

New Church LIFE

A monthly magazine devoted to the teachings
revealed through Emanuel Swedenborg

In this issue:

Got Holy Spirit?

A Sermon by Rev. Martie Johnson, Jr.

The Bright Lady

By Landon Synnestvedt

Church News from Kenya

August 2009

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REVEALED THROUGH EMANUEL SWEDENBORG

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Notes on This Issue

We return to Rev. Martie Johnson who preaches as a Chaplain on the USS Stennis. Did you know the Writings in scripture configurations quotes Paul's Epistles extensively in support of the Doctrines? So does Martie, in taking Bishop Kline's contacting one million people, seriously! How does the Holy Spirit operate in you?

Which minister has served in Sydney, London, Pittsburgh, Bryn Athyn, as Editor of *New Church Life*, and also presided often in the Wynter Room? Who else but our beloved Donald L. Rose. See his comments on some of those experiences. How did the hand of Providence change his life? – My Thanks to Carina Heinrichs for performing and writing this interview.

In "Bright Lady" Landon Synnestvedt considers how the works of C. S. Lewis compare with the Writings. How does the Woman Clothed with the Sun, or Michael fighting the Dragon, relate to us in our lives?

Richard Linquist reflects on New Church History. How many New Church landmarks round the world have been based on the Word, both of the first and second coming? And what is the common thread in his observations?

There is a response from the Chairman the General Church Development Committee, Bob Heinrichs on "Hope" in our last issue. There is a strong appeal for understanding how economy works in the Church. How can we help carry out Church growth? The message itself cannot be lost.

Note the Bishop's Announcement this issue.

GOT HOLY SPIRIT?

BY REV. MARTIE JOHNSON Jr.

Last year at Barry University in Miami, FL, I had a chance to present on the New Church understanding of the Holy Spirit. In a room full of clergy with differing views, the one thing we agreed on was that the Holy Spirit is not a dove.

As I thought about it, (maybe you agree) I believe we just don't talk about the Holy Spirit enough in our Church, and it is the very power and force that operates in us to makes us able to change from the image to the likeness of God. Many of my classmates, who come from the Vatican II Catholic perspective, were listening to my presentation, and while I was ready to jump up and say, "Yeah!...and efflux is according to influx and vice versa!" it just didn't seem right.

While it certainly true that *The Divine Providence* would have been helpful, it was a lot easier to talk about a simple idea from *True Christian Religion* 142-146 to illustrate the plain (genuine truth) teachings of scripture.

Let's face it: the ideas on Christian virtues that we are to learn and practice are given for our consideration and adoption to change our lives. Why? We can read, attend church, and fellowship until the cows come home, but we are responsible for "working out our salvation" (Philippians 2:12), and the Writings instruct us to call on the Holy Spirit to move from the image of God to His likeness and from reformation of our lives to a life of regeneration and salvation by the Lord. How?

The Divine Virtue and Operation, signified by the Holy Spirit, consists, in general, in reformation and regeneration; and following upon these, renewal, vivification, sanctification and justification; and following upon these again, purification from evils and remission of sins; and finally salvation (*True Christian*

Religion 142).

The Four Virtues: The Tools of Re-formation

There is nothing new about the four virtues. They are derived from Plato and were adapted by Augustine and then made known by Thomas Aquinas (who “Christianized” a lot of philosophical work from the ancient world). You may have run into these virtues in your studies in school. I like movies, so one place they were mentioned was in the movie “Gladiator,” in which a character playing the role of Commodus utters them just before committing patricide to become Emperor of Rome. The four (cardinal) virtues are Prudence, Justice, Temperance, and Fortitude. In terms of Christianity, these virtues were instrumental in the construction of morality in the formation of western civilization. How might this relate to us in New Christianity?

The Lord defeated death and evil itself and took away every power of hell to assail our souls. He also restored the freedom lost and manipulated by hell and gave us a map to follow Him. The two commandments are the baseline for our faith and actions to follow the Lord. From this baseline, we can move and enter His Kingdom and heaven itself by the virtues of renewal, vivification, sanctification, and justification. “This is brought about by means of Divine Truth, and in the case of Christians, by means of the Word, as this is the only means by which people approach the Lord and into which the Lord enters” (*True Christian Religion* 142). In other words, we need the Holy Spirit! In the book of *Acts of the Apostles*, the early/original Christians were instructed to wait for the Holy Spirit, and the “good books for the Church” can help us understand its import then and even more clearly now via the spiritual sense. In fact, “the Lord’s operation in *rendering these virtues effective is the work of the Holy Spirit, which He sends to those who believe on Him, and who prepare themselves to receive Him.*”

(Swedenborg then quotes Ezekiel 18:31 “Make yourselves a new heart and a new spirit” and Zechariah 12:1 “Jehovah forms the spirit of man within him” (*True Christian Religion* 143).

“Saving Graces in Everyone” and For Everyone

“The Lord without ceasing renders effective those saving graces in everyone for they are the steps to heaven, and the Lord wills the salvation of all people; thus the salvation of all is the end He has in view” (*True Christian Religion* 142). With this eternal love from the Lord, all we need to do is progress spiritually by using these tools, the virtues, to help us change our lives by the power of the Holy Spirit. “If there is the love of truth, then it is like sacred fire which flowed into the Apostles, as is thus described in the Acts: ‘And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:3-4).’” (*True Christian Religion* 146). This is the zeal that we commemorate every June 19th when we remember the apostles going out to the world.

Taking the stairs of salvation

In the Church, we know that faith without works is dead, and so we know that faith alone is not enough. “Faith is nothing but truth, and charity is nothing but goodness ... By means of Divine Truth a person is reformed and regenerated and then renewed, quickened, sanctified and justified; as those virtues progress and develop, he is also purified from evil and purification from these is the remission of sin.” (*True Christian Religion* 142 emphasis added). Our transformation is to be *re-formed*, and the steps are simple. In our individual spiritual journeys, we know that sometimes it is not easy to change attitudes, feelings, and habits. Wanting to be changed is one thing, being changed is another. Yet, we must take the steps, and when it gets tough, we must ask the Lord to order them and help us ascend and overcome the darkness that sometimes assails our humanity.

“Come and let us go...”

Step 1: Renewal—Hope in God and grow in faith.

“God give me strength!” I heard this phrase a fair amount from my mother when I was growing up. It meant that she was renewing both her ire and her love for me after I found yet another way to be an 8-year-old boy. Of course, renewal is that strength “to grow in a will to what is good” (*Arcana Coelestia* 3901). As the Writings tell us, the source of this is the Holy Spirit. “When the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit...” (Titus 3:5). Being renewed is knowing that the Lord is here with you and that this life will not overtake you. So this first step is a big one because it asks us not to give up hope because of past evils or current temptations. It is the step of courage. “Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day” (2 Corinthians 4:16).

Step 2: Vivification—Put morality and spirituality together in your life.

“‘The Holy Spirit’ is the life of the Lord’s wisdom...” (*Lord* 51). The opening of our eyes to His truth must interact with our prayer and being. This is the step of becoming, and it can be tough because it means having a new sense of integrity with ourselves. The life we live and have lived helps us gather the Lord’s wisdom to ourselves. Wisdom comes from education and experience. We have all been taught many life lessons, but we probably have not learned some of them or learned from them. We are all quickened by the Lord differently. Because we are unique and have had varied life experiences, we are all in different states to receive the Lord’s encouragement and leading. The Holy Spirit exists to vivify us all in a life lived and not just a moral life. The Holy Spirit is the power from the Lord

that illuminates “the things that belong to the moral life, [so they] may be vivified. This is evident from the signification of ‘confirming,’ as being to vivify the moral life by means of truths; for truths from the Word are what vivify it; and when it is vivified it is also confirmed, for it then acts as one with the spiritual life; for *spiritual life and moral life act as one with those who are spiritual, as will and action do; will is of the spiritual man and its life, and action is of the moral life lived*” (*Apocalypse Explained* 188). How does your life’s experience bring you new wisdom? Where have you turned suffering into growth? Have you thanked God for wisdom and shared it?

Step 3: Sanctification—Becoming holy is the journey of all saints.

Yes, we are saints. It’s an old term, but it is powerful. I don’t think we have to worry about this meaning that we are somehow perfect. This step is one of commitment and asks us to not just make changes but to be changed and work to stay that way. This is a step that asks us to use our faith to stretch and be better people now, not later. “No one is holy from himself, not even the angels may be seen (Job 15: 14, 15); but [one can be holy] from the Lord, because the Lord is the ‘Only Holy’ (Revelation 15.4, see n. 173)” (*Apocalypse Revealed* 586). Who is a saint? “They are termed ‘saints’ who live in accordance with the truths of the Word, not that they are holy, but that the truths in them are holy, and these are holy when they are in them from the Lord, and the Lord is in them with the truths of His Word (John 15:7)” (*ibid.*). Sanctification for the children of Israel was simple: “Those who lead a life of truth, and go on to lead a life of good, are withheld from evils and maintained in good by the Lord. *The good they have from the Lord is the holiness with them. Consequently in the measure that they receive good from the Lord they are holy; and the measure of good they receive from the Lord, that is, the measure in which they are holy, is determined by how far they*

lead a life of good in keeping with the genuine truths of faith, and by how far at that time they believe that all the good they think and do then begins in the Lord” (*Arcana Coelestia* 8806 emphasis added). As people who receive the love and light of Christ, we are “temples of the living God. As God has said: I will dwell in them and walk among them. I will be their God, And they will be my people” (2 Corinthians 6:16). The Holy Spirit from the Lord will abide in us, and we will be changed because He is Holy and “...having these promises, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God” (2 Corinthians 7:1).

Step 4: Justification—We are Saved for Good Works.

As Christians, we are not saved by faith alone. The Lord returned free will to us all, and we actively cooperate in “working out [our] salvation” (Philippians 2:12). The Holy Spirit is here to help us work things out for ourselves. This step encourages us to share and have humility in what we are able to do from the Holy Spirit. “[To] take away a person’s co-operation [is to] take his capacity to receive...” (*True Christian Religion* 505). We are not only justified by Christ, as Paul pens in the book of *Romans*. We are to act from it, not merely rest and claim the Lord’s work for us. The converse is true as well. We can never buy the Lord’s love or be justified by good deeds done. “Did you receive the spirit by the works of the Law or by the hearing of faith?” (Galatians 3:2). “What then does [an action] become [on our part] but something purely ideal, or a mere product of the reason?” (*True Christian Religion* 505) Justification is not static but dynamic, and it is a moving and changing state in us as we draw closer to the Lord and His will for our life. “A person is not saved by faith alone but by faith which expresses itself through love” (Anthony Coniaris). We must bear fruit in life and relationship to each other and Christ, based on our faith in action, not on the Lord’s merit or the work

of His redemption for humankind.

To conclude: Each of these steps work together to get us moving—they pick us up when we are down, they strengthen us when we feel weak, they remind us of the Lord’s light when we find ourselves in the dark, and they steer the way to a life of regeneration from the Lord’s love. With the help of the Holy Spirit, the four virtues awaken and purify us to receive even more light for the Lord, and this pushes away all the hurt and pain of sin in our lives by remitting them. I pray that we all strive to enact the four virtues of the Church every day so that we are renewed and vivified and continue to do the work of sanctification as we cooperate with the Lord to honor “His Kingdom come and His will be done on earth as it is in heaven...” *Amen.*

Lessons: Psalm 51:1-13, Philippians 2:5-18, *True Christian Religion* 142-146

The Rev. Martie Johnson Jr. was inaugurated into the priesthood in 2001 and ordained into the second degree in 2002. He served as Assistant to the Pastor in Boulder, Colorado in 2001, also traveling in the Western United States. In 2003 he became the Pastor for the Cascade New Church in Seattle, Washington, still visiting in the northwestern areas. From 2005 he has been on active duty as Chaplain in the United States Navy, and is finishing this work in the Seattle area. Martie and his wife Melinda (Simons) and family live in Seattle.



INTERVIEW WITH THE REVEREND DONALD L. ROSE¹

BY CARINA HEINRICHS

“He who loves the neighbor as himself perceives no delight in charity except in its exercise, or in use; and therefore a life of charity is a life of uses. Such is the life of the whole heaven; for the kingdom of the Lord, because it is a kingdom of mutual love, is a kingdom of uses. Every pleasure therefore which is from charity, has its delight from use. The more noble the use, the greater the delight. Consequently the angels have happiness from the Lord according to the essence and quality of their use” (Arcana Coelestia 997).

Rev. Donald L. Rose: “This is a course in Geography and history because I was ordained in 1957, and back in those days, it is hard for you to imagine how little communication there was. Not only did we not have e-mail, we didn't even have airmail! I went to Australia, and if I sent a letter, it didn't go by plane. It went by ship. In those days the phone was not what it is today. It was seldom used overseas. So if you went overseas, it was a long way away because when you sent a letter, you would ask so many questions, and even if they responded immediately, you would get a response in about four weeks. When I first went to Australia, I went by boat, but when I came home six years later, I flew.”

“Part of the job of the minister for the Hurstville society was to be a minister for New Zealand as well. Can you picture New Zealand? Well, when I went, the idea was that I would be the minister for Australia and New Zealand, and I thought “oh, that's nice; they are close to each other.” When you draw a picture of Australia, New Zealand is a little island that looks close to it, but when you get there, it is a 1,000 miles away.

“I went there in 1957...I would go for a long time without communication from other ministers, so I had to think up a way to stay doctrinally sound, and not go off the deep end. So I wrote an article entitled “Guarding Against Heresy.” And that was published in *New Church Life*! That article was as much for me as for everybody else. So, anyway, when I got to Australia, I was the Pastor for the Hurstville Society. This was a Society that hadn't had a minister in years. They had written to the Bishop asking for a minister. Well I learned about that, and after theological school, he [the bishop] asked me “Well, have you thought where you'd like to go for your pastorate?” And I said “What about Australia?” He said “You're interested in Australia?” Boy, he must have sent a letter, because in no time at all we were linked up, so that's how I got to go to Australia. I really wanted a challenge.

“Within a very short time, two of the older members of the Society died. In one respect, it was a blessing that I was there, for their families. In another way it was quite a blow to the society, because if you have your pillars die, it really affects you. It kind of shook us, and when they died so close to each other, we thought, well, who is going to die next?”

Luckily, the community survived and Rev. Don Rose began to teach classes on Bishop de Charm's book “*Life of the Lord*.” He also began advertising to the surrounding community. And then...

“I had a very interesting thing happen. There was this woman who would go around to all the surrounding churches, and ask questions. The other ministers said “Why do you always ask the hard questions?” So one minister finally said to her “Why don't you go to that church on the hill, and ask them?” So she came and said to me “Maybe you think you have some answers!” So I said “Well, we'll see.” And she liked what she heard, and she started to come to every thing, and then all of a

sudden, she didn't come to anything at all.” After asking around, Rev. Don Rose found out she had cancer, but he debated going to visit her because “...she wasn't a member of my congregation, so I thought it was too impolite to go visit her.” Eventually he decided to visit her, which turned out to be the most important decision he ever made, because he met her granddaughter Noelene Miller. “So I married her granddaughter, and lived happily ever after, and we had a son, Greg Rose. He was born in Australia.” They lived in Australia until 1963.

“We were going back to the United States, my pastorship was up, but we got a letter from the Bishop, that Michael Church in England was losing their Pastor [Rev. Sandstrom Sr.]. He was going to [Bryn Athyn to] teach in the Theological School. Well, we weren't so sure about going to England, but that was the need. So we took our little family, and we went to England. Part of the job was to visit France, to go to Paris and give services. Well, as it turns out, I spent a year studying at the University of Grenoble! So that was useful, to be able to speak French. Also, part of the job was to go to Holland, but the Dutch are very good at speaking English. I would send in my sermon ahead of time, and English copies were made, so they understood very well.”

After the English Pastorate, they moved to Pittsburgh, where he helped to inaugurate the school bus service from Freeport – Sarver – to Pittsburgh New Church School of which Don was principal. This forged an important link. He then moved to Bryn Athyn, where he has played the role of Assistant Pastor, Editor of *New Church Life*, and has performed other services for the General Church and the Academy. While serving as Director of General Church Religion Lessons, he decided that a key need was written material from the Writings for teens. He gave this priority and produced a series of lessons

later to be produced as a booklet called *The Human Face*.

After doing this interview, I remembered that being useful is very important, and also, that finding a use is not always easy, but it is always rewarding. Hence the above quote. We are all thankful to Reverend Don Rose for the uses he has performed and the lives he has affected all over the world.

¹ This interview, arranged by *New Church Life*, honors Rev. Donald L. Rose. Write to him: 2806 Huntingdon Pike, Huntingdon Valley, PA 19006, or Box 277, Bryn Athyn, PA 19009.

² *New Church Life*, 1958, p. 280.

³ Hurstville Society, in Penshurst actually, is up a steep hill, on Dudley Street, as many of you know!

⁴ As a member of the Swedenborg Society he also served on the Advisory and Revision Board, devoted to translating and publishing the Writings. He ran and partook in several British Academy Summer Schools. The Wynter Room at Swedenborg Society is where he often held meetings.

Dawn of a New Christianity

But now, because real Christianity is beginning to dawn, and a New Church meant by the New Jerusalem in the Apocalypse, is now being established by the Lord, wherein God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are acknowledged as one, because in one Person, it has pleased the Lord to reveal the spiritual sense of the Word, to enable this church to enter into the real use and benefit of these sacraments, baptism and the holy supper. And this is done when men, with the eyes of the spirit, that is, with the understanding see the holiness that is concealed within them, and apply it to themselves by the means which the Lord has taught in His Word. *True Christian Religion* 700

THE BRIGHT LADY¹

BY LANDON SYNNESTVEDT

The impact of the Last Judgment and the Second Coming is all around us in the world. There are movements for social and political freedom, advancing technology, growing urgency for ecological stewardship, easy travel, trade and immediate global communication – and these can all be seen in the light of a liberated spiritual world and a new revelation. The New Church has been sheltered and protected over the past 200 years, much like the Woman Clothed with the Sun. In a context of increasing intellectual and religious tolerance there is now avid interest in near-death experiences, angels, healthy marriages, and life after death. Devoted advocates and teachers from many faiths promote, in their own ways, ideas and principles that are familiar to New Church people. One could highlight many examples demonstrating that the time is quickly approaching for the New Church to bring a transformation to the human race. In this essay I focus on a single literary example to show the Second Coming's pervasive effect.

I spent an inspiring spring term at Bryn Athyn College in Rev. Dr. Ray Silverman's religion course on the Last Judgment. He introduced us to *The Great Divorce* by C.S. Lewis and we read portions of this delightful book aloud in class. It is an allegorical fantasy about the world of spirits and heaven. As a reader familiar with Swedenborg's descriptions of the spiritual world, the story felt so life-like and plausible (without attempting to be factual) that I smiled constantly as I read. The 'divorce' of the title refers to the separation that must occur between what is good and evil. The story makes it clear that nothing evil will be allowed into heaven and, in the end, evil will have no power to infect the good. The transition from life on

earth requires that those parts of us still attached to hell must be killed off and then be reborn in their contrasting heavenly form.

The Great Divorce was new to me, but I was familiar with C.S. Lewis' novels for young people. I recently read *The Chronicles of Narnia* to my children. I was continually moved by Lewis' way of conveying spiritual reality through those stories. *The Last Battle* (the final novel in the Narnia series) especially struck me with vivid panoramas of life after death. Lewis describes worlds within worlds - much like an onion has layers - where the worlds get bigger and more real as you go deeper (Lewis, 1994, 207). There is controversy about whether, or to what extent, Lewis was influenced by Swedenborg. Although intriguing, I will not join that debate in this essay. I simply wish to draw a few parallels between Lewis' work and what we learn from the Writings for the New Church.

Until I read *The Great Divorce* I could never imagine or feel 'the church' – the New Church – as a mother, let alone *my* mother. Lewis presents the Bright Lady: a highly honored angel who comes from heaven to the Valley of the Shadow of Life and implores a visiting spirit to re-integrate his dissociated parts, to let heaven in and thus grow into heaven's reality. During class discussion with Rev. Silverman I realized that the Bright Lady could be more than simply a woman who "on Earth was Sarah Smith" (Lewis, 2002, 118). The beautiful power of Lewis' Bright Lady can also be a glimpse of the Woman Clothed with the Sun, of the New Christian Church. He describes her effect on those around her: she is not a selfish mother coveting the children of others, "But her motherhood was of a different kind. Those on whom it fell went back to their natural parents loving them more" (Lewis, 2002, 119).

The New Church is a nurturing, healing power in the world, mirroring the non-competitive, selfless, unconditional love of a true mother. At the same time New Church people must also be

Michaels and battle the dragon to end its influence over people in the world. This work is well begun and the impact of the Last Judgment and the Second Coming is growing in the world. We can participate by sharing what we love about the New Church in a way that inspires people to see how the teachings could improve their lives.

The time is right for us to share the New Church with fresh effectiveness. The earth is swallowing up the flood that the dragon spewed after the Woman Clothed with the Sun: people *living* the fundamental teachings common to all religion; many Christians dedicated to living a Christ-like life, but are not dedicated to a salvation theory that separates faith from charity; a broad movement to promote healthy marriages – and a growing recognition that marriage between one woman and one man is the foundational relationship in society. As Dr. Jane Williams-Hogan, professor at Bryn Athyn College, has observed, the institution of marriage is transforming from a matter of convention and constraint to one of free choice, love, and partnership. A spiritual openness is even visible in some popular songs, books, and movies that depict an immediate resurrection and loved ones reunited after death.

In a similar way the Second Coming was in the air and affected C.S. Lewis's work. His *Bright Lady* shows us how to participate in the New Church transformation of the world. Consider that we as New Church people have been timid. Like the servant who buried his talent in the ground we have been guilty of unwarranted reserve. Did we fear losing what we have, or did we fear the shame of failing at our master's commission? Consider how Lewis pictures the Bright Lady, who I imagine as the Woman Clothed with the Sun:

I cannot now remember whether she was naked or clothed. If she were naked, then it must have been the almost visible penumbra of her courtesy and joy which

produces in my memory the illusion of a great and shining train that followed her across the happy grass. If she were clothed, then the illusion of nakedness is doubtless due to the clarity with which her innermost spirit shone through her clothes. For clothes in that country are not a disguise: the spiritual body lives along each thread and turns them into living organs. A robe or a crown is there as much one of the wearer's features as a lip or an eye.

But I have forgotten. And only partly do I remember the unbearable beauty of her face (Lewis, 2002, 118).

As participants in the Woman Clothed with the Sun, we can be naked and unashamed. We can share deeply with others in a way that lifts them up, just as the Woman was lifted up on eagle's wings. We can be naked and unashamed because we know that all good flows into us from the Lord and that all evil comes from hell (*Heaven and Hell* 302). Shame and fear - the attachment to shame and fear as if they are part of us - are sins. They separate us from the Lord and what He calls us to do for His people in the world. Let us discard the paralyzing sins of shame and fear, focusing instead on actually performing useful service, and our efforts will be clothed in radiance.

Imagine what it will be like to join the Lord in bringing the teachings of the New Church to millions of our sisters and brothers around the world. I am thrilled to be a New Church person at this time in history. New Church people have done much dedicated and loving work: studying the teachings of the Second Advent and building institutions devoted to knowing the Lord God Jesus Christ as He is revealed through the Writings of Emanuel Swedenborg. I grew up with an idea that our little Church was enduring a time in the wilderness. I originally believed that this wilderness would last many lifetimes, that we

had to wait “a time and times and half a time” until it was safe for us to go out into the world. But now it seems that the time has come and we have a mission to share the New Christian teachings with new boldness and love. The Last Judgment and Second Coming have altered the world and many people are hungry to hear the news.

¹ Essay written in Religion/The Last Judgment course, Bryn Athyn College, Rev. Dr. Ray Silverman, instructor, May 19, 2009

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“A woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet,” signifies the Lord’s New Church in the heavens, which is the New Heaven, and the Lord’s New Church about to be upon earth, which is the New Jerusalem. “And upon the head a crown of twelve stars,” signifies its wisdom and intelligence from the knowledge of Divine good and Divine truth from the Word. Verse 2. “And being with child, she cried travailing and pained to bring forth,” signifies the doctrine of the New Church about to come forth, and its difficult reception on account of the resistance by those who are meant by the dragon. Verse 3. “And another sign was seen in heaven,” signifies revelation from the Lord concerning those who are against the New Church and its doctrine (n. 536). *Apocalypse Revealed* 532

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE NEW CHURCH

BY RICHARD LINQUIST

I wish to write about the history of the New Church and its relationship to the letter B.

Birthday of the New Church – June 19th, is celebrated as the beginning of the New Church. This is based on *True Christian Religion* 791, where of the Lord’s sending His twelve disciples throughout the whole spiritual world, it is said, “This took place on the nineteenth day of June, 1770.”

Birmingham, England, was the location of the first New Church temple. It was dedicated on June 19th 1791 – a symbolic 3 times 7 years after the advent of the New Church, noted above. (Early advocates of the new revelation were two Anglican clergymen, Thomas Hartley, rector of Winwick in Northamptonshire and John Clowes, rector of St. John’s at Manchester.)

Baltimore, Maryland was the site of the first congregation of New Church people in America. It was organized in 1792 and built the first New Church temple in America in 1799.

Boston, Massachusetts – “Scots planter James Glen, en route from South America to London in 1781, was given *Heaven and Hell* by his ship’s captain.... He visited the United States, its revolution over, on his way back to South America [1874]... and in Philadelphia and Boston advertised and delivered the first known public lectures on the Doctrines” (Toward A New Church University pp. 11-12, by Sanfrid Odhner). A New Church society was later organized in Boston by Thomas Worcester.

Brotherly love – In Philadelphia, the city of brotherly love, as noted above, was one place where James Glen delivered lectures. “The first New Church temple in Philadelphia, erected at the southeast corner of Twelfth and [now] Sansom Streets,

was consecrated on January 1st, 1817....This temple was originally built in a square form, modeled after the Nunc Licet Temple described in *True Christian Religion* 508” (New Church Life, 1932, p. 431). “One day there appeared to me a magnificent temple, square in form, the roof of which was crown-shaped, arched above and raised round about; its walls were continuous windows of crystal; its door was of a pearly substance....Afterward, when I drew nearer, I saw this inscription above the door, Nunc Licet – It is now permitted – which signified that it is now permitted to enter understandingly into the mysteries of faith.”

Bryn Athyn, PA is where the first and only Cathedral of the General Church of the New Jerusalem is located. Above the door of the west entrance is the Nunc Licet inscription from *True Christian Religion* 508. Also in Bryn Athyn is Pitcairn Hall, the Administration Building for the Academy of the New Church. It was designed after the temple seen by Swedenborg in the Spiritual World. Of Pitcairn Hall Raymond Pitcairn wrote, “My own contributions to his [Romaldo Giurgola of Mitchell & Giurgola] basic plan include the introduction of curved refinements, the symbolism of the main entrance, the balance of the two wings of the southerly façade, and the proportional height of the crown superstructure as related to the building viewed from within and from without” (*New Church Life*, 1966, p.269).

I look forward to seeing more buildings constructed for the uses of the New Church, which are based on ideas drawn from the Word.

Editor’s Note: Do you know of other New Church buildings constructed from ideas drawn from the Word? Write an item for submission.

Editorial

AN ANCIENT CUSTOM: DISCUSSING DOCTRINE

In the New Church we idealize many things: marriage, family, performing useful services as part of our jobs, worship, and instruction. One ideal which has not seen the light of day for several thousand years is the egalitarian rule of everyone teaching everyone else. It only works if two conditions are met: 1. charity is present and always assumed in others, and 2: the *Heavenly Doctrines* are equally accessible to all, and remain the primary source of all our ideas. That is how it was in the First Ancient Church:

The teaching about charity, that is, how to live, was the chief teaching in the ancient churches. That teaching united all churches and so made one out of many. For they recognized as members of the church all those whose lives showed the good of charity and called them brothers, however much otherwise they differed in truths, what are to-day called matters of faith. One taught another about truths, and this was one of their charitable deeds. Also they did not take it amiss, if one failed to accept another's point of view, knowing that each person accepts truth only to the extent that he is in a state of good. Since the ancient churches were of this kind their members were therefore 'interior' people; and for this reason they were wiser. *Heavenly Doctrine 9*.

"One taught another about truths." Everyone was a teacher to all the rest. They shared their ideas with each other. Not that this did away with the Priesthood: there were priests back then too, and only ordained Priests are allowed to provide *official* instruction in the Word. The degrees of the neighbor were well

known in the Ancient Church, which existed in great variety while yet charity remained the central doctrine. Thus they too knew that “Good can be inculcated in another by any citizen, but truth only by those who are ministers that teach it. If others teach it, heresies arise, and the Church becomes confused and is torn apart” (*Arcana Coelestia* 6822). “Lest heresies arise.” If anyone but a priest were to provide official instruction, it would be bedlam.

However, “inculcating good” i.e. sharing your view-point is not the same thing as official instruction. Discussing doctrine is never a bad idea, especially when there is so much Truth or Doctrine available. You can read the Writings as well as receive instruction, and become conversant with the doctrines, and pass your understanding to others in your own words. When using your own words to explain truth, there is a special influx from the spiritual world: When we are using “everyday language, or common speech... light is shed upon it, [applying to many] expressions used by a person which spring from a perception of such things as exist in the next life where he is as to his spirit” (*Arcana Coelestia* 3693). We get this sense of understanding a truth from the spiritual world, and the influx then picks our words for us! We know the sensation, when we don’t think about what we are going to say, but our idea just pours out spontaneously into words: “It is very much as when a person is speaking, yet gives no thought to the words that he is using but is intent solely on the meaning which they express. His thought falls, in accordance with the meaning, immediately and spontaneously into words. It is the meaning within which produces the words that are used...It is through this inward meaning that man, though he is not aware of it, communicates with spirits” (*Arcana Coelestia* 1638).

In other words, when we try to put our belief in the Doctrines into our own words, the spontaneous flow of words comes from

spirits with us who are in those ideas of truth themselves. So here's another use for discussing doctrine, for putting our doctrinal views into our own words. Of course it helps that the ideas are true already, and are actually taught in the "original version" of the Writings. The way we express them in our own words just has our own spirit in the expression. Such would have been the phenomenon, when Charity reigned thousands of years ago, and people just spoke and taught each other. They knew that everyone could only accept as much truth as they were in genuine charity to begin with. Thus no one took it amiss if they disagreed "or failed to accept another's point of view, knowing that each person accepts truth only to the extent that he is in a state of good." They could just learn more from each other, and have a beer afterwards, - or perhaps it was mead. Anyhow, they were "interior people". The New Church by definition has now received "still more interior truths" than those given by the Lord at His Advent (*Apocalypse Explained* 948:3). Today we therefore qualify for perpetuating the same ancient tradition of sharing our view-point.

This kind of egalitarian instruction requires charity to be at the center. We do the same when we have a friendly discussion at gatherings of all kinds, over coffee, after dinner, etc. It has also been the principle behind those New Church discussion groups where laypeople have their say, but a minister is present. He is consulted now and then, or "has the last word." This is the proviso in *Arcana Coelestia* 6822, "lest heresies arise." For a heresy is "one truth" taken at the expense of all other truths, i.e. with some stubborn insistence (*Arcana Coelestia* 362). A heresy begins life as a truth. Every person's view may have loads of such truths, but these are not heresies, but truths looking to greater understanding. They are true now, but a greater view of them is pending. Only by insisting on one truth against all others does such a limited view become heretical.

The same improvement of the view of truth applies also to ministers who *do* know essentially all that the Writings teach: such is their training, just to prevent heresies. For one charge for ministers is to “uproot falsities” with themselves, and “so with the laity” (*True Christian Religion* 784). You need training to know all the Doctrines to qualify as a “teaching minister” (*Arcana Coelestia* 6822) who then has automatic charge of all “holy or sacred functions, Divine laws, and worship” (*Heavenly Doctrine* 317-319).

How do we know charity rules? We call it “good faith” today. Criminals, we are told, constitute only a single digit percentage of society. Most people you run into are well intentioned, or friendly. Even counting people in a personal snit, they would still be civil on the bus or train. We know of exceptions, may even have *been* the exception at times. But charity is at work most of the time, everywhere, even if only on the civic level. We assume “the best” of all people we know and meet in public. However, it is probably not, or not yet, the same level or degree charity as in ancient times, but a civilian level reminder of it.

So is today the same as the First Ancient Church, after the Flood but before the Tower of Babel changed the “charity first” rule? It might be. We speak of “neighbor” more comfortably than “brethren.” We don’t tend to call our next door neighbor “brother.” Many people of course *do* use the term *brother*. If genuine, it bespeaks a charity-first law. That does not mean, however, that the truths of faith do not matter. So even when people call each other “brothers,” intelligence is not far behind. We can thus recall the best examples of friendly debate in our own lives, where smiles still cover all disagreements, and no “heresy” was a heresy, because each person wanted to know more. And if a minister is not present, one is called upon for the answer, if not found directly in the Writings themselves.

Everyone may discuss what they know with all others. The proviso however, is that all present have an equal say. After one person has spoken his view, then that person has to stop and listen, until everyone else has had a turn. It is just like discussing doctrine today. No one may prevail over or persuade another. One person may end up correcting or informing a previous speaker.

Such discussions have always taken place, since the Source of truth has always been the Word of God. How that Word has been presented to humanity has varied as to form, but never as to content. At first God spoke His Word directly, face to face, then it was by means of angels, perception, dreams; then when the decline set in, it was next committed to rudimentary writing, which served as the Word after the Flood. This was the Word of Enoch which established the First Ancient Church we are discussing. During this Church, came the Ancient Word, and when the Second Ancient church turned to idolatry and sacrifices, this Ancient Word was scattered and lost. Then among the Third Ancient Church or Israel, a “new Word” was restored by dictation by angelic spirits, namely the Old Testament.” Its writing commences with the Ten Commandments written by God’s own finger. This was read on earth when the Lord came as the Word made flesh, and started teaching “You have heard it said... but I say unto you...” commencing the oral tradition of the New Testament from the Lord’s own mouth. Only after His resurrection did the “spirit of His mouth” (*Sacred Scripture 2*) assemble the Four Gospels and Book of Revelation, to form the New Testament. This added to but also replaced the Old. Both are called Sacred Scripture in the Writings, containing a spiritual or internal sense. But Sacred Scripture also contains the “doctrine of genuine truth” appearing here and there as “hand and face” passages, on the surface of many texts. One example is the Two Great

Commandments: “On these two hang all the law and the prophets” making Love to God and Love to the neighbor to be *plainly stated* truths. But mostly there is an internal sense, and the truth in this sense has always remained the same, no matter in how many different literal contexts it has been hidden. And it is a fact that apart from a Revelation by God, there could never arise any slightest notion of an afterlife, heaven or hell, of a God let alone His nature, or any information about ideals of life, etc. (*Sacred Scripture* 115, 116). The Writings even mock those who believe we can know spiritual things by “natural theology”: “If man of himself could have known that there is a God and a life after death, why then has he not discovered that a man is a man after death?” (Op. Cit. 116)

So there has always been truth to discuss among each other. Nor would there even be any curiosity about these things with humans, unless the same Source that provides the Word for people, also implants remains – traces of heavenly loves for truth and helpfulness, in each person’s inner mind. We may refer to remains as “gifts from God’s mercy” because no one has earned them (*cf. Arcana Coelestia* 19, 1906). These prompt all people to recognize truth to be true when she or he hears it, and the feeling of “yes” when doing or experiencing something right and fair. These remains also allow everyone to say “yes” when reading or hearing the Word of God. It is the same truth, stuck in our rational mind prompting us to say “yes” when it is written down for us by means of a revelator. The two hands of the Lord our God thus meet in us. His Providence through remains (*invisible right hand*) meets His Holy Spirit and its written text of revealed Divine Truth (*visible left hand*), inside our heads. We have to volunteer for this honorable process, by reading and hearing truth.

We gain the knowledge of the Word through the love of parents and instructors who provide the occasion for angels

from the Lord to as it were ‘staple’ those remains of good and truth to the rational level of our minds. These remains form the kernel around which our conscience is built by individual experience. The rational constitutes the border or *limbus* between the soul and physically bound mind. So once we have the truth, and it has become part of our conscience, we may carry our own inbuilt reservoir of what is right and fair, proper and orderly, right into doing our work, and sharing our views of truth with others. Everyone then hears it individually. Then the teaching holds true: “a truth, from whatever mouth it may be spoken, enters into another’s hearing and is received by the mind according to the state and quality of the mind” (*Divine Providence* 14:2).

When charity rules, people called each other “brethren” and the Lord calls *us* “friends.” We however do not call the Lord “friend”, but only what He Himself told us to call Him, namely “You call Me Master, and Lord, and you say well, for I AM” (John 13:13). We all belong to the same family: the Lord is our Heavenly Father, and the New Church is then our Mother. Although only priests may *preach* the Word, all may share it.

New Church Life Response

An article in the July 2009 *New Church Life*, *The Love of One’s Country*, advocated responsible citizenship by becoming well-informed about the founding principles of one’s country and studying both sides of political issues and candidates. However, the article clearly took one side as “friendlier to religion and patriotism.”

Love of country and citizenship are appropriate topics for *New Church Life*. Advocating one political philosophy or party over another is not. I regret that this happened, and I apologize.

The Editor

A Response to “Hope” by Wyston Simons
(*New Church Life*, June 2009, 257-9)

I would like to respond to the excellent message by Wystan Simons on “Hope” that appeared in the June issue. Wystan, in my opinion, has primarily framed the issue as a struggle “between those who love outreach and those who love “in-reach.” But there is more, in my opinion, to consider both from the standpoint of principle and practicality.

The principle to which I am referring is that of structure or, if you will, the order and organization of the General Church, which in itself is somewhat problematic. The practical lies in how the Church is actually governed and managed.

History tells us the General Church grew out of the “Academy Movement,” which split from the General Convention of the New Jerusalem. The Academy Movement essentially made its departure on two fundamental principles of faith and doctrine. The first being that the theological Writings given by the Lord through Emanuel Swedenborg are in fact the Second Coming of the Lord God Jesus Christ to this world. The second was focused on the very strong belief that New Church education was essential to the continued mission for the growth of the New Church on earth, which came to be known as “internal evangelization.” The formation of the General Church and its continued existence has been true to both of these principles from its inception. And we know that, over these many years, the General Church has not focused on external evangelization with either people, programs or money until recently. Like many organizations we grew to a certain size and became virtually stagnant with the exception of the more recent growth in the African continent, Eastern Europe and some Asian countries while the North American and Eastern European memberships continues to hold or decline.

Another piece of the puzzle that should be examined has to do with ownership. History documents that for various reasons the General Church has operated in a paternalistic manner with regard to management and money. For many years a few wealthy families and the executive Bishop pretty much made the decisions and controlled how the money flowed. This has been both a blessing and a challenge. The blessing being that the individuals who gave so generously of their money and time did so with the utmost love and attention to the feelings of others and did so to the best of their abilities with the good of the Church at the core. The challenge is that unfortunately a culture of dependency was created from within the Church's membership. Historically and up to the present day the dollars the General Church receives from its membership do not come close to the dollars that are needed to operate it. In other words, without the wealthy donors and the large endowment we are blessed with, the General Church would not be able to function at the level it does, let alone grow. The culture of giving has to change. It is neither right nor just to rely on others to do what each of us should be doing. If we continue to employ the new giving strategy that the Development Office is fostering and encouraging it will probably take a couple of generations to develop a healthy culture of giving within our membership.

Lest anyone fear that I'm suggesting the need to depart from priestly leadership to a congregational form of church government let me emphatically say that I am not. The Episcopal/ecclesiastical model that the church has employed, in my opinion, has not adequately adapted to the changing times. By this I mean the structure has not been studied or employed with the efficiencies that modern technology makes possible. I would suggest the reason for this is that in the past the priests of our church were not specifically educated for the "techno" world in which we live. Of course, here I am referring to the

development of the internet and all of the tools that are available to assist with growth and communication. Having said this, I'm aware the Theological School is now addressing this issue. The fact of the matter is, if the General church is to grow and fulfill its mission, *it will take priests and laymen hand-in-hand to accomplish this*. To me this means that a highly educated and energized priesthood working together with a carefully elected and highly motivated board of directors should bring their collective and individual talents to the table with the purpose of promoting the vision, mission and programs that are now in front of the New Church.

I believe there are probably few people today who cannot fully endorse the *Core Purpose* and *Core Values* that the General Church has adopted and now operates from. the *Core Purpose* being "To help people throughout the world grow closer to the Lord God Jesus Christ in His Second Coming." One of the ways of trying to achieve the Core Purpose is to have meaningful contact with more than a million people. This may be viewed by some as a dream that cannot be realized. That's the point of this goal. We as a Church need to make it a *real stretch* if we want to "hit it out of the park." It will never happen if we don't try. The strategies that are founded on the vision and mission statements are based on the development of people and programs and these should lead the way to the fulfillment of the former. By that I mean if the vision, mission and strategies are believed and supported by each one of us using our talent energy money and belief, then I believe the Lord will bless His church. Then *we* the laborers in the vineyard will be rewarded for our diligence, faithfulness and work. The *Lord's* New Church on earth will become an even greater reality and so the heavens will rejoice.

I think we all agree that change is more difficult for some individuals than others. We know it can be unsettling which

includes the fear that the Lord's truth will be watered down. This is a good fear. It is understandable, but I believe the changes being fostered are good changes, addressing the times in which we live. We need to stop hiding the Lord's shining light under a bushel. The goal is a better world with more opportunity for people throughout the world to learn the truth so that they have the opportunity to live it; to become spiritually free and so become angels in heaven when their short sojourn in this world is over.

Our rallying cry should be, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and all the rest will be added unto you." The requirement is to know the truth and then live a life of charity. To accomplish this, in my opinion, each one of us should take the time to read *The Word* daily, we should pray to the *Lord* daily, we should attend *Church* services as often as possible, we should make every effort to live a life in accordance with the Decalogue and finally We Should Fully Trust in "*Divine Providence*."

BOB HEINRICHS

Chair, General Church Development Committee

ANNOUNCEMENT FROM BISHOP KLINE

I am pleased to announce that I have appointed David Frazier as the Executive Director for the General Church, effective July 1st, 2009.

This role of Executive Director is a new executive position for the church. Let me explain: David Frazier has served as the Chief Administrative Officer/Treasurer for the General Church for the past two years. I have found that the role of a Chief Administrative Officer for the church has allowed me to delegate many of the lay-administrative duties that are part of my job as Executive Bishop. In order to more fully perform my duties as Executive Bishop and to give greater spiritual leadership to the church I have found that that I need to delegate even more of what I would term lay-administrative duties. And so, working with a committee of the General Church Board, we have developed the new role of Executive Director.

In addition to Dave's uses as CAO we have outlined the following job description:

1.Role of the Executive Director

a.In general, to provide for the orderly support, leadership and supervision of General Church business operations worldwide.

2.Specifically, to

a.Provide a healthy working relationship, in harmony with the core purposes, between congregations and the central offices.

- b.**Ensure that there is a clear organizational structure and that responsibilities for decisions are understood and maintained.
- c.**Ensure development of, and oversee implementation of, the strategic initiatives.
- d.**Ensure process controls and establish measurements for efficient use of resources.
- e.**Oversee the process of director level staff appointments, re-appointments and separations.
- f.**Provide support, supervision, evaluation, and professional development for employees.
- g.**Work with the Development Office to promote strong relations with individual donors, foundations and other funding resources.
- h.**Provide for ad hoc support for activities such as assemblies, camps, retreats, etc.

David will retain many of the responsibilities of his former position of General Church Treasurer as we work to restructure the Treasurer's Office in the light of this new position.

Rt. Rev. Thomas L. Kline
July 8th, 2009

CHURCH NEWS FROM KENYA

BY REV. ERIK J. BUSS

We know that the Lord is governing the universe with great care, but we don't normally see His guidance. Instead we see the efforts we and others make, and we believe that the Lord was the one who really made good things happen. On a recent trip to Kenya I was able to see the Lord's guidance more clearly than usual when I had the opportunity to baptize 109 people into the New Church. The pastors in Kenya, Samson Abuga and Khalid Obiri, had worked very hard to share the message of the Second Coming with these people, but when faced with so many people wanting to commit to the truth, it was much easier to see the Lord's hand at work.

One of my greatest joys of talking to these people in Kenya was their openness to the truth. I come from a Western culture in which people take pride in their intellectual prowess and need to be convinced slowly of the truth of something. Many of these people were able to hear the truth once and immediately acknowledge it. And when they acknowledged it they responded with joy. While there I gave quite a few talks on marriage, focusing particularly on the equality of the sexes, with each sex offering something unique to the world. This is not what traditional Kenyan culture teaches at all, yet many responded to the ideas enthusiastically. In fact, a minister from another church went away with a copy of Married Love because he was so intrigued by the Lord's teachings. The New Church in Kenya has a hopeful future. This was the Lord's doing; it is marvelous in our eyes.

**CHURCH NEWS FROM KENYA
“SMILES FROM MILES”**

BY ISAAC SYNNESTVEDT

Joseph and Angelina are senior members of the church started by Rev. Khalid. When Duncan Smith offered to fund a church building, they freely offered and were chosen to give land for the space. They have eight children, one of which is in Rev. Khalid's school. Currently the church has weekly services with twenty to forty attending, and during the week they have a full time nursery class of over 50 kids. The members are very young in the doctrines, and I believe will be warriors for the Lord. More than anything else they desire visitors to stay in their homes and teach them. They send so many greetings to Kendra, Jason, Duncan, Erik Buss, and all our families in America. When Erik Buss visited in March, he baptized eleven individuals.

The name of the town center nearest the church, where our member Isaac Choti is assistant principal to a primary school of 429 students taught New Church ideas, is called Enkos.

Rev. Khalid is the pastor overseeing the Masaai society. Nicks Marisa is a candidate [recently trained in Bryn Athyn] discovering his use and place here in Kenya. We are all very much looking forward to the coming of Nicole Pitcairn and Becky Walker sometime in the fall, and we are welcoming many more.

There are two Churches in Kenya: Riounde where the Rev. Khalid is Pastor. It is three miles from the outskirts of the town of Ogambo, part of Kisii environs, a seven hours drive from Niarobi. And at Etoro the Rev. Samson is Pastor, three miles on other side of Ogambo on a main road to the town of Kisii.



Joseph and Angelina support the New Church in Kenya, here with Isaac Synnestvedt.



Child baptized by Rev. Erik J. Buss



The 4th annual New Church Journey Program, **Living Courageously**, kicks off on **Sunday October 4th 2009** and again on **Sunday February 7th 2010**.

Participating congregations and groups represent 3 countries on 2 continents and members of the General Church, the Lord's New Church and The Swedenborgian Church (the Convention). So far the list includes:

NC Buccleuch, South Africa	Ivyland NC, PA
Glenview NC, IL	San Diego NC, CA
Washington NC, Mitchellville, MD	Bryn Athyn Church, PA
NC of Boulder Valley, CO	Olivet NC Toronto, ON
Sunrise Chapel of the NC, Tuscon, AZ	Pittsburgh NC, PA
Light of Life NC, Seattle, WA	Lord's New Church, PA
NC of Boynton Beach, FL	NC of Concord, MA
Sower's Chapel of the NC, Sarver, PA	And more...

Let us know if you plan to run this program so we can share the excitement.

Content: The workbook for this seven-week program features biblical insights written by the Rt. Rev. Peter M. Buss Sr. with tasks and activities by Star Silverman. It is based on the story of Elijah as found in I Kings 16-22 and II Kings 2.

Format: Journey Campaigns are carefully constructed to provide life-oriented spiritual themes that are helpful to both newcomers and long-term church members alike. The programs use regular, daily readings of the Word, small group meetings, prayer and discussion coordinated with the Sunday sermons, to get everyone talking about how these themes work in their own lives.