

New Church LIFE

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A monthly magazine devoted to the teachings
revealed through Emanuel Swedenborg

Be Still and Know that I am God
A Sermon by Thomas H. Rose

New Church Education for People
with Special Challenges
By Kirsten R. Rogers

When Prayers Go Unanswered
By E. Kent Rogers

Laying Down Your Life

Church News from Australia

May, 2008

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NEW CHURCH LIFE (USPS 378-180)
PUBLISHED MONTHLY BY
THE GENERAL CHURCH OF THE NEW JERUSALEM
The Rev. Dr. Erik E. Sandström, 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

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

Notes on This Issue

Memorial Day is the topic of this month's sermon, by the Rev. Thomas H. Rose, the Pastor at the Ivyland New Church. Everyone experiences temptations, which are battles, and also is called on to make sacrifices. Is there a common daily way for us to "lay down our life" for our friends?

The article on Education for the Challenged, has been seen in *New Church Life* before (1988). I am happy to receive this revised version from Kirsten Rogers. Besides reviewing some New Church Education history and Educational trends, Mrs. Rogers offers a refreshing reminder of the needs of the handicapped, and whatever their mental level, we owe them equal opportunities in our school systems.

The next article by Kent Rogers, comes to us all the way from Nepal. Kent has for several years been running an orphanage in Kathmandu. Many people support his work via the "Loving Arms Mission." He is expanding his operations together with making people aware of the Writings. In "When Prayers Go Unanswered," Kent poses the question why the Lord does not always seem to care about our problems, and how we can respond in a positive way.

Church News focuses on the Hurstville Society during the past year. Secretary, Margaret Heldon has forwarded some material. In the absence of a resident Pastor, Owen Heldon has been organizing lay services etc., and welcoming visiting ministers and a Bishop too. Many of you may have met some pillars of the Hurstville Society who have recently passed to the spiritual world. And who used the on-site tennis courts to re-enact an ancient ceremony?

BE STILL, AND KNOW THAT I AM GOD
BY THE REV. THOMAS H. ROSE

“Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth! Jehovah of hosts is with us; The God of Jacob is our refuge.” (Psalm 46:11)

We have a long-established tradition in this country of remembering and honoring those who have given their lives to preserve our freedom. It is right and fitting that we do this. In the United States there are many people—men and women—who have served or who currently serve with honor in the armed forces in defense of our country, and Veterans Day is set aside to acknowledge their contribution and dedication. At this time of year, however, we turn our thoughts to those of our community, to those of any community in the nation, who have made what is known as “the ultimate sacrifice”—dying in the line of military duty.

Some of us have experienced the loss of someone we loved in time of war. For some, a family member died in battle. For others, it was a friend or fellow soldier, sailor, airman or marine. For all, the loss is felt deeply, and the senselessness of the circumstances of war is brought to mind. David expresses these feelings in the book of Samuel. When Saul, the king of Israel, and Jonathan, David's closest friend, died at the hands of the Philistines on Mount Gilboa, David spoke these words to the people, in a psalm known as the Song of the Bow:

“The beauty of Israel is slain on your high places!
How the mighty have fallen!
Tell it not in Gath,
Proclaim it not in the streets of Ashkelon -
Lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice,
Lest the daughters of the uncircumcised triumph.

O mountains of Gilboa,
Let there be no dew, nor let there be rain upon you,
Nor fields of offerings.
For the shield of the mighty is cast away there!
How the mighty have fallen in the midst of the battle!
Jonathan was slain in your high places.
I am distressed for you, my brother Jonathan..." (2 Samuel
1:19-26)

We have set aside a time of remembrance for those who have died in service to our country. What is it that we remember the most in our distress over such a loss? It is the person's willingness to lay down his or her very life for family, friends and country. "Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends." This applies to circumstances of life other than wars between nations. We extend expressions of honor and gratitude to anyone who has suffered loss or sacrifice, particularly when it is seen to be for our own sake. We all can picture someone dear to us who has given up something in order to be a better person. We may have someone in our life who has struggled grievously through troubled times and who has come out the other side a more spiritual person, to the benefit not only of himself, but also of all around him. Like the soldier who lost his earthly life, this person, too, has fought a great battle, and something within him has had to die in order that the good and the true might emerge.

How often this takes place in life! We honor and respect those who have suffered spiritual temptations. We suffer through them ourselves, and we see that this is the only true and noble way to attain the life of heaven. Very often we are instructed and reminded in the Lord's Heavenly Doctrine that the only way to spiritual life is through spiritual combats against the hells—not so much against the hells in general, but against our own personal hells, which stand in the way between us and the Lord.

In the life of regeneration, the life that leads to heaven, the Lord calls us, as it were, into military service. He calls us into combat to fight against the influences of the selfish will, our old, unregenerate self. This aspect of self, twisted and perverse in the light of heaven, must actually die if the birth of the new self is to take place. The Lord says in the book of John, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain” (John 12:24).

It is good and right to honor those who have died in service to our country. Love of country is of paramount importance as a love for one's homeland, which nurtures and protects. Love of country is transformed into a greater love, that is, a love for the Lord's heavenly kingdom. It is noble and brave to die for one's country because it is an expression of love to the neighbor and a grand gesture of protection of the innocent. What we are honoring, however, when we remember a person who has died in this way, is the person's willingness to do such a thing for the sake of others. We are not honoring the fact that they died, and we are not honoring war; we are honoring the person's spirit of service, duty and self-sacrifice.

Again, we are reminded of the very simplest of sacrifices people make to the benefit of others. When a person puts his own self-interest aside and extends love and support toward another, then that person has laid down something of his life for his friend. When a person acts with kindness, even if it is inconvenient to do so, there is a laying down of a bit of the life of self-indulgence that comes so naturally to us all. When a person struggles to give up something within that is wrong and self-gratifying because the Lord has said it is wrong, there is a laying down of one's life for the Lord Himself. The Lord said, “He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for My sake will find it.” (Matthew 10:39).

This gives us something to think about: losing our life for the Lord's sake, and laying down our life for our friends. The Lord is asking us to give up our life for the sake of the two great commandments. There is no greater sacrifice. Listen to this story from the book of Mark:

Then one of the scribes came...and asked Him, "Which is the first commandment of all?" Jesus answered him, "The first of all the commandments is: 'Hear, O Israel, Jehovah our God, Jehovah is one. And you shall love Jehovah your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.' This is the first commandment. And the second, like it, is this: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these." So the scribe said to Him, "Well said, teacher. You have spoken the truth, for there is one God, and there is no other but He. And to love Him with all the heart, with all the understanding, with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love one's neighbor as oneself, is more than all the whole burnt offerings and sacrifices." So when Jesus saw that he answered wisely, He said to him, "You are not far from the kingdom of God." And after that, no one dared question Him (Mark 12:28-34).

"You are not far from the kingdom of God." We are not far from the kingdom of God if we have a full understanding and practice of what it is to lay down the life of our old self, our old will, for the sake of the new self or new will. It is the most difficult thing a person can possibly do, and none can do it without the Lord.

The evils and falsities of our natural mind, before the Lord makes us new, are like a family to us. They are familiar. We love them. About them, the Lord gives a remarkable teaching in the gospel of Mark: "And great multitudes went with Him. And He turned and said to them, If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and

sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple. And whoever does not bear his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple”(Mark 14:25-27).

Hereditary tendencies toward evil and falsity are like a negative or even a hellish “father and mother.” Self-serving, harmful, ungodly and lustful desires are present in our minds. We identify with them, and they become to us as “brothers and sisters.” We must recognize this or we will perish, spiritually. In addition, our mind gives birth to evil actions and false ideas—things that we actually make our own and do. These are our “children,” in the negative sense. And that thing which dominates us in a negative way, that which we hold dear to our hearts, is our “wife.” These are the things of the old self that we must reject in favor of the Lord and the neighbor. These are the things that we must come to recognize as our enemies. There must be war—a great spiritual combat. The casualties of this kind of war will be those terrible influences of the hells which have occupied the territory of our unregenerate natural mind and which, as a family of negative persuasion, have shaped our former self. From a willingness to follow the Lord and to establish His heavenly kingdom within us, there comes a willingness to lay down this former life, even as a soldier lays down his bodily life in an earthly war.

There are wars and there will be wars in this world. The Lord makes it very clear, however, that earthly wars are not the subject of His Holy Word. Even in the story of David lamenting the deaths of Saul and Jonathan, the true meaning has to do with spiritual combat. Again and again, there are stories of war in the Word, and in every case, the message is about every person's personal spiritual battles, and about the Lord's own combats and victories over the hells for the salvation of the human race. When the lesson is about spiritual combat, the Prince of Peace is called a Warrior, a Commander of battle. When Joshua was

about to face war, the Lord appeared to him in the form of a great Angel: And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted his eyes and looked, and behold, a Man stood opposite him with His sword drawn in His hand. And Joshua went to Him and said to Him, "Are You for us or for our adversaries?" So He said, "No, but as Commander of the army of Jehovah I have now come." And Joshua fell on his face to the earth and worshiped, and said to Him, "What does my Lord say to His servant?" Then the Commander of Jehovah's army said to Joshua, "Take your sandal off your foot, for the place where you stand is holy." And Joshua did so. (Joshua 5:13-15) The psalm of our lesson has this message: "Be still, and know that I am God."

To give up our life or to lay it down for our friends is to turn away from the evils and falsities that are present in our natural mind, to do combat against them from the power of the Lord's Word. This is to take the sandals off our feet in the holy presence of our Savior and Deliverer. To quiet the old self before the Lord, to bring to a halt all of the influences that would keep us from the Lord and the neighbor, is to "be still, and know" that the Lord is our God.

Every year, in this last weekend in May, we are grateful in our remembrance of those who have given their lives in our defense. It is a selfless act of courage to have done so. We are keenly aware that our gratitude focuses on their willingness to serve God, country and neighbor in such a way as to make this sacrifice. We are grateful to all veterans for their willingness to do this, and we remember with love and respect those who have fallen in war for the sake of our own peace.

At the same time, we are grateful for their reminding us that there is no peace in our own mental territories without our making the same kind of sacrifice, losing our former life for the attainment of true heavenly peace. Everyone who has endured the suffering of spiritual combat has the honor of self-sacrifice

BE STILL AND KNOW THAT I AM GOD

in the advancement of the Lord's heavenly kingdom and its true peace.

“God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble...”

“Be still, and know that I am God...”

“Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends.” Amen.

Lessons: Psalm 46; John 15:7-17; *Arcana Coelestia* 1664



The Rev. Thomas H. Rose was inaugurated into the priesthood in 1988, and ordained into the pastoral degree in 1989. He began by serving as Assistant to the pastor at the Mitchellville Society, i.e Sharon Church, Maryland, and then in 1989, as Assistant Pastor there, taking on also the office of Principal of the New Church School. In 1990 he added the role of Visiting Pastor to the Baltimore New Church. In 1993 Tom became the Pastor for the Bryn Athyn Church Elementary School for nine years. In 2002 he accepted the call to be resident Pastor for the Connecticut Circle, Connecticut. Now he is Pastor of Ivyland New Church Pennsylvania, starting in 2004. Tom and his wife Annette (Henderson) reside on the property at Ivyland Church, Pennsylvania.

NEW CHURCH EDUCATION FOR PEOPLE WITH SPECIAL CHALLENGES

BY KIRSTEN R. ROGERS

Introduction

Twenty-eight years ago, a little girl from another town visited my kindergarten and changed forever my previously stereotyped ideas of appropriate education for children with special challenges. She was a little person. Yet despite her diminutive stature and her need to use a walker, she came with big ideas about learning and playing along with everyone else in our class of abnormal children. And so she did, enriching our days and broadening our horizons at the same time.

Five years passed, and in the spring of 1985, a mother called me. She said that her daughter had been born with spina bifida and needed either braces and crutches or a wheelchair for mobility. Then she asked a question that simply stunned me. Would her daughter be allowed to come to our school? The first thought that rushed to mind was that New Church parents should never have to ask whether their children might attend New Church schools.

That mother's effervescent, red-haired daughter brought her sunshine to our kinder-garten that fall, learning and playing along with everyone else. In the meantime, her mother's question led me to begin considering what attitudes and practices prevalent in the educational world at that time, despite the good intentions of their proponents, might actually be inhibiting children with challenges. Gradually I realized that two aspects in particular disturbed me.

The first of these involved a subliminal yet real mentality that caused many educators, school board members and even parents to react as though students were the "products" of school

systems. Fostered in various ways by the fierce competition of the business world and by federal, state, and local government regulations, this mentality even now often interferes with the essential purposes of education. It subtly shifts the focus of attention away from the students and their individual needs. Many teacher hours are spent instead on paperwork, justification reports, and the preparation for and evaluation of test results. But schools do not exist to produce a product. They exist to provide a service to serve human society by assisting all its children in the process of learning.

The second area of concern involved special education. Lest my point of view be misunderstood, I must begin by stating that children today are fortunate to have special education available in their local schools. Only fifty years ago, most mentally challenged and many physically challenged children were simply institutionalized. For them, life in this world offered little. That is not the case today. Still, I began to question the structure inherent in many special education programs a structure that almost always segregated those with moderate to serious challenges into separate classrooms, often even into separate schools. In such situations, how could these young people learn age-appropriate behavior? How could they learn to interact with others their age who did not have special challenges? How, in other words, could they learn to live, work, and play in the real world.¹

Understandably, the mentally and physically impaired children of New Church parents were the focus of my particular concern. Should not all our children be welcomed into our schools? Should not all New Church teachers—elementary school, high school and college—be willing to develop programs that would help those with challenges grow up with their friends, in their communities, and with the Lord and His church at the center of their lives?

Happily, our teachers and administrators have really worked during the last twenty years to improve New Church education for our young people with special needs. I believe that the challenges now are for teachers and administrators to maintain a serious focus on this area, and for teachers and professors at all levels to keep building their knowledge and skills, so they can design courses that incorporate multiple teaching strategies and adaptations for those with special needs whenever necessary.

Doctrine

As a result of my concerns and questions back in 1988, I decided to research the *Heavenly Doctrines* and the history of educational efforts in the New Church. What do the Writings have to say about the human mind and children that may apply to New Church education for those with mental and physical challenges? How have various bodies of the Church viewed their educational responsibilities? What have been the essential purposes of New Church education during the past 170 years?

The *Heavenly Doctrines* tell us that everything a person does contains his whole mental being his essential humanity. A person's mind consists of his love's affection and the thoughts he forms from that affection. The affection and thoughts together are what he is.² The doctrines also tell us that the human mind can be enriched and perfected to eternity, especially when the person is led by the Lord,³ because, unlike an animal, a person has a spiritual mind that exists simultaneously in both the natural and spiritual worlds⁴. And the spiritual mind lives on after the death of the body.

This description applies just as fully to mentally and physically challenged people as it does to the rest of us. As one passage in the Arcana says of certain newcomers to heaven: Some who have been of childlike mind and simple faith then appear to themselves in white and shining garments, some with crowns. Some are taken around to various angelic societies and

are everywhere charitably received as comrades.⁵

Let us illustrate the communication of intelligence and wisdom from one to another in heaven. Swedenborg records in *Heaven and Hell* the following experience: Certain simple spirits were once taken up into heaven, and on arriving there, they too came into angelic wisdom, so that they then understood things they were never able to comprehend before, and uttered things they were unable to express in their former state.⁶

A similar experience appears in *True Christian Religion*, emphasizing the intuitive power to be gained through worship of the Lord: I saw a spirit who in the company of others appeared simple, because he had acknowledged the Lord alone as the God of heaven and earth, and had established his faith by means of a few truths taken from the Word. He was carried up into heaven to join the wiser angels, and I was told that there he was as wise as they were. In fact, he uttered numerous truths entirely as if of himself, of which he had previously been totally ignorant.⁷

It is clear from these reports that a person's spiritual intelligence may far exceed his natural intelligence. We cannot determine spiritual capacities on the basis of natural aptitude.

In considering a child's development, we learn from the doctrines that every human being is born with a spiritual mind, but it is not open or actively functioning at birth.⁸ It is opened gradually during his life, as he refuses to participate in evil because it is contrary to the Lord's commandments in His Word.⁹ In addition, and of particular importance to New Church educators, we note that the formation of this spiritual mind is based on everything from the Word that exists in the memory.¹⁰ And a person captures things in his memory because of the delight he feels in knowing them.¹¹

The first things a child learns, of course, involve only sensory experiences. He tastes his food, holds his bunny, and watches his mother's face. After a while, he begins to crawl, explores his

world, and tries to talk. He has no conscious awareness of the Lord during infancy. But as the *Arcana* tells us, [Children] learn many things at first, even useless ones, such as games and the like, not that these things may make them wise, but that the way may be prepared for their acquiring useful things that are matters of wisdom...¹²

Throughout childhood, in fact, sensory experience is the only means by which knowledge can enter a person's mind, because the higher levels of his mind are not yet open.¹³ But as the *Heavenly Doctrines* clearly state, some of the sensory truths a child learns become the basis for his later rationality and regeneration: the humanity of the Lord; the life of heaven; the literal sense of the Old and New Testaments; the wonder and usefulness of objects in the Lord's universe. When a child learns about these matters of religion and life, a vital link with heaven is formed; and as the *Arcana* says, the angels then think about Divine things and communicate their affections to the child. This in turn gives him delight and prepares his mind to receive genuine truth and goodness.¹⁴

One of the fundamental responsibilities of New Church teachers, then, is to structure and present sensory knowledge from the Word in such a way that it fosters this vital heavenly communication. To do this, they must also make it the goal in all subject areas. Children of the New Church who have mental and/or physical disabilities can learn from teachers in other schools many useful and interest-ing things, but little or nothing about the Lord. They can certainly learn about Him from their parents, of course, but much of a child's integrated instruction takes place in school. It is of great value for him to see the Lord in everything he learns. As one *Arcana* passage says quite plainly, The innocence of childhood is of no use unless by means of concepts it becomes the innocence of wisdom.¹⁵

And in another equally straightforward passage: Little children

cannot know a particle of truth until they have been provided with concepts. On the other hand, ...the better and more perfectly equipped with concepts they are, the better and more perfectly can intellectual truth...be communicated.¹⁶

We must not underestimate the extreme importance of early and continuous instruction from the literal sense of the Word and the plain statements of the Writings. No child can discriminate between truth and falsity from his own enlightenment. Whatever sight of truth he achieves, whatever useful conclusions he reaches are based on things he has learned from parents and teachers.¹⁷ Yet even though what a person learns during childhood does not make him genuinely wise and loving, the *Heavenly Doctrines* tell us that it does form a plane for the things of the understanding; and the understanding is what receives the truth of faith...., and the truth of faith is what receives the good of charity.¹⁸ In other words, the development of a person's rational faculty and the opening of his spiritual mind depend on knowledge he learns about the Lord and the church during childhood and youth.

A mentally challenged person may not have the higher planes of his mind opened in this world because of something that blocks his deeper understanding of truth. Yet even if the knowledge he gains does not go beyond the sensory plane, it is invaluable to his eternal life, because interior things are implanted in his mind at the same time. Divine Providence describes it this way: All people who are taught by the Lord in the Word are instructed in a few truths while in the world, but in many truths when they become angels. For the interior contents of the Word, which are Divinely spiritual and Divinely celestial, are implanted at the same time, but are not opened in a person until after his death.¹⁹

Every child loves to learn things, especially things about the Lord, and we have seen how vital this early learning is. But love

of knowledge by itself is not enough.²⁰ As the *Arcana* tells us, the things we know are spiritual riches, and we possess them in order to render useful service to our-selves, the neighbor, and the country.²¹ Children, even those with serious challenges, can be guided in using what they know to help each other and to contribute to the life of their home, school, and community.²²

The Development of New Church Education

Educational efforts in the history of the New Church have met with varied success. Some attempts to establish schools have been quite successful, others less so. What we want to examine, however, is why these efforts were made in the first place. What motives have led New Church men and women to try to establish separate schools?

We begin in England during the educational reform movement of the 1800s. Certain members of the General Conference opened schools during that time period. Of particular interest to us is the motivation of their founders. In his work *History of New Church Education* Richard Gladish says, To the prevailing sentiment for educating children of the poor, New Churchmen added the concept of education for heaven.²³

Education for heaven was also one of the purposes expressed by some members of the General Convention in the United States during the 1800s. Milo Williams, an educator and scientist, compared a child's mind to a vessel with two compartments, one for affectional things and the other for natural truths. He said that the important purpose of education was to fill the vessels properly, in connection with the literal sense of the Word. Then, when a child's rational mind began to develop, it would have a plane on which its energy could be properly exercised.²⁴

Williams strongly supported separate New Church schools; and in 1838, Samuel Worcester, chair of the Convention's Committee on Moral and Religious Instruction, declared that children of the New Church must be educated differently from

"children of the world."²⁵ Most of the schools they established were not able to succeed because of concurrent public school reforms.²⁶ But about twenty years later Edmund A. Beaman, in a report to the Convention, also expressed support for New Church schools. He said in his report, Knowledge is useful chiefly as it, like nourishing food, helps to form the mind... [T]he child of the New Church needs a school separate from those of the world, that the means of its mental growth may be, as far as possible, of a New Church quality...It needs a school where the life and sphere of the Church are felt...²⁷

Although the Convention did not expand their educational efforts, nevertheless, in their elucidation of doctrines relating to the instruction of the human mind, Williams, Worcester and Beaman had made important contributions to the future of New Church education.

In the late 19th century, in order to train their own priests, propo-nents of the Academy movement within General Convention estab-lished the Academy of the New Church, which rapidly led to the formation of several other schools. These provided education for the young people of the church from the secondary level to theological school. When the General Church of Pennsylvania broke away from Convention to reorganize as the General Church of the Advent, it too adopted education as one of its central purposes, and our present elementary schools had their beginning. The guiding tenet was expressed by W. H. Benade, one of the founders of the movement and its first bishop. He wrote, "...the primary principle of all instruction is that the...very first word...shall have respect to the Lord..."²⁸

In another important statement he said: If things be taught and learnt as bare sciences, without any leading to what lies beyond them as ends, they will enter the memory indeed but not into the life, and the disposition toward good will not be insinuated into

them from the Lord.²⁹

By the early 20th century, the General Church of the New Jerusalem had been formed. As we see from the description of the 1915 curriculum of the Bryn Athyn Elementary School, education for the children of New Church parents was no longer a new venture but had become a matter of permanent importance. In the introduction, we find this statement: “It is well known that the prime purpose in the establishment of New Church elementary schools is that distinctive religious instruction may be given to New Church children...”³⁰

The 1926 curriculum was described in a more comprehensive report, and its statement of purpose was somewhat expanded. Nevertheless, the essential reason for the school’s existence remained the same: The primary purpose of the school is the instruction of children of New Church parents in the Word of God and the faith of the New Church.³¹

Since 1926, many people have written about the continuing need for New Church education. I will quote here only the Rt. Rev. Willard D. Pendleton. He wrote two books on education, both of which define and clarify the purposes of education. He describes New Church education as “...a ladder set upon the earth, ...by which the human mind may ascend to the acknowledgment of the Lord... We regard the educational process, therefore, as a humanizing process.”³²

And in another place, he reminds us that it is “...not merely a process for formal instruction. In its more interior implications, it is an effort to direct the thought and affections of the child from self to use.”³³

Finally, and of particular importance to our purposes here, Bishop Pendleton provides a comprehensive statement of the objectives in New Church education, which he lists as follows:

“The first...is to introduce the child into a true idea of God.

The second...is the formation of a conscience in the

understanding.

The third...is respect for law and order.

The fourth...is moral integrity. [This includes honesty and insistence on refraining from things, which ought not to be done.]³⁴

The fifth...may be defined as a sense of social responsibility. [This involves things, which ought to be done.]”.

Conclusions Emerging from this Background

Through my investigation into the history of the development of New Church education, I was struck most forcibly by the remarkable consistency of purpose found in the various statements regarding education. Some were more fully delineated than others, and each had its own particular wording, but the essential message was always the same: New Church education exists to lead children to the Lord through a growing awareness of the nature of His Humanity. It exists to introduce children into a heavenly life through obedience to His laws. It exists to help children see the Lord's order and power in everything they learn. And finally, in all of these, it exists to lead through the development of good affections, for nothing is truly learned without them. As the Rev. N. Bruce Rogers said in an address prepared for the 1980 General Assembly, The point of New Church education is to aid parents in minimizing harmful influences and providing beneficial ones. This involves much more than simply instruction in knowledge, though this too is important; it involves the development of attitudes, in acknowledgment of the primacy of love, that the affections may be as good as the knowledges are true.³⁵

At this point some people may be wondering why no mention has been made of academic standards. The explanation is that the schools of the church were never established for purely academic reasons. Certainly, all students, whatever schools they attend, must be willing to work hard and to submit themselves to

the discipline involved in learning. Preservation of academic standards helps the majority of New Church students to maintain this commitment to their education. But some children, because of physical or mental challenges, simply are not able to meet ordinary standards in traditional ways. In such cases, the students cannot entirely adapt to fit the schools. If New Church education is to serve these children of New Church parents, the schools must adapt to fit the students. And these adaptations, while they will not always lead to a college degree, should allow all our children to complete elementary school and high school, and attend at least some college courses in preparation for adulthood and for life as angels of heaven.

It is clear, both from doctrine and from our history, that all children of the New Church deserve our best efforts within our own schools. Our elementary schools and high schools do not exist to compete with local prep schools, which provide only earthly skills. And Bryn Athyn College does not exist to compete with Harvard and Yale, but to provide a unique education based on the spiritual and moral values of the New Church—an education not found in any other college or university. In many cases, our schools do in fact provide an education in academics, sports, and the arts that is competitive with or superior to that generally found elsewhere. This speaks well for the dedication and ability of our teachers, but it is not the reason for the existence of New Church schools. New Church schools exist for the education of all our children in the New Church.

Admittedly, it takes additional time and effort to adapt our schools and programs to meet the needs of students with special challenges. This can be unsettling, especially when the necessary adaptations may differ from year to year. After all, life is easier if it is comfortable and at least somewhat predictable. But these students need us. New Church schools are alone in their ability to nurture children for both the natural and spiritual

worlds. We must always be willing to reassess our priorities in order to give these students the extra time and effort they require for their education. And we need the understanding and cooperation of our financial boards and contributors as well, because of the special funding that will be required.

Trends in the Educational World

When I finally determined to write the original version of this paper (in 1987), one of the areas I wanted to explore was the current thought among educators elsewhere at that time re-garding appropriate placement for children with challenges. Setting aside all religious consider-ations for the moment, did they believe that these children would grow better and more fully if they were included with their peers in their neighborhood schools? Or would they, in fact, learn better in special classrooms and in segregated schools?

I am delighted to report that during the same period in which my thoughts centered on including children with special challenges, hundreds of leading educators in the United States, Canada, and Europe were also considering this idea. In fact, the preponderance of research during the previous ten years favored inclusion for almost all challenged students. Many integrated programs had been put in place during the 1980s, far too many for me even to begin describing here. But I would like to share with you a few of the forceful statements I read during the course of my research. Douglas Biklen, in his introduction to the book, *More Education/Integration*, wrote, "...integration is not an experiment or a curricular innovation but is rather a constant aspect of quality schooling...all students have gifts and can contribute to the life of a school and community."³⁶

In segregated schools and special education classrooms, students with challenges were often taught together with others of the same mental ability but not the same chronological age. But Norman Kunc, also writing in *More Education/Integration*

said of this, “If we are to assess a child’s Needs, then it is essential to examine all of his needs...” A segregated setting, though it may have an excellent academic program, can fulfill only one quarter of [them]. The child has no hope of learning appropriate social behavior because he is never even given the opportunity to witness age-appropriate behavior.³⁷

One mother expresses the sight she has come to while working with her own handicapped daughter: “The purpose of schooling for anyone is a preparation for adulthood in the community, a training of people to be able to contribute to society.”³⁸

And finally, a group of physicians and educators from Boston explain why people with special challenges should attend regular schools throughout their education: “The opportunities to experience risks, to make decisions, and to assume responsibility are essential to the development of internal control, self-confidence, and independence.” One factor hindering the handicapped adolescent in becoming more independent is the often-observed tendency of parents and society to look upon this individual as an eternal child.³⁹

I return therefore to my two original questions. Should not all our children be welcomed into our schools? Should not all New Church teachers be willing to develop programs that would help even those with challenges grow up with their friends, in their communities, and with the Lord and His church at the center of their lives?

Doctrine, the historical purposes of New Church education, and many current educational trends all seem to invite, indeed to urge an affirmative response. All the children of the church are our children. New Church education exists to serve them all. In other words, to Cain’s question, Am I my brother’s keeper, the answer is, Yes!

In conclusion, I would like to allow a young woman, mentally challenged by Down Syndrome, to speak for herself. She was 21

when she told a Wisconsin legislative subcommittee: "There are a lot of things I can do. I can swim. I can read. I can make friends. I can listen to my records. I can watch television. I can make my own lunch. I can go to see a movie. I can take the bus by myself to Chicago and to work. I can count money. I can sing like a bird. I can brush my teeth. I can do latch hook rugs. I can cook dinner. I can think. I can pray. I can square dance. I can play drums. I know what is right. I know what is wrong."⁴⁰

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WHEN PRAYERS GO UNANSWERED

BY E. KENT ROGERS

Few people I know complain of a shortage of difficulties and trials in life. Regardless of creed or caste, life hands us plenty enough trouble. But for Christians, among the most grievous of all challenges we face is when God seems silent, distant, unconcerned. Our prayers go unanswered. We may wonder if they are heard at all. We may get pushed to a place where we begin to doubt if God actually loves us, or if God exists. These are among the darkest, loneliest and most distressing times we face as followers of Jesus Christ.

There are many kinds of prayers; some are relatively petty. We pray for a business venture to succeed, a hassle free flight, or the like. Other prayers stem from the deeper, more altruistic aspects of our being, given to us by God. For example, we may pray for a loved one to be relieved of a terminal illness, addiction, or depression. We may pray for improvement in our marriage. We may pray that God helps us improve ourselves and overcome our own weaknesses. And though we may pray for these things consistently over a long period, sometimes nothing changes or improves. God seems to have forgotten to rain down His presence and love onto us. Our spirit is suffering a period of drought. But it is not that God has moved away from us or stopped loving us. Drought of the spirit is caused by a blindness or inability to sense God. Our minds lack the spiritual lens, the truth; we need to see God (*Apocalypse Explained* 481).

What is going on at these times? Why are we left feeling so alone? What purpose is God achieving in our seeming abandonment? Near the end of I Kings, we read a story of a contest to end all contests. We might call it the War of Lords, or the Battle of the Gods. The setting is at the end of a three-year drought. Yahweh Himself has arranged for the contest. He tells

His prophet Elijah how it is going to go. The worshippers of Baal are to erect an altar to Baal and place a sacrifice on it. Elijah repairs an altar of Yahweh and places a sacrifice on it. Elijah then has a trench dug around the altar and enough water poured onto the sacrifice and altar to fill the whole trench. Whichever God or so-called god is able to bring fire down from heaven and burn the sacrifice, that God shall be proved the true God. Elijah gives the worshippers of Baal a head start. At the crack of dawn, they pray and pray to Baal. They shout and dance themselves into a frenzy in their petitions to Baal. "Oh Baal!" they cry out as loud as they can till the sun goes down. They even go so far as to cut and slash themselves in hope that Baal will honor their self-sacrifice and bring down fire from heaven. But Baal remains silent.

It is now dusk. It is Elijah's turn. He calls out to Yahweh, God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Immediately Yahweh responds by sending a fire so fierce that the stones are split, the sacrifice is utterly consumed and the water is instantaneously immaterialized. The winner is undeniable: Yahweh.

When we hear this story, our instinct is to rejoice and think, "Yes, that's my God, the Lord. He always wins." We place ourselves on the victor's team. And in some sense, yes, Yahweh is our God and Yahweh does always win. But not infrequently, we misunderstand the true nature of our God, Yahweh. And it is at these times that life seems so dark and scary.

The word "Baal" means "lord." Strangely, it is this very word, lord, that is invariably substituted for the Hebrew letters YHWH (Yahweh) in almost all translations of the Bible. In our prayers and conversations, we also use that word, Lord, when we mean our God, YHWH. The word Lord is synonymous with Master and the chief characteristic implied in that word is Power or Powerful. Although all power is inherent within, God's true name, YHWH, does not chiefly, denote power, but Reality or

Existence or Being. YHWH means, “Who is Being” or “The I Am.” (*Arcana Coelestia* 7636).

At the end of His Sermon on the Mount as well as elsewhere Jesus said, “Not all who call out to Me, ‘Lord, Lord’ will be received.” And anyone who has petitioned God and felt that stony silence in return can testify that at times, this is true. We call out, “Lord, Lord” but our words are not received.

When the worshippers were dancing around the altar, shouting, and cutting themselves, they were calling out, just as if we do today, “Oh Lord! Hear our prayers!” The only thing that was different was the language they used. We might be tempted to think that our minds and hearts are in a different place than the Baal worshippers, because, after all, we are thinking of YHWH, and not Baal.

But when we are trying to get God to change reality according to our will, even when our will seems right and good, it is power that we are seeking and power that we are worshipping— as our Lord, Master, or Baal. We make ourselves disciples of Baal, power, when our worship stems from concern for self and the world (*Apocalypse Explained* 160). Power does describe an aspect—an important aspect—of YHWH. He is omnipotent. But He is so much more. His chief aspect is not power but Love (*True Christian Religion* 43). This is what He showed us when He took on the form of a human being and walked among us as Jesus Christ. He had a singular message and command—“Love others as I have loved you.” His life’s story in effect says: “I am totally willing to suffer and die for the sake of loving and helping you.”

The word “Lord” is not the problem. “Throughout heaven [Jesus Christ, Savior of the world] is acknowledged and worshipped as Lord, since He has all power in heaven and on earth” (*Arcana Coelestia* 14). But when we say or think the word Lord, it is important to think of Jesus Christ and His essential

quality and message—love.

If Divine Love is YHWH's primary characteristic, Divine Wisdom must be His second (*Apocalypse Explained* 1124, *True Christian Religion* 43). God has a plan and the plan is good. God knows what He is doing. If this is not true, than all the love in the world and heaven will not be enough. Only in context of His Divine Love and Divine Wisdom does his Divine Power take its proper position (*True Christian Religion* 56). His power is to create angels out of mere mortals. His power is to save sinners. His power is to bring joy and love to hearts that are riddled with sorrow and despair, rage and fear. His power is to evolve love within the human heart and within human society. In short, His is the power to save (*True Christian Religion* 56).

When something goes terribly wrong in our lives; when something does not go according to plan; when our prayers and petitions fall on deaf ears, it is human to reach the point of anger. "Lord!" we may cry out in utter despair, "You hate me! Lord, You have abandoned me. Lord, You don't exist, do You?" In one sense, in this last idea, we have finally reached the hard-learned truth—that Lord whom we have been petitioning no more exists than does Baal.

This is not a happy, warm message, but it also is not condemnatory. By putting ourselves in the shoes of the Baal worshippers, I certainly do not mean to evoke guilt or shame. My hope, in fact, is to share a certain peace and relief from that awful feeling of abandonment and separation from God. In the story, the Baal worshippers are slaughtered. Elijah, the good person, then asks God please to give him death because, frankly, he has had enough of life. God sends him up to a mountain to witness a wind so strong it splits apart rocks. YHWH says that He is not in that wind. Next, there is a terrible earthquake, shaking the foundations of the earth. YHWH says that He is not in that earthquake. Next, a fire destroys and consumes

everything in its path. YHWH says that He is not in that fire.

Finally, there is a still small voice. This can be translated a delicate whispering voice (*New Spirit Filled Life Bible NKJV* text notes for I Kings 19:12). In the original language, the word translated 'small' literally means pulverized or crushed. YHWH says that He is that whisper. In the nitty-gritty of our day-to-day lives, love is so tiny, so delicate and fragile. Someone cuts us off, a wave of anger rises and love is forgotten. We face a financial crisis and love is drowned in the sea of worries. Selfish lusts and desires beat and thrash love in the back-alley of our mind. Almost everything seems more powerful than love. Even simple boredom and routine have an evaporating effect on love. We see our spouse every day and forget what an amazing human being she is. We see our kids every day and forget how precious they are. Love is so small, so delicate, so fragile and crushable.

In Jesus, we see this. He did not bring down fire from heaven. He did not call on His legions of angel warriors. He did not speak back to His accusers. He did not even step down from the cross. He was crushed by the hate of humankind. However, while love seems so small and so frail, love is in fact, invincible. Love is omnipotent because God is Love. This is the bedrock doctrine and fundamental tenet of Christian faith. It is the true message of Easter.

So what do we do about these challenges to faith, when life seems cruel and God seems silent? Even in this story, we may wonder how the God of love would have the prophets of Baal slaughtered. Could not a simple conversion ceremony have sufficed? Likewise, we may wonder why a loved one must suffer so terribly with cancer, with alcohol, with depression, with loneliness or something else. This sermon is not going to answer these questions. Rather, this sermon is here to offer a simple, but effective spiritual remedy, which we can employ when we face these times of deep despair.

God's plan for us is that we love one another. That is the plan. This sermon is offering that spiritual remedy. What do we do when our loved one is debased by heroin; what do we do when our own body is devastated by debilitating pain; what do we do when God does not answer our pleas for escape from our personal hells? We keep on trying to love, because that is the true God. The God that does not answer us and does not give us what we want—that is Baal. It is good to get so frustrated with this false god that we give up on that lord. When we do, it is as if the prophets and worshippers of Baal that are living inside of us are made no more. They are slaughtered. It is important to note that YHWH did not order the slaughter of the prophets of Baal. Elijah himself ordered that. However, our true God, YHWH, bends human mistakes into healing for others (*Divine Providence* 281, 240). This story helps to heal us and bring us into states of love. We are happier. We make others happier.

No matter what is happening or not happening in our lives, our goal is to love. Our peace is in loving. Our freedom is in loving. Our eventual happiness is in doing the exercises of love. When we seek to use God as a means to power, we are going to be enslaved by the false god of power, Baal. Seeking power makes us slaves. God's name is YHWH; we might say life or reality or even as is. Often, we do not like this God. Life is not often easy. Reality is not usually as comfortable as a stiff drink, or an hour drone into the TV, or a plunge into fantasy. Often we want power to change reality more than we want to love reality. But God is the Author of reality as it is. It is the best possible plan for us. It is the ever-unfolding flower of pure love. Although this is easy to say, it is almost impossible to feel at times.

Even the good person, Elijah, longed for death. He did not like reality as it was. Even Elijah was forgetting that God is not big power, but frail, fragile love. No matter what reality is dishing out, our job is singular, same and simple, to love in each moment, the best we can. That is what it means to be a follower

of Christ. That is what it means to be a Christian. This idea is not grand or even that appealing. But it does refocus our mind onto the real God, and His real message to us—love others. And in those very dark times when God seems absent or even cruel, it is comforting to realize that we have been petitioning the wrong lord without even knowing it. In those dark times, usually we will realize that we have not been seeking first and foremost to love others, but rather we have been seeking God to do something to suit our will and personal idea of what should happen in life.

Now let us look at the bad people in the story—Ahab and Jezebel. This pair is said to be the worst of all Israelite history. In Kings, Ahab was spurred on by his wife Jezebel. I was dumbfounded to find out what their names mean. Ahab means, Friend of the Father. And Jezebel means Chaste. These two joined together in unholy matrimony bred the most rampant and flagrant worshipping of Baal that Israel had ever seen or would see. And it is so squeamishly true in our lives too. “God, Father! I am Your friend! From my youth I have loved You and served You! I am chaste! Please, O Lord, answer my prayers. Fulfill my petitions!” And the unspoken subtext is “I am good! I am deserving. Give me Your power to wield.” Our rational has been wed to our selfish desires and in this state we misperceive ourselves as good when of course God alone is good (*Apocalypse Explained* 1146, 160). From a self-righteous state of mind, we are praying to power, to Master to Baal. And mercifully, YHWH does not respond to prayers offered up to that name.

He allows us to cut ourselves in service to this Baal until we despair of that false “Lord” We stop crying out, “Lord, Lord!” and start remembering our real duty—to keep loving in the moment, no matter what reality happens to look like. It is no easy task, but it is the only task. And there is something

comforting in having a focused goal. The false prophets are killed. The rain finally falls from the heavens. We hear the fragile little voice, “love one another.”

In this, we see one aspect of meaning in the idea that YHWH is the “Father” of Jesus the “Son.” Reality, or Life as it is, brings about states of Love in our heart. The Father in the Old Testament is a scary, terrifying depiction of God. But from that comes Jesus, a most humble, beautiful depiction of endless, tireless love. Life as it is, is often terrifying and lonely. But after wrestling with it long enough and frequently enough, God begins to plant that holy seed, Love into the human heart. We begin to see that all of our jockeying for position and power, all of our effort to gain material security. All of our attempts to strong arm God into doing things our way are simply pointless. In the final count, the only thing that matters is loving the people God brings into our lives.

We can see this “Father-Son” relationship. But we can take it deeper as well. After that seed of Love is planted in our hearts and minds, we come to see that YHWH’s reality is in fact pure love. It is what produced love in our heart. So in one sense, Love is the essence of the Father, and the Son is the ability to see that love in life around us. The Son is the Truth or ability to perceive reality accurately (*Arcana Coelestia* 7499). And it is not a very difficult leap to see that in essence both the Son and Father are therefore one--Love. As Jesus said of Himself, I and the Father are One (John 10:30). Jesus called Himself the I AM (John 8:58). We can say it this way: The Truth is Life is Love.

It does not matter if our spouse is kind or cold. Our job is to love. It does not matter if the trip we have planned for months was ruined by rain. Our job is still to love. And in the loving, we begin to feel a certain peace and joy. The ups and downs of reality no longer matter all that much because they are inconsequential to our job. We begin, as it were, to ascend above

the earth in a chariot of fire. The fire is God's love made real in practice, and the chariot are the ideas derived from that love and practice which sustain us and allow us to feel God with us. We just keep being lifted up on the simple, singular, same and soft task of loving others to the best of our ability in each moment, as it is, in the name of our true and visible God, Jesus Christ. We are not good. We are not chaste. We are not friend of the Father. We are just lucky to be given the chance to try to love. And that is the grace and mercy of Jesus Christ. It is His chariot.

Editorial

LAYING DOWN YOUR LIFE.

Memorial Days abound round the world. Monuments and memorial observances move us to tears as we recall the sacrifices of those in uniform who risk death and injury for the sake of their country. Many recall their own experiences, and how close they came to paying the ultimate price, making the ultimate sacrifice. The reason we are moved, is that it is the greatest love: "Jesus said, Greater love hath no one than this that one lay down his soul for his friends" (John 15:13). "Who does not remember and love the man who, from the zeal of love for his country, fights with her enemies even unto death that he may thereby deliver her from the yoke of servitude?" (*True Christian Religion* 710).

This means that the love of serving in the military has nobility, because it is a likeness of the Lord's love, when He said, "I lay down My life for My sheep...I lay down My life that I may take it again" (John 10:15, 17). Not only do these words recall the Lord's Passion of the Cross (*True Christian Religion* 709:3) but also remind us of the doctrine involved in the Passion: namely that the Lord "by His own power united His Divine Essence to His Human Essence through temptations" (*Arcana Coelestia* 3381, cf 1663, 1668, 1690 *passim*). "led the Human

into the most grievous temptations, even to the utmost of power.” (*Arcana Coelestia* 2816) It sounds strange that the Divine actually let the Human into temptations. However, just before the temptations began, the Lord came into another consciousness, namely of the Human that was being led; and then the awareness of the Lord changed: “The truth is that the Lord admitted temptations into Himself in order that He might expel thence all that was merely human, and this until nothing but the Divine remained” (ibid.)

The Lord’s admission of temptations into Himself was from His own free choice. For “He fought from His own freedom and finally laid down His soul that He might do all things from His own power, and thus might become righteousness from Himself, which He could not have become except from His freedom.” That is why He said, “I lay down My soul of Myself; I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again.” The Divine guiding the Human in this process, yet the Human admitting temptations in “freedom” are meant by the end of the quote: “This commandment I have received from My Father.” (*Apocalypse Explained* 900:3)

Imagine that: the Lord prepared His own human for the battles, and this all through His life, in “His own freedom”! All the while, He prepared the battles to reach the “utmost of power” on each occasion, and this until “nothing but the Divine remained.” He could do this preparation for battle because He “from His own power governed [ex propria potentia gubernaverit] in the state of temptations, that is, overcame the hells which...were continually...pouring [falsities and evils] into mankind” (*Arcana Coelestia* 5045).

That is why the Lord suffered such pain. It was because of our sins, accumulated through the ages and passed on from generation to generation, that the hells could pour such a stream of falsities and evils into the human race, and thus into the

heredity of the Lord. These the Lord took on by Himself. Yet it was “not His Divine that suffered, but ... His Human.” After the suffering, “a most inward and complete union took place” (*True Christian Religion* 126:2)..All of this is involved in “laying down My life.”

So also, we fight in our temptations from “freedom” without which “we could not become spiritual.” The main-spring from which we fight, is “the love of truth, and ... the love of eternal life.” There is no other way for our internal to be “opened and regenerated” (*Apocalypse Explained* 900:3). The equivalent victory and union for us humans in our regeneration comes when we remember the temptation as just a vague distress, when in fact it was most painful. This is meant by the Lord “wiping away our tears” (*ibid.*).

There is no other reason for wars, than our hereditary evils accumulating from generation to generation. The only hope to end all war lies in a plurality of human beings entering into spiritual temptations, and overcoming them in the Lord’s name. The individual conquest over evil would in that case remove the cause for war so that it would never arise!

However, we know this is not yet the case. Instead, “men’s life’s love has become such that it wills to rule over others, and finally over all; and also to possess the wealth of the world, and finally all wealth” (*Divine Providence* 251). Such evils accumulate unseen, but by their very nature cannot remain hidden forever. Such a love to rule over all, or to possess all wealth, lies completely concealed in every person’s heart in this world, but springs up whenever opportunity to expand one’s ego is given (*Heavenly Doctrine* 71, 77, 152). We may growl in anger at this message, and say, No way! I don’t have that desire lurking in me! However, if we react with that much anger, it only proves the point! Our anger is riled at being discovered, and is to blame. Therefore, we are asked to look deeply inside

ourselves: “These two loves” which can never be quelled by any external control, are like violent prisoners finding every possible rout to escape. They inevitably boasts of their presence. Thus, when evils have risen to the point of threatening destruction on everything, then they are uncovered so that people can see them and freely resist them. They are in Providence allowed to “break out” so that we can “see and acknowledge them” (*Divine Providence* 251). Enough people have searched out these hidden desires in themselves, and so they have known them when they come out into the open. Something has to be done.

Now, if the Lord just cast out such evil loves apart from each person voluntarily shunning it as a sin against Him, “there would be no life left to man” (*Divine Providence* 177). And if instead they were to be repressed by the Lord’s hand of Providence, that is to say, prevented by the Lord’s own hand from expression, then those evil loves would turn on the person and “like cancer or gangrene, they would spread and consume everything vital in man” (*Divine Providence* 251). The human soul would be consumed. It is similar to profanation, when evil and good being joined together, are then ripped apart. There would hardly be anything left. Wars by comparison are lesser evils. The Lord’s mercy therefore does not remove evils in a moment, nor does it in Providence “repress the evils” since in either case this would destroy the human being. Instead the “means” of His mercy is human cooperation in spiritual things. We have to volunteer for that fight against the evils which the Lord allows to emerge into the open, visible especially in war.

Granted then that war prevents worse fates, and granted that evil cannot for long conceal itself, it is inevitable that evils emerge into view. It is almost the “daily news.” When aggressors invade—a subtle issue in our modern international day and age—the Lord moves defenders’ goods to marshal their forces to restore the balance within the borders of each nation involved.

Repentance is then also possible. The aggressors are free to change their minds. The lost sheep is returned. “He rejoices more over that lost sheep than over the ninety-nine that did not go astray” (Matthew 18:13).

It must always be kept in mind that there is a love of “dominion” which is actually motivated by care for others. It is called “the love of dominion from love to the neighbor.” Such a person wishes good to all, and likes nothing better “than performing uses, or being of service to the public and to individuals” (*True Christian Religion* 400, 405). His desire for more power is only to perform greater services than otherwise possible. Clearly, someone like this would never invade another nation! They would instead send their army to “counter-attack” the aggressor, to restore the balance of human freedom. Perhaps there are few such examples from history, although the elves led by Haldir coming to the aid of Helm’s Deep in

Since human beings are the ultimate cause for war, since everyone who is not regenerated passes on more hereditary tendencies to domineer over others and steal their riches, they also have to breach the gap of their making, and join together to put an end to any war as well. That is why, once “war has begun,” if the best defense proves to be “aggression,” then the victim of war “becomes the aggressor”! (*Charity* 164) The invaded or wronged nations counter-attack. Examples such as D-Day come to mind, where the hand of Providence seemed to be at play even with the weather. What appeared as a “narrow window to launch” north of the Channel, appeared as a “impassable stormy wall” to its south.

The soldier in self-defense turned counter-attack, then becomes like a lion in battle, but as a “lamb” afterwards when he rejoices in the “deliverance of his country and his people from the invasion of any enemy” (*Charity* 164). He then treats prisoners-of-war as neighbors to be corrected (*Charity* 166).

Those in uniform then have “the glory of the use” of being in the military, with commanders having also the “glory of the honor” of being in command. (*Charity* 165)

We approach Memorial Day here in the USA. ANZAC Day is celebrated on April 25 in Australia and New Zealand. There is a national observance held on November 11 in Great Britain, Canada and many English-speaking nations; and so also elsewhere. Everyone from love of country knows it is noble to serve one’s country, to defend it. The love of country, like a rung in the ladder of loves moving up from self- and family-preservation to the Lord at the top (*Heavenly Doctrine* 91), is instilled by remains from the Lord and bred into everyone. The Church, the Lord’s Kingdom and the Lord Himself are indeed to be loved more than one’s country, placing “eternal life” and “truth” above all things. For each person’s freedom is involved in “becoming spiritual” since all “freedom is of love,” namely the “love of truth and the love of eternal life” (*Apocalypse Explained* 900:3). These loves stem from the Lord’s own love to “lay down His life for His sheep.” They are the “greater” loves that fight in temptations, and that are willing to don a uniform. It is such loves that we salute. “If the country is threatened with ruin from an enemy or any other source, it is noble to die for it, and glorious for a soldier to shed his blood for it. This is said because so great should be one’s love for it” (*True Christian Religion* 414).

Church News

HURSTVILLE SOCIETY SYDNEY AUSTRALIA

The Hurstville Society has no Pastor at present, but receives visits from ministers both from the United States and from Australian colleagues. The Rev. Trevor Moffat has visited and held services. Rev Alain Nicolier was there for over three months, December, 2007 to February, 2008 and now Bishop Brian Keith has made an Episcopal visit.



Brian and Gretchen arrived for their first visit to Hurstville Society just as the Memorial Service for Tom Taylor was conducted by the Rev. Julian Duckworth from the Roseville New Church. On Good Friday March 21st, the Bishop administered the Holy Supper and gave an address on “The Lord Bearing Our Sins” ,providing an understanding of the Easter Story. Sunday’s Easter service was on the subject of Peace, summing up the Lord’s work on this earth. After church all joined together for a delicious luncheon to formally thank and say farewell to Brian and Gretchen.

The Annual camp which combines all the New Church congregations in Australasia, i.e. Australia and New Zealand, is a happy gathering with ministers giving instruction, lots of fun and outings and happy entertainment. Here Rev Chris and Margaret Skinner, Brian O’Neill, Rev. Alain and Jeanne Nicolier, Rev. David Millar, Rev. David and Pam Moffat, Rev. Julian and Ruth Duckworth.

Alain and Jeanne Nicolier arrived December 2nd, and stayed until February 17th, visiting the Gold Coast New Church members and meeting Rev. Ian Arnold who is Pastor there. Alain also led in the Journey program for the Hurstville Society, also run by Michael Lockhart and Michelle Heldon.





The Hurstville Society were hosts to the visit from the Ngalangangpum Aboriginal School, last November, 2007. It was a “Bush to Big Smoke” visit, arriving from Western Australia were twelve aboriginal boys and six girls camped at the Church and a neighbor’s home for two weeks. They performed “the smoke ceremony” and sang songs like “One People One Land” written by the renowned Australian Christian composer Monica Brown. The visit owed its thanks to Leanne Mahy, a close neighbor to the Society, who teaches at this school in Western Australia.



Margart Heldon and Imran Paddy with the painting by Patrick Mung Mung

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An on-line family magazine from the G. C. Office of Education featuring materials for all ages focused on a new theme every month.

The Lord Protect Us in May 2008
The Holy City in June 2008
Healing Our Blindness in July 2008
Keeping the Sabbath in August 2008

CHURCH NEWS



Many will remember Tom Taylor, who passed away recently. Tom was the last surviving pupil of the Hurstville Society “New Church School” held up to the beginning of World War I. He and Shirley celebrated their 62nd anniversary, and have been life-long supporters of the Hurstville Society functions. The society also bade farewell to Trevor and Audrey Favell, who joined the Hurstville Society after seeing the bumper sticker of Rev. Douglas Taylor: “Have you read Swedenborg?”



Both Hurstville Society and the New Church at Ellerslie in Auckland, New Zealand, mourn the passing of Doreen Keal. Doreen with husband Hugh Keal were part of the Hurstville Society from 1961 to 1982, supporting its many uses under three or four pastors. Doreen was organist and headed many organizations and ventures. Their family is not only in Auckland but also in the Bryn Athyn and Kempton areas!

WHAT GRANDMAN WINDOWS CAN DO

BY JAN H. WEISS

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