

# New Church LIFE

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A monthly magazine devoted to the teachings  
revealed through Emanuel Swedenborg

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**In this issue:**

Attracting Spiritual Spheres  
A Sermon by George D. McCurdy

Predestination and Human Prudence—Part Two  
By David P. Simpson

Resurrection Address for "Lucky" Thabede  
By Peter M. Buss, Sr.

Church News from Australia

**January 2007**

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## *Notes on This Issue*

What might be the effect on the world of a belief in predestination? What happens when this doctrine is seized upon by the conceit of human prudence? David Simpson addresses these questions in a review of the eugenics movement in part two of his article on predestination and human prudence, comparing its progress in society to the development of disease in the human body. This second and concluding part begins on p.13.

Bishop Emeritus Peter Buss was visiting his native South Africa at the time of the death of Albert (Lucky) Thabede, one of the leading black ministers in that country. A large crowd attended the funeral at which the Bishop presented the resurrection address we have included almost in its entirety in this issue. From the *Highveld News*, newsletter of the Buccleuch Society near Johannesburg, in South Africa, we learn that the church was full and overflowing on Friday, 17 November, for the moving resurrection service.

“What are we going to attract today?” asks the Rev. George McCurdy in his sermon which begins on the next page? Spiritual spheres are real and powerful but the Lord gives us the ability to recognize them and the power to shun spheres from hell.



The Rev. George McCurdy is retired, having served the Academy of the New Church as Chaplain and teacher of religion. Mr. McCurdy continues to serve as visiting pastor to the Harleystown, Pennsylvania Circle, and to Lake Helen and Jacksonville, Florida. George and his wife Lois (Walton) live in Bryn Athyn.

**SPIRITUAL SPHERES**  
**What are we going to attract today?**

BY THE REV. GEORGE D. McCURDY

*“Evil spirits cannot endure the sphere of mutual love.”*  
*(Arcana Coelestia 1398)*

When you got up this morning and thought about coming to church, how did it go? Did some persuasive idea try to suggest that today would be a good time to stay home and relax or catch up on that long “to-do list”? Did you feel a sense of anticipation or need to come to church? Did a sense of obligation or good habits motivate you? Was there no hesitation because of a feeling that this is what should be done on the Sabbath?

Obviously, something worked, because here we are together in a worship service.

Now that we are here, what can we do to make this worship service not only valuable but also useful? How can we effectively listen to and reflect on the Word of the Lord to receive its message so that we can leave church better prepared to serve Him and the neighbor?

**Spiritual Spheres**

The Writings talk about the importance and power of spiritual spheres. What is a spiritual sphere? It is an organic spiritual quality within us that is ever changing and defining who we are and where we prefer to be spiritually. Spheres are our inner loves that will seek out corresponding spiritual dimensions. The Writings liken our spheres to magnets. Whatever the sphere of our love is, it will attract and draw us to either heaven or hell.

We all have experienced something about attracting spheres. Can you recall a time when you walked into a room of people who were laughing and talking but your presence seemed to bring an end to the cordiality of the group? What kind of sphere

did you notice without a word being spoken to you? You felt uneasy, excluded, unwanted, like an intruder pushed out of the group's friendship circle. Probably you felt as if you wanted to run out of the room.

Conversely, we have all experienced what it was like to walk into a room full of laughter and conversation where we were greeted warmly and invited to join the circle. Without a word being spoken we felt wanted, valued, and included as a part of the friendship of that group. It was a welcoming sphere.

Often spheres arise from our own moods. When we are in a bad mood, we tend to view things from an overly sensitive, negative point of view. As a matter of fact, we don't like hearing someone tell us to cheer up and get over it. Family and friends sensing our troubled state try to tread softly, not wanting to "ruffle our feathers." When we are in a negative state, we tend to complain and see the downside of things. Fortunately, we are likely to have more days where we are happy and put a good meaning on the quality of our life.

The spheres we generate are tremendously powerful. They will either push others away or pull them in.

### **Illustrations from the Word**

Stories in the Word illustrate how powerful spheres can be. Recall one such story involving Pharaoh and the children of Israel. In Exodus we have seven places where Pharaoh's heart hardened when he was told, "let My people go." Initially, Pharaoh agreed to let the people go, but then his heart hardened time after time. No matter what miracle or plague the Lord brought upon the land of Egypt, Pharaoh's heart would not melt. Negativism closed his eyes. He saw and heard about the acts of the Lord but was not willing to comply. He was locked in a sphere of stubborn resistance.

The Lord, revisiting His hometown, was met with a powerful sphere of unbelief. "Is this not the carpenter's son? Is not His

mother called Mary? And His brothers James, Joses, Simon, and Judas? And His sisters, are they not all with us? Where then did this Man get all these things?” (Matthew 13: 55-56)

What are we taught by the Lord about their disbelief? “Now He did not do many mighty works there *because of their unbelief*” (Matthew 13: 58, emphasis added). It wasn’t the Lord’s failure or inability to do mighty works. It was the fault of the doubting sphere.

Let’s consider further the theme of this lesson regarding negative debating.

### “Debaters”

The sphere of negativism may produce a spirit of debate that will attract arguments to push out the influence of the Lord.

Look at the excerpts from this passage in the *Arcana Coelestia*:

[T]hey who merely debate whether [spiritual] things exist, stand meanwhile outside the doors of wisdom, and are like persons who merely knock, and cannot even look into wisdom's magnificent palaces. And yet strange to say such people believe themselves to be wise in comparison with others, and that they are wise in proportion to their ability to debate whether a thing be so, and especially to prove that it is not so....

[W]hen yet the simple who are in good [an affirmative sphere] can perceive in a moment, without any dispute, still more without learned controversy, that the thing is, and what is its quality. These have a common sense of the perception of truth whereas the [negative debaters] have extinguished this common sense. (3428:3)

### Building a Positive Sphere

Why was it a good thing that we put aside other influences so that we gathered here for church? Why is it a necessary thing that we consciously work on building a positive sphere?

Being in church helps us hear about and consider spiritual things we might not have the time or inclination to hear about in our everyday jobs. Church is a place where we can reverently

say the name of the Lord Jesus Christ with an affirmative sphere that will invite and draw Him into our hearts. Meditating on the Word gives us corrective insights. The reading of the Word places within our minds the profound words of the Lord. We are here to ask, to invite, the Lord to perform great miracles in our lives.

### **Why is this important?**

We have a memory that has been storing the things of the Lord from our earliest childhood. The Writings instruct us that our mind forgets nothing. So the more we hear and learn about the Lord, the more we add to our sphere of attraction. Our remains will affectionately hold the things of the Lord's Word in a protective memory bank that will respond to the Lord's calling.

### **“Emptying Out”**

The growth of the New Church requires our participation in the work of vastations. Vastations involve emptying out, getting rid of, things that cause the devastation (or the pollution) of our spirit.

What are some of the things we need to empty out?

- The tendency to resist the Lord's authority.
- Finding fault with the Lord; accusing Him of things that are not in His Divine nature. He does not harm anyone. Instead, it is His nature to want to save and protect all. Being an angry Father that punishes His children is not within His Divine order.
- Regarding the Word as being an unhappy book that speaks only of wars and other assorted unpleasant and depressing topics. A negative sphere is inclined to call the Word antiquated and unreadable. These attitudes foster a dangerous and perilous negative sphere.
- Being critical of the form or language of the Writings. This

will attract blinding negativity that will cause us to miss the healing and bonding truths of the Lord.

Why mention these few issues? Because each of the illustrations mentioned highlights the negative sphere of the “debaters” who stand outside the door of wisdom and never enter. The negative debaters extinguish the good common sense of a positive sphere. The negative spirit will not open the Word because it doesn't want to be lifted or cheered by the Lord. Do the debaters hear or say, “Your Word is a light to my path,” “Your Word is a chart and compass?” “How sweet are Your words to my taste.” “I get more wisdom from Your Word than from all of my teachers” (Psalms 119: 105, 103, 99). The affirmative prayerfully, reverently, cheerfully, repeat these things.

When the Lord reveals the spiritual sense of His Word it is like opening a box “containing diamonds, rubies, and many other precious stones, arranged in order in compartments. Who does not value such a box when they know that such things are concealed within it, and still more when they are seen and are offered for free distribution?” (*True Christian Religion* 701: 3)

Why is it a good thing that we have gathered together to read, consider, and discuss the Word of the Lord? We have come to improve our positive sphere. We have come to have our magnet draw spiritual things into our heart and mind.

Our positive sphere with its mutual love also does something incredibly amazing: “Evil spirits cannot approach” our sphere of mutual love. If they approach they will be distressed. They will complain and lament, and therefore will fall back. “One angel can put to flight myriads of evil spirits, for they cannot endure the sphere of mutual love” (*Arcana Coelestia* 1397-1398).

### **What do we want to attract?**

So we return to the opening question of this meditation: What

are some of the things we want to attract today?

- We want the protective sphere of mutual love.
- We want a sphere of cooperation with the Lord.
- We want to open our heart and mind to the Lord so that His Word might actively dwell within us.
- We want to knock on the door of wisdom to be invited into that magnificent palace to see, touch, and know holy things.
- We want to receive the precious things of the Lord that He wants to give freely.
- We want to ask for that common sense that will help us “perceive in a moment, without dispute, that spiritual things are so.”
- We want to be involved in the work of reformation so we might rid ourselves of those things that oppose, resist, and deny the Lord.
- We want to have a positive sphere to invite the Lord and His angels into our hearts so that they might lift and guide us through our days.

With a positive sphere may we hear and record in our hearts and minds the following words, and like magnets, draw from them the inspiration we will need this week:

“Do not fear, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom” (Luke 12:32).

“The Lord shall preserve you from all evil; He shall preserve your soul. The Lord shall preserve your going out and your coming in from this time forth, and even forevermore” (Psalm 121: 7-8). Amen.

Lessons: Exodus 14: 13-18; John 12: 35-43; and portions of *Arcana Coelestia* 1397 and 1398.

## WHY NOT REINCARNATION?

### A New Church Perspective

BY THE REV. DAN GOODENOUGH

Human reincarnation by a person coming back to this earth in a new body after death of the old physical body, does not happen. There's a sense in which animals may be said to be "reincarnated." When animals die, the natural affections which are their souls don't dissipate, but seek new bodily expression on earth. These natural affections are not unique and distinctly individual spiritual essences like human souls but are general affections and natural desires.

And ideas and human movements can revive in new forms in later times. But individual human souls after the death of the body live on in the spiritual world in full spiritual bodies that uniquely picture and express their souls and underlying identities formed from their own inner-life decisions. The spiritual bodies we live in to eternity are full bodies with everything that our physical bodies have except that they're made of spiritual substance, not physical matter. They're real spiritual bodies, but this is not what people generally mean by "reincarnation."

One reason some people have believed in reincarnation is "second sight," or *déjà vu*—"remembering" something you know you never experienced before. Many people (including me) have felt this phenomenon at some time or other. It probably comes from some borderline mental contact with the bodily memory of some spirit who is temporarily close to us (maybe because of where we happen to be at the moment). *Heaven and Hell* 256 talks about this.

Many experiences that at first seem odd happen because of the closeness to us of the spiritual world. Although normally we're unaware of spirits, and they are unaware of us, once in a while

peculiar things happen and remind us of the reality and closeness of the spiritual world—like the unusual communications some people experience when a loved one dies. Déjà vu can occur at any time.

The western religions (Judaism, Islam, Christianity), and most “primitive” or native religions around the world, including Taoism and shamanism, believe you live just once in this life. Most of these religions believe in one God who created the universe. Reincarnation tends to grow among people who believe in many gods or who are uncertain or unclear if there is one Creator God. People who believe in creation by one God usually see creation of the universe as fundamentally good, and they tend to see God as putting us on earth for a definite reason—after which we move on to the next phase. The next phase is of course understood differently in different religions, but it’s in another realm or existence, not back on earth here. (Among the Crow people where I teach, the traditional belief is that on the fourth day after death you awaken in the new camp, which is in a spiritual realm; this is close to what I believe.)

In the New Church we believe strongly that God is love—love without end. God’s creation is good. He loves everyone, and He made us free to choose our character. We learn many things in this life, we grow through hard times and good times both, and we are kept free. We aren’t necessarily free in every action we do, but we’re free to think and become the kind of persons we wish to become, through our choices of how we wish to think and change and act. Then when we leave the physical body, the kind of persons that we’ve chosen to become define our eternal life, and we live among people (spirits and, we hope, angels) who are similar to ourselves. What matters is not so much the good or bad things we’ve “done,” but whether we have become loving people committed to do good to others, or self-engrossed people who think and care about ourselves above all else.

Heaven is where people (now angels) are together in a loving environment where they find good ways to help and benefit others. Hell exists, not as traditionally believed by many Christians, but as the spiritual “place” where people gather who care more about themselves than anything and always want their own way, period. The only punishment after death is for people (spirits) who are hurting others; you don't get punished for past sins unless you go back to them and hurt other people. Selfish people learn the rules in hell and learn how to behave to avoid getting punished, though sometimes they just can't resist causing trouble. They have “happiness” in a way, but it's pretty empty of the love that the Lord wants to give to all human beings.

If people had to come back again and again (Hindus believe thousands of times), their free decisions in any one phase would never be final, and they'd have to keep going back over their essential character decisions millions of times and redoing them. Nothing would ever be settled, good or bad. So many of the things you'd learned in one life, you'd largely unlearn as you start a new life. Everything human would always be being recycled with real progress impossible or incredibly slow through many reincarnations. This is why eastern thought sees time as circular rather than as linear and progressive and emphasizes recurrence more than progress. Still, belief in reincarnation does encourage inner change within the soul and gradual betterment (very slow) towards a kind of perfection that will eventually bring release from individual earthly life.

Reincarnation is not the work of a Creator God who loves his creation and wants to maximize happiness. Reincarnation is a more pessimistic view, seeing life in this world as fundamentally unhappy for most people and something you want to escape so that you can be re-absorbed into the infinite. Reincarnationists long for “release” to get out of the cycle of being reborn again

and again and again so that they can escape human life. A Hindu hymn sings it this way: “I am the bubble, make me the sea”—the individual person praying to be absorbed into the vast ocean and to lose individuality—no longer someone with one’s own identity.

New Age versions of reincarnation often pick and choose from traditions and use some parts of reincarnation while ignoring unappealing aspects—as if we can reinvent religious systems at will according to human whim. Whatever the variations, ongoing circles of reincarnation cannot avoid presenting earthly human life as less purposeful and constructive than creation by one God.

The crucial question about reincarnation is whether you believe in one Creator God, and if so, what that Creator God is.

**ANNOUNCEMENT OF A CONFERENCE**  
**The World Transformed: Effects of the Last Judgment on**  
**Human Knowledge and Values**

With the 250th anniversary of the Last Judgment rapidly approaching in 2007, the Cole Foundation for Renewing the Culture, supported by Bryn Athyn College of the New Church, will hold a conference of New Church scholars focusing on the effects of the Last Judgment in the natural and social world. It will be held November 2nd and 3rd, 2007, at Bryn Athyn College in Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania.

You are invited to submit a proposal for a paper for this conference. Those interested should submit a one page proposal by February 15th, to Michael H. Hogan, Conference Chairman [editor@colefoundation.org](mailto:editor@colefoundation.org).

Those seeking more detailed information about the conference should contact Mr. Hogan at the above email address and can go directly to the Cole Foundation website at [www.colefoundation.org](http://www.colefoundation.org), where a more complete description is available.

## PREDESTINATION AND HUMAN PRUDENCE

### PART TWO\*

BY DAVID SIMPSON

#### **The Human Predicament**

The doctrine of total human depravity, grounded from Augustine to Aquinas and which grew up through Luther and Calvin, rose initially out of the concept of original sin. Luther asserted that no matter what we do, we will remain utterly alienated from God due to our sinful nature. We are therefore absolutely incapable of doing what is necessary to overcome this alienation and be saved. In the light of this doctrine, efforts on the part of a person to shun evil as a sin against the Lord are mere vanities. Augustine described this situation as the “human predicament.” The essential aspect of this predicament of depravity and original sin is that man is unable to choose God. It is God, then, who reaches out to His elect, those whom He only could have foreordained that He would save in the midst of their sin, rebellion, and alienation, and provides the solution to the human predicament—vicarious atonement of the elect alone through the death of His Son.

*According to the Christian reformed, predestination is God’s grace. It is a false and pernicious doctrine based exclusively on sensual perceptions, but now the cyst of the Predestination ENTAMOEBIA is in the intestine, the first stage of the infestation.*

Predestination became a popular and widespread belief in the church as God’s answer to the human predicament but ultimately created another predicament of its own. Calvin assures the elect

\*[Part One of this article was published in this journal in November, 2006, pp. 332-339. Using the disease model presented there, the author now illustrates how the false doctrine of predestination has infested the body of human beliefs. Ed.]

that they will receive a token of their status by being called, or what he refers to as vocation. Another indication of election is justification. These tokens are highly subjective and gave rise to a predisposition toward a variety of tortured introspection that was associated with religious experience.

This introspection was not self-examination in order that a person might be convicted of sin, for such examination was meaningless. All men, even the elect were totally depraved and thus powerless to shun evil. Rather it was a form of introspection to see if God was providing evidence of vocation by visiting with “saving faith” that would provide justification. For justification was by faith alone, but even this faith was a gift from God. In the age of colonization, the reformed religions were given freedom from state interference in the new world, and puritan America became a significant arena for the application of this vital religious pursuit. Gradually, the preoccupation with seeking subjective evidence of election was challenged by political concerns that while Christians in the new colonies were engaged in such introspective and otherworldly interests, burly sinners would take over the emerging commonwealth.<sup>4</sup>

Further, the subjective search for saving faith, or simply waiting to be visited with it, was an exhausting and all-consuming exercise for the simple reason that a person’s whole eternity depended on it. Without the tokens of election all hope is gone. One writer on the subject at the time observed, “There is ground for believing that by this dread apprehension the reason of many has been dethroned.”<sup>5</sup> Another token of God’s election was conceived: If a person were a member of the elect, it follows that God would bless the favored and ignore or despoil the reprobate. Prosperity became evidence of God’s favor, a means of visible justification thus solving the mystery of election. In consequence of this, people worked hard to see if God would bless them in their labors. A work ethic appeared in

protestant doctrine, a work ethic based on a necessary visible reward, the appropriation of material wealth from one's efforts that was the tangible evidence of God's favor, grace and election. The stage was set for the open scrutiny and evaluation of people's spiritual destiny and consequent worth according to how materially fortunate or unfortunate they were.

***The Predestination ENTAMOEBA has now entered the bloodstream, the second stage of the infestation, and is residing in the liver. The capacity to differentiate between good and evil affections is diminishing.***

The idea of a favored elect with or without its religious roots, especially in the context of economic opportunities available in the virgin continent of the new world, promoted a gospel of success. This was interwoven with social and cultural forces which fueled the growth of unbridled capitalism from which a spirit of competition was also sustained. Rigidly predestinarian sects were glorying in their doctrine even to the point where charitable impulses were considered unnecessary. These "hard case" or "hard shell" predestinarians based their rather callous lack of compassion on the belief that individual or collective human action could have no effect on changing what was already determined by "the eternal decree of God."

This predestinarian fatalism may seem completely incongruous with other established ideals of religious charity, but this was an age where mercantilism and colonialism needed a justification of their own for subjugation and slavery. The disposability of indigenous peoples, initially based on sub-human classifications, was later justified by the expedient opinion that God had predestined them to eternal damnation for having been "excluded from the knowledge of His name" as Calvin had said. Through the teachings of Comte de Gobineau, a nineteenth-century French aristocrat and anthropologist, predestination took on distinct overtones of selective racial

superiority. Hitler and Nazism borrowed much from Gobineau's ideology. Gobineau's "Essay on the Inequality of the Human Races" (1853) was a doctrine of destined racial superiority that has been called "the Calvinism of raceology, real predestination."<sup>6</sup>

***The Predestination ENTAMOEBAs has now migrated to the lungs, the third stage of the infestation, and the ability to differentiate between truth and falsity is fading.***

It was at this time in 1859 that Darwin set the religious and scientific worlds upside down with the notion that nature itself was the driving and organizing force behind life. The appearance and organization of species was explained as the outcome of random mutations that promoted adaptability to the natural environment according to the laws of its order. Darwin, troubled by the dichotomy of beauty and brutality, preferred to withhold total commitment to design as it could not reconcile the nature of a benevolent God who either could not or would not eliminate suffering in a world where everything was determined. This dilemma is an echo of Swedenborg's warning that predestination attributes evil to God (*True Christian Religion* 486). Evolution overthrew the essence of theological predestination but could not engage the chaos of pure chance as a determining force. If anything akin to predestination existed, it could be expressed in the concept of natural selection, a form of natural predestination that reflected the physical laws governing the process of evolution, even though natural selection as a neutral mechanism did not actually "pre-determine" any specific outcome. Nevertheless, natural selection, if such a mechanism even exists, was about to be aided by the helping hand of human prudence approaching its worst.

The concepts of evolution and natural selection originating in England were applied to biology by Darwin and later to social organization and other disciplines by Herbert Spencer, whose

fame at the time rivaled that of Darwin. Indeed, it was Spencer who coined the phrase “survival of the fittest” in developing and applying evolutionary theory to philosophy, psychology, and the study of society; hence we have the term “social Darwinism” and all its implications.

The mechanism for passing on those advantages conferred by natural selection was the new science of heredity. Heredity also had an impact on the social as well as the physical sciences. A leading figure in this study was Sir Francis Galton, a cousin of Darwin, who by statistical methods purported that mental traits are no less inherited than are physical characteristics. In his book, *Hereditary Genius* (1869), he used the word “genius” to denote “an ability that was exceptionally high and at the same time inborn.”<sup>7</sup>

Galton went further to found the ideas of human eugenics, a term meaning “well born,” the nineteenth-century scientific term for the religious idea of the elect. The eugenics movement, which exploded in England and the United States, was dedicated to scientific endeavors to increase the proportion of persons with better than average genetic endowment. This was to be accomplished through selective mating of marriage partners based on the heritability of intelligence and personality, a kind of social predestination governed by human prudence completely oblivious to the source and purpose of conjugal love.

It is interesting to relate that Galton wrote an article on the efficacy of prayer.<sup>8</sup> In his article he noted that the vast preponderance of the population in all public gatherings said a prayer for the long life of the sovereign. Yet the life span of sovereigns was demonstrably lower than that of the average population. Therefore the efficacy of prayer was statistically unsubstantiated. Such was the inclination at the time to apply scientific and mathematical methods to spiritual principles or to impose human prudence over Divine providence, an indicator that the ability to differentiate truth from falsity was crumbling.

Evolution was a slow process that is only possible in the context of an inconceivable span of time. On the other hand, the science and the practice of eugenics provided an answer for the purposeful strengthening and preservation of the race in a way that random natural selection could not, unless natural selection was deployed through human prudence. “We cannot doubt,” Galton wrote, “the existence of a great power ready at hand and capable of being directed with vast benefit as soon as we have learned to understand and apply it.”<sup>9</sup>

***The Predestination ENTAMOEBA has now crossed the blood brain barrier and is in the brain.***

Inevitably it was clear that defining genius, or exceptionally high ability in all its varied forms was a foreboding task. Even if eugenics could isolate via heredity certain genius or inborn ability and promote it through selective breeding, then what abilities should be promoted and in how many? Within evolutionary doctrine, extinction itself was a proof of evolutionary failure. Instead of forcing evolutionary successes artificially, when those outcomes are hard to predict, why not concentrate on eliminating those elements that are easily identified as evolutionary failures such as the mentally ill? For if genius was an inborn trait so was its opposite.

The eugenics movement won substantial recognition in early twentieth-century America which became the first country to enact compulsory sterilization as part of its eugenics program. By 1941, 33 US states had endorsed sterilization policies. The number of people involuntarily sterilized in the United States as a result of these policies was 64,000. Other western governments, including Canada, Sweden, Australia, and others, were engaging in the same policies toward those considered defective.

The policy of Nazi Germany towards “defectives” was much more severe. Commencing in 1933 within six years, under The Nazi Act for Averting Descendants Afflicted with Hereditary Diseases, 375,000 forced sterilizations were carried out, almost

one in every hundred German citizens. In the United States, in 1935, Dr. Alexis Carrel, a French-American Nobel Prize winner for medicine in 1912, who had been on the staff of the Rockefeller Institute for medical research since its inception, published his book *Man the Unknown*. Within three years it had been translated into nine languages other than English. It was reprinted fifty times.

In his last chapter, “The Remaking of Man,” Carrel repeatedly looks to eugenics as the solution to the ills of society. He suggests the removal of the mentally ill and the criminal by euthanasia.

***The predestination ENTAMOEBAs has now incapacitated the reception of Love and Wisdom.***

In Germany, the systematic murder of people considered to be biologically unfit to live began in the mental hospitals and was initiated and wholly endorsed by the medical establishment, mostly by psychiatrists actively applying the principles of eugenics. Hitler was not principally a Darwinist as even a cursory reading of *Mein Kampf* will reveal, a fact that proponents of evolution enjoy and are perhaps obliged to point out. His sense of mission arose from the idea that God had predestined Aryan blood to supremacy as the “highest image of the Lord.”<sup>10</sup> In either case, those who believe that Nature or God is in need of their help still represent the effort of corrupt and self-serving human prudence to bring about the forced outcome of some form of predestination that benefits the self-nominated elect, as they define those ideas according to their own intentions and self love. It matters little if they are the Eugenicists in their belief that the [scientific] “development of the human personality is the ultimate purpose of civilization”<sup>11</sup> or the Nazi purists “fighting for the work of the Lord”<sup>12</sup> who sought the “fulfillment of the mission allotted it by the Creator of universe.”<sup>13</sup>

The theological concept of predestination that tried to reconcile the spiritual dichotomy of good and evil by establishing a parallel natural dichotomy of a vested and pitiless elect and a worthless residue of abandoned reprobates went through religious, economic, social, scientific, racial, and medical iterations to produce the holocaust that started in the mental hospitals. Predestination unleashed and validated the love of domination that always flows from the unbounded love of self. What would it take for men to see this great evil that arose from a religious doctrine based on merely sensual perceptions? In my view, it would take a world war, a war that was permitted by the Lord so this great evil could be seen for what it was.

When the allied armies liberated the concentration camps, the horror shocked the world and still does. In fact, the Nazis were only doing what the British, American, and French academics had unleashed on the world in their ideological movements of social Darwinism, survival of the fittest, racial supremacy and eugenics; movements that had their root in the pernicious doctrine of predestination.

If we may draw comparisons from the progressive degeneration caused in the body by a pathogenic protozoan to the mechanism of evil, as I have tried to do, then we are left to contemplate the following:

Evil is introduced from sensory interaction with a contaminated environment or with the environment in a contaminated way and worms its way in to reside in the lowest sense impressions that we have. It will grow to diminish the capacity to differentiate between heavenly and selfish affections. Affections arising in accord with those negative sensory experiences will attempt to appropriate false ideas, which then surreptitiously become the core beliefs of a person, an institution or a society. These core beliefs are essentially lies from hell.

Ultimately, the effect is to debilitate the capacity for receptivity of Love and Wisdom from the Lord. This is spiritual death.

The process is reversed in precisely the opposite way. The core beliefs, like the walls of Jericho, protect the evil that resides within the affections. The walls, the false ideas that protect evil affections, must come down. The children of Israel feared entering the Promised Land on account of the giants and walled cities they spied there. By circling the walled city and blowing the trumpet of the Lord's truth, the children of Israel demonstrated for us the process of discovering the truth as it applies to us. The shout that was issued after the sound of the trumpet represents the appropriation of the truth that we are able to see into our will, thus giving us a voice. Then we will have the capacity, strengthened by our understanding of the truth from the Word, to shun evils as sins against the Lord. The shout brought the walls down. The evil that was protected behind those walls was then exposed in order that it could be destroyed.

### References:

<sup>4</sup> For more information on the conflict within the early Puritan establishment see the trial of Anne Hutchinson who was banished from the Massachusetts Bay Colony in 1636

<sup>5</sup> Allen C, Guelzo citing James Ross, *Abraham Lincoln Redeemer President*, (Grand Rapids: William B Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1999), 37

<sup>6</sup> Feliks Loneczny, *On the plurality of Civilizations* (London, Polonica publications, 1962), 141

<sup>7</sup> Francis Galton. *Hereditary Genius, An Inquiry into its laws and Consequences*, second edition. (London: Macmillan and Co. 1892)

<sup>8</sup> Francis Galton. *Statistical inquiries into the efficacy of prayer*, (Fortnightly review, 1872) pp 125-135

<sup>9</sup> Francis Galton. *Essays on Eugenics—The possible improvement of the human breed*, (London: The Eugenics Education Society, 1909), 33-34

<sup>10</sup> Adolph Hitler. *Mein Kampf* (Volume 2 Chapter 1 Philosophy and party)

<sup>11</sup> Alexis Carrel *The remaking of Man*. Chapter 8, section 12 (Harper & Brothers, 1935)

<sup>12</sup> Adolph Hitler. *Mein Kampf* (Volume 1 Chapter 8, The beginning of my political activity)

<sup>13</sup> Adolph Hitler. *Mein Kampf* (Volume 1 Chapter 2, Years of studying and suffering in Vienna)

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**NDAIZANE ALBERT (LUCKY) THABEDE**  
**Resurrection Service, November 17, 2006**

BY THE RT. REV. PETER M. BUSS

When a ship sails away across the ocean, it gets smaller and smaller, and finally it disappears over the horizon. Yet it is still there. It has simply passed out of our sight. The country to which it is going will see it when it arrives.

We cannot see Lucky Thabede now because he has passed out of our sight. The earthly body in which he lived in this world had become too frail to contain the vibrant, powerful spirit of the man, and so his spirit left this body. We cannot see him, but others can. He appears now in the spiritual world in a spiritual body which is healthy and strong and which will live forever. His mind was always young and strong. The weaknesses he suffered were weaknesses of the body, and they afflicted his spirit for a while, but that is over now.

What will he feel as he comes awake? Because he was very ill, the first thing he will notice is that he is feeling so much better. He is without pain and weakness, and he can see clearly. Perhaps he will not know right away that



he is in another world, but there will be loving angels around him who will care for him and will tell him quite soon that it is so.

He will not be afraid of this knowledge, for he has always known about the life after death. From the New Church he has

learned what heaven is like, and he has known how he will awaken to eternity and what steps he will go through.

Will he grieve for the separation from his beloved family, who have cared for him so much? He surely will, and he will long to be with his wife Maureen now that his physical ailments are over. But the angels will comfort him—just as his family is comforted by loving friends here. And he will know that his spirit is close to her and to his loved ones.

He will rejoice in his newfound strength and health, and he will explore this spiritual world of which he had learned and taught so much here on earth. He will meet other friends and family who have gone before him, explore the beauty of this perfect world, and begin his journey towards his eternal home in heaven.

So as we gather here to remember him, it is right and necessary that we grieve for his passing. A fine man has left his family too early, and there is much sadness as we think of that. But we cannot grieve for his future. He is alive and well. He has no disease any more. His mind is alert and strong, ready to set to work once more.

For heaven is not a place where you sit still and do nothing. The Lord Himself is not an idle God. He works, day and night, to bring happiness to every one of His children. And He told us, “This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.”

Heaven will be a happy place forever because forever we will perform useful, kind, loving deeds to others—just as the Lord does for us. That is the secret of heavenly happiness. Each angel there is longing to bring happiness to others, and those others are longing to bring happiness to them, so the happiness of all increases each day.

So the Writings for the New Church say that the happiness of heaven consists in a life of useful service. And they also say that

our happiness here on earth is at its greatest strength when we are using our abilities to make other people happy. And that ability—to work to improve the lives of those around us—that is the joy of heaven.

So to all eternity the angels work to help people out of their unhappiness and to bring them more happiness. They help us here on earth. They help people arriving from this earth to enter into spiritual life. They help each other. They even help the people in hell—trying to make their lives a little less miserable. When we think of Lucky Thabede we cannot help but think of his usefulness throughout his life. For many years he worked in human resources and in personnel management. As a director of personnel for a large company he had the difficult but very important job of representing to the management the needs and wishes of the many workers and of explaining the policies of the company to the workers. I remember how much he cared for the struggles of those who worked in this organization and how hard he tried to improve their lot. There can be no doubt that they were better off for the many times he succeeded in doing this. And there were some times of sorrow when he felt that management did not care enough for the messages he was bringing. But he was fearless in bringing them.

While still working full time, he decided to become a minister of the New Church. He had been the leading layman in the Alexandra Society, but it was without a pastor. So he studied at night for several years, and was ordained over ten years ago. He continued to work full time at his job, and during his lunch hours and in the evenings he would write his sermons, prepare classes for adults and young people, and visit the sick and conduct special services such as funerals, baptisms, and so on. It was a busy, busy time, but when he was asked if it was too much he would insist that working on church work was not stressful he loved it so much.

He was remarkably brave. Some years ago he underwent a major operation for cancer and less than two weeks later he attended a full week of ministers' meetings, participating fully in them. When we asked him how he was, he answered with his trademark statement "No, I'm all right." He didn't want to concentrate on his health; he wanted to get on with the work that needed to be done.

His family remembers him as a pastor for his charity to others. He was always willing to reach out to everyone. He tried to make sure that those who were poor could attend such events as a church week in Durban and often helped them out of his own pocket. He was so good in visiting his parishioners and reaching out to those who had drifted away from the church. If they died, he did not hesitate to offer to conduct their services. It did not matter that they had not been active recently; he cared for them and their families. Under his care the Alexandra Society grew strong once again, and that brought him much satisfaction.

Because of his leadership, the ministers of the Church and the lay leaders recommended that he become the Executive Vice President of the Church in South Africa. It was sad that his health became poor very soon thereafter, because he would have done much good in that job.

His children remember him as a strict and firm father who wanted to ensure that they had the right moral values. For example, if they found some money lying about, he taught them to ask themselves if they knew they had left it there. If not, then it was not theirs to take. He taught them the finer points of telling the truth—not just to avoid telling lies, but not to change a story just a little in order to make their point.

He also realized from an early age that the hopes of South Africa rested on a well-educated black middle class which would one day be running a great many of the political, social, and business affairs of the country. He and Maureen sacrificed a lot to ensure that their children had a fine academic education as

well as a fine moral and spiritual one, and it is greatly to their credit that their children are so well-adjusted, so happy, and so useful themselves.

So Lucky worked in business, in the church, in his home, and in society for the benefit of those he served. So he has really been preparing for many years to be an angel.

But life was not all work. He loved fun also, and had a fine sense of humor. He loved music and singing. He played the clarinet with friends as a young man and continued to play it for many years. He would lead groups in spontaneous singing, and he insisted that they do it right—especially if they sang too slowly or without enough energy.

It was hard to see him so ill for the last few years. He longed to be back at work, to be able to do the things that he considered important. In providence it was not to be so here on earth. But today he begins to perform acts of useful service again. What will he do in heaven? Surely he will hope to serve the Lord as a minister once again—for teaching the truth is needed in heaven as well. Probably he will have a task of helping people who are in need of guidance and support, as he did on earth. One thing we can be sure of: The vibrant, strong spirit that was always his despite sickness and pain is starting to be active again. Under the guidance of the Lord he begins his eternal work. “Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from henceforth. Yea, says the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors (the labors of putting aside earthly desires). But “their works do follow them.” Lucky will follow his love of usefulness to all of eternity.

**Ndaizane Albert (Lucky) Thabede.** Ordained August 1993; 2nd degree, March, 1997. Served as Pastor to the Alexandra Township Society, South Africa (1993-2003). Executive Vice President, South African Corporation 2001. Lucky is survived by his wife Maureen.

## *Editorial*

### HOW SHOULD WE THINK OF THE FUTURE?

No matter how carefully we plan, the future is by no means certain. We might wish that it were otherwise—that we might know with certainty what to expect in the months and years ahead. Actually, it is of the Lord’s providence and wisdom that we do not know the future.

We can look to the future in one of two ways: as an opportunity to achieve *our* purposes, or as an opportunity to fulfill *the Lord’s purposes*.

The first view is from self and leads to the anxious concern that is forbidden in Scripture. Someone who believes that he governs himself is “constantly agitated, being carried along into evil desires, into anxious cares about things of the future, and thus into a vast number of anxieties” (*Arcana Coelestia* 2892).

The second view comes from the recognition that life is not our own but is governed by the Lord. The person who believes this “trusts solely in the Lord and has no anxious cares about all else; he is quite sure that all things work for his good, blessedness, and happiness for ever” (*Ibid.*). Although such a person exercises diligent prudence to accomplish uses and to attain his hopes, he does not think of the future anxiously.

In this sense, the future *is* known. It is known to be in the Lord’s hands and leading to His good ends. Such knowledge does not relieve us of our responsibility to live in support of the Lord’s ends. It does not guarantee that all of our reactions to coming events will be positive and happy, but it does bring us the confidence to seek from the Lord our “daily bread” and to guard ourselves against the uncertainty of a “doubtful mind.”

Those who believe thus in an overruling providence are given a trust that the Lord is “directing their lot.” Consequently, they have “no wish to know beforehand what it will be, lest they

should in some way interfere with the Divine providence” (*Divine Providence* 179).

Hope and a desire for accomplishment are not forbidden. We should look upon the future with high hopes, using our minds and strength to bring forth fruit “unto life eternal.” The Lord has hidden the future from us that we may experience the joys and delights that come in the performance of use.

How then should we think of the future? Not without hope or ambition. Not passively, awaiting some mysterious fate. We should think of the future as a new opportunity to serve the Lord and the neighbor with energy, creativity, and a happy sense of accomplishment. We should face the future with confidence — not in ourselves but in the Lord’s providence. We should be ready to recognize that our ways are not always the Lord’s ways and that His will is to be done. Such an attitude will save us from many disappointments. We cannot be sure what the future holds for us, but we can be sure that the Lord knows and will provide that whatever happens in time will be conducive to our eternal happiness.

As we enter a new year, our lives often besieged by a host of natural concerns, let us remember the comfort of the Lord’s teaching: “Commit your way to the Lord, trust also in Him, and He shall bring it to pass” (Psalm 37: 5).

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## DECEMBER MAILING

If you have not received your December issue of *New Church Life* (or any of last year’s issues), please let us know and we will send a replacement copy. Please make your request by mail to Lisa Weiss, PO Box 743, Cairncrest, Bryn Athyn, PA 19009; by e-mail to [newchurchlife@newchurch.org](mailto:newchurchlife@newchurch.org); by phone at 267 502-4949 (mornings only). We apologize for this inconvenience.

## *Communications*

### **Predestination and Human Prudence (Part One)**

David Simpson (“Predestination and Human Prudence” *New Church Life*, Nov. 2006) quotes *Divine Love and Wisdom* 83 where it says that “all influx from the spiritual world is effected by correspondence.” He says that organisms that cause disease were brought into existence by man’s choosing to submit to the influx from hell and to appropriate evil in the misuse of his spiritual freedom. I may be misunderstanding him, but I think he is missing an important aspect of the science of correspondence. The material aspect of organisms themselves was not brought into existence but their evil spiritual significance, not for God but for man, was created by his fall from a celestial state. He then got “a warped view of everything,” as Swedenborg says in *Arcana Coelestia* 210. The organisms are not evil in themselves, but man makes them evil because they seem to attack his material, unregenerate proprium. It is the influx of evil materialism that blinds the mind to the God-centered, rather than the man-centered nature of this science. This is the implication I get from reading *Divine Love and Wisdom* 339, which David quotes at length in his article (page 333).

When we consider the overwhelming dominance of the world by human beings, with all the attendant ‘evils’ such as global warming, it seems to me that man is a material parasite on the world and all the other creatures with which we share it. To adapt David’s words, we feed and are sheltered while contributing nothing to the survival of our host, that is, the globe.

The position taken by our unregenerate proprium is a negation of *Arcana Coelestia* 46, which David quotes, where Swedenborg quotes Joel 2.22 “Fear not you beasts of the field for the dwelling places of the wilderness have been made green.” *Entamoeba histolytica*, in moderate numbers, is an essential

contributor to the balance of nature, but since evil entered the world we, mankind, assume that anything whatsoever that threatens the material life of a person is evil, and to express that concept we label as evil creatures perfectly innocent in themselves. We no longer live in spiritual harmony with nature and this, I think, causes David's and Darwin's problem when considering its apparent underlying misery.

David traces the path of *entamoeba histolytica* through the body. Why does he say it corresponds to evil? Regeneration works in exactly the same way in the gradual reformation of the entire man. 'Histolytica' means in Greek 'flesh dissolution'. If the fleshly liver (excuse the pun) is evil, *entamoeba* serves a valuable function in destroying it. If the 'disease' leads to final death of the body and resurrection to new life in the spiritual realm, then *entamoeba* is a thoroughly good thing, as it was and is when the Lord saw everything that He had made, and behold it was very good.

David Lister  
Bramshill, Hampshire, England.

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*Jacob's Ladder* in January 2007  
*Masculine and Feminine* in February 2007

## **The Dawson Creek Society and a 50th Anniversary**

Dear Editor,

My wife and I were surprised to see the Dawson Creek Society still listed in the December *New Church Life* as a Circle. In fact, after nearly fifty years of continuous operation, most of that time with resident pastors, the Dawson Creek congregation was finally and officially recognized by Bishop Kline as a Society of the General Church on January 20th, 2006.

While I have your attention, may I also invite all of your readers to consider joining us on the first weekend of August 2007 for the 50th anniversary of the dedication of our New Church building in Dawson Creek? Anyone who may be interested in attending should contact me or the church secretary in Dawson Creek for more information and to be included in our mailing list in preparation for the event, which will also serve as the focal point of a western Canadian District Assembly at that time. Please see our new website on the societies page of [www.newchurch.org](http://www.newchurch.org) or write directly to the address below, which is the pastor's home and office.

The Rev. Michael Gladish, Pastor  
1605 Loran Drive, Dawson Creek, BC V1G 4X9 Canada  
Phone: home, office + fax: 250-782-3353; cell: 250-719-5235

[We apologize for the oversight in the December issue and congratulate the Dawson Creek Society. Ed.]

# *Church News*

## **A Special Garden in Hurstville, Australia**

BY NORMAN HELDON

You might be interested to know that at the Hurstville Church we have a New Church garden, quite a big garden, with a variety of flowers, shrubs and trees, and also figures of animals and birds. Close to all these are attractive signs that give botanical information where appropriate and all explain spiritual correspondences. There is also a large angel figure and one nearby of a small boy and girl holding a book obviously meant to be the Word. Part of the sign reads, "When little children read the Word the angels experience an even deeper perception and delight."

We have a tennis court also, hired most days, and quite a few players have enjoyed wandering around and reading the signs.

### **Further notes from the church Newsletter entitled: FREE PUBLICITY**

In September a journalist came to play some tennis at our church tennis court. He was surprised and delighted by the beauty of the gardens at the back of the church building "in the middle of suburbia." As he strolled slowly through the garden, taking in the natural foliage and sampling the poetry and the quotations from the Writings displayed on small wooden signs, he met the gardener, 89-year-old Norman Heldon, the church member who, along with some other parishioners, was responsible for the transformation of what had been a wilderness.

The journalist, Ben Hewett, wrote a very laudatory article for the October issue of the prominent Sydney gardening magazine *Burke's Backyard*, replete with beautiful color photographs of the garden and Norman Heldon ("an old Digger," as he called him) clad in his gardening clothes. The article closes with the address of the church. In the article, the journalist wrote: "I will never forget Norm nor the wonderful pearls of wisdom that touched my spirit that day....I headed home, reminded that gardening is about getting in touch with the natural world and, perhaps, the spiritual world."

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In February, we will mail recruiting packages to age appropriate families who appear in the General Church database. These packages include an application form for admission of new students to the Schools. If you do not received a recruiting package and would like one, please contact the School Secretary at 267-502-2556. Requests for application should be made by March 1, 2007. Letters, phone or email inquiries should be addressed to ....

Margaret Gladish,  
Principal of the Girls School  
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267-502-2556

Scott Daum,  
Principal of the Boys School  
ANC Boys' School, P.O. Box 707  
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Please include the student's name, parents' address, the class the student will be entering, the name and address of the school he or she is now attending, and whether the student will be a day

*ACADEMY SECONDARY SCHOOLS APPLICATIONS*

or dormitory student. We urge parents to submit completed application forms by April 15, 2007.

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Thank you,

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