

New Church LIFE

A monthly magazine devoted to the teachings
revealed through Emanuel Swedenborg

In this issue:

Did the Devil Make You Do It?
A Sermon by Amos Glenn

Growing Young
Reflections on Age by Geoffrey Childs

The Writings in Spanish
A New Need In Latin America

A Tribute to Tatsuya Nagashima
Translator and Leader in Japan

February 2007

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A MONTHLY MAGAZINE DEVOTED TO THE TEACHINGS
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Notes on This Issue

It is comforting to know that the hells cannot make us do anything. The Rev. Amos Glenn, Pastor of the Pittsburgh society, points out in his sermon, “No, the Devil Did Not Make You Do It,” that “there is no force for evil, only for good.” No personal devil stands in the shadows to snatch away our souls. More sermons from Pittsburgh can be found on the Pittsburgh website: www.pittsburghnewchurch.org.

The Rev. Geoffrey Childs, now retired after a long career in pastoral work, remembers people who were old in years but young in heart. In his article, “Growing Young,” he reflects on the various states of life through which we pass. He finds parallels with the teachings of the Writings in empirical psychology. To grow old in heaven is to “grow young.”

A theme in this issue is the translation of the Heavenly Doctrine from Latin into everyday languages. First, Mr. David Simpson of Toronto, Canada, now Director of the Canadian organization for evangelization, ISI, (Information Swedenborg, Incorporated) turns his attention “South of the Border” with a strong appeal for more attention to Spanish-language translations. The accompanying report on evangelization in Mexico (p.64), adds urgency to this appeal.

In “Tributes to Tatsuya Nagashima,” we learn the story of a remarkable man from Japan who was baptized into the New Church only twenty-three years ago and has, since that time, translated more than half of the Writings from the original Latin into his native language. These are listed on p.69. He has left a legacy in Japan for generations to come.

In this issue, we include notes on a new book on marriage: *One Heart*, by the Rev. Erik Buss. This 432-page volume is currently available from the New Church Bookstore (see the promotional ad at the back of this issue).

NO, THE DEVIL DID NOT MAKE YOU DO IT

A SERMON BY THE REV. AMOS GLENN

“The enemy who sowed them is the devil, the harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are the angels.” (Matthew 13:39)

God vs. the Devil

We often think there is a great spiritual battle between God and the Devil—a battle for our very souls. This is not a bad picture to have because it explains a lot about how we feel during our spiritual struggles and how we can deal with temptation. It reminds us that the battle is not us against the devil, but *the Lord* against the devil. It is the Lord who draws us into heaven, not we ourselves.

God vs. Who?

But if you take the analogy too far, it begins to break down. We need to understand that there is no person called “the Devil.” There is no one person ruling in hell who has the power to oppose the Lord's will. The Writings for the New Church teach us clearly, particularly in *Heaven and Hell* 544, that there isn't anyone like that. And this becomes obvious when we wonder, “Who are these people? Who makes up hell?”

Just like heaven, hell is made up of people who once lived in this world. The only difference is that people in hell chose to oppose what was Divine while they were in this world. Do those people have more power than others? No, they're just people. They don't have any more power in hell than they did here on earth. But hell is a pretty powerful place. What is the power of the hells? What power does this “devil” have?

To answer this question, consider this passage from the gospel of John where the Lord is telling the people around Him that while they think they are the descendants of Abraham, in fact they are not. Those who hear this message are very offended.

They say, “We were not born of fornication. We have one Father—God.” Jesus replies to them:

If God were your Father, you would love Me, for I proceeded forth and came from God; nor have I come of Myself, but He sent Me. Why do you not understand My speech? Because you are not able to listen to My Word. You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it. But because I tell the truth, you do not believe Me. Which of you convicts Me of sin? And if I tell the truth, why do you not believe Me? He who is of God hears God’s words; therefore you do not hear, because you are not of God. (John 8: 42-47)

This is a powerful condemnation of these people. They're thinking, “We're the children of Abraham; we're the chosen people. We're God's children because we are the children of Abraham.” But the Lord was denying them this thought by responding, in effect, “No. If you were God's children, you wouldn't be behaving as you are right now. You prefer doing the will of the devil, so he is your father.” Then He explains where the devil's power is: “he is a liar.” The devil, He says, lies from his own resources. The power of the hells is in their ability to deceive and persuade people.

The Power of a Lie

Think about the woman in the Garden of Eden. She knew the difference between right and wrong. Why did she choose to do what she knew was wrong? Because she was deceived. She believed the lies that were told to her. Those lies became part of her belief, her point of view. But good things cannot be built on falsity. When falsity becomes part of who you are, the result is bad behavior. Therein lies the power of the evil spirits. The terrible power of the devil is the ability to lie, and to lie so convincingly that sometimes we can't tell the difference between our own voice and the devil's voice, or between our own

thoughts and the thoughts the evil spirits put into our minds.

Sometimes, we want so much for something to be true that when people tell us it is true, we believe them. We never stop to compare what they tell us with what the Lord teaches in His Word—the source of all that is genuinely true. The only power that the evil spirits have is this ability to lie to us. And they have this power only because it is granted to them by the Lord.

Who Governs Hell?

Many people, as the Writings of the New Church tell us, believe there is a personal devil that governs hell, called the Devil or Satan. But the Writings tell us that's not true. Who governs hell? The Lord governs hell just as He governs heaven. The Lord governs all of creation.

We may wonder, “If the Lord is governing hell, why are there bad people doing bad things in hell? Why are they allowed to influence us?” The answer is because of Divine order and Divine providence. The Lord's providence is His government providing what we need to reach heaven. He protects everything we are, so that we remain human. His government in hell is such that He imposes only as much of Divine order on it as the people there can bear and still remain human beings.

For most of their lives, evil spirits in hell are not allowed to do evil things, only to fantasize about doing them. But they are allowed to lie to us. This is for the sake of our own freedom, that is, for the sake of our ability to rationally choose between what is right and wrong—to follow the Lord and to be elevated into heaven. Without that balance, or equilibrium, we would not be human beings. So the Lord turns the desire these spirits have to do evil to a good end. He uses the evil to protect human freedom, to protect our ability to choose rationally.

Implications of the Lord's Government

We may readily accept the simple idea that the Lord governs

everything but may not often think of its far-reaching implications. Dramatic ideas arise when we really delve into the truth that the Lord governs everything and that there is no devil governing hell. It means that Divine order is all there is. It means that Divine providence leading to heaven is all there is. There is no such thing as infernal order and no such thing as infernal providence. There is no force acting on the world to lead us without our knowledge into hell. There is only the Lord's Divine love leading us toward heaven.

The only power the evil spirits have is to lie to us. Think about the man who planted wheat in his field. At night, when men were sleeping, his enemy came and sowed tares—weeds—into his field. As the wheat began to grow, so did the tares. Perhaps the enemy was hoping that the man who owned the field would tear up the weeds and destroy all the wheat, too. Similarly, the evil spirits would like nothing more than for us to confuse what is good and what is evil and to tear up all the foundations of our spiritual life.

There are many people who think of themselves as Christians who are ready to give up all religion because of some of the false doctrines that their churches teach. Instead of being able to pull up only the tares of the trinity of three persons or only the tares of faith alone, they pull up the wheat with the tares, leaving the field bare and their religion empty. The hells lie to them saying, “If you can't believe this one part of the religion that's being taught to you, you can't believe any of it!”

The Hells are Powerless

Can evil spirits make you stop believing it? No! They can only tell the lie that if you don't believe this then you can't believe that. You can dismiss this lie outright and say, “That's ridiculous! Why would you even think that?” And then the hells have no power over your life.

Remember, those tares were put into the field where the wheat

was growing. The evil spirits could not have grown tares where there wasn't wheat growing. The enemy of the man in the story didn't come to rip out all of the wheat seed and plant all tares—they couldn't grow—the hells just don't have that kind of power. The Lord can create worlds. The Lord can endow people with freedom. The Lord can create love. The Lord can teach people. The Lord can make it rain. The Lord can make seeds sprout.

Can the hells do that? The hells can't make it rain. The hells can't make a seed sprout. The hells can't create anything because they are nothing else than people who don't want to follow the Lord. That's all. We may cringe in fear of them because they seem so powerful. They seem so powerful when we think of life as a great battle between the Lord and the Devil, and that they are somehow equal in power. But they are not. The Lord has all power and the hells would have no power at all if the Lord didn't give it to them.

Lies of the Devil

There is a saying: The greatest trick the devil ever played was to make people think he didn't exist. And there is some truth to that. But, in fact, the devil *doesn't* exist. So maybe the greatest trick that the hells can do is to make people think that the devil does exist *but not hell*. Evil spirits are very skilled at these lies. They can make the human race think that there is something just as powerful as God called Evil, that evil can cause bad things to happen to people, and that the Lord cannot stop all of them from happening because the devil is equally powerful. And then, to top it all off, they may say there is no such thing as the devil after all, and therefore there is no such thing as good either.

They lie to have us believe that everything is fine. “What you believe is fine,” they say; “there's no judging anything as right or wrong.” But there *is*. There *is a difference between right and wrong*, and we understand the difference by going to the Lord's Word and learning what is true.

And when you do go to the Word to learn what is true and good, it is then that the serpent whispers lies, saying, “This is the Lord telling you not to do things because He doesn't want you to have any fun” or “This is the Lord telling you not to do things because He wants to control you” or, even worse, “These stories aren't the Lord telling you anything. They are the words of old men who died long ago who have no idea of what modern society is like. Forget the whole thing and just do what you think you need to do.”

No Force for Evil, Only for Good

There's no force in the universe leading us without our knowledge towards hell. Evil spirits can only lie to us, deceive us, and persuade us to do bad things and to oppose the Lord in our own lives. That's the only way we can become part of hell. Living that way and doing those things is a free, rational choice that we make. The hells cannot make us do anything. We are free people. The Lord guarantees that we are free, rational people able to make choices between right behavior and wrong behavior—able to know what is good and what is bad and choose what is good and right. And when we do that, there is nothing that the hells can do to stop us. *Amen.*

Lessons: Genesis 3:1-13; Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43; *Heaven and Hell* 544.



The Rev. Amos Glenn serves as pastor of the Pittsburgh New Church in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania and as principal of the Pittsburgh New Church School. He and his wife Diahnne (Halterman) have lived in Pittsburgh since the year 2000. They have two children.

GROWING YOUNG

BY THE REV. GEOFFREY S. CHILDS

Bishop de Charms lived among us until 99 years of age. He retained his essential character, affections, and interests. He continued to give papers to the Council of the Clergy until a very old age; but instead of delivering them from notes as before, he began to read his short studies. When he was about 90, the Council was discussing evangelization, observing how things really weren't going well. Bishop de Charms got up and, for the first time in years, spoke extemporaneously. He spoke vividly about how the Christian Church started with so few—that even among the 12 apostles, one turned against Him. Yet that Church grew, became widespread. This was a very young man talking, with powerful insight. It was unforgettable.

Bishop Alfred Acton I (1867-1956) was my teacher in the Academy Theological School. In his 80s he invited the theologs to his home for supper, home-made beer, and discussion. Often we'd discuss the nature of spiritual substance, one of his favorite subjects. He would sit back and watch the theologs discuss. His face was absolutely alive, and there was no feeling of any age difference. He was one of us, except much wiser. He was young.

I had an uncle in his late 70s, early 80s, still an active lawyer, still exploring new ideas. He loved the Heavenly Doctrines; they were very much alive in his mind. At the shore, he loved to swim and he'd enter the waves as "Mr. Magoo," without teeth, glasses—but with childish delight. He loved to talk New Church ideas with us.

I knew two sisters in Toronto, then well along in their 90s. They were absolutely alive and young: interested in you, in other people, in the church. One of them was quite a feminist activist. Once I told her, kidding her, that we had a rule in the Church that once past the age of 85, women couldn't serve on the pastor's council or the board. She was absolutely indignant until she

caught on that she was being kidded, and laughed.

What Makes Us Young?

What makes an old person young? And why are there so few that are that way? I think both the Writings and empirical psychology help answer these questions, at least to some degree. In talking about spiritual youth, which is the essential cause of being young, the Writings tell of certain symbolic portrayals:

There are spirits who are in other respects good, but who cannot as yet be admitted into heaven, because they are not willing to hear and to admit interior and [still less] the more interior things of the Word.... Upon earth there will...be many who will hate the interior and more inward things of the Word, because they more closely touch the life of their love.... Those spirits were represented to me by a vision—they were like an old woman with an ugly face...snowy white; the face was irregular [in its features], and anything but beautiful; in a word it was deformed.... But afterwards, spirits who hear, admit, and love interior things, were represented to me by a virgin in a white shining garment, in the very prime of her maiden age, playing on a musical instrument. Thus, such spirits are clothed in white shining raiment, and are remitted into the bloom of their youth.... (*Spiritual Diary* 1139-1143)

The willingness to hear the Word openly, and to admit its interior and inmost things, is the pathway to spiritual youth. Behind this willingness to apply the inmosts of the Word to one's mind and heart is an inmost quality. This is expressed in the Word by the Lord's words: "Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of God. Assuredly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will by no means enter it" (Luke 18: 16-17). About this the Writings teach that "a person is so created as to be during his childhood in external innocence and, when he becomes old, in internal innocence, to the end that he may come by means of the former into the latter, and from the latter return to the former. For the same reason when a person becomes old he dwindles in body and becomes like a child, but like a wise child, that is, an angel, for a wise child is in an eminent sense an

angel” (*Heaven and Hell* 278: 3).

Two Ways to View Aging

Heaven and Hell reveals that “to grow old in heaven is to grow young” (414). A couple from the inmost heaven, thousands of years old, appeared to Swedenborg as incredibly handsome and beautiful, and very young. Yet they were among the wisest beings in creation. Growing old in body on earth can be looked at in two ways: from the stand-point of time and the aging body, or from the viewpoint of states and the essential spirit. All of our growth toward regeneration on earth is toward being young in spirit. Old age can be the wisest and even happiest time for us on earth, if we think in the light and warmth of the trinal Word and follow the revealed path of life. To be reborn is to enter heaven in heart even while on earth, and thus to enter the youthfulness of heaven. The same familiar passage from *Heaven and Hell* puts it beautifully:

Those who are in heaven are continually advancing towards the spring of life, with a greater advance towards a more joyful and happy spring the more thousands of years they live; and this to eternity.... Women who have died old and worn out with age, if they have lived in faith in the Lord, in charity to the neighbor, and in happy marriage love with a husband, advance with the succession of years more and more into the flower of youth and early womanhood, and into a beauty that transcends every conception of any such beauty as is seen on earth.

These angels are the very forms of charity.

Old age is ideally a “wise infancy,” innocent and playful. Just because this is very rare today does not mean that it cannot exist, or will not gradually increase as the New Church is established more universally. Conjugal love is said to be rare, but it does exist. And so with a wise and happy old age. The cause of this comes not from our doubting lower senses or “death” forces in the lower psyche, but rather from the Lord Himself, and His heavens. We are told: “‘Old age’ in the internal sense does not

signify old age, because the internal man, or man's spirit, does not know what old age is; but as the body or external man grows old, the internal passes into newness of life, man's spirit being perfected by age as his bodily powers diminish" (*Arcana Coelestia* 4676).

I have often visited old people's homes in my pastoral work and have seen the senility and pathetic states of people there. So often one sees a senile old woman hugging a doll. She is back in infancy again on one level of her mind. And the Lord is instilling with her special new remains that will last to eternity. No evil or disorder is permitted that will not yield some eternal use; and so with the senility of some in old age. An interesting contrast to the picture of old people's homes just drawn is in the book by M. Scott Peck entitled *A View by the Window*. The people he describes aren't really old. Some, a few, are even touchingly wise and alive. Scott Peck knows whereof he speaks, having served for years as a doctor in such a home.

Growing old gracefully is a vital part of living a trusting, spiritual life. Despair, grouchiness, in fact evil itself, attack strongly in old age. Later states of regeneration involve highs and lows more extreme than in youth. But if the lows are faced by holding the Lord's hand and obeying His Word, the gift of inner youth that follows gives all of life a tender meaning. I think that is why we are so affected by the innocence of some old people. When they are alive and youthful in spirit, innocent and open, it has an effect more potent to our hearts than that of even an innocent child.

Choosing to be Old

In utter contrast to this are certain attitudes that can make us old even when chronologically young. You can see, for example, a relatively young adult who is a fussy old person, with established old person habits. By their hair-do and body language, certain young women can say: "I'm not going to get

married—I'm a spinster-person!" And a young man, deeply imbedded in old person habits, can make a similar male statement. Certain psychological defenses or stances make us old in mind and go against creativity, openness, and youth. And some spiritual attitudes are even more potent in aging us long before the body is old.

What the Writings Teach about Developing States

Each stage of life has its time of crisis when we make the choice between aging or growing spiritually younger. At an early adult age we can choose to be an "Ishmael" forever (speaking in the symbolic terminology of the Writings), a rebel who is at first young, but ages quickly in negativity. Isaac, our rational and spiritual faith, is far more alive than his spiritual brother Ishmael. But in Isaac's old age, his eyes grew "dim that he could not see" (Gen. 27:1). Then it was time for Jacob to lead in spiritual life. Jacob calls for self-discipline in obeying the Word from a free conscience. If we reject obedience, we never mellow into the "Jacob-becomes-Israel" state. Instead our spirit calcifies. Instead of rejecting mediate good with its merit, we buy into merit 100%. And it undermines our spiritual youth. After the "Jacob-becomes-Israel" state, Joseph comes on the scene. He represents our later regeneration stage of truly finding and loving the Lord.

But we can reject this tender new state, yielding to what would be signified by adultery with Potiphar's wife, or remaining in the prison of Pharaoh. The choices in growing spiritually young always involve the Lord first of all—calling upon Him, asking His help to shun our disclosed ruling evil. If we do this from the Lord, He will lead us on the path of life, which is also the path of "growing young".

But there are also emotional or psychological attitudes, stances that age us prematurely. The wounds of emotional and mental disorders can cause temporary spiritual oldness. Emotional hate

and guilt are strong inhibitors of youthfulness and aliveness. And so is the anxiety and fear that hate, anger, and guilt bring. They tend to make the body rigid in defensiveness, and turn back the thinking levels of the mind. Regression is very common in emotional illness, regression caused partly from fear. In an interesting number, the Writings directly teach that fear closes down the mind (*Divine Providence* 139:1). And this is the opposite of growing truly young. A pathetic psychological aging factor is perfectionism based on a false conscience. The repetitive patterns in perfectionism, in trivial habits that trap the mind, are sad. They speak of an emotional “aging” that is pathetic to see.

The whole effort in therapy is to free the mind of these emotional defenses that are such traps. And if through self-discoveries the mind gradually becomes free, the potent awareness of youth comes in like a fresh and gentle breeze. The direction then is to proceed spiritually to grow young as well, to discover the delightful promises the Lord bestowed upon Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph.

Confirmations in Psychology

The Writings speak a great deal about the successive stages or major states of life. These are delineated especially in *Arcana Coelestia* 10225, which speaks of four major states from infancy to old age, with subdivisions in these states. What is interesting to me is to see how empirical psychology has also picked up on major successive states, and how there is a bit of a matching up between Revelation and psychology. In fact, the two fields feed each other.

Erik Erikson, a writer in this field, noted three major adult stages: “intimacy versus isolation” from the ages of 20 to 40; “generativity versus stagnation” from ages 40 to 55; and finally “integrity versus despair”¹. His idea of “predictable crises of adult life” was brought to widespread attention in Gail Sheehy’s

book *Passages*.²

She expanded on Erikson's ideas, preferring the less loaded word "passage" over "crisis." Again, one sees correlations between stages found in the Writings and those she discovered by collecting and analyzing case histories. Her empirical studies divide life into a series of passages. And she includes biological factors that affect these stages, such as menopause and aging.

The stage of "pulling up roots," roughly from 18 to 22, she defines as the age when we "cast about for any beliefs we can call our own.... The tasks of this passage are to locate ourselves in a peer group role, a sex role, an anticipated occupation, an ideology or world view" (*Passages* 37-39). This sounds much like the transition from Ishmael to Isaac faith! In proceeding to define the following stages, we see times when the psychological state and the spiritual state seem identical. In the "trying twenties," for example, one major focus is, "How do I put my aspirations into effect?" This parallels the early Jacob state so clearly, which is the application of ideals to natural life. Later, she speaks of the "Deadline Decade" (35 to 45): "In the middle of the thirties we come upon a crossroads.... There is grieving to be done because an old self is dying.... The man of 40 usually feels stale, restless, burdened, and unappreciated.... There are [with people] major shifts of emphasis away from pouring all their energies into their own advancement. A more tender, feeling side comes into play. They become interested in developing an ethical self" (43-45). This sounds doctrinally almost identical to the late Laban-Jacob relationship, when Jacob sees that Laban is "no longer with him, as yesterday and the day before" (cf. Gen. 31: 2). Spiritually, a person then sees selfishness that he has not seen before and he wishes to

¹ Erik H. Erikson, *Identity, Youth and Crisis*, W. H. Norton and Co., New York, 1968, p. 94

² Gail Sheehy, *Passages*, E.P. Dutton, 1976

leave it behind.

Gail Sheehy's next major stage is defined as "Renewal or Resignation," and it sounds like the rebirth of the natural shown in Jacob's being renamed Israel. Gail Sheehy writes: "Somewhere in the mid-forties, equilibrium is regained. A new stability is achieved.... These may well be the best years. Personal happiness takes a sharp turn upward.... At 50, there is a new warmth and mellowing. Friends become more important than ever, but so does privacy." (*Ibid.* 45-46).

The Writings reveal another potential stage beyond this: the establishment of Joseph, or the celestial of the spiritual, in the inmost of the conscious mind. This would be a discovery of the Lord, a consciousness of His immediate presence never known before. Then Benjamin enters the story, corresponding to the new truths we've never truly seen before.

Harmony of Revelation and Psychology

The stages described by Erik Erikson, and the passages of Gail Sheehy harmonize with the revealed overview of states given by the Lord in the Writings. We are told that

...from earliest infancy to extreme old age a person passes through a number of states in respect to his interiors that belong to intelligence and wisdom. The first stage is from birth to his fifth year; this is a state of ignorance and of innocence in ignorance, and is called infancy. The second state is from the fifth year to the twentieth; this is a state of instruction and of memory-knowledge, and is called childhood and youth. The third state is from the twentieth year to the sixtieth, which is a state of intelligence, and is called adolescence, young manhood, and manhood. The fourth or last state is from the sixtieth year upward, which is a state of wisdom, and innocence in wisdom. (*Arcana Coelestia* 10225)

Each state is then described in some detail. In speaking of the last state, we are told:

[It] is a state of wisdom and of innocence in wisdom; which is when the person is no longer concerned about understanding truths and goods, but

about willing and living them; for this is to be wise.... From the succession of these states the person who is wise may also see the wonderful things of the Divine Providence, which are that a prior state is constantly the plane of the states which follow, and that the opening or unfolding of the interiors proceeds successively from outermosts to inmosts; and at last so that what was first (namely, ignorance and innocence), but in outermosts, is also last, but in inmosts; for he who knows that of himself he is ignorant of all things, and that whatever he knows is from the Lord, is in the ignorance of wisdom, and also the innocence of wisdom.” (*Arcana Coelestia* 10225: 6,7)

It is a wonder of Providence that the stages of psychology underpin and support the stages of regeneration. The Writings teach that we will go through major changes of state in our lifetimes whether we regenerate or not. These “natural” stages of life come with advancing age, and are inevitable. But they may serve as the basis and foundation for spiritual stages of progress; they strengthen and express interior development. Thus psychological growth and spiritual growth should go hand in hand (cf. *Arcana Coelestia* 5159, 4005, 4136: 2; *Apocalypse Explained* 543: 3).

The Lord Leads Us Through Successive States

The Lord provides stages of progress to help people in their pathways to compassion and wisdom. In this process, “every age has its delights, and...by these a person is introduced by successive steps into those of the age next following.... These delights had served the purpose of bringing him thereto; and finally to the delight of intelligence and wisdom in old age” (*Arcana Coelestia* 4063).

At the time of the Lord’s birth and earliest infancy, we are told of a man “in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon, and this man was just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel” (Luke 2: 25). Simeon was led by the Holy Spirit to the temple in Jerusalem just as Mary and Joseph brought the infant Lord to be presented. As Simeon held the Infant in his arms, he said, “Lord,

now let your servant depart in peace, according to Your word; for my eyes have seen Your salvation” (Luke 2: 29,30). The wise old Simeon holds the infant Lord—the secret of everlasting youth—in His arms. He is the leader, recognizing Who the Lord is.

Simeon represents loyalty to the Lord’s Word throughout a long lifetime. It is this quality that holds the Divine Child, the source of spiritual youth, in his arms. The Word offers many examples of wise old people, and we also know some in our own lifetime. More and more this will be the case on earth as people accept the trinal Word and live it. Instead of being regarded as second-class citizens, wise old people will be seen as leaders of the heart. It is said in the prophet Joel that “your sons and daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions” (Joel 2: 28). The “old men” here are the wise, and their “dreaming dreams” means that they instruct concerning truths. Wise old people can have a depth of experience and integrity to receive deep insights (*Apocalypse Explained* 624: 8), and to pass on their wisdom, their “dreams,” received from the heights of love. These are not imaginary “dreams” but the truest insights, comparable to Joseph’s dreams which represent “preaching concerning the Lord’s Divine Human” (*Arcana Coelestia* 4682). Wise old people teach us all, not didactically, but rather by their life and love’s example, and through open, gentle conversation.

Finding Wisdom Within

Where can we find these wise old people? Right within us, as we become older! How? By having the courage to look deep within ourselves from the Lord, and face directly our inmost ruling evil as He reveals it to us. And to pray to Him with all our heart to remove that evil. Then to act on this genuine repentance. If in our own psychology we find emotions of deep hatred and anger at parents or caretakers, we can follow the bravest route of

therapy and face these terrible hates within us. Again, by turning to the Lord, and praying for His help, acknowledging that of ourselves we nurse those hatreds, He will come to us, and help us. If the Lord discloses and helps us remove such ruling evil and such emotional hate, a wonderful dream comes true.

The Lord brings to us what He alone can bring: spiritual youth, the beginning of eternal youth. Perhaps we can discover that most beautiful gift of the Lord: the ignorance of wisdom, and the innocence of wisdom (cf. *Arcana Coelestia* 10225). The “ignorance of wisdom” is a new term. It denotes that our knowledge is so little compared to the vastness of creation, and the Infinity of our Lord. From this genuine acknowledgment of our ignorance can come a sense of wonder! Wonder before the beauty of creation. Wonder before the tenderness of the Lord. This is the quality of a “wise child.”

When this gift comes to us, as we deeply pray it does, then the idea of death itself will become less and less traumatic, less and less feared. It will be seen as it was in ancient times—as the gateway to heaven and to life. With death, the old body is cast aside and the loving person grows younger, and then youth in the heart is matched by the beauty of a young spiritual body. Then the angels can say of each of us what was said of Joseph: “Look, this dreamer is coming” (Gen. 37: 19).

Those who are in true conjugal love, after death, when they become angels, return to their early manhood and to youth, the males, however spent with age, becoming young men, and the wives, however spent with age, becoming young women. Each partner returns to the flower and joys of the age when conjugal love begins to exalt the life with new delights, and to inspire playfulness.... The person who while he lived in the world had shunned adulteries as sins, and who has been inaugurated by the Lord into conjugal love, comes into this state first exteriorly, and afterwards more and more interiorly to eternity.... [Then] a person puts off all the austerity, sadness and dryness of old age, and puts on the liveliness, gladness, and freshness of youth. (*Apocalypse Explained* 1000)

WHY SPANISH? WHY NOW?
Why translate the Writings into Spanish?

BY DAVID SIMPSON

The purpose of this discourse is to offer evidence that the time has come to make the Heavenly Doctrine of the New Church available in Spanish.

Both Spanish and English are principal languages of international communication and broadly based. Only Chinese outranks Spanish in the number of its primary users.

We in North America are at the doorstep of the Spanish-speaking world, the threshold of which extends deep into the United States itself, which is the 5th largest Spanish-speaking country in the world. Looking south, we can see that the current realities of Latin America present some interesting contrasts and opportunities.

Firstly, the literacy rates in Latin America are encouragingly high.

Secondly, there is an interesting demographic not uncommon in the developing world, which will serve to enhance the likelihood of change and the openness to new ideas. In Latin American countries there is a low median age, typically lower than western countries by about 10 years or more. Very high proportions of the population are young adults. Similarly there are large groups, as high as 30 percent in some countries, which are under the age of 14. At present and in the future, a substantial wave of these literate populations will also be in their young adulthood, an age of developing spiritual maturity when the Writings will have a substantial appeal. These surging populations will continue to be hungry for change in political, social, and spiritual arenas—arenas that the Writings serve to address and enhance.

Thirdly, there is a strong commitment to education in the

region, particularly early childhood education. This Latin American commitment to early education shows both the region's willingness and its ability to sustain and increase literacy, even in the face of the tremendous demands of a young population.

Fourthly, Latin America is also one of the most urbanized areas in the world, a phenomenon from the last quarter of the 20th century. The direction of internal migration continues to be from the countryside to the cities. People who arrive in the cities do not become lost souls, as it were, for there are social networks of people from the same regions and families who frequently maintain their connections to their (or their family's) place of origin. The effect is that ideas originating in the major metropolitan areas have a conduit into the smaller centers as people go back and forth, which is good news for the effort of evangelization.

Fifthly, the countries of Latin America are deeply Christian. That is to say, the Bible is revered and the person of the Lord is universally recognized and commonly worshiped. Latin American constitutions support freedom of religion, which has enabled many denominational sects to establish themselves within the last two decades both in the principal population centers and in the rural areas.

Traditional Catholicism is struggling against the incursion of evangelical denominations and other sects that are moving in to take advantage of an improving climate of religious tolerance. Some demographers have estimated that 1/8th of the region's 430 million people adhere to non-Catholic Christian denominations. Evangelicals also are beginning to wield considerable political power, a point noted only for its significance as an indicator of current social change. What is of interest to us is that as a consequence of evangelization by other non-Catholic Christian communities, the isolating stigma of

being a non-Catholic Christian is much less of a reality, most notably in Central America.

One effect of the rise of evangelical denominations and the liberalization of the religious environment is the introduction of a pluralism that also paves the way for the more open dissemination of ideas. Or perhaps the rising desire for pluralism, as seen in the advance of non-Catholic denominations, is a testimony to the forces of modernity, be they secular or religious. Either way, the prevailing factors of a literate population, the homogeneity of the Spanish language throughout the region, the communications infrastructure, a burgeoning young demographic pushing the demands for change in the religious and secular arenas, highly concentrated populations, and a strong indigenous spirituality will, in my opinion, combine to create an environment that will be highly receptive to the Writings, if they are available. We need to make the effort to produce Spanish translations of the Writings now so that when these factors culminate, and they will soon, the Church will be ready. For those of us in North America, our brothers and sisters in Latin America are our new world neighbors; in broad terms they call themselves Americans, as do we. We live in this hemisphere together.

The truth, the pallid and disturbing truth, is that our neighbors need the Writings desperately. The daily realities that characterize the urban experience of most of them are harsh. A walk through the barrio neighborhoods of Lima, Caracas, or Guatemala City with an open eye to the deep social problems could depress a person from the developed world. Still, these social problems are not a cultural phenomenon in the sense that we could say, "Well, that is what those people do, or what they are like." Actually, most people in Latin America work hard, no matter what they do, and they have to. Yet the underlying problems do not go away. These societies are parched with a

thirst for the essential truths of the Heavenly Doctrine. These are my personal reflections but I believe they are conclusions that are obvious to anyone who surveys the difficult social conditions that plague so many of these nations at the ground level.

In contrast to the modern urban problems, one only has to consider the great antiquity and the attendant spirituality that exists in this part of the world. Expressions of devotion and ritual worship continue to have a very important place. While flying over the lines of Nazca last year, I looked down and was overwhelmed by the motivation of the people to create representations of forms that inscribed temples on their landscapes. The results of their work appeared to me as expressions of correspondences that were at the root of the spiritual understanding and worship of people in the Ancient Church. The descendants of those ancient people are the populations that inhabit these nations today, and they are an intensely industrious and spiritual people who fortunately all happen to speak a single language—Spanish.

We could of course do nothing. We could wait to see if Spanish-language publishers want to translate the Writings for their own economic motives. If, on the other hand, there is a perceived mission to be involved in evangelization and the growth of the New Church in this part of the world, even if only to a limited degree, then I would suggest that some work to make the Writings available in Spanish should be undertaken by the church. The absence of an organized New Church in Spanish-speaking Latin America is not a reason not to do it, but rather precisely the reason to do it. In my opinion, what are needed are low-cost, durable, and portable paperback editions of the Writings that can be made readily available to a vast population that is waiting. Why not now? ¿Por qué no ahora?

SPREADING THE DOCTRINES IN MEXICO

The appeal for Spanish translations of the Heavenly Doctrine in the article immediately preceding this report has particular application to evangelization efforts currently in progress in Tijuana, Mexico. David Simpson, the author of the article and the new director of Information Swedenborg in Canada, reports: "I am currently working with a number of individuals in the church who are highly enthused about the prospect of having the Writings translated into Spanish. Pastor Mark Perry in San Diego, Willard Heinrichs in Colorado, along with Carla Friedrich, the pastor of the Convention Church in San Diego, and many local members have been working with a number of Mexican pastors in Tijuana who have expressed interest in the Writings. There is an outreach center that has been procured and remodeled, thanks to the efforts of Ralph Jungé, which has been named the 'Swedenborg Learning Center.'"

Reports in the *California Digest* newsletter by the Rev. Willard Heinrichs, the Rev. Mark Perry, and Mr. Ralph Jungé, describe meetings in Tijuana with seven Mexican pastors who have an interest. Some key people from the San Diego New Church, in addition to the pastor, are Ralph Jungé, Geraldo Gomez, and Jesus Zarzosa, the initiator of this new venture.

Willard Heinrichs writes: "In Tijuana we went to some office quarters referred to by Jesus as 'Proyecto Hispanaya'. There we met with seven pastors and a doctor.... It was clear from the outset that these ministers are educated, professional people besides serving as pastors.... While some of them can understand English, communication needed to go through a translator, which Geraldo did very effectively. When I told them about the courses I used to teach in the doctrine of the spiritual world, it was apparent that this was also an area that particularly interested them. In fact, when we began exploring with them what they might wish to study, they were most enthusiastic about

this doctrine. Sadly, we had to report to them that the book, *Heaven and Hell*, which especially contains this doctrine was only in the process of becoming available in Spanish.... For the moment, the only book of New Church teachings given through Swedenborg available in Spanish, so far as we are aware, is...*The New Jerusalem and Its Heavenly Doctrine*.... Jesus has about 20 copies of this work. We expressed dismay that the organized New Church in this world, to date, has been very slow to bring more of the Lord's second advent teaching into Spanish, considering the fact that this language has become so important today....[Since this report, other books and collateral works in Spanish have been found.]

“As the discussion proceeded, we came to agreement that the first thing we would do is begin to study together the *NJHD* which can serve as a splendid and practical overview of the New Church.

“Before closing, I would like to register my thanks and appreciation for what two of our General Church priests are doing in regard to potentially reaching out to the Hispanic community in the U.S. and Mexico. It is my understanding that the Rev. Mark Perry, serving in San Diego, has doubled up on his Spanish courses recently so as to become competent in Spanish as soon as possible. In Georgia, now the U.S. state with the fastest growing Hispanic population, the Rev. Patrick Rose is also seeking to acquire competence in Spanish. It is a very promising development and I can only hope and trust that in the near future these two gentlemen and others following their example will join with, and contribute their wisdom and experience to, those who are becoming increasingly excited about possibilities of seeing the New Church grow and flourish in the Hispanic community!” (*California Digest*, Oct. 2006, p.4).

We hope to report further on this work in future issues.

TRIBUTES TO TATSUYA NAGASHIMA

Tatsuya Nagashima, our good friend from Japan, passed into the spiritual world just before Christmas, after a protracted illness. He was 76. In recognition of his work for the General Church, he was presented last fall with an engraved tray along with a tribute from the Rt. Rev. Peter Buss.

Excerpts from a Tribute by Bishop Buss, Fall 2006

“[Tatsuya Nagashima] has made it a life's work, since finding the New Church, to translate the Writings into modern, clear Japanese. Over the years he has translated well over half of the theological works.... For many years he did all this work in his spare time while working full time.

“Translating the Writings into Japanese is not easy. Every language has its specific quality. Mr. Nagashima's insightful understanding of the Latin language and of the Japanese language, culture,



and attitudes have enabled him to present the Lord's words in the best possible manner to the people of Japan.

“Early on, he formed an organization for printing, advertising, and selling the Writings and related works (such as a book of fifty New Church sermons which he translated), and for keeping in contact with interested readers and finding ways of helping them to know more about the New Church. He called it, ‘Arcana Friends.’ It is a wonderful organization which has brought well over one hundred people into its community as well as distributing many of the books of the Writings all over Asia.

“Mr. Nagashima contacted the General Church and joined it with his lovely wife Sumie. He and Sumie have opened their home to visitors and to inquirers. He has advertised and promoted missionary lectures and kept in contact with interested persons.

“The warm and wise spirit he has shown in all his uses has touched our hearts and made us feel truly grateful to have known this wonderful man and his supportive and talented wife.

“With much affection in thinking of a friend who labors on in this work.”

Peter Buss

A Memorandum by the Rev. Donald Rose, January, 2007

I am writing because of having heard from Japan of the death of a good friend whose life has been an inspiration.

To tell some of his story, I would first mention D.T. Suzuki, (1870-1966). He was a kind of bridge between Christianity and Zen Buddhism. He may first have heard of Swedenborg at the World Parliament of Religions in 1893. Reading books of the Writings in English, he was keenly interested.

The council of the Swedenborg Society in London proposed to him that he translate *Heaven and Hell* into Japanese.

Suzuki called Swedenborg, “a seer unique in the history of mankind.” He attended the Swedenborg Congress in London in 1910. The Japanese translation was published in 1912, and the Society then contracted to have three more books done, ending with *Divine Providence* in 1915.

In the years that followed, a number of people in Japan became readers of the Writings. One of them was Tatsuya Nagashima whose life and work we now appreciate.

When Tatsuya was 13, his father died suddenly, leaving him

wondering and searching. He was attracted by Christian belief in eternal life and heaven. He became a Christian and, because of his brilliant mind, he was encouraged to become a Latin scholar. At age 26, he became a Jesuit.

He later looked back at the rigorous training in the Latin language and saw it as a preparation for his life's most important work. At age 36 he left the Catholic Church and his vows of celibacy and studied the Scriptures at a deeper level. He then found the translations of Suzuki in Japanese. He later obtained original Latin volumes, which he read with ease, and he discovered that there were others around the world who embraced the Writings.

In 1983, he traveled to Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania. I met him and heard directly from him of his decision to commit his life to the truths revealed in the Writings. [On April 3rd, 1983, the Rev. Donald Rose baptized Tatsuya Nagashima into the New Church.]

Tatsuya found out that Suzuki was not the only man to translate *Heaven and Hell*. There were half a dozen men who had done so, all of them translating from English. He resolved to do the first translation directly from Latin into Japanese. He was indefatigable, translating one book after another, and it dawned on me that we were seeing another John Clowes or another Le Boys des Guays (the two men who translated all books of the Writings, one into English the other into French).

Mr. Nagashima had translated the major works of Swedenborg and was moving along in translating *Arcana Coelestia* volume by volume. In 2001, he wrote in *New Church Life*, "I really would like *NCL* readers to share my joy of completing the first volume.

"Thanks to the Jesuit training, I am now translating the most valuable treasure in human history into my language. The Lord gives me a last chance of my earthly life for a challenging long-

term project.... Every day a new passage or number of *Arcana Coelestia* bewilders, frightens, challenges, inspires, reveals, awakens, or puzzles me. Before me a still indefinitely vast but immensely rich ocean is expanding” (p. 254).

“In the ocean of life ‘few swim in the rough waves.’ This, he recalls, is “a guiding metaphor of my life.” He writes, “I have swum alone in the rough waves of the ocean with few people around in common.... The Writings say, nothing is allowed to happen except to the end that something good may come out of it. Without my father’s sudden death, I wouldn’t have been baptized into Christianity...[or eventually] have been infilled with such an abundance of religious truths from the Writings” (*New Church Life* 2001 p. 251).

Donald Rose

[A resurrection service for Tatsuya Nagashima, given by the Rev. Donald Rose, was held in the Bryn Athyn Cathedral on January 18th, 2007.]

Works of the Writings Translated by Tatsuya Nagashima

Arcana Coelestia Volumes 1 – 6 (2001 – 2006)

(Volumes 7 – 8 translated but not yet published)

True Christian Religion

Heaven and Hell

Conjugal Love

The New Jerusalem and Its Heavenly Doctrine

Earths in the Universe

The Doctrines of the New Jerusalem concerning the Lord, the Sacred Scriptures, Life, and Faith (The Four Doctrines)

Divine Love and Wisdom

Divine Providence

The White Horse, Athanasian Creed, Charity

De Verbo, Summario Expositio

The Commerce of the Soul and Body

Book Noted

One Heart: Finding True Happiness in Marriage by Erik J. Buss, General Church of the New Jerusalem, 2006, 432 pages, soft cover

A number of new books on marriage have been published recently in the church. The latest, entitled *One Heart*, is a substantial volume by Erik Buss, currently pastor of the Westville New Church in Durban, South Africa. What follows is not a review but simply a description of the book to acquaint readers with this new publication, now available. We hope a reviewer will come forward in the future to provide a deeper analysis of this significant work.

In his acknowledgments, Mr. Buss credits the seed of the book to a New Church couple who asked for a book that brought together the clear teachings of the Heavenly Doctrine about marriage along with commentary, concrete applications, and stories from actual experience illustrating the teachings. No small task! “My thanks to them for the seed, without which this book would never have grown.” And grow it did. In total, there are 432 pages in compact but very readable type.

To collect the teachings of the Writings about marriage is, in itself, a daunting effort, for these teachings are not contained only in the work *Married Love*, also called *Conjugal Love*. No less than twenty works of the Writings from which passages have been garnered are listed in the key to abbreviations. We would estimate that as much as half the book consists of direct quotations from the Heavenly Doctrine organized according to specific topics.

Mr. Buss elaborates in his preface: “The goal of this book is to present the Lord’s teaching on a subject, then to offer pathways toward applying that teaching. Each chapter begins with passages the Lord offers on a subject with only minor comments

from me.” He continues: “Toward the end of each chapter, I offer my thoughts about what the passages mean, along with some questions to ponder, activities for you to do, and in some cases stories that illustrate the theme of the chapter” (i). In other words, extensive quotes about various topics on marriage begin each chapter. Key principles are drawn out from these. The author’s commentary and questions follow, but leave the reader the option of drawing his or her own conclusions from the selected quotations on the subject.

After an introduction of eleven pages on “The Lord’s Wish for Us,” the book is organized into three main parts: 1. “Preparation for Marriage,” 2. “Married Life,” and 3. “Challenges in Marriage”. These parts are followed by a chapter expounding the lessons of the marriage in Cana of Galilee found in John, chapter two. This is called “The Wedding Story.” Finally, an appendix is added which includes five essays about marriage by four priests and one lay woman: “Love is Not a Feeling,” “Internal Invulnerability,” “Woman as Heart,” “Some Thoughts on Masculinity,” “Common Misconceptions about Marriage in the New Church.”

Returning now to the three main parts with their numerous chapters, Mr. Buss explains, “I have tried to make each chapter self-contained, so that the book can be used as a topical reference work” (Preface i). It is not necessary to read consecutively through the book to gain the benefits of it. The reader can go to a specific chapter or topic of interest and find there the key passages from the Word that apply to it.

The first part on “Preparation for Marriage” may particularly appeal to young people and those looking toward marriage, but has teachings of interest to all. Fifteen chapters present a variety of topics from “The Nature of Men and Women” to “Contemporary Issues.” Along the way are sections on “What to Look for in a Partner,” “Why Is Virginity So Important?” “Physical Intimacy Before Marriage,” and of course, “Betrothals” and

“Weddings.”

The second part on “Married Life” again presents a wide variety of topics about which teachings from the Heavenly Doctrine have been drawn together. Among the eighteen chapters are “The Special Gifts of Men and of Women,” “Roles of Husband and Wife,” “Acknowledging the Power of Heredity and Upbringing,” “Lovemaking,” “Having Children: Strengthening Your Marriage.”

Finally, the third part of fifteen chapters on “Challenges in Marriage” brings together passages that bear on some of the difficulties couples may face during their marriages. Subjects such as “Doubts: ‘I Married the Wrong Person,’” “The Power of Commitment,” “Who is in Charge?” and “Separation: A Tool for Saving Marriages” are a sampling.

Mr. Buss is to be commended for making the many teachings of the New Church about different aspects of marriage so readily accessible. The hard sayings are presented along with the beautiful and encouraging ones. Readers may not always agree with Mr. Buss’s comments or conclusions about the topics under consideration, but he has not shied away from presenting his thoughts on dozens of difficult questions relating to marriage. One value of the book is to engage the reader in serious consideration of the important and crucial questions that arise from the application of the Lord’s teachings to our marriages.

We conclude with the opening sentences of the Preface: “In New Church teachings, the Lord has promised that true married love will be raised up again. As they work on their marriages, people on earth will increasingly experience a level of spiritual connectedness and natural delight that has been missing from this earth since ancient times.”

Kurt Horigan Asplundh

Editorial

THE AGE OF WISDOM

It is surprising to consider some medical statistics. About the end of the Second World War, the average life expectancy in America was sixty-three. Not much time for the average person to gain wisdom or exhaust the Social Security fund. In 1970, just a generation ago, average longevity in the United States was 73 years for women, 72 for men, a gain of 10 years. Now, it is at 79 for women and 78 for men; another gain, and still climbing.

Some civilizations have revered age and the wisdom of age, as we have not. It was a statute among the ancient Jews: “You shall rise before the gray headed and honor the presence of an old man” (Lev. 19: 32). In Chinese culture respect for age, which must have had its origins in the Ancient Church, was carried to an extreme as it degenerated into ancestor worship. A couple of millennia ago, the Roman Senate, a body of councilors whose very name is derived from a word meaning “the old men,” led that Republic to its heights.

But in our time it is not usually an honor to be old. This is a sad commentary on modern life. While it is true that medical science has learned to keep the elderly alive longer, and society has provided means whereby the aged are protected from physical want, appreciation for the deeper values of old age has declined. Who wants to be old?

This is confirmed by increasing emphasis on the youth culture. People in later years seem to be occupied mostly with efforts to stave off the inevitable inroads of old age.

Certainly, there is nothing wrong with maintaining our good health or enjoying a vigorous life at any age. But so far as we set our hearts only on the things of youth we are misled by the world. We lose sight of the values and uses of age and deprive ourselves of the unique benefits that come from our contact with

older people. The important uses of old age should be embraced rather than down-played.

“What,” we may ask, “is the use of old age?” The so-called “golden years” often are filled with “labor and sorrow.” As we advance into our eighties or nineties we may secretly pray to the Lord in the words of the 71st Psalm: “Do not cast me off in the time of old age; do not forsake me when my strength fails.”

The Lord hears. He does not forsake us in our old age. In fact, even though we may decline in body or mind, the Lord uses this period of life, even as He uses every period of life, to further the development of our spirit in preparation for the life to come, “a person’s spirit,” we are told, “being perfected by age as his bodily powers diminish” (*Arcana Coelestia* 4676).

What makes old age unique in human development? It is a time in our life for the development of wisdom and a state of innocence in wisdom. The Writings teach that from the age of sixty and beyond a person who seeks to follow the Lord enters a new state of willingness to be led and may gain a beautiful humility and trust.

Mere passage of years does not guarantee wisdom. We must strive for it. When properly sought, the state of old age is a state of wisdom. The Writings describe this as a state in which we are “no longer concerned about *understanding* truths and goods, but about *willing and living* them, for this is to be wise” (*Arcana Coelestia* 10225 emphasis added). The good of life takes on a new importance.

From the spiritual point of view, then, old age is not a decline but a culmination or completion of development. In spirit, we are never “past our prime,” but always approaching it. Old age puts the finishing touches on our life. The Lord never “casts us off.”

Communications

Why Not Reincarnation?

I am writing in response to Rev. Dan Goodenough's article, "Why Not Reincarnation?" (*New Church Life*, January 2007). I am puzzled by his view that "reincarnation is not the work of a Creator God who loves his creation and wants to maximize happiness." Surely a God of love would never give up on us. He would give us as many chances as we need to live the kind of life that would get us to heaven. The Lord's love extends to all people, and he never gives up on us. He forgives seventy times seven, and his mercy endures forever.

We are told in the Writings that all people are predestined to heaven and none to hell:

A discussion about predestination once took place and many of the spirits, owing to the chief ideas they had adopted in the world, were of the opinion that some people have been predestined to heaven and others to hell. But I heard a response to this from heaven, which was that no one has ever been predestined to hell, but that all have been predestined to eternal life. (*Arcana Coelestia* 6488)

It is a dictate of sound reason that all are predestined to heaven, and no one to hell; for all are born men, and consequently the image of God is in them. (*Divine Providence* 322)

All people, no matter what their state, have remains of goodness from the Lord, and these are never destroyed. The Writings have this to say about remains:

The Lord so preserves all of those states with the individual that not even the least of them perishes. I have been given to know this from the fact that every one of man's states from his infancy right through to extreme old age not only carries over into the next life but also reappears. Indeed those states are exactly the same as when he lived in the world. Thus not only are goods and truths in the memory carried over, but also all states of innocence and charity. And when states of evil and falsity, or wickedness and false notions, recur—for every single one of these as well, down to the smallest detail, is carried over and reappears—they are at that time moderated by the Lord through those states of innocence

and charity. From all this it becomes clear that if a person possessed no remnants, he would inevitably be subject to eternal condemnation.
(*Arcana Coelestia* 561)

This tells me that no one is condemned to eternal damnation since everyone has remains which are never destroyed. When we look at the world it is obvious that not everyone has the good fortune to be born to loving parents and brought up the right way and so make it to heaven in the space of one short earth life. Why wouldn't our loving Heavenly Father give us all as many chances as we need to get it right and find the happiness of heaven? How long it takes is irrelevant—eternity is a very long time. The happiness of heaven is what the Lord wants for everybody, and we are all predestined to heaven. I see no reason why the Lord could not replant our spiritual remains (our essential goodness) back into new life so that they can continue to grow.

Jenny Keal
Auckland, New Zealand

Dear Editor:

I would like to add the following to Dan Goodenough's article on Reincarnation:

The purpose behind reincarnation is the idea of a second or more chance on regeneration. Every time we come back, we can become more heavenly. What always turned me off to this idea and reincarnation is the fact that if we keep improving, then eventually we will die and dissolve in the Infinite. We will lose our own personality, and then what was the purpose of these many incarnations? I am back where I was not before.

Rev. Jan H. Weiss
Placentia, California

APPLICATIONS FOR ADMISSION TO THE ACADEMY OF THE NEW CHURCH GIRLS SCHOOL AND BOYS SCHOOL

We warmly invite applications to the Academy of the New Church Girls and Boys Schools. Founded in 1877 we continue to pursue excellence in the field of New Church education.

At the Academy of the New Church Secondary Schools, we prepare our students for a good and useful life. As an educational arm of the General Church of the New Jerusalem, we lead students through a rigorous academic curriculum so that they may find meaning, fulfillment, and happiness. As we instruct our students in the teachings of the New Church and encourage a life according to New Church principles, we develop their intellectual powers, teach them about spiritual realities of life, and offer them many avenues to practice spiritual and moral virtues.

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 receive 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 the principals.

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

Requests for financial aid are included as part of the application process. All requests for financial aid should be submitted to the **Business Manager, Les Alden, Box 711, Bryn Athyn, PA 19009. (les.alden@ancess.org. 267-502-2608.)** Please note: The earlier the request is submitted, the more likely we will be able to meet the need.

Admission procedure is based on receipt of the following: Application, Transcript, Pastor's Recommendation, Agreement Form, and Health Forms.

The Academy will not discriminate against applicants and students on the basis of race, color, gender, and national or ethnic origin.

Thank you,

Margaret Gladish,
Principal of the Girls School
ANC Girls' School, P.O. Box 707
Bryn Athyn, PA. 19009. 267-502-2556

Scott Daum,
Principal of the Boys School
ANC Boys' School, P.O. Box 707
Bryn Athyn, PA 19009. 267-502-2538

Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.

Revelation 3:20

THE HOLY SUPPER

The Lord says, "Do this in remembrance of me." He teaches us to open our hearts and minds so that He may enter. He shows us to the upper room where we can sup with Him and He with each of us.

Preparation for the sacrament of the Holy Supper is a personal endeavor. There are many sermons, doctrinal classes and addresses about the Holy Supper to lead us to prepare ourselves.

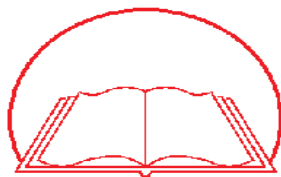
- #107664 - **Holy Supper**, contemporary service, Rev. Grant Schnarr
- #103768 - **The Last Supper**, sermon, Rev. Jeremy Simons
- #106342 - **The Holy Supper**, contemporary, Rt. Rev. Thomas Kline
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