

## Mutual Love The Lord's Stressbuster!

By Rachel Glenn and Jill Rogers

There are many factors that can contribute to work-related stress: feelings of accountability, concerns over how others view the job we are doing, a sense of responsibility for other people's work, and so concern over how well *they* are doing *their jobs*. These stressful feelings exist in any workplace, but they may be even more common in our schools because, as New Church teachers, we all care deeply about the success of what we are doing. And, because most of us are not yet regenerate, we are also apt to worry about those who seem to be doing better and getting more recognition than we are.

Fortunately, the Lord has provided us with the perfect "stressbuster!" *Arcana Coelestia* tells us that "the Lord's kingdom consists in mutual love, in which alone peace resides" (1038:2). Since peace resides in mutual love, working toward achieving this kind of love helps us to feel less stress. The *Arcana* also tells us that the primary characteristic of mutual love is an affection for what is good and true (see 1802:4, 2872). It looks for and loves the good and the truth in the neighbor and so establishes a bond with him or her. Consider how much less stress we would feel if we knew that those we worked with, and for, were looking for the good and the truth in what we were doing. And what if they knew that we were doing the same?

We live in a world of accountability. This is not a bad thing in itself. It can hold us to the principles of good teaching, administrating and parenting. We need to feel accountable for what we do, and we need to be supported in doing our jobs well. That support comes from the context of mutual love, which can be hurt by gossip or destructive criticism. Our lives might be more peaceful and productive if we spent less time worrying and talking about what others might be doing wrong and more on making what we do right. And we need to feel that our colleagues are supporting us in our work in the spirit of mutual love, without being harshly critical.

The Writings also tell us that a particular kind of freedom accompanies mutual love in which everyone shares their blessings and joys with others, from the depths of their hearts (see *Miracles and Signs* 12). Imagine working in an environment where people felt free to share their joys and their sorrows with colleagues, students and parents. When we share our blessings we are able to feel joy in the benefits of others as well, instead of discontentment because they have more (or less) than we do. We are told that it is the Lord's "will that all goods should be communicable and that all people should be stirred by mutual love and so be happy" (*Arcana Coelestia* 1388).

In addition, mutual love comes from affections for use (*Divine Love* 12:2). An open and respectful sharing of affections for the uses of New Church education can lead to feelings of blessedness and peace. We may feel too busy for discussions and meetings concerning our use, but putting aside daily tasks to focus on the vision might give us the motivation to continue to help the Lord in leading the students in our care. The sort of peace that the Lord gives us is not necessarily that of less work—angels are very busy—but of contentment in the work and therefore less stress. The vision of a work environment completely governed by mutual love is well worth striving for since it offers us peace, freedom, and the joy of shared labor. And, finally, because we are told simply that "Whoever has mutual love has the Lord's life" (*Arcana*

*Coelestia* 3063).