

LIFE AFTER DEATH

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The Truth about Angels

SEVEN INSIGHTS INTO
COMMONLY HELD IDEAS p.12

*"I was overcome with
the thought of a happy ending
to so many heartaches."*

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Comforting Teachings on a
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New Church Connection makes the connection between religion and life. Every issue features relevant, inspiring content that highlights the personal nature of spirituality, providing applicable ideas to support your journey with insights from the New Church (Swedenborgian) faith.

PRODUCTION TEAM
EXECUTIVE EDITOR
David Lindrooth
MANAGING EDITOR
AND CREATIVE DIRECTOR
Bronwen Henry
CREATIVE DESIGN
Caroline Kline
COPY EDITOR
Rachael Glenn
ASSISTANT EDITORS
Abigail Smith
Sasha Henderson
Taryn Frazier
SUBSCRIPTION MANAGER
Midge Kerr

General Church Outreach
A department of the General
Church of the New Jerusalem
1100 Cathedral Road
PO Box 743
Bryn Athyn, PA 19009
1-877-411-HOPE (4673)
www.newchurch.org
questions@newchurch.org
For general information
call 267-502-4911.

To contribute an article or
personal story, or to request
this magazine for yourself or a
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duction team at outreach@newchurch.org for more
information.

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Jared Alden

WELCOME

Know that in any questions, doubts, or fears you have about life after death the Lord is there with you gently leading.

My six-year-old nephew recently came to me with questions about life after death that stopped me in my tracks. Would his parents die? Would his great grandfather recognize him in heaven? What happens to bad people?

Even at the age of six his questions capture the essence of many adults' speculations about the afterlife. Dealing with loss, wondering what heaven will be like, and questioning whether there is an eternity outside of heaven are some of the main themes many people ponder.

When facing my own grief or trying to offer some sort of comfort to loved ones (of any age) who are dealing with loss, I am quickly reminded that I know very little about life after death.

New Church theology offers ideas that are not only comforting, but resonate deeply. In this issue, we explore some of these themes and ideas regarding life after death. Find hope and encouragement in the Rt. Rev. Louis B. King's journey of facing loss on p.6. If you aren't sure how to offer comfort to a friend who is grieving, consider the insights provided by readers and Anna Woofenden on p.10. Discover the gentle and loving transition the Lord has planned for each one of us in the excerpt from Emanuel Swedenborg's most popular work *Heaven and Hell*, featured on p. 14. If the ideas in this issue get you thinking and wanting an opportunity for conversation on the topic, consider getting some friends together and using the small group outline provided on p.18 to explore this theme in greater depth.

Know that in any questions, doubts, or fears you have about life after death the Lord is there with you gently leading.

Bronwen Henry

Bronwen Henry
General Church Outreach



It is not so difficult to live the life of heaven as some believe.

—HEAVEN
AND HELL 533



What's next?

Look for these upcoming issues:

Letting Go: Dealing with Fear and Worry

Finding Balance: Handling Stress

Grieving: Accepting Loss

Recovery: Overcoming Addiction

SEEKING ANSWERS

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Will I be reunited with loved ones when I die? Can people in hell improve their hearts and leave hell? Does purgatory exist? *Rev. Eshun Ekow* responds to these questions and more.

CHANGING LIVES

6

With courage and compassion, *Rt. Rev. Louis B. King* reflects on the loss of loved ones in his life and his confidence in their future reunion.

COMFORTING A GRIEVING FRIEND

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When a friend is grieving the death of a loved one, we often find ourselves at a loss. *Anna Woofenden* shares three tools she has discovered to help in times of grief.

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN WE DIE?

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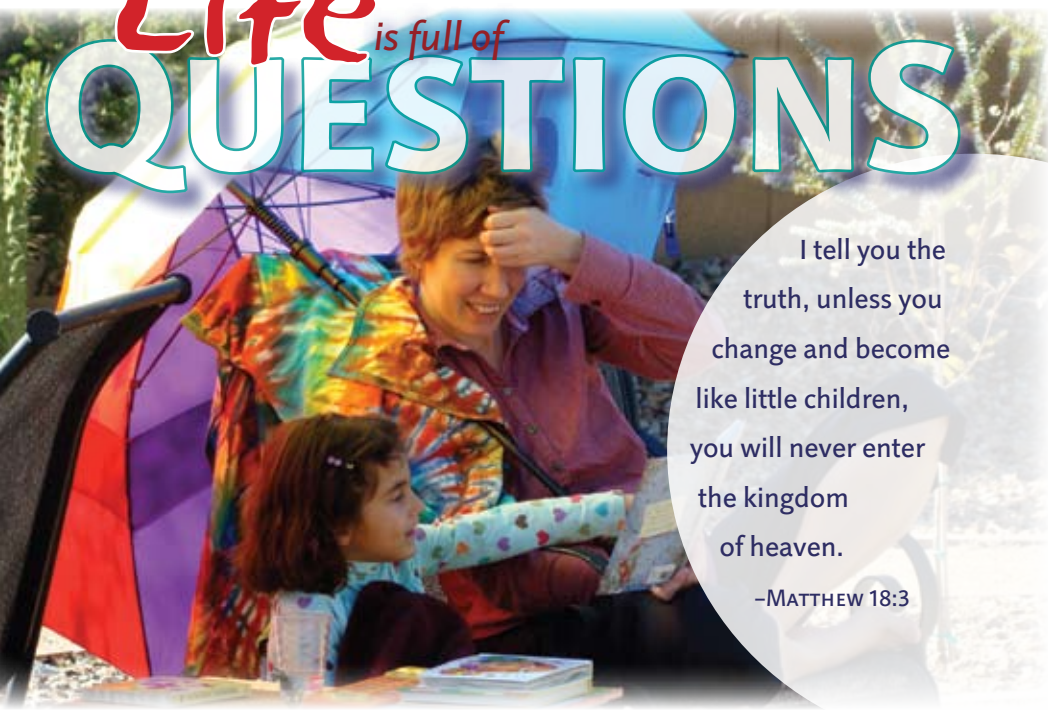
Discover the comforting and tangible insights from New Church teachings regarding a person's journey after the death of the physical body.

MARRIAGE CAN LAST TO ETERNITY

18

You may have heard that there is no marriage in heaven. *Rev. Lawson Smith* explores this misconception and the New Christian belief that marriage is present in Heaven.

Life is full of QUESTIONS



I tell you the truth, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

-MATTHEW 18:3

photo by CHRIS CLARK

Rev. Eshun Ekow explores questions about life after death, including how our eternity is determined and what occurs when we die.

Q CAN PEOPLE IN HELL IMPROVE THEIR HEARTS AND LEAVE HELL?

The answer is no. Hell is a place for people who, when on earth, made evil choices the pattern of their

lives. A love of evil ruled them, steering them toward hell. Driven by this ruling love, they acquired a spiritual home compatible with their evils. Once in hell people cannot, and strangely enough, will not allow the Lord to change their hearts.

Q WILL MOST PEOPLE EVENTUALLY END UP IN HEAVEN?

The Lord's goal in creating the world is for people to come to heaven. To this end, the Lord, together with angels and good spirits, is relentlessly seeking to accomplish this task. However, the Lord does not compel people to come to heaven. Instead, the Lord leaves people in freedom to choose to come to heaven. As long as people learn the Lord's truths, He motivates them to practice those truths so they can come to heaven one day.

Q WILL I BE REUNITED WITH A LOVED ONE WHEN I DIE?

It depends on the inward state of you and the loved one. In the other world, reunion of loved ones is based on inward qualities. If there is similarity in the loves of both people, the Lord has provided that the two can be reunited.

Q DOES A PURGATORY EXIST?

The reasoning behind the existence of purgatory might seem to make sense. The general assertion is that there are sins which are not damnable, and someone who commits them should have a chance to receive

absolution after paying some penalty for them after death. But the Lord provides the opportunity for each person who genuinely wants to repent of his or her sins to do so on earth. When an evil person doesn't make use of these numerous opportunities here on earth, the door of salvation is closed to that person after death.

Q ISN'T IT POSSIBLE THAT EXISTENCE ENDS WITH LIFE ON EARTH?

No. The Lord alone is Life itself, and every human being is a recipient of that life from Him. He created us for heaven, as mentioned above. Life on earth is a preparatory ground for the formation of our eternal spirits, which live on after death. Death is the only gateway to the next life. In fact, "real" life begins after death in this world. The spiritual world is the substantial world.

QUESTIONS WANTED
SHARE YOUR QUESTIONS ABOUT SPIRITUALITY AND LIFE.
Email questions@newchurch.org and mention "New Church Connection".



Rev. Eshun Ekow is a pastor and teacher at the Tema New Church and school. To learn more go to www.newchurchschool.org

When death separates us from loved ones, we may grieve for the experiences we can no longer share with them in this world.



all photos courtesy of LOUIS KING'S personal collection

Rt. Rev. Louis King reminds us that we can rejoice in the Lord's promise of an eternal heaven and a renewal of those precious relationships. He shares his story of celebrating the reality of a life after death.

It's lovely in the cemetery woods about six in the evening. Tall poplars make high leaf-cover and provide sounding boards for the wood thrush, the woodwinds of nature's orchestra. My wife Freya and I listened to and loved the clear trills of their call. Such memories of peaceful happy moments they stir as I sit by her grave and remember—so many things.

Freya and I used to go to the Bryn Athyn cemetery several times a week to discuss the lives of the three little boys whose names appear on three stones in our King plot: two grandsons and our own son, Dag.

This evening I looked at Dag's stone and was overcome with the thought of a happy ending to so many heartaches during his short stay with us. The material bodies of our little ones have long since



Our visit convinced us to keep our little earth angel and to change our life to accommodate him.

returned to the elements, but the physical markers remind us of their spiritual bodies and of a heaven which sustains a splendid new life of human relationships.

Now I go to the cemetery without my sweetheart physically present, but her stone stands lovingly beside those of our three little boys. The awareness of our family in heaven draws me to that peaceful spot like a magnet. All three boys, now grown angels, are happily married and

living useful lives. I love to feel Freya's presence and to imagine her hugging her big angel son and his wife, just as she embraced her children here on earth, in the house I hope to be worthy of inhabiting with her not long from now.

When Dag was born in Pittsburgh in 1960, the doctor brought me in to hold him and said, "Your son's a Down Syndrome baby. You don't want to hear this, and you will want to keep him at home, but that's not fair to you, your other children or your son. There's a wonderful institution in Polk, Pennsylvania. You must get on the waiting list right away."

We visited Polk, with its institutional buildings and sweeping lawns. As we neared the main building, we noticed swing sets—probably a hundred swings—all in motion with short, middle-aged men and women swinging and waving to us. Their eyes were a clear sign: all adults with Down Syndrome. We visited every conceivable situation, from the room with forty-year-olds in cribs to the area for infants. There, a twelve-year-old boy cared for twenty little ones, doing nothing but changing diapers. He'd grab a needy candidate, put his knee on the baby's stomach and exchange a diaper with remarkable efficiency, never smiling or slowing. Our visit convinced us to keep our little earth angel and to change our life to accommodate him.

At home, life bustled more than usual; we'd brought seven children to Pittsburgh and had added four more. Baby Dag's angelic presence created all kinds of competition to hold him and look into his blue-white eyes. We called them "moonstones," reflecting the light of the heavenly Sun. Freya wanted to hold him too, but she had many things to do, and

will have Baby Dag the rest of his life, and possibly yours." New England was so beautiful and peaceful that we lost track of the time. In fact, we arrived back in Pittsburgh a day early. A parishioner and nurse had kept watch over Dag for us. At home, he began to have difficulty breathing. We drove to the hospital, where doctors put him on oxygen. Freya wanted to

sang our favorite Hebrew worship song, "Shaloo shalom." His eyes were closed, his throat clicked twice and his little body went limp. An angel choir had taken up the song and had



The material bodies of our little ones have long since returned to the elements, but the physical markers remind us of their spiritual bodies and of a heaven which sustains a splendid new life of human relationships.

"As soon as children are reawakened (which happens immediately after their death), they are taken to heaven and given to angels who had loved children tenderly during their physical lives and had loved God as well." -Heaven and Hell 328

Every child who dies... is accepted by the Lord after death, brought up in heaven... and then, being continually perfected in intelligence and wisdom, all such individuals are led into heaven and become angels. -Heaven and Hell 329



stay with him, but the doctors encouraged us to go home for a good night's sleep. The next day was filled with back-to-school demands. I suggested to Freya that we go out for an early supper and then to the hospital for visiting hours. My assistant pastor encouraged me to go over to the hospital early in the afternoon to check on Dag.

I held him for some time, thinking only of his sweet Mom at home rushing through chores so she could come and hug him.

there was always a volunteer to hold Baby Dag. As summer came to an end, I urged Freya to take a week in New Brunswick with me, as we had so often dreamed of doing. She responded, "I want to stay with the children and hold my Baby Dag before the rush of school begins." I pointed out that "You

I found Dag laboring to breathe. I lifted him into my arms and felt a sudden urge to baptize him. I brushed my fingers over my tongue to moisten them and baptized him. My tears drenched his face as I

lifted his little spirit into heaven. I held him for some time, thinking only of his sweet Mom at home rushing through chores so she could come and hug him. I set him back in his bed and went to the nursing station to say he had expired. Nurses and doctors rushed in all directions as I quietly walked to the car and headed home to my sweetheart.

At the top of the stairs my real angel stood ironing dresses. Her hair was up in pink curlers. The vacuum cleaner was out and the smell of supper filled the room. "Hi Darling," she said, not looking up. "Would you put the vacuum away and check on the kids' supper? I will be through in a minute. It will take me ten seconds to brush out my hair, and we can be off to see our baby." I stood without a word. She looked up at my silence and read the heartache on my

face. She put down the iron and fell into my arms, sobbing, "Oh Frat, I didn't get to nurse him. Now I can't even hug him. Too many things—just too many things."

On earth, Freya was a mother so busy with the needs of a family of seven children that some other member of the family always seemed to have the pleasure of caring for Dag. Then, all at once, he was gone. Freya sorrowed for the missed opportunities, but now she is with him and our other two little grandsons, now adult angels. ●

WHAT IS YOUR STORY?

How has your life been impacted by living New Christian spirituality? Is there a spiritual practice or message that has transformed your relationships, work, or sense of peace and happiness? Share your story. Email newchurchconnection@newchurch.org.

COMFORTING a Grieving Friend



photo by TARYN ROSE BRAZIER

realchallenges

When a friend is grieving the death of someone he or she loves, we often find ourselves at a loss. We don't want to say or do the wrong thing.

- > What can we say that will give comfort?
- > What can we do to help?

realsupport

Anna Woofenden shares her experience of working with people who have lost loved ones. She discusses **three tools** she has discovered to help people to reach out and offer support.

1 BE PRESENT. When someone grieves, he or she needs support from friends. Put your own thoughts and theories aside and show your love by hum-

bly serving the bereaved as best you can. The task may be as superficial as making travel arrangements or as personal as offering counsel.

2 GRIEVE AND CELEBRATE. Support the emotions which come with the loss of a loved one—the sadness, anger and pain. And make sure to celebrate the reality of eternal life. Help create a space for the bereaved to mourn and rejoice as well. Ask questions about

the person who died. Laugh and cry with the bereaved. Talk together about what the loved one might be doing in the spiritual world.

3 BE A VESSEL FOR GOD. Recently I was preparing to meet with a woman who had just lost her husband. I felt way over my head. A friend reminded me, “We’re all over our head in these situations.” Our job is not to say the perfect words, write the card that

Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

—MATTHEW 5:4

Do not worry about what to say or how to say it. At that time you will be given what to say, for it will not be you speaking, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you.

—MATTHEW 10:19-21



Anna Woofenden is the Outreach Director at The New Church of Boulder Valley.

To learn more about this church go to www.bouldernewchurch.org

OFFERING SUPPORT for GRIEVING FRIENDS

Finding the right words can be difficult.

Here are a few approaches, submitted by readers, which can guide us as in offering comfort to those mourning the death of a loved one.

Support.

The death of a loved one can sometimes bring with it a crisis of faith. But be open about your own beliefs; if friends are struggling to believe, they may need to lean on your conviction.

Listen.

What mourners say to you could be more healing than what you say to them. Sometimes even silent companionship can be healing.

Love.

Let them know you love them.

Honesty.

Rather than offer advice or platitudes, ask honest questions about their state of mind. Encourage them to share stories. “Thought brings presence,” so memories can bring the person’s presence in our minds and hearts.

Honor.

Remind loved ones that everyone responds to death differently. Encourage them to grieve in ways that are helpful to them.

Time.

Those who grieve may not feel themselves for a while. If a friend still feels down, after a while remind him or her that this is normal. Grief takes time.

Acknowledge.

Let them know you’re aware of their pain. One of the most difficult experiences for people who have lost a loved one is to have their loss ignored. Although it may not be comfortable, acknowledge the loss.

Give Space.

Be sensitive to your friends’ current state and needs. Don’t assume they need to continuously talk about their loss. Silence can be freeing and healing.

Angels have an influence on our lives every day (if we let them).

HERE ARE A FEW REMINDERS TO TAKE NOTICE OF THEIR PRESENCE.

Notice the angels...

...who move you to compassion.

...who grieve with you and hold you in times of sorrow.

...who give you the strength to keep going.

...who send you hope and never give up on you.

...who long to lead you but let you choose whether to follow.

...who surround babies.

...who whisper while others shout.

...who are with you in times of crisis.



photo by KARA COWLEY

"Notice the Angels" reminders are available on beautiful cardstock to use as reminders.

Available today from store.newchurch.org or 267-502-4980.



Read more about true and false ideas of heaven in *Married Love 2-25*. In this account people get to explore their preconceived ideas of what heaven is like and then learn and experience what it's really like.

The Truth About Angels

There are many different ideas about angels. The teachings of the New Church include detailed descriptions and clear teachings about angels—who they are, how they live, what they do. **Malcolm Smith** explains that some commonly held ideas are true and some are false.

ANGELS ARE A SEPARATE CREATED RACE AND WERE NEVER HUMAN. FALSE. Angels do amazing things in the stories in the Word but every angel was once a regular person and every single person can become an angel after death.

ANGELS LOOK JUST LIKE YOU AND ME. TRUE. Angels look like people on earth do—only more beautiful. Angels' bodies reflect what they're like on the inside. A loving old woman who dies with an ailing body becomes the beautiful, healthy, young angel she is inside.

ANGELS LIVE IN TROPICAL PARADISE. SOMEWHAT TRUE.

After death good and bad people live in landscapes and climates that reflect what they love. Some angels live in tropical areas; others live in other beautiful environments.

ANGELS ENJOY NATURAL PLEASURES. TRUE.

Angels enjoy eating food, playing sports, listening to music, watching shows, and many other things. These things aren't what make them happy though.

ANGELS SIT AROUND ON CLOUDS AND PLAY THE HARP ALL DAY. FALSE.

Angels are involved in all sorts of useful activities—raising children who die young, welcoming people to the spiritual world, teaching others what they've learned. Being useful makes them happy.

ANGELS ACT AS GUARDIANS TO HUMAN BEINGS. TRUE.

The angels with people primarily work to guard them against selfish thoughts and motivations.

ANGELS ARE NOT MARRIED. FALSE.

People who truly loved each other in the natural world are still married in heaven. Others find their true partner after death. Being married is one of the core things that makes angels happy. (For more on marriage in heaven read the article on page 18.)



Malcolm Smith is a student at the Academy of the New Church Theological School. www.ancts.org.

What Happens When We Die?



Here is an excerpt from Swedenborg's most famous work, *Heaven and Hell*, exploring what happens when the physical body dies (paragraphs 445–450).

When someone's body can no longer perform its functions in the natural world in response to the thoughts and affections of its spirit (which it derives from the spiritual world), then we say that the individual has died. This happens when the lungs' breathing and the heart's systolic motion have ceased. The person, though, has not died at all. We are only separated from the physical nature that was useful to us in the world. The essential person is actually still alive. I say that the essential person is still alive because we are not people because of our bodies but because of our spirits. After all, it is the spirit within us that thinks, and thought and affection together make us the people we are.

We can see, then, that when we die we simply move from one world into another. This is why in the inner meaning of the Word, "death" means resurrection and a continuation of life.

A person does not die when his or her natural body dies. Shortly after the death of the natural body, a person wakes up in the next world.

The moment [our heart] does stop, we are awakened, but this is done by the Lord alone. "Being awakened" means having our spirit led out of our body and into the spiritual world, which is commonly called resurrection.

[Swedenborg could write these things about death because the Lord *allowed him to* experience this process himself while he was alive in order to be able to share these things. Here he describes some of that experience:]

The angels who were sitting beside my head were silent, simply sharing their thoughts with mine (when these are accepted [by the deceased], the angels know that the person's spirit is ready to be led out of the body). They accom-

Whether mourning the loss of a loved one, caring for aging parents, or pondering the ways of the universe, this question is common and core to how we view life on earth.

plished this sharing of thoughts by looking into my face. This is actually how thoughts are shared in heaven. . . .

When heavenly angels are with people who have been awakened they do not leave them, because they love everyone. But some spirits are simply unable to be in the company of heavenly angels very long, and want them to leave. When this happens, angels from the Lord's spiritual kingdom arrive, through whom we are granted the use of light, since before this we could not see anything but could only think. . . .

[A]ngels take the greatest care to shield the awakening person from any concept that does not taste of love. Then they tell the individual that he or she is a spirit.

[The spiritual angels] do everything for us as newly arrived spirits that we could ever wish in that state. They tell us—at least to the extent that we can grasp it—about the realities of the other life. However, if our nature is such that we do not want to be taught, then once we are awakened we want to get out of the company of angels.

The essential person is still alive because we are not people because of our bodies but because of our spirits.

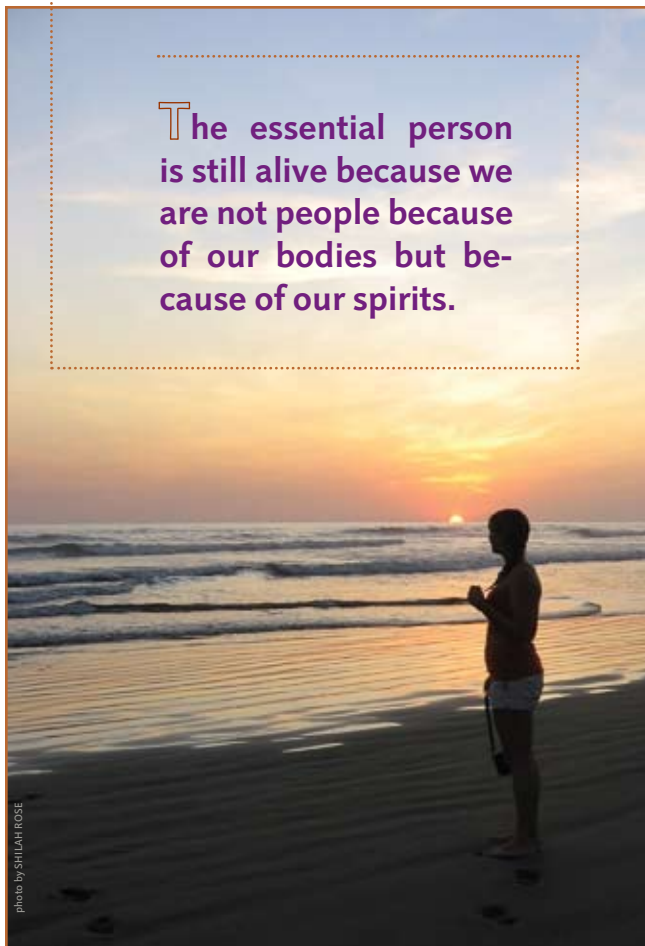


photo by STELLA ROSE

What Happens When We Die?

CONTINUED FROM PG. 15



photo by SHILIAH ROBE

Still, the angels do not leave us, but we do leave them. Angels really do love everyone. They want nothing more than to help people, to teach them, to lead them into heaven. This is their highest joy.

When spirits leave the company of angels, they are welcomed by the good spirits who are accompanying them and who also do all they can for them. However, if they had led the kind of life in the world that makes it impossible for them to be in the company of good people, then they want to get away from these as well. This happens as long and as many times as necessary, until they find the company of people their earthly life has fitted them for. Here they find their life; and remarkable as it may

sound, they then lead the same kind of life they had led in the world. ●

The book *Heaven and Hell* is available to purchase at store.newchurch.org or by calling 267-502-4980.

When we die we simply move from one world into another.

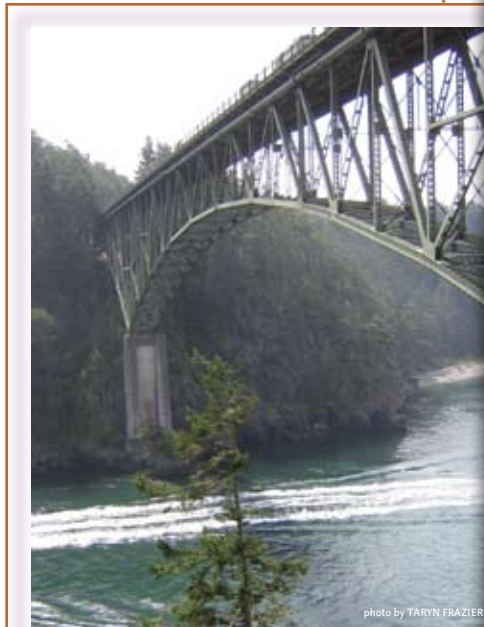


photo by TARYN FRAZIER

When heavenly angels are with people who have been awakened they do not leave them, because they love everyone.

Talking to Children about Life after Death

A personal story

The topic came up after my daughter Mia saw the Disney movie Cinderella and she asked what had happened to Cinderella's mother. I said that she died and went to heaven.

She didn't talk about it again until a few nights later, when at bedtime she said, emphatically, "Mom, don't YOU ever die, OK?" and I found myself floundering. I reassured her that I wouldn't die until I was very, very old because I didn't know what else to say.

Then I felt like that was being dishonest, so the next time she said it, I said, "Mia, no matter what ever happens to someone you love, even if they go to heaven, they will always be in your heart. So I'll will always be in your heart, and you'll always be in my heart, no matter where we are.

In the sweet wisdom of her three-year-old mind and heart, she said, "You can call your heart Mia, and I'll call mine Mom."

Contributed by Patty Seo-Mayer



photo by HILTON MAYER

Bible Story

Excerpted from Luke 20: 27-39

Some of the Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection, came to Jesus with a question. "Teacher," they said, "Moses wrote for us that if a man's brother dies and leaves a wife but no children, the man must marry the widow and have children for his brother. There were seven brothers. The first one married a woman and died childless. The second and then the third married her, and in the same way the seven died, leaving no children. Finally, the woman died too. Now then, at the resurrection whose wife will she be, since the seven were married to her?"

Jesus replied, "The people of this age marry and are given in marriage. But those who are considered worthy of taking part in that age and in the resurrection from the dead will neither marry nor be given in marriage, and they can no longer die; for they are like the angels. They are God's children, since they are children of the resurrection. But in the account of the bush, even Moses showed that the dead rise, for he calls the Lord 'the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.' He is not the God of the dead, but of the living, for to him all are alive."

Some of the teachers of the law responded, "Well said, teacher!" And no one dared to ask him any more questions.

MARRIAGE CAN LAST

to Eternity

You may have heard that there is no marriage in heaven. This conclusion is often drawn from the New Testament quotation (to the left). However by looking at this exchange in context, we can recognize that its meaning is different than what was originally thought.

Rev. Lawson Smith explores this misconception and the New Christian perspective that marriage can be present in heaven.



photo by TARYN FRAZIER

They are no more two, but one flesh. What therefore, God has joined together, let no one put asunder.

-MATTHEW 19:6; MARK 10:9

Going Deeper Insight

-By Lawson Smith

When Jesus was on earth, a group came to Him with a question intended to make Him look foolish. The issue for them was not, "Is there marriage after death?" but rather, "Is there any life after death at all?"

Jesus' reply holds a spiritual meaning. He is teaching us how we may become, as He says, "equal to the angels," "sons of God," "sons of the resurrection" (Luke 20:36). There are two things in us which must be joined together or married, before we are ready for heaven. These two things

are a **knowledge** of the Lord's commandments, and a **practice** of these ideas in life. Jesus said, "He who has My commandments, and keeps them, it is he who loves Me" (John 14:21).

This spiritual union of **knowledge** and **practice** must take place during this life. Jesus said, "The sons of this age marry and are given in marriage" (Luke 20:34). If

we don't unite or marry **knowledge** to the **practice** in this life, we will never do it in the next life. But we can become "equal to the angels" by a good life on earth.

In marriage, by each partner's inner journey to follow the Lord,

a husband and wife learn to resist the urge to dominate, or to be allured by tempting situations. In these ways a couple allows the Lord to open their minds and hearts to Him and to each other, and He will bless them forever.

The Bible clearly teaches that God created men and women to be married to each other. Jesus quoted

Those who are in a state of truly married love look to eternity in their marriage because eternity is inherent in this love.

-MARRIED LOVE 216

the Book of Genesis, saying, "Have you not read that He who made them from the beginning 'made them male and female?'" God is the One who joins a man and his wife together (Matthew 19:4-5). What God has joined together, not even death can separate.



Rev. Lawson Smith is pastor of the Kempton New Church in Pennsylvania. For more information about this church go to www.kemptonnewchurch.org

photo by TOM PIAZZA

If you are looking for concrete answers to questions about life after death, look no further.

Within *Afterlife* you will find thought provoking descriptions of the realities of life after death, heaven, and hell, as revealed to Emanuel Swedenborg.

Gather some friends together, read this book, and utilize this small group outline as structure for a book club or small group study.



Order *Afterlife* online today at store.newchurch.org or call 267-502-4980

Small groups are a great chance to work on your spiritual life and to get support from your friends in the process.

WHAT TO DO:

- Gather together 6-10 friends.
- Meet weekly to discuss the readings and support each other on your spiritual paths.
- Decide whether to meet every week at your house or to alternate hosting duties.
- Decide whether to have snacks and who will provide them.

- Choose a book to read together. (New Church Connection will now be featuring a small group program outline in each issue.)
- SUGGESTED BASIC STRUCTURE FOR YOUR WEEKLY GET TOGETHER:**
- Start with an opening prayer.
- Go around the group and have each person speak briefly about

- how he or she is doing.
- Go around and let each person share how the task/focus went that week.
- Discuss the week's reading.
- Allow each person to offer a brief "closing thought".
- Close with a prayer.

SMALL GROUP OVERVIEW

| | THEME | IN YOUR LIFE | WEEKLY READING | QUOTATION FROM AFTERLIFE |
|--------|--|--|-------------------------------|--|
| WEEK 1 | About life after death. | Notice your reactions to new ideas. | <i>Afterlife</i> pgs. 3-28 | "As 'spirit-people' . . .we see the way we used to; We hear and talk the way we used to. . .we want, wish, crave, think, ponder, are moved, love, and intend the way we used to." pg. 16 |
| WEEK 2 | Choosing your eternal path. | Live with integrity from your heart. | <i>Afterlife</i> pgs. 29-51 | The life that leads to heaven is one "of behaving honestly and fairly in every duty... from our deeper nature and therefore from a heavenly source." pg. 51 |
| WEEK 3 | The connection between heaven and earth. | Find spirituality in ordinary life. | <i>Afterlife</i> pgs. 55-79 | "The Lord's inflow into the world and into the world's gifts within us continues even without our aid, but it does not come into our rational functioning." pg. 80 |
| WEEK 4 | Life as an angel. | Follow the Lord. | <i>Afterlife</i> pgs. 80-117 | "Whatever angels possess, they attribute to the Lord, and anything they need is given to them." pg. 93 |
| WEEK 5 | A deeper look at biblical teachings on heaven. | Strengthen your connection with the Lord through His Word. | <i>Afterlife</i> pgs.118-151 | "If the human race were cut off from heaven, it would be like a chain with a link removed, and heaven without the human race would be like a house without a foundation." pg. 127 |
| WEEK 6 | The core of heavenly life. | Develop a servant's heart. | <i>Afterlife</i> pgs. 152-169 | "[A]ll the happiness angels have is found in service, derives from service, and is proportional to service." pg. 160 |
| WEEK 7 | The depth of the Lord's compassion. | Accept and offer forgiveness to yourself and those around you. | <i>Afterlife</i> pgs.173-196 | "God never turns away from us. . . .He behaves toward us out of goodness and love and mercy. That is, he wills well toward us, loves us, and has compassion on us." pgs. 175-176 |



Congregations around the world

The New Church is a new Christianity that provides a clear path to eternal happiness and addresses your questions about God, love, and life after death. The teachings are immediately practical and deeply spiritual. The New Church is based on the teachings of the Bible as illuminated in the Writings of Emanuel Swedenborg.

The New Church (General Church of the New Jerusalem) has congregations around the world. All people are welcome to join in worship and participate in the life and community of the church.

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New Church TEACHINGS

The perspectives in this magazine are based on the teachings of the New Church found in the Old and New Testaments and the Theological Writings of Emanuel Swedenborg.


Here are the core teachings of the New Church:

- There is one loving, personal God, and He is the Lord Jesus Christ. His providence is powerful and unending. God guides each person's spiritual path, from the smallest things up to the biggest things, and His angels are with us every moment.
- The Old and New Testaments have a deeper meaning, revealed in the Writings of Emanuel Swedenborg, which help people lead happy and useful lives to eternity.
- Spiritual growth is a process. Through recognizing our sins, praying, shunning evils, and living a new life, we are transformed and united more closely with God.
- All religions have goodness in them. People of every faith are saved if they live sincerely according to their religion.
- Each of us continues life as a complete person immediately after the death of the body.
- While people are free to choose to live in hell, God wants everyone to live with Him in heaven to eternity.
- Marriage can last forever, for God blesses people with a special love in marriage that goes on after death, even to eternity.

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PO BOX 743
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And God will wipe away
every tear from their eyes.

—REVELATION 7:17