

# 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:

The Hour Has Come  
An Easter Sermon by Grant Odhner

The Last Judgment — 250 Years Later  
by Andrew Dibb

Reports on the General Church in Africa:

- The South African Corporation
- Establishment of the Church in Ghana

Reincarnation -- A Reply

**March 2007**

# New Church Life

A MONTHLY MAGAZINE DEVOTED TO THE TEACHINGS  
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NEW CHURCH LIFE (USPS 378-180)  
PUBLISHED MONTHLY BY  
**THE GENERAL CHURCH OF THE NEW JERUSALEM**  
The Rev. Kurt Horigan Asplundh, Editor

PRINTED BY FENCOR GRAPHICS, INC. PHILA., PA 19111  
SUBSCRIPTION: \$16.00 to any address. SINGLE COPY \$1.50

Postmaster: send address changes to: New Church Life, PO Box 711, Bryn Athyn, PA 19009  
E-mail: [datacenter@anc-gc.org](mailto:datacenter@anc-gc.org)

Periodicals postage paid at Bryn Athyn, PA 19009  
and at additional mailing offices

## *Notes on This Issue*

A passage from Swedenborg's Diary lists the underlying reasons for our time of death (*Spiritual Experiences* 5003). This addresses the question, "Why do some die as children, some as adults, and some in old age?" In his sermon, the Rev. Grant Odhner applies these reasons to the Lord's life. Was the Lord in control of the time of His crucifixion? Why was this important? The Last Judgment took place in the spiritual world 250 years ago this year. This was the beginning of a new religious era in both the spiritual and natural worlds. The Rev. Andrew Dibb shows the continuing effects of this judgment in the lives of people today. The light of this new era brings hope to a dark world.

In the second of a series of reports on General Church corporations, the Rev. Gerald Waters, current Executive Vice President, gives us a brief history of the founding of the South African church corporation in 1994 and its subsequent progress. The report includes a list of the functions of the corporation, all vital to the support of the church in South Africa.

Last June, the Rev. W. O. Ankra-Badu provided the first installment of a history of the establishment of the General Church in Ghana. This month, he brings that history up-to-date with his second, and concluding, installment.



The Rev. Grant Odhner currently serves as Assistant Professor of religion in Bryn Athyn College and of theology in the Academy of the New Church Theological School. Prior to taking this position in 2002 he was pastor of the Oak Arbor Society, Rochester, Michigan for twelve years. He has also served the Boston New Church. Grant and his wife Sarah (Bruell) live in Huntingdon Valley, Pennsylvania.

## **THE HOUR HAS COME**

### **Why the LORD Laid Down His Life When He Did**

BY THE REV. GRANT H. ODHNER

On a number of occasions during His ministry people wanted to kill Jesus, but we are told, “No one laid hands on Him, for His hour had not yet come” (John 8:20, 7:30; cf. 7:6-8, 2:4). But in the twelfth chapter of the Gospel of John, just after His triumphal entry into Jerusalem, Jesus began to speak of “His hour” as being upon Him.

The hour has come that the Son of Man should be glorified.... Unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies it produces much grain.... Now My soul is troubled, and what shall I say, “Father, save Me from this hour?” But for this purpose I came to this hour. Father, glorify Your name. (23-24, 27-28)

The Gospels present the death of Jesus as a purposeful thing. Of course, it was not the Lord’s will that people should kill Him. Nor were His murderers helpless pawns in His scheme; they were free agents. We gather this from what He said to Judas: “The Son of Man goes as it is written of Him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed” (Matthew 26:24). People freely chose to betray Him and kill Him. They were culpable for it. At the very same time, Jesus insists:

I lay down My life for the sheep.... I lay down My life that I may take it again. No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. (John 10:15, 17-18)

We have here a facet of providence which is difficult for us to understand! In all death there is a Divine purpose, and yet the means of that death are often not from the Lord but are only permitted by Him. He is in charge, but evil is still allowed a role. Nowhere can this be seen more clearly than in the death of our Lord Himself.

The work *Spiritual Experiences*, number 5003, tells us “the

reasons why some die children, some youths, some adults, some old people....”:

1st. On account of the usefulness to people in the world.

2nd. On account of the usefulness, while he is [living] in the world, to spirits and angels; for a person is with spirits as to his interiors....

3rd. On account of the usefulness to himself [of his being] in the world, either that he may be regenerated, or that he may be let into his evils....

4th. Therefore, on account of the usefulness afterwards in the other life, after death, to eternity....

We are going to use these four reasons as a springboard for reflecting on the timing and meaning of the Lord’s death and resurrection.

### **Having loved His own in the world, He loved them to the end” (John 13:1)**

The first factor mentioned in determining when people die has to do with their “*usefulness to people in the world.*”

Obviously the Lord has to consider where people are most needed. If it is absolutely essential that a certain person be with loved ones in this world—either to serve them or be served in some special way—would the Lord allow him or her to be moved? There are vital uses to be served in this world that cannot be served by people who are in the spiritual world.

The Lord came into the world to be of use to people here: “I am among you as one who serves” (Luke 22: 27). Obviously, He was involved in the lives of the people around Him—Mary and Joseph, His brothers and sisters, His disciples, and many others. Surely His usefulness to them was a factor in His time of death. We see Him preparing His disciples for His leaving (e.g. in His three predictions and at the Last Supper—especially in John’s account, chapters 13-17). We see Him on the cross assigning the disciple John to take care of Mary (John 19). Or was His plan so big that He had to “sacrifice” the needs of individuals? No, each human being is important to Him, as He assures us: “Are not five

sparrows sold for two copper coins? And not one of them is forgotten before God.... Therefore fear not; you are of more value than many sparrows” (Luke 12:6-7).

But, more broadly, the Lord’s usefulness in this world was to people of all times. He was here to do a few things for us that He could not do from the spiritual world.

One of these things was to teach people the truth in natural terms, to show Himself in such a way that people here could see and accept Him. His actual presence here and teaching would inspire the writing of the Gospels. They would establish the church. The Lord could not leave the world before this work was finished. And, indeed, as “His hour” dawned He could pray:

Father... I have manifested Your name to the men whom You have given Me out of the world....I have given to them the words which You have given Me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came forth from You; and they have believed that You sent Me. (John 17: 6,8)

It is worthy to note that in this prayer Jesus says: “I have given to them the words which You have given Me; *and they have received them.*” The Lord’s work was not just giving His disciples the truth, but also enabling them to receive it.

The other thing that the Lord came to accomplish for people in the world (people of all time) was the regeneration of the mind He had taken on. We call this His “glorification.” By this He was able to free us from the grip of evil and falsity. And He could do this only by struggling with hell from the vantage point of a developing person in the world.

The Lord could not leave the world until He had accomplished these things—glorified His human and successfully transmitted new truth to people in the world.

### **Serving the heavens from earth**

The *second reason* for a person’s time of death (mentioned in *Spiritual Experiences* 5003) is the person’s “*usefulness, while he*

*is [living] in the world, to spirits and angels.”* “For a person is with spirits as to his interiors; and he is there as long as he is in the world.”

While we are in the world, we share feelings and thoughts with “like minds” in the other world. Spirits and angels experience these feelings and thoughts on a higher level, while we experience them as they sink into our natural consciousness. We serve each other in this relationship (*Last Judgment* 9). We rely on spirits and angels for our mental life: their thoughts and affections are “grounded” in ours. As a result of this dependency between the worlds, our usefulness, whether we live here or there, extends to people in the other world.

Now, the most vital service that we can provide those in the spiritual world is to have thoughts based directly on the Word. When angels are with people *who think from the Word*, they are “in light.” In other words, they are then able to think clearly and wisely; they are able to enjoy an exquisite perception of the Divine life that flows into them because there is a full “grounding” of their thoughts. In short, the Word serves as a foundation for heaven when it “lives” in people’s minds.

When the Lord came into the world, the Word was not “living” in people’s minds. The heavens were faltering. But He became the living Word, the Divine Word made “flesh”! He restored the Word as heaven’s basis by bringing new and old truth to light here: first in Himself (in His natural mind) and then for others. In this way He served those in the other world while He was on earth.

The Lord served spirits and angels in another way while He was here. Remember that the Lord developed gradually. He willed that a Divine awareness develop *in the human* as it grew and learned. So, like us, He made an ascent through levels of mental states. And mental states are nothing but communities of minds in the spiritual world. The Lord had spiritual associates just as we do.

In fact, the Lord's associates were not all good. His "natural man" began in ignorance and obscurity. This obscurity was not just from ignorance, but from the fact that the *constant tendency* of the natural man is to think selfishly and from a worldly perspective. This meant that the Lord had to deal with these tendencies, and with the spirits who shared them. In dealing with them, the Lord caused a judgment to take place.

Here is how it happened: When He was with a given set of associates, the Lord would first glean what He could through their shared mental states. But then He would go a step beyond them and draw increased light into His mind. This would bring into greater definition and order what He had received through them. He would share His greater clarity with them. This would always cause a judgment; for every community of minds was in disorder. People were associated together based on false criteria of likeness. Especially in the world of spirits, evil people appeared to be good, because there was no means of unmasking their deceptions. But when the Lord became associated with a group, it would enable the good spirits there to enter into greater clarity, thus into greater wisdom and goodness; and from this, the evil spirits among them would become apparent. After a struggle, the evil would be forced to depart and the community would reorganize based on what the Lord had revealed.

From this we can see how the Lord served spirits and angels while He was in the world. In fact, it might be said that when He was through, all good spirits and angels had been, and remained, His associate spirits. And in the process (before judgment came) all evil spirits had been His associates as well!

### **For their sakes I sanctify Myself' (John 17:19)**

The *third factor* that determines our duration of life in the world has to do with the *usefulness of our being here for our own spiritual development*.

Regeneration can happen with us only while we are here. It

takes place through our chosen life patterns while we are in the natural world. To be permanent, our choices must be “etched” in the outermost substances of our minds, which are natural and fixed. Our spirits gain and retain a border or covering from our life on earth. After death, this natural covering becomes the subconscious vehicle by which our spirits have permanence and a needed foundation for all our mental operations. Because this fixed border is gained here, there is a pressing purpose for us to be here long enough for our choices to be realized.

Personal development was also a factor in determining the time of Jesus’ death. He, too, was being re-born as to His outer person. We just spoke of His work of dealing with the selfish tendencies in the mind that He took on through Mary. He dealt with them at each level of His mental growth.

Let’s think of this again in terms of His associate spirits. As He entered each state of mind, He entered into a community in the other world. In each community He would cause a judgment, and the evil people there would fight back. In fact, we are told that the Lord was being resisted and assaulted by evil spirits every moment of His life. But at every step He was victorious. Each victory brought His outer mind into greater order even as it brought the spiritual world into order and the evil spirits under greater control. At the end of this lifetime of inner struggle He could say, “Now is the judgment of this world; now the prince of this world will be cast out” (John 12:31). “I will no longer talk much with you, for the prince of this world is coming, and he has nothing in Me” (John 14:30). “Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world” (John 16:33).

Thus, usefulness to Himself, to His own development or glorification, was a factor in the Lord’s time of death. And yet, as we see from this prayer to the Father, there was nothing selfish here: He said: “*For their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also may be sanctified by the truth*” (John 17:19). The Writings

confirm that He did indeed have “an end for the sake of self”: namely, “that it may be from self to save the human race” (*Arcana Coelestia* 4593). He sought no personal prize other than this (*Arcana Coelestia* 1789).

**It is to your advantage that I go away” (John 16: 7)**

The *fourth* and final factor (in *Spiritual Experiences* 5003) determining when people die is the *usefulness of their being in the other world, both to themselves and to others there.*

*Spiritual Experiences* 5003 points out here:

Everyone who will be in heaven has his place in the Grand Man, or, on the other hand, he has his place in hell—wherever forces fail they are balanced, and, of the Lord’s providence, people are brought to that place. In this way also, the Lord’s kingdom is cared for, whose welfare is the universal [concern of] providence.

Every person is born to serve a useful function in the body of humanity and to experience heavenly joy in this association. This happens most fully (for good people) after death. In leaving the world, they lay aside their material bodies with their gross limitations. They also lay aside a lot of struggles and prejudices and evils which have become external to their *ruling* aspirations, yet which have impeded their usefulness and happiness here.

Why are people called to their places in the other world when they are? We can think of it this way: consider a cell in a human body. The cell lives from the body and, as a part of it, enjoys the soul’s life. Each cell has a function to serve. As a body grows and changes, different parts of it need new cells. So it is with heaven. The goal of providence is to create and oversee the development of a heaven from the human race, not just a heaven for individuals (*Divine Providence* 64, 201-202). There can be no heaven for individuals if not for the whole. The Lord “grows” the human race with this in mind. People are born to serve a useful function in the developing Grand Man. The changing

balance of forces (which are uses) within the whole creates opportunities-to-serve for every individual whom the Lord brings into the world. People are born into time and brought to their place in their own due season.

This is one factor in determining our time of death. Will we be most useful to people in the other world by being among them? Are we ready to receive the happiness of heaven and contribute to it? Is the transition at a given time vital to our eternal welfare? The Lord knows.

What about the Lord? One great difference between Him and us in this regard is that our potential for usefulness in heaven is finite. We have a single function and place there. The Lord was not a finite person—not when He “ascended to the Father.” He was not a receiver of life. “As the Father has life in Himself, so He has given to the Son to have life in Himself” (John 5: 26). “I am the way, the truth, and the life” (John 14: 6). “I am the resurrection and the life” (John 11: 25). As a result, the Lord did not have *a place* in heaven when He left the world. *He was heaven!* He became *its soul and life!* All people of heaven and the church then dwell in Him as branches dwell in the vine or as cells dwell in the body.

Was the Lord more useful to those in heaven after He “ascended?” Yes, because He then was the soul and life of a *new* heaven! He had given it a new order. People there could receive the Divine life more clearly and fully. And now, because He had worked from a Human taken on in the world, which He retained, He would have a *new base* in the outmost level of life, from which to maintain the health of the human race in both worlds. He had become “the first and the last”! So, yes, the Lord became more useful to the angels by rising in glory.

But in rising He became more useful to people in the natural world, too. As He said to His disciples:

I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not

go away, the Counselor [the Holy Spirit] will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you. (John 16:7)

In leaving the world the Lord would complete His work. He would become fully Divine *in and through the Human He had taken on*. Because of the connection that this Human had both with heaven and with ultimate creation, He could touch people in a new way. A new Spirit could go forth from Him and work with us. This Spirit is the Holy Spirit, the Counselor, which “was not” until Jesus was glorified (John 7:39). From this Spirit He would be able to lead and guide people more surely, intimately, and freely.

In addition, as long as He was in a physical body, He was limited to some extent. He was certainly limited by people’s rigid perceptions of Him as being in space and time. After He had risen, He would have greater power to affect people—greater power, because *they could realize* that He was not just a man but was Divine! He had risen as no other!

**I am with you always” (Matthew 28: 20)**

We assure people who have lost loved ones that they will see them again. The Lord assured His disciples of the same thing concerning Himself: “You now have sorrow; but I will see you again and your heart will rejoice, and your joy no one will take from you” (John 16:22). In the literal sense the “seeing” that the Lord referred to here was a reference to His appearing to the disciples after the resurrection. But spiritually understood it is a reference to our mind’s ability to see God. After His work was complete the Lord would be able to be present with us more clearly, fully, and intimately. This was the very purpose of His coming!

**Of that day and hour no one knows...but My Father only” (Matthew 24:36)**

Timing in eternal matters requires infinite wisdom. It is so with

each human life:

The life of every person is foreseen by the Lord, as to how long he will live, and in what manner. Wherefore he is directed from earliest infancy with regard to a life to eternity. (*Spiritual Experiences* 5002)

The reasons why “some die children, some youths, some adults, some old people” all relate to uses which we can grasp in a measure. Yet these uses are of a scope that can be truly fathomed by the Lord alone. The same is true of the timing of the Lord’s advents. Both were brought about in the fullness of time with infinite wisdom and care. And it was with such wisdom and care that the Lord oversaw His life while in the human so that His love’s goals could be achieved. This love and wisdom shine forth in His words as He prepared to “lay down His life for His friends”:

When the hour had come, He sat down, and the twelve apostles with Him. Then He said to them, “With fervent desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer....” (Luke 22:14-16)

“The hour has come that the Son of Man should be glorified.... Unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies it produces much grain.... Now My soul is troubled, and what shall I say? ‘Father, save Me from this hour’? But for this purpose I came to this hour. Father, glorify Your name” (John 12:23-24, 27-28). *Amen.*

Lessons: John 12:23-32; John 17; *Spiritual Experiences* 5002-5003

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### **Every Life is Foreseen**

The life of every man is foreseen by the Lord, as to how long he will live, and in what manner; wherefore he is directed from earliest infancy with a regard to a life to eternity. The Providence of the Lord, therefore, commences from earliest infancy. (*Spiritual Experiences* 5002)

**THE LAST JUDGMENT**  
**After Two Hundred and Fifty Years**  
BY THE REV. DR. ANDREW M.T. DIBB

*The Last Judgment* is a centerpiece of New Church Doctrine. The Doctrines describe a time in history, just two hundred and fifty years ago, when spiritual darkness filled this world and the next.

**Comfort in Dark Times**

There may not seem to be much room for optimism in these early months of 2007. In many ways the world seems to be more dangerous and less stable than it has been for a long time, with wars abroad, terrorist threats at home, and increasing levels of crime in our cities. Life gets very depressing when we concentrate only on the negative things we see in the media. Once pessimistic thoughts take hold of the mind, our dark thoughts get darker and darker, a sense of hopelessness creeps in, and this paralyzes our ability to see anything different. In dark times the Lord often seems absent. It is as if He simply disappears in our times of deepest need. People in the battles of temptation often feel as if the Lord has withdrawn from them, and yet, as we are told in the *Arcana Coelestia*, “at such times the Lord is more present than that person can possibly believe. But once temptation subsides he receives comfort, and for the first time believes that the Lord is present” (840).

With this assurance in mind we can reconsider the state of things at the beginning of 2007. Regardless of the things happening in the world around us, the year 2007 has the potential to stand as a reminder of more hopeful things. It marks the two hundred and fiftieth year since the Lord judged the former church in the year 1757. Two hundred and fifty years is not a long time in historical reckoning—the New Church is still in her infancy, the dust from the judgment has hardly settled, and full development of the New Church age lies ahead of us. When

we focus only on the challenges around us, the world may seem very dark.

### **Spiritual Darkness before the Last Judgment**

It is almost impossible for us to imagine the spiritual darkness before the Last Judgment when truth was all but blotted out. For centuries people were dominated and manipulated by leaders who used the Word as a weapon, who appointed to themselves fabulous powers to control the very thoughts of the average person. Very few people were willing to challenge this, until eventually, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the Christian world erupted into terrible violence and cruelty on a scale that makes our modern wars seem tame by comparison. A hundred years before the Last Judgment many people grew so sickened by the violence in the name of religion that they turned away from God altogether.

Where was God during these dark centuries of human history? Why didn't He stem the tide of evil and falsity that pretended to be Christianity? Why didn't He restore true Christianity to the world sooner? Surely in that way a lot of pain and suffering could have been avoided. The innocent victims of religious strife, of false teaching, of cynical manipulation could have been protected, and the world would have been a better place, a different place. Why won't He reveal His truth more forcefully now to quiet the conflicts of today?

### **The Omnipresence of the Lord**

The Heavenly Doctrine reminds us that when we are in states of spiritual conflict, or temptation, the Lord seems to be far away, distant and unconcerned about us. At best, He seems to sit in judgment on our spiritual states, pointing out our evils. But this is a fallacy of the senses. The Lord never leaves us; He certainly never condemns or punishes us. The same is true for the stages and cycles of human history. There have been several times when people turned their backs on the Lord to the extent that they lost all sight of Him. There have been times when His

truth became so obscure that it could be twisted to mean almost anything. Yet at each time, just before all contact between the Lord and humanity was lost, the Lord reached out once again, reestablishing the fact of His presence through a new revelation. At each time, a judgment took place in the spiritual world, and the Lord brought a new understanding of truth into the spiritual world and onto the earth. With each judgment He established new heavens so that order would reign in the spiritual world and extend down to earth.

When Swedenborg was alive, many thought of the Last Judgment as Divine retribution for people's failure to worship God. They believed the Lord's anger flamed against the human race and that He intended to throw all the evil and nonbelievers into a hell of burning flame. The Lord's words to Nicodemus must have comforted some, those who believed that by His death on the cross the Lord saved those who believed in him (see John 3:16-17). But the Lord did not come, at either His first or second advents, to save only a few. He came to save the entire world. The purpose of judgment was not to destroy the wicked but to find the good, to lift them up, and bring them into heaven.

### **God's Love**

The Gospel of John emphasizes God's love: "For God so loved the world, that he gave His only begotten Son..." (John 3: 16). It is a wonderful thing to contemplate God's love. We can think of it abstractly as the unknowable center of His very being. We can think of it in terms of infinity, as the force behind His omnipotent power. But we can also think of His love in a much more personal way. The God who loved the world was and is the same God who created it, a God motivated by a love for others, who created human beings in such a way that they could feel life as their own, with freedom and reason, and the freedom to return His love. The book *Divine Love and Wisdom* describes the essential of love as not to love self, "but to love others, and to be

conjoined with others by love” (47). The work, *True Christian Religion*, adds that the point of connection with others is to bless them and make them happy (43). His love, then, was the powerful force behind creation.

Everything He made was made so that it expressed His love, was able to contain it, and reflect it back to Him. In the Divine Providence we read that He made all things “from the Divine Love by means of the Divine Wisdom” (2).

Powerful as it is to think of the Lord in these grand terms, we may still only think of the Lord as distant, far removed. When we think of the Lord as the Creator, even when we focus on His love for all people, we can feel as though He is distant from us—far away and unattainable. But this is not the image of the Lord that the Word gives us. He is our Creator, but He is also intimately involved in our lives, even down to the smallest detail of what we feel, think, and do. It is humbling to stand on a crowded street in a great city as the people go by and to reflect that the Lord made each one of them, that He loves each of them and knows each of them more intimately than they know themselves. This can help us get some idea of the infinity of the Lord’s love towards all people.

### **The Nature of Love**

In the first Epistle to the Corinthians, Paul gives a wonderful description of the nature of love. He wrote:

Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails. (1 Corinthians 13:4-8)

A God of love never fails His creation. The Writings describe love like this: “love consists in this, that its own should be another’s; to feel the joy of another as joy in oneself, that is loving” (*Divine Love and Wisdom* 47).

This is the God of the New Church who is never angry, never

punishes, never casts anyone into hell. When the Human race fell into states of spiritual darkness that were so severe that they threatened to cut people off from the Lord and would have destroyed even the foundations of heaven itself, the Lord acted from Divine Love. He did not threaten, punish, destroy. Instead He sent His only begotten Son into the world.

### **The Only Begotten Son**

The New Church understands this teaching in a way very different from the common way. The “only begotten Son” is the Lord’s truth, revealing His love and showing people how to bring their lives into order so that they can receive His love more fully. When the Lord expresses His love, He always does so wisely, so that the outcome of His action is perfectly suited to His love. We see this in Genesis, when the earth was void and darkness was on the face of the deep. Like all darkness, this earliest time represents a state in which people are separated from the Lord. The Lord begins the process of creation with truth, teachings that both contain His love and lead people back to Him. So He said, “Let there be light”; and there was light.” That light represents the beginning of human regeneration, and it is the Son of God with us. The Gospel of John says a very similar thing, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.... In Him was life; and the life was the light of men.... And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us...” (John 1:1,4,14). This Word, the light of men, is the Lord Himself.

### **The First Coming**

At His first coming, the Lord took on a human form, the form of truth, and brought Divine truth into the world. He used its power to fight the forces of hell, to glorify the human form He had taken on. As a result He brought new order to heaven and earth. For a while the light shone in this world even though not everyone understood it. Though the Lord was a form of truth, He

never was separated from the driving, motivating love that had caused Him to make the world in the first place. He never forgot His longing to make people happy.

It is a sad fact of history that in the centuries after the Lord's birth, people turned away from Him. The light of truth He had lit in this world flickered and almost went out, not because the Lord withdrew it, but because people withdrew from Him. They looked for shortcuts to salvation, easier ways of finding heaven. But, of course, these do not exist. What they found instead were excuses for the things they did, and they gave themselves permission to do worse things. By the time Swedenborg was alive in this world, the spiritual state of humanity had reached its blackest point.

### **The Second Coming and Last Judgment**

But as He had done before, the Lord looked upon the human race with His love. His goal was always to bring people into heaven, into light and happiness. Love never fails. So once again the only begotten Son entered the world. He came this time not as a human being, but as the light of truth. Two hundred and fifty years ago, this year, He performed another judgment on the Church. He exposed and got rid of the falsities of seventeen hundred years of human reasoning, and in their place He revealed His truth so that once again the light shone in the world. Once again, God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son to save it.

The Gospel of John is very clear about the response the Lord wants to His truth. He sent His only begotten Son so that "whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life" (John 3: 16). For many centuries people believed the wrong things about the Lord. They believed that His death on the cross was redemption itself and that their personal belief saved them. But in the light of the truths the Lord revealed two hundred and fifty years ago, we are shown that true believing means doing and living the things the Lord teaches us. People are saved only

by using the Lord's truth to bring their lives into a state in which they can receive the Lord's love and blessing. His love is constant. We have to receive it, and we can do that only by living according to His truth.

### **Living in the Light of Truth**

For the past two hundred and fifty years, the human race has lived in this new light of truth and, hopefully, many people have found the Lord's blessing. Certainly the world has changed because of it. Civilization is almost unrecognizable when compared to what it was when darkness still reigned. Even our darkest times now are lit up by truth.

Although this particular year, like many before and perhaps like many afterwards, may seem to have started on a somewhat gloomy footing, we can get a new perspective on it when we think according to the light. It is true that wars still rage, that poverty and inequality exist, that the tension between morality and immorality is greater than ever before. But what is hopeful is that many people are concerned about these things; they care about the welfare of others, about the traumas, the pain and grief that others experience. They are concerned about matters of principle, of right and wrong. Across the globe many people are reaching out to others in love and friendship.

In both Genesis and the Gospel of John, the truth, the only begotten Son of God, is compared to light in a dark world. That light was rekindled at the Last Judgment and has been burning steadily ever since. When we look at the minute daily details of our lives and of the world around us, it seems as though we have made no progress. But if we look at the past two hundred and fifty years as a whole, we will find that that light is burning brighter and brighter. This year, 2007, should be no exception. The Lord's light is a light that will never go out, for its fuel is infinite. It is the Lord's love: "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life" (John 3: 16).

# **THE SOUTH AFRICAN CORPORATION OF THE GENERAL CHURCH OF THE NEW JERUSALEM**

BY THE REV. GERALD G. WATERS

**(Second in a series on Corporations of the General Church)**

## **Introduction**

It is with delight that I offer some insight into the founding of the South African Corporation of the church, the function it performs, and the progress that has come about since it was founded in 1994.

Prior to 1994 the so called ‘Mission’ societies—all of them black—fell under the control and supervision of a Superintendent, a minister specially appointed to that position by the Bishop of the General Church. All matters relating to these societies initially were dealt with by this Superintendent. In later years, a treasurer was appointed to assist the Superintendent, and they together, would liaise with the Episcopal office and General Church treasurer in Bryn Athyn in overseeing and providing for the needs of these societies. For many, many years this form of government and leadership of the black societies prevailed and seemed the most practical way to deal with their needs.

Happily, very happily, in 1994 we saw the birth of the new democratic South Africa, and it became fitting and necessary for all societies of the church in our country, both black and white, to be governed, particularly in terms of financial and administrative matters, on an equal basis. Very prudently, some three years prior to this, Bishop Peter Buss saw the need for an umbrella body to be formed to help bring this about. He, no doubt, also recognized the need for unity amongst church members if the potential growth of the church in this country was to be realized. The time had come for the church in South Africa to determine its own destiny and learn to stand on its own two feet. And so it was that Bishop Buss commissioned the Rev.

Geoffrey Childs to come to South Africa and establish an incorporated body of the church to carry out its essential uses.

On the weekend of October 7-9, 1994, what became known as “The South African Founders Assembly” was held in Westville for the specific purpose of founding *The South African Corporation of the General Church*. Three years of hard work went into drawing up a constitution for the Corporation and determining the manner in which the Corporation would operate. Mr. Childs was the architect behind it all, ably and lovingly assisted by his dear wife, Helga. In the Lord’s providence we were sent the right man to handle a challenging situation, and to this day we are most grateful to Geoffrey and Helga for all that they did for us and the Lord’s church in this country.

Mr. Childs, as the Bishop’s Representative, was appointed as the first Executive Vice President of the Corporation, a position he held for the next five years. He was succeeded by the Rev. Christopher Smith. Mr. Smith then ably led the Corporation for a little over two years. These years proved to be quite a challenging time for this fledgling body. We continue to be grateful for Mr. Smith’s contribution in helping to get the Corporation fully functional. We also thank Heather, Christopher’s lovely wife, who bravely supported him in a country so far from home.

Pleasingly in the history of the Church in South Africa, in 2001 the late Rev. Albert ‘Lucky’ Thabede was appointed the first black Executive Vice President of the Corporation. This was a momentous and happy occasion for us all as it was generally felt that the time had come for the leadership of the Corporation to be taken over by a black minister. Very sadly though, the Rev. Thabede was not a well man and, having led only one Corporation meeting, he was unable to continue. It was a sad time for all of us as he had been so enthusiastic and vision-driven to bring understanding amongst the different cultures of

the church and see them grow as a united body. Lucky, together with Christopher Smith, contributed a great deal to the functioning of the Corporation, especially in drawing up a job description and employment contract for ministers which he, Lucky, believed would conform to the newly promulgated labor laws of the country. Many will know that Lucky passed into the spiritual world a few months ago [see *New Church Life* January 2007] and for those of us who knew him well and worked with him, he will be remembered for the man he was and the significant contribution he made. In 2002 Bishop Buss appointed me as the acting Executive Vice President, and in 2004 I was elected to the position.

### **Purpose and Functions of the Corporation**

According to our constitution, the primary purpose of the Corporation is: “To serve the Lord by promoting the establishment of the New Church in the hearts and minds of the people of Southern Africa” and to do this by promoting one united church in our country.

Whilst the Corporation strives to achieve this goal, it must be pointed out that it does so purely in terms of the externals of the church. All matters of an ecclesiastical nature relating to the clergy and their uses as pastors to their respective societies fall under the guidance and leadership of the Regional Pastor [currently the Rev. Erik J. Buss].

The functions of the Corporation can broadly be summarized as follows:

- 1) To attend to the ongoing management and administration of funds: a) those taken over from the Mission, b) those made available by the General Church in Bryn Athyn, and c) those contributions received locally for the promotion of the church in our country. This embraces:

- The payment of ministers' salaries/costs and any other financial needs.
- Making provision for ministers' pension and medical benefits.
- Providing both financial and logistical support for various uses of the church as identified by the clergy.
- Supporting societies, where justified, with the renovation of their buildings and, at times, with the extension/improvement of their complexes.
- Assisting financially, where possible, with the development of new complexes. Currently an entirely new complex is underway for the Alexandra Society.
- The prudent investment of capital to provide revenue for the on-going needs of the church.

It should be pointed out that this work is done almost entirely for the black societies as the two white societies are financially independent and manage and administer their own affairs.

2) To provide a forum at which all the societies and isolated members of the church can be represented to discuss and deliberate upon their own situations, to learn from one another, and to look to ways to improve their positions. It is the goal of the Corporation to help the seven black societies to become independent both financially and in terms of the management of their own affairs. To achieve this we encourage and assist them to:

- Set up governing structures within their societies.
- Draw up constitutions to give them legal status to take ownership of their own complexes.
- Understand and accept that they have to contribute financially to the church and work towards becoming self-supporting.

3) To strive to generally promote the growth and development of a united church by supporting and financing exciting projects such as NYAASA (New Church Young Adults Association in South Africa) aimed at keeping the young people in the church, the annual Winter/Summer School retreats, setting up a website for the church, supporting evangelization projects, matching society contributions, and the like. Sadly, a number of these projects have fallen away because of restricted funding.

### **Progress Made**

In trying to give some idea of the progress made since the formation of the Corporation one might ask the questions, “So, what is so different now as opposed to twelve years ago?” or “Has any real progress been made in this time?” In terms of growth of numbers or the manner in which societies now operate or the support that is now being given by individuals to their respective societies, it is hard to say or measure whether or not the existence of the Corporation has made much difference. What can be said is that great strides have been made in improved communication and understanding. Significant success has also been achieved in improving medical and retirement benefits for ministers, and better attention is being given to the various needs of societies.

Perhaps of most significance is the greater understanding that has come about between the different cultures of the church in South Africa. Whereas in the past the black and white societies each went their own way, today we try to work as a team, conscious of the fact that we are striving together to help the Lord build His church in our country.

In conclusion, it must be said that all of this could not take place without the generous funding provided by the General Church for which all of us in South Africa are most grateful.

## *Editorial*

### ANNIVERSARY OF THE LAST JUDGMENT

Most people have heard of “Judgment Day” but few know that it actually took place in the spiritual world during the year 1757, two hundred and fifty years ago. The expectation is that this judgment will bring about a cataclysmic end of the world as we know it and herald the promised second coming of the Lord.

But it did not happen as expected. What took place instead was a spiritual judgment with tremendous spiritual consequences, but with little noticeable effect in this world.

Fifty years ago, on the 200th anniversary of this event, Bishop George de Charms noted in this journal: “No man living, except Emanuel Swedenborg, was aware at the time of the tremendous changes taking place in the spiritual world.... In the *Spiritual Diary* and in *The Last Judgment and Babylon Destroyed* [published in 1758] Swedenborg gives an eyewitness account of this momentous event. He tells of storms and eruptions and earthquakes that left great cities in ruins. He describes how the good among the inhabitants were protected...and organized into a new heaven; while the evil, fleeing in terror, cast themselves into hell. All this took place within the short period of a single year.” He continues: “[These spiritual events] produced no sudden upheaval of human society on earth. Life here went on as before.... Even now, after the lapse of two hundred years, the fact that such a spiritual judgment has taken place is known only to those few who belong to the New Church...” (*New Church Life* 1957, p.1).

The Heavenly Doctrine confirms that little changed outwardly in the natural world as a result of the spiritual upheavals brought about by the Last Judgment. Civil affairs and even various religious sects continue as before. But henceforth, we are told, “the man of the church will be in a more free state of thinking on

matters of faith...because spiritual freedom has been restored to him” (*Last Judgment* 73).

In commemoration of the bicentennial of the Last Judgment, several articles related to the subject were included in the issues of *New Church Life* during the year 1957. This 250th year since the Judgment provides yet another occasion to remember the continuing importance of what took place in the year 1757. To this end, we include in this issue an article titled “The Last Judgment.” (See p.93)

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### **Southeastern District Scholarship Fund**

Southeastern District Scholarship Funds are available to those who live in the district for assistance with paying for education at the Academy’s Boys and Girls schools, the Bryn Athyn College, or the Theological School. The Southeastern District roughly encompasses from south of the Mason Dixon Line to the Mississippi River, but its borders are flexible.

Applications should include the student’s name, home address, names of the parents if they are applying on behalf of their child, and which school the student hopes to attend.

Send applications no later than April 1, 2007 for the 2007-2008 school year. Send to:

Attn: Southeastern District Scholarship Fund  
Washington Church of the New Jerusalem  
11914 Chantilly Lane  
Mitchellville, Md. 20721

Questions may be directed to:

Erin J. Stillman, Board (same address)  
Phone: 301 464-5602

#### **PLEASE NOTE:**

For those who would like to support this use, checks can be made out to WCNJ earmarked “District Scholarship Fund.”

## *Communication*

### **Why Not Reincarnation?**

Dear Editor:

In reply to Jenny Keal's letter about my article "Why Not Reincarnation?" (*New Church Life*, January 2007), let me affirm what she says about the Lord's love for all people. Yes, He gives 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." As Jenny shows, all people have been predestined for heaven and no one for hell, and all human beings are born with the image of God in them (*Divine Providence* 322).

Yet this doesn't mean everyone ends up in heaven or that people return to this life again and again until they accept the Lord's offer of goodness in themselves. The "image of God" which He creates in everyone (*Divine Providence* 322) is the "ability to understand truth" and the "ability to do good." These abilities give us the capacity to be free and rational and make us spiritually free. But this capacity doesn't mean we'll choose to understand truth and do good. A God of love does create us for heaven (*predestines*, intends us for heaven), but He does not determine that we must go there (He doesn't *predestinate* us to heaven).

Remains enable the Lord to lead us away from evil toward good and, as Jenny quotes, "not even the least of them perishes." Someone without any remains "would inevitably be subject to eternal condemnation" (*Arcana Coelestia* 561). But the passage doesn't say that remains lead everyone eventually to heaven or prevent people from choosing to make their lasting home in hell.

The Lord uses remains to provide all of us with ample opportunity to follow spiritual paths different from those we walked in our childhood and in prior cultural experiences. Heredity and good upbringing from loving parents affect the kinds of spiritual choices we have. Still, God gives every individual an inner spiritual ability to put first, in seemingly small ways, either ourselves or a goodness higher than self—God, a “Higher Power” (AA), other people, or something else beyond self.

We all have changes of state in which we can understand and feel with different perspectives, and so we have freedom to rethink, and start in new directions. Freedom includes the capability of developing habits, choosing our own character through decisions, and confirming (reaffirming, strengthening) the loves we ourselves want to feel by acting from them again and again. Even when we’ve confirmed in ourselves who we want to be, we’re still free and are given many opportunities to change. But we’re also allowed to continue to be as we are if that is our wish. The options that come to us in life—the good ones from the Lord and bad options from hell—are more than enough for us to decide whether we want to look toward God and goodness for others or to ourselves above all.

It’s an age-old fallacy that birth, upbringing, and conditions of life give some people a better chance than others to be good. (This belief is especially strong in lands where many believe in predestination or in reincarnation.) History and literature are full of people who became very different from what one might expect from their early conditions of life—sometimes becoming wonderful examples of love and accomplishment. Nurture is important but does not determine either our natural or spiritual life.

If God continued us through many lives till we became fully receptive of His goodness, our two personal memories, which embody our spiritual character and identity, would not work (see

*Heaven & Hell* 461-469, etc.). Moreover, would such a God care above all about our freedom? Or would He in effect be pursuing us, against our already-chosen preferences, and insisting that we accept His happiness sooner or later? A system that didn't permit an individual to choose to love himself as his primary life goal would allow only one kind of decision. True granting of freedom means letting people be what they themselves wish to be, allowing them the full reality of their free choices.

A final point of agreement with Jenny: The Lord always forgives everyone, and no one ever goes to hell because He doesn't forgive them (*True Christian Religion* 409, 539, 651, 652, etc.). It's not possible for the Divine to hold evil against anyone—even though we do that to ourselves. People go to hell and prefer to stay there, not because God doesn't forgive them, but because they don't want His forgiveness. They prefer to remain with their own chosen pleasures. We accept the mercy and forgiveness He extends only by turning to Him and repenting from the evils that keep Him distant. But whether or not we do that, He leaves to our free decision.

Dan Goodenough  
Big Horn, Wyoming, USA

**Laurel Camps**—Week one: July 29 – Aug. 4; week two: Aug. 5 – 11.

Registrations go out by mid-April. If you have received mailings in the past, you will receive them this year. If you are unsure if we have your correct address or would like to add your name to our list, please call Joanne Kiel 215 947-0780, or email [joannkiel@gmail.com](mailto:joannkiel@gmail.com)

# *Church News*

## **THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE GENERAL CHURCH IN GHANA (Conclusion)**

BY THE REV. W.O. ANKRA-BADU

In my first article under the heading “The Establishment of the General Church in Ghana” (*New Church Life*, June 2006, p.230), I chronicled salient events that contributed and also led to the establishment of the General Church in Ghana. During the period 1986 to 1991 three members of the clergy, Bishop Louis King, the Rev. Willard Heinrichs, and the Rev. Robert Junge, visited the newly established church. Dr. Bill Radcliffe, a great friend of the church in Ghana, also paid a visit.

In this second and final article I am going to discuss the development and growth of the church in Ghana from 1991 to the present. During this fifteen-year period, four ministers completed their theological studies and returned to Ghana. They are the Rev. Messrs. Martin Gyamfi, Simpson Kwasi Darkwah, Nicholas Anochi, and Jacob Borketey-Kwaku.

### **1991 – Rev. Gyamfi Returns to Ghana**

The first to arrive was the Rev. Martin Kofi Gyamfi. He arrived in July 1991 after about five and half years’ studies in both Bryn Athyn College and the Academy of the New Church Theological School.

Rev. Gyamfi’s transition from the academic life in Bryn Athyn to full time work as a minister was smoother than mine. I was not assigned to any group because the General Church had not been established yet in Ghana. On the other hand, Mr. Gyamfi was assigned to Oframase where he used to teach and farm, so he was familiar with the people and the terrain. He also started a group there prior to his going to Bryn Athyn to study. On top of

all this, I had, before his return to Ghana, baptized twenty-four adults at Kwahu Tafo. Mr. Gyamfi took over the administration of that group in 1991, and it has since been under his care.

A year or two after Mr. Gyamfi's return to Ghana, he established the General Church in Asakraka, his hometown, where he now resides with his wife, Joyce, and their eleven-year-old daughter, Nina. The Asakraka church is firmly established. A church with a congregation of well over a hundred members has been built. The church and the town can also boast of a beautiful school with a population of two hundred students and twenty-three staff, teaching and non-teaching. The school was opened on September 11, 2001 and, in addition to his heavy schedule, Mr. Gyamfi is its first principal. Mr. Gyamfi also has started a pre-theological training for four students.

Mr. Gyamfi, in my opinion, has been a successful minister judging from all the uses he performs for the church. He serves several groups, serves as the principal of the New Church School, and he is training future New Church ministers. Some of his students are lay leaders of the groups under his care.

### **1992 – Rev. Darkwah returns to Ghana**

A year after the arrival of the Rev. Martin Kofi Gyamfi to Ghana, the Rev. Simpson Kwasi Darkwah came back and immediately started work. "I started my ministry with two families forming the remnant of the declined Tema congregation," says Mr. Darkwah. The two families included his own family. Because there was no church building, Mr. Darkwah had classes and worship services in private homes, and he says, "several relocations went on in response to steady growth and corresponding needs."

In addition to the Tema group another group at Madina was growing side by side with the Tema congregation. "I used to conduct worship at both places every Sunday," the Rev.

Darkwah informs me. The Madina group used to be led by the late Pastor Garna. For some time the group used a poultry farm facility at Adenta as a place of worship before it moved to the house of one Mr. Adotey at Madina in 1994. Both the Tema and Madina groups continued to grow steadily under Mr. Darkwah's leadership and by 1997 well over a hundred people had been baptized into the church.

### **New Church School at Tema Established**

When the Tema School was established in August 1999, Mr. Darkwah had to give up his weekly presence in Madina and rely on the assistance of lay leadership. Also, he had to give up the teaching service he had been rendering to the Ghanaian Theological School for several years when he assumed responsibility as the first principal of the Tema New Church School. Some of the problems facing the principal were the problems of accommodation, suitable teaching staff, and funding. "We were challenged to build an excellent and competitive New Church School that can stand the test of time," Mr. Darkwah says. He adds, "Supported by generous individuals and the General Church, we have come a long way and we are on course to achieving full success."

We recognize, acknowledge, and appreciate the support from friends in the US, and their frequent visits. They came with constructive ideas, valuable materials and generous donations.

Presently the school can boast of being a grade "A" school with a population of two hundred sixty pupils. Five times we have participated in the BECE exams, and the school came out with encouraging results.

I am reliably informed by Mr. Darkwah that "The Tema congregation has been growing steadily with a current membership level of one hundred eighty, including about one hundred General Church members, plus children, and inquirers."

While tremendous progress has been made in terms of physical growth of the school and structures, the same cannot be said of the church. Worship services and other church activities are squeezed into a small place in the school building. A modest start has been made to put up a suitable Church facility, but this is halted for lack of funding. It is our hope that, at the appropriate time, we will receive more funding to continue the Church building.

To conclude this segment of the article let me quote Mr. Darkwah. He says that, in spite of the lack of proper place of worship, “We feel satisfied with the state of the New Church and its uses. We are by no means resting on our oars. We are committed to further growth and development of our two institutions. We believe that when our dreams for the school and church buildings come true, the Tema church and school will be another success story of the General Church outreach development.”

### **1995 – Rev. Anochi Returns to Ghana**

Three years after Rev. Darkwah had arrived in Ghana, the Rev. Nicholas Wiredu Anochi returned home after his ordination in Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania. He immediately started working with and under me in my ministry at Abelenkpe in Accra, the capital city of Ghana. He did not confine himself to Abelenkpe alone; he visited other ministers already in the field—such as the Rev. Darkwah and the Rev. Gyamfi—and preached to their congregations. The congregations he preached to include that of Tema, Madina, Asakraka, and Nteso.

Mr. Anochi also conducted doctrinal classes in the areas he visited, and helped the Rev. Darkwah and me in organizing several mini-crusades near church centers: many times at Abelenkpe, Tema, Haatso and Madina. The three of us traveled many times to Kumasi to organize some future members into a

coherent group. We also organized mini-crusades in some villages near Kumasi, such as Duasi, Kenyasi, Atwima-Koforidua, and Akropong. Some converts were baptized.

With vigor, Mr. Anochi established an active doctrinal class in a tailoring shop at Adabraka, a community in Accra, where we met every Friday afternoon between 1:00 and 3:00 “with faithful attendants of about fifteen adults of various religious persuasions, including Buddhists, Moslems and Christians.” In addition to these, the Rev. Anochi preached regularly on the streets, in market places, various workshops, and even on buses. By the middle of 1996, Mr. Anochi separated himself from me in order to nurse the Adabraka doctrinal class into a New Church group after baptizing some of the members of the class. Sunday church services were held in the house where the tailoring shop was located.

Mr. Anochi says, “When I moved from my temporary residence to Dome/St. Johns area I moved the Adabraka group to my residence where my spacious living room functioned well as a place of worship;” adding, “thus the Dome/St. Johns group was born in January 1997.” The Adabraka facility continued to be used for Friday afternoon doctrinal classes.

Mr. Anochi tells me, “My zeal to expose the Heavenly Doctrines to more people propelled me on to the Central Region of Ghana where I organized other mini-crusades at Kwanyaku, where I grew up, and other villages near the town.” According to Mr. Anochi, he had the privilege of preaching several times in the Kwanyaku Presbyterian Church. He also evangelized many times at Abetifi, his hometown, and traveled a few times with some of the former students of the Ghanaian Theological School; namely Godwin Zattey-Agboga and Edward Akotey. The towns they went to included Berekum in the Brong Ahafo Region. Berekum is about 300 miles away from Accra.

In spite of Mr. Anochi’s heavy schedule, he has time to nurture

the budding Dome group of very enthusiastic students of the Writings. His Wednesday doctrinal classes at Kwashieman, a suburb of Accra, sometimes attract eighteen to twenty-five people. Since the establishment of the Tema school he has been going there every Wednesday to conduct worship. Mr. Anochi also serves as the vice chairman of the board of trustees of the school.

In November 2003, a small group of “Pentecostal worshippers” joined Mr. Anochi’s congregation after they had been exposed to the Heavenly Doctrines. They have since been baptized into the New Church. In fact, it will come as a surprise to readers to learn that the Dome/St. Johns group meets in their (the former Pentecost members’) church building at Taifa, since the New Church group in Dome has no place of worship of her own. The Taifa church building is yet to be completed.

“Thanks to the Lord, some generous New Church members such as Mr. Duncan Smith of Glenview, are helping us put up a church building at Fise, a suburb of Accra to give the New Church and my ministry a permanent and decent place of worship and outreach,” Mr. Anochi states in deep appreciation. It is his firm belief that “it is the Lord who builds His church,” and that “we are only willing servants in His vineyard.”

### **2002– Rev. Jacob Borketey-Kwaku**

Teshie-Nungua New Church is one of the newest branches in Ghana and is led by the Rev. Jacob Borketey-Kwaku. The church used to be a Pentecostal/Charismatic group led by Mr. Kwadwo Adu Amoako, currently a student in the Ghanaian Theological School. The members of his group opted to be members of the General Church when Mr. Borketey-Kwaku had the opportunity to interact with them during the latter part of the year 2000.

The small group, which formed the core of the church, has

now increased to about thirty-two baptized members, with about twenty-five adults and three adolescents. There are also four children under twelve years. Additionally, there are twelve inquirers who are potential members. Mr. Borketey-Kwaku states that, “enthusiasm and optimism are so high among members that a fast growth of the church is anticipated in the near future.”

Presently the group attends services in an elementary school classroom at Teshie, a town near Accra. Mr. Borketey-Kwaku’s group has begun reaching out to people on a wide scale, giving out write-ups of appealing doctrinal subjects. It is the group’s prayer that their efforts will be fruitful so that the General Church will grow in Ghana.

Mr. Borketey-Kwaku once told me that a co-worker of his met him and paid glowing tribute to the memory of Emanuel Swedenborg. He bought a copy of *Divine Providence* in 1995 and was highly impressed with the doctrines it teaches.

According to Mr. Borketey he has distributed dozens of the Heavenly Doctrines, including *Heaven and Hell*, and *The Four Doctrines*. These two books, together with the *New Jerusalem and its Heavenly Doctrine* are the favorite books of most Ghanaians.

Mr. Borketey-Kwaku’s favourite quote is: “Unless the Lord builds the house, they labor in vain who build it”(Psalm 127:1).

Further growth of the New Church in Ghana is central in our thought. From zero membership before my arrival in 1986 to one on my arrival in Ghana, then from one to forty-one in 1991, membership has increased by leaps and bounds. Records of the number of people we have altogether baptized are not handy. I can only hazard a guess: the number should be around six hundred. Out of this number, at least half are members of the General Church.

We have achieved this result because most of the time we work in tandem, and with a high level of harmony. We have a general

board, though each group or circle has its own board, and we have cultivated an oil palm farm. This has just started bearing fruits. So far, we have successfully played our roles as workers in the Lord's vineyard. We collectively hanker after a New Church which has thousands of members, and a church that will in future be financially independent.

We take this opportunity to express our sincere gratitude to all members of the General Church of Ghana for their support and prayers. We also thank individuals and groups of the General Church outside Ghana, especially the United States, for their financial support and sympathy. However, our greatest financial support has come from the General Church. In addition to this, the General Church has also sent hundreds of free books to the church. For all these we collectively render our heartfelt thanks. Finally, our greatest thanks go to the Lord who, through His Divine Providence, has made the establishment of the General Church a possibility and a reality. Long live the Crown of all churches in Ghana!

**Jacob's Creek Family Camp** — July 5-8, near Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

Theme: "Correspondences." Ministers on staff: the Rev. Messrs. Brad Heinrichs, Derek Elphick, Amos Glenn, and Dan Heinrichs.

Financial aid is available (affordable rates for everyone).  
For information and registration forms go to:  
[www.geocities.com/jcfamilycamp/index.html](http://www.geocities.com/jcfamilycamp/index.html)

Questions call Blake and Paul Messman: 610-954-5173 or  
e-mail: [bpmessman@verizon.net](mailto:bpmessman@verizon.net).

## 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 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 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@ancss.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

*Jesus said, I am the  
resurrection and the life.*

*John 11:25*

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## EASTER SEASON AUDIO

### Worship Services

- #107364 - **The Walk to Emmaus**, adult service, Rt. Rev. Thomas Kline
- #107367 - **Mary Magdalene**, contemporary, Rev. Grant Schnarr
- #107365 - **The Last Supper**, sermon, Rev. Jeremy Simons
- #106910 - **Breakfast By the Sea**, contemporary, Rev. Jonathan Rose
- #106878 - **The Lord is Risen!**, sermon, Rev. Kenneth Alden
- #107378 - **Outside of Jerusalem**, combined service, Rev. Dr. Reuben Bell
- #106063 - **Thomas**, festival service, Rt. Rev. Peter Buss

### Doctrinal Classes

- #107358 - **Earthquakes at Easter**, Rev. Andrew Dibb
- #107350 - **The Crucifixion**, Rev. Kurt Ho. Asplundh
- #107337 - **Easter-Peace-Raising Lazarus**, Rt. Rev. Louis King
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