



Butterflies in Church

I am not writing about the nerves which worship leaders get from time to time. I refer to three tortoise-shell butterflies which appear each Sunday morning in the Derby church. Such simple things bring us so much delight. As our building warms up, they entertain us with their graceful presence, blessing us by landing on sunlit spots on our heads and shoulders.

What could they symbolise for you or for us as a Church? The first thing that occurs to me is the beauty of free gifts of the Lord's creation. They challenge the idea that ever more sophisticated technology will bring us happiness. Also they illustrate how strong the Lord's life is, for despite their vulnerability, they have survived while the rest of their friends have succumbed to old age and cold.

Perhaps they symbolise our persistence as a small group of people calling themselves a church. They remind us that the Church should be a refuge for those things which are vulnerable, innocent and beautiful; that there are always angels present with us and they are drawn to us when we allow the Lord's truth to shine on us.

In the teachings of the New Church, butterflies are used to illustrate the final stage of our spiritual development, when we become angelic in our love and life. Our previous stages are likened to those of the caterpillar and the chrysalis. This amazing human change is part of the Lord's creation and, like the chrysalis, much of it remains hidden until we put off an aging body and the stresses of living in this world and awaken in the spiritual world. But the Lord can only achieve this change with our co-operation. As we live our daily lives, we are actually choosing now what kind of human beings will come out eventually. Our Lord's aim is human beings who emerge beautiful, free, loving, wise, and innocent of all selfishness, duplicity and corruption - human beings whose presence brings joy and delight like a butterfly dancing in the sunlight.

Our Church should be a place where these qualities are encouraged and nurtured. During this coming New Year, may we be sensitive to the Lord's transforming presence within us and our church communities.

Rev John Sutton From the Derby Newsletter January 2004

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Curepipe New Jerusalem Church

Rev Bruce Jarvis
reflects on
"an adventure of a
lifetime"

See page 4

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**Our mission is to express, share
and experience with others in life
an inclusive, non-judgmental
vision of God's kingdom**

50 Spiritual Classics

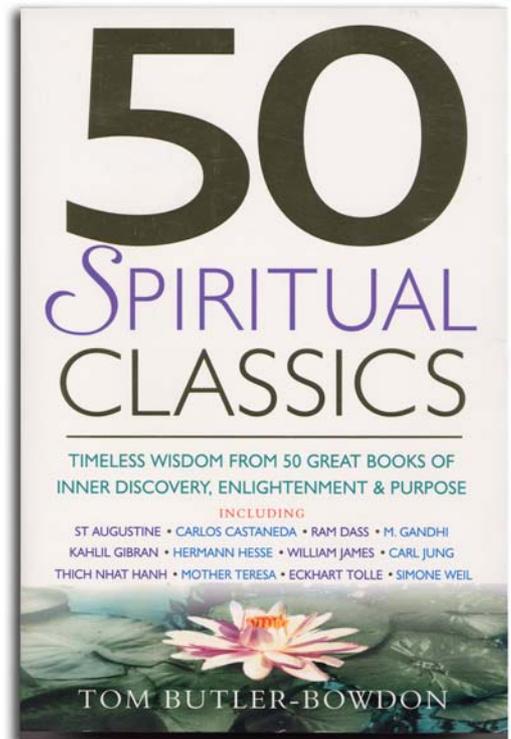
This book by Tom Butler-Brown was first published by Nicholas Brealey Publishing in May 2005 and is now widely available through bookshops and Amazon. The sub-title of the book is "*Timeless Wisdom from 50 Great Books of Inner Discovery, Enlightenment & Purpose*" and as this suggests the book includes extracts from 50 different writers over the last 2400 years. This is not a narrow selection of material but instead covers a very wide range of religious and spiritual thought including Heaven & Hell by Emanuel Swedenborg.

Most of the writers included are 20th century, but there is Swedenborg (18th), Teresa of Avila (16th), St Augustine (5th), and Chuang Tzu (4th BC). Because of the wide range of 20th century authors this is likely to be a popular book with a wide audience so it is very encouraging that Swedenborg is positively presented.

The section on Swedenborg (6 pages) commences with a quotation from Heaven & Hell and then goes on to describe 'The structure of heaven', 'The life of angels', 'The good and the true' and then 'Rich in heaven'. After some final comments there is a very brief biography.

My thanks to the Sydney Newsletter for bringing this book to my attention.

Editor



Purley Chase Meeting at Derby - 12th November 2005

We began with a short service of worship conducted by the Rev David Gaffney at 11 am.

Mrs Jean Chambers welcomed about 60 people who had come many miles to be there. She began by saying we were not there to discuss the building; only its use for the future. Michael Hindley told us of the difficulties with Warwickshire Council in accepting any of the plans put forward. After submitting four plans they have now reverted to Plan No. 2 which was being considered.

Rev David Gaffney spoke next about the positions he had held in the commercial world, all preparing him for this special position of manager and minister at Purley Chase, for which he was considered to be suitable. He thought it was providential that, at the time he became a minister, this opportunity became available.

Anne Gaffney told us of her roots with Accrington New Church and her background in catering. She had been a manager in a Restaurant and is now a chef at an Italian Restaurant, so Anne is quite capable to be a successor to Irene Woodhouse.

We were then divided into 6 groups and each given a questionnaire leaflet to fill in and return to David with our comments and suggestions. This paper was divided into 4 sections which were:-

- The aims of the Purley Centre.
- Attracting young people to participate.
- Themes for events and people who could lead them.
- How can you help at these events.

Much discussion followed but it was too early to make firm plans and too early to book accommodation. David Gaffney would combine all our answers on the questionnaires and all our comments and compile our views with a look to the future.

After a final short service the Derby Society were thanked for their wonderful hospitality and we returned home after a very enjoyable day

Nellie Thomas

From the Accrington Newsletter

From the Writings ...

From these things it follows that the ultimate sense of the Word, which is the literal sense, and the fourth in order, contains in itself the three interior senses, which are for the three heavens: that these three senses are unfolded and shown in the heavens, while a man upon earth reads the Word with reverence; that hence it is the literal sense of the Word, from which and by which communication is effected with the heavens; also, from which and by which a man has conjunction with the heavens; that the literal sense of the Word is the basis of the Divine truth in the heavens, and that Divine truth without such a basis would be as a house without a foundation; and that the wisdom of the angels without that foundation would be like a house in the air; that it is the literal sense of the Word in which the power of Divine truth consists; that it is the literal sense of the Word by which man receives enlightenment from the Lord, and by which answers are made when man desires enlightenment; that it is the literal sense of the Word from which everything of doctrine on earth is to be confirmed; that Divine truth in the literal sense of the Word is in its fullness; that Divine truth in the literal sense of the Word is in its holiness.

Apocalypse Explained 1066

Enlightenment comes from the Lord alone and is granted to those who love truths because they are truths, and who apply them to the uses of life; with others, there is no enlightenment in the Word. Enlightenment comes from the Lord alone, because the Lord is in all things of the Word. Enlightenment is granted to those who love truths because they are truths, and who apply them to the uses of life because they are in the Lord, and the Lord in them. For the Lord is His own Divine Truth; and when this is loved because it is Divine Truth - and this is loved when it is applied to use - then the Lord is present in it with man.

Doctrine of Sacred Scripture 57 extract

No one can see the spiritual sense unless he has been taught real truth. This enables him to see the spiritual sense, when he has some knowledge of correspondences. Someone who has been taught what is false cannot see anything of the spiritual sense; he warps and applies the correspondences he knows to suit his false teaching. He may therefore falsify the Word still more. This is because the truly spiritual sense of the Word comes from the Lord alone. This is the reason that no one in the natural world or in the spiritual world is allowed to seek out the spiritual sense of the Word from the literal sense, unless he is completely under the guidance of the teaching of Divine truth and enlightened by the Lord. The spiritual sense therefore can be seen by the teaching of Divine truth supported by the literal sense of the Word. But the teaching can never first be seen from the spiritual sense. It is false to think to oneself, 'I know many correspondences; so I can know the true teaching of the Divine Word, the spiritual sense will teach it to me.' This cannot happen; but as I have said, let someone say to himself, 'I know the teaching of Divine truth, now I can see the spiritual sense, provided I know the correspondences.' But this must still be by enlightenment from the Lord, because the spiritual sense is Divine truth itself bathed in its own light; and this is meant by glory, the literal sense being the cloud, in the passages of the Word about these subjects.

De Verbo 21

In addition to these most manifest evidences, there is the fact that the spiritual sense of the Word has been disclosed by the Lord through me; which has never before been revealed since the Word was written with the sons of Israel; and this sense is the very sanctuary of the Word; the Lord Himself is in this sense with His Divine, and in the natural sense with His Human. Not a single iota in this sense can be opened except by the Lord alone. This surpasses all the revelations that have hitherto been made since the creation of the world. Through this revelation a communication has been opened between men and the angels of heaven, and the conjunction of the two worlds has been effected; because when man is in the natural sense the angels are in the spiritual sense.

Invitation to the New Church 44

Mauritius - an adventure of a lifetime

For as long as I can remember - well, from my late teenage years or early twenties when my Church horizons began to stretch beyond those of my local congregation - I have been aware of the existence of a New Church community on the tiny tropical island in the Indian Ocean called Mauritius. More recently, suggestions had been made to me that I should consider spending a period there as a visiting Minister. I knew very well that, over the years, a number of my colleagues had gone to Mauritius for varying lengths of time. So when, in 2004, I received a specific request the time seemed right. The Governing Council and my own congregation at Seaburn Dene gave their blessings, and the visit was on. After 40 or so years, a dream was to be fulfilled!

Monday 14th March 2005 and I was up and away, flying out of Newcastle Airport, and then later overnight from Heathrow. Twelve hours after leaving London I was in the terminal building at the Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam International Airport, looking for 2 familiar faces. Dr Andre Danjoux and his wife Denise are well known to me from their periodic visits to Seaburn Dene New Church when in the UK to visit family members. Long before I became Minister at Seaburn Dene, Andre worked for many years in the North-East, and was an active member at Seaburn Dene.

Mercifully, Andre and Denise were there to meet me, and spirited me away on a beautiful day to meet a reception party at the Curepipe Church - 31°C and clear blue skies - perfect! Having flown over the island and seen the extent of the cane sugar plantations (though a declining part of the island economy), now I could enjoy the warmth and the environment at close quarters. The airport is on the south-eastern coast, diametrically opposite Port Louis, the capital. Between the airport and Port Louis runs the island's motorway, and Curepipe sits in the central plateau about 1800 feet above sea level. From the car I was also able to see the mountains

I had observed from the air. These are a spectacular feature of the Mauritian landscape.

My Mauritian journal is a wonderful resource for jogging my memory, but I must be very selective here. Nor do I want to repeat what Judy Elliott wrote in the November *Lifeline*. Six or seven months after my return home, I can only say that I feel myself well and truly bitten by the Mauritius "bug". The whole experience captivated me. The island itself has its enchanting side, though the Curepipe climate - I was there as their climate moved into its winter phase - fulfilled what I had read. Curepipe has two climates: the rainy season, and the season of rains! My journal certainly confirms that. One of my first purchases was an umbrella; and I quickly realised that the women use them for protection against both the rain and the sun! During my time on the island I visited many of the beautiful beaches, surrounded by the coral reef, but couldn't help observing how the tourist industry has commandeered most of the attractive coastal areas to cater for wealthy visitors.

My heart was swept away by the people, by their warmth and kindness. The Church community was so generous to me in their hospitality. They yearn for ministerial leadership, and the opportunity to learn and discuss. It's hard for them to understand how desperately short of Ordained Ministers we are in the UK. There, it is all or nothing. The sense of isolation is immense. Something, I suspect, we find hard to absorb. Moreover, the cultural and spiritual environment in Mauritius, where Christians are a minority group, means that witnessing and making an impact is challenging. It is a very multi-cultural island, and Hindus are by far in the majority. The dominant Christian force on the island is Roman Catholic, a hangover from the French period. Our team of New Church lay worship leaders do a magnificent job, undertaking all the public duties of Ministry, but it is wonderful for them to have occasional periods when they are ministered to, and have the opportunity to discuss issues with an ordained minister.



129th Anniversary of the Dedication of the Church at Port Louis

Most Sundays I conducted services at Port Louis at 8.30 am, followed by a dash back up to Curepipe in Azize Oozeerally's taxi for the 10.30 service. On some Sundays there was a united service at one or other of the churches. During the week there were pastoral visits, and the regular Thursday afternoon class at Curepipe. Despite the smallness of the island, holding meetings is difficult. The people are scattered around the island. It is tropical so the evenings are dark throughout the year. Transport is tricky and often slow. For this reason Church Committee meetings are held on Saturday afternoons! From my Ministerial

point of view, however, there was the sheer luxury of being able to focus my time and energies in a way which just doesn't seem possible back home in the UK.

Let me draw to a close with some highlights, or perhaps I should call them outstanding moments.

- A few days after my arrival Cyclone Hennie began to make its presence felt. Fortunately, it skirted the eastern coast, so its full impact was not felt. Still everyone had to remain indoors for 24 hours or so, having stocked up with supplies; and powercuts and floods had to be endured. It was quite enough for me!
- There were magnificent sunrises and sunsets in abundance, especially enjoyed from Trou aux Cerfs, the dormant volcano on the outskirts of Curepipe.
- Cyril Phanjoo's funeral was a memorable experience for a British minister, worth an article of its own.
- The weekly class was an inspiration to me. Seven of us took a journey through the Book of Revelation – and loved it!
- Judy Elliott had warned me to expect at least one tummy upset during my stay. Sure enough, it happened in week 9!
- A member loaned me a guitar for my stay, and it was put to good use. What a thrill it was to have a session in a recording studio with the son of one of the members, a sound engineer. If someone can make me sound professional he must be good!
- 3 of the united services stand out. We held a service at Port Louis (24th April) for the 129th anniversary of the dedication of that church; and managed to get a press release published. The New Church occupies an important place in the island's history, and the building in Port Louis is of some interest to historians. On Mother's Day (29th May) everyone was thrilled to welcome Mme May Francois and members of her family to church at Curepipe to mark her 95th birthday. She had been unable to attend for a few months, and was determined to receive communion from a priest in her church. Afterwards we held a party in the Evangeline Danjoux Hall. On my last Sunday (12th June) we held an early New Church Day service. It was a great delight to welcome 50 adults and children to the service and the following lunch in the hall. Towards the end of the service I had the pleasurable task of presenting, on behalf of the General Conference, Lay Preacher certificates to Evelyne Eynaud, Lemuel Braunau and Yves Radhaunath.



New Church Day celebration at the Curepipe Church

My fabulous and memorable Mauritian odyssey ended on Monday 13th June the way it had begun with a flight across the middle of the island, the coral reef clearly visible in the blue waters, and those majestic mountains epitomising the spirit of the place and the people. These jottings are a brief and inadequate account of my 3 months there. I could have waxed even more lyrical but our editor would not have thanked me. The experience lives on in my memory (and in my journal when placenames escape me!), and the pastoral links are maintained through emails and telephone calls.

Mauritius is an outpost of the New Church in the Indian Ocean. May those people feel blessed by their work, and may our fraternal links with them become ever closer and mutually beneficial.

Rev Bruce Jarvis



Bruce Jarvis with some of the congregation at Port Louis

God is our Refuge and Strength -

The Book of Psalms



I am delighted to be able to present to Lifeline readers a series of articles by Rev John Elliott. In this eight article John turns, at the request of a reader, to Psalm 121.

“By David in the Psalms we have to understand the Lord. In the Psalms therefore, wherever David is the speaker the Lord is meant in the spiritual sense.” **Prophets and Psalms**

Psalm 121 is the second in a group of fifteen songs or poems, each consisting, with one exception, of no more than nine verses. All fifteen have as the whole or as part of their superscription *A Song of Ascents*. This superscription or title is generally taken to mean a song which pilgrims sang as they made their way up to Jerusalem, which is situated among the Judaeen hills that are approximately two and a half to four thousand feet above sea-level. Several years ago, as Judy and I approached that city - in a coach, not on foot as pilgrims in the past would have done - the first words of Psalm 121 came to mind, *I will lift up my eyes to the hills*. (I also remembered our Lord's saying that a city set on a hill cannot be hidden.)

Perhaps you likewise have made that upward journey to Jerusalem, reciting one or more of the fifteen *Songs of Ascents*; but even if you have not enjoyed that unforgettable experience those songs can be just as meaningful to you. For those who are endeavouring to lead a truly Christian life are on a spiritual pilgrimage, journeying onwards and upwards to the holy city, the heavenly Jerusalem. The Lord has provided these pilgrims with His Word to guide them and His Sacraments to sustain them along the way. He has given them psalms or songs in His Word, each one appropriate to some particular spiritual state that Christian pilgrims pass through.

As I have observed time and again in these articles on the Book of Psalms, the Saviour Himself derived Divine strength and support from these sacred songs. Whenever He travelled literally on the road up to Jerusalem He may well have joined in with others as they recited or sang the fifteen pilgrim songs; but of course His perception of what lay within these songs was far deeper than that of His fellow travellers. Some idea of His perception of how those songs related to Himself, to His inner life and to the work of salvation He was accomplishing at that time, is presented to us briefly in **Prophets and Psalms**. Here are the explanations of the first six *Songs of Ascents*,

Psalm 120

[The Lord prays] to the Father to take action against those within the degenerate Church who are secretly trying to destroy Him.

Psalm 121

[The Lord prays] to the Father to keep watch over Him.

Psalm 122

The Lord's gladness because of the new Church, in which He Himself reigns.

Psalm 123

[The Lord prays] to the Father to stand by him, because He has been totally rejected by the Jewish nation.

Psalm 124

[The Lord prays] to the Father to keep Him safe in temptations brought on by those who are full of guile and those who are hypocritical.

Psalm 125

The new Church is protected from false ideas arising from evil, because of the Lord.

Now let us look a little more closely at Psalm 121, many people's favourite or one of their favourites. In this song there are two singers or voices, or perhaps a solo voice and a group of singers, for the song takes the form of a dialogue. In the first two verses the solo pilgrim asks a question, to which he himself, or she, provides the answer. After that, in the remaining verses of the psalm, another voice or group of voices develop that answer.

The theme of the whole song is contained in the initial statement made by the first voice, *I will lift up my eyes to the hills*, or rather *to the mountains* (when the Hebrew word used at this point occurs elsewhere in the Old Testament it is generally translated as 'mountains'). Mountains often stand as boundaries between one nation and another; sometimes they also serve to protect the people inhabiting townships below and behind them. And as these people behold those mountains, or 'lift up their eyes' to them, they feel safe from unwanted intruders or enemies. They trust the mountains to protect them. The Psalmist uses this image of trustworthy protectors from earthly perils to introduce thoughts of trust in the One who provides protection against spiritual dangers. Another *Song of Ascents*, Psalm 125, begins with such thoughts,

*Those who trust in the LORD are like Mount Zion,
which cannot be moved, but abides for ever.
As the mountains surround Jerusalem,
so the LORD surrounds his people,
from this time forth and for evermore.*

Having used the image of mountains to introduce the overall theme, the first voice in Psalm 121 goes on to ask, and answer, the question, *From where does my help come?* (The translators responsible for the Authorised or King James Version rendered the words of the original Hebrew as a statement, not a question - *I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, whence cometh my help.*) The answer which the first singer gives to his or her own question - *My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth* - is the expression of a simple, uncomplicated confidence that He who made land, sea, and sky, and everything in them, is always there to help me. He is not only the Creator of all things, seen and unseen; He is also an ever present Helper of those He has created, and of those who seek to be recreated in His image and likeness.

The second voice or group of voices then affirms and fleshes out this simple conviction. *He will not let your foot be moved*, that is, He will prevent you from stumbling or losing your footing as you tread the pilgrims' way to the heavenly city, for He is watching over you all the time –

*He who keeps you will not slumber.
Behold, he who keeps Israel
will neither slumber nor sleep.*

The first Book of Kings records a contest on Mount Carmel between the Lord's prophet Elijah and 450 prophets of Baal. During the contest - when for a whole morning the 450 tried in every way to call down fire from Baal to ignite their sacrifice, but without success - Elijah mocked them, suggesting that Baal was otherwise occupied 'or perhaps he is asleep and must be awakened'. But the one true God was different; when Elijah called down fire on his sacrifice there was an immediate response, because He is ever wakeful. 'He who keeps you' never slumbers, that is, He does not become drowsy or 'nod off'; still less does He go right off to sleep. Actually the expression 'He who keeps you' translates a single Hebrew word, which may otherwise be rendered 'your watchman'. A night-watchman may doze off, the Divine watchman never does so. And being one who keeps watch constantly, by day as well as by night, He is a protector -

*The LORD is your keeper;
the LORD is your shade on your right hand.
The sun shall not strike you by day,
nor the moon by night.*

We sometimes refer to a close companion or helper as our right-hand man. I do not know the origin of this term, but perhaps it derives from Psalm 121 and/or from Psalm 109, where it says of the Lord, *He stands at the right hand of the needy, to save him from those who condemn his soul to death.* He who is the helper, at the right hand, of all spiritual pilgrims, shades them from

harmful influences. He protects them from spiritual sunstroke and moonstroke. Moonstroke? We know all about sunstroke, about the effects of over-exposure to the sun; but can anyone be stricken by too much moon? Well no, but some people of old seem to have thought that the moon as well as the sun could be harmful, and their way of thinking is being used in the song. In the past it was thought that the changing phases of the moon, for which the Latin word is *luna*, were somehow a cause of insanity or *lunacy*.

Now we often speak of the Lord Himself as our sun, the source of the warmth of unselfish love in the heart and of the light of understanding in the mind. See for example in **Songs for Worship** hymn 44 *Christ, whose glory fills the skies*, which speaks of Him as the 'sun of righteousness, or 250 *Lord of all being*, which includes the verse,

*Lord of all life, below, above,
whose light is truth, whose warmth is love;
before thy ever-blazing throne
we ask no lustre of our own.*

But is it the *Sun of my soul*, to borrow the words of number 363 in **Songs for Worship**, that Psalm 121 is referring to when it asserts that *the sun shall not strike you by day, nor the moon by night?* Apparently not, according to the explanation of this part of Psalm 121 in **Apocalypse Explained** 401.34. There it is stated that 'the sun' is used in that psalm to mean self-love, and 'the moon' to mean false ideas that are a product of that love. But the explanation in **AE** 401 goes on to say that since self-love is the source of all evil, and the latter gives rise to false ideas, the psalm adds the promise that *the LORD will keep you from all evil, he will keep your life (or soul)*. He constantly guards the life within a person, that person's inner and real self. He seeks to protect that life or soul from the permanent damage which can be done to it by the heat of the sun of self-centred love, and by the spiritually insane notions, the 'loonatic' illusions, that shine within a benighted trust in self. And this promise - *the LORD will keep you from all evil, he will keep your life* - is reinforced so to speak by the final words of the psalm,

The LORD will keep your going out and your coming in from this time forth and for evermore.

In conclusion let me quote the following description of Psalm 121 in a book containing the Hebrew text of the Psalms, together with an English translation and commentary, edited by Rev Dr A Cohen and published by The Soncino Press,

One of the most popular hymns in the Psalter, a perfect expression of trust in God, this Psalm has been on the lips of countless men and women through the generations when they felt the need of help beyond that which mortals could offer. It was probably sung antiphonally by the group of pilgrims as they approached the Holy City.

To be continued

The following is an extract from the address given by Rev Fred Elphick - **Editor**.

.....

In the beginning, the Lord creates us for a special function in heaven. And in the end, if we cooperate in the meantime, He has created in us a new heart and mind. These are perfected forever. Which is why men and women who lived in the world thousands of year ago and were received in heaven, are still in the bloom of youth and vigour. Each day is even more delightful than the last! That's what angels are. And this explains why, even in this world, old people are often amazingly youthful.

With these thoughts in mind then, we turn to the good friend we remember today, Tony James. The memory is bitter-sweet. Taken from us so suddenly, on Saturday 8th October 2005, we miss his physical presence that much more. The sound of his clear tenor in our services has barely died away. But we also remember his youthfulness. Many were surprised to learn, knowing his lively personality, that he was 84.

Hear now a brief outline of those 84 years, kindly provided by Rev Alan Lewin:

"Tony James was born on 4th Jan 1921 in Hammersmith. His father was a professional violin player and so the family moved around the country during his childhood. Tony worked in advertising as an artist. He served in the Commandoes during the war in North Africa and Italy - from which came his great love of Italy.

His first wife was Jean and they had a daughter Laura. In time, Tony had two grandchildren – Alfie and Kip. His first wife passed into the spiritual world in the late eighties and he married my mum in 1991.

They shared their New Church belief together and were passionately committed to the Writings, which they read together everyday. Mum and Tony also thought that people in the church ought to be reading the Writings and that a good place to begin would be the *Arcana Coelestia*. They asked me to write notes for each chapter, which Tony then reproduced. They distributed these to interested people throughout the world.

Tony also took many lay services and they both took an enthusiastic part in the distance learning when it was offered by the New Church College. They enjoyed their annual trip to Italy, each with a rucksack on their back and travelling by Eurostar and overnight sleeper.

They were really happy to discover the depth of New Churchmanship at Michael Church and it became a spiritual home for them."

The mention of Tony taking lay services reminds us of our Christmas celebration last year, when he was one of the readers. You could hear every word, read clearly and with beautiful expression. He was equally adept with the written word. Back in February, he had a letter in Lifeline magazine, berating someone who seemed to imply that Swedenborg approved of spiritualism. Here's a brief extract. (We can almost hear him saying these words):

"How can anyone who indulges in listening to spiritualist mediums claim to know Swedenborg? He who unequivocally warns of the dangers of attempting to contact the spiritual world."

After more in similar terms he concludes with a final salvo: *"Do we hold that the Writings are the considered opinions of Swedenborg? Or do we believe that they constitute the Lord's Second Advent Revelation? If the latter is not the case, the New Church is not the Church I joined as a junior member in 1937."*

So as we offer our love and sympathy to Rene and all the family, let's close on the note we began with. Newness of life is exactly what Tony is experiencing now. We can easily imagine his joy in being reunited with so many people who have passed on before him; on being amazed at how the sights and sounds – the stunning scenery of the other world – far exceed what he imagined. It must be like visiting a distant country that you learned about in school and waking up one morning with the realization that you are really there.

'Thou hast turned for me my mourning into dancing' sang the Psalmist, 'Thou hast put off my sackcloth and clothed me with gladness... O Lord my God, I will give thanks unto Thee forever.' **Psalm 30:11,12**

Change of Address

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News from the Churches

West Wickham

Taize by Candlelight

On the evening of Saturday, 29th October the West Wickham New Church was transformed by the glow of candle power. The Taize service was an outreach venture which we had not tried before. 'Taize' worship is multi-denominational with meditation, silence, song, prayer and optional circle dancing. A lot of planning and preparation was required and Elisabeth Brooks took the lead by writing personal invitations to about eight different churches within reasonable distance of our building. Her efforts soon paid off and she was pleased to recruit three volunteers, all from different denominations, who agreed to take part in the service. Before the service began the chairs were moved to form a circle around one large candle in the center. Well over a hundred candles were arranged around the building and the effect was to create a beautiful warm and peaceful atmosphere in which to worship.



The service was movingly led by Rev Gillian Gordon, and Marion Curry inspired us with her music. Twenty nine people attended and judging by the many compliments offered, everyone found it a most moving and worshipful evening. It was also most satisfying to realise that half of those attending were not New Church members. The theme of the service had been "The love of God" and the following words which we used during our worship summed up the feelings of us all:

*Come and fill our hearts with Your Peace,
You alone, O Lord, are holy.
Come and fill our hearts with Your Peace, Alleluia!*



On a Tuesday morning in early December Rev Gillian Gordon led a delightful informal service for mums and toddlers. It was much enjoyed by three toddlers, their mums, a grandmother and a few church members. Everyone was seated in a semi-circle around some beautiful hand made nativity scene figures which the toddlers were encouraged to handle. Gill kept the interest of the toddlers by telling them the nativity story whilst showing them some lovely pictures. The innocence of the toddlers helped to make this a most moving and heart-warming occasion.



I will be delighted to include pictures of events reported in Church Newsletters in the section 'News from the Churches' if you can arrange for someone to take a few pictures on a digital camera and email them to me. I can then add the picture to the text already in your newsletter. **Editor**

From the Governing Council

Once again Conference Trustees, Officers and the Senior Minister have met at Swanwick, for the first time using a meeting room in Lakeside. As we arrived a large Christian Aid group were sharing a last meal before leaving, to be replaced by a family gathering of some two or three hundred young adults and children. With the early bulbs already showing this Conference centre is busy as always.

The Governing Council's four priorities were high on the agenda. The current attractive design for the Purley buildings (see below) is with the local authority officers and it is hoped that planning permission will be granted in early February. Following the Derby meeting Revd David Gaffney has collated many exciting ideas and offers for the New Purley – there is much to look forward to. It was a delight to share in a unanimous decision to support Christine Bank as a new ordination student to begin full time work at the College this spring. Council members are determined to support the College and its Director of Studies, Revd Clifford Curry, in all ways possible to enable the training of new Ministry. Web development also needs support and was discussed at some length. Local church issues were presented with no big decisions to report on this occasion.

It was agreed to put further planning into the central recommendations from the Education initiative to which there was a high rate of quality replies. Council

members expressed their thanks to all who have so far taken part. There is much enthusiasm throughout the country with many offers of help. 2006 will be a year of continuing development and planning.

The programme for the 2006th Conference at Swanwick from July 24th to 28th is in its final planning stage, with the theme being 'The Heart of the Matter'. Planning is underway for a rather different 200th AGM from 30th July to 3rd August 2007. Please put these dates in your diaries so that you can take part.

Organisational work always has to be done: rules and handbooks, financial details and properties, workloads, responsibilities and legal issues. Currently child protection is foremost in the news and a prominent responsibility of the Council. Police checks are needed for everyone who has dealings with children. It is a simple matter and essential for all. If you need help or advice please contact Rev Rita Russell.

The long meeting finished with a feeling of optimism and with thanks to the Lord for the many people who are working for his church on earth. The spiritual lead of the Senior Minister ensures that the Lord is constantly before us and left the Lord with us, closing the meeting with Isaiah 55 verse 6.

Judith Wilson



The above picture shows the architect's sketch of the rear, south east, elevation showing the new-build extension as a continuation of that elevation and showing the multi-purpose room as the first of the new gables and then the new dining room. Each has matching windows, and the dining area has a decked balcony outside. The lower ground floor contains a possible games room and the boiler room.

This revised application is to be determined by the NWBC Regulatory Board on 6 February and the chief planner has recommended it for approval. The multi-purpose room is a rectangular shape and will provide greater flexibility than the earlier options.

For the latest position on the planning application visit: www.btinternet.com/~alanmisson/Lifeline/
And then follow the link under February 2006 for **Purley Chase Planning Application**

"ΖΩΗ"

As some of you will know, last year I became a grandfather for the first time. My new granddaughter has been given the lovely name Zoë; it is a name with a special significance for Christians because Zoë is actually one of the great New Testament words.

It is a Greek noun (written **ΖΩΗ** in capitals or **ζωη** in small case letters) and it means "life". In particular the word describes the vitality that characterizes all living things. It is of course, associated with the life of the body and is often used in that context, but in the Gospels Jesus gives the word a new and greater significance.

The word zoë was continually on the lips of Jesus. Some of the best-known examples of its use are as follows:

*"The gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to **life**"* Matthew 7:14

*"What must I do to inherit eternal **life**?"*

Mark 10:17

*"In him was life, and the **life** was the light of men"* John 1:4

*"I am the bread of **life**"* John 6:48

*"I am the resurrection and the **life**"* John 11:25

*"I am the way, and the truth, and the **life**"* John 14:6

All these uses of the word zoë teach us that life is much more than the vitality of the body. I have known many people whose body was weak and sick, yet within whom there burned a bright and vital spirit of life. The life within them clearly had a source other than the body for it was healthy even though their body was sick. The Gospel quotations above teach us that the Lord is the source of this spiritual life; he is also the food that sustains it and the guarantor of its continuation after the death of the physical body.

There are some people who dread the idea of eternal life. This is because their experience of life on earth has been bad. For them life has involved pain, or deprivation, or great sadness. When life is like this,

lacking any quality and joy, existence is an ordeal and the idea of eternal life becomes a terrible curse. However the zoë that Jesus offers is life of high quality, for it brings with it fulfilment, contentment, peace and joy. He makes this clear when he tells us,

*"I came that they may have **life** (zoë) and have it abundantly"* John 10:10

What is the quality in the life that Jesus offers that makes it so much better than the life that many experience in their daily existence? The answer lies in the following teachings: -

"Love is our life" Divine Love and Wisdom 1

"Love is the reality of life and wisdom is its consequent manifestation"

Divine Love and Wisdom 358

The loving life that Jesus offers to all who follow him is summed up in the words of the New Commandment,

"Just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another" John 13:34

The secret of abundant life is firstly to form a loving relationship with the Lord. His love for us is so deep and generous that, as soon as we open our hearts to him, he begins to fill us with the warmth and light of heaven. His life only becomes a reality for us, however, when we learn to show the same generosity of love towards our fellows. It is in using the new life that Jesus offers that we are able to inherit its satisfactions and delights. A new vibrancy begins to pulse through us and we come more fully alive. Such new life brings hope and delight even to lives that here on earth are sad or painful. It also embodies within it the gift of heavenly and eternal life. My prayer is that my granddaughter might come to inherit such life, but not her alone, I pray that we might all inherit it through our personal relationship with the Lord.

Rev Robert Gill

Missionary Society Annual Meeting

Kensington New Church

7pm Friday 17th March 2006

The meeting will begin with the formal business.
After this Rev David and Mrs Anne Gaffney will speak about the development programme at Purley Chase.
Anyone is welcome to attend and refreshments will be served.

Notices

Spiritual Growth Workshops 2006

Leader: Rev Michael Stanley

Theme: Healing and Wholeness

We shall be examining some of the illusions and mental blocks that prevent us from experiencing the healing power of the Lord's love.

Friday 28th to Sunday 30th April at Barnes Close, Worcestershire

Tuesday 15th to Thursday 17th August at Morley Retreat House, near Derby

Cost: around £70

Please contact Rita Russell, 58 Chain Lane, Littleover, Derby DE23 4DX
Email: rita.russell@generalconference.org.uk for up-to-the minute details and booking forms.

Gathering Leaves 2006

19-21 May 2006 at Temenos Conference & Retreat Centre



The Governing Council has approved the sponsorship of the air fares of a woman minister and a lay woman to attend this event. Accommodation is to be provided in local homes in West Chester.

The Council has asked Mary Duckworth as Senior Minister elect to be the minister.

Lay women are invited to apply by providing to the Chief Executive of Conference, Mr Michael Hindley, 59 Campernell Close, Brightlingsea, Colchester CO7 0TB, a summary on one A4 page of the benefits to them attending this spiritual retreat.

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