

New Church LIFE

A monthly magazine devoted to the teachings
revealed through Emanuel Swedenborg

In this issue:

Predestined to Heaven
A Sermon by Brian W. Keith

Reflections on Growing Older
By Donald C. Fitzpatrick, Jr.

Paradigms Revisited
Part Two of a Study by Alfred Acton II

New Ministers for Ghana

Academy Calendar 2007-2008

July-August 2007

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Predestined to Heaven
A Sermon*Brian W. Keith* 251

The Spirit of Truth*Walter E. Orthwein* 257

Growing Older.....*Donald C. Fitzpatrick, Jr.* 261

Paradigms Revisited
Part Two*Alfred Acton II* 268

Declarations of Faith and Purpose
Ekow Essiedu Eshun..... 280
Godwin Zattey-Agboga 281

New Minister Assignments..... 282

Editorial
The New Editor..... 283

Communication
Paradigms Revisited - A Response.....*Bruce R. Jarvis* 285
The Republic of Georgia*Göran Appelgren* 282

Academy of the New Church 2007-2008 Calendar 287

Bryn Athyn College Graduates 2007 289

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Notes on This Issue

Are we sometimes too pessimistic about our chances for heaven? In his sermon starting on the facing page, Bishop Brian Keith asks what attitude the Lord wants us to have when thinking about His kingdom.

People may say they've been "moved" by the Holy Spirit. The Rev. Walter Orthwein explores what is meant in the New Church by the presence of the Holy Spirit or Spirit of truth.

We all face the prospect of growing older. The Lord assures us that He will not abandon us in our old age. In his article beginning p. 261, Mr. Donald Fitzpatrick of Bryn Athyn reflects on several of the issues we face in growing older.

Starting on page 268, we present Part Two of Bishop Alfred Acton's study of how truths Divine are accommodated to human perception in the sense of the letter of the Word. He discusses three categories of finite limits to revelation on this lowest degree of accommodation.

The work of the church in Ghana will now be augmented by the presence of two newly ordained men whose Declarations of Faith and Purpose appear on pp. 280-281. May their work prosper!

Our congratulations also go to the thirty-seven Bryn Athyn College graduates listed on p. 289 of this issue.



The Rt. Rev. Brian Keith is the Assistant Bishop of the General Church. He was inaugurated into the priesthood on June 6th, 1976 and served the Immanuel Church in Glenview for sixteen years in a variety of capacities including as Pastor and as President of the Midwestern Academy. He was Dean of the Academy's Theological School for ten years and Principal of the Bryn Athyn Church school from 2002 to 2005, when he was selected and confirmed as Assistant Bishop. He has been acting as Interim President of the Academy of the New Church this year. Bishop Keith and his wife, Gretchen (Umberger), live in Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania.

PREDESTINED TO HEAVEN

BY THE RT. REV. BRIAN W. KEITH

“The kingdom of God does not come with observation; nor will they say ‘See here!’ or ‘See there!’ For indeed, the kingdom of God is within you.”

(Luke 17:20-21)

These words of the Lord, spoken shortly before His entry into Jerusalem, have frequently been cited as demonstrating that heaven is not a physical place. And certainly this is true— heaven does not exist on a distant planet or up on the mountaintops.

Yet, notice what the Lord was really saying. The Pharisees had asked *when* the kingdom of God would come. But, as was so often the case, He did not directly answer that question. He did not give any time frame or an assurance that it would indeed come some time in the future. Rather the Lord shifted tenses. He used the present tense “is” not “will be.” He told them that the kingdom of God had already arrived and that it existed within them! His message was that they should not look for a kingdom of God in the far-distant future, for the kingdom of God was within them *then and there*.

Why would the Lord speak in such a manner? What was His point? It seems He was addressing a subtle pessimistic attitude of mind. He was addressing the feeling that “things are not very good just now and any hope for improvement is far removed in the future.” For those who were asking the question their times could not have been especially joyous. Foreign rulers controlled the land. The economy was subsistence, at best. Yet the Lord said that the kingdom of God existed within them.

At times, in our thinking about heaven, we may feel as those people did. We have heard what a wonderful place it is. And we may have tasted a slice of it now and again— those happy times

in life when cares are far away and we can relish feelings of warmth and joy. We might then look at the challenges we face—financial worries, loneliness, diminished physical powers. And we might question how the happiness of heaven can ever exist in our lives.

It's like people constantly working on their house and yard. They are painfully aware of all that there is to do—cleaning up the clutter, removing peeling paint, trimming overgrown bushes—and perhaps feeling it can never all be done. Neighbors may come over and comment on the excellent shape of the house and yard, but the owners know in their hearts what a poor job they have been doing and how much more there is to do!

Sound familiar? We can have the same poor attitude toward our spiritual lives. We look at our lives—seeing what is wrong and what has been wrong for a long time. We recognize our faults, our evils, and realize just how bad we are. Then we measure that against what we think we should be. The distance between where we are and where we want to be seems immense. Heaven for us seems to be years or centuries away. But if we ask the Lord, “When will I be good? When will I be perfectly happy?” His response will be much the same as above: “Do not look for heaven to float down out of the sky. Do not expect heaven to come in the far-distant future. In fact, do not look for heaven in the future at all—for it is within you now!”

What a frightening response! When a person feels that the kingdom of God is so distant, the Lord says it is here! How could our judgment be so far off? How could we feel so evil and have the Lord tell us that heaven is within us right now?

Perhaps it occurs because we know that the first of charity is the shunning of evils as sins against God. The work of regeneration is rather simple and straightforward. We are to look for our selfish and worldly loves and then attempt to lessen their influence in our lives. We should not do what is wrong and should not want to do what is wrong. Perhaps from knowing and

practicing this we have slipped into thinking that we should spend our entire lives wearing mental sackcloth and ashes saying, “Oh woe is me; there is still so much evil to shun and I’ve just begun.” It is not much different from looking at one’s house and seeing only the work that needs to be done.

And what a dangerous way of thinking this is! If all we ever see is what is wrong, how can we avoid feeling defeated or depressed? How can we celebrate the Lord, serving Him with gladness and coming before His presence with singing, if we are constantly fretting about how evil we are?

Certainly, we are meant to examine ourselves periodically, and those will not be especially happy times, but we are not meant to do it continually with no let-up.

Perhaps another illusion that makes us feel so far from angelhood is how we think of angels. The myth has grown up that angels are perfect—that they understand everything and never feel inclinations to what is wrong. Those whom we might classify as “angelic” here on earth are people who seem to be rather “otherworldly.” Perhaps we might hold up a beloved grandmother or Mother Teresa as examples of how to be “good.” But the problem with that kind of “good” is that it seems otherworldly and impossible for us to achieve, even if we wanted to!

In truth, angels are people. Although they have a greater harmony to their lives with more of the rough edges knocked off, they are basically people like you and me. They have their strengths. They have their weaknesses. Even in heaven the angels feel selfish inclinations. They regularly have their night-times when their good loves seem to grow cool and when their light is diminished. Some of the descriptions of the lower heavens given to the New Church can make one feel somewhat superior, for they speak of those who are married but who have almost no idea of a spiritual relationship—they do what is right but seem to be doing it only because they have been told to do it.

Does this mean that heaven is no better than this earth? No, but it does mean that the Lord accepts a far larger number of people than we might. Some angels' entire existence is focused upon others, but there are also those angels who are just doing their jobs and trying not to get into any trouble.

We may ask the question, "Am I good enough to go to heaven." But we might ask a more accurate question, "Is there any way for me to avoid going to heaven?" The Lord said there are "many" mansions in heaven, not just a few. No one keeps a list of what we have done right and what we have done wrong, adding up the difference to see if we have "made it" or not. Nor are we walking along a narrow ridge with deep precipices below, where one false step, one significant evil action, will cast us over the side into condemnation to hell.

Our spiritual character is formed throughout a lifetime of hundreds, if not thousands, of small daily choices. Each time we willingly perform a use—even just washing dishes or following through on what we said we would do—each time we say something positive to others, each time we go out of our way for others, the Lord is creating a heaven within, a heaven that is perfected to eternity.

A central message of revelation is that it is not that difficult to be good (*Divine Providence* 33:2, 322-329; *Heaven and Hell* 359, 528-530). There are always good loves and affections within any individual. Although that good is remote when a person is actively engaged in evil, it is still an aspect of the person—a pathway that the Lord uses to reach that person to lead him or her on a different route.

Also, in this natural world a Divine plan directs people to act in good ways. Numerous laws, both written and unwritten, channel our activities in healthy, productive ways. Those around us support our efforts to be good, applauding our successes. And all the unwritten social mores create an invisible structure that leads us to be useful and strongly discourages anti-social

behavior. So the Lord has, in a sense, designed the system in our favor. Everything is set up to promote good and discourage evil—His yoke is easy and His burden is light. All we really have to do is avoid loving what is selfish. We may still do things that are not good, but as long as we do not let a love of self and the world dominate over our entire lives, we are going to heaven, for heaven is within us now.

This should not be a surprising idea. The Lord did not create us to test us or to cause us to suffer hardships to see if we are good enough for heaven. He created each and every human being to become an image of Him—an angel in heaven. And He knew what He was creating. He did not have any false illusions about what we are. So He does not turn away from us when we are not perfect. He accepts whatever amount of love we have and tries to help us grow from there. Heaven is from the human race. There are no angels born such. When we are feeling the oppressive weight of our own failings, we might think that angels are a separate race, but the end of creation is a heaven from *our* human race.

The Lord does not select a few—the bright or beautiful ones—to image Him. We all are created to be in His image. The Lord said “You did not choose Me but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should remain” (John 15:16). He has chosen everyone to bear fruit, and to bear fruit throughout all eternity.

His love created us in His own image so that He could make us happy. His continual caring for us, His providence, leads us to the happiness He has established for us. Indeed, from birth all human beings have been predestined for happiness, for heaven. The Lord’s sincere desire and His careful leading are for the sole purpose that we might be happy in heaven. When an individual is born, the Lord does not think that he or she might turn against Him and focus only upon self. It may happen, but all the Lord’s efforts will be to prevent it. His silent guiding of thoughts and

affections, the laws of the natural world and the open declarations of His Word, all set the scene for making everyone an angel.

What, then, should be our attitude towards ourselves, especially when we are so painfully aware of our faults and when heaven seems so far away? Let us take heart from what the Lord said about heaven not being outside, here or there, but within. There is always some good within us. Let us never think that our life is hopeless, for it is not. Our evils may obscure the vision of heaven for a time, but the Lord does not expect us to be perfect at all times. Indeed, the Lord seeks to create angels of all of us constantly. Yes, we must deal with our evils but did He not assure us, saying, “Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened” (Matt. 7:7-8)? He did not say that it *might* be given to us or that we *could* find or that it *may* be opened to us. He said we *will* receive we *will* find and it *will* be opened to us.

We can be positive about heaven, the purpose of creation, the meaning for our existence. After all, the Lord has *predestined* us to live there! We should not constantly be worried about whether we will get to heaven or not, for the Lord tells us it will be done. “Let not your heart be troubled.... 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.... I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also. And where I go you know and the way you know” (John 14:1-4).

We know where the Lord is and we know the way to go. Let us not be troubled and let us not be afraid, for the kingdom of God is within us and His kingdom shall endure forever. *Amen.*

Lessons: John 14:1-14; *Divine Providence* 27

THE SPIRIT OF TRUTH
BY THE REV. WALTER E. ORTHWEIN

Before the Lord was ever born on earth, people had been inspired and led by the Holy Spirit, but the nature of that Spirit was radically changed by the Lord's glorification. Before, it was a Divine Energy flowing through the heavens which served to accommodate it to finite human reception. But now, after the Lord's glorification, the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Lord's own Divine Human more powerfully than ever before.

But if the Holy Spirit is to touch us with its power, we must see and acknowledge the Lord's Divine Human, its source. That perception and acknowledgment waned in the Christian Church as the Lord predicted. This is why the Lord has come again, to reveal Himself in His Divine Human more fully than ever before. He has come, not in person, not in the flesh, as in His first advent, but as "the Spirit of truth," as He promised in the Gospel of John.

It might seem that He is with us less fully in His second advent than when He walked the earth. But while it is true that there was great power in that appearing of the Lord in a natural human form, it also, paradoxically, limited people's view of Him.

This is why, as He told His disciples, He had to go away in order to be more perfectly and permanently with them. "It is to your advantage that I go away," He said, "for if I do not go away, the Comforter (or 'Helper' as it is in the New King James Version) will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you.... [W]hen He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth" (John 16.7,13).

Such a presence of the Lord is perfect for the establishment of a new spiritual church based not on external miracles, such as the healing of physical diseases which the Lord performed during His first advent, but upon a revelation of truth addressed

to the rational mind.

The healing of the spirit was always the Lord's primary concern; the physical healings were natural representations of that more essential spiritual work. They got people's attention; they showed the Lord's power and laid the groundwork for us to understand the spiritual healing that corresponds to the physical. But spiritual healing—the kind of healing accomplished by spiritual truth—was always the essential thing.

The "Spirit of truth" is not limited by space or time or even person, as the Lord was in His first coming when He appeared in the flesh. Nor is the human mind bound by time and space; we are able to see not just the physical objects in front of our eyes, but (in our mind's eye) things which have existed in the past or will exist in the future. We are able to see the spiritual causes behind natural created forms.

The facts of history are seen not just in the records of them (more or less accurate) but in our understanding of their significance. We can see the meaning and purpose in the things of nature and thus see the Divine in them—"almost as in a mirror," the Writings say.

In regard to the stories of the Scriptures, the truth they convey to our understanding is far more important than whatever historical facts they may contain and whether those facts are accurately stated or not. Whether or not they represent actual facts, they perfectly represent spiritual truths—which, of course, are what the Scriptures are intended to convey.

This is why speculation about the "historical Jesus" is not a matter of concern in the New Church—why would it be when the Lord Himself is alive and present with us and visible in His Word by means of the Heavenly Doctrine of the New Jerusalem?

But is He really present? Yes, His presence is more real now than when He walked on the earth. What an amazing thing, yet how few know it! What was true of His first coming—that "the

world knew Him not”—is true also of His second.

The most real part of anything is what it means. This is the spiritual part of it—the love and purpose, the intelligence and use which the thing embodies. From a natural point of view, these spiritual things seem abstract and less real than the natural forms that contain them. Yet they are what give the natural thing whatever substance it possesses.

This is especially true of persons. Seeing the physical form can actually obscure a vision of the real person, the spirit within.

We can't see the “historical Jesus.” We can't see His hands or the expressions on his face or His clothing. We can't hear the sound of His voice. But this doesn't matter because we can see (understand) and hear (have our will affected by) the love and wisdom which were embodied in the physical form.

These human things, these spiritual things, are the essential things. The power that flowed through His hands, the compassion and mercy that gave tone to His voice and formed the expressions on His face; the pure, clear, liberating truths which gave life to the words He spoke... we can perceive these inner things even better now than those did who actually stood before Him in the flesh 2,000 years ago.

It was always the Spirit in the Lord's words and acts that made them what they were and made Him what He was. And that Spirit—the Spirit of truth—is present with us now, guiding us into all truth. “All truth” does not mean all knowledge, but the good and use to which all true facts point.

A compass possesses “all truth” geographically. A hiker may not know where he is exactly and may encounter many features of the landscape that surprise him, but if he has a compass (and of course a destination in mind) he will always know (no matter where he is) which direction he needs to go.

The revelation the Lord has given us in His Word, and especially in the internal sense which has now been revealed, is

our spiritual compass.

The Lord Himself is “all truth” because He is the Good from which all truth comes and to which it leads. If our desire is to go to Him, His Spirit will guide us at every step.

Every spirit requires a body through which it works, and the Spirit of truth has one. It has a body of truth which exists in an outmost, material form—namely, the books of the Heavenly Doctrine of the New Jerusalem. The truths printed on these pages reveal the Lord as a Man, as the Divine Human, more fully and perfectly than did the physical body He had on earth.

When the Lord was on earth He said: “the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life.” The same is true of the words He speaks to us today, written through the instrumentality of a man who was “filled with His Spirit.”

Finally, in a more general sense, the “body” which the Spirit of truth forms and gives life to, dwells in and works through, and when necessary heals, is the organized New Church that grows out of the new revelation.

Let us pray that the Spirit of truth will find a home in each one of us, and through us

RECEIVING THE SPIRIT OF TRUTH

The world's inability to receive the Spirit of truth “because it neither sees Him nor knows Him” means that it will not acknowledge the Lord with faith in the heart, because external things belonging to the world will obscure [Him]. This being so, is there anyone at the present day who worships Him as the Lord of the whole of heaven and of earth, Matt. 28:18? Yet all who are in heaven, and so with whom internal things prevail, see the Lord as their only God. (*Arcana Coelestia* 9278)

GROWING OLDER

BY DONALD C. FITZPATRICK, JR..

*"Do not cast me off in the time of old age;
Do not forsake me when my strength fails."*

(Psalm 71:9)

The Psalmist's prayer is one that each of us might echo at some time. But since the Lord is Love itself, we can trust that He will never cast us off or forsake us, even if we turn away from Him. But knowing and believing that may not be enough to keep us from worrying about growing older. So let's consider some of the things we may have to face.

To begin with, aging is inevitable.

While some people seem to refuse to accept that fact, everyone really knows that we cannot avoid aging. So whether we like to admit it or not, we *will* all grow older. In fact, many of us will live to old age.

In many countries today, old people form a larger part of the population than ever before. Not only that, but in many cases they are able to be active far longer than their parents and grandparents were. This has led some to think that researchers will discover ways to make living more than a hundred years almost commonplace. If medical science continues to advance at the rate we have already seen, this may well happen.

Still, at some point in time we will all leave this world. We know from the Writings for the New Church that the Lord's purpose in creating the universe is to have a heaven from the human race, and no amount of scientific progress is going to change that purpose. Nor will it establish that heaven here on earth. We read in *Arcana Coelestia*: "For human life, from infancy to old age, is nothing else than a progression from the world to heaven; and the last age, which is death, is the transition itself" (3016e).

The truth about aging is twofold.

A story was told some years ago about an elderly man's reply to the question, "Do you feel like an old man?" "No," he said. "I feel like a young man with something wrong with him." That response illustrates a point that some older people make. They say that they still feel young *mentally*. The Writings explain why this is. First, they say that a person's spirit grows younger as his or her body grows older and diminishes (*Arcana Coelestia* 4676). Second, they say that the spirit is the mind. In fact, "the spirit" is what the mind is called after the death of the body (*Divine Providence* 324:3, *True Christian Religion* 156).

If a person's mind or spirit is created to live to eternity, doesn't it make sense that it should not age in the way his or her physical body does? The Writings tell us that to grow old in heaven is to grow young (*Divine Providence* 324:4). And the passage from the *Arcana Coelestia* 4676 that was mentioned in the last paragraph seems to suggest that the process can begin in this world.

That is an encouraging idea, but it does not alter the fact that our bodies grow older, and as they do, we lose some of our ability to do the things we want or need to do. And knowing that our minds may be growing younger does not necessarily provide much consolation. For some of us, the unpleasant thought of losing our physical strength and skill outweighs the consoling thought that there may be something good about growing old.

Our attitudes are important.

Attitudes toward old age do matter. The culture we live in sends us mixed messages about growing old. On the one hand, it encourages us to remain physically and mentally fit so as to prolong the time when we can be active. Advertisements promote the idea of moving to communities especially designed for older people who want to remain active. On the other hand, the culture glorifies the physical characteristics of youth and suggests that people who *look* old are really not an attractive or

very useful part of society.

The emphasis is on new ideas, new ways of doing things, new fashions in dress and entertainment. Sometimes, these turn out to be what Henry David Thoreau in his book *Walden* called “improved means to unimproved ends.” They suggest that if we look younger or have more or newer possessions we will be happier.

The trouble is that we sometimes accept the things that the culture around us says or implies about growing older when they may not be true at all. But the ideas in our own minds are the most important ones. If our attitude about growing old is negative, we may feel that it is unfair of the Lord to leave us in this world in old age. We may decide that we are either useless or simply burdens to others. Our thoughts will then turn inward and become self-pitying. They may create a sort of mental prison cell without windows through which we can look out.

If, on the other hand, our attitude is affirmative, we will seek to learn what we can accomplish in old age for others and for our own spiritual life. We will look outward and turn our thoughts toward other people to see how we can benefit them. If we are retired, we can look for opportunities to volunteer our time and talents.

Our attitudes toward both temporal and eternal things are important.

We can cultivate helpful attitudes toward temporal things in old age. The words of the familiar hymn remind us that, “The things of this world pass away.” We often sense the truth of this statement as we grow older. *What* we have around us becomes less important than *who* we have around us. Friendships become more precious, especially the friendships in our marriages. Routines that once seemed unimportant or boring may prove comforting. Having time to read a good book or listen to music or talk to friends may turn out to be a luxury we felt we could

never take time to enjoy before.

We can also cultivate helpful attitudes toward eternal things. The next line from the hymn that we quoted above is, “Come let us in Him rest.” What does it mean to rest in the Lord? Certainly it must involve confidence in Him and trust that He has our best interests constantly in mind. He created us to become citizens of heaven and to live there usefully and happily to eternity. He has led us every moment of our lives with that goal for us in mind. We can see this if we take the time to reflect on the things that have happened to us through the years, especially if we have been blessed with happy marriages and interesting occupations.

Reflecting in this way allows us to see Providence as we are meant to, “after it operates and not before” (*Divine Providence* 187). And when we consider how His Providence has cared for us in the past, we should be willing to trust and follow Him now. We should heed the words of Samuel to the children of Israel, “Only fear the Lord, and serve Him in truth with all your heart; for consider what great things He has done for you” (1 Samuel 12:24). We can do this knowing that if we are in the stream of Providence, we are being carried along toward happiness all the time, no matter whether what happens to us is pleasant or unpleasant in worldly terms (*Arcana Coelestia* 8478).

And if we are to be in the stream of Providence, the Word must be as important to us as it has ever been. Perhaps it should be even more important since it alone can lead us to truly understand what awaits us in the spiritual world and how to live so as to become citizens and inhabitants of heaven. We can trust the Word, for as the prophet Isaiah wrote, “The grass withereth, and the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand forever” (Isaiah 40:8).

Our uses do not cease in old age.

Can we see that there are uses in living in old age? A passage in the *Spiritual Diary* (5003) explains why some people die in

childhood or youth and why some die in old age. In each case the reason has to do with what is useful, useful to other people in this world and to those in the other world while we are here, useful to one's own regeneration, and useful to people still in this world after we have left it.

We noted earlier that we might come to feel that we can no longer be useful in old age. Part of the reason for this feeling is that we are not able to serve others in the same ways that we did when we were younger. We may not be able to help them move furniture or prepare a holiday meal. But we can serve them in other ways, especially because we have two things to offer, time and wisdom.

If we are healthy enough to maintain our contacts with younger people, we can take the time to listen to them. We don't need to worry about whether we can give them useful advice or encouragement. We can simply give them the gifts of our attention and interest without worrying about whether we can afford the time.

If they ask us about things we remember from our past, we can share experiences that made us feel confident in the Lord's leading. Perhaps they will have to do with discovering the work that we were to do or meeting the person who was to be our married partner. Whatever they are, they may help them to see that their experiences can become the basis for a similar confidence.

Our uses may take new forms.

When we are young and active, we often fail to realize how much we depend on other people. Then our strength and knowledge allow us to do many things for ourselves. We may even have taken pride in knowing how to do things and doing them without asking others for their help. As we grow older, however, we may find our strength declining and our knowledge outdated.

If we reflect at that point, we will see that in reality we have always had to depend on others for many things. We were never as self-sufficient as we thought we were or tried to be. Almost everything we owned came to us as a result of the useful work of other people. We did not grow all of the food we ate or make the cars we drove. Realizing that should help us to see that needing to have others do things for us now may give them opportunities to be useful.

Yes, we may face illness in old age.

If we find ourselves suffering illness in addition to the usual changes aging brings, we face more challenges. We may be confined to our homes, to our rooms, or even to our beds. We may be more dependent on the help of others than we ever imagined we would be. The temptation to feel sorry for ourselves may be strong indeed, for surely we are useless now.

But the experience of having seen or known about others in this condition who remained cheerful and interested in other people should remind us that being useful can take many forms, some of them as simple as caring about others, telephoning them, and wishing them well.

It may seem strange to think that there might be benefits to being ill. The Writings tell us that we cannot repent in a state of illness (*The New Jerusalem and its Heavenly Doctrines* 168). However, when we are ill, we may find our thoughts turning away from the things of this world of time and space and toward eternal things (*Arcana Coelestia* 2411:2). If this does happen, we should try to enjoy the peace it can bring us.

But we can still have a goal.

Most people are deeply affected by the innocence of little children. Their willingness to be led and to ask for help when they need it appeals to us. We see this willingness reflected in the action of the little child who reaches up for an adult's hand when facing a step that seems too high. We find it hard to refuse this

silent request for help.

We also need to be willing to be led, to reach for the Lord's hand. He is always reaching out to us in His Word, for the goal of our life in this world is to come into a state like that of little children. What that means is made clear in this passage from *Heaven and Hell*:

Because innocence attributes nothing of good to itself, but attributes all good to the Lord, and because it thus loves to be led by the Lord, and the reception of all good and truth, from which wisdom comes, is derived therefrom—therefore man has been so created that during his childhood he is in innocence, though external, and when he becomes old he is in internal innocence, to the end that he may come by the former into the latter, and from the latter return into the former. For the same reason, when a man becomes old he dwindles in body and becomes again like a little child, but like a wise child, that is, an angel, for an angel is a wise child in an eminent sense. This is why, in the Word, “a little child” signifies one who is innocent, and “an old man” signifies one who is wise in whom is innocence. (*Heaven and Hell* 278:3)

The Lord is standing at the door of our minds, knocking and waiting for us to open it so that He can come in (Rev. 3:20). If we do, we may find something of the peace that “has in it confidence in the Lord, that He directs all things, and provides all things, and that He leads to a good end” (*Arcana Coelestia* 8455).

Then we can have full confidence that He will never cast us off in the time of old age or forsake us when our strength fails. Instead, He will always be our shepherd, and we shall not want for anything that we need to be eternally useful and happy.

PARADIGMS REVISITED
BY THE RT. REV. ALFRED ACTON II
Part Two

[Bishop Acton began this article in the May 2007 issue (p. 168) by quoting the passage that describes the degrees of truth Divine descending from the Lord to people on earth (*Arcana Coelestia* 8443). Truth Divine of the sixth degree “is such as is with people, accommodated to their perception; thus it is the sense of the letter of the Word.” At the end of Part One, Bishop Acton listed six categories of finite limits on this sixth degree of truth. In Part Two, he discusses the first three of these categories. Ed.]

I turn now to a discussion of each of these categories of finite limits to Revelation which can be misunderstood since they contain fallacies, and which, if misunderstood, will become falsities.

1. The mechanics in giving Revelation (pen, paper, and printing)

Revelation in the Old Testament was written on scrolls. Individuals copied them. People who wanted a new book had to get it by hand-copying what was in the old book. The Text of the Old Testament was fixed by the Sopherim. Their work, under Ezra and Nehemiah, was to set the Scriptural text in order after the return from Babylon. This work lasted about 110 years, from Nehemiah to Simon the first, 410-300 B.C. The Sopherim were the authorized revisers of the Sacred text; and, their work being completed, the Masorites were the authorized custodians of it. Their work was to preserve it and prevent the loss or misplacement of a single letter or word.¹

The Sopherim and the Masorites were very careful copyists.

¹ Excerpted from: *The Companion Bible*, by E.W. Bullinger. Appendix number 30

They counted every letter in a chapter, every letter in a book, and every letter in the whole of their Hebrew Bible.² When they got to the middle letter in a chapter, it was copied as a larger letter. The same was done in a book and also in the entire manuscript. The copyist then counted from the beginning and again from the end of the manuscript. If the count didn't come up right, he recounted. If it still was off, the manuscript was destroyed. For the manuscript to be used, all the letters had to meet a correct count.³

However, in their work there is good evidence that things probably were added or changed in the text of the Old Testament. Some of that evidence is based on the Dead Sea Scrolls where in some manuscripts there are different readings from the accepted version. Was that difference because of a mistaken copy that somebody buried or was it really because somebody slipped something new in later? We don't know, but there is a whole field of textual criticism now analyzing these kinds of things. The point is that texts vary and probably were altered over the years. Do such fallacies mar or enhance Divine truth? Were the additions providential, done to better describe the spiritual sense? I believe that is the case, but there is nothing said about this in the Writings.⁴

Copies of the New Testament also were made by hand until the invention of the printing press in 1436. These were made with care, but probably not with as much care as those done in the Old Testament by the Masorites. The New Testament like the Old

² The Hebrew Old Testament differs from ours as to the order of the books. It is usually divided by Judaism into the categories of law: *Torah*; prophecy: *Neviim*; and writings: *Kethuvim* (history, poetry, wisdom books); as denoted by the acronym Tanakh. For Jews the term Old Testament is usually seen as pejorative.

³ The Masorites were even more careful in their work, but I think I've said enough to give the general idea of how dedicated they were to preserving their manuscripts.

⁴ In the *Word Explained* Swedenborg does question whether Moses could have written about his own death but seems to accept the idea that he did.

also has different manuscripts with different readings. So scholars of the 20th century claimed such things as that the phrase: “Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever” was added by a monk while copying the text.⁵ There are differences between different texts which seem to introduce errors or perhaps appropriate alterations in the original to make it better accommodated to new generations. Whatever the case may be, there are differences in different manuscripts. From the 16th century, when the received edition of the New Testament was established, there is mostly uniformity in later editions until the present. Of course with printing it is a lot easier to maintain such uniformity.

What do we know about the manuscripts of the Writings? First, let us look at the style Swedenborg used in writing the Writings. What he did first was to write an outline of whatever he wanted to work on. Next, he wrote out a draft filling in the outline. He would then index the first draft. Finally, he would write a “fair” copy of his manuscript that someone else could read. The fair copy was then sent to the printer. The printer, after typesetting a page, would throw the page away. No proof pages were sent to the author for corrections in those days.

To prevent some printer errors, Swedenborg tried to stay on the scene when he was seeing a work through the press. Eventually he would get a book back and could at least make changes in his own copy. We know that he made such changes because we have his own copy of *True Christian Religion* where he made such corrections. Scholars understand that there is room for errors in this process. To avoid some of these errors, translators need to begin their work by producing as good a Latin text as possible. With published works, translators at least have the printed first edition but, as noted, the printer did make mistakes.

We also have manuscripts that were never published. One of

⁵ See note in *The Revised Standard Edition* on Matt. 6:13

them is the *Athanasian Creed*. The *Athanasian Creed*, as we now have it, was commissioned by a Mr. Nordenskjöld to be copied by another gentleman. Unfortunately, the original is now lost. What we have then is a copy of a lost manuscript. We also have some other things that this man copied for which the original manuscript does exist. We find he wasn't a very good copyist. So a scholar knows to be careful in basing any doctrine on the *Athanasian Creed*. To use it as the only basis for a doctrinal view is suspect. Past views concerning the dissipation of the resurrection body use this work for a proof passage.

All of the unpublished works are in Swedenborg's handwriting, written for his use only. They are not "fair" copies, with the exception of *Apocalypse Explained*, and they really are difficult to read. Most of these unpublished works are now in print. But how good a job was done in preparing the Latin editions of these unpublished texts? They exist in Swedenborg's handwriting. Reading this handwriting is not easy. It was done with a quill pen and ink, which adds to the problem. Manuscripts have ink blotches where a reader has to make an educated guess as to what is underneath the blotch. Obviously, there are issues about the manuscripts in terms of the quill pen and the printing process. These mechanics place the finite forms of the Writings in some question. In my view, good scholarship must try to undo any possible errors, not claim the Lord wanted them there as a fundamentalist of former Christianity might believe.

2. The language of Revelation (Hebrew, Greek, and Latin)

Revelation is in language, and language has limits. We know that the language people speak limits their genius. For example, because the Germans all speak German they have a common genius.⁶ Genius, like language which is a part of it, is embedded in the brain. It determines how we think. Picture a computer. It

⁶ See *True Christian Religion* 813

has hardware that limits how it will compute. Hardware in the computer is analogous to the structure of the brain. We inherit the brain with its working limits. The computer also has software that again limits how the computer works. Without these limits the computer is useless. It must be limited or made finite to work in a finite world. Analogous to the computer's software is what environment gives us, our language, etc. Both heredity and environment contribute to our genius.⁷ We think in language, and so the language we are using reflects our thought process. How we say things is part of the "software" side of our genius. Take for example a Japanese mother with her child. The child is about to put his hand on a hot stove. Does she yell out, "No!" She can't. She doesn't have a word for "no." I once was talking to a Japanese man about this, and he said it really makes them talk to their children.

One language can say things that another language can't. That is one of the reasons the Writings say Revelation is preserved in "dead" languages. But how dead is dead? Today, I'm told, you can buy a newspaper in Latin at the Vatican. The church has added new words to Latin to cope with our modern world's many developments. Latin in this sense is a growing language. You can go to Israel and read things in Hebrew; and you can go to Greece and read Greek. What is important in terms of a "dead" language is that there is a recognized period of usage during which words were well defined. A scholar using the period as a base can understand the meaning of the language with far more certainty than in understanding the meaning in a "living" language. So we can be more certain of what was meant at the time a particular Revelation was given.

But there are still real issues to debate for linguists studying

⁷ Language is a function of environment, but see *Arcana Coelestia* 471, 2300 as regards inheritance.

Revelation. For example, the Old Testament is written in classical Hebrew. Classical Hebrew has no future tense, so how do you know if an issue being discussed is a present or a future thing? Well, it's implied, and usually clear by context. But you are saying something in a very different fashion with the future only implied. Hebrew, as the Writings point out, is the closest language to the celestial language of the Most Ancient Church.⁸ It is a beautiful language, an affectional language, and so, proper for the Old Testament. But it is a language that cannot do certain things that other languages can do. Also, although written in classical Hebrew, there are some words in the Old Testament which have no reference in other material. Joseph's coat is called "many colored," but no one really knows what the word rendered "many colored" means. The Hebrew word has no reference elsewhere.

The case is somewhat different with the New Testament. It is written in koine Greek. Koine Greek is adapted from the earlier Attic Greek of classical times. It came late in the development of the Greek language when the armies of Alexander the Great spread it over the world. It is a simplified form of Greek that made it possible for conquered people in Asia Minor to understand their conquerors. It is a common or everyday language. It is not a hierarchical language. Today, many English-speaking people looking at the King James Version of the Bible do not understand what Swedenborg means when he says the New Testament is written in a "common" language.⁹ For them, the Bible written in 16th century English is hierarchical—the same beautiful language of Shakespeare. Nevertheless, koine Greek is simplified Greek. It is straightforward, as adapted and spoken throughout Alexander's empire.

The Writings are written in what is called Neo-Latin, not

⁸ See *Heaven and Hell* 237,260

⁹ See *Sacred Scripture* 1, *Apocalypse Explained* 1065

classical Latin. Neo-Latin is closer to classical Latin than the middle Latin of earlier times that was a degenerate form of classical Latin. Scholars of Swedenborg's day all wrote in Neo-Latin and of course spoke it, as well. There are many, many manuscripts in Neo-Latin which are only now being studied as to their language. In fact, the New Church, which has been translating the Writings for a long time, is in the forefront of such studies. Neo-Latin was the Latin of the great philosophers of the 16th and 17th centuries.

Greek was the language of Plato and Aristotle as well as the pre-Socratic philosophers. German is quite like Greek. It is not surprising that both Germans and Greeks were much involved in philosophy. Latin, on the other hand, is the language of law, and much of the law, even today, still uses Latin phrases. Certainly the Latin language is a very precise kind of language, most suited to the nature of the precise doctrine of the Writings.

The point is that each form of Revelation as we have it speaks to the reader in quite different ways. Each language has its own finite limits which contain either accommodations or fallacies.

People who do not understand Hebrew, Greek, or Latin are further limited by the translator and the nature of the target language. For example, Abraham in the King James translation is asked to "tell the stars" in order to learn the number of his future progeny.¹⁰ To "tell" here means to count—now an archaic meaning of the word and misleading to the reader. Many such examples could be given in all three forms of translation into English. Our language has changed. People are also limited by the translator's doctrinal background. For example the Latin preposition *in* followed by the ablative case can mean *in* or *on* in English depending upon the context. One theologian used this ambiguity to postulate that life on the moon is inside the moon. There are many other examples I could mention, but these few

¹⁰ See Gen. 15:5

make the point. Readers of Revelation are limited by the work of the translator because of his or her knowledge of both the language being translated and the target language, not to mention his or her doctrinal understanding.

3. The mind of the Revelator (Concepts that can be understood by the author)

I turn now to the third category of finite limits to Revelation: The mind of the Revelator. Each form of Revelation has been given through a person. Swedenborg illustrates this fact in saying that what he wrote was written “*a Domino per me*” that is, “by the Lord by means of me.”¹¹ He, as well as other Revelators, had a real involvement, or “as of self” presence, in what he wrote. His mind was developed in such a way that he could understand what he wrote although the Divine truth within what he wrote surpasses any human intellect.

The Old Testament has an “as of self” involvement on the part of the authors. In some places in the prophets it is said the prophet’s pen was moved “automatically.” It seems that, at least with some of the prophets, their hands were moved without their being able to control the movement.¹² Nevertheless, we know that various minds had various influences in the formation of the Old Testament. For example, we find that Moses was seen in the other world. He was at that time in his own place. He spoke with Swedenborg. He said that he knew something about the New Testament but does not read it. Swedenborg told Moses some things written in his five books about certain people. He acknowledged them all, just as though they were present to him.¹³

¹¹ See *New Church Life* 1959 p. 90

¹² See *Word Explained* 1150, 7006. But just how uninvolved they were in this “automatic” writing is questionable. See *Spiritual Experiences* 446,557, 1533, 2270, and 4820. These passages compare how spirits were involved in Swedenborg’s writing and with other Revelators. See especially *Spiritual Experiences* 4820

¹³ See *Spiritual Experiences* 6107

Moses is said to have had manuscripts from the Ancient Word that he both transcribed and edited. We know that the first eleven chapters of the Book of Genesis were copied. How well did he copy? We know that, at least in one instance, he did not really copy. Instead, when he dealt with Noah coming out of the ark, he altered the text. The people of the Ancient Church are said not to have made animal sacrifices.¹⁴ Since this was the case it seems obvious that when Moses spoke of Noah making a sacrifice that it was not so. Moses seems to have modified the Ancient Word to meet the states of the Jewish Church. In fact, it is said that the Old Testament would have been different had it been given to a different nation.¹⁵ There are other places where the author questions his own story. For example, in the Book of Joshua the sun is described as standing still. The author of the book questions this claim saying, “Is not this written in the Book of Jasher?”¹⁶ Isaiah, in his Revelation, changes the concept of God that was extant with the Hebrew people. God becomes “the one God,” whereas, up to that point, He is the only one that you should worship *among many gods*. Micah undoes the earlier view of sacrifice. “What does the Lord require of you, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God?”¹⁷

We see that the mind of the Revelator changes the nature of the Revelation given through him, at least to some degree. This principle is also true in the New Testament. We find Matthew very concerned with approaching the Jewish mind, saying again and again, “This was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet....” His mind sees things somewhat differently from Mark’s. Mark seems to be writing for a Roman audience.

¹⁴ See *Arcana Coelestia* 2180

¹⁵ See *Arcana Coelestia* 10453:3

¹⁶ Joshua 10:13

¹⁷ Micah 6:8

Luke seems to want to get the record straight. We find Luke saying, “O Theophilus,” as he begins his inspired Gospel, and then, in the Book of Acts, he once again addresses Theophilus. Luke wrote both books. One has a spiritual sense, one does not. He believed what he was writing was getting the record right in both his books. He apparently didn’t realize that what he wrote in Luke was Divine Revelation while what he wrote in the Book of Acts was not.

John is a man with a background in Greek philosophy, particularly the concept of the *logos*. He demonstrates his knowledge at the outset: “In the beginning was the Word,”¹⁸ an obvious reference to the Greek concept of the *logos*. Throughout his book you can see how the philosophical mind of the Revelator affects what he says and how he says it. This fact does not detract from the spiritual sense, but it does show an “as of self” involvement on the part of the Revelator.

The Book of Revelation, written by John on the Isle of Patmos, was produced by someone very familiar with “apocalyptic” literature. Apocalyptic literature uses a code for the faithful. It is written at a time when the very life of the church is at stake. I think there is little doubt that John of Patmos believed that what he was writing predicted the fall of Rome. He seems to believe that the beast with seven heads is the city of seven hills, Rome, with the number 666 spelling out the name of the tyrant, Nero.¹⁹ Today, to my knowledge, no biblical scholars believe the John of the fourth gospel and the John on Patmos were the same. Examining what each wrote indicates different minds involved in each book. Swedenborg, who wrote before scholars questioned these things, accepts one John and, for that matter, one Moses, which also is quite suspect in the minds of most

¹⁸ John 1:1

¹⁹ Some manuscripts say the number was 606 instead of 666. In the Hebrew numbering system 60 is the letter nun. Apocalyptic literature uses numbers to spell names. The beast Nero Caesar is spelled 606 while the name Neron Caesar is 666. See *The Interpreter’s Bible*, Abington Press, NY, Vol. XII p. 466 et al

current scholars.²⁰

What about the mind of Swedenborg? He was a trained philosopher. Here is his own testimony as to why he was called from being a philosopher to a theologian: “I was once asked how from a philosopher I became a theologian; and I answered, In the same manner that fishermen were made disciples and apostles by the Lord; and that I also from early youth had been a spiritual fisherman. On hearing this, the inquirer asked, ‘What is a spiritual fisherman?’ I replied that a fisherman in the spiritual sense of the Word signifies a man who investigates and teaches natural truths, and afterwards spiritual truths rationally.”²¹

Swedenborg is an 18th century European, although prior to his call he had many insights well beyond his century. In his *Animal Kingdom* written in 1744 he states what new doctrines he developed in his search for the soul: “We may not however climb immediately from effect to principles, from the body to the soul, and from the material world to the immaterial. And therefore in order to this ascent, I have been obliged to as it were conceive from an ovum, form, and bring forth new doctrines which I term the doctrine of form, the doctrine of order and degrees and also of the society of co-ordinates, also the doctrine of representations and correspondences, and lastly the doctrine of modification. All these doctrines must first be laid down and explained, before I dare to mount or attempt that ladder which leads from earth to heaven.”²²

I once published an article on the importance of Swedenborg’s pre-theological works.²³ In them we see how he defined terms

²⁰ As noted Swedenborg met Moses in the other world, reporting he had his five books which he says he wrote. If this was not true could Swedenborg’s mind have been so conditioned as to not be able to accept such an earthshaking thesis? Would his readers have accepted it?

²¹ *Intercourse of the Soul and Body* 20

²² *The Animal Kingdom* parts 4 and 5, “on Generation” n. 357. This summary is also found in the prologue to Vol. 1 page 10 where it is set forth as part of the plan for this series.

²³ *New Philosophy* 1965 p. 9, The Importance of the Pre-theological Works

and developed doctrines which later are carried over into the Writings. For example, in the *Economy of the Animal Kingdom* the chapter on the chick in the egg outlines how the soul builds the body. Swedenborg's own experiments plus his extensive research led him to see that before birth the brain operated in motion with the heart, and after birth the correspondence changed so that it operated with the now opened lungs. This insight coupled with his later observation that people in swoons appear on the outskirts of heaven is the basis for stating that spiritual life begins at birth.²⁴ In the *Principia*, Swedenborg states that life on other planets will not be the same as life here on earth. This idea makes it very easy for Swedenborg to receive knowledge of extraterrestrial life of a different nature than ours. He says he is not yet sure whether they "had been differently created, or furnished with a different body," but they say this is the case.²⁵ The terms "Representatives," "Significatives," and "Correspondences" are all defined prior to his call.

Also note the limits of his knowledge. Swedenborg could not write about heart transplants, or telephones, or cars. They did not exist. There clearly are limits on the mind of Swedenborg. He is a child of the 18th century, but he is not chained to it. His scientific insights are profound, and he is ready to reveal Divine truths which transcend his century. For example, the revelation given in *Conjugal Love* is replete with concepts which were beyond his contemporaries' beliefs. They were considered so heretical in Sweden that the book was banned. Nevertheless they are first addressed to the people of his age and their culture.

[To be concluded]

²⁴ See *Arcana Coelestia* 3887:2, *Divine Wisdom*. III, V, *Divine Love and Wisdom* 401 et al. but note *Arcana Coelestia* 3298 on the as of self just prior to birth. *Divine Love and Wisdom* 390:2, 407:2, *Divine Wisdom* XI 6a on swoons and *Heaven and Hell* 438 on appearing in heaven.

²⁵ See *Spiritual Experiences* 1670

DECLARATIONS OF FAITH AND PURPOSE

May 27, 2007

Ekow Essiedu Eshun

I believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, the one God of heaven and earth, one in person and essence, in whom is the Divine Trinity of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and who in His Divine Human is present and visible to angels and men.

I believe in the Divine authority of the threefold Word, the Old Testament, the New Testament, and the Writings.

I believe that the Writings, as an immediate revelation from the Lord, constitute His second coming.

I believe that the Church of the New Jerusalem is a new Christianity. This new Christianity is a new dispensation of the Lord's church with man, and the crown of all the churches that have hitherto existed on earth.



I believe in the life after death, in heaven and in hell and that the life that leads to heaven is a life according to the precepts of the Decalogue.

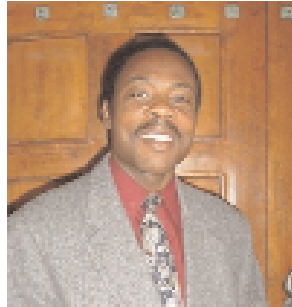
In presenting myself for inauguration into the first degree of the priesthood, I acknowledge that the priesthood in its threefold order is of Divine institution in order to provide the Lord's presence among men. Order itself is that presence of the Lord in the church, and I pray that, in humility and faithfulness, I may observe and uphold that order and so serve the Lord in the establishment of His church upon earth.

Before the Lord and in the presence of the people of His church gathered here, I affirm my solemn vow to perform the duties of the office to the best of my ability that the Lord,

through His office about to be adjoined to me, may lead and bless His people.

Godwin Zattey-Agboga

I believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, God of heaven and earth and Creator of the universe. I believe that He alone is Divine and Human, that all people through Him are given life, and that through His redemption and salvation all people may receive eternal life.



I believe that knowledge of truth is the necessary means of salvation. I believe in the revelation of truth and in the threefold Word as the only complete and perfect revelation of truth.

I believe that the essential of salvation is a life according to truth, and that the Lord, in His providence, offers all people a rich variety of ways in which the truth may be lived.

I believe in the life of uses: in marriage and child-raising; in service to others; in social and community life; in repentance and reformation; and in worship to the Lord.

My purpose in presenting myself for ordination into the ministry is to faithfully serve in whatever use I am called to in the church. I intend to serve the Lord and the church by evangelizing the youth—bringing to them the news of the Lord’s Second Coming in the New Revelation given for the New Church, instructing them to know that “religion is of life, and the life of religion is to do what is good” (*Doctrine of Life* 1). I will also endeavor to bring them to a sense of the living presence and leading of the Lord our God.

NEW MINISTER ASSIGNMENTS
from the Bishop's office

The Rev. Ekow Essiedu Eshun

Assistant to the pastor in the Tema Society under the Rev. Simpson Darkwah, preaching, teaching, and assisting in the school.

As a secondary project, Ekow will begin working to establish a group in the western coastal region of Ghana.

The Rev. Godwin Zatthey-Agboga

Assistant to the pastor of the Asakraka-Kwahu church under the Rev. Martin Gyamfi.

In addition, he will serve the group in Kumasi (monthly), and initiate a start-up group in the Volta region.

The Rev. Segno-Kodjo Ayi (ordained May 27th, 2001)

The Rev. Ayi is assigned to minister to a group in Lome, Togo, West Africa.

In addition, he will offer support for Eric Souka, a candidate who will be serving in Vogan.

**FURTHER NEWS FROM
THE REPUBLIC OF GEORGIA**

Dear friends,

On the 6th of June, 2007, the New Church in Georgia was officially registered. It is now a legal entity in the Republic of Georgia and can act in all practical ways necessary to build the New Church in that part of the world.

Praise the Lord,

The Rev. Göran Appelgren
Stockholm, Sweden

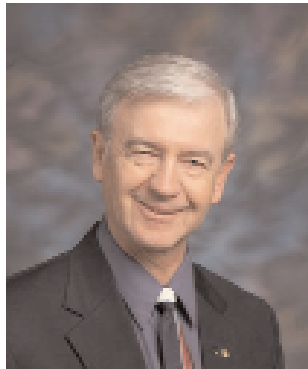
Editorial

THE NEW EDITOR

Bishop Kline has announced the appointment of the Rev. Dr. Erik E. Sandström as the new editor of this publication, beginning July 1st. A few words of introduction, along with a picture of Dr. Sandström, are in order.

Erik Emanuel Sandström was born in Stockholm, Sweden, in 1942. After a volunteer assignment with the Peace Corps, Erik attended the Academy Theological School, was inaugurated into the priesthood in 1971, and served as an assistant to the pastor in Toronto. He was ordained into the second degree in 1972 and assigned as pastor of the Michael Church in London, England, where he served for nine years. He then served seven years as pastor of the Hurstville society in Australia and as visiting pastor to the Auckland circle in New Zealand.

In 1988, Erik returned to Bryn Athyn to teach in the Academy's college and theological school, and also served as visiting pastor to the New York-New Jersey circle, and to Stockholm (1989-1990). From 1993-2002, while continuing to teach, he was head of the Religion and Sacred Languages Division in the college, adding the responsibility of Curator of the Swedenborgiana collection at the Swedenborg Library in 1996.



Since 2002, Erik has successfully completed and defended his doctoral dissertation on modern Christology, has continued teaching part-time in the theological school, and has done extensive traveling pastoral work for the General Church. He reports having had the privilege during his career of visiting 26

different circles, 15 or so societies, in eight different countries, and preaching in three languages.

Dr. Sandström has been married to Lynn-Del (Walter) of Bryn Athyn since September, 1970.

It is with pleasure and high anticipation that we introduce as the new editor a man with such a broad and varied experience in the church and Academy.

Anyone wishing to communicate with Dr. Sandström or make submissions to *New Church Life* may address mail to him at Box 717 (or Box 740), Bryn Athyn, PA 19009 or may send email to either of the following addresses:

Erik.Sandstrom@brynathyn.edu

Erik.Sandstrom@anc-gc.org.

A NOTE TO OUR READERS

This issue is designated “July-August 2007” and is the last to be produced under my editorship. The summer provides a little extra time for the new editor (introduced above) and his staff to make a smooth transition. Dr. Sandström’s first issue will be the September issue.

It has been my privilege and pleasure to edit *New Church Life* during the past two years. This journal has been in continuous publication since 1881, more than 126 years. In a lead editorial, the first number declared: “The *New Church Life* is to be thoroughly and distinctively a New Church paper....” Truly a challenging goal for any editor!

I wish to thank the many contributors to the *Life* whose sermons, articles, and communications have been published during my editorship, and also those readers who have supported this unique magazine.

May this publication long continue to serve all those who love the teachings of the Heavenly Doctrine.

Kurt Horigan Asplundh

Communication

Dear Editor,

I have been interested to read Part One of Alfred Acton's *Paradigms Revisited* in the May 2007 edition of *New Church Life*. The paper is a fascinating study, and I look forward to Part Two.

There was one area of Acton's paper that caused me misgivings. I have for some time shared his view that there is a spectrum of New Church ecclesiology. It seems to me that this spectrum contains similar elements to those which have characterised the traditional Christian Churches. We do indeed appear to have a range reflecting a more Catholic approach to the Church across to what has been seen as the liberal, Protestant end of the spectrum. The last 200 or so years suggest that there are, for example, sections of the New Church which reject women's sense of and call to ministry, where the masculine predominates, and who hold to very definite views about Church government. There are groups who prefer more fluid, flexible, congregational forms, with some crossovers, and internal differences. And so on. Such variety would seem to conform to what the Heavenly Doctrines have to say about the character both of the Church and of the heavens.

What did surprise me, and cause misgivings, in Acton's presentation was the statement in the section *Parallels in the New Church*. He suggests that some people in the General Conference take a "liberal Protestant" view of Emanuel Swedenborg and his Writings, picking and choosing the truths to accept, the Writings containing inspired insights in much the same way as do Shakespeare's writings. Acton says that the Writings are not regarded as Divine revelation by such members of the General Conference.

I guess, on the scale of things, there are people around the world who take these sorts of views. That is inevitable. But Acton's statement nevertheless surprises me, and I wonder what the evidence is for his view. All members of the General Conference subscribe to the Declaration of Faith, which concludes: *I believe in the Word of God or Holy Scriptures and in the Heavenly Doctrines of the New Jerusalem, drawn therefrom and contained in the Theological Writings of Emanuel Swedenborg.* The vows we are required to make when ordained into the priesthood of the New Church leave no one in any doubt as to the Divine source of the Heavenly Doctrines.

As I say, I was surprised to read Acton's statement. I could have felt offended and insulted, but my feelings are actually sad. Sad that a senior colleague in a sister New Church organisation could make such a judgment without providing any evidence. Scholarly analysis may have its own validity, but one would hope that Divine Revelation leads us to treat relationships with the greatest care and respect. Charity and the capacity to treat others with affection and dignity underpin all our churchmanship. It is this, rather than any precise doctrinal formulation, which will determine the company we keep in the spiritual dimension.

Yours sincerely,

The Rev. Bruce R. Jarvis
The New Church
Shields Road, Seaburn Dene
Sunderland, England



**THE ACADEMY OF THE NEW CHURCH
THEOLOGICAL SCHOOL, COLLEGE
and SECONDARY SCHOOLS CALENDAR
ONE HUNDRED and THIRTY -FIRSTSCHOOL YEAR**

2007

July 8-14	Sun-Sat	ANC Summer Camp
15-21	Sun-Sat	Tools 4 Life Camp
16-27	Mon-Fri	Summer Institutes
Aug 19-25	Sun-Sat	Girls School sports camp ends 24th, Boys School sports camp ends 25th
22	Wed	College international students and RA's arrive on campus
23-24	Thu-Fri	College faculty retreat
25	Sat	All College students arrive on campus
26	Sun	Secondary Schools resident students arrive on campus
27	Mon	Registration in all schools
28	Tue	Secondary Schools begin classes; College & Theological School Service Day
29	Wed	College and Theological School begin classes
	7:30 p.m.	Opening worship (Cathedral)
Sept 3	Mon	Labor Day Holiday
5	Wed.	4:00 p.m. President's address, reception (MPAC)
Oct 12	Fri	Charter Day: 8:00 a.m. Annual Meeting of ANC Corporation (MPAC) 10:30 a.m. Service (Cathedral) 9:00 p.m. Dance (Asplundh Field House)
13	Sat	7:30 p.m. Banquet (Asplundh Field House)
29	Mon	Secondary Schools grading day, no school
30	Tue	Secondary Schools 2nd quarter begins
Nov 16	Fri	College and Theological School fall term ends after exams
21	Wed	Secondary Schools break for Thanksgiving
26	Mon	Winter term begins in College and Theological School Secondary Schools resume classes
Dec 21	Wed	Secondary Schools Christmas vacation begins at 2:00 p.m. College and Theological School vacation begins following afternoon classes

2008

Jan 6	Sun	Secondary Schools students return, College and Theological School resident students return
7	Mon	College and Theological School classes resume Secondary Schools 3rd quarter begins
21	Mon	Martin Luther King, Jr. Day (Secondary Schools in-school observance, Col/TS holiday)
Feb 18	Mon	Presidents' Day holiday (reading day in College)
22	Fri	College and Theological School winter term ends and spring break begins after exams
29	Fri	Secondary Schools spring break begins at 2:00 p.m.
Mar 10	Mon	College and Theological School Spring Term begins
17	Mon	Secondary Schools 4th quarter begins
21	Fri	Good Friday holiday for all
24	Mon	Easter Monday holiday for Secondary Schools; College & Theological School in session
May 2-4	Fri-Sun	Bryn Athyn College Alumni Weekend
3	Sat	1:00 p.m. Semiannual meeting of Academy Corporation (MPAC or Pendleton Hall Auditorium)
22	Thur	Last day of exams for College and Theological School 6:30 p.m. College Graduation Dinner and Dance (Cairnwood Mansion)
23	Fri	2:00 p.m. College and Theological School Graduation (MPAC) 5:00 p.m. Secondary Schools Senior Dinner (Glencairn) 9:00 p.m. Secondary Schools Graduation Dance (Glencairn)
24	Sat	10:00 a.m. Secondary Schools Graduation (AFH)

2007 BRYN ATHYN COLLEGE GRADUATES

Associate in Arts

Gina Ann Bolton
Justin Eric Bowyer
Meghan Elise Dibb
Abigail Rouette Echols- with
distinction
Jeremy Dean Fehon
Annika Fitzpatrick – with
distinction
Carina Nicole Heinrichs
Beata Horan
Angella Kathleen Irwin – with
distinction
Alexandra King - with
distinction
Kristin Paige Lindsay – with
distinction
Garrett Bruce Nash – with
distinction
Dylan Craig Odhner – with
distinction
Lamar Berith Odhner – with
distinction
Luciana Monsores Hygino
Santos
Steven Kent Schnarr
Robert Garrett Smith – with
distinction
Molly Louise Synnestvedt
Diane van Zyverden – with
distinction

Bachelor of Arts/Bachelor of Science

Jared Mark Alden
John Lawson Cole – cum laude
Jeremy Kurt Finkeldey – cum
laude
Matthew Jefferson Glenn
Dylan Jameson Hendricks – cum
laude
Daniel Stratton Hultgren
Elwyn Aubrey Kern- cum laude
Skye Kerr- cum laude
Cairn MacFarlan King – cum
laude
Carl Steven King
Alexander Kayne Lermite –
cum laude
Miriam Sarah Lexie- cum laude
Eden King Lumsden – cum
laude
Sylvia Grace Odhner – cum
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The Lord Is My Banner - contemporary service, Rev. John Odhner, #107029

The Fight for Freedom - sermon, Rev. Derek Elphick, #105798

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