

# New Church LIFE

---

A monthly magazine devoted to the teachings  
revealed through Emanuel Swedenborg

---

**In this issue:**

The Integrity of the Word  
A Sermon by Douglas Taylor

Love & Judgment: a Big Spiritual Dilemma  
By Michael D. Gladish

The Theological School  
By Dean Andrew M.T. Dibb

The Baptism of the New Church Part I  
By Howard Roth

General Church Schools Directory

Annual Report of the General Church

**November 2008**

# New Church Life

A MONTHLY MAGAZINE DEVOTED TO THE TEACHINGS  
REVEALED THROUGH EMANUEL SWEDENBORG

**The Integrity of the Word**  
 A Sermon .....*Douglas Taylor* 443

**Love and Judgment: A Big Spiritual Dilemma**.....*Michael D. Gladish* 451

**The Theological School**.....*Dean Andrew M.T. Dibb* 455

**The Baptism of the New Church, Part I**.....*Howard Roth* 458

**The Joseph Project**.....*David Lindrooth* 467

**Editorial**

Atheism-No Proof of God ..... 464

Letter to the Editor..... 475

Bibliography.....*Alain Nicolier* 475

**General Church Schools Directory** ..... 477

**Annual Report of the Secretary of the General Church**..... 485

**Announcements** ..... 489

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](mailto:datacenter@anc-gc.org)

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

## ***Notes on This Issue***

Our sermon this month is from another retired veteran of the Church, Rev. Douglas M. Taylor. The contents are topical, referring both to the Messiah to come, and to the Second Advent.

In the same vein, the short comparison between the First and Second Advents, by Rev. Michael D. Gladish is reprinted from a year ago. It asks us whether love is unconditional. He points to answers which make The Lord's love among us effective.

The welcome article by Howard Roth is a major study by a lay scholar of the Writings and will appear in four parts. Howard examines the Lord's call of the Apostles and what baptism means for the New Church today.

The Theological School, by Rev. Dr. Andy M.T. Dibb, the Dean of Theological School, is an outright appeal for future candidates. The General Church is world-wide, and so is this appeal.

The Joseph Project, written by Director of Evangelization, Rev. David Lindrooth, is another contribution of a very active Pastor of the Church. It offers expert assistance in spreading the Church in all locales round the world.

Please note back cover notice.

## THE INTEGRITY OF THE WORD

### A Sermon

BY THE REV. DOUGLAS TAYLOR

*For I testify unto every one who hears the words of the prophet of this book, if any one shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book. And if any one shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and out of the things which are written in this book. (Revelation 22:18, 19)*

The Word must be preserved because it is the basis and container of all things for the church, both in heaven and on earth. *Those in the spiritual world depend upon the people of this world for their very consciousness and their subsistence, and not at all upon their own basis (Last Judgment 9).* But the heavens, unlike the hells, are in order and therefore depend upon what is of order with man. It is the Word that teaches what order is. To the extent that people think, will, and live according to the teachings of Divine Revelation, to the same extent they are conjoined to the heavens. As they read the Word in its literal sense, the inhabitants of heaven are present with them in the internal spiritual sense. And the angels draw out their sense without knowing what the people on earth are thinking about, “and yet the thoughts of the angels and of men form a unity by means of correspondences, like end, cause, and effect. This conjunction by means of correspondence is such from creation. This then is the source of man’s association with angels by means of the Word” (*Sacred Scripture* 67:6). Further, “the Lord is present with mankind and is conjoined with them by means of the Word, since the Lord is the Word, and in it as it were speaks with mankind. The Lord is also Divine truth itself, as also is the Word” (*Sacred Scripture* 78).

Accordingly, the church is to draw its doctrine from the Word (*Sacred Scripture* 5061). Indeed “a church is a church according to its understanding of the Word” (*Sacred Scripture* 76-79). Doctrine that is not from the Word can come only from human ingenuity and self-derived intelligence. But a church that wills to be led by the Lord, to be conjoined with Him, will always seek to discover what the Lord requires, will “*seek to enquire in his Temple,*” to learn in all humility from His Word. For a Church will be “noble...if in genuine truths, ignoble...if not in genuine truths, and destroyed...if in falsified truths” (*Sacred Scripture* 77).

The need to preserve the Word intact is therefore manifest. But how far has this very necessary warning been heeded? It is true that there have always been some people who have insisted on the literal inerrancy of Scripture, and as a consequence have been a means of its preservation. But today (in the Christian Church) their ranks are sadly depleted and their numbers rapidly declining. For against them is arrayed a vast army of exceedingly intelligent men - that is to say, men of great natural intelligence, who from a desire to ascertain the truth about the Word, have had the unfortunate effect of undermining people’s faith in its Divine Revelation. In their attempts to understand *how* the Word was written, these scholars have lost sight of the more important question of *why* it was written. Although their theories are constantly at variance with one another, they are united in this, that they all regard the Word as nothing more than man’s developing idea of God, instead of God’s idea of man. The great standard or criterion of judgment is historicity; the test of history, whether or not the Word agrees with what is known and proved from history; this is the main test. There is nothing sacred about the Word, according to this concept; it is merely the document that bears testimony to the various religious experiences of mankind through the ages. There is nothing sacred about the order of the books of the Word, or even of the chapters within the books. Everything must conform to the facts

of history. Everything must conform also to the idea that there is no such thing as a miracle. Everything of prophecy, of foretelling future events, is easily disposed of by the claim that books that appear to foretell events were actually written after those events, and they are placed accordingly. The great hope is that one day there will be final agreement as to the correct historical order of events.

And what is the attitude of these biblical critics to the Apocalypse in particular? In general, they regard it as a most interesting form of literature common among the Jews. Some think that its veiled form is due to the need of Christians at the time it was written to hide its message from the Roman oppressors. It is therefore ingeniously interpreted by them in the light of contemporary historical happenings; the "fall of Babylon," for example, being regarded as a secret symbol of the wished-for "fall of the Roman Empire." These are some of the things that are added to "*the words of the prophecy of this book*", and what has been taken away, of course, is the concept of Divine Revelation.

The Divine warning itself which is thus ignored is taken as another example of the superstition of the times. It is said to be a common thing in Jewish literature, as is obvious from other similar warnings in the Old Testament. In Deuteronomy, for example we read, "You shall not add unto the Word which I command you, neither shall you diminish ought from it, that you may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you" (4:2). And again, "Whatever thing I command you, observe to do it. Thou shall not add to nor diminish from it" (12:32).

In the light of this modern movement to discredit the idea of Divine Revelation, it is easy to see why the Lord warned the Christian Church to preserve their Scriptures intact. And the New Church is under the same obligation to preserve the Word. Indeed, it has a greater obligation to do so, since the people of the New Church have been given to know *why* this must be

done. They can know and understand that the sense of the letter of the Word contains an internal spiritual meaning – a sense in which the only subjects treated of are the Lord and His kingdom and its reception by mankind. They can see all the alleged inconsistencies and impossibilities convincingly explained by the doctrine of the internal sense of the Word. They can also see with equal charity that the slightest change in the order of the literal sense will break the sequence and series of the internal sense.

Hence, New Church people are less likely to add to or take away from the letter of the Word. Perhaps our greatest temptation though in this regard is to jest from and about the Word. For the Writings point out, “Those who make jokes from the Word do not regard it as holy, and those who joke about it hold it in no esteem” (*Apocalypse Explained* 1064:3).

From these considerations, it is clear why the New Church joins in the struggle to preserve the Word in its integrity. But what of the Apocalypse or Book of Revelation in particular? Why did *it* have to be hoarded with an especial care? Why did the “*words of the prophecy of this book*” particularly have to be kept inviolate? For in the beginning, when “this book” was in the form of a separate scroll, the warning clearly applied to the Apocalypse exclusively.

It was, of course, a means of conjunction with the heavens, but it was not of much use to the Christian Church as a source of doctrine because, apart from a few principles given in the messages to the seven churches in Asia, the things written in this book could not be understood.

As we read in the Preface to *The Apocalypse Revealed*: “There are many who have labored to explain the Apocalypse; but, as the spiritual sense of the Word had been hitherto unknown, they could not see the *arcana* which lie concealed in it, for the spiritual sense alone discloses these; on which account expositors have conjectured various things, and most of them have applied the things that are in it to the states of empires,

intermingling also some things about ecclesiastical affairs. But the Apocalypse, like the whole Word, does not in the least, in its spiritual sense, treat of worldly things, but of heavenly things; thus not of empires and kingdoms but of heaven and the church.”

Consequently, “without an explanation there are few things in the Apocalypse which can be kept” (*Apocalypse Revealed* 944). For example, what is said about the horses that went out of the book cannot be acted upon in its literal sense; nor what is said about the twelve tribes, about the seven angels with the seven trumpets, about the little book eaten up by John, about the woman and the dragon, and many other things besides. Such things were of little use to the Christian Church. Yet it was to preserve them intact, neither adding nor subtracting.

The reason for this was that the Apocalypse is a prophetic book. A prophetic book is always for the next dispensation, for the church which is to follow on from the one in whose revelation the prophetic book or books appear. Thus the Jews, though they valued their prophetic books very highly, did not understand them. Although they knew that the Messiah would come, they did not acknowledge Him when He did come because they had misunderstood the prophecies concerning Him. They expected a Messiah who would set up an earthly reign and exalt the Jewish nation. It was only after the Lord had actually fulfilled the Old Testament prophecies concerning Himself, that these prophecies were rightly understood. And it was the Lord Himself who revealed their true meaning.

There was one book, however, that the Jews neither understood nor valued, and that was the book of Daniel. It was not included by them among the Law and the Prophets but was relegated to a place among the books known (interestingly enough) as ‘the Writings.’ These Jewish Writings were the last to be recognized as part of the Sacred Scriptures.

It is well known that the book of Daniel has many similarities with the Apocalypse. And the Apocalypse was likewise not unanimously received into the canon of Sacred

Scriptures by the Christian Church, mainly because it was not understood.

But, as the prophetic book of the Christian Dispensation, it was never intended as a doctrine of life for the Christian Church. It was addressed specifically to its successor – the New Church – the Church of the New Jerusalem. Indeed, the Apocalypse may well be described as the Charter of the New Church. It contains in its internal sense a detailed account of the judgment on the Christian Church. It describes the very evils and falsities that destroyed that church, and which will also destroy the New Church unless they are shunned and cast out. It also gives the reason for the separate existence of the New Church in the world.

These things were given to mankind to know and act upon in the Heavenly Doctrine of the New Jerusalem – signified by the “holy city, New Jerusalem coming down from God, out of heaven” (Revelation 21:2). The Heavenly Doctrine in its summary form is what is meant interiorly by “*the words of the prophecy of this book.*”

From this it follows that those who have received that Doctrine as divinely revealed, are the ones to whom is specifically given this warning against adding or taking away. To us who have chosen to obey the teaching of this prophecy is given the responsibility of keeping it intact without adding anything of our own or taking away anything from the Divinity of the books in which this prophecy is revealed, that is, in the Writings for the New Church.

We add to the words of the prophecy if we import our own ideas or some alien philosophy and bring them to bear on our reading of the Writings; or if we try to make them confirm some preconceived notion; or if we seek support or permission from the Writings for the indulgence of some evil which we really ought to abandon.

What we add in doing this is from our proprium, from what is our own, and though we may do this adding without any

conscious intention to destroy the Writings, nevertheless that is what we would do. But we are more deliberate in our work of destruction if we take away from the Writings – that is, if we subscribe to the view that while they may be in some sense inspired, they were however, written down by a man, Swedenborg, and that therefore they are full of his human imperfections. For this breeds an attitude of wariness towards the doctrine of the Writings and a disposition to distrust their teachings. If we have reservations with regard to the Writings, the dictates of human reason then become the criterion or guiding light for our life.

Still more do we take away if, while endeavoring to live according to the teachings of the Writings, we nevertheless consider them as merely human writings. To believe that is to deny that the Lord has revealed the internal sense of the Word, or the nature of the life after death, or that He has performed a Judgment upon the Christian Church, or that He has made His promised Second Coming; for these things are for the Lord alone to do. No man can presume to do them.

To believe that the Writings are anything less than a Divine Revelation from the Lord, as they themselves claim to be, is to detract not only from them but also from the Lord Himself who revealed them. We cannot say that we acknowledge the Lord and wish to be led by Him if, in the next breath, we say that we have certain reservations with regard to the Writings. For they are the Lord in His Second Coming. To order our lives according to the teachings of the Writings is to be led by the Lord, and to do that is to keep the prophecy of this book.

So it is that inmost meaning of our text refers to the confession and acknowledgement of the Lord. We are told in the work *The Apocalypse Revealed* that to add to the words of the prophecy or to take away from them “signifies that those who read and know the truths of doctrine of this book, now opened by the Lord, and yet acknowledge any other God than the Lord, destroy these two things, cannot do otherwise than perish from

the falsities and evils, which are signified by the plagues described in this book” (*Apocalypse Revealed* 957; cf. 958).

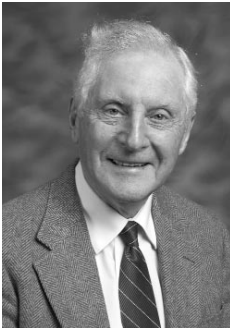
That there is no other God but the Lord Jesus Christ is the faith of the New Heaven; it is the New Evangel for the New Church; it is a summary of the doctrine of the Apocalypse, indeed, of all Divine Revelation in the Old Testament, in the New Testament, and in the Writings.

The same may be said concerning faith in the Lord. There is to be no other faith than faith in the Lord now made visible in His Second Advent. The warning in the text is given to us lest we begin to have faith, that is, confidence in ourselves. With regard to spiritual matters, if we add or take away anything from Divine Revelation, whatever its form, we do not acknowledge the Lord but wish to be led by our own ideas. And our own ideas, when they oppose the Lord, are nothing but falsities from evil - “*the plagues that are written in this book.*” They will plague us as surely as they have plagued the preceding churches if we allow them to do so. They have been exposed in such detail for one reason only, that we may shun them.

Let us then keep the words of the prophecy of this book. Let us keep them pure and undefiled. Let us acknowledge from the heart that “*the Lord God Jesus Christ reigns, whose kingdom shall be for ages and ages.*” For, “*Blessed is he who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book*” (Rev. 22:7).

Amen

Lessons: Daniel 7:13-14; Revelation 22:6-21 Love & Judgment 41 (portions)



The Rev. Douglas M. Taylor was inaugurated into the priesthood in 1960, and ordained as a Pastor in 1962. He first served as a resident minister to the Tucson Circle, visiting Phoenix and San Diego. In 1963 he answered a call to serve as the Pastor of the Hurstville Society, Australia, until 1974, when he responded to become Assistant Dean of the Bryn Athyn Society. In 1978 to took the post of Director of Evangelization, until 1989, when again he returned to Hurstville Society, visiting elsewhere in Australia and also New Zealand. After retiring in 1993, he continued as visiting Pastor to the Baltimore Society, Md., visiting Australia some more times, and also giving newcomer's classes in Bryn Athyn. Douglas is now retired, living with his wife Christine (Brock) in Bryn Athyn.

## **LOVE & JUDGMENT: A BIG SPIRITUAL DILEMMA<sup>1</sup>**

BY THE REV. MICHAEL D. GLADISH

As we prepare to celebrate the birth of Christ each year we are confronted with the age old problem of reconciling two apparently contradictory principles, love and judgment. "For God so loved the world," we read, "that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). Yet Jesus Himself said "For judgment I have come into the world..." (John 9:39). "For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth" (John 18:37).

What a curious fact. We normally think of God Himself as somehow requiring judgment, and Jesus as the loving Savior. But truth is the standard of judgment, and it does tend to condemn, since no one is perfect. Indeed "all have sinned and fall short of

1. From sermon preached in Toronto 2006

the glory of God” (Romans 3:23). So if Jesus came to teach the truth and to judge, how are we saved?

Most Christians say that we are saved by faith in the “fact” that He suffered and died on our behalf, offering Himself as a sacrifice to atone for the sins of the whole human race (past, present and future). The idea is that in confronting the evils and falsities of the world He became a “lightning rod” for all the hatred of the world, and that by suffering on our behalf He relieved us of any need to suffer. In classic Christian theology this is called the “vicarious atonement.”

But this makes the love of God rather demanding, don’t you think? Should He require a Divinely human sacrifice to move Him to pity and forgiveness? Indeed, it seems rather pagan, doesn’t it? One gets the sense of an angry, jealous God demanding payment for the sins of the world and being appeased only by the brutal murder of His own Son. What kind of love is this, and what kind of judgment?

### **Unconditional Love?**

What a contrast this is from all the talk we hear today about “unconditional love,” that is, love that requires no-thing but accepts all people without qualification. We hear it everywhere! “God loves me just as I am.” And it’s *true*! But does He love the *way* we are? Note the Gospel is *all* about the need to change, beginning with the first words of Jesus’ public ministry, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Matthew 4:17).

So how can we understand God’s love? And how can we reconcile that love with what He does require?

Here’s a simple answer: God’s love is such that He wants to make us happy to eternity (*True Christian Religion* 43). You can’t ask for much more than that.

But in order to be happy we have to live in harmony and co-operation with the laws of order. Who could possibly imagine that God would love our misery or our mistakes, our selfishness or our stupidity? No, it is because He loves us that He wants us *not* to be miserable, selfish or stupid. And this love is unconditional, but it requires wisdom, or judgment to be effective.

Getting back to Christmas, we can think of it this way: God in His Infinite love as it were says to Himself, “My people are miserable, what can I do to make them happy?” And from His infinite wisdom He replies to the effect, that “I must go down there and show them how to find happiness; I must not force them, but teach them, and show them, so that they have a choice and can turn their lives around.”

### **The Real Nature of Judgment, or Conditions for Salvation**

There are two words in the Gospels for judgment. One refers to condemnation and the other to the concept of discernment, or prudence. The Lord in the Gospels clearly spoke of both, but when He taught He did not do so with any intention to condemn but rather “that the world through Him might be saved” (John 3:17). And here’s the key: not saved by His sacrificial death on the cross, but saved by the freedom that His teaching and a proper discernment of the truth provides (John 8:32), so that we can enjoy an orderly, fulfilling spiritual life.

And this freedom implies decisions, judgments that we must make. For example, there is no doubt that we should love all people, even as our heavenly Father loves all people, “making His sun to shine on the evil and on the good... sending rain on the just and on the unjust” (Matthew 5:45), but we cannot love their evil or their falsity or their confusion or their grief. We cannot love it and we cannot confirm it or support it. Thus we cannot show our love for all people in the same way. Neither could the Lord, which is why He condemned the scribes and Pharisees even though He loved them too.

And He said, “If your brother sins against you, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him” (Luke 17:3-4). Note, “If he repents.” The same message is clear in the parable of the prodigal son: his father had compassion on him when he repented and came home (Luke 15:11-32). To do otherwise would be to support the disorder, and that does *not* truly love. So we have the teaching that “Christian prudence demands that a person’s life should be carefully checked, and charity exercised accordingly” (*Heavenly Doctrine* 85).

### **Back to Christmas.**

There is an appearance in the literal stories in the Gospels that God sent His Son as someone separate from Himself into the world, “that the world through Him [not the Father] might be saved.” But the truth is that God, being pure, unconditional love in its very essence, provided for the salvation of the world by clothing *Himself* in the human form *as* Jesus Christ so that He could teach the truth with love and so remove all the obstacles to a life of faith.

This is why, in perhaps the most famous Advent prophecy of all, we read, “For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given... and His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, the Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace” (Isaiah 9:6). Note, He is all of these in *one* person. This is why Jesus Himself said, “I and My Father are one” (John 10:30); “He who has seen Me has seen the Father” (John 14:9).

But how could the Infinite be contained in a finite body? And who looked after the rest of the universe while it was so contained? We might as well ask how the mind can look after the body while its thoughts are focussed on one small thing. The fact is, the infinite is not contained or limited in any way, but it does manifest itself in a focussed way in the love and wisdom of Christ.

### **The Dilemma Solved**

So we see that the Story of Christmas is not the story of God demanding any-thing, least of all a human sacrifice. It is the story of love providing the wisdom necessary for us to take responsibility, to make good judgments, and to keep His commandments for our own sake, indeed, for our eternal welfare.

It is the story of love and wisdom working together, as they always do, and working in this case in a human form for all to see and understand.

“I have come,” Jesus said, “as a light into the world, that whoever believes in Me should not abide in darkness” (John 12:46). And “He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life” (John 8:12).

May this and “all your Christmases be bright” with the light of His love and wisdom!

## **THE THEOLOGICAL SCHOOL**

BY DR. ANDREW M.T. DIBB

I was appointed Dean of the Theological School when the Rev. Eric Carswell left to become the President of the Academy. One of the duties of the Dean is to meet with the Bishop every two weeks to discuss the training of the future ministry of the General Church. It was during our first meeting that Bishop Kline asked what we could do to attract men to the ministry partly to solve the acute shortage of ministers, and partly to prepare for the planned growth that would come about through the concerted growth drive we are preparing for. What will be the effect of a million meaningful new contacts, of Bryn Athyn College and the High Schools as they grow? To believe in the Lord means believing that His Church will indeed grow. This means that the clergy has to increase in numbers in order to teach and lead those who find the church in the future.

Training men for the ministry is long and expensive process. It is a total commitment by the men, and if they are married, of their wives and children. In the past many students and their families made this commitment, and we should never overlook the hardships they endured in the process as they struggled to balance a demanding academic curriculum with the responsibilities of keeping hearth and home together. Unmarried students fared a bit better, but they too carried the responsibility of tuition payments and simple survival. It should be no surprise to us that some men, who felt called to the ministry weighed up the costs and decided that their responsibility to the families outweighed their call.

It was with this in mind that we began a general reconstruction of the way the Theological School operates. The first step was to establish a team to figure out how to remove the financial barriers. In a long series of meetings, discussion, planning and figuring, the team calculated the costs of

eliminating one cost after another. We decided that if we removed the financial cost of training so that the General Church and the Academy equally shared the burden, then we could offer prospective students a financial package that includes full tuition remission, housing, medical insurance and a stipend for daily living. Scales were worked out for single theologs and for those with or without families. Each final package is calculated for individual Theologs, taking the details of their personal households into account. The idea has been to create an equitable system in which any man, married or not, who feels called by the Lord can live modestly for a three year program while preparing for his future work. The joint Boards of the Academy and the General Church agreed to fund this initiative in February 2008, and we moved from the planning stage to the implementation phase.

In addition to restructuring the financial provisions for theological students, it was felt that we needed some review of our curricular offerings to help equip these men for the future. Our doctrinal program has been under review for some time, with some major changes being implemented as a result. This curricular review continued during the summer of 2008, with some additional changes made to our program. These changes were mostly the result of reorganizing some courses and consolidating others to remove repetition. Essentially, however, the doctrinal program of the Theological School has not changed significantly.

The major changes in this year's program are in practical courses. The pastoral role rests on sound doctrinal study, but it has other aspects that need attention, particularly those relating to interpersonal relationships and people-skills and management. In the past, when Theologs were working long hours at extra-academic jobs to earn a living, skill courses were *ad hoc*. For example, we dedicated twenty hours over three years to counseling skills. However, by relieving students of the need to work, or at least greatly reducing the number of hours they do

work, has made it possible to add some of these skills. We have divided these into two distinct areas.

*Skills Acquisition* classes are designed to help the students to bring their doctrinal knowledge into practical formats. Six of these will be offered over a two year period: communication skills, pastoral counseling, conflict resolution, group dynamics and pastoral business. Each of these skills will be taught by highly trained and experienced teachers.

*Experiential Learning* activities take the student out of the class room and into contact with real people. Dr. Sonia Werner, working in close relationship with the Bryn Athyn Society, has developed a program in which students spend three to four hours a week in face-to-face contact with people, ranging from retirees at Cairnwood Village to newcomers at the Cathedral, to working with elementary, high school and college students in various projects. The aim is to develop our students' people-skills, and also encourage them to think of the doctrines in practical as well as intellectual ways.

When all is said and done, the Theologs are just as busy as they have always been, but the big difference is that now a far greater part of their time is on task in learning about the doctrine and learning how to communicate it in a wide spectrum of situations. They still study Latin, write papers and give reports, but they also practice their skills on people, listen to people's troubles and share the excitement of new-comers finding the church.

In this 2008 – 2009 school year we have an intake of six students, which will go some way to resolving the ministerial shortage in the General Church and better position us for the growth we hope will come from the meaningful contact we are making with the world around us. However, the shortage is by no means resolved. The General Church still needs ministers, and will continue to need them for years to come. Our hope is that if men, upon reading this article, feel "the call" to the priesthood, and see in this new financial and training strategy as

a way forward, and if they would like to discuss this prospect, please do not hesitate to contact me. All discussions are non-binding and will be kept confidential.

*You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you. (John 15:16)*

P.O. Box 717  
Bryn Athyn PA 19001  
[Andrew.dibb@ancts.org](mailto:Andrew.dibb@ancts.org)  
(USA) 267 502 2582

## **THE BAPTISM OF THE NEW CHURCH**

### **PART I**

BY HOWARD ROTH

*“And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you” (Matt. XXVIII:18,19,20). This is the great and final commission of our Lord to His Apostles. It is the command of God, instituting and perpetuating, through human means, His new and everlasting Church upon earth. Two things are commanded, - to teach, and to baptize. The ministers of Jesus Christ are to teach all nations to observe all things whatsoever He hath commanded them; and they are to baptize all nations into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Thus the commission is a brief and plain one. It is the most powerful commission ever given unto man; and yet in how few words, and with how little circumstantial pomp! The power lies in its source. It is but a word, but the word comes from God, - from Him to whom all*

*power is given in heaven and on earth; and when God gave this word, "great" indeed "was the company of those that published it" (see Psalm 68:11).*

It is interesting to note when, first, after this Divine commission was given to the Apostles, they exercised it. We find the account of the first performance of Christian baptism after the ascension of our Lord to heaven, in the second chapter of the book of Acts. We read there how, on the day of Pentecost, the Apostle Peter, standing up with the eleven about him, preached a sermon to the vast multitude of Jews assembled at Jerusalem at that festival "out of every nation under heaven." He took his text from the prophet Joel: "And it shall come to pass in the last days, that I will pour out of My Spirit upon all flesh" (Joel II:28). He told them about Jesus of Nazareth, whom they had crucified and slain, - how that David has prophesied of Him that God would raise Him up to sit upon His throne; that now verily He is exalted, and has shed forth His Spirit upon them. "Therefore," says Peter, "let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ!" Then the people were conscience-stricken, and began to ask Peter, "What shall we do?" Peter said unto them, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit". Then they that gladly received his word were baptized; and the same day these were added unto them about three thousand souls.

You will notice that Peter exhorts them to be baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. We elsewhere read in the Acts of the Apostles, that Paul, finding certain disciples at Ephesus, asked them if they had received the Holy Spirit since they had expressed their belief? They answered, "We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Spirit." Paul said unto them, "Unto what baptism then were ye baptized?" They said, "Unto John's baptism." Then said Paul, "John verily baptized unto

repentance, saying unto the people that they should believe on 'Him' who should come after," that is, on Christ Jesus. And when they heard this, they were baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, they received the Holy Spirit. We have here an important testimony regarding what the Apostles themselves thought concerning the Divinity of our Lord.

It is said, you observe, that they baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. It is possible, even probable, that the Apostles conformed strictly to our Lord's injunction in pronouncing the name of the Divine Trinity. But this testimony of the Book of Acts shows, it would seem beyond controversy, that baptism into the Name of Jesus, means just the same as baptism into the Name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit; in other words, that the Name of Jesus is the Name of God, and thus also of the whole Trinity which dwells in God. For if the name of Jesus was used by the Apostles as meaning only the Son, and not comprising the Whole Divine Being, then were they administering only a partial and imperfect baptism; whereas it is recorded that those who were baptized into the Name of the Lord Jesus, received the promised gift of the Holy Spirit.

Another interesting fact to be noticed in these accounts of early Apostolic baptism is, that a number of disciples, who had already been baptized by John the Baptist, now came to Paul to be re-baptized, or rather to be now truly baptized into the Christian Church.

The first baptism was a sacred, a holy, yea, a Divine ordinance; for we know that John the Baptist was sent to prepare the way for the coming of the Lord, and to prepare the way by his baptizing unto repentance. It was not that John the Baptist's was not duly authorized, or without a Divine sanction, that they who received it had to be baptized again, in order to become Christians; but the baptism of John was preparatory, and to be succeeded and completed by the baptism of Him that should come after. Thus the two baptisms are not the acts of the same

dispensation of Divine grace, but of successive dispensations. It was not required that those whom the Lord's Apostles baptized, should have already been baptized by John. When our Lord had once given the disciples power to baptize, then the office of John was at an end; and, as we read, "Jesus (that is, His disciples) baptized now more disciples than John, though Jesus Himself baptized not, but His disciples" (John I.:1). And John says of Jesus, "He must increase, but I must decrease. He that cometh after me is greater than I." Thus the one baptism was sufficient for those who were of the first baptism by the disciples of the Lord, but of those who were baptized by John a second was required.

At this day, the New Church stands in the religious world in a relation not unlike that of the Apostolic Church at the time to which has been referred. The New Church receives now from the Lord, in the letter of the Gospels, her commission to go forth, now, in the time of His Second Coming, teaching all nations, and baptizing them into the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. A new religious era, a new dispensation of Divine Truth, is lifting its standard in the world. It comes silently, unheralded, unannounced in the ears of the multitude; just as in the silence of the night a little infant was born in the humble stable of Bethlehem, there being no place for Him in the inn. The New Church! The New Dispensation! How silently, how mysteriously, how wonderfully, it is dawning upon the world! How many minds have been illuminated by a ray of its light! And what is its light? And whence comes its light?

Its light is the light of new truth shining into the minds of men. Not of a new truth, nor of many new truths, do we mean, as consisting of the vast advance of scientific discovery and general learning; but the light of new truth, of truth new in kind, new in its source, new in its effect on man's heart and life. Now all truth is Divine. God is its only source; and as God is eternal and unchangeable, so must truth be. How then can we speak of new truth? We mean of course, truth newly revealed from Him

who is the Truth Itself, - the only Source of Truth, and of all Light, - revealed by Him who is Himself the 'Word', - who is at once the Revelator of Truth, and the Truth revealed. This new light, which is the new truth now dawning on the mental world in the New Church, shines forth, therefore, out of the Word of God. It is the light and the truth of the Word of God, - hitherto, in the purposes of God's Providence, hidden beneath the letter, but now declared to man as the inner and spiritual, therefore the true meaning of the Word. It is the secret meaning which once lay in "dark sayings of old", in the parables and proverbs in which Our Lord spake while on earth, and of which He said, "Hitherto have I spoken to you in proverbs, but the time cometh when I shall no longer speak to you in proverbs, but shall show you plainly of the Father" (John XVI:25).

Thus, there are different degrees or kinds of truth, even of the Divine Truth. These kinds of truth are the Divine truth adapted to the various grades and degrees of man's mind, and also of his religious life. The literal sense of the Scriptures constitutes one degree of truth; the spiritual sense of the Scriptures is a higher and more interior degree of truth, and is adapted to a more interior plane of the mind, and a more advanced spiritual life, than that which the letter itself addresses.

And yet, just as all true spiritual life finds its only expression and delight in the humble plane of our external acts and relations, so does all the spiritual power and meaning of the Bible find its basis and its expression in the words of the literal sense. It is not apart from the holy letter of the Word that we get at the spiritual truth, but only through the letter and in the letter. Thus in the Bible has been opened to our gaze the firmament of genuine spiritual truth and knowledge.

It is a new kind of truth, because it is spiritual truth. Though shining through the parables, the symbols and figures of the literal language, yet it is itself a distinct plane of truth, - as distinct from the letter as is the sunlight distinct from the tinted window-pane through which it shines. This spiritual truth is

everywhere connected with the letter by the correspondence between all natural and all spiritual things. As the natural world is all a picture of the universe within, and thus of the world of the mind, so is the Bible in its letter a picture, or rather a parable, of the Bible within; that is, of the Word of God itself, infinite, unfathomable, Divine.

The New Church, which, as the New Jerusalem, the Holy City, a structure of heavenly doctrine, is now descending from God, and from His own light, into the minds of men on earth, takes up now her Divine commission to teach all nations, and to Baptize them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

As a system of truth newly revealed from Heaven, its establishment in the world is verily a “Second Coming of the Lord”, Who alone is the Truth, and who comes now as He came before, as the ‘Word’.

Before, indeed, He came as the ‘Word made flesh’, as the Word in a Divine Human Person: now at ‘His Second Coming’, He comes as the same Word, not in Person, but in the Spirit. His coming is the coming of the Spirit which shall lead us into all Truth. The Lord is therefore at this day making His Second Advent in His own Revelation of His own truth, out of the spiritual sense of His written Word. In this spiritual sense the Word treats everywhere of Him; and since it is itself the Lord as to His Divine Truth, therefore the phrase, “All thing whatsoever I have commanded you”, means the entire Word from beginning to end.

The Divine commission to the New Church is therefore to teach this Word as now new revealed or opened up to our knowledge in the revelation of its spiritual meaning; and the commission of the New Church to baptize all nations into the Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, is, to baptize them into the Lord as now revealed in his Second Coming, - as revealed in the truths which He has mercifully declared to us in the spiritual sense of the Scriptures, with deep affection addressed as “The

Writings”, - in that truth wherein He now shows us, as He promised, plainly of the Father.

The significance of this Divine commission to the New Church is therefore a new one, - a deeper and a fuller significance than it had when first given to the Apostles.

It is a significance which does not destroy the Law or the letter of the Word, but which fulfils it. The command to teach is, to teach the Word in its true spiritual character, as now made known out of heaven from the Lord. The command to baptize is, to baptize into the Name of the Lord Jesus, as verily not one of three distinct Divine Persons, but as the only Divine Person, in whom dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; who, thus being revealed as at once God and Man, as embodying the entire Divinity in His glorified Humanity, verily at this day speaks no more in proverbs, but, in Himself, shows us plainly of the Father. The truth which the New Church teaches is therefore henceforth new truth; and the baptism which the Church administers is therefore a new baptism.

To be continued.

## **THE JOSEPH PROJECT**

BY REV. DAVID LINDROOTH

Dear Friends:

General Church Outreach started developing the Joseph Project last July as a way to offer a more robust support to congregations that are striving to better establish themselves in the communities they serve. I am thrilled to have Theresa McQueen and Heather Allais on staff helping to build it. I would like to offer a few words to build out your picture of the concept.

Broadly speaking, when a congregation desires to work with the Joseph Project, we will help them with planning, evaluation of programs, finding appropriate training and expertise, marketing,

and evangelization technique – whatever is needed to help better establish that church in the community it serves.

To use an analogy, if a person wants to run a marathon, they might choose to work with a trainer who can help them properly prepare for the run. The trainer might recommend a good dietitian, might suggest stretching exercises and help the person find the right running shoes for the race. The trainer provides helpful advice and encouragement. The trainer might be able to give a better idea of what to expect during the run, and might be a good mentor. However, it is up to the runner to hold himself accountable for the preparation. The trainer isn't a boss or an authoritarian. Like a trainer, the Joseph Project will offer support and mentorship for those congregations trying to go the distance but, like a good trainer, it can't force a congregation to comply. It is an effort to better leverage the resources available to the central body for the sake of the groups that are out there really doing the work.

The Joseph Project is rooted in a couple of doctrines. While, I am hoping to present a detailed version of my thoughts in February at the clergy meetings I would like to introduce a few thoughts now. One key doctrine is freedom and self determination. I strongly believe that congregational health is linked in a pastor's ability to freely determine with his congregation how it can best bring the doctrines to the people whom it serves. The teachings about variety are partly there because people living in different communities and cultures have specific doctrinal needs which can only be determined on the ground by the pastor carefully communicating with his flock about where they need to be going. If the focus is on the needs of the central administration, the pastor is likely to fail.

Another key consideration is the doctrine of use. How does a church use its doctrines to impact the lives of the people living in the community around the church? Are these people aware of our teachings, their beauty, and the supportive path to eternal life they offer. Finding ways to articulate in the community the power of

our doctrine is vital to the success of our churches. How do we create an environment where the people living near your church recognize the importance of the spiritual message that is preached from your pulpit on Sunday – whether they are members or not. The Writings support the concept that the highest use served in a community happens through a church by its leading people to the Lord and eternal life through the Word. I am convinced that the success of a church depends on its ability to clearly articulate the power and value of its doctrinal message to the community. If people are aware of the power of what the church stands for and they know they are welcome to participate, the church will be healthy. I believe it is pretty much that simple. There are some compelling examples of how this happens – but I believe this is an area that we could focus on in our churches.

I have a strong sense that the organizational principle of the Grand Man and the human form is better articulated when our prime focus of our global efforts for having a church focus on supporting what is happening on the level of the local congregations. Rather than having all eyes on the Bishop, or Bryn Athyn, everyone should be working for, supporting, and cheering for the wonderful work that happens on the level of the individual who is being served in the context of the local church. Maybe one way to say it is that when a church is independent, using its own enlightenment and is truly serving the spiritual needs of the individuals within its field of influence it becomes more reflective of the grand man of heaven.

Finally, I often get the question of why I called it the Joseph Project. As you know, Joseph was a dreamer. Really, the Lord gave him the dreams that, after some turmoil in Egypt, resulted in the emergence of a great people. I believe that the Lord calls us to use the gifts of wisdom and rationality to progress forward with the establishment of the New Church. I am sure it won't happen without a measure of turmoil, but the Lord clearly has great dreams for the New Church and how it can serve the human race. The concept of the Joseph project is to use the vast talent resources

in this church to support pastors and their congregations on that journey.

I love talking about these concepts with people, so feel free to contact me and discuss and add your input.

David.lindrooth@newchurch.org  
Box 743 Bryn Athyn, PA

### *Editorial*

#### **ATHEISM - NO PROOF OF GOD.**

Atheism supposedly exists now also among some young people of New Church upbringing, those who have been educated in our system! We do not wish to insult anyone's intelligence by claiming how wrong they are, or how they are burying their heads in the sand, because they are of course absolutely right! There never was, never has been, any proof of God's existence. Why should they believe what cannot be proved? There is however a childishly simple proof of God's existence. More of that later.

Just think for a moment, how infinitely clever, indeed wise, God is for not leaving any witnesses for His existence. He created the universe so there is no signature! Søren Kierkegaard (1813–1855) called this thunderous absence of a “signature” a sign of the “anonymous author cunningly concealing himself” and no one can be “more carefully withdrawn from direct relationship [to people] than God.” Just look, he says in other words, how carefully He has concealed Himself! To the conclusion of this lack of a signature, Kierkegaard concedes that God “is not there.” But the proof, he continued in another direction, consisted in turning to one's “inner self, and once only in the inwardness of self-activity, does he have his attention aroused, and is enable to see God.” (Søren Kierkegaard, Concluding Unscientific Postscript).

This inner self is also fallacious, however. This however has to avoid Ludwig Feuerbach's (1804–1872) denial of God as worthy of discussion, since only “man himself, and nature” are proper objects of “philosophical study,” not God, a subject that “transcends human experience.” Here he is similar to his

predecessor David Hume (1711–1776). The next generation from Swedenborg, Hume was an empiricist thinly disguised as a Deist. The mind alone was real, said Hume, but a miniature of God’s mind. We must therefore trust human reason. This however led to doubting that even the world was the way we saw it, a skepticism which lent fire to later naturalistic arguments, doubting God also. Biblical criticism had with Hume’s contemporaries, Hermann Samuel Reimarus (1694–1768), and Gotthold Ephraim Lessing (1729–1781) already used this approach to cast doubt on the historical existence of Jesus, Moses and Muhammad. There was a “ditch” between faith and history. The Bible could not be trusted as a source or description of any truth, let alone that of God. The Gospels were hence irrelevant as history because of the lack of miracles verifying the same truths today. Jesus himself was doubted as an historical figure, but was more the enthusiastic or kerygmatic projection of faith in some ancient outstanding individual.

These are just a few strands of the arguments paving the way for atheism. Only faith has maintained the Bible as the all time best seller for all centuries. That says something about the persistent clarity of truth, both concealed in scripture, but self-evident here and there as well. Astoundingly enough, it was in this Age of Reason era of final doubt in the Word of God, that all the self-evident truth was drawn out and published for all to witness, if they willed. Atheism today is easily read out of existence in the Heavenly Doctrines (1749-1771).

So it was up to around 1800 that everyone thought of God or the gods as controlling everything, from wind to thunder, to war and disease, to the stars in the sky. God caused everything, and His ways were often mysterious. But God was now relegated to a “god of the gaps” argued “from ignorance.” There are other explanations of everything today, and science provides them! Science has left only a few “gaps” where God might still exist, “growing smaller and smaller.” Lightning is caused by electrons, not by Thor or Zeus! Science explains and solves more things than God or faith in Him does. So they say.

The Writings warned against this whole line of reasoning, in fact ridiculed it, just when the Age of Reason and the Enlightenment were peaking: *naturalism* is not willing to

acknowledge the possibility of “influx from the Lord’s Divine through the spiritual world.” That is why *naturalism* has “overwhelmed” the Church (*Apocalypse Explained* 1220) and favored thinking “about Divine things from things proper to nature, that is space and time” (*Arcana Coelestia* 5116:3). Then, however, “one infinite God” cannot be comprehended at all, nor the entire creation of the universe, which becomes a “foolish” notion (*Canons* 4). The consequence would be the “worship of nature” which leads “automatically to atheism” (*True Christian Religion* 771). That is why “naturalism and atheism rush forth together” (*Coronis* XVI).

We of course cannot condemn outright all that science does, nor the scientific principles which have “created” the world of technology we all enjoy, deemed to be the most advanced and civilized since the world began. We count “civilized” by such modern standards as electronic equipment and new model cars. What is denounced is eliminating God and heaven, just because they cannot be seen from the natural “lumen” of science (cf. *Divine Love and Wisdom* 69)! Just because the scientific method which is now a norm to all learning throughout the world, absorbs information just as easily as a sponge absorbs water (*Interaction* 9) does not mean that science is only harmful. It just should not deny God! For natural theology can never enter into “spiritual theology,” while the reverse, however, cannot be said. For spiritual theology easily enters into the natural scientific techniques (*De Verbo* 6:4). From spiritual things, all natural things can be seen in order, while from natural things, nothing spiritual at all is witnessed. There are indeed two foundations of truth, the Word and Nature (*Spiritual Experiences* 5709), yet from the foundation of truth based on nature, nothing of the foundation of truth based on the Word can be seen. “Nothing can be founded upon Scientifics except it be previously founded upon the Word” (*Spiritual Experiences* 5710). This is repeatedly given as the method:

“When a person’s basic assumption is to believe nothing until he sees and understands it, he cannot possibly believe; for spiritual and celestial things are neither visible to the eyes nor comprehensible in mental images. But the true order is for a person to become wise from the Lord, that is, from His Word. In that case everything follows as it should.... the premise of

belief in the Lord's Word and of confirming spiritual and celestial truths by means of natural truths, using as far as is possible the terminology of the learned world" (*Arcana Coelestia* 129).

Some *have* seen the need to see God from a premise of prior existence, as Barth, for example, who thundered "Let God be God." There is no "regenerative soteriology" i.e. human approach to God that generates its own view of Him. This is because "God sought humanity, not the other way around," he said. Similarly, to the extent that atheism is based on lack of proof of God's existence, it is just declaring that the method of discovering reality obviates spiritual reality. You can no more prove that God exists than prove that the "idea of God" is itself real. After all how real is an idea? And so it goes.

It is supremely ironical that the Lord Himself on earth addressed the impossibility of proving God's existence. Can you guess where? It is of course where He says, "Blessed are those who have not seen, yet believe" (John 20:29) He was talking to Thomas, who had just fallen on his knees and said, "My Lord and my God." Thomas having earlier witnessed the Lord's crucifixion and death, had here witnessed the resurrected Lord. Here was the proof, the nail marks, he asked for. Still, the risen Jesus rebuked him: "Because you have seen Me, you believe." Part of the irony, is that Thomas "saw" the Lord with his spiritual eyes. He was seen only with the spiritual eyes after the Resurrection, saying "their eyes were opened" (*True Christian Religion* 777, *Conjugal Love* 30, *Apocalypse Revealed* 36). Only when they are opened, is there any "proof" of spiritual reality. And every single night, that proof of spiritual reality is supplied to practically all human beings, as quickly and quietly as the earth turns from light into darkness. We dream. Where does the "light" of a dream come from? The room is dark, yet the dream has light! That is seeing with our spiritual eyes. Besides this "proof" which we leave you to ponder, the Lord when He said, "Blessed are those who do not see yet believe," meant the very fact that no one can prove God's existence: "They are blessed who do not see the Lord with their eyes, as Thomas did, and yet believe that He is; for this is seen in the light of truth from the Word" (*Faith* 10).

"Believe that He is." That is God's existence. The Only

“proof” of God comes from the Word of God, which is the “light of truth.” Only the Word can “prove” God’s existence. Only revelation can tell us of God (*Sacred Scripture* 114). Well, does the Word of the Lord exist? Yes. The Word of God exists: Ergo, God its Author exists. We too “are because God is” (*Divine Providence* 46e)...

Another argument: How can such a majestic universe exist without proof of a cause or Maker? Who is clever enough to create a universe without leaving a trace, but God? And as if to have the last laugh, the Lord made His Advent by the same method: spontaneous germination in the womb of Mary: “Only by means of conception from His Divine and by birth from a virgin...” (*Divine Love and Wisdom* 234, *Lord* 29) To think the Lord could have come any other way is insane. (*True Christian Religion* 502)

Still, people ask “Where is the evidence? Unless I see it for myself...” However, because the “reaction appear[s] as though it were a property of the thing created because it occurs when the thing is acted upon,” (*Divine Love and Wisdom* 68) the spiritual acting on the natural is so subtle that it escapes empirical detection. Yet ever since paleo-history, man has known God was behind it all: wise people knew the land was “impregnated by the most subtle substances (which can have no other than a spiritual origin), and through this they have power to conjoin themselves to use, from which comes their prolific principle” (*Divine Love and Wisdom* 310). “There is present both the spiritual which provides a soul and the material which provides a body. Also within everything spiritual there is a conatus to clothe itself with a body” (*Divine Love and Wisdom* 343). People have known that for ages, as part of the wisdom and lore of culture.

Well, if so, is there in fact any tangible evidence of God being the source of life? What could constitute “empirical evidence” of God’s Creative hand? Can we see when life began? Was it suddenly? Would evidence of a sudden beginning of life constitute a “smoking gun” for Creation, a finger-print of the Intelligent Designer? Is there any hard evidence of a SUDDEN beginning? Well, ahem, ahem:

*“The period of biological innovation occurred at virtually the same instant in geologic time all around the world....evolution at supersonic speed.” (Time, When Life Exploded, Dec.4, 1995, p.68)*

Life did explode “instantly,” no not on Dec. 4 1995 but from 543 to 510 million years ago. That is a mere 33 “eons,” called by *Time* “virtually the same instant.” Now the current estimation of the age of the universe is 13.7 giga-years, i.e. billions of years. Dividing 543 million minus 510 million equals 33 million, into 13.7 billion, equals ca. one 400,000th.

The “instant” of 33 million years when measurable organic life began all over this planet, is one 400,000th of the total time elapsed since creation. That is awfully quick.

So does that do it? Is this proof? “Life” began suddenly, everywhere, simultaneously! Is this not only God’s signature, but entire palm-print in creation? What else could cause such a sudden arrival of life all at once all over the planet? It is scientifically verifiable evidence. The Lord made His Advent only on this planet (*Earths in Universe* 113) just because here it can be known that God is Man both from the Word and from experience (*Spiritual Experience* 4782). God the Creator of the universe was born onto our planet, but 543 million years ago, He left His mark already. Now we can appreciate why the Lord “loves this earth more than others” because here “heavenly truths can be rooted in truths of nature.” (*Spiritual Experience* 1531) Fossils and mathematics match revelation, the foundation of nature matches how creation happened as revealed in *Divine Love and Wisdom*, published by Swedenborg in Amsterdam, at the print-shop of François Changuion, in 1763. “I AM” acts and the time and space universe began.

If Theists and Atheists met and discussed belief, no solution would likely ensue. There just is no proof. The decision to believe, however, is in the New Church dependent on reading the Writings or not. When Theists are also New Church members, the discussion would revolve around what proof there is that *Heaven and Hell* or all of the *Writings* are, in fact, so? However, that is one question that can only be answered by reading for oneself! As Swedenborg himself

advised, "Read my books and see for yourself." After reading them, another question can be asked: who has any shadow of a doubt left that everything said there is so? There is no doubt left whatever. "Life after death is a dead certainty." Generations of New Church people have faced death content with the certainty of what is said about the afterlife. It is true.

The same goes for God's existence. After the Lord is studied in all the Doctrines, the question of God's existence becomes passé. God is the Divine Itself, the Father, acting as the soul to the Divine Human, the Son, who is the risen Lord. The Holy Spirit comes from Him when He, as the visible God, One both in Person and Essence, speaks. That Divine speech is the "Spirit of Truth leading to all truth," the source of the Writings, the Heavenly Doctrines. The only proof of God comes from all that He has *now* said, namely the Word of God in the Heavenly Doctrine.

We close with the childishly simple proof of God. There have been so many proofs of God put forward that they become frivolous. But there is some substance to them. The Transcendental Argument says (1) If reason exists then God exists, (2) Reason exists, (3) Therefore, God exists. The Cosmological or first cause Argument says, (1) If I say something must have a cause, it has a cause. (2) I say the universe must have a cause. (3) Therefore, the universe has cause. (4) Therefore, God exists. A couple more: The Argument from Beauty or Design (Teleology): (1) Isn't that baby/sunset/flower/tree beautiful? (2) Only God could have made them so beautiful. (3) Therefore, God exists. Finally a rather cynical argument from the Bible: (1) [arbitrary passage from OT] (2) [arbitrary passage from NT] (3) Therefore, God exists<sup>1</sup>. All of these can be stated more philosophically, but also easily be disproved and so discounted.

But there is a new argument we mentioned at first: How can people for thousands of year, all over the world, without contacting or even knowing of each other, all reach the same doubt over God's existence, unless there does indeed exist a God as the object of all such doubt? You just cannot doubt something that actually does not exist, not for that many

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.godlessgeeks.com/LINKS/GodProof.htm>

millennia, in so many scattered locations. In any case, if God actually did not exist, then the doubt of His existence would not even arise. There would be no belief to begin with. This is proved by children who are taught nothing, ending up believing – nothing! However, if God really did not exist, then there would be no universe nor people who could believe, either! But doubt of God has persisted. God has become the permanent object of human doubt. The very persistence of human doubt thereby makes God’s existence permanent! One could put this in Cartesian terms, using *Dubito, ergo sum*. Transposing, we have, *Dubito Deum longaque per orbis terrarum, Ergo Deus est*. I doubt God over time and through all the earth, therefore God is.

However, the only proof of God is found from the “light of truth from the Word.” There is also an influx into the souls of all people that there is a God and that He is one (*Canons* 4). This influx can only reinforce a true belief when this is expounded from the Word. You can’t see it in your inner self, as Kierkegaard postulated, since the inner self has no answers which have not entered through the senses. There too there is a proof of God, since the idea of God has to enter through the senses. That means God has to reveal Himself in order for anyone to see and then believe in Him. Once the Word has come about through such experiences, the Word of God stands in for the original personal presence and revelation of God. And the existence of the Word of God cannot be denied, however strongly anyone is confirmed in Atheism or not. If the Bible’s existence cannot be denied, neither can God’s existence be denied, since only the Word shows God to be. For God’s existence, His nature, Advent, Salvation of the human race, all this must be revealed from the Word of God alone (*Sacred Scripture* 114, 115). No one can come up with this information on one’s own, by natural deduction. “No one can see from below the things which are in the heavens” (*De Verbo* 6:4). They must be revealed. With the Second Coming having taken place in the revealed Writings, the conclusion that “God is” and that “we are because God is” (*Divine Providence* 46e), is almost a foregone conclusion, but apparently not with 100% of witnesses. Therefore, “Blessed is the man who has not seen, yet believes” (*John* 20:29, *Faith* 10)

Dear Editor,

I take issue with Rev. Nicolier's article on Theology of Sexuality, Part II. His interpretations are far removed from the actual content of the Writings and dismiss the role of genetics on the development of homosexuality but instead simply blames the parents. Might I remind Rev. Nicolier that the Lord permits diseases and disorders into the natural world without it always being the direct fault of the victim or the victim's parents. Moreover, investigations on concordance rates of homosexuality in monozygotic and dizygotic twins disprove many of his contentions.

Sincerely,  
Sharon Himmelstein

**Selected Bibliography for Alain Nicolier's  
Theology of Sexuality**

August and September New Church Life, p. 318-328, 356-364

Barnhouse, Ruth Tiffany, 1977 "Homosexuality, A Symbolic confusion" New York: Seabury Press.

Bergner, Mario, 1995 "Setting love in order", Hamewith Books

Comiskey, Andrew, 1989 "Pursuing Sexual Wholeness" Charisma House

Montagu, Ashley, 1971 "Touching, the human significance of the skin " Columbia University Press

Payne, Leanne, 1996 "The broken Image," Hamewith Books Series

Payne, Leanne, 1999 "Crisis in masculinity" Hamewith Books Series

Whitehead, Briar, 1993 "Craving for love" Monarch Books

## GENERAL CHURCH SCHOOLS DIRECTORY

2008-2009

### GENERAL CHURCH OFFICE OF EDUCATION

<b>Rev. Brian Keith</b> .....	Director
<b>Melodie Greer</b> .....	Assistant Director, Curriculum
<b>Barbara Doering</b> .....	Teacher Support, Testing, Arts Fund, Home Schooling
<b>Sarah Odhner</b> .....	Unit Box Circulation, STARS
<b>Gretchen Keith</b> .....	Vineyard, Curriculum Support, Resource Development
<b>Rachel Glenn</b> .....	Publications, Vineyard
<b>Janet Lockard</b> .....	Jacob's Ladder, Early Childhood Religion Lessons
<b>Lisa Weiss</b> .....	Secretary/Accounts

### TEACHERS IN THE GENERAL CHURCH SCHOOL SYSTEM

#### BRYN ATHYN CHURCH SCHOOL

Donald Fitzpatrick.....	Headmaster
Rev. Phil Schnarr.....	School Pastor
Gail Simons.....	Director
Steve Irwin.....	Special Projects, Resources
Joanne Keil.....	Preschool Director
Beth Brock*.....	Senior Preschool
Paige Austen*.....	Junior Preschool
Anna Blair*.....	Preschool Aide
Nicole Pitcairn*.....	Preschool Aide
Linda Kees.....	Kindergarten
Beth Bochniak.....	Kindergarten
Gretchen Glover*.....	Kindergarten Aide
Amy Jones*.....	Kindergarten Aide
Christine DeMaria.....	Grade 1
Robin Morely.....	Grade 1
Aline Brown.....	Grade 2
Liz Switzer.....	Grade 2
Anita Halterman*.....	Grades 1-2 Aide
Judy Soneson.....	Grade 3
Cynthia Conaron.....	Grade 3
Bri Kern*.....	Grade 3 Aide
Jenna Frey.....	Grade 4
Carla Reuter.....	Grade 4
Cara Dibb.....	Grade 5

*GENERAL CHURCH SCHOOLS DIRECTORY*

Debbie Cook.....	Grade 5
Kirsten Alden.....	Grade 6
Sheila Daum.....	Grade 6
Wendy Clymer*.....	Int. Tutor/Aide
Sandy Pellani*.....	Int. Tutor/Aide
Carol Nash.....	Grade 7-Girls
Drew Hyatt.....	Grade 7-Boys
Brita Conroy.....	Grade 8-Girls
Greg Henderson.....	Grade 8-Boys
Molly Cronlund*.....	Upper Unit Aide
Sharon Neiger.....	Librarian
Heather McCurdy.....	Phys Ed
Alex Rogers.....	Phys Ed
Dianna Synnestevedt.....	Art
Margit Irwin.....	Music
Lucas Mergen.....	Tech Ed
Dean Morey*.....	Mech. Art, Grade 8-Boys
K Harantschuk.....	Science Grades 5-8
Sue Hyatt*.....	Enrichment
Kenneth Rose*.....	Enrichment
Rev. John Odhner*.....	Religion Grades 4& 6
Rev. Mac Frazier.....	Religion Grade 5
Lisa Synnestevedt.....	Director Student Support
Angela Rose*.....	Student Support
Jodi Carr *.....	Student Support
Natasha Keys*.....	Student Support
Janna King*.....	Student Support
Gail Neukum*.....	Student Support
Janna Lindsay*.....	Student Support
Kiri Rogers*.....	Counselor
Barbara Rose*.....	Student Support

**CARMEL NEW CHURCH SCHOOL**

Rev. Bradley Heinrichs.....	Principal, Religion Grades 3-8
James Bellinger.....	Principal, Grades 9-10
Laura Hill.....	Grades 1-2
Nina Reipert.....	Grades 3-4
Kayla Uniac.....	Grades 5-6
Liz Longstaff.....	Head Teacher, Grades 7-8
Stephanie Kuhl.....	Grades 9-10
Rev. Nathan Cole*.....	Religion Grades 1-2, 9-10
Muriel Glebe*.....	French
Mary Jane Hill*.....	Music
Suzanna Hill*.....	Junior and Senior Kindergarten

## GLENVIEW NEW CHURCH SCHOOL

Rev. Peter Buss.....	Jr.School Pastor, Religion Grades 5-8
Laura Barger.....	Kindergarten-Grade 2
Sarah Berto.....	Preschool Director, Kindergarten-Grade 2, French Grade 7
Deborah Lehne.....	Grades 3-4, History Grades 7-8
Rebekah Russell.....	Grades 5-6
Lucinda Edmonds*.....	SS Grades 5-6
Philip Parker.....	Principal, Science/Math Grades 5-8, Phys Ed
Jennifer Overeem*.....	Art
Sue Bellinger*.....	Music
Rev. Mark Pendleton*.....	Religion Grades 3-4, 7-8
Roxanne Junge*.....	Senior Preschool
Jacque Chapman*.....	Junior Preschool
Kara Smith*.....	All-day Preschool

## KAINON CHURCH SCHOOL

Rev. Erik Buss.....	Principal, Pastor
Maria Gibb.....	Grade 1, Music
Marie Rose Sparg.....	Grades 2-3
Jane Edmunds.....	Headmistress
Watkins, Sandra.....	Grades 6-7
Gail Mitchell.....	Grades 4-5
Warren Short*.....	Sports

## KEMPTON NEW CHURCH SCHOOL

Rev Lawson Smith.....	Principal, Religion Grades 9-10
Lori Friend*.....	Kindergarten
Kathy Schrock.....	Grades 1-2
Michelle Biermann.....	Grades 3-4, Phys Ed Grades 7-10
Rev.Louis Synnestvedt.....	Grades 5-6, Religion Grades. 7-8
Mark Wyncoll.....	Assistant.Principal, English Grades 7-10, Math Grade 6
John Walker.....	Math Grades 4, 7-10
Barbara Karas.....	History Grades 7-10, English Grades 7-8, Music
Rev. Andrew Heilman*.....	Hebrew 2, E Science Grades.7-8, Biology Grades 9-10
Kate Pitcaim*.....	Latin 1-2
Elone Heilman*.....	Art Grades 7-10
Emily Smith*.....	Secretary

GENERAL CHURCH SCHOOLS DIRECTORY

**OAK ARBOR SCHOOL**

Rev. Nathan Gladish.....Principal, Religion Grades 5-6, sharing Grades 7-8  
 Elise Gladish\*.....Pre-Kindergarten-Kindergarten  
 Judy Pafford.....Grades 1-2  
 Julie Elder\*.....Grades 3-4  
 Nancy Genzlinger\*.....Grades 3-4  
 Nathaniel Brock.....Grades 5-6  
 Rev. Derek Elphick.....Religion Grades 3-4, sharing Grades 7-8  
 Dawn Genzlinger\*.....Grade 7-8  
 Karen Elder\*.....Art Grades 7-8, Music

**OLIVET NEW CHURCH SCHOOL**

Rev. James Cooper.....Pastor  
 Jeremy Irwin.....Principal  
 Judy Todd\*.....Preschool  
 Deborah Williams\*.....Playschool  
 Sara Gatti.....Head Teacher, Morning Kindergarten  
 Gabriele Pulpan.....Grades 3-4  
 Karen Cooper.\*.....French, Afternoon Kindergarten  
 Laura Petersen.....Grades 1-2  
 Rachel Hasen\*.....Music

**PITTSBURGH NEW CHURCH SCHOOL**

Rev. Amos Glenn.....Principal, Religion Grades 3-8  
 Gerda Griffiths\*.....Kindergarten, Phys Ed  
 Colleen Donaldson.....Grades 1-2, Art Grades 6-8  
 Holly Uber.....Grades 3-5, Phys Ed 3-8, Science Grades 6-8  
 Cynthia Glenn\*.....Grades 6-8, Music Jr.K-8, Head teacher  
 Caroline David\*.....Grades 6-8  
 Julie Uber\*.....Art Grades 1-8, Social Studies Grades 3-5

**WASHINGTON NEW CHURCH SCHOOL**

Rev. Garry Walsh.....Religion  
 Jana Sprinkle.....Kindergarten,Misc  
 Kim Maxwell.....Grades 1-2  
 Anne Ball.....Grades 3-4  
 James Roscoe.....Grades 5-6, History  
 Kathy Johns.....Head Administration, Grades 7-8, Phys Ed

Carole Waelchli.....	Grade 9-10
Erin Stillman*.....	Art,Misc
Sharon Kunkle*.....	Music 1-10
Rev. Michael Ferrell*.....	Religion 5-6

\*part time

## SCHOOLS ENROLLMENTS 2008-2009

### The Academy

Theological School (Full-time).....	16
Theological School (Part-time).....	1
Theological School Masters Program .....	7
College (Full-time).....	138
College (Part-time or auditing).....	12
Boys School.....	117
Girls School.....	113
Total Academy.....	404

### Society Schools

Bryn Athyn Church School.....	306
Carmel Church School (Kitchener).....	44
Glenview New Church School .....	34
Kainon School (Durban).....	59
Kempton New Church School.....	59
Oak Arbor School (Rochester, MI).....	43
Olivet New Church School (Toronto).....	39
Pittsburgh New Church School.....	23
Washington New Church School (Mitchellville).....	47
Total Society Schools.....	654

Total Reported Enrollment in All Schools.....1058

**ANNUAL REPORT OF THE SECRETARY OF THE  
GENERAL CHURCH OF THE NEW JERUSALEM**

Between July 1, 2007 and June 30, 2008, 66 members were received into the General Church. During the year the Secretary's office received notice of the deaths of 56 members.

Memberships July 1, 2007	5077
New Members	66
Deceased Members	56
Resigned	2
Membership June 30, 2008	5085

**NEW MEMBERS**

**CANADA**

Crandall, Jillian Dawn Eggleston  
Cresswell, Gregory Alan  
Glowe, Matthew Samuel Pritchard  
James, Herb Mark  
Petersen, Laura Jennifer  
Starkey, Patricia Lynn  
Uniac, Kayla Margaret

**GHANA**

Abaka-Williams, Richard  
Agroh, Gifty Ama Agroh  
Akoto, Julius Brown  
Opoku, Peter Kwaku Mensah

**DENMARK**

Kamaeva, Tatiana  
Muires, Stephan Karel

**JAPAN**

Kusanagi, Mayumi  
Yanagawa, Fumitaka

**REPUBLIC OF CHINA**

Chou, Timothy J

**SOUTH AFRICA**

Mdunge, Mbali Primrose  
Mthunywa, Sibongiseni Nomzano  
Nzimande, Siphesihle

**SOUTH KOREA**

Lee, Eun Woo

**SWEDEN**

Frankel, Greta  
Green, Anna Birgitta Wipegren

**UNITED KINGDOM**

Morris, Jody

**ARIZONA**

Aughey, Kathleen Bell  
Bell, Thomas Day  
Netting, Rhonda Marie Gillette  
Ross, Jean Dickson  
Watson, Arthur Curtis

**COLORADO**

Randall, Stephanie Lynn Bailey  
Randall, Charles Franklin

**FLORIDA**

Rees, Robert Arthur

**ILLINOIS**

Davis, Claire Gyllenhaal  
Wulfsohn, Glenda Heilman

**MARYLAND**

Baltz, Gregory Andrew

**MICHIGAN**

Alrutz, Deborah  
Tesnar, Brenda Lee  
Tesnar, James Francis  
Wilson, Scott Kevin

**MINNESOTA**

Berg, Ian Andrew

**NEBRASKA**

Moore, Lea Ann Michalle Tapp  
Moore, Ronald William

**NEW JERSEY**

Olsson, Teresa  
Roselle, Paul Lucas

**PENNSYLVANIA**

Alexandrov, Olga Greendlinger  
Alexandrov, Rudolf  
Echols, Tammy Anne Walcott  
Farmer, Meredith  
Frost, Sunna Kim  
Glenn, Kaemmerle Brown  
Glenn, Thaddeus Hyatt  
Horigan, Doreen Marie Woods  
Im, Sang W  
Im, Bong J Lee  
Kennedy, Marcia Pitcairn  
Kim, Geun Ja Kang  
Lansbury, W. Roger  
Lee, Kun Sun  
Lermitte, James Todd  
Ludwig, Heather Dian Klein  
Poehlman, Kerin Lee Horigan  
Sutton, Serena Rae Silverman  
Treacy, Thomas M.  
Villafane, Krystal Ann Schwitters  
White, Megan Kaplan

**TEXAS**

Jackson, Jeffrey Scott  
Johnson, Maria Ina Spechar

## DEATHS

- Acton, Alfred Gareth*; 81; August 1, 2007; Jupiter, Florida
- Allen, Ralph Eugene*; 90; January 15, 2008; Henderson, Missouri
- Baekstrom, Gosta Michael*; 91; November 28, 2007; Meadowbrook, Pennsylvania
- Bancroft, Peter Alden*; 68; January 18, 2008; Pelham, Alabama
- Becker, Myron*; 79; August 12, 2007; Tucson, Arizona
- Bellinger, Philip Ernest*; 79; July 31, 2007; Kanata, Ontario, Canada
- Bostock, Conrad*; 84; November 24, 2007; Birmingham, Alabama
- Bowerman, Warren Dennis*; 76; July 30, 2007; Towson, Maryland
- Bowman, Elizabeth Lechner*; 94; March 17, 2008; Helena, Montana
- Cockerell, Roger Dunbar*; 67; November 1, 2007; Westville, KwaZulu Natal, South Africa
- Cole, Charles Snowden*; 92; May 18, 2008; Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania
- Crampton, Stephanie Joyce Starkey*; 79; May 25, 2008; St. Mary's, Ontario, Canada
- Day, Elvin Kingsley*; 57; July 25, 2007; Glenview, Illinois
- Doering, Carrie Isabel Craig*; 92; March 16, 2008; Portland, Maine
- Dumakude, Selina*; 80; March 10, 2007; Empangeni, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa
- Eastwood, Dorothy Dodd*; 91; January 10, 2008; Huntingdon Valley, Pennsylvania
- Echols, Charles Alan*; 76; June 24, 2008; Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania
- Favell, Audrey Irene Worrall*; 87; April 6, 2008; Lugarno, New South Wales, Australia
- Favell, Trevor Frank*; 86; December 7, 2007; Lugarno, New South Wales, Australia
- Friesen, Peter*; 88; July 5, 2007; Dawson Creek, British Columbia, Canada
- Glebe, George Theodore*; 81; May 21, 2008; Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania
- Glenn, Elizabeth Hope Glenn*; 92; January 3, 2008; Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania
- Greenhalgh, Marianne Hosterey*; 80; November 30, 2007; East Sussex, United Kingdom
- Griffin, William Thomas*; 86; July 14, 2007; Fountain Hill, Pennsylvania
- Gyllenhaal, Ruth Louise Davis*; 90; November 12, 2007; Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania
- Gyllenhaal, Virginia Childs*; 84; May 4, 2008; Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania
- Hedberg, Eric*; 89; November 28, 2007; Årsta, Sweden

- Heersink, Sara Elizabeth Sophia*; 97; March 10, 2008; Wapenveld, Netherlands
- Heinrichs, Anne Smith Menzies Bruce*; 79; December 22, 2007; Kitchener, Ontario, Canada
- Heinrichs, Charles Roderick*; 77; September 8, 2007; Grand Junction, Colorado
- Heldon, Elizabeth Walter*; 92; March 8, 2008; Willow Grove, Pennsylvania
- Hendricks, Michael Arnold*; 63; April 27, 2008; Dawson Creek, British Columbia, Canada
- Honemann, Mary Catherine Blake*; 88; May, 16, 2008; Timonium, Maryland
- Johnson, Irene Mae Rose Feczko*; 81; July 20, 2007; Merrillville, Indiana
- Keal, Doreen Margaret Lumsden*; 89; February 28, 2008; Waitakere, New Zealand
- Keal, Hugh John*; 91; July 5, 2007; Waitakere, New Zealand
- Kuhl, Matthew Denis*; 42; August 22, 2007; Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania
- Latta, Joan Cleveland*; 80; July 14, 2007; Cheltenham, Pennsylvania
- Lindsey, Rose Blanche Pijoan*; 94; April 17, 2008; Vista, California
- Munich, Joan Borland Kendig*; 82; December 8, 2007; Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania
- Pitcairn, Stephen*; 83; March 29, 2008; Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania
- Raymond, Hazel Georgina Lyons*; 84; March 30, 2008; Brampton, Ontario, Canada
- Rhodes, Tina Patricia Schnarr*; 48; February 21, 2008; Huntingdon Valley, Pennsylvania
- Sandstrom, Erik*; 98; December 11, 2007; Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania
- Sanvidge, Mildred Acquinas June Johnson*; 86; July 7, 2007; Red Wing, Minnesota
- Schoenberger, John Jacob*; 96; November 25, 2007; Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania
- Stewart, Agatha Elsie Funk*; 87; December 31, 2007; Kitchener, Ontario, Canada
- Stroh, Kenneth Oliver*; 87; December 6, 2007; Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania
- Taylor, Thomas Douglas*; 88; March 17, 2008; Revesby, New South Wales, Australia
- Walter, Claire Bellinger*; 82; October 15, 2007; Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania
- Warwick, Roy John*; 83; July 30, 2007; Ruislip, Middlesex, United Kingdom
- Wooderson, Nina Newall*; 87; January 4, 2008; Nr. Dorking, Surrey, United Kingdom

## *ANNOUNCEMENTS*

*Wyland, Ruth Cranch*; 86; January 10, 2008; Huntingdon Valley,  
Pennsylvania

### **DEATHS— DELAYED REPORTS**

*Ridgway, Peter Owen*; 70; February 13, 2005; Richmond, Virginia  
*Schoenberger, Alfred*; 84; January 7, 2006; Pinellas Park, Florida  
*Walton, Don A.*; 69; September 14, 2001; Palm City, Florida

### **RESIGNATIONS**

*Austin, Tamar King*; January 2, 2008; Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania  
*Cass, Tracy McQueen*; June 17, 2007; Newark, Delaware