

# New Church LIFE

A monthly magazine devoted to the teachings  
revealed through Emanuel Swedenborg

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Walking on Water  
A Sermon by Stephen D. Cole

Reflections on the Sermon  
By Kenneth & Janet Briggs

Eldergarten 2008

A Bible Translation Goal  
By Donald L. Rose

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

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

## NOTES ON THIS ISSUE

The sermon this time is brought to us by Rev. Stephen Dandridge Cole. We can think of the Lord's glorification states when He walks on water, as associated with Easter. We have here the short version. The full length sermon is available on Audio <http://store.newchurch.org/nca.php?cat=375>

The sermon brought an immediate response in the article directly following it, entitled *Reflections*, by Kenneth and Janet Briggs of Langhorne, Pa. They joined the New Church seven years ago, and have studied at Harvard and Duke, as well as taken courses in our Academy Theological School MARS program. Their book on marriage, entitled *Experiencing the Light: the Power of 2<sup>2</sup>* came out recently.

*Bound on Earth, Bound in Heaven* is another reflection, this time on Katrina, still in the news as New Orleans is reconstructed. Could a modern day Jonah warning of Katrina's devastation have made a difference? How does the Lord operate, or give warning signs, before disaster strikes? Don Brandis from Washington State makes us reflect on our own roles as well.

There are several announcements, and exciting pictures of the future of the Bryn Athyn College Campus, to which so many of you have come, or sent your teenage students. The move announced by President Eric Carswell and Communications Director Bruce Henderson, definitely looks towards University status.

Don't miss Don Rose's reminder regarding *Heaven and Hell*, first published in 1758, exactly 250 years ago! Several first editions as they came off the press in London that year can be inspected in Swedenborgiana, Swedenborg Library, or seen on the web (see Bayside Swedenborgian Church site). Note the title page reproduced in this issue.

Have you attended Eldergarten? A great report by Forest Dristy

recaps the event with a picture as well, and ends up attracting you all to next year's event.

Look at GrandMan program advertisement.



Rev. Stephen D. Cole has been serving as a Teacher in Bryn Athyn College since 1999, and from 2002 also took on the Head of the Religion and Sacred Languages Division at the College. Stephen was inaugurated into the first degree of the priesthood in 1977, and ordained into the second degree in 1978. He first served as the minister for the Ohio District, resident in Cleveland in 1977, and then as pastor of the same district in 1979, resident in Cincinnati. In 1987 Rev. Cole answered a call to be Assistant to the Pastor in the Oak Arbor Society, Michigan, and then in 1993 as Pastor of the San Diego Society, California. Stephen resides with his wife Jennifer (Smith) and family in Bryn Athyn, Pa.

## **WALKING ON WATER** BY THE REV. STEPHEN D. COLE

*“But seeing the wind strong, he was afraid, and beginning to sink, he cried out, saying, Lord, save me. And straightway Jesus stretching out the hand, took hold of him, and saith unto him, O thou of little faith, Why didst thou doubt?”*(Matthew 14:30-31)

Our lessons today set before us three different stories from different parts of the Word, which all yet have to do with the spiritual testing called temptation. Temptation can take many different forms and so, therefore, it is represented by many different images in the Word. These can be as varied as flood and famine or war and wandering.

In the events referred to in the text, temptation takes the form of a tempest at sea. As to the natural circumstances, we read that the wind was strong and the boat of the disciples was tossed by the waves. As to the mental condition of the disciples, we hear, even in the letter, of fear and lack of faith.

Temptation is often thought of as an inclination or enticement to do something wrong. However, the temptation in this story tests trust in the Lord. The disciples as a group are tested as to their faith that the Lord, who has sent them out on the sea, will continue to look after them. Peter, in particular, is tested as to his confidence that the Lord can make him walk on the water. Spiritually, these tests reflect trials of our confidence that the Lord will be with us and care for us as we set out on new ventures or, because we believe that the Lord requires it of us, try taking certain risks in life.

The faith that the very hairs of our heads are numbered, the confidence that the Lord’s providence reaches down to the very least details of our lives, is represented in the story by the sea and the Lord’s power over the sea. Seas stand for the ultimate,

last, or lowest particularities of our lives. The Lord's presence and influx even into these, we are told, is the meaning of the Lord walking upon the sea. Obscure and wavering faith is represented by Peter walking upon the sea and beginning to sink, but being saved when the Lord took hold of him.

As we see from our lesson from the *Arcana*, a temptation is not a true temptation unless it is, in some sense, more than we of ourselves can bear. For it to do its work, it has to stretch us beyond the limits of our own power and reveal to us, at least for the time, our complete dependence upon the Lord. When we reach this state, when we realize that we do not have to depend on our own power, there can be a great state of relief. We come through the night and begin to experience the morning. This is why the event recorded took place "in the fourth watch...when it is daybreak and morning is at hand." It is a state when good begins to act through truth, and into this, the Lord comes. At His presence, the sea, which has been tumultuous, is now at peace. Our minds, which have been full of anxieties, are put at rest.

The story of the capture of Lot by the four kings of Mesopotamia, which we read from the 14th chapter of Genesis, may not seem to have a lot in common with the story about walking on water. However, both are stories of temptation – one the testing reflected in an outright conflict or battle, the other the testing that takes the form of an anxious or unsettled mind. Moreover, if we look at the *Arcana* explanation of the Genesis story, we find that again there are two stages: the first stage is the victory of the four kings over the five, and it represents a conquering of the evils signified by Sodom, Gomorrah and the other cities of the plain. Then secondly, the fact that they are conquered by the kings of Mesopotamia and that Abram's nephew Lot is carried away captive, represents our immediate tendency to be carried away by the conceit that somehow we have conquered evil from our own power. Lot must then be

rescued by Abram, which symbolizes the Lord rescuing us from this conceit.

As Abram rescues Lot and brings him back into the land of Canaan, they are met by Melchizedek, the King of Salem, a city whose name means peace. True peace comes not with the satisfaction of a victory won from oneself, but rather from the full confidence of resting in the power of the Lord.

The Lord does it all. We are saved by the grace of God, and not through any efforts of our own. The Protestant reformers insisted on the doctrine that we could do nothing to earn or merit salvation. But where this doctrine goes awry is in insisting that therefore we have no say or choice about whether we are saved or not. What the doctrine of the New Church makes clear is that although salvation is an unearned gift from the Lord, we nevertheless have the choice as to whether we will accept the gift or not. The choice to accept the gift of salvation is simply the choice to put ourselves entirely in the hands of the Lord.

Sometimes truly acknowledging the omnipotence of the Lord means being willing to go forward into what may look like a dangerous or frightening course of action, because we believe that that is what the Lord has bidden us to do. This can feel like stepping out and trying to walk across a stormy sea. At other points, having full confidence in the Lord means somehow coming to the full and genuine recognition that of ourselves we are powerless over some specific evil that besets our lives, and that the Lord and only the Lord can rescue us. We see this recognition in Peter crying out to the Lord “Save me,” as he begins to sink into the waves.

When the Lord says to Peter, as He stretches out his hand to lift him up, “O thou of little faith,” it is not an accusation or an admonition. It is the Lord, in His boundless mercy, expressing His recognition that this is the inevitable human condition, that we are born and continue to be “of little faith” until the hard

experiences of life bring us to a full confession of our utter need for the Lord. Amen.

Lessons: Genesis 14:1-2, 11-16; Matthew 14:22-34; *Arcana Coelestia* 8165.

*Arcana Coelestia* 8165[2] 'Were there no graves in Egypt, [since] you have taken us away to die in the wilderness?' .... These words, it is self-evident, are words of despair. They are also the kinds that are thought by people in a state of despair, which is the final phase of a temptation. At that time, they are on a slope so to speak or slipping down to hell. Yet thinking in that way at such times does no harm, and the angels take no notice of it; for each person's power is limited, and when temptation stretches him to the absolute limit of his power he cannot stand up to anything further and starts to slip. At that point, however, that is, when he is on the slope and starts to slip, he is raised by the Lord and thereby delivered from despair. More often than not, he is then brought into a bright state of hope and the comfort this brings, and into a state of bliss. The words 'damnation through a state of temptations in which they would go under' are used because people who go under in temptations pass into a state of damnation. For the end in view with temptations is that truths and forms of good, and therefore faith and charity, may be strengthened and bonded together. That end however is achieved only when a person is victorious in temptation. If instead he goes under, truths and forms of good are set aside and falsities and evils are strengthened. Hence those people's state of damnation.

## **REFLECTIONS ON THE SERMON “WALKING ON WATER.”**

BY KENNETH & JANET BRIGGS

Your authors were so taken by the above sermon delivered recently by Rev. Stephen Cole at the Bryn Athyn cathedral and reviewed in the Bryn Athyn Post (Aug. 16, 2007,) that they took the unprecedented step, for them, of ordering a CD of that service and reviewing it several times. The challenging title and the vivid visual images it evokes caught our attention. We took away a new perspective of the role of temptation as a necessary, skill-building struggle, not merely a personal striving to avoid doing deliberately evil deeds.

In this new view of temptation, such a struggle may take the form of a tempest of feelings when we finally realize that we are not able to overcome, or even endure, a present situation through our personal efforts and resources alone and we have not yet abandoned enough personal pride to allow us to recognize that the Lord is with us in every particular and “ultimate” detail of every situation. Failing to recognize our personal limitations may leave us on the “downhill slope” that leads to despair and to a depression, which disempowers our inherent abilities to move forward, as friends of the Lord, willing and able to accept new revelation and to understand his ultimate will in our individual lives.

An additional perspective differing from what we usually entertain, included in the above sermon, is an acceptance that the Lord’s “O thou of little faith” comment to the sinking Peter describes “the inevitable human condition, that we are born and continue to be [in].” Your authors believe history bears witness that our differing individual perspectives may lead to conflict and failure to move forward. On the other hand, reliance on a single view from our own experience or one authority or scriptural interpretation may leave us with a picture of a flat

world, seen only in black and white and low definition. Since fatigue and forgetfulness regularly lead us to forget the Lord's presence with us throughout each day and decade, we stand in need of additional perspectives to keep both the temporal and the permanent—he eternal—dimensions of our lives consciously in focus.

The discussion between us following the above sermon revealed not surprisingly that our initial experience of its message differed considerably. After some discussion, we found that we had arrived at the same truths by way of our different modes of perception. Although difference of perception has persisted with us, even after many years of studying, discussing, writing and praying together, we remain firmly convinced of their complementarity. This experience confirms our conviction that the best team to maintain an ongoing awareness of the Lord's presence with us is the Church, in the form of husband and wife. We were delighted to read, "We value marriage between a man and a woman and honor the unique, complementary nature of each sex," listed as one of the five core values in the recently published *Statement of Purpose for the General Church*. (Emphasis added).

How can we understand the differences between the perceptions of husband and wife and their complementary nature? Dare we name or "personify" these thought processes which we glimpse as swiftly passing and ever changing? The depth of these questions brought to our mind the following quote from the philosopher Martin Heidegger who said, "In confronting the logos, men are uncomprehending... they do not comprehend the logos. ...that is to say, men are those who do not bring together...the logos, that which is permanently together, collectedness. Men are those who do not bring it together, who do not comprehend it in one, who do not compass it in one, and this regardless of whether or not they have heard it. Men do not

penetrate the logos even if they attempt to do so with words.” (Martin Heidegger, *An Introduction to Metaphysics*, Yale Univ. Press, New Haven, 1959)

Does the word ‘men’ in the above quotation, really refer to mankind, or only to the male of that species? In answer to the above, I (KB) was immediately confronted with my personal fascination with the Mount Everest of meaning, “In the beginning was the Word...”

I chose, logically enough, to start my climb through the Latin via *De Verbo* 14 and was thereby pleased to find Swedenborg’s explanation of the complementary relationship of the inmost (the Word) and the literal integument (word) of the same concept. My next reflection concerned a little book *The Definition of Definition* (Ralph Barsodi, Porter Sargent, Boston, 1967) that I had long treasured, if seldom read, and how little impressed my wife had been by that approach. Many times our paths of learning had crossed again after I had dallied along the low road and she had arrived there, by some mysterious process, well before me. I now realize that even in exploring the present topic, I could not just “penetrate the logos” by words alone.

Our own experience, plus the fact that Heidegger spoke and wrote in German, as well as his reliance on the ancient Greek Heraclitus,—all led us to think that men here is gender specific and the above describes the lack of depth in the thinking habits of the majority but not all of present day males. Newspapers often describe the laudable exploits of analytical “splitters” be it of quarks, microorganisms or points of civil law or scripture. A search of the literature indicates that, until very recently, authors of analytical publications were almost exclusively male. In this article, we wish to compare this male analytic ability to the “collectiveness” of the thinking of many but not all women and to explore the complementarity of these modes of thinking.

Since most of us find it very difficult to stay focused on the

details of our daily tasks and their spiritual eternal dimension at the same time, we may need reminders and encouragement from our spouse. We have good evidence that, at least in the later half of his life, Swedenborg was able to live and function very well, simultaneously in a temporal society and the spiritual realm. This may have been one of the reasons that he did not need to marry in our temporal world.

A man, or at least the most masculine part of his ego, is apt to seek positions that protect his power. He does not focus deeply enough to recognize and accept the revelations that the Lord has for him regarding what yearns to be born in a particular situation. He (man) tends to hold back.

What then is it about the constitution of most, if not all, women that can complement the male wisdom that she often admires and free her spouse to move forward in step with the Lord's progression? If this reputed gift of hers is now ready to come forth into full bloom, from whence does it come? Was it built into her mitochondrial DNA from the time that our Creator introduced "gender," or has it only begun to find its function and its name since some of our male dominated cultures began to be enlightened enough to consider it and allow it to be investigated and published?

In search of a name for this feminine function as well as some description of how it works, we herein consult not only the *Writings* and the Gospels as well as footprints in the recorded mythologies of ancient civilizations but also its overt expression in the published opinions of some of our modern women writers.

*In True Christian Religion* 783, Swedenborg uses references to all four gospels to the emerging Christian Church as the bride to be claimed by the bridegroom, i.e. the Lord, in the marriage of good and truth. Numerous other Gospel episodes point to an awareness of woman as an ubiquitous, perhaps necessary component of the labors which bring forth the New and the

Good. Take for example Mary at the wedding at Cana, Mary Magdalene at the tomb, the women at the foot of the cross. There are as well earlier and later myths of vegetation goddesses, or women as spiritual guides, such as Sophia, an archetype of the feminine and nourishing images which function in the development of mature consciousness in individuals and in cultures; then the maidens bearing the Holy Grail, etc. The Writings often associate truths and wisdom with the masculine and “the good” with feminine. However, what does it mean to bring the good?

In order to get to the good, one must gather: Gathering the complexity of specific situations, including the conflicting and complicated particularities and also the eternal dimension that is there within the temporal, attempting to bring each situation into focus and to hold both planes in our awareness.

We see this in the story of the disciples putting to sea in their boat, a man-made, even if inspired structure, which they trusted to bear them safely across the waters. They were not prepared for a radical change in the weather, nor could they foresee the transformation of their lives they would experience on “the other shore.” Using the well-known correspondence between water and truths, we can recognize what appeared to be a conflict between the eternal role of the disciples’ calling, and the chaos of fear and doubt they experienced during the crossing episode, — two planes. We too often find ourselves “at sea” in some of the institutions and customs that we have cobbled together, to transport us on and across the “truths” as we understand them. We also feel unprepared when an unseen presence “on the face of the waters” heaps them up into violent but temporary waves capable of destroying much that is old and familiar. It does not take a “rocket scientist” to find an analogy with our present fears and doubts, while astounding advances in technology, transportation and communication threaten much that is familiar to us.

It requires, then, a firm focus on the eternal aspect of each temporal frame of our personal life journey, to allow us to see the Lord coming to us firmly supported by the waves of information that otherwise threaten to overwhelm us. Rev. Cole mentions in his sermon that “the Lord in the ultimate [in] the particularities is the meaning of ‘the sea’”. Thus we have to rely on the Lord when we have temptations, but this is not to obliterate our courage. Rev. Cole speaks about our needing to take risks in order to move forward.

“Moving forward” requires looking for “what yearns to be born.” Although it is not true that men cannot focus on what is yearning to be born (an outstanding example is Swedenborg’s vision of the descent of the New Jerusalem), focusing on what is yearning to be born may well be easier for a woman. It comes to her naturally through the experience of labor. Psychologically, too, this may be easier for her, because of her reported greater ease in being able to tolerate and contain the conflicting elements in particularities. In *Woman’s Way of Knowing* we read, “Women constructionists show a high tolerance for internal contradiction and ambiguity. They abandon completely the either/or so common to the previous position described [that one size and shape of a “truth” fits all persons and situations at all times.] ‘They recognize the inevitability of conflict and stress and although they may hope to achieve some respite, they also learn to live with conflict rather than talking or acting it away.’ They no longer want to suppress or deny aspects of the self in order to avoid conflict or simplify their lives....These women want to embrace all the pieces of the self in some ultimate sense of the whole — daughter, friend, mother, lover, nurturer, thinker, artist, advocate. They want to avoid what they perceive to be a shortcoming in many men—the tendency to compartmentalize thought and feeling, home and work, self and other. In women, there is an impetus to try to deal with life, internal and external,

in all its complexity” (Belenky, M; Clinchy, B; Goldberger, N; Tarule, J., Basic Books, New York, 1969, p.139).

The mythological motif regarding woman’s concern with, and involvement in, what is yearning to be born gives credence to the concept that this is her sacred responsibility, particularly at times when there is a shift in the plane of learning, regarding birth of vegetation gods and, on a higher plane, the personal quest of the knight in search of the Holy Grail (see Jesse Weston’s *Ritual to Romance*, Doubleday Anchor Books, Garden City, N.Y., 1957, p.49). In the Gospels, also, women are depicted in times of a shift in planes of spiritual learning.

Within their marriage, a man and a woman need to keep the focus on the Lord in the particularities of each day’s journey together and to look conjointly for their meaning on a spiritual level. Although individuals may be able to acquire this skill by themselves it is likely that they will benefit from the perspective of their spouse who enters any situation from a slightly different angle,—especially when there appears to be a conflict between temporal winds of change and the eternal aspects of some new thing that is yearning to be born. A conjoint view may reveal that certain temporal elements of their present situation are not yet ready for change, even though we have completed our interior preparation and feel ready for a new call. Here, patience and courage are more appropriate than fear and trembling.

**BOUND ON EARTH, BOUND IN HEAVEN:  
REFLECTIONS ON KATRINA AND HOW THE LORD  
IS IN THE WORLD.**

BY DON BRANDIS

Matthew 16:4 A wicked and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and no sign shall be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. And he left them and departed....13 When Jesus came into the region of Caesarea Philippi, He asked His disciples, saying, Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am? 14 So they said, Some say John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets. 15 He said to them, But who do you say that I am? 16 Simon Peter answered and said, You are the Christ, the Son of the living God. 17 Jesus answered and said to him, Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven. 18 And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it. 19 And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.

*Arcana Coelestia* 9410:2 Those who are restricted to the outward sense of the Word, separated from the inward, thus those who are separated from the true teachings of the Church, convince themselves that such power was given to Peter by the Lord, and also to the rest of the Lord's disciples....Those therefore who know the outward sense of the Word and at the same time its inward sense understand that these things spoken by the Lord had regard to faith and the truths of faith, which are received from the Lord. Such faith received from the Lord possesses that power, thus the Lord Himself, and not at all any

mere human being.

We live in a time dominated by natural thinking, by a determinedly secular view of all things. When times are hard, when hurricanes displace millions and destroy cities, when the AIDS pandemic kills millions around the world, when a revised world economy benefits some at the expense of others (as all economies do), when bitterly contested elections resolve nothing, when the conflicts that are inevitable arise in any human relationship obscure its benefits, natural thinking has neither spiritual nor moral resources. Even people of faith in such times wonder where God is, what He is doing.

There is bad news in our world every day even though the news from the Word, although not always easy and sometimes very uncomfortable, is always good. It is often easier to believe that the Lord has all power in heaven than it is that He has all power in our world, even though the Word assures us unambiguously that He has all power everywhere and always. Faith affirms this, and yet all too often we wonder and do not believe. Where is the Lord when terrible things happen, or even when smaller cruel and unnecessary things happen? Why do these bother us, when we know we have faith? Why are we so often unsuccessful in reaching the minds and hearts of others who have no faith with what gives us spiritual comfort when they are suffering? Why are there times when our own faith does not comfort us, when we suffer and find our faith unequal to it?

The *Writings* contain the needed answers to these questions. Although we have heard them many times before, part of the reason we are here is to work through these reasons, and so we need to hear them many more times. In the alternation of weekday and Sabbath, of doubt and faith, of natural thinking and spiritual thinking, we do our small but essential part in our regeneration and that of others around us. What is power in our world? Natural thinking sees only the exteriors of people and

things, and thus for natural thinking, power consists in one thing forcing itself on another. Hurricanes blow down trees and houses, push water overland, flood cities and highways. Nations make war on each other, viruses spread from one human or animal host to another, the managers of corporations decide to close plants in one country and move them to another. We know how to look for the effects of these external events in individual lives.

The *Writings* tell us the natural world is the world of effects, the spiritual world that of causes, and the celestial or inmost that of ends or intentions. The current suffering of New Orleans' poorest citizens results from thousands and thousands of human choices, some by them and some by others. The dikes that kept the waters out had not been constructed and maintained properly, the disaster planning had not dealt at all with how to get the citizens who did not own cars out of the city. Much of the National Guard was in Iraq, FEMA had been marginalized due to other demands on federal funds. Further, the causes of poverty in the region as across the nation are complex and deep-rooted and have been largely ignored. The matter has not been important enough to us to deal with effectively.

Well, the failures that resulted in so much suffering after Katrina can in no way be blamed on God. He neither caused them nor failed to prevent them. The suffering and injustice are not evidence of Divine impotence. So to think would be to think externally about God. Even though we must use some natural concepts in conjunction with spiritual ones if we are to think faithfully about God, natural concepts by themselves are inadequate to understand the Divine. See *True Christian Religion* 339—"The reason why we must believe, that is, have faith in God the Savior Jesus Christ is that it is faith in a visible God, in whom there is an invisible God; and faith in a visible God, who is human and at the same time God, enters into a

person. For faith is in its essence spiritual, but in its form natural. With a person therefore faith becomes spiritual-natural, for everything spiritual must be accepted in the natural, in order to be of any value to a person.”

We see from this how the Lord acts mainly from within us, and only secondarily from outside us, from our experience. We need to learn to recognize exteriors from interiors, to see the natural in terms of the spiritual and not the reverse. The *Writings* tell us, for example, that if educated people who are usually oriented to such merely natural thinking, were told of deeper senses in the literal Word, “he will be taken aback at first, then dismiss the idea as nonsense, and finally ridicule it” (*Arcana Coelestia* 9407:4).

To demand the reverse, i.e. that the spiritual conform to the natural, is what the *Writings* call negative doubt, and it will always fail to bring us into the light of heaven—unless by its failures we try something else (see *Arcana Coelestia* 2094, 2832, 2588). So let us try something else. How is Jesus Christ—the Divine Human, the risen Lord—Lord of our world? His disciple Peter found out how. Let us watch him do so. Chapter 16 of Matthew’s gospel is about our need for signs from heaven, about our need to experience the Divine at work among us. A group of Pharisees and Sadducees came to Him and asked for a sign from heaven, and he rebuked them, saying the only sign they would receive is the sign of Jonah.

What is the sign of Jonah? There are at least three meanings of the sign of Jonah. The first is the correspondence of Jonah’s three days in the belly of a whale to the Lord’s resurrection after being dead for three days. In this context the Lord means that the Jews will get the same sign everyone else gets, namely the glorification of the risen Christ as the Divine Human. It is the Divine Human who makes faith possible for each of us and for all of us. We can have faith that He is Lord of heaven and of our

world because the Lord has come and subdued the hells, reordered the heavens and given us the Gospel and the *Writings*. The tasks of faith are the same whether people are in the Universal Church or outside it. We all are called by the Lord to shun evils as sins, to do the good we see to do as charity toward everyone else, and to worship the Lord we see. The Lord gives everyone a glimpse of things in the light of heaven now and then, and we need to notice when it happens, learn from the Word what our spiritual insights mean, and to reform our lives by them.

The second meaning of the sign of Jonah comes from the story of Jonah's reluctant ministry to the people of Nineveh. You remember the story of the evil gentile city of Nineveh, and that the Lord called Jonah to go to it and tell them He would destroy them unless they turned from their wickedness. Jonah did not want to help the gentiles in Nineveh. Here he represented faith without charity. This kind of faith runs away from the Lord, but this does not work, and he ended up on a ship at sea in a great storm the Lord sent against him. Jonah eventually told the sailors to throw him overboard, and they did so, and the storm stopped. Jonah did not drown; he was promptly swallowed by a whale, where as we said earlier he remained three days. He prayed to the Lord to save him again, and the Lord had the whale vomit him out onto dry land. The Lord now had Jonah's attention, and Jonah went to Nineveh and preached repentance to them for three days, i.e. long enough to get *their* attention. He told them that in forty days the Lord would destroy them if they did not repent, meaning that in the fullness of time the inevitable consequence of unrepentant wickedness is a hellish life, a permanently miserable spiritual state reflected in a miserable natural state. This is in truth the certain result of living wickedly and resisting the Lord's salvation in a world where all power comes from the Lord, and is the spiritual truth that is the second

meaning of the sign of Jonah.

The people of Nineveh heeded Jonah's sign and repented, turning from their wickedness. By "wickedness" here we may understand the primary social sins denounced in the Decalogue: murder, false witness, adultery and theft. Having renounced these and begged the Lord's forgiveness, they did not settle into a permanent hellish spiritual state. They were lifted into the light of heaven, and had the good lives of people who are being regenerated. Such lives are not always pleasant, but they lead to heavenly life in some form in this life and in the next.

What about the third meaning of the sign of Jonah? For this we look to our text from Matthew 16. Jesus has rebuked the Pharisees who asked him for a sign from heaven before they would listen to him in the Biblical sense, with a spiritual hearing that leads to obedience. Jesus then asks his disciple Peter, who has been with him now for some time and seen Him in action, heard Him speak to many people, witnessed the healings and the conversions and the repentances. "Who do you say I am?" He asks. "You are the Christ, the son of the living God," replies Peter. The Lord answers, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father in heaven. You are Peter, and on this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of Hell will not prevail against it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven" (Matthew 16:15-19).

The inner sense of this text is unusually rich in meaning. The Lord calls this disciple by different names in different circumstances. "Peter" means "rock" and commonly represents spiritual truth, and in Peter's case usually means truth of faith; truth known, acknowledged and believed. After Peter confesses that Jesus is the Messiah, the son of the living God, Jesus calls him blessed, and also 'Simon son of Jonah'. 'Simon' has similar

correspondences to ‘Simeon’, the second son of Jacob and Leah, which at the most general level means truth from good, and then more specifically obedience, faith of charity and affection for truth (Genesis 29:33, *Arcana Coelestia* 3867-3872). “Jonah” means “dove” in Hebrew, and represents the good of charity. “Simon son of Jonah means hearing and obeying spiritual truth from good” or “faith from charity” (*Apocalypse Explained* 443:4-5).

Faith of charity or faith from charity is real faith, bound to or conjoined with real charity. It is good and truth conjoined, which is the intention and the product of regeneration. People in this state are blessed, are conjoined in community to the Universal Church and also to a particular church and so to a community in heaven. They are so bound in heaven as well as on earth. The meaning of the third sign of Jonah is that of the Beatitudes. The second and third meanings of ‘the sign of Jonah’ taken together are this: on the one hand, if you persist in wickedness and refuse the salvation the Lord offers, you will have a certain sort of life forever, and if you accept the Lord’s salvation and shun wickedness you will have a very different sort of life. This is true because the Lord has all power in this world and in the spiritual world. Real faith—i.e. faith conjoined with charity—is from the Lord and contains the keys to the kingdom of heaven. “Keys” represent power. The Lord gives people the power to save themselves or to condemn themselves. The Lord does not give us Divine power but only human power. The small but vital power to choose the left hand or the right for ourselves but not for others is essential to the Lord’s power on earth and in heaven and in the hells.

This is also the reason there are positive and negative correspondences of every spiritual representation. The Lord’s power on earth does not compel anyone. When He says to Peter that He has given him the keys to the kingdom, He means that

anyone who has faith from charity, who has good and truth conjoined by regeneration, can see when he or she is in a Sabbath state that all events in our world that involve humans require of them spiritual choices, and that their spiritual state is a result of those choices. Regardless of how clearly or unclearly we see them, these choices determine what we are. “They are judged according to the actions done in their life and according to their thoughts and ends in view” (*Arcana Coelestia* 2335). What matters most is not whether a person in New Orleans got out before the hurricane or not, but how they reacted to the events of their experience, and especially to the other people in those experiences. Our spiritual lives have much less to do with what others have done to us than with what we have or have not done to them and for them. Material states are not reliable indicators of spiritual states, even though the former are results of the latter,—unless they are seen in the light of heaven. We are not in the world alone, and the states of others are just as important to us spiritually as our own is. Even when the just suffer materially and the wicked prosper, the just are better off.

Suppose that a twenty-first century Jonah went to New Orleans before Hurricane Katrina struck and spoke plainly and openly about what was to come and why. There were such voices, but they were ignored. But suppose they had been heard in the Biblical sense? Advisors and the public officials of the states involved could have been called together and worked out both a plan for the coming hurricane and also for a more lasting and faithful public response to the needs of the poor, the blind, the elderly, the sick, the prisoners, the lame (*Matthew* 25:35-40, *Arcana Coelestia* 4956-4958, 5063-5067, 6004). Then when “the rains came down, and the streams rose, and the wind blew and beat against the house, it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock” (*Matthew* 7:25).

## **EDITORIALS**

### **THE LORD'S REDEMPTION AT EASTER.**

The Writings teach us that there was no other way for the Lord to make His Advent, than by being born as a human being “like any other” (*Arcana Coelestia* 1573:7). The need for the Advent was because hereditary evils accumulate from parents to children, generation after generation, and this “is the principal reason for the degeneration of a church” (*Arcana Coelestia* 494). However there must always be a Church somewhere on earth which “has the Word and knows the Lord” (*Heavenly Doctrine* 244, *Sacred Scripture* 104, *True Christian Religion* 267). For if the church has an end, the connection between heaven and the Church also ends, and the human race perishes. Thus it is of “the Lord's Divine Providence [that] some revelation should come into existence, for [the] Word is the general recipient vessel ...conjoining heaven and earth, without [which] heaven and earth would [be] disjoined, and the human race [perish]”(*Arcana Coelestia* 1775).

To prevent the human race from “perishing in eternal death” (*Lord* 18) and since “the Divine cannot take evil upon Itself”, therefore only by birth into the world could the Lord “overcome evil by His own power” (*Arcana Coelestia* 1573:7). To remove this threat from hell, therefore, the Lord assumed the heredity of the human race. “This diversion of iniquities and evils to Himself can never come about except through a hereditary channel” (*Ibid.*). The Lord thereby made His Advent while at the same time granting the hells access to the “Divine truth bound”—meant by Isaac bound for sacrifice by Abraham (*Arcana Coelestia* 2813). “Divine truth bound” also refers to the Lord under the title the Son of Man, who always “must suffer” in the Gospel stories. Assuming this human by birth was thus the only way for the Lord to overcome human hereditary evil, through which the hells were threatening to destroy the human race. For overcoming the hells no human being “has ever been able to do

or ever can do.” Therefore, the Lord alone was “willing to be born like any other human being” (*Arcana Coelestia* 2034.).

The Lord on earth knew that the salvation of the entire human race depended on Him. That is why He was willing to “bear our iniquities” which means suffer temptations from our sins, just as we do (*Lord* 15). However, the Lord’s temptations were most grievous (*Arcana Coelestia* 2816, 1661), in fact so severe that “no other could ever endure one ten thousandth part of them” (*Arcana Coelestia* 1573:4). In fact, the Lord still suffers the temptations “in every individual human being” (*Arcana Coelestia* 4287:3), since He alone overcomes them. That is why our repentance can at best be motivated by a love “not to harm the Lord” (*Arcana Coelestia* 8925).

That is how the Lord’s mercy works, by the Divine love grieving (*Arcana Coelestia* 5480). So great was the Lord’s “love” or “end in view” that “His inmost joy [was] for the salvation of the human race, which He had in view in the union of Himself with His Father” (*Arcana Coelestia* 2034:3). We see how the Lord rejoiced that human salvation lay in His own union with His Divine soul. Since the “Lord’s love [was] towards the whole human race,” and since “the intensity of the love determines the intensity of the temptation...it becomes clear how severe His conflicts were” (*Arcana Coelestia* 1690e). Despite such “most malignant wiles and venom” which the hells employed against Him (*Arcana Coelestia* 1820), yet because of the nature of the Divine love moving Him, “He could not but conquer” (*Arcana Coelestia* 1812).

By such conquests the Lord made Himself “righteousness” (*Arcana Coelestia* 8273) and became “the Redeemer” (*Lord* 33, 65, *True Christian Religion* 579:3) by “His own power” (*Arcana Coelestia* 1787, 1921, *passim*), and not by that of the Divine Itself, which is above temptations (*Arcana Coelestia* 2795:2).

## HOW DOES THE NEW CHURCH INCREASE?

“The new heaven increases, [and] the New Church descends from it ... to the extent that the false ideas of the former church are set aside” (*True Christian Religion* 784). Let us remove false ideas and replace them with true ones, and the New Church will grow. One such false dogma is instant salvation apart from means: The Lord can instantly remove all our evils, cleanse us, and lift us into heaven,—as is believed when someone claims to be “born again.”

But the idea of instant salvation or mercy apart from means, is the “flying fiery serpent” mentioned in Daniel: it abolishes obedience to the Ten Commandments and ends up attributing evil to God! (*Divine Providence* 340) For if God can raise anyone to heaven regardless of their life, while yet evil still happens in the world, then God is to blame, because He could wipe out all evil, but does not do so! Why not?

The truth however is that the Lord removes our evils only when we do so on our own. The very thought that regeneration (rebirth) thus salvation can happen without human cooperation, is “vanity of vanities” (*True Christian Religion* 577). Only as man on his own removes or shuns evils, does the Lord remove their roots as well as the evils themselves. The spiritual images connected with instant salvation is thus a “ruined city, a plain devastated by locusts, or keeping a viper warm next to one’s bosom” (*True Christian Religion* 582:2).

A complete and unexpurgated set of evil tendencies is received by everyone just by being born! Every Church that comes to an end, collapses from the accumulation of hereditary evil tendencies among its population. These we read are “multiplied and augmented in each descending posterity, remaining with each person, and increased in each by his actual sins”(Arcana

*Coelestia* 313). They are “never dissipated so as to become harmless except in those who are being regenerated by the Lord.”(ibid) This reduction or dissipation comes with the gift of “tendencies to good and truth” from parents who are being regenerated, and thus receptive of conjugal love (cf. *Conjugal Love* 202, *Arcana Coelestia* 3469). Mind you, these hereditary tendencies do not in and by themselves condemn anyone, only actual evils do (*Apocalypse Explained* 989). However, we leave them intact or ignore these tendencies at our peril, since we then condone the evils they sponsor! When we ignore them, it is like the Sons of Israel fearing the giants of the Promised Land. We are scared of conquering our own evil tendencies, since we don’t want to give them up. We like to experiment with our evils, creating worse temptations for ourselves. This is to wander for 40 years of our own making.

So we need to take special note and heed this warning: “EVILS CANNOT BE REMOVED UNLESS THEY APPEAR.” Wow, we have to actually “do evil” before we know what it is! But no: “This does *not* mean that man is to do evils in order that they may appear”( *Divine Providence* 278 emphasis added). We can never act out evil just to check whether it is in fact evil! That would be close to profanation. Instead, we must go to the opposite extreme, namely “examine not only [our] actions but also [our] thoughts, and what [we] would do if [we] were not afraid of the laws and disgrace.” We should especially imagine “what evils [we] hold in [our] spirit to be allowable and do not regard as sins; for these [we] still commit” (*Ibid*). “In their spirit” all people imagine secret evils. Because however our “thought is the process which purifies and excretes the evils” (*True Christian Religion* 659), i.e. our ideas picture our evil desires for recognition purposes, consequently we are not blamed for just thinking of evils. Instead, by seeing them first in thought we can thereby shun the desire. This is where our

tendencies to evils appear, where we see what we long for in spirit. We must identify and shun these as though they were vipers keeping warm in our bosom. Whether we tackle a tendency right off, or tackle an incipient evil practice, or a well rehearsed one, conquest requires a spiritual temptation,— the 40 years wandering in the wilderness. A temptation is spiritual when we call on the Lord’s help.

Do we sometimes get angry at God for all the innocent people who suffer beyond any reasonable explanation? “How could there be a God when this happens?” However, the answer stares us in the face: suffering happens because people do not hold themselves guilty of evils! That is why the Lord must jog people into a spiritual condition by permitting natural temptations, i.e. misfortunes and accidents, to “break down their pleasures” (*Arcana Coelestia* 762). If people did what they should, and held themselves guilty of evil, they would often be “exempted from common misfortunes” (*Spiritual Experience* 4630) since such things do not always happen to people “with whom the Lord is present” (*Op. Cit.* 4138). Catastrophe is loosely contingent on confessing guilt or not. It is therefore no use to be angry at God for disasters, but instead to examine oneself even when distant disaster strikes others.

However, to be good we need to look beneath the surface, and call for the Lord’s help. Self-examination, repentance and reformation are the means of mercy, because we can undertake them consciously. Regeneration is only partially a conscious effort, but mostly “on the job”, i.e. while we are at work (cf. *True Christian Religion* 580). We don’t notice it in progress since no one is capable of “reflecting on his own regeneration” (*Arcana Coelestia* 933). No one can see oneself being led en route to heaven, since it would just look like a construction zone (cf. *Divine Providence* 203)! Still, our evil tendencies are actually “removed” while we are planning and carrying out our business

or employment (*Divine Providence* 296:10). We make our decisions for heaven when we honestly carry out the terms of our employment. No wonder heaven is a kingdom of uses.

Now when we begin to examine ourselves, do we see no end to our evils? Hell actually is bottomless, and so also our evil tendencies seem to defy our repentance! Instead we picture ourselves going to hell with flying colors. However, we must resist feeling totally unworthy, and saturated with evils. We cannot tackle all of hell at once, as in eastern meditation trying to rise above the entire field of “maya” and “sangsara”, i.e. ignorance and illusion. We could go crazy if we try! Instead, the Lord’s “easy yoke” is to shun only one evil at a time, once or twice a year. Is that too much to ask? Pick a tendency, examine it in private, see the guilt, then confess it to the Lord alone while you are “in your room and the door is shut”(Matthew 6:6). This means a secret confession unseen by others (*Arcana Coelestia* 5694:4), for only then is the prayer “from the Lord” (*Apocalypse Explained* 695:4).

Can we be successful at a purely mental event such as repentance? Yes. It is actual repentance when we say to ourselves, “Although I think and want this evil”—fill in the blank by actually naming it so that both you and the Lord can hear it, —then finish “I will not do it, because it is a sin” (*True Christian Religion* 535). You may add a call for the Lord’s help, for strength to do His will or to obey His Word, all in the Lord’s name. If we also pray for something or someone, we must end the prayer with the sentiment, “nevertheless not my will or way, but Thine be done” (*Arcana Coelestia* 8179:3), or else we are too cocky for our prayer to be heard.

Do we understand just how the Lord can save us? “It is by means of the truths in anyone that the Lord has the power to save you; for you are reformed and regenerated and taken out of hell and introduced into heaven by means of truth from the sense of

the letter of the Word. This power the Lord took upon Himself, even as to His Divine Human, after He had fulfilled all things of the Word down to its ultimate level” (*Sacred Scripture* 49).

We need therefore to include the Scriptures, both Testaments, in our self-examination and prayers for help. Use Bible quotes you love and remember. We should not abstain from “...evils for any reason whatever *except from the Word*” since nothing else than the Word can “purify the internal man” (*Apocalypse Explained* 803 added emphasis). Do we dare check out the wrong reasons for repentance, which do not work? “Fear of civil law and penalties, fear of the loss of your reputation, or honor, the fears of becoming poor” etc. in short fear of ‘getting caught.’ They don’t work.

Part of the problem of confessing our evils, is that we feel guilty also of evils which have been done to us. An abused or victimized person, especially a child, feels guilty of what has happened to them! It helps to understand the reason: guilt and torments of conscience are inspired by devils who accuse us of the “very evils they themselves inspire” (*Arcana Coelestia* 751, 761, 8159). Being a victim of evil thus means we inherit an unfair guilt. That is because we are innocent of the harm done to us! The “torment of conscience” victims feel, therefore do not belong to them, but to “the very evils which belong to devils, in hell” (*Arcana Coelestia* 6097, 7344). We therefore need not shun evil done to us, but place the torment of guilt at the gate of hell. Both the harm and the guilt came from hell. That is why devils inspire the thought that we are “already saved” (*Arcana Coelestia* 2380:4,5), trying to confuse us out of further attempts. Angels however know that “No man putting his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God” (Luke 9:51-62). They inspire the thought to always keep moving forward, that you are “not saved” (Ibid.). We cannot freeze up, but keep going forward.

Now the Writings have unmasked devils and evil spirits, so we can see their tactics. They not only inspire us from hell with evil desires, but hand over guilt and torment as well. To counteract this blow, we are told to picture evil as pouring into us from the outside. Don't you remember this quote? "If man believed, as is the truth, that ...all evil and falsity is from hell, he would not...appropriate evil to himself and account himself responsible for it"—nor would he claim credit for the good that comes from the Lord (*Arcana Coelestia* 6324, *Heaven and Hell* 302e, *Divine Providence* 320)! It is actually easier to repent of evils if we think of them being beamed up from hell. Shunning evils as sins is then a matter of blocking their entrance. Only the Lord has power to prevent their entry, by virtue of His conquest of hell. We can think, "I can shun this evil [= prevent entry] because of Easter."

Another trap in confession is to make oneself guilty of too much! "Confession of all sins is the lulling to sleep of all, and at length blindness" (*Divine Providence* 278). So don't confess guilt to "evils of all kinds"! We blind ourselves if we say we are steeped in sin. We have to be specific, and name just one thing which it hurts most to hear announced! So we say it to ourselves, and our intention is then already worthy of forgiveness. An evil confessed is already known and forgiven by the Lord, because He caused us to see it! Anyone need not "enumerate" the evils because he has "searched them out and seen them in himself, and consequently they are present to the Lord because they are present to himself. The Lord has also guided the person in self-examination, disclosed the sins, and inspired sadness and together with this an effort to desist from them and begin a new life" (*True Christian Religion* 539). The Lord already led you to see it, and so by your secret confession to the Lord, you are already forgiven. But that does not mean it is gone: we have to stop it in our lives. That is when the evil is also "remitted", i.e.

sent out of our lives. We have to face down the evil we have confessed, not allowing it back.

We do this by remembering the Sacrament we have taken, so that “if he afterwards [after the holy supper] abstains from one or another sin which he then discovers in himself, this is sufficient to initiate him into the actuality [of the repentance]” (*True Christian Religion* 530). For the Holy Supper is a sacrament of repentance (*Apocalypse Revealed* 531, *Brief Exposition* 114, *True Christian Religion* 567) which thus introduces us into heaven while still on earth. The memory of our resolve at the Holy Supper together with the letter of the Word later acts as a bulwark against the hells. Because the “bread and wine correspond to heavenly bread and wine” which in turn “correspond to the holy of love and holy of faith, both from the Lord, and both the Lord”, therefore the Lord is conjoined “not with the bread and wine, but with the love and faith of the man who has repented” (*Apocalypse Revealed* 224). The bread and wine are necessary elements, but the conjunction with the Lord is with the repentant frame of mind. How can we imagine any closer conjunction? The after-effect of the sacrament, is consequently to abstain from the evil we have already confessed. Our earlier prayer not to do it becomes fulfilled in “I will not do it” now, in act. The evil is then remitted, also called “doing the work of repentance” (*Heavenly Doctrine* 159, 161). We have finally overcome that temptation, and the evil has lost its appeal, or begun to do so.

Here therefore are the “means of salvation” whereby the Lord’s mercy raises us to heaven, all through our lives. The dragon of instant salvation or faith alone, that old serpent, is thrust through by Michael’s sword.

**COMMUNICATIONS**

**Science and Correspondences: food for thought**

Dear Editor,

We've come a long way since the 18th century! When the Lord opened Swedenborg's spiritual sight, little progress had been made in science. It seems the flowering of science (and music also – that's for another time) was awaiting the Last judgment and the Lord's second coming.

When I first started as a scientist what seems like centuries ago, I often used to wonder how differently Swedenborg might have addressed correspondences if he had known what we do today about the natural world around us. In his time, no-one knew anything about bacteria, viruses, that there was life in the depths of the sea, let alone that organisms could survive in any conditions in or on this earth, no matter how extreme. They didn't even know what those conditions might be. For example, think about the heat vents in the ocean where life survives intense heat and noxious fumes (with the help of specialized bacteria); these vents were not found until just a few years ago.

When I first studied bacteria, it occurred to me that not all disease-causing bacteria were bad all the time. In many areas in the human body, many different types of bacteria co-exist quite happily without causing any disease. In fact, we need those bacteria to help us digest our food, clean up our skin, or just keep things in working order. The problem in these areas seems to occur whenever conditions change, either with the bacteria or the host (the person) so that one bacterial type takes over. Then infection can occur, and the person becomes sick. My idea is that bacteria could represent the affections associated with the loves of self and the world. The bacteria that always cause disease no matter what could represent the more heinous evils; the others that are sometimes bad could represent loves that are not inherently evil: they just become so when they predominate over the loves of the Lord and the neighbor. When the order is inverted (the host's immune system is compromised, or a barrier to infection is

removed/conscience is squashed or the Lord is forgotten) those bacteria/loves can attack and cause natural/spiritual disease.

Having watched the BBC/Discovery Channel's "Blue Planet," I became fascinated by the team's journey to the depths of the ocean, a place no-one had ever been before. To do it, they required a special submersible that would not implode when exposed to the intense pressures at those depths: 400x the pressure at the surface.

When they descended, they discovered not only were these areas not barren deserts, but they saw creatures they had never seen before. Normally these creatures lived in complete blackness, except for the fluorescence/lights generated by the predators which attracted their prey (from bacteria living in these creatures incidentally). When the lights of the submersible shone on them, it was a fascinating yet hideous sight. Many of these "fish" had huge sharp teeth; in some the teeth were so huge that they could not close their mouths.

However, in other areas, the creatures found resembled decorative plants; some were deep sea versions of corals that lived without light. They were much less hideous than the predatory fish, in fact they seemed more beautiful, but they were still carnivorous.

The extreme depths with fish with huge teeth made me think of the hells of the Nephilim. The people going to these ocean depths required extra protection, just as Swedenborg did before he could be exposed to the spirits in those hells. The light in the depths of the ocean were as illusory as the fake lights in hell, and there was intense pressure in the ocean, just as I imagine there would be for us in the Nephilim hells, which is why the Lord prevents them from affecting any of us here.

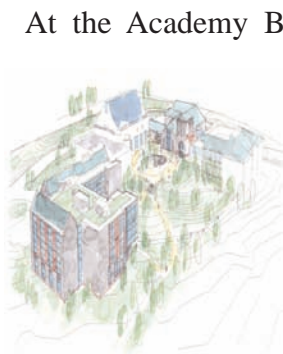
Maybe the corals and other vegetation existing without sunlight could be likened to lesser hells, maybe representing the hells in the love of falsity: the beauty is still illusory, but it does not seem as fierce and so without beauty as the carnivorous fish?

I'd appreciate other scientists' ideas of how learning more about the natural world has helped them realize the amount we must still have to learn about the spiritual one!

Julie Conaron, MS, MA

## MAJOR ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE GENERAL CHURCH AND ACADEMY OF THE NEW CHURCH BOARDS

**Rev. Eric Carswell, President of the Academy of the New Church:**



At the Academy Board meetings this past Friday a major commitment was made to the education of Bryn Athyn College. The Board of Trustees voted unanimously to approve funding for two new buildings for Bryn Athyn College.

The 39,000 sq. ft. Grant R. Doering Center for Science and Research, which will contain science labs, classrooms, and faculty offices, will be located between Swedenborg Library and Pitcairn Hall. A second building located to the west side of Pendleton Hall will serve as an entranceway to the campus and will include an entrance gallery, a kitchen and dining facility that seats 150, space for student life activities, office space for admissions and financial aid, and a student health center. Construction on both buildings is expected to begin this May and will be completed by the fall of 2009.

The approval of these new facilities marks a significant point in the growth and development of the College and we hope and pray for the "propagation of the Heavenly doctrines," their integration into many areas of natural study, and the development of the civil, moral and spiritual values which are among the essential purposes envisioned the Academy founders.



### **Mr. Bruce Henderson the Director of Communications:**

The Academy's decision to move ahead with these facilities is part of the Administration's and Board's commitment to growth, particularly in the College. See the architects' renderings of the new buildings, also available on the College website, [www.brynathyn.edu](http://www.brynathyn.edu). Meanwhile, the new Dining Hall on the Secondary Schools campus is moving aggressively toward a May 1, 2008 completion date, and the new student housing complex for the College will be ready for the new school year this September.

The General Church Board of Directors and the Academy Board of Trustees gave joint approval on Saturday, February 2, for a significant new program to attract new students to the Theological School and to increase their practical training. It provides funding so that candidates—especially second career men—will not have to work at side jobs to support their families. And it dramatically increases training for all aspects of the pastor's role.

Theological School Dean Andrew Dibb says that “While these proposals may be expensive, their long-term benefit for the life of the New Church is incalculable.”

Bishop Tom Kline said the approval of this program by both Boards is “a significant, historic moment in the Church” which will produce very positive results.

#### **WWW.NEWCHURCHVINEYARD.ORG**

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 King of Kings*—March, 2008

*The Way to Heaven*—April, 2008

## A BIBLE TRANSLATION GOAL FOR THE YEAR 2016

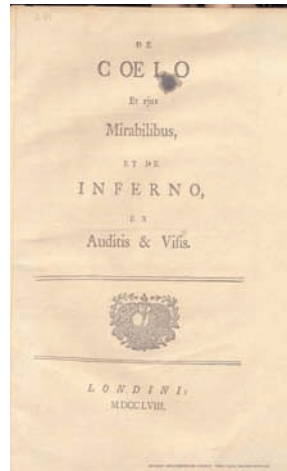
THE REV. DONALD L. ROSE

New Church Life once reported that the entire Bible had been translated into 341 different languages. That was a dozen years ago, and in a moment I will give the latest figures. There were two other figures, the number of languages which had just the New Testament was 822. But the “goal” that has been set has to do with the number of languages that have at least one book of the Bible. That was 929 (*NCL* September 1995 p 407).

Let’s talk about the situation in, 2007. The American Bible Society recently reported that the entire Bible has now been translated into 429 languages. The New Testament has been translated into 1,144 languages. And “some Scripture” now appears in no less than 2,426 languages. The goal for 2016 is huge. It is to have something of the Bible in virtually every language on earth. Maybe 6,912 languages. What an enterprise.

Of course if the portion of the Bible is extremely short, perhaps a single verse, it makes the task seem more attainable.

What about the translation of the *Writings*? In the report of the international Swedenborg congress held in London in 1910 there is an interesting feature. A single sentence from the *Writings* is rendered in 15 languages. (That is on page 355 of Transactions of that congress.) This could be a subject for discussion this year, which is the 250th anniversary of the publications of certain books of the *Writings*, including *Heaven and Hell*.



## *Church News*

ELDERGARTEN 2008  
BY FORREST DRISTY

The eleventh Boynton Beach Eldergarten was held at the Boynton Beach New Church during the period January 20 to 25. Under the capable leadership of director Gale Arnoux, and with the expert assistance of a large number of the society's experienced members, the event followed a long tradition (dating back to 1995) of providing senior members of the church with a stimulating educational experience pertaining to the teachings of the New Church.

The popularity of Eldergarten is evident from the fact that the number of applicants usually exceeds the number of spaces available. That was certainly the case this year, when kindhearted stretching of sensible limits resulted in a total attendance of about 140 eager students, all of whom had attained the prescribed "age of wisdom"—that is, all of whom were at least 60 years old (see *Arcana Coelestia* 10225). These studious participants were from near and far, some from as far away as Colorado and Canada.

The opening event was the registration on Sunday evening, January 20, when each student received a folder containing useful information pertaining to the coming events. Also provided, to everyone's delight, was a tasty "light supper" including an amazing array of delicious desserts. It was a wonderful way by which the participants could meet each other in preparation for the coming classes.

Each class day opened with a brief worship service followed by three lectures, a break for refreshments coming after the first one. After the third lecture we were all given a hearty box lunch, which could be eaten in company with colleagues around one of

the numerous tables that were located inside and outside the church building. It was an arrangement that promoted conversation on all manner of subject matter. Afternoons were set aside as free time.

The lecturers this year were Rev. Peter Buss, Jr., whose topic was *The Lord's Vision and Our Reality: Problems Caused by the Gap*; Brian Henderson, Assistant Professor at Bryn Athyn College, whose topic was *Breaking the Chains: The Role of Swedenborg and the Writings in the Struggle for Freedom and Abolition*; and Rev. Grant Odhner, whose topic was *On the Brink of the Land*. These lecture topics were so different from each other that there was no danger at all of overlapping material or of any repetition whatever. However, they all had one characteristic in common: effective Power Point presentation. I will attempt to give a brief description, however inadequate it may be, of each topic.

Peter's lectures were concerned with the enormous gap that exists between the ideal, heaven-like picture of what life could be if we all lived in accordance with the truths of the Word and the chaotic, disorderly picture of "real" life as many people experience it. Special attention was given to issues pertaining to marriage and the family and to our current culture, which seems to be in opposition to the truths of religion. By use of helpful imagery involving Big T (infinite truth), Middle T (denominational truth) and Little T (personal truth) he laid out a very clear exposition of the necessary steps we can follow in order to close the gap as it exists in our own lives, thereby also narrowing the gap as it exists in society as a whole.

Brian spoke to us about the momentous surge in freedom that occurred during and following the latter half of the eighteenth century. This included spiritual, religious, political, and personal freedom, with special attention to the abolition of the slave trade and the final emancipation of all slaves. These subjects were

viewed as results on the natural plane of the Last Judgment witnessed by Swedenborg in the spiritual world in the year 1757. He discussed interesting but little known information about the role of early Swedenborgians in all of these developments.

With Grant we were carried on a most inspirational overview of the entire book of Deuteronomy. After discussing the general nature of that book and its relationship to the other books of the Old Testament, he described its various parts and its overall role in the story of the Israelites as they were on the brink of entering the Promised Land. Many references were made to the spiritual significance of the historical record with special insight into its correspondence with our own process of regeneration. The listeners were left with a renewed respect and affection for the hidden truths in that venerable book.

The Eldergarten days and evenings were by no means restricted solely to the learning of profound historical and theological material. Opportunities were afforded for a number of less intellectual activities. On Wednesday some 55 adventuresome participants boarded a bus that took them many miles northward and, as it were, several decades backward to a part of the state that was more like the Florida of many years past. This remote location, called Forever Florida, included a working cattle ranch as well as many hundreds of acres of natural rangeland. A swamp buggy tour of the premises and a substantial cattleman's dinner fortified the travelers for the long bus ride back to the reality of Boynton Beach. In the meantime, a group of 23 intrepid golfers, who had opted out of the bus trip in favor of a day on the links, encountered a local downpour that restricted their game to a mere nine holes. Their disappointment was assuaged, however, by an excellent dinner in the club house in company with a large number of non-golfing companions.

Without doubt, the social highlight of the Eldergarten was its final event: the banquet on Friday evening at the Delray Beach

Country Club. It provided ample opportunity for the participants to circulate amongst themselves and converse on every imaginable subject before being treated to an elegantly prepared dinner of fish or chicken. Following the repast they heard Rev. Kurt Ho. Asplundh deliver in humorous poetic form a delightful summary of the events of the week. To conclude the banquet, thereby bringing to a close the events of Eldergarten 2008, we listened to our executive bishop, the Rt. Rev. Thomas Kline, give an inspiring presentation of his views on the purpose and values of the General Church and his ideas regarding its growth and development in the coming years. It seems clear that the best and most exciting years of the Church lie just ahead.



## **JACOB'S FAMILY CREEK CAMP**

**JULY 3-6**

Jacob's Creek Camp is held at Laurelville Mennonite Church Camp in the mountains of western Pennsylvania about fifty miles south-east of Pittsburgh. The stream which runs through it is called Jacob's Creek.

The spirit and general program at Jacob's Creek provides a camp for all ages combining a family vacation with an emphasis on the doctrines of the New Church.

This year's theme:

Divine Providence

Learn about the laws by which the Lord's divine love and wisdom govern the world!

About the Program:

- Our emphasis during the structured program is on doctrinal instruction and reflection.
- Our program includes adult lectures and discussions, and a fully planned children's program.

Youth are grouped by age, and their program runs concurrently with the adult program. Sessions included discussions centered around stories from the Word, projects, and other activities. We also provide pre-school and nursery programs.

We have family worship two times a day, morning and evening.

There is ample unscheduled time in the afternoons to allow for swimming, sports, games, hiking, spontaneous group discussions, etc. There are evening programs for everyone. In the past this included: campfire singing, relay races, a talent show, an ice cream social, and even a live band.

There is an opportunity to partake of the Holy Supper on Friday evening.

**Facilities**—The Laurelville Church Center offers a variety of housing options with sizable and comfortable rooms. Recreation facilities include a pool, a baseball diamond, courts for tennis, volleyball, and basketball, hiking trails, and a new recreation hall for rainy days. Meals are provided by the Laurelville staff. The camp has beautiful indoor and outdoor worship facilities.

**Adult presentations offered twice**—The morning sessions will be offered twice so that those assisting with the children's program will be able to participate. The same presentation will be given once earlier and again later in the morning, thus freeing up volunteers needed to continue the quality of our children's and teens' programs.

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## WHAT GRANDMAN WINDOWS CAN DO

BY JAN H. WEISS

GrandMan Search for Windows has the Bible and the Writings of the Second Coming. This text is not always easy to read, and understand. In our old age we may not be able to see the very letters well. GrandMan Windows can help to make the Divine Word more visible and understandable.

Ministers and lay people need help. Getting into the 30 volumes of the Writings and to the internal sense of passages in the Bible is undertaken by very few.

With the GrandMan Program this is all very different. With the Query Window of the program we can find words and passages. All you need to do is manipulate a few keys on a key board, and you can bring before your eyes any part of the Divine Word. If you want to know the internal sense of a verse in the Bible, it only takes the click of the mouse.

The program can put the “shadow file” on top of the original text, and in this shadow file we can make many changes. We can bring in colors, and we can bring in notes anywhere in the text. We can delete or change part of the text. We can change, enlarge and bold the fonts. This shadow file can be saved and transferred to other users of the GrandMan Program anywhere in the world, either on disk or over internet. So if a minister did a study once, anyone can have it any time in the future.

Many things we can with the program that we can learn from a Manual in the web site of New Church Outreach in the section on computers. To place an order, send a check for \$25 U.S. to: New Church Outreach, POB 342 Placentia, CA 92871 Please include your: Name and mailing address. My email address is *nco@secondadvent.net* and my web site address *http://secondadvent.net*.