuit or business we mean any effort to be useful. When as a result a person is engaged in some pursuit or business or other useful activity, his mind is fenced around and circumscribed as though with a circle, within whose bounds it is progressively ordered into truly human form. . . . Because of this, conjugal warmth lasts better and longer in such people than it does in others. (249)*

It may seem narrow and confining, but the opposite is true. It is a method that creates love miraculously.

This is why the Lord said that whoever desires to save his life will lose it. He means that whoever desires to find happiness without being willing to serve will lose that happiness. But whoever is willing to give up his own happiness for the sake of doing something useful will find it. We gain that life by service, even though it appears that work is a sacrifice.

A *Life Line* in the March/April edition of this journal, titled “I’ll never work again,” noted that many Americans are not working. “One commentator said, ‘the most chilling metric of all’ is that seven million Americans of prime working age ‘are done looking for jobs.’”

This is a comment worth expanding on. It comes from a recent book about American employment patterns: *Men Without Work: Post-Pandemic Edition*” (2022) by Nicholas Eberstadt. He notes:

*What economists call prime working-age men, aged 25 to 54, are still the backbone of the economy. Up until the 1960s, work rates for prime-age men in America were consistent and very high. Then starting in the mid-’60s, something changed. Since about 1965, we have seen a relentless and almost invariant consistent retreat from the workforce for those men. Today, the work rate for prime-age men is lower than it was in early 1940, which is the only really good measurement we have for the Great Depression. At that time, the unemployment level for America was almost 15%, but work rates today are lower than they were for American men that age back in 1940. So we’ve got kind of a Great Depression-scale work problem for men on our hands in the U.S. right now.*

*According to their self-reported data, according to time-use surveys that the government submits to people who are from all different walks of life, for the Bureau of Labor Statistics, these labor force dropouts basically don’t do civil society. They don’t do worship. They don’t do charity. They don’t do volunteer work. Although*

*they've got, you'd think, almost nothing but time on their hands, they don't do much help around the house. They don't get out of the house that much, they say. What they say they do is to watch screens. Other information says about half of these guys report using some sort of pain medication every day.*

A further comment is that the typical member of this group is not married and does not live independently. Needless to say, they are not likely to be happy either.

Throughout human history a hardship in life has been the amount of effort required to survive. Food and other physical needs have been scarce and often difficult to acquire. According to the passages quoted here, however, the work that this has required has been as much a source of happiness as it has been a source of grief. And by contrast the ease of life experienced by many of us today may be as much a source of grief as it is of happiness.

The New Church is not about making life more difficult for people. But it is about service and knowing who it is that we serve. The announcement made on June 19, 1770, is a call to follow Him and do as He teaches us – not just because He commands it but because people will follow and obey a Lord who loves us and who lays out the mysteries of faith in a way that everyone can understand. This is why the New Church is the path to a happier world.

(JFS)

# Letters to the Editors

Letters to the Editors may be sent to the Editors of New Church Life at  
Box 743, Bryn Athyn, PA 19009  
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## *The Attack on Religion*

To The Editors:

I would like to thank (Editor) Bruce Henderson and (Spiritual Editor) the Rev. Jeremy Simons very much for these three excellent articles in the January/February 2023 edition of New Church Life, and urge all members of the General Church to read them as one article and to ponder over them: *The Celestial Fire of Conscience*, page 7 (Mr. Henderson), *Bonnhoeffer's Theory of Intelligence*, page 61 (Rev. Simmons). and *Innocence Awake*. page 66 (Mr. Henderson).

What is happening across the world is terrible, and the world is, indeed, as Bruce remarks, in free fall. Therefore, I would have liked to have seen these three articles drawn together, to give much greater prominence in addressing the evils besetting the world – particularly in regard to “woke” attitudes, Black Lives Matter, the LGBTQ+ Bryn Athyn petition, the various sex and gender issues which are current, and the effect of all these issues on our children.

Essentially, these three separate articles are in fact one article, and as one they are especially relevant to what is happening, being taught in the world, and subtly infiltrated into our consciousness as acceptable, such as “woke” attitudes, gender issues, sex changes, the number of sexes there are, and awful falsities being implanted into our children through education systems and social and media influences.

It is essential that we always act according to a true conscience, which Bruce defines so well. It is not some inner voice saying, “Hey! You shouldn’t be doing this.” We hear a great deal about “woke” attitudes, sex changes, transgender and even zero gender issues and sex education of children. In considering such issues, we should note Bonnhoeffer’s views on intelligence, written as long ago as 1945 – especially his comments in the second paragraph under



**his Section 4: Freedom and Independence are Key Aspects on Intelligence.**

Finally, I would draw your attention to Bruce's Life Line, *Innocence Awake*. The points he makes should be a wake-up call to every New Church person. He says that innocence is always there to be awakened, as the Lord has blessed us all with remains from childhood that stir and renew feelings of innocence. When religion underpinned our lives, and therefore true remains were implanted in our children, I think that was true. But is it still true today? To me, this will depend on the extent to which they are from the Lord.

In today's world innocence is being destroyed and the values being implanted by the world, by parents who reflect the false values of the world, and by schools, are "remains," but are falsities. We all know that as defined in the Writings, remains are from the Lord and lead to our salvation. If the remains are from religion, the Word and the Lord, then they are true remains and anything else will be evil.

Are not good remains and innocence in our children being destroyed by an essentially evil society? The more that evil morality takes over society, pervades the education of our children, and the less there is of religious values and the greater the tolerance of these new ways – now becoming apparent even in the General Church – will children acquire good remains or will their childhood become perverted? To what extent will the situation worsen from one generation to the next?

In general, there is no longer the standard of truth which is inviolate, outside of ourselves and to which we must measure up. The more that adults accept this, the more the innocence of children is being destroyed as increasingly fewer remains from the Lord will be implanted because children are no longer taught THE truth. In such a scenario hope for the future can only die.

As I see it, there is no rationality anymore. Political correctness, "wokeness," and social innovation in the name of progress are now the name of the game, all leading to the destruction of religion, morality, truth and the loss of innocence in children. No one dares speak out anymore on anything if it does not coincide with the fringe elements now in control of society.

Dan Wooton, on the popular United Kingdom TV channel, *GBNewsLive*, recently said that the problem in the world today is that there is no longer **The Truth**, only **Your Truth**, which is whatever you decide to be the truth. As Jeremy quotes from Bonnhoeffer, one is dealing with slogans and catchwords which are all too readily and irrationally accepted by society. Evils and falsities are just accepted, sadly even by members of the Church..

There has been a long and subtle attack on all that is good in society, all that is of the Lord and of religion. Take the feminist movement which got going in the late 1960s, which often seems to me to be the beginning of the serious decline in standards. Yes, the inequalities needed to be dealt with, and

superficially that *was* the issue. But behind it was an attack on marriage and religion. One didn't have to be married. One could have *de facto* marriages. Then from there homosexuals and lesbians and same-sex marriages became acceptable, then LGBTQ+ marriages and so on, and lastly a blind acceptance of political correctness and the "wokes" which now seem to be setting social standards.

I am sure that what is happening in the United States is much the same as in Australia, in the United Kingdom and elsewhere. I follow what is happening in the UK; here are some examples:

- The National Health Service has advised its doctors that they must not assume the sex of a patient, not even from one patient's visit to the next.
- A nurse in the UK has been suspended because she said that being white doesn't make you a racist.
- In Scotland a man who raped a woman was found guilty but then changed his sex to a woman and was sent to a women's prison, causing a public outcry.
- Legislation recently went before the Scottish Parliament that would have allowed children of 16 to determine their own sex without medical confirmation or parent's consent, the only legal requirement being to have lived in Scotland for three months according to the new sex. Needless to say this raised a storm in England from women. Male perverts could go to Scotland for three months, become registered females, return to England and have access to women's toilets, change rooms, hospital wards and so on.
- Puffin Books recently announced that it was rewriting the famous children's books by Roald Dahl to make them less offensive (their words, but to whom?). It was only after a thinly veiled criticism by Queen Camilla that Puffin did a u-turn and said they would continue to publish in their original form as well as their sanitized versions.
- Recently at an Isle of Man primary school ( Isle of Man is an autonomous enclave in the UK) a drag queen, according to a Daily Mail report, gave a talk to children at a primary school and asked how many sexes there are. When an 11-year-old child responded with "two" she was expelled from the class, which was told that there are 72 sexes.

In Australia as elsewhere, primary school age children are being taught that there is no such thing as sex – one can decide whatever one wishes to be. Children here are indoctrinated through the schools system in the political persuasion of the day, whether it be sex change, homosexuality, lesbianism, transgender, Black Lives Matter, etc.

Black Lives Matter is a subtle and dangerously racist movement against whites. Statues have been toppled in England because they are of people who were once slave traders, forgetting the context, and forgetting that such people saw the evil of the slave trade in later life and became philanthropists in their hometowns.

African countries demand slave trade reparations from Britain, forgetting that it was their own chiefs who procured the slaves in the first place and that it was Britain and the efforts of the Royal Navy that abolished the slave trade. In places like Zimbabwe and South Africa black people are bitterly anti-white, forgetting that if it hadn't been for the whites they wouldn't have the cities and infrastructure they now have.

Recently I watched a TV investigative/documentary program of the government-funded Australian Broadcasting Corporation, which was highly critical of two private Catholic Schools in Sydney. From what I could see the supposed investigative report was nothing more than a rant against religion, in particular against the two Catholic Schools – the conservative Opus Dei movement of the Catholic Church, which these two schools supported, and that the schools tried to instill in their students the idea that one should not have sex before marriage.

This is insidious and taxpayer-funded indoctrination. Perhaps, too, there may have been a political agenda: the current premier of the New South Wales government attended one of these schools and at the time a general election was looming.

I have heard, too, that children as young as five may decide that they are actually of the opposite sex and are taking that sex's hormone therapy to help take them on their way. I have also been told that if a child as young as 14 visits a doctor with a parent, the doctor is obliged to ask if the child agrees, and if not, the parent has to leave.

The subtle and insidious erosion of religion and morality is nowhere more apparent than in the annual Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras. It commenced in a relatively small way four decades ago to popularize gay and lesbian lifestyles at a time when they were not generally accepted. Over the last 40 years that small beginning has changed into an internationally recognized festival attracting hundreds of thousands, as well as being supported by large businesses. Obviously, there is money to be made here, and it is now a prime Sydney festival.

This year, the Australian Prime Minister made a big thing of being the first Australian Prime Minister to actually participate. The anti-religion and anti-morality basis of this festival is either ignored or forgotten. Long may we drink, dance and be merry with no care for the morrow. The Lord continually refers to kings who sinned and led their people astray and the consequences of their actions. (*See 1 Kings 16, 29-33*)

All this is only the tip of the iceberg. One of the slogans on one of our TV networks is: "From little things big things grow." This is all too true when it comes to evils.

Unfortunately, too, dangerous trends are emerging in society. The rule of law is being pushed aside as individuals or groups take violent action against those who oppose their own views, of which your readers in the United States would be all too familiar.

As Bruce points out in *The Celestial Fires of Conscience* it is only a true conscience that allows us to discriminate against and speak out against all these problems. As he says, conscience is not a voice whispering in one's ear but is only something granted by the Lord through a life leading to regeneration.

It worries me that so many people, including some in the New Church, go along with much of the sordidness in the world: e.g., the recent petition in Bryn Athyn to the Bishop, which cannot be in any way regarded as sordid but does reflect worldly and doctrinally false ideas. Superficially, acceptance might seem to be a matter of charity, but one should always be cognizant of the underlying evils which are there and will flow on.

Those of us who have concerns must speak out strongly and openly and condemn what is happening in the world. It should not be left to people like Dan Wooton. General Church folk must be there too. Sadly, some General Church ministers make spiritual and condemnatory judgments on those who speak out in support of the truth, as representing Ham in having only faith and no charity – as stated in *Arcana Coelestia* 2079.

Barrie Ridgway  
Canberra  
Australia

### *The Life of Life Lines*

To The Editors:

This is a note of deep appreciation for the Life Lines section in the January/February 2023 *New Church Life*.

This entire section came to me as a breath of fresh air, especially *The*

*Church of the Graven Image* and all the quotes from Dietrich Bonhoeffer (new to me). It's been years since I read the story of Brother Andrew. I shall revisit *God's Smuggler*, thanking you for the reference.

In Day 6 of the New Church Easter Readings, I found the closing reflection – “Submitting the rational to the Lord means subordinating our wants and ideas about what is right to the Lord” – completely applicable to all that was written in Life Lines.

In this sad era of public opinion – “find your own truth” and/or “live according to your OWN truth” – it was a blessing to read this portion of *New Church Life* and enjoy the contrasting enlightenment found within.

Nancy Lindman  
Weiser  
Idaho

*Seek the Lord While  
He May Be Found*

To The Editors:

It may not seem obvious but if we think about it, when we are engaged in seeking the Lord's way in the Word and in the explanations of the Word's truths in the Writings by Emanuel Swedenborg, are there not two distinct platforms by which we can approach the task?

The first would be to say simply in our heart: “Lord, I have a problem in my life. Please show me *Your* path that I may follow it.”

On the other hand, we might say: “Lord, I think that I know the way. Please confirm that *my* choices are acceptable to you.”

Both searchings of the Word may seem to be similar, but could the bias of our approach skew the conclusions we reach? Maybe the answer we give to this question will have eternal consequences.

Martin E. Klein  
Huntingdon Valley  
Pennsylvania

# Pilgrims in Israel:

## Feeling the Presence of the Lord

*Rev. Dr. Andrew M. T. Dibb*

**I**n November 2019 I was privileged to visit Israel. I had been there once before to attend a conference in Jerusalem and was fascinated by the country. When the opportunity came to go again – this time with colleagues and expressly to visit Biblical sites – choosing to go was a no-brainer.

Aram Yardumian, Stephen Cole, David Gyllenhaal and I set out and spent a wonderful 10 days that changed our conception of places mentioned in the Old and New Testaments. We felt strongly that Theological School and College faculty, as well as Theological School students, should visit the Holy Land at least once in their lives.

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The next opportunity did not come until November 2022. This time a group of nine, including three students, set out, arriving in Tel Aviv at the crack of dawn after a mostly sleepless night. There we met our tour guide, Ana Shalaev, who would share her incredible knowledge of Israel – and the connection of each place we stopped – with the Old and New Testaments. Becoming an official Israeli tour guide takes two-and-a-half years of education and training, and it certainly showed in her encyclopedic knowledge of the country.

Our itinerary was extremely full. Recognizing that it would be impossible to visit all the places of interest and note, it was necessary to work out a program that made sense, including essential places – and took the frailty of some aging ministers into account. As it was, we averaged walking between six and seven miles a day, interspersed with much-needed rests in the tour van.

The logical way for us to see Israel was to focus on the north – Mount Carmel and Galilee – then travel south to see Jerusalem, Bethlehem and places in central Israel. We did not venture down into the Sinai.

After landing at Ben Gurion, Ana started the tour with a visit to Caesarea on the Mediterranean Sea – a magnificent city built by Herod the Great. Without lingering too long, we traveled north to Mount Carmel, a ridge of hills projecting across Israel into the Mediterranean Sea. The objective was the site on Mt. Carmel where Elijah killed the prophets of Baal. Even more exciting was the lookout platform with the land spread out before us.

The view to the north and east of Mt. Carmel was the Plain of Jezreel, where so many Biblical events happened. Off in the distance were other noteworthy places, Mt. Tabor, Mt. Gilboa, Mt. Meron and Mt. Hermon. To the east, the Sea of Galilee. The plain immediate below the lookout was Armageddon, where many believe the final battle between good and evil will happen.

By this time we were exhausted. We had booked a hotel on the shore of the Sea of Galilee, with spectacular views. The terrace stopped at the water, and there was a place to swim. Most of the time the water was absolutely calm, with hardly a ripple. The Rev. Grant Schnarr described his experience seeing this calm body of water:

There are many memorable events from our trip to Israel. Two highlights stick out to me. The first has to do with the Sea of Galilee. We spent the first few days next to it and it is altogether breathtaking in beauty. Several of us were also struck by the size. You can look straight across at the land on the other side. At 13 miles long and eight miles wide, observing it on a calm day I wondered how the disciples could not get across that sea as the wind blew against them, just before the Lord appeared before them walking on the water. (*See Matthew 14:22-36*) Or how a storm could create such fear in the disciples that they may die? Why couldn't they just row over to land in about 10 minutes?

I got my answer, as I think others in our entourage did as well, when the wind picked up one evening, and the still sea turned into a monstrous, turbulent, dangerous body of water. We watched as the waves smashed into the bulkhead, spraying water everywhere, the wind blowing furniture around. I said to myself, "Ah, this explains everything!" I had al-

ready known that the surrounding topography created the opportunity for strong winds and storms coming across the sea without notice, but experiencing it first-hand helped me understand just how dramatic and precarious things had become for the disciples. It all made sense.

The next morning the wind calmed down to a tranquil stillness. We took a boat ride out onto the sea itself. I imagined Jesus, then Peter, walking on the water right here, before us. Exhilarating!

During our stay in Galilee, the Sea was a constant presence. An excursion north took us to Mount Precipice, the traditional cliff where the people of Nazareth threatened to throw the Lord down. (*See Luke 4:29*) Had they managed this, the Lord would surely have been killed. Whether Mt. Precipice is the actual mountain is not certain, but, as the Rev. Stephen Cole notes:

The view from Mount Precipice also looks out across the Jezreel Valley – back across to Mount Carmel and East to the same landmarks we had seen in the panorama from Mount Carmel. What struck me in seeing these vistas from Nazareth was that, not until I was actually standing there, had I given much thought to the fact that, although the Gospels focus on the account of the Lord's public ministry, He actually spent a majority of His earthly life in Nazareth. And not only did He study and learn the histories in the Old Testament, but He could also see many of the very places where the events took place, simply by looking out over the Jezreel basin.

Nazareth itself is the largest predominantly Muslim city in Israel, but it is crowded with pilgrims and tourists thronging to see the traditional sites of the annunciation to Mary, where the Lord grew up, and where He preached a sermon that infuriated His listeners. There are two traditions about the annunciation resulting in two churches, a large Catholic Basilica with a cave that is believed to be part of Mary's house. An altar cloth states, "Here the Word was made Flesh."

Not far from this is a smaller church where the Lord is said to have read the passage from *Isaiah* that He said was now being fulfilled. The congregation, which had known Him all His life, was provoked to anger, which led to them almost throwing Him off Mt. Precipice.

The second tradition of the annunciation is that the angel Gabriel appeared to Mary at a well. This well still produces water, and close by it is an Orthodox Church commemorating the Annunciation.

It is not possible to go into this much detail about all the places we saw, but



one particularly impressive site is Magdala, the hometown of Mary Magdalene. Not too long ago the Roman Catholic Church was erecting a hostel when, as so often happens in Israel, ancient ruins were discovered. Fortunately, the building project did not affect the ruins as they turned out to be an amazing first century synagogue from the time of the Lord. It is quite possible that the Lord actually preached and performed miracles there. (*See Matthew 15:39-16:14*) Magdala is one of the jewels in Israel's biblical crown.

After touring the northern end of Israel for three days, visiting Capernaum, the place where the Lord preached the Sermon on the Mount, and another where He performed the miracle of feeding the five thousand, it was time to turn southward to our second base in Jerusalem.

A highlight of this part of the trip was stopping at Beit Sha'an, an ancient city spanning thousands of years. Close by the ruins is a stream. It was at this stream where the Lord thinned out Gideon's army by having them drink water, leaving only 300 men to attack the Midianites. Theolog Thomas Jackson describes his response to being on that spot:

The brook of Harod was the site that held the most impact for me in Israel. While only a small brook in the desert, the experience of being by that brook where Gideon's army would have been, and looking back to where the Israelites would have been encamped, then across the brook to the hill of Moreh where the Midianites would have been, was striking. To stand on a biblical battleground and envision the armies clashing on the very place where I stood was an experience I won't soon forget.

The road south is parallel to the River Jordan, which lies just to the east. The hills on the other side of the Jordan River are the country of Jordan. Much of the territory we travelled through is part of the West Bank. We stopped twice on this stretch of road. The first time was at the ancient city of Jericho, the lowest city on earth, and one that has been inhabited for thousands of years. It is an amazing feeling to stare down at the remains of a mud-brick wall thousands of years old and think of the many biblical events they witnessed.

The other stop close by was a spot on the River Jordan, across from Jericho, one of the traditional places where John the Baptist baptized the Lord. The Jordan at this point is very narrow; one feels you could almost jump across it (not advisable even if one could, for one would then be jumping into the kingdom of Jordan, would possibly be shot, and would certainly create an international incident. Plus, one would have to be more athletic than most of us were.)

There were quite a number of people at this site, many of whom were being baptized, some by full immersion and some by having water sprinkled on their heads. Of course, the question arose if this was really the spot, but to those

being baptized it didn't seem to matter. The connection with the river itself and the act of baptism seemed to be most important.

Finally, we made it to Jerusalem. We began our tour from the Mount of Olives, with the walled city just over the Kidron Valley. Not exactly the same as when the Lord was there, but certainly close enough to give a strong sense of what He may have seen. We walked down the Mount of Olives, stopping briefly at the Garden of Gethsemane, and were awed by the ancient olive trees. Going up the other side, we entered Jerusalem close to the start of the Via Dolorosa, the "Way of Sorrows." Theolog Irv Kaage explains:

The Via Dolorosa marks positions in Jerusalem, linking them with the biblical account of Jesus' movements after He was taken into custody in the Garden of Gethsemane and brought into the city by soldiers through the Lion's Gate. Crucifixions were conducted at a strategic, conspicuous place to maximize public mockery and create a horrific deterrence to disobedience to the state. It is beneficial to have a visual reference to help the imagination see the impact of the original event, as well as how it is commemorated today.

The Via Dolorosa ends at the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, erected over the purported site of Golgotha and the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea. It is one of the holiest places in Christendom and is always thronged with pilgrims and tourists from all over the world. One could fill pages with information about the Church of the Holy Sepulcher and we stayed as long as we could. However, there are several claimants to being the burial site; another is the "Garden Tomb." The setting of this tomb is completely different from the Holy Sepulcher, and in many ways much more appealing. Unfortunately, its provenance does not carry the same weight of history. This did not make it any less wonderful to visit.

The Jerusalem we see today is quite different from what it was in millennia past. The whole city has shifted. A visit to the ancient city of David takes us to a far boundary of the old city. This is the oldest part of the city and parts of it are still in the process of excavation. Standing on the probable sight of David's palace one looks down on the houses below, giving texture to the story of David seeing Bathsheba bathing. It makes sense in that setting.

An important part of the city is the water system developed centuries before David by earlier inhabitants. Walls connected the city to a spring, which in time were covered and then replaced by an amazing underground tunnel, Hezekiah's Tunnel. As one walks through it, it is easy to imagine ancient Jerusalemites in their ritual of fetching water from the spring. At the bottom of the hill is the Pool of Siloam where Israelite pilgrims washed before ascending up

a newly discovered road to the Temple.

The temple lies at the heart of the ancient city. It is the holiest place in Judaism and the third holiest for Muslims, and unfortunately a place of conflict and strife. Tourists are allowed onto Temple Mount to view the Dome of the Rock and the Al-Aksa mosque. It is very impressive to see the Golden Dome against a clear blue Israeli sky.

Temple Mount was originally the site of the temple built by King Solomon, rebuilt after the Babylonian Captivity and expanded by King Herod. It was completely destroyed by the Romans, but the surrounding supporting walls were simply too massive to destroy. The Western Wall runs behind where the Holy of Holies would have been, and this is accessible to Jews who gather to pray. The Rev. Grant Schnarr's description of his experience there captures the thoughts and feelings of the group:

The most memorable and moving event for me was visiting the Western Wall, often called the "Wailing Wall," in Jerusalem. It is part of a retaining wall where the temple stood in Old Jerusalem and is said to be the last part of the original wall of the temple. It is said that the Ark of the Covenant, once rested in the Holy of Holies, right on the other side of this preserved section where people gathered. This a most holy site for Jews and Muslims and is visited by millions every year. Visitors stand or kneel and pray. People bring paper notes with prayers, promises, and messages to God in the hopes to be heard. These are stuffed into the cracks in the wall.

We visited the wall just as the Sabbath was starting (Friday at dusk), and the area filled with people. I decided that I want-

*I reached out and touched the (Wailing) Wall with both hands, both praying and gazing up at this magnificent structure. As I prayed, I could feel such power in these stones. Here is how I first expressed my feelings in an earlier description on social media. This memory will always be cherished. (The Rev. Grant Schnarr)*

ed to go up to the wall and touch it and say a prayer. I stood next to a man with his arms outstretched on the wall, reciting by heart one formal prayer after another. I reached out and touched the wall with both hands, both praying and gazing up at this magnificent structure. As I prayed, I could feel such power in these stones. Here is how I first expressed my feelings in an earlier description on social media.

*I'm not Jewish, but praying at the Western Wall was a highlight of my trip. The power of millions of people's pain, hope, prayers, faith, humanity, all focused on these ancient stones still standing only feet from where the ark of the covenant once rested, reverberated through my flesh and bones, as my prayers joined theirs, ascending into the heavens.*

This memory will always be cherished.

In order to visit Bethlehem our guide arranged for a Christian Palestinian named Ramses to lead us. Bethlehem is in the Palestinian West Bank and so is off limits to Israelis. Some of us had met Ramses before on earlier trips. The Church of the Nativity is a huge complex of churches run by the Orthodox, Armenian and Catholic Churches, who control access to the birthplace of the Lord by turns. We were fortunate to be able to make contact with an Armenian bishop who allowed us to enter through the exit. The spot where the Lord was born is marked with a bronze star set into the stone and pilgrims stand in line for hours to touch the star and pray there.

Two miles outside Bethlehem is the Shepherd's Field, including a cave where they would have rested when not on duty. It is a steep rocky hillside, quite different from most Christmas cards, but much more authentic. The Rev. Stephen Cole writes:

For centuries, Bethlehem was populated predominately by Christians. They have now fallen to a minority, but there is still a significant Christian presence in the Holy Land. It is easy to fall into thinking simplistically, at a distance, that the modern-day Holy Land is composed of Israeli Jews and Palestinian Muslims. But when one is actually in Israel, Christianity is inescapable. At virtually every significant spot mentioned in either the Old Testament or Gospel histories, you will find a Christian Church. And these churches are not just empty museums. Local congregations meet in them, and there is also a steady stream of visitors. Some might be classed as gawking tourists, but many are better described as Christian pilgrims, people from Christian churches all over the world, people who have come to the Holy Land and who visit these sites because they

are important to their faith. Everywhere we went, there were preachers preaching, individuals praying, groups singing.

The trip ended with a visit to the Museum of Israel, but time was limited so it was not possible to see the entire set of exhibitions. Finally, we drove to Tel Aviv to see a modern Israeli city bustling with life, even on the Sabbath. Our walk through Tel Aviv took us to the ancient port of Jaffa (modern Yafo), where we sat on a stone wall and watched the sun set over the Mediterranean.

One topic of discussion we came back to time and time again was whether these sites were authentic. There really is no way of knowing, but people have been studying them for centuries. Each site is a blend of tradition, custom and history (which may all be the same thing) refined by ongoing archaeological study. Whether these are the exact sites or not, is not the real point. The events of the Word happened somewhere close to where people say it happened, and



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# “There They Will See Me”

*A Sermon by the Rev. Grant Odher*

*Lessons: Matthew 26:30-35; 28:1-10,16-20;  
John 21.1-14; Arcana Coelestia 904*

Picture the resurrected Lord standing on a mountaintop in Galilee. Can you picture the space around Him – falling away to the distant land and lake below, and expanding endlessly toward the horizon? As the disciples approach Him, they are filled with wonder. They are seeing Him with new eyes. “*And when they saw Him, they worshiped Him.*” (Matthew 28:17)

The Lord had planned this meeting spot before His resurrection. He had told the disciples, as He walked with them to the Mount of Olives:

*All of you will be made to stumble because of Me this night. . . . But after I have been raised, I will go before you to Galilee. (Ibid. 26:32)*

On Easter morning, the angel said to the women who came to the tomb:

*Go quickly and tell His disciples that He is risen from the dead, and indeed He is going before you into Galilee; there you will see Him.” (Ibid. 28:5-7)*

And as though that weren’t enough, Jesus reinforces this message:

And as they went to tell His disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, “Rejoice! . . . Go, tell My brethren to go to Galilee, and there they will see Me.” (Ibid. 28:9-10)

And the 11 disciples went away into Galilee, to the mountain which Jesus “*had appointed for them.*” (Ibid. 28:16)

On that mountain in Galilee, Matthew records just a few important messages given to the disciples:

*All power has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and Behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age. (Ibid. 28:18-20)*

“Behold, I am with you always.” These parting words of the omnipresent God represent a theme in Matthew’s Gospel. After recounting the Lord’s birth, he states:

And all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying: “Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel,” which is translated. “God with us.” (Ibid. 1:21-23)

Later, Jesus tells His disciples: “Where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them.” (18:20) And He declares that He will tell His “sheep” on Judgment Day that in ministering “to one of the least of these His brethren,” they have ministered to Him. (25) Now in parting He underscores this message: “I am with you always.” We will return to these words.

But why does Matthew’s Jesus meet with His disciples in Galilee? In *Mark* and *Luke* the Lord appears to the disciples only in Jerusalem. In *John* He appears in Jerusalem and then later by the sea of Galilee. But in *Matthew*, the Lord only appears in Galilee. Clearly, for Matthew there is an important message in this. What symbolic meaning does “Galilee” hold?

In the spiritual world places represent states of mind. Moving from one place to another has to do with changing our state of mind. The same is true in Scripture. “Galilee” represents a state of mind.

In *Matthew* (as in *Mark* and *Luke*) Jerusalem was Jesus’ ultimate destination during His ministry. He only spent His last week there. The rest of the time He was in Galilee, or on His way toward Jerusalem.

Jerusalem was the heart of Judaism. The temple was there on Mount Zion. That was the very seat of God’s presence. “Out of Zion,” the prophet sang, “the law shall go forth, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.” (*Micah* 4:2) Jerusalem represents the Word and the teaching of the Word. “Jerusalem” represents the mental state of engaging with the truth and tasting its lofty ideals. The Scriptures often speak of “going up” to Jerusalem. The Lord’s destination was “Jerusalem,” because He came to renew and reestablish the Word, and the church based on it.

But in *Matthew* the risen Lord did not tell the women that the disciples would find Him in Jerusalem: "Go, tell My brethren to go to Galilee, and there they will see Me." (*Matthew 28:10*)

What is the mental state represented by "Galilee"? What is it to "go" from "Jerusalem" to Galilee?

Galilee is where Jesus was conceived, where He grew up and was educated, where He began His teaching, where He called people to be His disciples, where He spent most of His ministry. Why did He spend all this time there? It was a place where there were Jews, but also a place that was full of Gentiles. While Judah was much more insular – set up in the hills next to the wilderness and by the desolate Dead Sea trench, Galilee had a central plain extending across it that formed a crossroad connecting the great countries of the East – Syria, Assyria, Babylon and Persia – with the Mediterranean and Egypt. It was a place that these nations wanted to occupy and control. So Israelites living there came into contact with other cultures and ideologies and had to struggle to survive as a people and a religion.

After Jesus' baptism, when He returns to Galilee, *Matthew* quotes *Isaiah*:

*The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali,  
By the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles:  
The people who sat in darkness have seen a great light,  
And upon those who sat in the region and shadow of death  
Light has dawned. (9:1,2)*

Galilee is a symbol of our natural minds. The natural mind is where goodness and knowledge of truth ("Israel") mingles with evil and ignorance and falsity ("Gentiles"). In our natural lives we are continually challenged by this evil and falsity – that is, by ignorance, selfishness, faulty thinking, misguided goals. Our natural condition is a state where we must struggle to do the right thing.

This symbolic meaning of Galilee is strengthened by the fact that the heart of Galilee (where Jesus did much of His ministry) was in the region of the tribe of "Naphtali." "Naphtali" means "to wrestle" and symbolizes spiritual struggles. (*Arcana Coelestia 3928*) What is more, the area around the Sea, the center of the Lord's ministry, is one of the lowest inhabited places on earth – 695 feet below sea level! That Sea is a symbol of our natural mind and life, and our imprisonment there (which makes it a hell). It represents the state from which the Lord wants us to be "fished out," and saved.

So why does the Lord after His resurrection tell the disciples (in effect) to leave "Jerusalem" and to "go to Galilee" in order to see Him? Why did *Matthew's* Jesus want Him to speak His last words to them there?

Well, we might note that Jerusalem was not the disciples' home. They were



*We do need to “go up” to “Jerusalem” with the Lord. Our faith is formed by going periodically to the Word, lifting our thought to what is ideal, getting out of our ordinary modes of thought and life, getting inspiring tastes of heavenly life.*

from Galilee. They faithfully followed Jesus to Jerusalem. They followed Him to the “Holy City,” to the place of His supreme conflict and victory. They ascended the temple steps to Mount Zion and walked up the Mount of Olives with Him. But His message to them at His rising was: “Go to Galilee. There you will see Me.”

We do need to “go up” to “Jerusalem” with the Lord. Our faith is formed by going periodically to the Word, lifting our thought to what is ideal, getting out of our ordinary modes of thought and life, getting inspiring tastes of heavenly life. If we did not follow the Lord in His “process” of going up to Jerusalem – if we did not strive in the path of regeneration – we would not become spiritual people. But where do we most often “see the Lord”? Where do we *experience* Him

in our daily life? Where are we *challenged* to “teach the nations” in ourselves to “observe all things that the Lord has commanded” us?

“Galilee” is where we *live*. Our natural state. Getting out of our bed in the morning. Picking up yesterday’s clothes. Washing and dressing for a new day. Driving to work. Our daily chores and uses, and interactions with people. You might think that the Galilee state is not where we will see the risen Lord. Yet when we believe in the Lord, and are trying to love our neighbor, as He taught us, this is precisely *where He is*. He is there at work in us – giving us the prompting, the insight, the power to overcome our own selfishness and inertia.

Now the Lord appointed a *mountain* in Galilee as the place to meet His “brethren,” the disciples. Did you notice that word “brethren”? “Go tell My brethren to go to Galilee.” Literally speaking, “brethren” are blood relatives. “Brethren” symbolize people who are knit together by a bond of mutual love. (*Arcana Coelestia* 6756, 2360; *Apocalypse Explained* 746) “Mountains” also represent a state of love. (*Arcana Coelestia* 6435)

To see the Lord in our “Galilee” states, we need to be in a state of love for our fellow human beings. The angel says to us: “[the Lord] is going before you into Galilee. There you will see Him.” The Lord “goes before us,” prepares us to love, shows us how to love. “Tell My brethren to go to Galilee, and there they

will see Me.” We see the Lord in our daily lives with the eyes of faith, only from love, only on the mountain that He appoints.

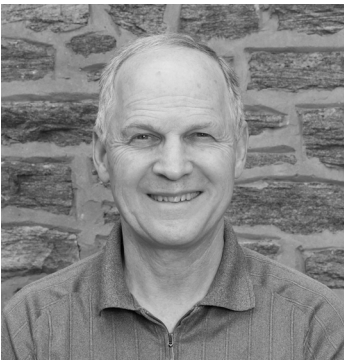
I'd like to end with a playful thought. We don't know when the Lord was born: we celebrate in December for symbolic reasons. But we do know when He died and rose. Passover – later March or April. Spring. A lovely time of year in Galilee. In March-April the “latter rains” have trailed off, the Barley Harvest was beginning. There would have been flowers blooming.

The Lord is present especially in our human relationships; in our love and service of others. But when we are looking with the eyes of faith, and working from His unselfish love, we see the Lord *in all things*. And we feel gratitude. We see Him in the people whom we've been called to care for and serve. And we see Him in the small things that bring us pleasure, even in the flowers.

So, as you return to your “Galilee,” from “Jerusalem” today, may you “see the Lord.” He is there. “Going before you.” He is there to meet you on the mountain, appointed for you. He is not going to take away your precious sense of freedom and initiative, by presenting Himself too obviously, but He is with you *as sure as can be*. Did He not say: “Behold, I am with you always, even to the end of the age”?

Amen.

*The Lord is present especially in our human relationships; in our love and service of others. But when we are looking with the eyes of faith, and working from His unselfish love, we see the Lord in all things.*



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# To a Mountain in Galilee

*The Rev. Grant Odhner*

**N**o one knows which mountain in Galilee the Lord set for His disciples to meet Him after His resurrection. We simply know that He directed them to “go to Galilee.” There they would see Him. (*Matthew 28:7,10*) And the disciples “went away to Galilee, to the mountain that Jesus had appointed for them.” (*28:16*)

I’m not aware of other’s suggestions for the appointed mountain. But my vote is for Mount Arbel. Arbel towers 1,290 feet above the Sea of Galilee, right at the midpoint of the lake’s North-South expansion. It gazes down on the Plain of Gennesaret, from Magdala up to Capernaum, where so much of the Lord’s teaching and many of His healing miracles took place.

I recently stood on this mountain and enjoyed the breathtaking view. Why might the Lord have chosen this mountain? In Galilee? (Please see the preceding sermon for my thoughts on the latter.)

But why Arbel? In His parting with the disciples the Lord said: “All power has been given to Me, in heaven and on earth.” In hearing these words the disciples could look up and see the wide expanse of the heavens around them. They could look down and remember the signs of His power. They would recall His calming the wind and the waves, and His walking to them on the water. They could gaze on the spot where He had given the “Sermon on the Mount,” and the places where He had fed the 5,000 and the 4,000, where He had taught crowds from a boat, and healed hundreds of people who had poured out of the villages to meet Him as He landed on the shores of Gennesaret. They could even gaze across and see where He had cast out the Legion of demons, who had entered the swine and run down the slopes into the sea.

Now the Lord was inspiring them, and empowering them, to “Go and make disciples of all the nations,” teaching them to observe all things that He

had commanded them. Truly, a wonderful starting point!

Matthew does not specify which mountain the Lord appointed. The most important symbol to note is “mountain” – which represents the Lord’s love. Still, it is pleasing to stand on Mount Arbel and reflect on the Lord’s wonderful work in “Galilee of the Nations” – a symbol of all the people He stoops to save.

# The First and Second Coming: Would You Have Believed?

*A Sermon by the Rev. Mark D. Pendleton*

*Lessons: John 16:12-13; Matthew 24:29-30; Revelation 1:1-7  
Secrets of Heaven 68; Heaven and Hell 1; Married Love 1*

**O**ur topic is the Lord's First and Second Comings – the first having been prophesied in the Old Testament, the second in the New Testament.

Why am I raising these topics? First, I've been wondering what it must have been like for people in Jesus' time to accept that He was who He said He was: the Son of God, God Himself come on earth. Second, I wonder what it will be like for people to encounter the Lord's Second Coming.

To the first question, what must it have been like for people, when Jesus was on earth, to accept the possibility that He was the Son of God – God on earth in human form? What if someone showed up today on the streets of Chicago, or Philadelphia, or Phoenix, Arizona, or the city nearest you, and said: "I am the Son of God I am God in human form"? Or what if we were watching world news on television, or looking at social media, and heard about someone in Madrid, or Accra, or Tokyo declaring, "I am the Son of God"? What would we do?

It is true that before the Lord came on earth there were prophecies of His coming. People were expecting the Messiah. Jesus also taught many wise and even astounding things. He didn't teach crazy, insane things. He also did many good works, not questionable ones, and performed miracles the likes of which no mortal had ever performed. These things may have made it possible or even easy for people of His day to believe in Him as God in human form.

At the same time, believing that Jesus was the Son of God would have been a monumental shift for many people – a big "ask" on Jesus' part. It could have been especially hard for Jewish people of the time when Jesus wasn't the earthly kind of king they were expecting, but a heavenly king instead. If Jesus showed up today, saying, "I am the Son of God," how would you respond?

*If Jesus showed up today, saying, “I am the Son of God,” how would you respond? What would it take for you to shift your paradigm to believing “this is God on earth”?*

What would it take for you to shift your paradigm to believing “this is God on earth”?

And what about the Lord’s Second Coming? This, too, was prophesied by Jesus Himself and in the entire book of *Revelation*: “I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. However, when He, the Spirit of Truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth.” (*John 16:12-13*) “They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds with power and great glory.” (*Matthew 24:30, Mark 13:26*) “Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him.”

(*Revelation 1:7*) Clearly the Lord God Jesus Christ is coming again.

Then there are Jesus’ sayings in *Revelation* which talk about the end of days – with wars and rumors of wars, cataclysmic, global upheaval, destruction, annihilation, the rapture, and all the rest – with anyone’s guess as to how all of this is going to happen, how it is going to play itself out, or what it’s going to look like before, during and after.

And what if the Second Coming doesn’t happen the way scholars and theorists have predicted over the centuries? Jesus was not an earthly king. What if His descriptions of the consummation of the age, and the descriptions in *Revelation*, aren’t about earthly clashes? I have heard biblical scholars and presenters start to question if these descriptions may be talking symbolically more than literally.

What will it be like for people who may be primed, ready and waiting – expecting something specific to happen, and that it will look a certain way –but what ends up happening isn’t anything like what they’re expecting? What would it have been like back in Jesus’ day, especially for the Jews who may have been expecting a different kind of Messiah, when they got something other than they expected?

What if we simply do what some scholars have started to do and place nearly all of *Revelation*, and nearly all of Jesus’ descriptions of the end of times, in the category of allegorical/symbolic, rather than literal, and simply focus on those few of His brief statements in the New Testament? I’m talking about *John 16*, *Matthew 24* (repeated in *Mark 13*), and *Revelation 1*.

*John 16* says: “I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. But when He, the Spirit of Truth, is come, He will guide you into all

truth.” *Matthew 24* and *Mark 13* say: “He is coming on the clouds with power and great glory.” *Revelation 1* says: “Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him.”

*John 16* is talking about the spirit of truth coming, and also about being led into all truth – indicating that the Lord’s Second Coming will have to do, in part, with being guided into truth. As for *Matthew*, *Mark* and *Revelation*, where it says, “He is coming on (or with) the clouds,” we know that a lot of Scripture is cloudy and unclear as to its meaning; and “meaning” likewise has to do with truth – our way of seeing things.

*Revelation 1* says: “and every eye will see him.” The eye has to do with enlightenment and understanding. When we understand something for the first time we say, “I see.” And this, too, has to do with a truth-oriented experience or process. So, if we place nearly all of *Revelation*, and Jesus’ descriptions of the end of days, into the category of allegorical or symbolic, and focus in on these three statements of the Lord that carry a truth orientation, what are they saying the Lord’s Second Coming is going to be? What form will it take?

What if the allegory in *Revelation*, along with the description of the end of days, aren’t talking about earthly clashes, wars and rumors of wars, but instead about personal, internal, spiritual upheavals and revolutions that we all go through as the Lord makes one final approach to us and one final coming into our minds, hearts and lives? Of what use would all of the truth-oriented stuff that the Lord might offer us be through that kind of “end of days”?

Emanuel Swedenborg was an 18th-century scientist, philosopher, theologian and revelator who talked and wrote along these lines more than 250 years ago. He postulated that the Second Coming of the Lord God Jesus Christ wasn’t going to be a literal coming in person, but that He would do so in a third massive body of spiritual knowledge and truth that would finally, once and for all, arising out of the Old and New Testament Scriptures and focusing back on them, be able to lead humankind “into all truth.”

At the same time, Swedenborg made the astounding claim that for the last 27 years of his life, the Lord performed the greatest miracle of all time by opening his “spiritual eyes” and allowing him to be consciously awake, present and aware in both the physical and spiritual worlds simultaneously. This, he claimed, allowed him to learn all about the spiritual world, heaven and hell, and the inner workings of the human spirit and psyche. This gave him the ability, guided by the Lord, to understand the “spiritual meaning” of even the cloudiest parts of Scripture. And in that way he was able to unlock the deeper levels of meaning contained in the Bible, which relate to the life, growth and development of the human spirit.

Are these claims astounding? Yes, beyond astounding. Are they “unbelievable”? You might answer “yes.” Swedenborg knew this would be the case, even

as he penned his theological works. And so, he wrote:

*I am well aware of the fact that many people will say that nobody can possibly speak to spirits or angels as long as they are living in the body, and that many will call it delusion. Some will say that I've spread the ideas [I've written] around so as to win people's trust, while others will say something different again. But none of this deters me; for I have seen, I have heard, I have felt. (Secrets of Heaven 68)*

*Church people these days [the mid-1700s] know practically nothing about heaven and hell or their life after death, even though there are descriptions of everything available to them in the Word [of God]. In fact, many who have been born in the church deny all of this. In their hearts they are asking, "Who has ever come back to tell us about it?"*

*To prevent this negative attitude from infecting and corrupting people of simple heart and simple faith, it has been granted me to be with angels and to talk with them person to person. I have also been enabled to see what is in heaven and in hell, a process that has been going on for thirteen years. Now I am being allowed therefore to describe what I have heard and seen, in the hopes of shedding light where there is lack of knowledge, and of dispelling skepticism.*

*The reason this kind of direct revelation is taking place today is that this is what the Coming of the Lord means. (Heaven and Hell 1, published in 1758)*

Ten or 12 years later Swedenborg followed up with this:

*I anticipate that many who read the following descriptions and the accounts at the ends of the succeeding chapters will believe they are figments of my imagination. I swear in truth, however, that they are not inventions, but actual occurrences to which I was witness. Nor were they witnessed in any condition of unconsciousness but in a state of full wakefulness. For it has pleased the Lord to manifest Himself to me and send me to teach the doctrines that will be doctrines of a New [Christian] Church, the church meant by the New Jerusalem in the book of Revelation. To this end He has opened the inner faculties of my mind and spirit. As a result,*



*it has been made possible for me to be in the spiritual world with angels and at the same time in the natural world with people, and this now for twenty-five years. (Married Love 1, published in 1768)*

Now even though Swedenborg suggests that this new body of teaching and doctrine would be for a new Christian Church on earth, he wasn't one to pigeonhole people or force them into one brand of faith. The theology he wrote was systematic and universal in nature – with the ability to speak to all people, of all faiths and cultures, and also to people who have no faith or religion, and support them in their spiritual walk, for all time to come.

Well, if we simply connect the dots, what are we talking about? Is it possible, is it conceivable, and what if the Lord's Second Coming on earth was never meant to be a coming in person – in the literal clouds of heaven – along with global, cataclysmic destruction, but rather, a final download of spiritual knowledge and information intended to guide humankind through its final, deepest, darkest struggles, to lead it into “all truth,” and ultimately to the Lord in heaven?

What must it have been like at the time of the Lord's First Coming on earth for people to adjust themselves to the reality of that coming, especially those who, for centuries, had expected something different? And what will it be like for people now, and on into the future, when they first encounter the Lord's Second Coming, especially if it is different than what they've expected?

- “I have many things to tell you, but you cannot bear them now. But when He, the spirit of truth, is come, He will lead you into all truth.”
- “He is coming on the clouds with power and great glory.”
- “Behold He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him.”

Amen.



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# Praying and Sacrificing for the Church

*The Rev. Calvin B. Heinrichs*

A common refrain in the General Church is the teaching in *True Christian Religion* 787: “*The New Church is the crown of all the churches that have hitherto existed on the earth.*”

This is one of many teachings that highlight how special it is to be part of a church which acknowledges that the Second Coming has happened. Of the billions of people on earth, we are some of the lucky ones who get to help in the distribution and cultivation of the Lord’s Advent in the Heavenly Doctrine. Exciting, is it not?

Truthfully, many of us (myself included) are not excited every minute of every day. Though I know that getting to be a part of the New Church is an awesome responsibility, some days it can feel like we are just part of any ordinary church. As we know, the people on earth who turn to the Lord in His Second Coming are few in number. That said, we are encouraged in the Heavenly Doctrine: “*For the Word in the church, although existing with comparatively few, is life to all the rest.*” (*Sacred Scripture* 105)

The point is not to bemoan the relatively small size of the church, neither is it to stress a need for growth. I want to talk about what every one of us can be doing right now. At the end

*At the end  
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We are told to “pray  
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of *Apocalypse Revealed* a command is given to those who know of the Lord's coming and the New Church. We are told to "pray that it may come." (# 956) I have struggled with this.

You may be thinking: "Hey, you're a minister. How can you not be praying for the New Church to come?" Good question. I certainly want the New Church to come. I certainly *want* to see it be the crown of all churches and spread across the world in my lifetime. But I don't think I prayed to the Lord for this to happen until sometime in the summer of 2021 – two thirds of the way through my Theological School training.

When I read through *Apocalypse Revealed*, I was blown away by the command to pray for the New Church to come. This was especially pointed to me, as I was in the process of writing my dissertation on worship. The connection between prayer and worship took on a special interest after reading that quote. Often I found myself wishing for the New Church to come, but I never really *prayed* for it. Whether a priest or a layman, we can all be *praying* to the Lord that His New Church may descend.

Praying is not the only thing we can be doing. Something that was certainly a focus in the early Christian Church was the idea of sacrifice. This idea was also present in the early New Church. However, before we get into some of the sacrifices we can make for the New Church, I would like to preface these with *Heaven and Hell* 358.

*It should be said to begin with that a person may acquire riches and accumulate wealth as far as opportunity is given, if it is not done by craft or fraud; that he may enjoy the delicacies of food and drink if he does not place his life therein; that he may have a palatial dwelling in accord with his condition, have interaction with others in like condition, frequent places of amusement, talk about the affairs of the world, and need not go about like a devotee with a sad and sorrowful countenance and drooping head, but may be joyful and cheerful; nor need he give his goods to the poor except so far as affection leads him.*

We don't need to sacrifice so much that we are sad and sorrowful, or walk around looking downtrodden. By sacrifice, we mean putting the Lord's goals above our own earthly pleasures.

There are many examples of devoted New Church men and women making sacrifices for the church. Perhaps some obvious ones are priests. In the early days of the church, they would travel around preaching and often working full time in other employment to support themselves. Some priests travelled far and wide and left friends and family to preach the good news of the Second Coming in remote places. One priest took a train ride across Canada and

lectured in any town that would have him. Hundreds of people are descended from the converts of that trip and many are still active in the church today.

Priests are far from the only people who make sacrifices for the church. Think of the many over-qualified teachers who have taken jobs at church schools. Think of the many people who chose to stay and work at the Academy despite having more lucrative offers from bigger institutions. Some of them turned down jobs at NASA, Princeton and Stanford, to name a few. Many of these teachers felt a calling and duty to participate in the mission of New Church education.

But taking jobs at church schools is only one of the many ways people make sacrifices for the church. Another obvious way is by donations of time and money. There are hundreds of committed New Church men and women who volunteer hundreds of hours every year to serve on boards and committees, and who participate in maintenance projects and many other uses. One person built shelves and tables, hung pictures and TVs and even built a sandbox, all as a volunteer. People give their time and expertise and this is an amazing sacrifice.

There have been times when people took a longer commute to make sure they lived in a New Church community. One example was a man who commuted to New York City for work so his family could grow up in the New Church community of Bryn Athyn. It wasn't just his family that benefitted but the whole community. Especially in small communities, every family matters. Sometimes all it takes is just one more family in an area to push them over the edge to a have a full-time pastor and their own church.

We all, priests and laity alike, have sacrifices we continue to make to help support the Lord's Church on earth. A humorous maxim once told to me was: "Shepherds don't make sheep. Sheep make sheep." There is some truth to that. Though a priest can have an impact on a church, we don't make the sheep. Priest and laymen work together to care for the Lord's flock. The roles may look different, but we all have sacrifices we make.

We can all work together on fostering a sense of duty to serve the church. Perhaps together we can strive to put the needs of the Church above our own and fill in where we can. Whether we serve in a remote place, choose work in church school, volunteer on boards, donate money, or take a job in a New Church community, we all have uses we can en-

*We all, priests and laity alike, have sacrifices we continue to make to help support the Lord's Church on earth.*

gage in to help the New Church come. Let us all, with one voice, pray for the New Church to come!

As the Lord said: *“I lay down My life that I may take it again. No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself.” (John 10:17-18)*

The **Rev. Calvin B. Heinrichs** graduated from Bryn Athyn College Theological School and was ordained in May 2022. He was assigned to the Westville New Church in South Africa, but is still awaiting a visa to travel there. In the meantime he is serving in Kempton, Pennsylvania, where he lives with his wife, Liza (Jungé), and their infant daughter, Estelle.

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### MEMORIAL ADDRESS

## ANATO Guillaume Joseph Kouassivi

January 10, 1971 - February 16, 2023

*The Rt. Rev. Bradley D. Heinrichs*

*For the Lord will not cast off forever. Though He causes grief, yet He will show compassion according to the multitude of His mercies. For He does not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men. (Lamentations 3:31-33)*

**W**e are gathered here today because of the tragic passing of Guillaume Anato into the spiritual world at the young age of 52. None of us could have expected someone so full of life and vitality to be taken away from us so soon. It is a monumental loss to all of Guillaume's friends, congregants, brothers in the priesthood, and even more so to his extended family, and particularly his wife, and children. At times like these it is hard for us to understand why the Lord could permit such a tragedy to take place. Our souls may cry out in anguish: *"My God, my God, why have You forsaken me?" (Psalm 22:1)*

Often in those fluctuating, terrible states of despair we speak bitter things to the Lord, and then are overwhelmed with guilt on account of the anger we have directed to our Creator. But we can rest assured that in these troubled states the Lord is forever there holding our hand and saying: *"Fear not, I will help you." (Isaiah. 41:13)* In fact, we are told that the Lord's compassion toward the state of our grief is of such a quality that He takes no notice of the bitter words we cry out against Him in our pain and anguish. *(Arcana Coelestia 8165:2, Heavenly Doctrine 197)*

In severe times of trial when our very faith in God may be tested, it seems that we are left all alone and helpless, but this appearance is far from the truth. For in our darkest hour, the Lord is actually more closely present within us than ever before, constantly trying to lift us up and give us hope. (*True Christian Religion* 126) So in this time of overwhelming sorrow, let us trust that the Lord will keep carrying us, until we feel that we can walk again on our own. “*For the Lord does not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men.*” (*Lamentations* 3:33)

It is important for us to realize that the Lord did not will that Guillaume should be taken from us so early. His unexpected health complications which led to his premature passing were most certainly a permission, a sorrowful event in which the Lord will strive with all His might to turn to good – both for Guillaume and his beloved family which he left behind. Although our spirits are stricken with grief at Guillaume’s passing into the next life, we can take comfort in the Lord’s words: “*My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand.*” (*John* 10:27-28) Today, we know that Guillaume is in the loving arms of the Good Shepherd.

Whenever we think about the passing of a loved one into the next life, it provides an opportunity for all of us not only to reflect on the life of that individual in this natural world, but also on the life he will experience in the spiritual world – the world in which we will all eventually live to eternity. It also gives us the chance to contemplate what the next world will be like and to see how the Lord’s guiding hand is directing each of our lives toward His heavenly kingdom.

This heavenly kingdom, we are told, is “*a kingdom of useful services. The reason is that the Lord loves all people and so wills good to all, and good means useful service. Now because the Lord performs good or useful services indirectly through angels, and in the world through people, therefore to those who faithfully perform useful services He gives a love of being useful and its reward. The reward is internal blessedness, and this blessedness is eternal happiness.*” (*Conjugal Love* 3:7)

For the people who knew Guillaume, I think they would say this teaching describes well the quality of his life. He loved to be useful and serve others. He enjoyed helping members of his congregation whenever they needed a hand. He was a loyal husband and devoted father. Amongst his fellow clergy, he was well respected for his doctrinal knowledge, wise contributions, and for his kindness to his colleagues.

The teachings for the New Church assure us that for a person who devotes himself to serving others in this life and treating others charitably, in the next life will continue to do so as an angel of heaven. And that he will experience in-

ternal blessedness and eternal happiness. Guillaume certainly seemed to make the most of the talents that His Lord and Master gave him, so we can picture the Lord in the next life saying to him: *“Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your Lord!”* (Matthew 25:21)

You can tell a lot about a person’s character from the things people recall about him at the time of his passing to the next life. When Guillaume’s crossing over to the other side was announced to his clergy brethren on our cyber council, we were told “a great Iroko tree has fallen in West Africa.” What a perfect image for Guillaume – a strong upright tree, with his roots firmly planted in the soil of this earth and his arms continually stretching and reaching up toward heaven.

The words of the Psalmist come to mind, describing the character of a godly man: *“His delight is in the law of the Lord, and in His law he meditates day and night. He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth its fruit in its season, whose leaf also shall not wither; and whatever he does shall prosper.”* (Psalm 1:2-3)

Guillaume definitely prospered in his studies. Both those who taught him in Theological School and those who studied with him noticed how intelligent, thoughtful and wise his responses were in any discussion, and how he offered his ideas only after fully questioning and listening to the responses of others.

His vision for spreading the teachings of the New Church in Benin also prospered. Once he had completed Theological School, he returned to his home country and set about spreading the good news. This eventually culminated in the building of Chapel Bethel which is a beautiful structure dedicated to the worship of the Lord Jesus Christ.

His former Bishop, the Rt. Rev. Brian Keith, wrote: “Guillaume’s sudden departure from this world is a tragic loss for his family, the church in West Africa and especially in Benin.

*When Guillaume crossed over to the other side, we were told “a great Iroko tree has fallen in West Africa.” What a perfect image – a strong upright tree, with his roots firmly planted in the soil of this earth and his arms continually stretching and reaching up toward heaven.*



Guillaume was a gentle and laughing presence, a wonderful leader, as he exuded warmth and love for all. Guillaume is a friend. I will miss him.”

His Dean in the Theological School, the Rev. Dr. Andy Dibb, wrote: “He leaves a great hole for his family and the church. I remember his Theological School days when he was a lively presence, much loved by all of us. As the first General Church pastor in Benin, he laid a foundation for generations of the Church to come. An inspiration.”

His close friend Ron Schnarr wrote a touching tribute: “He was a good man. He loved the Lord. He was thankful and grateful for everything the Lord gave him and he taught me about gratitude. Who thought two brothers could be born so far away from each other, with two different languages, two different color skins in two different worlds, but the Lord knows what He is doing and the time he gave us together as brothers in the Lord was precious and means the world to me. Guillaume Anato, you were a minister of the Lord, a leader in your community, a master interpreter, a spiritual warrior, a loving husband and father. You were my friend and you are my brother and you will be missed.”

Many other colleagues wrote in as well, and noted other such wonderful traits that captured the spirit of Guillaume, such as his sense of humor, his heartwarming laugh, delightful smile, his love of music, dancing, and praising the Lord. The last thing he posted on Facebook was a powerful West African song of gratitude to the Lord with the chorus line: “*Akpe Ko ma da Nee*” – “*Thanksgiving is all I’ll give.*” This really was the positive and affirmative attitude that Guillaume lived his life by – a simple trust in the Lord and a thankfulness for all he had been given. He was especially thankful for his beautiful wife, Stella.

I remember when my wife Cathy and I came to Benin a few years ago to put on a marriage conference with Guillaume and Stella and Ablam and Olga. Guillaume told me how much Stella had changed his life, and that he could not imagine doing all the work of the church without her support. He reflected on how she was the perfect half to complete him as a person. His words brought to mind the wonderful teachings of the New Church about marriage and conjugal love.

In those teachings we are told that in a marriage where genuine conjugal love is present, the husband’s and wife’s souls incline toward each other and they gradually desire to think and will as one another, until eventually “*they do not wish to lead two lives but one.*” (*Conjugal Love* 50) And that without this conjunction they feel like “*a person divided or half a person.*” (37) And therefore, that “*marriage is the completion of a person, for by marriage a person becomes a complete person.*” (156) In a heavenly marriage, “*the wife wills to think and will as the husband, and the husband as the wife, and because each wills*

*this, each is led by the Lord as one, and the two are one angel.” (De Conjugio 35)*

Perhaps the part of the New Church teachings that meant the most to Guillaume, was the idea that marriage love continues in heaven and that the covenant between husband and wife can last forever. *“People who are in a state of truly conjugal love look to eternity in their marriage because eternity is inherent in this love. . . . Married partners who love each other tenderly think of eternity in regard to the marriage covenant and not at all of its being terminated by death.” (Conjugial Love 216:1,4)* Given these teachings it is easy to imagine Guillaume’s spirit remaining near Stella’s, patiently waiting until, in the Lord’s good time, they are reunited in the spiritual world.

Guillaume also was very proud of his four children and loved them so much: Emmanuella Mawulolo Anato (born December 18, 2011), Samuel Ronald Mawulom Anato (born May 17, 2013), Louange Esther Akpédjé (born August 29, 2016), and Olivia Grâce Makafui (born March 24, 2021).

He loved the idea that all children created were for the sake of becoming angels of heaven where they can happily dwell to eternity with the Lord. He knew that it was part of his and Stella’s duty and privilege to try to raise them in such a way that they would live the kind of life that leads to heaven. As a father he did his best to be a role model they could look up to and emulate. In his absence, he will be counting on the community of people who know and love his family to help Stella in raising his children to love the Lord and to be of useful service to society and live in charity with their neighbors.

As we approach Easter, it is useful to think of what the Lord told his disciples before His crucifixion: *“Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. 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 . . . that where I am, there you may be also.” (John 14:1-2)* *“I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die.” (John 11:25-26)*

Then after His crucifixion, when the women were in mourning, and came to pay their respects, they met the angel who joyfully proclaimed: *“He is not here; for He is risen, as He said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay.” (Matthew 28:6)* This is the Lord showing us all that He is indeed the resurrection and the life, and that we will also all live again.

Our dear friend Guillaume is not here, but he has risen as the Lord has promised. He has left his earthly body behind, but now he has been given a new body in the other world that will clothe his spirit. As he awakes to his new surroundings, he will have the opportunity to join his Lord and Savior in His heavenly kingdom.

The Lord tells each one of us to *“seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness.” (Matthew 6:33)* The things of this world pass away, but spiritual

life lasts forever. Choose wisely during your time here. *“Behold, I am coming quickly,”* says the Lord. (*Revelation 22:12*) We trust that Guillaume is now in God’s eternal heavenly kingdom; pray that you may meet him there when, in the Lord’s good time, He calls upon you.

So, as we conclude our remembrance today of Guillaume’s life in this world, let us also envision the delightful life he is now beginning to experience in the next world. Let us recall his smile, his infectious laugh, his kind gentle eyes, and the zest for life that he had. His love for all the people around him, and especially for his dear wife and children.

Personally, I know that I will miss my friendship with him. I was touched by his humility of spirit and his love of the New Church to which he dedicated his life. I will forever remember sharing the chancel with him in worship at the dedication of the Chapel Bethel and seeing the joy he had in praising the Lord in song, and to see his wife Stella joyfully dancing and showing my wife Cathy how to worship African style!

Let us take some solace that our great loss is most certainly heaven’s gain. Let us remember that the Lord is watching over Guillaume and must have needed him to perform some vital uses in the other world. Let us not forget that the Lord is also most closely present with us in our time of immense grief, promising that in time He will *“wipe away all tears from our eyes, so that there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying.”* (*Revelation 21:4*)

*Psalm 30* comforts us by saying: *“Sing praise to the Lord, you saints of His, and give thanks at the remembrance of His holy name. . . . His favor is for life; weeping may endure for a night, but joy comes in the morning. Hear, O Lord, and have mercy on me; Lord, be my helper! You have turned for me my mourning into dancing; you have put off my sackcloth and clothed me with gladness.”* (*Psalm 30:4-11*) I can picture Guillaume saying this to us right now.

Thank you, Guillaume, for touching all of our lives in such a meaningful way, and we pray that the Lord will *“preserve your going out and your coming in from this time forth, and even forevermore.”* (*Psalm 121:8*)

Amen.

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FROM THE BISHOP'S OFFICE

## How Does Your Book of Life Read?

*The Rt. Rev. Bradley D. Heinrichs*

We are approaching June 19th when New Church people around the world celebrate the birthday of the New Church. There are so many poignant images in the book of *Revelation*, but perhaps none more gripping than the one about the judgment when everyone's book of life is opened:

*And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. (Revelation 20:12)*

This picture of hoards of people, standing in line, waiting for God to open their books and judge them, always terrified me as a kid (and if I'm being honest, still terrifies me a bit)! In adult states of reflection, it gets me thinking about what is "*the Book of Life*?" What is *my* Book of Life that will be opened one day? And perhaps most importantly, how will it read?

First, let's look at the other book which was opened that was called "the Book of Life." Quite simply we are told that "*by 'the Book of Life' is signified the Word of the Lord, and all doctrine respecting Him.*" (*Apocalypse Revealed* 588)

It makes perfect sense that the Word is the Book of Life, when you think about the beginning of the first chapter of *John*: *“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. . . . All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.”* (*John* 1:1-4) The Word is the source of all life, and the light that shines forth from it is what gives life to our spiritual lives.

On the other hand, turning away from the Book of Life causes spiritual death, which is why we get that frightening statement that *“anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.”* (*Revelation* 20:15) We’re told that to be judged by the Book of Life simply means that we are *“judged in accordance with the Word’s truths”* and that *“no one is found written in the Book of Life but someone who has lived in accordance with the Lord’s commandments in the Word, and who believed in the Lord.”* (*Apocalypse Revealed* 874) This is where the importance of what is written in our book of life comes into play.

So, what is our Book of Life? The short answer is “pretty much everything!” The Lord tells us that *“all the good a man has thought and done from infancy even to the last of his life, remains; in like manner all the evil, so that not the least of it completely perishes. Both are inscribed on his Book of Life (that is, on each of his memories), and on his nature (that is, his native disposition and genius).”* (*Arcana Coelestia* 2256:2) The two memories mentioned there, are the interior and exterior memories, and these are *“as it were two books, in which have been written all his thoughts and acts.”* (*Ibid.* 9386:2)

Now, if you are at all like I am, these statements are somewhat frightening! When I reflect on all the evil I have previously fantasized about, all the horrible thoughts I have entertained, and all the bad things I have done, I begin to be fearful of how my Book of Life is going to read. To make my anxiety even greater, there is this teaching where the Lord warns us: *“Let no one believe, then, that there is anything that a man has ever thought in himself or done in secret that can be concealed after death; but let him believe that all things and each single thing are then laid open as clear as day.”* (*Heaven and Hell* 463) This teaching is powerfully confirmed in the Scriptures: *“For there is nothing covered that will not be revealed, nor hidden that will not be known. Therefore, whatever you have spoken in the dark will be heard in the light, and what you have spoken in the ear in inner rooms will be proclaimed on the housetops.”* (*Luke* 12:2-3)

This terrifying warning has caused me to search to see what I can do to edit my Book of Life so that it reads a little bit better. Some helpful qualifications are that the things written on our interior memories which are never blotted out, are *“chiefly those which have become of the will, that is, of the love; for the things of the love are of the will.”* (*Arcana Coelestia* 9386:2) Also that it is only those things that a person *“thinks, says, and does from his will, whether good or evil,”* that is *“appropriated to him, and remains.”* (*Divine Providence*

227) So our Book of Life, written on our interior memory, doesn't have as its primary text the passing thoughts or momentary desires that we choose to reject. It is the things that we love and will and that we actively focus on which become the main chapters of our story.

This is part of the mercy of the Lord. He allows us through repentance to edit, as it were, the story of our lives, so that we don't have to continually re-read about all our faults and evils. *We're told that "goods are never so commingled with evils, nor evils with goods, that they cannot be separated,"* for when a person "comes into the other life, if he has lived in the good of love and of charity, the Lord then separates his evils, and by what is good with him elevates him into heaven." (Arcana Coelestia 2256:2) Certainly, this provides some comfort to know that the Lord is on our side and is constantly striving to raise us into heaven if we will let Him.

Nevertheless, while those evils by sincere repentance are no longer part of our main story, we are wise to remember that *"sins can by no means be wiped away from anyone, but that when the person is kept in good by the Lord they are separated or rejected to the sides so as not to rise up."* (Arcana Coelestia 5398)

Notice, they are not erased or completely wiped away, but are removed to the sides where they are out of sight and not the focus or center of our life-story anymore. The Lord reminds us that everything we have *"spoken and done, down to the smallest point,"* is inscribed on our interior memories, or our Book of Life, and that *"whenever the Lord grants"* can be *"made manifest before the angels as in clear day."* (Ibid. 2474)

So why would this be the case? Why can't we permanently erase something? One reason is that it makes our choices really matter. When we do something purposefully evil to hurt someone, it makes an indelible print on us, and yes, we can repent of it and have the Lord move it to the sides and out of focus, but it still happened and still did damage. We can't have a magic eraser that just makes all our bad choices vanish, so it encourages us to choose wisely.

The second reason the indelible record is kept is so that in our evening states as angels in heaven, if we are beginning to delude ourselves into think-

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ing we are really good as of ourselves, and not from the Lord, and forget that He is constantly withholding us from our former evils, then He can open those parts of our book to remind us of what a miserable state we were in when we chose to act against what He teaches in His Word. The purpose is not to shame us, and parade our past evils before our eyes, but to keep us humble when we might be becoming too arrogant.

However, rather than becoming obsessed with our previous poor choices, I believe the importance of reflecting on our Book of Life is to realize that with the Lord's help we can

write new chapters that are much better than the previous ones. Notice what it said about those coming to have their Book of Life read: they were each "*judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books.*" (Revelation 20:12)

If you're worried about how your book will read, then start shunning evils as sins against the Lord, and do the good things He teaches, and your book will have a happy ending! For "*everyone is allotted a life after death in accordance with his deeds.*" (Divine Providence 128) And those people who find their names written in the Book of Life and received into the New Church are "*those who believe in the Lord and live in accordance with His commandments in the Word.*" (Apocalypse Revealed 925)

These teachings about the Book of Life and our books of life are critical for us to understand. We are not judged on the amount we know, or the mere correctness of our faith and belief, we are judged by what we do with what we know. We are judged by our works which come forth from what we love.

Essentially our Book of Life is opened and measured against the Book of Life or the Word of the Lord. Did we shun evils as sins as the Lord urges us? Did we abide by His Commandments? Did we practice genuine charity? Did we love our neighbor by doing good deeds when opportunity presented itself? Did we honor our marriage vows? Did we love the Lord and demonstrate that by the actions of our lives?

Our Book of Life is a permanent record of all the things we have chosen to do with full freedom and rationality. Thus, our Book of Life is a complete record of our choices: whether we chose to love the Lord and our neighbor or

chose to primarily love ourselves and the things of this world. These choices determine our eternal fate. So, in reality we are not judged by the Lord, but we are judged by our own decisions that we made throughout our life.

If you have parts of your book that you are not proud of, then repent of those things, and it can become a footnote buried at the back that nobody needs to read. The Lord gave you the power to be the author of your own story, and with His help you can write new chapters whose story will read similarly to the angels of heaven. Even as the Lord told His disciples: *“Behold, I give you the authority . . . over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you. Nevertheless, do not rejoice in this . . . but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven.”* (Luke 10:19-20)

Happy New Church Day to all of you!

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*In reality we are not judged by the Lord, but we are judged by our own decisions that we made throughout our life.*



# Education and the Development of the Rational for Individuals and the Human Race

*The Rev. Prescott A. Rogers*

Ever since I discovered the ordering scheme of the Heavenly Doctrines having to do with the human race as a macrocosm and every individual as a microcosm within that macrocosm, I have seen its application in many cases. One such case has to do with the role of education in the development of the rational. As is the case in every macrocosm/microcosm relationship each reflects the other in every way, except for size. For example, a muscle cell as a microcosm shares the same characteristics and functions of the whole muscle as a macrocosm.

Sometimes we learn of the microcosm by comparison with the macrocosm, and sometimes we learn of the macrocosm by comparison with its microcosms. With regard to the role of education in the development of the rational, the Heavenly Doctrines usually teach about the development of the rational in an individual, including the role education plays in that development. But there are teachings also about the human race and its development of the collective rational that show how similar it is to its development in an individual.

In the *Arcana Coelestia* the rational is usually presented as a discrete degree of the mind between the natural and the spiritual. A higher-level discrete degree can only be achieved or opened by a discrete degree change in love. In this model, for a person to become rational, he or she needs to love what is rational and its application to life. This model was abandoned by Swedenborg after the Last Judgment on the Christian Church began in 1757. A new model was first introduced in *Apocalypse Explained* and fully developed in *Divine*

*Love and Wisdom.* This new model was consistently adhered to throughout the rest of the books in the Heavenly Doctrines.

In this later model the rational was no longer presented as a discrete degree of the human mind, but rather as a *quasi*-discrete degree of the natural mind – the lowest of the three discrete degrees of the mind. A *quasi*-discrete degree looks like a discrete degree but is not (quasi being a Latin term that means “as if”). It looks like a discrete degree because it is one distinct level within a discrete degree, and because there are three quasi-discrete degrees in every discrete degree. *Quasi*-discrete degrees are distinct and are a continuation of one into another.

Discrete degrees are totally different from each other and are not continuations from one into another. As an example, consider the human mind in which the three discrete degrees are the natural, the spiritual and the celestial. A person cannot in a continuous fashion become spiritual. To become spiritual the person must be regenerated. On the other hand, every person, whether good or evil, can continuously develop through the three quasi-discrete degrees of the natural degree of the mind, also called the natural mind, and so become rational.

The three *quasi*-discrete degrees of the natural mind are the sensual, being the lowest or most external (and therefore the most natural,) the *imaginative*, being the middle of the natural (and so is often called the middle natural), and the *rational*, being the highest or most interior, and so the least natural of the three *quasi*-discrete degrees.

The sensual gets its name from being that part of the natural mind that communicates with the natural world by means of the physical senses. It tends to see and believe in only what a person can sensually perceive. It also tends to love and seek what is sensual. The imaginative (not to be confused with the imagination) is based on the word “image.” It gets its name from its ability to conceive of what is not sensually perceived, and to delight in that perception. It is the level where ideas begin to be formed – ideas not bound by what is sensual.

The rational gets its name from the term “ratio” which has to do with conceptual relationships. Specifically, it is the level that can see and delight in the relationship between what is natural and what is spiritual. It has this ability since it is the level of the natural mind closest to the spiritual mind, or the spiritual degree of the mind.

The Heavenly Doctrines teach that in the development of a human being, a person is born with only the sensual level opened, and that level is dominant throughout childhood. Meanwhile, as a child develops, the imaginative level opens until it is fully opened around the time of puberty, and it is the dominate level of a person’s adolescence. As an adolescent, the person’s sensual level

stays open, but is no longer dominant.

Throughout adolescence, the rational level develops until it is fully opened and operating, around age 20. It is the dominant level throughout adulthood, while the sensual and imaginative levels stay opened and operating. (Note: this dominance of the rational in an adult is lost when the person confirms himself or herself in evil. In this case the sensual level dominates, for all evil is sensual.)

This development of the natural mind is the result of education. The following passages from the Heavenly Doctrines teach about the role of education in the rational development of a person:

*Regarded in itself, the natural degree of the human mind is continuous, but by correspondence with the two higher [discrete] degrees, it appears, when elevated, as though it were distinguished into levels. (Divine Love and Wisdom 256, title of section. Rogers translation)*

*The enlightenment of the natural mind does not ascend by discrete degrees, but increases by a continuous progression. As it increases, then, the mind is accordingly enlightened from within by the light of the two higher [discrete] degrees. (Ibid.)*

*Forms of use for perfecting the rational faculty are all disciplines which provide instruction in those matters . . . which are called sciences and fields of study. These relate to natural, economic, civil, and moral concerns, and they are learned either from parents and teachers, or from books, or from dealing with others, or on one's own through reflections on such concerns. (Ibid. 332 Rogers translation)*

Whereas love is the only thing that can move a person from one discrete degree to another, it is knowledge that moves a person from one quasi-discrete degree of the natural mind to another. More specifically, it is the accumulation of knowledges that causes the development within each quasi-discrete degree and from one to another.

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Knowledges can be and are gained from every arena of a person's life – the home, the community, etc. But schools or formal education are the only arena where the emphasis is placed on the accumulation of knowledges. This, then, is the role

that education plays in the development of a person's rational.

New Church education has played and can play a significant role in the development of a student's rational. The Heavenly Doctrines at times mention the types of knowledges a person acquires and give importance to the highest type of knowledge, that which belongs to religion because it alone deals with what is spiritual. It is not just a matter of the quantity of knowledges that matters, but

even more so the quality of those knowledges. (As the Greeks first taught, and as the Heavenly Doctrines affirm, quality is more important than quantity.)

Non-religious education is very important, but religious education is more important. And New Church education is even more important because it alone can teach the genuine truths of the Word and academic subjects in light of those genuine truths. Genuine truths alone are the presentation of spiritual truths in the natural world. Knowledges of such truths are the most important in the development of the human rational.

The Heavenly Doctrines teach that there has been a series of churches on earth established by the Lord to serve as the center of His kingdom on earth. These churches have been the Most Ancient Church, the Ancient Church, the Israelitish Church, the Christian Church and the New Church.

- The Most Ancient Church was characterized by its innocence of ignorance and a celestial love of the Lord.
- The Ancient Church developed the knowledge of correspondence and was ruled by love to the neighbor, a spiritual love.
- The Israelitish Church was natural, even merely natural, and its ruling love, when its people were in order, was the love of obedience.
- The Christian Church was a spiritual church, marked by a return to the love of the neighbor as its dominant motivation and on learning the truths of the Word.
- The New Church is to be a celestial church governed internally by love to the Lord, and is to be characterized by the innocence of wisdom (as distinct to and superior to the innocence of ignorance of the Most Ancient Church).

The doctrines for the New Church teach that the people born in any time period develop individually as the churches had done – up to the age in which

*New Church education has played and can play a significant role in the development of a student's rational.*

they were born. The people of the Most Ancient Church were in the innocence of ignorance throughout their lives, and so were celestial. This is why the good people of the Most Ancient Church live in the celestial heaven.

The people of the Ancient Church were born in the innocence of ignorance and so celestial states, but developed as adults into spiritual states, marked by the acquisition of knowledges. Whereas the Most Ancients perceived the Lord's truths and goods in nature and were taught by open communication with celestial angels from that church, the Ancients had a written Word called the Ancient Word from which they were taught the knowledges about spiritual truths. This is why regenerated people from the Ancient Church dwell in the spiritual heaven.

The people of the Israelitish Church were sensual by nature, even though as infants they had been in the celestial states of infancy (like that of the Most Ancient Church) followed by the spiritual states of childhood. The regenerated from the Israelitish Church are in the natural heaven, ruled by the love of obedience where they love the neighbor as themselves and not more, as spiritual angels do. The truths revealed to them in the Old Testament are sensual, having to do with what was experienced through their senses.

The truths in the New Testament are interior truths that show the way to the acquisition of spiritual truths. The Heavenly Doctrines call the Christian Church a spiritual church. And the people born between the time of the Lord's first coming and His second coming started off in the celestial states of infancy, followed by the spiritual states of childhood, followed by the natural states of the Israelitish Church, until they became spiritual having been taught the interior truths of the New Testament.

With the revelation of the Heavenly Doctrines and its most interior truths -- called rational and genuine truths -- that openly reveal what is spiritual and celestial, a person born today does not simply go through the stages that a person born at the time when the Christian Church was the Lord's kingdom on earth went through. He or she may enter celestial states while living on earth.

The Old Testament reveals sensual truths accommodated to the sensual quasi-discrete degree of the natural mind. The New Testament reveals imaginative truths accommodated to the imaginative quasi-discrete degree of that mind because interior truths are imaginative truths, the imaginative level being interior to the sensual. And the Heavenly Doctrines reveal rational truths accommodated to the rational quasi-discrete degree of that mind. Rational truths are the most interior truths, just as the rational level is the most interior level of the natural mind.

The human race, as the macrocosm, fell from celestial and then spiritual states until it became merely natural. This is why the Lord was born on earth. The human race needed to be saved. Since the time of the Lord's first advent

the human race has been lifted up spiritually by the truths taught by the Lord in the sequential revelations. The Lord did more than reveal truths. He provided for the means by which those truths could be seen and received, especially by means of education.

It is providential, rather than coincidental, that the history of education is related to the history of the churches. Education in the West began with the Egyptians. Select priests were taught the sacred writing, called hieroglyphics, and some important members of the royalty were prepared by teachers to become ready for governing. The Greeks emphasized education for all males who could afford it by paying for a learned man and sometimes for a tutor. So, education went from only certain priests and princes to the wealthy.

The Greeks prepared for the New Testament with its development of literature (Matthew), biography (Mark), history (Luke) and philosophy (John). The Romans created the world in which the Christian Church could form and spread. Education, with all its subjects, was championed by the Classical World. But then, when the Catholic Church felt threatened by science, philosophy and even history as rivals to the truth of the Bible as they accepted it, the Dark Ages began in which only a very narrow education for certain priests was allowed.

With the Renaissance (or the age of the rebirth of Classical culture, including education) came the opportunity to develop thought and understanding. Once again education was available for the wealthy. After the Renaissance came the Age of Enlightenment. During this time education became one of the crusades of the learned. It prepared for Swedenborg's education, and for the presentation of a reasoned and reasonable revelation with its rational truths. It also led to public education in some European countries.

This development continues today in many ways. But the most important way is the opportunity individuals have in becoming educated so that their individual minds can progress from being sensual to being imaginative to being rational – as the human race has progressed from being sensual to being imaginative to being rational. Formal education has expanded over the centuries to include more and more students.

This trend has continued, except for the period of the Dark Ages, until public education has become available

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to more students around the world – females as well as males, and members of all social classes. Perhaps, or rather likely, this is a preparation for the spread of the Heavenly Doctrines, for the understanding of those doctrines depends on the development of the rational quasi-discrete degree of the natural mind, and this development depends on education.



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# 'Booting Up' the Word

*The Rev. Glenn 'Mac' Frazier*

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**G**et ready for some computer science history. And bear with me: I have a spiritual point to make at the end.

Have you ever heard someone talk about “booting up” a computer? This is a term almost as old as computing itself. It refers to a sequence of steps a computer takes to go from an inert pile of circuitry to a functioning, “computing” machine.

Everything a computer does it accomplishes by running a set of instructions called a program. But how does it know how to run programs at all? That’s where the operating system comes in. The operating system is a lower-level program that all the application programs run on. It is responsible for managing the computer’s physical resources (memory, storage, input and output devices, etc.) as well as for executing the instructions within individual application programs.

But before the computer is turned on, the operating system isn’t loaded into memory. This creates something of a circular problem: the operating system is how the computer knows how to run software, but it is also itself a piece of software that needs to be loaded and executed. Effectively, it wakes up to the world like a newborn child, or maybe more aptly like an adult with amnesia. The central processing unit (CPU) has nothing to work with, and so nothing can happen.

To solve this problem, computers have a section of their memory called a “boot block” that stores very simple instructions for loading and then execut-



ing the full operating system. Usually, a boot block is the very first “track” in the computer’s memory or storage. (I’m simplifying things here, but this is the gist.) It’s called a “boot” track, and the process of having the computer load its own operating system into its memory is called “booting” because this is short for “bootstrapping” – the act of reaching down, grabbing the straps of your boots, and lifting yourself up – a cute analogy for what the computer is doing inside its own head.

So, what’s the point? I tell you this because this is also how we access Divine truth through the Word.

Really.

According to *Doctrine of the Sacred Scripture* (50-61), we need three things to properly perceive Divine truth: the science of correspondences, doctrine and enlightenment.

*Correspondences* help us “decode” the symbolic representations in the literal stories of the Word into higher concepts, like stones into truths, or gold into love. *Enlightenment* is a gift from the Lord that opens our perception in response to our sincere love of truth and life of good according to it. And finally, doctrine is instruction, thinking and synthesis of ideas about what the Word is trying to say to us and how we understand it.

But there’s a catch. According to those same passages, *the Word cannot be understood without doctrine, and yet doctrine must be drawn from and also confirmed by what is written in the literal sense of the Word.* Seems like a closed loop, doesn’t it? So how does the Lord get us around this problem?

Well, while much of the Word is a collection of stories, genealogies, wild visions, poems, chronologies, and such, it also has throughout simple statements of pure, genuine teaching/doctrine. It can be tricky figuring out what the Divine truth is within the story of David numbering the people, for instance, but when the Lord straightforwardly says, “Love the Lord and love your neighbor . . . upon these hang all the Law and the Prophets,” it doesn’t take any work to see what He means by it.

Some of these “boot block” passages aren’t quite as obvious at first glance, but many are. If you want to see an example of this process of starting with a simple doctrinal statement in the Word and using that to unlock and “boot up” additional doctrine, read through *Doctrine of the Sacred Scripture*. It uses this method extensively to teach us how to read the Word.

*Start with what the Word plainly teaches as doctrine, and then read the rest of it in light of that.*

## 'BOOTING UP' THE WORD

So, if you want to perceive real Truth, you are armed with a knowledge of correspondences and are living a life of charity that the Lord can infill with enlightenment, then you just have to read the Word. But don't forget to boot it up: start with what the Word plainly teaches as doctrine, and then read the rest of it in light of that. As you go, you will discover more and more doctrine, which, if put into action, will lead to more enlightenment, and enrich your life in a never-ending cycle. For eternity.

Truly, the Lord is good.



The **Rev. Glenn 'Mac' Frazier** is pastor of the Washington New Church in Mitchellville, Maryland, where he lives with his wife, Gillian (Leeper), and their family.

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# Church News

*Compiled by Bruce Henderson*

## THE REV. GUILLAUME ANATO January 19, 1971 – February 16, 2023

*The following is from a message sent by the Rt. Rev. Peter Buss Jr., to the General Church Clergy on February 17, about the passing of the Rev. Guillaume Anato. See also the Memorial Address by the Rt. Rev. Brad Heinrichs on page 203, and photos on page 238.)*

Our friend and colleague, **Guillaume Anato**, left us for the spiritual world on February 16. We had been informed by the **Rev. Martin Ahotosse**, who was serving alongside Anato in Benin, that he was very sick, and we were all doing our best to help him receive the critical care he needed. We had so hoped he would recover, but the anemic condition he was facing was too severe for that to happen.

This is a hard situation to reconcile. Anato leaves behind a beloved wife, Stella, and four young children: **Emmanuella** (11), **Louange** (6), **Samuel** (9), and **Olivia Grace** (2). Our heartfelt love and ongoing support go out to this family. They will need help and support as they struggle to find a way forward.

Guillaume also served as National Pastor of the General Church in Benin. He has been instrumental in building up the church there in Hevie (an hour or so from the capital city of Cotonou), with a newly dedicated temple and grand plans for the growth of the church. In April 2019 the Rev. Martin Ahotosse joined him in Benin. Martin has become a close friend and trusted colleague, and our hearts go out to him too as he absorbs this loss.

**The Rt. Rev. Brad Heinrichs** arrives today (February 17) in Ghana for a previously planned trip and will be able to help with arrangements. The **Revs. Martin Gyamfi, Kodjo Ayi** and others are already engaged in offering support and help. Needless to say, this passing sends waves of shock and sadness throughout West Africa where Guillaume was known and loved. That sadness

extends across the ocean to the many of us here who got to know him through Theological School and clergy meetings.

We honor his dedicated service to the church and wrap our loving arms figuratively around Stella and the family. And we turn to the Lord who is the only one who can truly bring comfort and solace to grieving hearts.

I add these comforting words from the *Psalms* at this sad time:

*Hear my cry, O God;  
Attend to my prayer.  
From the end of the earth I will cry to You,  
When my heart is overwhelmed;  
Lead me to the rock that is higher than I.*

*For You have been a shelter for me,  
And a strong tower from the enemy.  
I will abide in Your tabernacle forever;  
I will trust in the shelter of Your wings. (Psalm 61:1-4)*

## GENERAL CHURCH BOARD OF DIRECTORS

*Meeting highlights from March 2023*

### President's Report

**The Rt. Rev. Peter Buss Jr.** talked about the five strategic initiatives covered by respective teams throughout the meetings:

- Recruiting and Developing Priests
- Intake Program for New Church Education
- Starting and Growing Online Groups, Leading to Circles
- Supporting Congregation Renewal
- Vision Casting, Communication and Engagement

He also reported on past and upcoming Regional Clergy Meetings and the increasingly helpful role played by Bishop's Council.

He extended condolences and warm wishes to our church friends in Benin who are recovering from the loss of National Pastor **Rev. Guillaume Anato**.

We are looking forward to the General Church Retreat 2024 and are ready to move into the planning and execution phase.

## Assistant Bishops

**The Rt. Rev. David Lindrooth** updated us on the expansion of the Phoenix congregations and the work of the Healthy Congregations Committee.

**The Rt. Rev. Brad Heinrichs** reported on his recent travels to Benin, where he officiated at the memorial service for the Rev. Guillaume Anato.

## Executive Director

**David Frazier** provided financial results for FY23: Revenue \$3.5 million, Expenses \$2.9 million, and an Operating Surplus of about \$618,000.

## Board Self-Assessment

**Ethan King** reviewed Board self-assessment survey results, offering insights into areas that have held steady over recent assessment cycles, areas that have declined or improved, and areas that need improvement. The Board anticipates a review of results and comments by a task force so that the assessment can continue to maintain Board effectiveness.

## Outreach

*The Rt. Rev. David Lindrooth and the Rev. Pearse Frazier*

Bishop Lindrooth reported on the function of the Outreach team and noted that faith works better when you are part of a church. With this in mind the Outreach team is passionate about connecting people to communities. The General Church strategic goal of Starting and Growing Online Groups, Leading to Circles in the next five years will require a shift in how resources are organized so that we can feed this way of reaching and involving people.

The Outreach team is building a process that creates and nurtures groups, some of which might be capable of becoming new circles or joining existing societies. We are building and testing the prototype process with modest initial goals. When it is demonstrated to work, we hope to scale it up.

To accomplish these and other goals, Outreach identified a few key considerations. One is the need for better contact database management. Another is a clearly articulated strategy for the deployment of clergy.

Outreach was scheduled to launch a new season of *Big Spiritual Questions* in late March at <https://www.youtube.com/newchurchvideos>. Past videos available on this site include *The Meaning of Life*, *The Difference Between Good and Evil*, and *What Happens When We Die*.

## **Global Healthy Congregations**

*The Rt. Rev. David Lindrooth and John Berridge*

Bishop Lindrooth commented on the GHC committee goals of continuously improving the congregational life-cycle framework and the beginning of a process to partner with congregations working toward future health and growth. Initial work on this has focused on West Africa. Next steps involve expanding these efforts globally.

Bishop Lindrooth and John Berridge presented a new General Church initiative: Support Congregation Renewal. They discussed steps of the project such as defining congregational health and goals, the General Church's role as a resource and partner, and identifying locations to pilot the process.

## **General Church Education**

*Greg Henderson, Rebekah Russell and Karen Stoeller*

Greg reported on GCED's recent visit to the Ghanaian schools and the Treasury of New Church Stories project.

Rebekah reported on a productive set of recent Education Leadership Team meetings and an upcoming General Church Education Conference in June. (See separate item below.)

Greg, Rebekah and Karen presented the initiative Intake Program for New Church education. Goals revolve around teacher recruiting and development plans and include steps such as building our teacher e-learning and competency modules, evolving compensation practices, and supporting continued education.

## **Advancement**

*Mark Wyncoll*

Overall contributions and planned gifts in FY23 are ahead of schedule, while the number of donors and annual gifts are down slightly from last year. He updated current member engagement efforts and shifts in fostering activity of the New Church Career Network.

Communications Director Marijke Bau-Madsen reported on the Vision Casting and Communications Strategic Initiative, which continues previous efforts at improving the effectiveness of messaging to members and friends of the General Church. Early steps are aimed at establishing a strong foundation

for messaging strategies.

### **Budget and Audit Committee**

*David Frazier, Wade Buick*

The General Church is projecting a small surplus in the FY24 operating budget. Revenue is projected at \$6,521,000 – up 6% from FY23, driven by an expected increase in investment income. Expenses are anticipated at \$6,518,000 – also a 6% increase due primarily to inflation and includes about \$800,000 allocated toward strategic initiatives.

The FY24 Capital Budget of \$140,000 includes a 20-year building plan, including an architectural and engineering study.

In the FY24 Non-Operating Budget net assets are expected to increase by about \$2 million, supporting projects from approximately 120 funds.

### **Investment**

*Jesse Cole*

Last year was a tough financial year, with the portfolio down 16.46%. The New Church Investment Fund outperformed benchmarks for all periods tracked. The NCIF committee approved an increase to the payout by 6.5% for FY24. It will be monitoring the payout rate to meet the 36-month average upper band guideline of 5%, particularly if we meet more headwinds in the immediate future.

### **GENERAL CHURCH EDUCATION**

**Rebekah Russell**, Coordinator for General Church schools in General Church Education reports that with more than 70 teachers and ministers registered, plans are well underway for the June 15-16 GCED Conference on the Academy campus in Bryn Athyn. The theme is “Reunite and Rejuvenate.”

Plans include 23 workshops on a wide variety of topics, two plenary sessions, grade level meetings, and two evening events, including meals.

Teachers and administrators will focus on New Church education, learn from and collaborate with each other, and enjoy meeting with each other for the first time since the covid pandemic.

### **GENERAL CHURCH CORPORATION**

The General Church Corporation will hold its annual meeting June 24 in the

CHURCH NEWS

Pendleton Hall Auditorium of Bryn Athyn College.

Included in that meeting will be the election of Board members for three-year terms ending in 2026.

Nominees include these three incumbents eligible for re-election:

<b>Charles Ebert</b>	Longmont, Colorado
<b>Ethan King</b>	Huntingdon Valley, Pennsylvania
<b>Catherine A. McQueen</b>	Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania

Seven new nominees include:

<b>Wendy H. Baker</b>	Summerville, South Carolina
<b>Annette B. Baltz</b>	Rydal, Pennsylvania
<b>Greg Clay</b>	Rochester, Michigan
<b>Robert Heinrichs</b>	Boynton Beach, Florida
<b>Keith Hyatt</b>	Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania
<b>Andrew Martz</b>	Rochester, Michigan
<b>Erik Odhner</b>	Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania

Board members who have served the maximum three consecutive terms are:

<b>Kay Alden</b>	Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania
<b>Jake Brown</b>	Huntingdon Valley, Pennsylvania
<b>Ian Carswell</b>	Chicago, Illinois
<b>Gustav Fornander</b>	Stockholm, Sweden

Board members not running for re-election, who had completed two terms:

<b>Stephen Ball</b>	Mitchellville, Maryland
<b>Alex Coulibaly</b>	Monrovia, Liberia

Resigning from the Board was **Mary Jane Jungé**,  
Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania

**ACADEMY BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

Meetings of February 10-11, 2023



## **Chancellor**

**Chancellor Peter Buss** expressed gratitude for the time and effort of the Presidential Search Committee and to President-elect **Eric Carswell** for his “get to work” approach.

The Chancellor also reported on the General Church Task Force Report on sexuality and gender issues, and on some of the responses and reporting that followed. Despite persisting polarization, growth and progress came out of the engagement and discussion.

## **Vice Chair**

**Dr. Charles Lindsay** was elected to a second two-year term as Board Vice Chair. He commented on the report from the College Governance Consultant and on the need to form an ad hoc committee to address College governance questions. That committee was formed. The monitoring report to the Middle States Commission on Higher Education will note its adoption as part of the College’s continuing compliance efforts.

## **Secretary-General Counsel**

**Philip Zuber** reported that the results of the Board Self-Assessment Survey triggered several follow-up to-dos by the Vice Chair, Legal Advisory, Executive and College Board Committees, and the Bryn Athyn College President, with a May 2023 reporting date.

## **Treasurer and Investment Committee**

**Treasurer Duane Hyatt** provided his annual endowment sustainability projections. With the 2022 market turndown, long term sustainability remains a serious concern, especially given persistent and recurring deficits, which need to be resolved.

The Investment Committee reported that despite the significant market downturn, and although significantly lower, the endowment portfolio performed better than benchmarks, with private investments contributing to that performance. The Board agreed in principle with the recommendation to increase private investments to 30% of the endowment portfolio.

## **Finance**

There was lengthy discussion about whether the endowment level thresholds

in the 2013 College Contingency Plan have been or soon will be reached, and if so what should be done, if anything, and how that might adversely impact the MSCHE accreditation issues and the strategic plan. No action was taken.

Because of the change in market conditions, the Board agreed in principle to move funds from the Excess Endowment Fund into the Debt Repayment Fund, which will reduce payout to the Academy Secondary Schools and the College.

By Board resolution, the Synnestvedt House was moved from being a College-controlled property to ANC Central control, with the transfer of an equivalent value from the Central Endowment to the College's endowment.

### **Bryn Athyn College**

Enrollment for 2023-24 is on target. There has been a big increase in applications from New Church-affiliated students.

Interim President Carswell's official start date is May 1, although he has already been working actively.

Concern persists that there will be a significant shortfall in Annual Fund contributions to the College. A tuition increase of 3% for FY 24 was authorized. A short-term (bridge) Strategic Plan for the College – maximum of three years – was approved.

### **Academy Secondary Schools**

Repairs to the Fine Arts Building from a Christmas Day water line break are nearing completion, with thanks for the intervention and extraordinary work by CPO.

Contributions to date have exceeded the budget goal for the year. Extensive and active recruitment efforts are under way. The costs, benefits and management of the three summer camp programs are under review. They are considered important feeder programs for the schools.

### **Glencairn Museum**

The massive infrastructure project is progressing on schedule and the Museum is expected to reopen in November. Despite the closure, staff have been very busy. Medieval objects are on display at the Philadelphia Museum of Art. Collections were displayed over the Christmas holidays in New Haven, Connecticut, where they tried to duplicate the look and feel of Glencairn. Extensive digital program offerings have been enjoyed by members, children and schools. A three-year loan of Egyptian objects will return to Glencairn once

the Museum reopens.

### **Cairnwood**

Cairnwood is hoping for a better-than-expected surplus in Fiscal Year 23. Next year looks more challenging, but initiatives are in place to try to counter changes in the marketplace. Aside from hosting events, Cairnwood held numerous successful special events and education programs.

### **Advancement**

Three Small Gift/Big Impact campaigns last year were very successful and produced many new donors. Other campaigns are planned this year, including the Bryn Athyn College Show Your Love campaign on Valentine's Day and a Glencairn campaign in March. One focus this year is the Morna Hyatt Teachers Fund, which has a 5:1 match for donations up to \$250. All Board members have contributed this year.

### **SECONDARY SCHOOLS DORMITORIES CLOSING**

An April 4 letter to Academy of the New Church community members announced that “a strategic decision was made during the March 30 Board of Trustees meeting that “effective June 30 the dormitories at ANC will no longer serve as residential spaces for students during the school year.” The letter was signed by **Dr. Jeremy Irwin**, Boys School principal; **Kira Schadegg**, Girls School Principal; the **Rt. Rev. Peter M. Buss Jr.**, Chancellor; and **Dr. Charles Lindsay**, Board Vice Chair.

The letter continued: “We acknowledge the significance of this change and honor the ways that the dorms have served students for decades. We deeply care about the people who live in the dorms and who manage the dorms.”

“However, it has become clear that a change in the way we provide student housing is necessary. Since 2015, the costs associated with operating Glenn and Stuart Halls have increased significantly. Heading into the 2024 fiscal year, we faced an untenable deficit and had to make a series of significant decisions. The hardest of those decisions is to close our dorms temporarily.

“The administration is committed to working with staff currently living in apartments attached to the dorms and community members to find alternative accommodation options for families who want to send their students to ANC but live too far to commute. This decision, though extremely difficult and emotionally charged, is the right decision for the financial stability of the Academy moving forward.

“We recognize that people will have questions about this change and will do the best we can to answer them. Thank you for your continued support of the Academy of the New Church Secondary Schools.”

## HELPING CHILDREN IN CRISIS

*Report of the General Church Board, March 2023*

*Kay Alden, Chair*

All the children are doing well and have started their various 2023 school years (which start in January in Kenya). School years were accelerated due to time missed during the covid shutdown but are now back on schedule. We have a total of 20 teenagers and young adults still in our care, but six of them will be matriculating out of our care in the coming months as they complete their vocational training. Seven will still be in secondary school and seven still pursuing training as nurses, teachers, engineers and a fashion designer.

The big news is that the well is finally complete. The fund raising and efforts to initiate and complete this project started well before covid. I would like to give special thanks to our treasurer, **Roger Schrock**, who oversaw this project. Communication between the two countries is often challenging on many levels and Roger did an amazing job of getting the job done.

This project is a life-changing event not only for the church compound but for the extended community of Etorá. The nearby hospital now has access to clean water and we can expect the cases of typhoid in the area to decrease significantly.

I would also like to share the names of the various members of our executive committee. These people have been committed to the work of HCIC for many years and spent countless hours doing what needs to be done. Besides myself and the ministers, **Roger and Kathy Schrock, John Wille and Aven Lindrooth** have been to Kenya. It really helps to have people on the committee who have met the children and can understand the cultural and physical challenges the people there face.

## KAINON SCHOOL ANNIVERSARY

Kainon School in Westville, South Africa, celebrated 100 years of offering primary education on March 4. **Bishops Peter Buss and Brad Heinrichs** were in attendance.

Brad reported that it was “an inspiring event and a wonderful testament to the powerful impact New Church education has had on a group of people for

several generations.”

## EPISCOPAL TRAVEL

From the *Bishop's Newsletter* for March 2023, travel by the bishops during the winter included:

**Executive Bishop Peter Buss Jr.** visited London, England; Boulder, Colorado; Westville and Cape Town, South Africa.

**Bishop David Lindrooth's** travels – all in the United States – included Seattle, Washington; Oak Arbor, Michigan; Phoenix, Arizona; and Boulder, Colorado.

**Bishop Brad Heinrichs** visited Mitchellville, Maryland, and in Africa, congregations in Asakraka, Tema and Buccleuch. He also traveled to Benin in March for the memorial service for the **Rev. Guillermo Anato**. See page xxx)

Bishops Buss and Lindrooth traveled to Seoul, South Korea, in mid-April for regional clergy meetings for ministers in Asia.

## FAMILY SUMMER CAMPS

### Jacob's Creek Family Retreat

Jacob's Creek Family Retreat – celebrating its 30th anniversary – will be held July 27-30 at the Laurelville Retreat Center in Mt. Pleasant, Pennsylvania. This year's theme is: *Creation – Behold I Make All Things New*.

Attendance is capped at 150 so early registration is encouraged.

Registration is online at: <https://www.jacobscreekfamilyretreat.org/>

Friend the retreat on Facebook at:

<https://www.facebook.com/JacobsCreekFamilyRetreat/>

For questions or further information contact **Julie Uber**,

412-782-2710 or email [julie.uber@gmail.com](mailto:julie.uber@gmail.com).

### Maple Leaf Academy

Maple Leaf Academy for teenagers will celebrate its 54th year at the Ecology Retreat Center in Mono, Ontario, Canada, July 8-14.

After the long, dark days of the covid pandemic, the camp looks forward to exploring the theme of light: “*Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying: ‘I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness but have the light of life.’*” (John 8:12)

For more information or to register visit [www.maplecamp.com](http://www.maplecamp.com). Direct any questions to **Stephanie Kuhl**, Camp Director: [gcic.mapleleafcamp@gmail.com](mailto:gcic.mapleleafcamp@gmail.com).

## PILGRIMS IN ISRAEL



(Group at Nazareth)  
Back row, left to right:  
Matthew Genzlinger,  
Grant Odhner, Thomas  
Jackson. Front row: Irvin  
Kaage, Aram Yardumian,  
Grant Schnarr, Andrew  
Dibb, Mandala Sithole,  
Stephen Cole



Two views  
of Galilee



Jordan River



Baptism in the Jordan River



Arbel from Tiberius



The oldest Hebrew Scroll with  
Levitical Blessing



Mount Tabor



Table at Mandla



Synagogue at  
Mandla

## PILGRMS IN ISRAEL



The Annunciation to Mary



The Dome of the Rock



The Garden Tomb



View of Galilee from Mt. Precipice



Traditional Site of the Lord's Birth



The Western Wall



## MEMORIAL SERVICE FOR THE REV. GUILLAUME ANATO



Brad and Cathy Heinrichs with the family: left to right, Olivia, Stella, Lavange, Samuel and Emmanuella



The Rev. Guillaume Anato



Stella Amato with Cathy Heinrichs



Bishop Heinrichs with the Amato family



Attending ministers, left to right: Segno-Kojo Ayi (Togo), Bishop Heinrichs, Gyamfi Martin (Ghana), Martin Ahotosse (Benin), Eshun Ekow (Ghana), Kuro Ebute-metta (Nigeria), Sylvain Agnes (Cote d'Ivoire), Samuel Lompo (Burkina Faso), Leopold Assiobo (Togo)

**PURLEY CHASE PROGRAMME DIRECTOR  
AND PASTORAL SUPPORT**

Purley Chase Centre, owned by The General Conference of the New Church, is a retreat and event venue set in the beautiful North Warwickshire countryside of England. We are seeking to appoint an enthusiastic, self-motivated person to become the Centre's next Programme Director.

The ethos of the Centre is rooted in an enlightened and balanced approach to Christ-centred spirituality, aided by insights found in the writings of Emanuel Swedenborg. We validate all faiths and welcome people of all religions and none. For more information and a job description visit

*[www.purleychasecentre.org.uk](http://www.purleychasecentre.org.uk)* .

This is a full-time position and offers a competitive salary depending on experience.

If you would like to apply for this position please email your CV with a covering letter to Natalie Welch at *[natalie.welch@generalconference.org.uk](mailto:natalie.welch@generalconference.org.uk)*

The closing date for applicants will be June 1, 2023. Interviews in person or online as appropriate will take place week commencing June 19, 2023.

# Life Lines

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

## THE CHRISTIAN WOODSTOCK

Earlier this year we were both heartened and skeptical about a spontaneous religious revival at a tiny Christian college in Kentucky: The Asbury Phenomenon.

A routine chapel service spontaneously took on a life of its own as a two-week marathon of songs and prayer that quickly spread to other campuses and venues. There were no charismatic leaders, no calls to witness, no doomsday sermons. Just the sincere openness of young people hungering to connect with God and find purpose for their lives was refreshing.

Such revivals do invite skepticism. We have seen them come and go through history – even at this same university. A fever flames, then inevitably cools. It is hard to predict whether anything lasting will come of this. It began in a collective mood of contemplation in search of connection, repentance and calling. The focus was not so much on a group experience as seeking personal relationships with God. In the moment it was a welcome counter to the culture – especially with this “Generation Z” polling the lowest interest in religion in recent history.

This was not a staged Billy Graham kind of revival, but a personal, low-key experience for college students – then children, families and senior citizens as the fervor spread. No one seemed to be in charge; there were just volunteers everywhere, helping where needed. National TV cameras were turned away, to keep this as simple and authentic as possible. The message was: “There is room in God’s house for everyone.” And “everyone” responded – 70,000 visitors to the town and campus, and 63 million viewers on social media.

The question with revivals is whether the emotional high can sustain itself as a slow, steady faith that carries through the highs and lows of life. But we should be encouraged that with religion in decline throughout the world, the arc of providence still bends toward good. These young people were unabashedly opening themselves to God and to being led by His love in their hearts.

These are the young people among us still reeling from the covid years, overwhelmed and overly stressed in a chaotic, violent world, morally un-

moored and uncertain about the future – and welcoming a soothing, holy calm.

One student said: “I’ve never witnessed anything like this in my life. We can’t end what we didn’t start. The Holy Spirit started this and the Holy Spirit is going to continue to move throughout this campus and throughout other college campuses and other churches.”

A 94-year-old former professor at Asbury – who witnessed revivals there in 1950 and 1970 – offered this benediction: “Follow Me,” Jesus said. Isn’t that simple? We can all understand it. You don’t have to go to a big university to know how to make disciples. You just follow Jesus.”

Whether or not this Asbury Phenomenon becomes an anchor in these young people’s lives – and lightens the way for others to follow – let us at least share in their hope: “*This is the Lord’s doing; it is marvelous in our eyes.*” (Psalm 118:23)

(BMH)

## THE MIRACLE OF CRABS

The Heavenly Doctrine tells us that function precedes form, even though the opposite seems to be true:

*The use they serve existed before the organic forms of the body came into being. The use produced and adapted those forms to itself, and not the reverse. But once the forms have been produced or the organs adapted, the uses they serve then flow from them, in which event it seems as though the forms or organs were prior to the uses, when that is not in fact the case. (Arcana Coelestia 4223.2)*

In other words, the need for vision existed before there were eyes to see, and the eyes then came into being to fulfil that use. The alternative to this idea is that nature randomly produced large numbers of variant forms, among which were ones that were light sensitive. These light-sensitive forms aided the survival of the life form, which then reproduced and passed on the characteristic to offspring, gradually evolving into vision.

The difference is that the one requires a Creator, who created the pre-existing uses and created life-forms to fill these ecological niches. The alternative is that change is driven by randomness and shaped by survival. A third alternative, which perhaps blends the two, is that life-forms change in ways that appear to be driven by randomness and survival due to adaptive mutations, but actually change according to influx from the Lord guiding them toward specific functions.

There are many examples that illustrate this, but one that has been especially noted in recent years is the evolution of the crab. Crabs exist worldwide in great variety, but all of them have certain characteristics that identify them as crabs. Scientists have been amazed to discover through recent DNA analysis, however, that they consist of at least five unrelated groups. This means that crustaceans have evolved into crabs at least five times, as explained in this Newsweek article:

*The phenomenon is so widely known that it's been given a name – carcinization. Through this process, crabs, the beach critters we all know and love, have evolved at least five times from separate groups of crustaceans. At least five groups of decapod crustaceans have evolved a crab-like body form. These include most eubrachyurans – the group which includes most land crabs – plus sponge crabs, porcelain crabs, king crabs and the hairy stone crab. So how do these creatures end up so crabby? The process of carcinization involves adopting various crab-like characteristics like a flattened, often round carapace (upper shell), and a pleon (abdomen) that is folded under the body. Why they do this is another question.”*

Why they do this is that the features that make a crab a crab are adaptive and enable the survival of the species. Another way of putting this is that whatever a crab's function that enables its overall use as a species it is served by the particular form it has taken on. This use has guided the development or creation of its form and characteristics. The use formed the crab, just as it has formed every living thing.

There is an amazing secret behind this that is explained in this remarkable passage:

*How the Divine proceeding, which is the very and only life, can be in things created and finite, shall now be told. This life applies itself not to humans themselves, but only to the uses in them. Uses themselves, viewed in themselves, are spiritual; while the forms of use, which are members, organs, and viscera, are natural. But yet these are series of uses; to such an extent that there cannot be a particle, or the least of any particle, in any member, organ, or viscus, that is not a use in form. The Divine life applies itself to the uses themselves in every series, and thereby gives life to every form; from this we have the life that is called our soul. (Divine Love 4)*

This passage is about how the Divine life can be in living things without those living things needing to be Divine themselves. The answer is that the life itself is not actually in the natural forms themselves but in their function or

use – because uses in themselves are spiritual.

This explains why things keep evolving into crabs. It also explains why there are so many unrelated but very similar life forms, and why almost all animals share such things as vision, hearing, digestive systems and brains. The uses come first, and the Lord's life flows into those uses, which in turn modify natural forms to serve those uses. It is a truly miraculous process.

In a similar way every person is formed both naturally and spiritually by the uses they are engaged in, whatever they might be. The uses come first, we adapt ourselves to serve them, and they in turn change us over the course of a lifetime – hopefully not into crabs.

(JFS)

## THE WAR ON SPIRITUAL POVERTY

Part of President Lyndon Johnson's vision for a Great Society in 1964 was a "war on poverty." In the 60 years since the United States has spent an estimated \$22 trillion fighting this "war" – a war we are not winning.

We know well the counsel of *Matthew 26:11*: "*The poor you will always have with you.*" Poverty throughout the world calls for our attention, compassion and commitment. Lifting people out of poverty helps all of society. But even more insistent than a war on natural poverty is the calling through all of history for a war on spiritual poverty.

Almost everywhere we look in the world we see the hells attacking our spirit – from neighborhood crime and daily shootings to natural disasters and international tensions. The Lord came on earth 2,000 years ago to overcome the hells – but also to preserve our freedom to choose between heaven and hell. In spite of all that has happened since (the Last Judgment, the Second Coming and the establishment of the Lord's New Church in heaven and on earth), we still see millions of people turning their backs on God – the all-encompassing definition of evil – leaving us all poorer and suffering.

In the Beatitudes prelude to the Sermon on the Mount, the Lord says: "*Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*" (*Matthew 5:3*)

Obviously, He is not talking about material poverty but a poor and humble spirit. This is the simple realization that we are poor indeed without God in our lives and that we should be dependent on Him to lift us up – not the government.

Yes, the poor will always be with us, and we are commanded to do what we can for them. But we need to nurture even more the poor in spirit – with ourselves and within our society – if we are to have victory and find peace in this war on spiritual poverty.

(BMH)

## TO HELL AND BACK

A priest in Michigan is just going public with a near death experience following a heart attack in 2016. We have heard about many of these experiences with common themes: a tunnel of brilliant light, a warmth of ineffable love, a transcendent epiphany – and no longer any fear of death. But this priest says his experience was entirely different. He claims he went to hell – that his spirit left his body and descended into hell “through the very center of the earth.”

He testifies: “The things I saw there were indescribable.” Indeed, they seem like some of the grotesque images Swedenborg depicts: a man walking on four legs like a dog, with “his eyes bulging and worse than that – he was wearing chains on his neck. He was like a hellhound. There was a demon holding the chains.”

He also claims he heard familiar music – the usually upbeat “Umbrella” by Rihanna and Bobby McFerrin’s “Don’t Worry, Be Happy” – but sung by taunting demons to torture people.

While others have been uplifted by near death experiences – and what they have taken to be glimpses of heaven to light their way going forward – this priest was scared straight. His terrifying vision of hell turned him to forgiveness and mercy – a good outcome.

Through Swedenborg’s Writings the Lord lets us “see” into heaven and hell – without a near death experience – and lets us choose freely. Heaven seems the obvious choice – but many people do not seem to be choosing heaven by the way they live their lives. They should not be surprised to find themselves in hell if that is what they have chosen as their spiritual home. And it shouldn’t take a near death experience to wake them up to that.

(BMH)

## THE SLIPPERY SLOPE TO HELL

We tend to think that people who go to hell – who actually choose hell through the way they live their lives – are really evil people. They are the Hitlers and crime bosses of the world, not people we know who “make mistakes.”

But evil is described in the Writings as basically turning one’s back on the Lord – the opposite of the angels in heaven who are always turned toward Him and following Him.

We have this simple, chilling warning from C. S. Lewis, a one-time atheist who became a noble champion of Christianity in mid-20th century England. He is loved and remembered for such children’s favorites as *The Chronicles of Narnia* and *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* as well as testaments to his

faith: *Mere Christianity*, *A Grief Observed* and *The Problem of Pain*.

In one of these classics – *The Screwtape Letters* – a highly placed assistant to Our Father Below” (Screwtape) is mentoring his nephew Wormwood – a novice demon – with a series of letters on how to corrupt the soul of an innocent young man and turn him to damnation.

“Do remember,” he advises his nephew, “the only thing that matters is the extent to which you separate the man from the Enemy [God and heaven]. It does not matter how small the sins are provided that their cumulative effect is to edge the man away from the Light and into the Nothing. Murder is no better than cards if cards can do the trick. Indeed, the safest road to Hell is the gradual one – the gentle slope, soft underfoot, without sudden turnings, without milestones, without signposts.”

We are told in the Word that it is not that difficult to get to heaven as we might think. We just need to love the Lord and love our neighbor. But clearly there is a slippery slope to hell as well. You don’t have to be a murderer – just any love of self and the world that satisfies Screwtape and Wormwood.

(BMH)

## BE OF GOOD CHEER

Despite all the comforting teachings we have about Divine providence and permissions, it still can be challenging to reconcile all the evil and suffering in the world with an all-loving, omniscient God.

But we need to remember that when Pilate was challenging Jesus to defend Himself before He was crucified, He answered: “My kingdom is not of this world.” His kingdom is in heaven. That is where we are delivered from the evil of the world – where there is “a great gulf fixed” between heaven and hell, and those in heaven are forever safe.

Remember as well the assurance Jesus gave to His disciples – and all of us – in His last hours:

*These things I have spoken unto you, that in Me you might have peace. In the world you shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer, for I have overcome the world. (John 16:33)*

(BMH)



# Announcements

## BAPTISMS

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

### **Alden, Shiloh Erik**

At Huntingdon Valley, Pennsylvania, February 12, 2023 (born February 4, 2023), son of Micah and Tania Buss Alden, Rev. Kenneth J. Alden officiating.

### **Bosson, Nicolas Abouho Kan**

At Songon, Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, March 4, 2023, Rev. Henry Joel Kouassi Kouame officiating.

### **Gallagher, Natalie**

At Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania, February 12, 2023 (born December 24, 2010), daughter of Katrina Gallagher, Rev. John L. Odhner officiating.

### **Garcia-Gallagher, Isabella Susan**

At Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania, February 12, 2023 (born August 24, 2015), daughter of Katrina Gallagher, Rev. John L. Odhner officiating.

### **Glenn, Violet Rebekah**

At Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania, February 26, 2023 (born February 10, 2023), daughter of Coleman and Anne Grace Hurd Glenn, Rev. Christopher A. Barber officiating.

### **Glou, Silvere Landry**

At Bouake, Gbeke, Côte d'Ivoire, March 20, 2023, Rev. Honoré A. Aka officiating.

### **Heinrichs, Estelle**

At Kempton, Pennsylvania, November 20, 2022 (born October 25, 2022), daughter of Calvin and Liza Jungé Heinrichs, Rt. Rev. Bradley D. Heinrichs officiating.

### **Jamison "Diego" Painter**

At Sioux City, Iowa, (online), April 20, 2023 (born May 29, 1974), Rev. John L. Odhner officiating.

### **Kouakou, Liliane Altime**

At Bouake, Gbeke, Côte d'Ivoire, March 18, 2023, Rev. Honoré A. Aka officiating.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### **Kouame, Blandine Adjoua**

At Bouake, Gbeke, Côte d'Ivoire,  
August 6, 2022, Rev. Honoré A. Aka  
officiating.

### **Kouame, Paul Evelyne Kouhui**

**Ahou** -At Songon, Abidjan, Côte  
d'Ivoire, March 4, 2023, Rev. Henry  
Joel Kouassi Kouame officiating.

### **Mary Valentine**

At Spring City, Texas, (online),  
April 20, 2023 (born October 15.  
1944), Rev. John L. Odhner  
officiating.

### **Matthew Bush**

At Clearwater, Florida, (online),  
April 20, 2023 (born January 20,  
1963) Rev. John L. Odhner  
officiating.

### **St. Martine, Nolan Orville**

At Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania,  
March 5, 2023 (born October 11,  
2022), son of Walter and Kristine  
Amee St. Martine, Rev. Charles E.  
Blair officiating.

### **Swartley, Kayla Ann**

At Kempton, Pennsylvania,  
February 5, 2023, Rev. Brett D.  
Buick officiating.

## CONFIRMATION

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

### **King, Levi Snowden**

At Kempton, Pennsylvania, February  
5, 2023, Rev. Brett D. Buick  
officiating.

### BETROTHALS

*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)*

**Eads-Buick, Jared Owen Malachi  
Eads and Natalie Beatrice Buick**  
At San Diego, California, March 11,  
2023, Rev. Brett D. Buick officiating.

**King-Swartley, Levi Snowden King  
and Kayla Ann Swartley**  
At Kempton, Pennsylvania, April 1,  
2023, Rev. Brett D. Buick officiating.

### MARRIAGE

*The origin of love truly conjugal is from the marriage of good and truth. All conjunction of good and truth has joy within itself because this conjunction is the heavenly marriage within which is the Divine. (Arcana Coelestia 4572)*

**McCutcheon-Sandstrom, Neil John  
McCutcheon and Kerstin Beth  
Sandstrom** – At Huntingdon Valley,  
Pennsylvania, December 25, 2023,  
Rev. Dr. Erik E. Sandstrom  
officiating.

### IN MEMORIAM

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

**Anato, Rev. Guillaume Joseph  
Kouassivi** – February 16, 2023, of  
Cotonou, Benin. 52.

**Cook, Stephen Eustice**  
April 15, 2023, of Bryn Athyn,  
Pennsylvania. 76.

**Bevan, Gwynne**  
February 12, 2023, of Huntingdon  
Valley, Pennsylvania. 42.

**Cox, Karin Jo Schiffer**  
December 21, 2022, of Riegelsville,  
Pennsylvania. 69.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

**Halterman, Rachel**

February 27, 2023, of Bethesda,  
Maryland. 78.

**Holm, Nicholas David**

February 10, 2023, of Huntingdon  
Valley, Pennsylvania. 61.

**Hansen, Ketty Mejer**

March 18, 2023, of Härlev,  
Denmark. 95.

**Smith, Gale Windram**

February 24, 2023, of Bryn Athyn,  
Pennsylvania. 84.

**NEW CHURCH AUDIO**

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### General Church Advancement

PO Box 708  
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19009 USA

*(memo line "annual fund" or name of the congregation)*

*Thank you*

Mark H. Wyncoll | General Church Advancement  
267-502-2423 | [mark.wyncoll@newchurch.org](mailto:mark.wyncoll@newchurch.org)

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*... Everyone whose willing spirit moved him,  
should bring the Lord's offering for  
the work of the tabernacle*

*Exodus 35*

