

THETA ALPHA JOURNAL



APRIL 2023

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Theta Alpha

“Daughters of the Academy”



Named From the Greek:

Θυγατερες Ακαδημιας

Thugateres Akadémias

Founded in 1904 by graduates of the Academy of the New Church, Theta Alpha exists to provide a forum for women for the advancement and support of New Church education in its many forms, and to support each other in our personal spiritual growth. Membership is open to interested women aged eighteen and older.

Non Nobis Solum ~ Not for Ourselves Alone

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Editorial

Helen Kennedy

Anything that helps me learn the difference between my inner self and my outer is a joy to me. The laws in Exodus, Leviticus and Deuteronomy read like they are lifeless and dry, something that might have had meaning for people long ago, maybe. But what I love about the Writings, and what keeps me coming back to them, is that they make these laws spring alive with meaning.

I was reading this in Exodus 22:26: “If you go so far as to take your companion’s garment as collateral, at the going in of the sun you shall restore it to him.” This definitely was a transaction for a time long ago when clothing was so hard to come by, and any piece of it was of great enough value that it was used as a pledge. There’s much to be said in anthropology about the difficulty of making clothing in past times, how laborious it was, and how the weavings of the patterns changed over the many centuries. But this passage is from the Word and applies to the Israelites of well over 3,000 years ago. What could a person borrow from another, so that they would have to give a pledge, and then want their pledge back at the end of the day? I suppose if a person borrowed something like a donkey for a day, then the lender would take the borrower’s cloak or tunic as a pledge that the donkey would be returned. Or maybe the person borrowed a tool, something that had real worth to it like a plow. But what the inner sense of lending and getting your pledge back really means is so spectacularly alive that my words can’t encompass it.

My interpretation of what this means is that, if my belief in life after death becomes less real because it seems like this world is the only life people have, then the truth that people live after death becomes gray or in the shadow. This truth has to be restored before the sun goes down, or before I start to believe permanently that this world is the only place people live. I gave my thoughts about the meaning before saying what the Writings tell us, which is “if illusions of the senses dispel fact-type truth, [the truth] must be restored before the pleasures of superficial passions produce a state of shadow” (*Secrets of Heaven* 9212, 9213).

Swedenborg, of course, has a lot more to say about these two lines, but the reason why I’m saying this is that each one of us has to process the truths we learn through our own minds, and apply them to the lives we live. In Chara Daum’s talk, “Stretch, Release, Breathe: How My Work Works on Me,” she takes us down avenues of her thinking. We see how individualized and appealing her way of seeing things has become. She gave the talk at the Theta Alpha luncheon last October, and now a wider audience will get to read about her life’s journey of working on translations of the Writings. At the end of the article is a list of sites to listen to the talk, if any of readers would like to do that.

An article on the Ukraine Society tells us about the opening of their Reading Center in 2009. Through the content of some emails sent to Göran Appelgren in Sweden we are given a bit of an insight into the way their life is now as the war continues in their country. They are people like us, readers of the Word and Writings, who are living through a terrible time. We tried to present this in a respectful way due to their country’s suffering and with the hope that readers would keep them in their thoughts and prayers.

Sasha Silverman takes us into the world of Dave’s Backyard

Farm and the invisible web that drew him into deeper spiritual connections. Millicent Amoako from Ghana has written for us some of her thoughts about prayer. Bea Pitcairn, whose artwork is on the cover, tells us of her years developing her art. In this Journal we also have an example of a comic book, or web cartoon, about Heaven and Hell and the Spiritual World. Started by Reverend Shiro Matsumoto in Tokyo, it is a new way to tell people of God's love for them and how life's purpose is to be prepared for heaven.



Join the Conversation!

We would love to publish selected responses to articles, poems and stories in the *Journal*.

Tell us what you think! Contact information is in the beginning of this *Journal*.

The Financial Health and Wellbeing of Theta Alpha International

Janet Krettek, President

I have had the benefit of reviewing our history: old Minutes, notes, letters, articles that couldn't be parted with, yet no one had storage space left for them. This benefited me with a broader perspective, the ups and downs of the organization. The fear in the 1960's was that working women would not volunteer their time anymore. Hmmm. Seems I heard that same fear expressed last week . . . and yet, here we are, as strong, and yet as vulnerable as ever. Our board is filled with working women, working mothers, working women advancing their educational goals to doctorate levels. I was the young one when I started on the board and now I am second eldest! Theta Alpha International (TAI) has changed because we women have changed. However, without the dedication of these women, the organization could not be sustained. Thus, we are vulnerable without your dedication.

Let me explain our financial picture. We have three accounts. The New Church Investment Fund (NCIF) is kindly using its expertise to help us manage the two larger ones as, prior to this, the money was sitting in the bank receiving a pittance of interest. Now we are in the market and faring much better. The largest account is **owned** by the Academy of the New Church (ANC), which encompasses the college and the high school, but the spending of this money is **directed** by TAI. Most of our scholarships were formed using the funds in this largest

Membership Dues

Please remember that your membership dues support all of Theta Alpha International's programs, including this *Journal!* Membership is open to interested women aged eighteen and older.

Dues are \$15 (US)

You can join any time!

If you are renewing, dues are "due" by July 1st each year.

For new and renewing members, please remit payment to:

Mail-In Option:

This is a tear-out page to mail in with your dues; just fill in the information on the back and send in with your dues to the following address:

Theta Alpha International
P.O. Box 154
Bryn Athyn, PA 19009

Pay Online Option:

Visit <http://bit.ly/taijournal>

Membership Form

I want to be a member of the Theta Alpha International!

- I am renewing my membership
- I am a new member

Please fill out this page and enclose a \$15 US check for the annual dues made out to Theta Alpha International and mail to:

Theta Alpha International
P.O. Box 154
Bryn Athyn, PA 19009

Member Information:

Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Email Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

- I have enclosed \$15 dues for the 2022-2023 year
- I am also including an additional donation of \$ _____
to support Theta Alpha International

(\$15 donations are equivalent to paying the \$15 annual dues)

account. It is self-sustaining. We are following one of the commonly used formulas for retirement savings called the 4% rule: we do not use more than 4% of the overall amount so that the principal can continue to grow and supply, on average, 4%/year for us to use. We are not putting any more money into this account. This has worked well for us.

The second largest account, also managed by the NCIF, has about half the amount of the first and is solely owned by TAI. It funds two Education Scholarships for Bryn Athyn College and we draw funds as needed for organizational expenses, the largest of which is the Journal. Again, we are using the 4% rule to maintain the scholarships.

The third account is our checking account, owned by TAI, which has a few thousand dollars in it at a time, and is used to pay for the Journal — layout, printing, mailing. The Journal is our biggest expense.

The second and third accounts are funded by dues and donations. When the money runs out of the checking account, we draw from the second account, which is happening more frequently, despite generous donations. This is the concern. Decisions had to be made. Should we sacrifice the scholarships when our mission is New Church Education or should we change how the Journal is distributed? Since we are in the electronic age, the decision was to distribute the printed Journal to those who pay dues, which just barely covers that cost. **For those who receive the Journal for free, without paying dues, from now on you will receive the printed October edition only.** The April edition will still be online on the newchurch.org/publications website. Send us your email address if you would like to receive the electronic copy directly in your inbox.

TAI is women supporting women of all ages. I do not think the mission has grown out of style, but that it is evolving with us. We continue to have needs that we can help each other with and there is always someone willing to serve that use. I thank you for allowing me the privilege of acting as President. I am at your service.

Stretch, Release, Breathe: How My Work Works on Me

Chara Daum

Theta Alpha Luncheon Talk – October 7, 2022

Theta Alpha president, Janet Krettek, observed that Chara Daum had worked for the church for the long time, and asked her, “What have you learned?”

Chara: In reflecting on that question, I was stunned to realize I’ve had TWO twenty-year chapters of working for “the church¹,” first twenty for the General Church and the Academy; and the second twenty for the Swedenborg Foundation. I’ve worked with original Swedenborg manuscripts, teamed up with six different translators of Swedenborg, proofread new Latin editions of various works, and appeared on the internet as a Swedenborgian personality. That work is where the meat of this talk comes from, but I have to mention other arenas that have provided huge learning curves for both heart and mind — as a Latin teacher at ANC, a leader at Laurel Camp, a helper for Jonathan Rose’s “Spirit and Life Bible Study,” and of course the personal work of human relationships.

This was a career I had not planned and did not see coming as a young woman, but now I see that the Lord provided a beautiful path for me, dropping the breadcrumbs of my lifelong love for words, The Word, and the human beings I walk the planet with.

1 Chara explains: I put quotation marks around “the church” because it has so many different definitions — everything from a building, to a community, to an ecclesiastical organization, to our inner spiritual work, to all human efforts to facilitate a relationship with God, to a whole new understanding of spiritual reality in a new era. I hope you’ll be able to intuit the meaning I’m intending each time, given the context. I sometimes use the term “The Cause,” myself, to refer to an overarching hope to serve the Lord’s purposes in a broader way than just being employed by an earthly organization.

Thank you for this chance to reflect on how my work for “the church” has moved my heart. It’s lovely to be here today with the Theta Alpha, to talk about my own personal “New Church education” in my adult life. But first — fair warning — I have learned that whenever I speak publicly, I weep. Somebody once told me that crying is what happens when your spirit gets too big to fit in your body, so it spills out in tears. So I’m OK with crying, and I’ll try to just carry on!

“What have I learned” from my work over 40-some years? Of course it’s more than I can ever recount. But I’d like to take you on a little travelogue through my work history, as the context for a few key moments that have impacted my own faith journey.

I am a Bryn Athyn girl. It’s been the context for my whole life, even when I didn’t live in town. I happily attended the schools here, and when I graduated with a degree in religion and sacred languages from Bryn Athyn College I felt I had a (*stomp, stomp*) solid footing in what the New Church is all about, what it should look like, and how we should all be living by it. I joined right in with what I thought to be a homogenized, rich and creamy take on the whole thing.

One of my first jobs at the beginning of my unforeseen career was working with Dr. Durban Odhner to decipher Swedenborg’s handwriting for the books now called *Spiritual Experiences* (formerly known as *Spiritual Diary*). Those scrawled pages — not intended for publication — were full of ink blots and cross-outs and re-writes and even a grocery list in Swedish on the back of one page. Scrutinizing those pages was a first step in changing the way I conceived of Swedenborg’s Writings and the human agency involved in this Divine Revelation, that is, how this revelation was delivered through the work of a mere mortal. It shifted my center of gravity a bit, and I found myself with a slightly wider footing.

My next job offer came from Rev. Bruce Rogers, my professor

and mentor throughout college, to whom I'm deeply grateful for setting me on this path. Bruce asked me to be the 'Latin reader' or 'Latin consultant' for some of his translations, eventually including *Conjugal Love* and *Divine Providence*. What's a Latin consultant? Think of it as an assistant translator. Surrounded by a sea of dictionaries and lexicons and reference works, I would compare Swedenborg's Latin on one hand, to Bruce's translation on the other, making sure that every Latin word made it into the English in one way or another, catching errors, and offering feedback. That was my first experience of diving into entire books of Swedenborg's Latin, coming face to face with every long sentence, and grappling with what Swedenborg was trying to convey to our finite minds. I began to see why translation is known as "the art of failure" — because something is inevitably lost when a message moves from one language to another, due to the inherent differences between languages. You've heard the term "Lost in translation." It's a real phenomenon!

I began to contemplate language usage in a new way, to feel the import of the fact that language is CONSTANTLY changing. I wrestled with the concept of IDIOLECT, though I didn't have the word for it at that time. Your idiolect is your completely unique way of using and understanding language. *Completely* unique! What are the ramifications of that simple and universal fact for the whole idea of translation? For the translation of a message from God? What was in Swedenborg's own mind, in the 1700s, when he used big-concept words — like *amor* (love), *bonum* (goodness), *ecclesia* (church)? How do we discover that intended meaning, and how do we convey it into the moving target that is the English language? It all seemed intimidating, and the responsibility sometimes felt overwhelming. I was yanked out of my comfort zone, which was the perfectionistic and, yes, *non-existent* world where everything is knowable, and clear, and

there is One Right Way. *Stre-e-e-tch*.

The next step in broadening my horizons was getting involved in the Swedenborg Foundation’s translation project, the “New Century Edition of the Theological Works of Emanuel Swedenborg” (referred to as the NCE). This intriguing project was to aim primarily at people who have never heard of Swedenborg. The NCE Committee established a list of principles to guide their translators. I’ll name just two: (1) leaving no Latin word untranslated (which does away with the words *proprium* and *arcana coelestia*, for example); and (2) aiming at the heart of the English language, by using Anglo-Saxon rather than Latinate vocabulary where possible. Why does that last one matter? Well, here’s a brief musical interlude to illuminate the difference:

*Scintillate, scintillate asteroid minific
Urgently I ponder your nature specific
Exaltedly poised in the ether capacious
Convincingly resembling a gem carbonaceous
Scintillate, scintillate asteroid minific
Urgently I ponder your nature specific.*

Now that’s all English, but it uses almost all words of Latin origin, whereas the version you’re familiar with, “Twinkle, Twinkle,” uses almost all words of Anglo-Saxon origin. It has a different impact, doesn’t it? I just had to give you one concrete example!

Anyway, all these translation objectives were fascinating and fun stuff for a word nerd like me! So I was thrilled — and terrified — when the Rev. Dr. Jonathan Rose asked me to be the Latin consultant for his translation of *Vera Christiana Religio* — *True Christian Religion*, or *True Christianity*.

Joining the NCE team as they wrestled with the challenges spurred by these guidelines was such a joy and an honor and an education. I loved spending time with those brilliant minds and

kind, passionate hearts coming from different Swedenborgian perspectives than I had grown up with. That experience *stretched me a LOT*, and I'm very grateful that that bridge was built in my own heart.

As I worked on Jonathan's translation, I experienced for the first time what people meant by translation "style." I had only ever worked with Bruce before, and Jonathan's work felt so different from Bruce's. And through the years, I discovered that Lisa Hyatt Cooper's work was *another* very different style, and so was George Dole's, and Erik Odhner's. Each new translator stretched me a little further and loosened my grip on rigid literalism, nudging me towards idiomatic expression. It's been a fascinating adventure in idiolect, and in translating the *message* rather than the *words* themselves — BUT — not without an existential crisis about OUR human agency in this Divine Revelation.

To wit:

I vividly remember a pivotal moment, sitting at my 'translation station,' pondering the Latin word *caritas*, traditionally translated charity. Possible options being considered for the NCE were *goodwill/ thoughtfulness/ caring/ kindness/ neighborly love*, or straight up love in some contexts. What??? Are we ALLOWED to change the rendition of this Latin word? I had to consider what the word *charity* usually means in the world today — which is, giving something to people less fortunate than ourselves, right? But that's not what Swedenborg means by charity (usually). It's about having love in our hearts for all people, looking for and loving the goodness in them — the Lord in them — and even just doing our jobs to the best of our ability as an avenue for truly loving others. So, I was agonizing about how that word should be translated, and a revelation came to me, in the words of Isaiah:

"Behold, the Lord's arm is not shortened, that it cannot save."

(Isaiah 59:1)

I realized that nobody is going to *not* make it to heaven just because we use *goodwill* instead of *charity*. The Lord is soooo much bigger than that! And in the face of the Lord's magnitude and omnipotence, I realized that we were just one small team of fallible people, doing our best to convey these spiritual ideas. In the Lord's Divine Providence, we were the ones led to this work, and we were employing all our education and love and wisdom to produce an accurate and meaningful translation — just one offering in a never-ending string of attempts to accommodate changing language

That crisis gave me an opportunity to practice a favorite line from the Psalms:

"Fret not. It only causes harm" (Psalm 37:8).

And it brought me face to face with my *supposed* belief in another favorite quote, from the *Arcana*:

"Peace has in it confidence in the Lord, that he directs all things, guides all things, and leads to a good end"
(Arcana Coelestia 8455).

Did I really believe that? I mean, I wasn't feeling the PEACE part, but did I believe (borrowing from some other translations) that the Lord directs and is in charge of and guides and provides and takes care of ALL things? EVERYTHING? Leading to a good outcome? It was confronting. Could I *release* my clutch on a form I was used to, and see how the ideas could come through in a different way? Could I lean into TRUSTING that the Lord could bring something good out of our efforts, for whomever these new translations might reach? Well, I DID, eventually, and when I came through that crisis and began trusting the Lord's leading in this little part of my little job in my little life, that trust somehow extrapolated out to the whole world. *The Lord is in*

charge. Fret not. Breathe.

And something good HAS come out of the NCE efforts. But it doesn't float everyone's boat. The new translations have been hard for some people. They were a challenge for ME at first, especially when I came across a beloved quote, and the words were all switched up. The thing is that the words of our sacred texts can be the building blocks for our own personal HOLY TEMPLE, our own inner TABERNACLE, the place where we meet with God in our own heart and mind. When those words are changed, it can feel like our holy temple is crumbling or our tabernacle is being torn down. It's distressing and painful. So I have complete sympathy and love for those who prefer the older translations upon which they have built their familiar sacred space. I do not want to trample on that holy ground.

My next arena for growth was the incredible odyssey of working on *Arcana Coelestia*, "Secrets of Heaven," with Lisa Hyatt Cooper. What a privilege — to have a job that MADE me keep forging ahead in the Arcana, and to travel with a dear friend, word by word, through the whole thing. Hidden among the profuse repetition in those books, I discovered so many shining gems of the Lord's love for us. I covered my workspace in sticky notes, trying to hold on to those spiritual twinklers. And of course they occur in ALL the books of the Writings. One of the treasures that kind of took my breath away when I encountered it in the Latin was a piece of angelic advice: "Read the Word and believe in the Lord . . . and you will see the truths that are to be part of your faith and your life" (621:3).

Wow! "You" — second person! It sounds like such an individual thing! Like, 'the truths that will be a part of your faith and your life' are potentially different for every single person! That really hit me. So much for "homogenized"

Well, I can't resist listing off some of my favorite 'gems' — I

guess these are some of those ‘truths that are to be part of MY faith.’ Impressionistically stated, and in my own idiolect, here are a few of them (and please imagine twinkling stars or a bit of fireworks going off with each statement):

God is LOVE and MERCY ITSELF!

You were predestined for heaven!

The Lord is pulling for you all the way!

The Lord is guiding you every moment towards your highest possible happiness — no matter what the circumstances look like!

The Lord can bring goodness out of every painful happenstance!

The Lord has MERCY for the ENTIRE human race, consigned as we are to misery!

God can't even look at us with a frown!

It LOOKS like truth comes first, but it's really LOVE that is the goal! (All the stories about birthrights and twins . . .)

It's easier to get to heaven than you think!

In the other life, your own heart will lead you to your eternal dwelling place! (Hmmm.... I mean, the Lord doesn't "throw us" anywhere!)

You will be where you can breathe!²

[deep breath —]

Well, maybe we can't always FEEL these amazing things, but it's beautiful and hopeful stuff! So when you're working hard on the essential task of self-examination and repentance and trying

2 The list of twinklers, passages that sparkle for Chara, is left intentionally without references. She can provide them for anyone who is interested.

to be a better person — don't forget that you have all THAT going for you! *Release the fear that we're not good enough, or that God is judging us harshly. BREATHE in the Lord's mercy and love!*

That brings us to the most recent chapter of my work for the Swedenborg Foundation, on the YouTube channel called “Off The Left Eye” [OTLE]. It's a bizarre name, I know, but it's taken from Swedenborg's experience of going through the dying process: After being with the highest angels, he felt the sensation of something being rolled off his left eye, which meant he was ready for spiritual instruction. So our channel offers videos for people looking for new spiritual ideas. Hugely challenging to my comfort level — BIGGEST STRETCH — I was invited to appear on-screen, online, first reading through *Heaven and Hell* with our viewers, then taking part in skits, or being interviewed about some bit of Latin or linguistic concept. But MOST challenging was taking questions from our LIVE online audience and attempting to answer life's BIG questions, off-the-cuff and in-the-moment. WHOOSH. So confronting. But, as Jonathan has calculated, I HAD read 5,551 first-edition pages in the original Latin (about 76% of the published theological works, he says), and I HAD wrestled up-close-and-personal with what they are trying to say, so I had to accept that I probably DID have more exposure to Swedenborg than most people in the world, and that I was perhaps qualified *enough* to try to talk to people about it. I call myself an “impressionistic Swedenborgian,” because I am not good at remembering exact quotes or where they come from, and I lack an encyclopedic mind. But from my years of study, I have my own God-given sense about the message in the Writings, and I have learned to be (relatively) comfortable speaking from that standpoint. I practiced BELIEVING that all our thoughts and feelings come to us from the spiritual world, as Swedenborg learned, so when a question was posed in real time, I grew the courage

to *speak* the thoughts that came into my head – another chance to lean into believing that Divine Providence is working through us, overseeing every moment and bringing good from whatever happens. *Release the fear. Breathe into the possibilities.*

These days, I spend most of my work time responding to viewers' comments on our OTLE videos. It's an honor and it's humbling. Every day I interact with people from all over the world, from every walk of life, every faith tradition, every economic level and every state of mental health, struggling with heartfelt questions. "Where is my recently departed loved one? Will I ever see them again? THANK YOU for letting me know that these dark thoughts in my head aren't ME, they're evil spirits! What is the point of life? Why is there so much suffering? Does God really love me?" There's so much pain in human hearts, so much confusion — and though some people have already intuited some of the answers, we get so much feedback that these new ideas have been life-changing — it has greatly deepened my appreciation for the blessings of our teachings. I love having a chance to give these people compassionate listening, offer a helpful Swedenborgian concept or two to ponder, suggest another video — and then leave them in the Lord's hands. If they don't like what we offer, I don't need to change their minds about ANYTHING. I don't have to solve their problems. Because the Lord is in charge of EVERYBODY's spiritual path. Whether they are devotees of Swedenborg, Jesus, Buddha, Allah, Oprah, Deepak Chopra, Brené Brown, Charlie Brown, or Winnie-the-Pooh, God can meet them — with that non-shortened arm — in every moment of every moment, with what is best for their individual spiritual progress. It's not up to me to dictate their path – I can just offer a helping hand and a sip of water. And when I practice that attitude with complete strangers on the internet every day, it helps me extend that grace toward the people in my own life, my

church, my town, my household. *Let go of control. Trust in the Lord's care for everybody.*

Well, they happened to ask me to give this talk today. But aren't we ALL doing this work as we bumble and stumble towards eternity, no matter the details of our work or personal life? The Lord reveals himself to each of us in such an individual way. He speaks to us through our hearts and how we are moved when we read the Word or encounter truth in the world. We are each "our own love and our own understanding" (*True Christianity* 778). We are each growing an individual church inside us as we try to figure out what is true, and then try to live accordingly. THAT is "the church" — the joining of truth and goodness, of faith — (gestures upward) — and life — (gestures toward others) — in our hearts. No matter WHAT work you do or how you spend your time, you are each on that journey of "working for 'the church'." And I wonder – might it be a constant adventure for everyone in learning how to "Stretch, Release, and Breathe"?

So — that's the story of me bridging the centuries, zooming IN on Swedenborg's scribbled Latin, and zooming OUT to the whole world on YouTube. By diving deep and narrow into Swedenborg, I've sprung up with a broadened and expanded mind and heart, stretching to embrace the whole journey and all of God's children along the way.

I have been *STRETCHED* out of my first stable but stiff stance of young adulthood. I have *RELEASED* my tightly-clenched notions of what "the church" is or should be *for anyone other than myself*. I practice *BREATHING IN* the fact that God IS, that God is IN each of us, and that God is guiding each of us, in every present moment, on the path towards our own eventual brightest light and greatest joy. MY path is only MY path. MY path is what happens when I "Read the Word and believe in the Lord and see the truths that are to be part of MY faith and MY life." And the

same goes for you. I can let go of how others are following their God, and I can live my faith the way the Lord leads me to live it. And I can fret not, because it only causes harm. And so, in the words I often use to sign off from my YouTube comments, “I wish each of you every blessing on your own spiritual path.”

Chara (still) lives in Bryn Athyn with her husband Scott, where they are enjoying exploring the retired life and staying grounded by spending time with their small grandchildren. She can be contacted at cdaum@msn.com.

Ways to listen to Chara’s talk “Stretch. Release. Breathe: How My Work Works on Me”:

- New Church Audio: www.newchurchaudio.org. Search Chara Cooper Daum 18 Oct, 2022.



- Video recorded on an iPhone in a friend’s living room: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1fd1rRsDYDhblGzQu96h9Pu1E4-Bie6f9/view?ts=6352ce71>

- Recorded during a Zoom call with some of Chara’s classmates (Class of 1977) at closer range and may be a bit easier to hear. However, it has a couple of (perhaps distracting) little interactions with classmates: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1PGinT4yKwOYZZWDkMBa7XQrlFNTprOcw/view>



The Navigator

Madeleine Brown

*“He determines the number of the stars
and calls them each by name.” Ps 147:5-6*

Sometimes when I look up at the night sky
I remember a time when you knew every
constellation. I knew whatever spot of light
I pointed at you could give it a name
like Adam in the Garden.

Your eyes were so good that once you said in the Air Force
you could see galaxies no one else could see.
It seems to me that you’ve always had magical powers,
powers of seeing things no one else could see, powers of
knowing the sky, and navigating by the stars —
and the power of knowing me.

This above is a poem written by Madeleine in honor of her father, Michael Brown, who was in the Air Force. Madeleine writes, “My Dad and I communicated with his special gift of poetry for the last few years of his life. After having a stroke, his first words to me were, ‘Madeleine, do you have a poem for me?’ He was going, as he said, ‘on a spiritual journey above the earth.’ I didn’t ask him if he had a poem for me. He was headed into the sun glinting off his wing, turning his plane for home.” Madeleine’s poem for her father in the previous issue (October 2022) is titled “Flying Home.” Madeleine can be contacted at maddie.alden88@gmail.com.

Mermaid

Tiffany Perry

Swimming freely in the ocean of my heart,
Unfettered, unafraid, wild.
Moving to the beat of the fire in my soul,
Answering only to the Divine flame,
Which gave me life.
Undeterred by emotional waves,
The darkness beneath is no obstacle.
Diving deep into the murky waters,
I am intent on my purpose.
Scars decorate my soul,
The tattoos of battle,
Rising like a star from the depths,
Shrapnel of dark thoughts sticking to my body.
A flick of my tail, and a leap into the sky,
The darkness evaporates like smoke in the sunlight.
Laughing with delight,
I am enveloped by the rolling crests.
My sacred purpose,
To heal the poisoned waters of my heart.
The sands of pain polish me,
Struggles rise and fall with the tides of life.
Monsters of ego, pride, desire,
Make frenzied attacks on my heart and soul.
The flame of love burns bright,

And leads the way back towards the light.
The deep waters of the heart call out to me,
To become a true daughter of the Divine flame.
I will never stop diving.

Tiffany is an Office Assistant who enjoys writing, painting, photography, and occasionally participates with Community Theater productions. She and her husband, David, currently live in Oreland, Pennsylvania. Tiffany can be contacted at tdperry1977@verizon.net.



Prayer, a Form of Worship

Millicent Adu Amoako

In our New Church group, we organize a women's fellowship which meets weekly for doctrinal teachings, counseling, and prayers. At times, one of them or both dominate the prayer sessions. Also, songs of prayer interlace with verbal group and individual prayers. We teach young women and new girl-converts how to pray and lay their petitions before the Lord. We emphasize how love and charity must govern our practical lives of faith, and every one of our sessions starts and ends with prayers.

In our private devotions and prayer sessions, we intercede for pastors, lay leaders, the entire membership, growth, and expansion of the New Church. During church services, everyone is made to understand that . . . prayers proceed from us through our mouths. Consequently, our prayers are such as we are in respect to life . . . (*Apocalypse Explained* 325: 1-11). We must therefore continually shun evils as sins, look to the Lord, and exercise charity towards others. By this is meant that the essential of worship is the life of charity; and that its instrument is gesture and praying. During services, and especially at prayer meetings, we help members understand that our church lives must be influenced by these thoughts and affections. By this attitude, our prayers can reach the Lord, and touch His Heart.

The following are some of Millicent's thoughts about prayer based on passages in the Word.

By prayer is understood communication with God. In the

internal sense, “prayer of the saints” signifies worship from spiritual good, or from the good of charity (*Apocalypse Explained* 324: 18). Thus prayer connotes . . . all things of worship and adoration of God (*Ibid.* 325: 1-11). Whoever is in the life of good, or of charity, falls into fellowship with the Lord. So by interior thought and commitment, such a person constantly communes with the Lord or prays to Him. This genuine divine worship is unknown to those who make worship consist in adoration and prayers, thus in such things as of the mouth and thought, not in such things as are of work from good of love, and of faith; when yet, the Lord regards nothing else in the man who is in adoration and in prayers than his heart, i.e., what are in his interiors such as they are in respect to love, and the consequent faith . . . (*Arcana Coelestia* 10143: 4).

Millicent is the wife of Reverend Adu Amoako in Kumasi, Ghana. She can be contacted at pastoradu26@gmail.com, or at P. O. Box RY 143, Kumasi-Ghana.

For all who reach out to God through prayer, it can be very uplifting and personal. Millicent is telling us some about prayer in her life, seen through the eyes of doctrine and joining in prayer with other women in her church. But prayer can take many forms, and is as individual as the person praying. It would be good to hear from our readers about prayer and its meaning in their life.

While going through a stack of old papers in a closet while recovering from covid, I came across an article in a Swedenborg Publishers International (SPI) from the Autumn of 2009. The article on the first page was about the people in Ukraine who are reading the Writings. The following is from that article. - Editor

Dnepropetrovsk and Crimean Swedenborg Societies

Svetlana Manaenkova

On the 23rd of May, 2009, two Ukrainian societies held a meeting in Yalta on the south coast of the Crimea. It has become a tradition that the followers from different parts of Ukraine take part in these meetings. This year's meeting was attended by representatives from Knepropetrovsk, Pershotravensk, Pavlograd, Kiev, Ternopol, Sevastopol, and also Yalta. More than thirty people came. The honored guests were Reverend Göran Appelgren (the regional pastor of Europe), and also a member of the New Church from Sweden, Gustav Fornander. The main and key topic of the meeting was the regeneration of man.

The leader of the Dnepropetrovsk Society, Dmitry Vasilyev, proposed to discuss several very important topics. Every person searches for the answers on these questions, to see if he or she is on the way of regeneration. The questions were the following:

1. What is the regeneration of a person?
2. What are temptations?
3. What is repentance? What is the difference between true and false repentance?

These questions aroused great interest and many discussions. The main goal of the discussions was not to check the knowledge of Swedenborg's writings, but to gain a deep understanding of

the key questions for the life of each person who is on the path to regeneration. Different points of view and levels of understanding appeared in the discussions.

In summarizing the first part of the meeting, Reverend Appelgren said that it was very important for people to follow the Ten Commandments Thus, sequentially, the new will from the Lord is formed in us, and we go on the path of regeneration.

After the break, the following questions that directly concern the life of every person were proposed for discussion:

1. What is conscience?
2. What does it mean to think naturally and to think spiritually?
3. What is faith itself?

Five groups engaged in discussion; this arrangement helped all participants to express their points of view more freely, fully and sincerely. They became spiritually closer; they sort of understood each other.

The second day of the meeting began with the baptizing of several members into the New Church in a ceremony that was led by Rev. Göran Appelgren Later, our guest from Sweden, Gustav Fornander, told us about his life as a member of the New Church, about his spiritual experiences, and his temptations. Also, his story about the activity of the New Church in Sweden was very interesting. His sincere desire to understand our people and the desire to share with them with all his heart evoked a warm response among the participants.

After the May meeting in Yalta, monthly meetings at the Swedenborg Centre in Dnepropetrovsk continued on a higher level. It seemed that people received their “second wind.” In comparison, earlier 12-15 people visited monthly meetings at the Centre; now more than 20 people every month come from different parts of Ukraine, in spite of crises and different financial problems. The discussions continue for some 7-8 hours, and are

very interesting. Up to the present time we have studied chapter by chapter the first volume of *Arcana Coelestia* and finished it. Usually people prepare for the questions on each chapter, and prepare their own questions on topics and subjects they find difficult. Such meetings are so useful for the people; they tell us that their life changed from one meeting to the next.

Every time we thank God for the opportunity to gather together and communicate on spiritual themes. And every time, we send our sincere gratitude to all those who helped us in the creation of such a Centre in Ukraine. In December this year we will celebrate the fourth anniversary of the Swedenborg Centre in Dnepropetrovsk.

The Dnipro (Dnepropetrovsk) Group continues to meet. The following is from a series of emails between Dmitry (Dima) Vasilyev and Göran Appelgren, and they bring us up to current time. The tendency today is to move into the Ukrainian language to distance themselves from the aggressor country. So the city is Dnipro and Svetlana, the author of the previous article, is now Svitlana Manayenkova (a 'y' is added).

Dima Vasilyev is a member of the Ukraine group reading the Writings. He is baptized, and his wife's name is Tanya. Göran estimates there are about 100 readers of the Writings in Ukraine. At the point when this email takes up, the Dnipro Reading Group had been given money to make repairs to the building in which they meet. It was for ordinary wear and tear to the building, and the money mainly came from a fund, CUCIS,¹ started by Duncan Smith. Since the Ukraine group is still doing translation work, the business office of the General Church felt it was in line with Duncan's wishes to use the funds.

Dima Vasilyev in October 2022:

We dream of making repairs in our Center after the victory. After all, 17 years have passed since we built it!!! Everything

1 CUCIS - The Committee for Uses in the Commonwealth of Independent States, CIS being a cooperation between some of the previous Soviet Republics.

inside still looks good, but many places clearly need to be updated So today, while putting things in order, we dreamed about when our whole country would be restored after all the terrible destruction. It would be great if the Lord arranged for an opportunity for us to restore and renew the inner appearance, which for so many years has been regularly serving the spiritual growth of many people and their advancement along the path! How to make it real we don't know (the time is not now), but we hope in the future it will become possible somehow.

Work also continues on the translation of the next volume of the *Arcana Coelestia*. Several chapters have already been completed. I am constantly working on an edition of the *Compendium* in Russian. There are 40 numbers left to complete.

Every month we meet at the Center. Every two weeks we hold online Zoom meetings with our Crimean group, each member of which absolutely does not support Russia and prays for the victory of good over evil in the hearts of all people. And every two weeks we also have Bible study meetings with our Moscow friends who hold exactly the same views.


Yes, missiles arrived in our city. Yes, the destruction at the landing site is terrible. Yes, people are dying Some of our people are scared, some even very. But we believe that the Lord will surely keep those who are faithful to Him. And if our destiny is to perish, then we accept it from Him because we know that He does not err. And we also know that this is not the end, but a transition to the spiritual world, where we will eventually come anyway. So we believe in the Lord and His Plan and Providence. It's not easy in practice. But we simply have no other way.

We are very glad that we managed to breathe new life into the façade of our Center! Once again, THANKS to everyone for the help!

Dima wrote on January 16, 2023:

Now we don't have electricity and our internet connection is very slow now. But I will try to write to you on the phone without the help of Google translate.

On 14th a big rocket hit the Big House, two entrances of which were completely destroyed.² It happened in the residential area where I lived from 1986 till 1996, not so far from my former house. The tragedy is really terrible. All of us are ok and safe. But a classmate of Lena Tihaya (Zoya's and Volodya's daughter and Denis' sister)³ was killed. She just walked near the Big House in the moment of attack The mayor of our city and I, myself, think that the Russians wanted to destroy the thermal power plant which is situated across the Dnipro River. The powerful but old Soviet missile has a big error in accuracy.

My 84-year old mom, only after that tragedy, understood the whole horror of the situation. She principally doesn't watch TV. We are living now out of the city, thank God. But Svitlana's new apartment and Oxana's and Alexander's apartment⁴ is not so far from that place, 2-3 km. They heard the sound of that explosion  VERY loudly.

Dima, same day:

Two of our dancing students⁵ were at that moment closer than 1 kilometer from that place. They're ok, but they told us that an explosion was VERY loud. My wife, Tanya, her sister and I were out walking around that time. Right after we came home we also

2 The Big House is a normal apartment block, Soviet style.

3 Presumably members of the Dnipro Reading Group.

4 Svitlana, Oxana and Alexander are members of the Dnipro group. Rustam, mentioned a few lines later, is from Yalta.

5 Dima and Tanya have a dance company, Raduga (Rainbow).

heard that terrible sound but didn't realize where exactly it was. At home there was no electricity or any connection at all. Only after an hour were we informed about what happened.

We pray to the Lord constantly and do believe in His Love and Wisdom.

Svitlana and Rustam, who is in Crimea, are continuing to translate *Arcana Celestia*. I have finished the first pass of editing the *Compendium* in Russian. Now I am going through it as a reader to make it more easily readable, correcting the mistakes. The work is ongoing.

Göran:

I am glad to know that translation and editing is going on. Quite remarkable during these times, but at the same time it probably gives you some meaning to life, or like a defiance of the horrors around you. May the Lord bless you abundantly!!

Dima:

Yes, it helps a lot to have a guiding star before our eyes to remember what is the goal of our way. I'm glad you understand so well.

Göran adds: The reading group started when a number of young people wanted to study the Bible. After a while they began looking for explanations of it and found "Heaven and Hell" in Russian published in Moscow 1993. Funny enough, I was the one who was instrumental in having that happen. That's how they eventually got in touch with the New Church, and then they began translating several books of the Writings. They have continued their meetings as a reading group and doing translation work ever since.

If anyone would like to make a donation for the daily life needs of the people in Ukraine, contact the editor @ hmkennedy98@gmail.com.



Dnipro Society 2022

**The *New Christian Bible Study* website
has the following in the Ukrainian language:**

Bible: <https://newchristianbiblestudy.org/bible/ukrainian-bible/matthew/1/>

NJHD: <https://newchristianbiblestudy.org/exposition/translation/njhd-ukrainian/>

Learning to Paint

Bea Pitcairn

Bea's paintings were on display in the Cairnwood Village dining room last autumn. She was encouraged to give a talk on opening day. Her painting, Portugal 2, is on the cover of this Journal.

I was born in 1934, so if you are good at math, you will be able to tell how old I am. If you are not good at math, which I am not, I will tell you I am 88 years old. I'm telling you this because my brain doesn't always comply with the right word I know is there. So, I have written this out and will read it.

Ever since I was a child I have always liked to draw and paint. When I was about 10, my mother signed me up for art classes at Bryn Mawr Art Center. It was a large Victorian home which was converted into an art center. We ascended the creaky stairs to the children's art room. The teacher passed out paper and paints. She put a record on the phonograph. Soft music filled the room. We were told to listen to the music and close our eyes, to see what we could see in our minds, to use our imagination and start to paint what we imagined. I didn't know where to begin. I wanted to be shown how to paint. I was confused and embarrassed. I painted a little bit of blue for the sky and then just sat there feeling uneasy. I looked at the other children. Some were painting. I wanted to be told what to do. It was the only art class I refused to go back to. I hope my mother got her money back.

Then when I was about 12, my mother and I went to

Philadelphia to take ceramic lessons. Then to Upper Darby to take China painting lessons which was a popular thing to do in those days. I painted some glasses with flowers on them to hopefully sell. Arlene Archer from our Philadelphia Church Society bought all 6 glasses. Alas! After a few washings the paint came off all of them. I was embarrassed!

When I was in 8th grade, I began attending the Bryn Athyn Elementary School. I didn't pursue art independently during my first six or seven years in Bryn Athyn. After I graduated from Junior College in Bryn Athyn, I studied art for one year at the Broad and Pine Art School, now called the University of the Arts. I loved going there and learned some fundamentals in drawing and oil painting.

A few years later, after I was married, I took some classes at the Abington Art Center with several friends, including Ruth Gyllenhaal, Beth Johns and Nancy Ebert. We studied with Howard Watson, an accomplished watercolor painter. Do you remember years ago when we were young, we had to use a catch phrase 'find oneself'? An accomplished painter, Roland Roycraft, said the search to "find oneself in art, pick out a medium and style to fulfill your innermost feelings, is a task that every artist has." I fell in love with watercolor. That was the medium I wanted to pursue.

Watercolor is transparent with an easy flow. The colors can bleed together and take you along on an interesting path. You can go with the flow and come up with some beautiful colors. When you want to focus on something, you have to coerce the paint to do what you want it to do. Since it is the spontaneity and transparency you want to save, you can go over it one or two times, but if you go over it too many times, it will flatten out and lose transparency. My motto was 3 strikes and you are out!

John Pike, a well-known artist, said at one time, “Trying to fix a watercolor is like telling a lie; the more you work on it the worse it gets.” Some teachers tell you to do a black and white sketch of your subject. You can solve the problems there and don’t have to do it on your painting.

One teacher I had in an outdoor watercolor workshop had a mallet in his hand. He walked around looking at students’ work. He saw a woman carefully painting and fussing over part of her painting. He held up the mallet and said, “STOP! Leave it alone! Don’t do another thing!” We all learned from that.

I would take classes every year with the watercolor teacher, Don Dennis, in the Bahamas. My family took a vacation there every year when the children had their Spring Break. We went to Elbow Cay which was especially conducive to watercolor painting. There was, of course, water around the small island that I loved, and the water was beautifully transparent. There were small cottages just the right scale to fit into a pleasing painting.

In 1990, after my husband had gone to the other world and my children were mostly grown, I applied and was accepted to the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, known as PAFA in Philadelphia. It was a 4-year program with a certificate at the end. I was 56. The school was filled with many interesting people that I would be studying with! They were all ages and from all walks of life. There were people who were already professional artists, and commercial artists who wanted to have the pleasure of coming to take fine art. Others came there right out of high school.

A new president had come to PAFA from a college in Colorado. He was a poet. He said as he walked through the classrooms that he had never seen such intensity and concentration from students who were so serious about their work. “You could feel it in the air,” he said. Older people were grateful to be there. One man about 60 told us that he wanted to go to art school when he

was young, but his father told him he should go to engineering school (which he did). Now that he had retired from engineering, he went to PAFA. He was happy and friendly. He liked the sea and painted boats and ships. His oil paintings were tightly constructed, and the ships were carefully made (probably because of his engineering training). One of the teachers said, “the more you know before coming to PAFA, the more you will get out of it.”

At the school we had a good classical training in art. We did a lot of drawing. Drawing was said to be fundamental to the study of art. We were encouraged to carry a sketchbook with us. The teacher would look at **your** work and suggest you go to the library and look up a certain artist whose work was most like your work, so you could learn from him or her. We could copy some of the artist’s techniques and apply them to our own work. We could also copy other people’s paintings from the walls of PAFA and at the Philadelphia Museum of Art. It was a good way to learn—learn by doing.

I also did some printmaking. That is where you can have a message and tell a story. I did quite a few of these as my imagination came up with quite a few stories.

After graduation from PAFA I went back to watercolors full time. Now I felt free as a bird. I wanted to let myself go and try new things. Earlier on, I was puzzled by some abstractions. I tried to learn how they worked. I admired artists who took chances. I would work on something, then put it aside to come back later with a fresh eye.

To get inspiration I looked through travel folders that might have interesting castles or old-world buildings. I especially liked looking through children’s book illustrations. Each had their own special style. I painted copies of some of them. I was attracted to the whimsical.

PAFA had some trips overseas. I was lucky to be able to take

several. I went to France once and to Africa twice with the animal drawing teacher. I went to Ireland and that country inspired me to paint the luscious green grass and sheep grazing on hills. I had been to Egypt with the Glencairn group. That trip made me feel like I was in Biblical Times. It was inspiring to see the Lord's creations with its fullness and variety as well as man's creations of beautiful buildings and parks. I took photographs during my travels and these photos from my travels inspired much of my work.

Can you recapture a feeling you had when you were somewhere far from home? In another exotic place so different from your own? I don't know but it is said that every thought and feeling you ever had stays somewhere in your mind. It becomes part of you without you being cognizant of it. You learn by doing. First you concentrate on applying the rules, and eventually they become part of you, and you do things automatically. I believe some of that comes out in my paintings. For instance, I think about what I saw in Egypt and it will be in my mind when I am painting. I would hope that people looking at my art would get a sense of some thoughts or feelings I had while there.

I will tell you about some of the influences I have had from other painters. German illustrator Ivan Gantschev inspired me greatly. He said, "Some say if you want to paint a good watercolor, you have to stand knee-deep in water. I always paint on wet paper. It is a fascinating play between wet and dry, soft and hard. I like to be surprised and pulled in. One really has no choice, for the watercolor does not tolerate any authoritarian action anyway."

German artist, Paul Klee, was another great influence of mine. His paintings abound with abstract landscapes behind his world of fantasy and reveal a concept of truth based on dreams. Paul Klee's conception of an art object is that he would see beauty derived not from the object but from the sensation aroused by

its deformation, then reformation in his style. Did you get that? Neither did I.

I can't be that presumptuous. I just like to paint. I just hope something that I feel and remember will come out in the paintings. I finally had the freedom to paint from my imagination. I can't explain every painting. If everything works as it should, it will be a successful painting. I have no messages or theses to convey. I have had some dark times in my life. I want these paintings to be happy and joyful. **"Let there be light!"** I guess I would say I was compelled by an inner animating force: an instinct. I hope my watercolor paintings will be hopeful and uplifting to all. I do not have lofty aspirations. I just want to paint a good painting: a happy and colorful painting.

I haven't painted for about 5 years or more. I quit when my grandchildren were going to school and learning things I had already lived through (the Depression and World War II). I took this time to write my memoirs. I wanted to tell them what it was like from my point of view as a child, so I have had it published.

I am hoping this show inspires me to get back to painting. I hope you all enjoy what my imagination has produced and you feel uplifted as you look around at these paintings [on display at Cairnwood Village].



Call for Articles!

We need and want to hear from everyone throughout the world in the pages of our long-lived and well-loved Journal. Everyone has something absorbing, interesting, thoughtful or humorous to share. Contact information is in the beginning of this Journal.

Dave's Backyard Farms: Curating an Invisible Web of Connections

Sasha Silverman

Crates of fresh, juicy apples picked from Pennsylvania trees. Cartons of eggs with bright orange yolks sourced from hens that roam in local pastures. Tight-wrapped wedges of raw-milk cheese from cows that spend their days munching only fresh grass. Slabs of sockeye salmon fished from the icy waters of Alaska. Bands of fragrant herbs plucked from local organic garden beds. All these carefully selected goods and many more fill the quaint new storefront, Dave's Backyard Farms, in Huntingdon Valley, PA, just outside of Bryn Athyn. Shop owner and organic farmer Dave Hamalian, who opened his first shop in Elkins Park, says, "I always wanted to open a store here in Bryn Athyn, where I started selling vegetables 5 years ago."

Dave's connection to Bryn Athyn and New Church teachings began in the most natural of ways. Dave had opened a table at Bryn Athyn Bounty to sell his goods. There, he began talking to local residents, and soon began learning about Swedenborg. He then spent many days in the Swedenborg Library pouring over the Writings, learning as much as he could about the theology and doctrines. "I especially enjoyed the book *Divine Love and Wisdom*," Dave shared.

Although Dave was an atheist for much of his adult life, farming opened within him a profound appreciation for nature and its spiritual components. "There are so many intricacies in the nature

and soil. It's amazingly complex, and you see the interconnection of everything.”

Dave expresses a longing for a genuine connection to one another and to the earth that extends beyond the superficiality of much of modern culture. He said, “I studied history in school and saw how quickly we moved away from the land in the last century. I felt like a lot was lost in that process — we lost our connection to spirituality, to the land, to food. I started farming because I wanted to reestablish those connections. And in that process, I began to believe in God and I became a Christian. Everything overlapped and it seemed like the right move for me.”

Dave started farming over ten years ago during his Ameri-Corps service at an agricultural “life-sharing” community where he lived and worked alongside adults with special needs. It was there that he gained a profound appreciation for the soil. He explained how, for example, mushrooms form symbiotic relationships with trees; healthy trees will transfer nutrients to sick trees, and they also prefer sending nutrients to their young through the network of mushrooms. Dave says, “This is just one example of the myriad of things we're totally disconnected from.” Dave adds, “Everything would change if we got more in touch with nature.”

Dave points out that he is one generation removed from some form of subsistence farming, as his mother came from Armenia where her family had a homestead with fruit trees. Her family grew everything they ate and preserved the harvest, and even dried their fruit to eat throughout winter. “It's sort of in my blood,” says Dave. Dave's father, who was born in Syria, also enjoyed gardening and had a deep appreciation for nature.

In 2017, Dave's parents offered him their modest backyard in Huntingdon Valley, with just about 1/8th of an acre of space. Using a tractor-less technique he learned from a Quebec farmer, Dave successfully farmed every square inch of the property,

producing a huge yield. In fact, he had so much produce that he decided to rent a stand at the Bryn Athyn Bounty farmer's market.

In coordination with Bounty director, Nina Finkelday, Dave soon began supplementing his own veggies with fresh food from his farmer-friends: peaches, herbs, foraged mushrooms, and even fresh baked breads. "I started with one table, then another, and then the line got longer and longer." He soon realized he needed a stable location.

Today, you can browse Dave's Backyard Farm shop and come home with everything from fresh eggs, local milk, yogurt, fish, herbs, veggies, fruits and meats, to flavored kombucha and ice cream. For Dave, much of the joy of running his shop comes from the community-building between those who grow, share and consume the food. Dave points out that many of the products connect through an "invisible web." For example, his cheese (from Valley Milk House) and his ice cream (from Weckerly's) both use dairy from the same farm. And he carries prepared foods with ingredients from many of the farmers whose other goods Dave also carries. The invisible web includes a wide variety of farmers he has connected with during his journey, and extends to all those who eat and get nourishment from the love and care put into the growing of the food.

To those interested in getting started with gardening, Dave suggests, "Just turn over some soil. That's the best way to start." Clearly, from the smallest seeds, magnificent things can grow.

Sasha Silverman M.Ed. is a mental health therapist at Anchor Points Counseling in Huntingdon Valley. Sasha believes that the more we listen to one another's stories, the more we can remember and appreciate our universal humanity and connectedness. She can be contacted at sashasilverman@yahoo.com.

Helpful Handiwork

Kelly Treacy

Are you looking for a new project, something useful to do? If you enjoy sewing and needlecraft, there's a small but loyal group of women who volunteer their time to make the golden girdles (belts) and white, blue and red stoles for ministers. We are looking for a few more volunteers to join us in this satisfying and useful activity. If you are interested in learning how to crochet the girdles or sew the stoles, please contact me at kelly.treacy@newchurch.org. Help us keep this unique New Church craft going!

Unnamed

Madeleine Brown

I stand alone in the cold Pacific
and let the waves lap over my
knees, soaking my jeans
Like a kid, not fearing consequences
I savor the moment of impact.

Minutes from the Charter Day Luncheon

October 7, 2022

Janet Krettek

Janet Krettek welcomed members into the room, invited them to get their lunches, and led a blessing.

The ANC dance team delighted the room with a performance.

Janet reviewed the events from the past year. Melodie Greer has stepped down from the Board as Treasurer, and the ladies present expressed their appreciation for her many years of service. Kirsten Cranch was appointed Treasurer and has been trained by Melodie over the last year. A Social Media Subcommittee was formed and Theta Alpha International is on Instagram, in addition to Facebook. After that the TAI scholarship winners were announced. For a list of the winners, see the October 2022 Journal, page 43.

During the Treasurer's Report, Kirsten Cranch explained that finances are tight and dues are down. Costs of producing the Journal is the biggest expense aside from scholarships. After much discussion, the board made the decision that the October Journal will continue to be sent out to everyone as usual. However, the April Journal will be sent only to those who pay dues. For those who have not paid dues, the April Journal will still be available electronically at newchurch.org/publications. For a fuller explanation, please see "The Financial Health and Wellbeing of Theta Alpha International."

The Treasurer's Report and budget were approved, and there was an acceptance of the Minutes from October 2021.

Judy Hyatt presented a memorial resolution for the members who have passed on during the previous year. She read the names of the deceased, followed by a moment of silence.

The keynote speaker was Chara Daum. Her talk, "Stretch, Release, Breathe: how My Work Works on Me," inspired us all as we learned of how her career at the General Church and then Swedenborg Foundation unfolded. She was quite engaging, and her sense of humor showed through.

The meeting was adjourned until the next Charter Day, October 13, 2023.

These Minutes were respectfully submitted by the president, Janet Krettek, because the Secretary, Sarah Jackson, ran the kitchen for the Luncheon.



Call for Art Submissions!

As you can see from the beautiful cover art and line drawings, we are hoping that the *Journal* can present some of the visual art that Swedenborgians around the world are creating.

Please send us images you would like to share with *Journal* readers and feel free to write a few sentences about what you send in! Contact information is in the beginning of this *Journal*.

Annual Report and Proposed Budget

Kirsten Cranch

	21-22 Budget	21-20 Actual	22-23 Proposed Budget
Income			
Direct Public Support			
General Fund Contribution	\$ 7,000.00	\$ 11,432.95	\$ 7,000.00
Total Direct Public Support	\$ 7,000.00	\$ 11,432.95	\$ 7,000.00
Investments			
Bank Interest - Money	\$ 6.00	\$ 0.64	\$ 6.00
Total Investments	\$ 6.00	\$ 0.64	\$ 6.00
Other Types of Income			
Scholarship - TAI		\$ -	
Miscellaneous Revenue			
Total Other Types of Income	\$ -	\$ -	
Program Income			
Membership Dues	\$ 2,200.00	\$ 1,980.00	\$ 2,200.00
Journal Contribution		-	
Total Program Income	\$ 2,200.00	\$ 1,980.00	\$ 2,200.00
Special Events Income			
Fundraising			
Luncheon ticket sales	\$ 1,300.00	\$ 1,740.00	\$ 1,300.00
Total Special Events Income	\$ 1,300.00	\$ 1,740.00	\$ 1,300.00
Total Income	\$ 10,506.00	\$ 15,153.59	\$ 10,506.00
Expenses			
Awards and Grants			
Scholarship - TAI	\$ -	\$ 2,100.00	
Cash Awards and Grants	\$ 700.00	\$ 700.00	\$ 700.00
Noncash Awards and Grants	\$ 1,500.00	\$ 778.04	\$ 1,500.00
Awards and Grants - Other			
Total Awards and Grants	\$ 2,200.00	\$ 3,578.04	\$ 2,200.00

	21-22 Budget	21-20 Actual	22-23 Proposed Budget
Operations			
Books, Subscriptions,			
Postage, Mailing Service	\$ 100.00	\$ 42.21	\$ 100.00
Printing and Copying	\$ 50.00		\$ 50.00
Supplies	\$ 300.00	\$ 68.90	
PayPal Fees	\$ 30.00	\$ 38.59	\$ 30.00
Total Operations	\$ 480.00	\$ 149.70	\$ 180.00
Other Types of expenses			
Journal Expense	\$ 9,800.00	\$ 10,294.92	\$ 10,500.00
Luncheon/Brunch Expense	\$ 1,300.00	\$ 1,694.77	\$ 1,500.00
Fund Raising Expenses		\$ -	
Baptism Project	\$ 300.00	\$ -	\$ 300.00
Total Other Types of expenses	\$ 11,400.00	\$ 11,989.69	\$ 12,300.00
Total Expenses	\$ 14,080.00	\$ 15,717.43	\$ 14,680.00
Net Income	\$ (3,574.00)	\$ (563.84)	\$ (4,174.00)
ANC Fund Ending Net Assets		\$ 327,071.74	4% \$13,082.87
ANC Fund Scholarships	\$ 12,000.00	\$11,000.00	\$11,000.00
ANCSS 1 (Deirdre Bongers 21-22; Isabella Furness 22-23)	\$ 2,500.00	\$2,500.00	\$2,500.00
ANCSS 2 (Angeliess Wahl 21-22; Hilani Wahl 22-23)	\$ 2,500.00	\$2,500.00	\$2,500.00
BAC General 1 (Jordan Brunne 21-22; Elizabeth Parker 22-23)	\$ 2,000.00	\$2,000.00	\$2,000.00
BAC General 2 (Evelyn de Chazel 21-22; Hilani Wahl 22-23)	\$ 2,000.00	\$2,000.00	\$2,000.00
BAC General 3	\$ 1,000.00		
BAC Graduate 1 (Jennica Nobre 21-22; Isabella Furness 22-23)	\$ 2,000.00	\$2,000.00	\$2,000.00
TAI Fund Ending Net Assets	\$ 225,942.55	\$225,386.26	4% \$9,015.45
TAI Fund Scholarships	\$ 6,200.00	\$6,200.00	\$2,000.00
BAC Education New	\$ 2,100.00	\$2,100.00	
BAC Education Continuing (Jade Deibert 21-22)	\$ 2,100.00	\$2,100.00	
BAC Graduate 2 (Anne Grace Glen 21-22; Elizabeth Parker 22-23)	\$ 2,000.00	\$2,000.00	\$2,000.00
Current Checking Account Balance		\$3,714.20	

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Comic Book

John Jin

In the East people do not have a clear concept of who God is. They have different names for God, but have lost attributing love and wisdom to God.

In Korea people normally say God's name as Hanulnim, the Lord of Heaven. They see God as a protector, guider, judge, giver of fortune and/or misfortune—but there is not a sense that God loves you and guides you to heaven. I would like to recover that sense by sharing the Heavenly Doctrines.

In Tokyo, for Reverend Shiro's sermon one time, he made some pages of a comic book of the Writings. The idea came from the Unification Church that made a comic book of Heaven and Hell and the Spiritual World, and it was very popular. But it was full of wrong concepts. My goal is to make a comic book or web cartoon of the Heavenly Doctrines and have it available in Asia. I also will have it available for people anywhere in the world who want it. If the comic book or web cartoon is done well, then it will help people, especially simple people and gentiles, to feel that God loves them. Without a clear concept of God we cannot make heaven in us because the Lord's Divine, or the light and heat coming from Him, makes heaven. The light and heat in heaven are truth and love (*Divine Love and Wisdom* 113).

Right now the comic book is being produced by one woman in Japan, Junkor Takahashi, and one man in China, Su Zhihao. So this is a baby step. The woman is a volunteer, so it will take

a while (she doesn't want to receive any money for her work). I want the comic book or web cartoon to have good story writing, then give it to someone who is professional to create. If I meet the right person, then it will speed up. It is possible some other people may want to contribute their skills. If so, there is a small fund for it.

Being a missionary is a risk-taking business. I don't mind failing. I keep trying new things with an attitude of "let's try it now!"

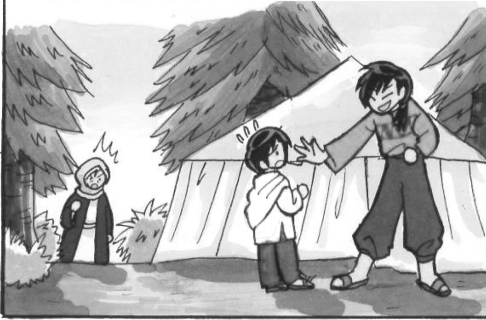
The Writings will spread in Asia through the gentiles. The close of the age and the coming of the Lord constitute the last time of the old Church and the beginning of the new (*Arcana Coelestia* 4535). When the old Church is being vastated, interior truths are revealed that will be of use to the new Church which is then established (*AC* 3786). Concerning the establishment of the Church with the Gentiles, see *AC* 1366.

Another reason is because the Ancient Word was in Asia. The Writings say it was over the great wall or in Great Tartary (*True Christian Religion* 279). There are remains of those teachings in the East, especially in the villages where people practice love and charity to one another. Loving others, or charity, is for the human mind.

Rev. John Jin is the Regional Pastor for Asia. He can be contacted at pncjin@gmail.com.

This sample of the graphic novel is being written by and for Asian people, translated for the Journal's English-speaking audience.

For Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, which she had born unto Abraham, mocking.



Cast out this bondwoman and her son, for the heir of this bondwoman will not be heir with my son, with Isaac.



There is an inner sense which is different from the literal sense.



From the literal sense, this seems to be a leadership struggle within a family.

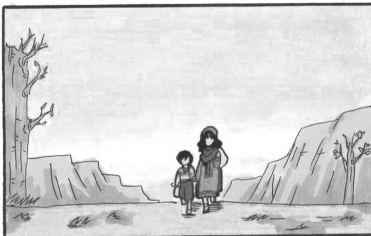
“Hagar the Egyptian” represents a desire for knowledge and also change. (SH 2652)



The contents of the outer, earthly memory are called facts. (SH 9922)



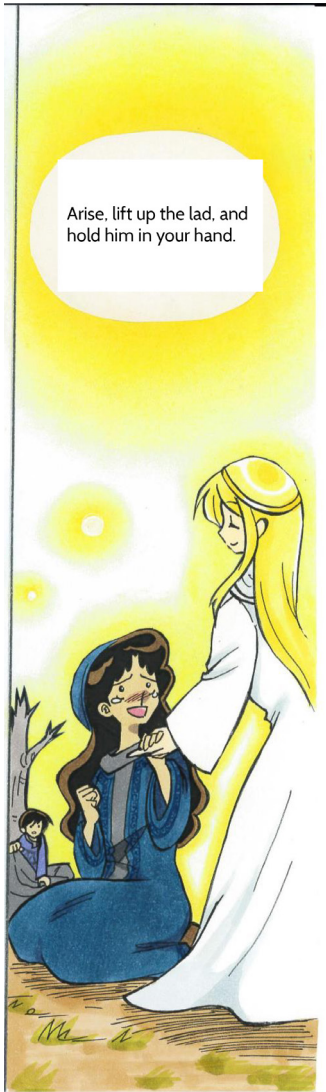
There are many kinds of facts focused on the external world, but not on the Lord and heaven.



Drinks water heavily.









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