



Casting our nets on the right side of the boat

He said to them, "Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and you will find some." So they cast it, and now they were not able to haul it in, because of the quantity of fish. John 21:6

In the final chapter of John's gospel we find some of the disciples returning to their old life of fishing on the Sea of Galilee where their association with Jesus had first begun. In John's gospel this final chapter recounts the third appearance of Jesus after the resurrection. Remember what Jesus had said to them once before: "I will make you fishers of men" And so in the confusion and sadness of the days after the crucifixion the disciples return to their old way of life, as fishermen on Galilee.

When you look at the sea, full of fish you get a simple picture of the whole world, full of people. After all, don't we have the expression: 'There's a lot more fish in the sea?' And right at the beginning of his ministry, at Galilee, Jesus drew the disciples attention to the possibility of becoming fishers of men, throughout the whole world. But when you look at the sea, full of fish you also get a picture of the Word of God, full of eternal truths.

So here is Jesus appearing once more at Galilee to focus the disciples' minds on two things:

- To draw men and women from the world to the Lord
- To draw truths from the Word

And he speaks to us too.

We also must draw truths from the Word and in whatever way we can seek to draw others to the Lord.

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A birthday cake for an organist !



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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

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The disciples, led by Peter, go fishing but they catch nothing. Perhaps they had forgotten how to fish after three or more years doing something completely different. But they went fishing at night! There they were trying to catch fish in the sea of Galilee but all in the dark.

This is another perfect picture of how, although our faith can lead us to search the Word of God (Peter leads the fishing expedition), if we think we know all the answers, if we rely on our own understanding, then the Word will remain dark and obscure and we will fail to find any fish, we will not see the truth for what it really is.

But the morning comes:

And then the Lord himself suggests that they try fishing from the right side of the boat. Surprisingly, although they do not acknowledge the Lord, they follow his simple instruction and a miracle occurs, the nets become over-laden with fish.

The assumption is that that the first time around the disciples cast their nets from the left side of the boat and in the dark. Simply put the left refers to faith or truth while the right refers to charity or good. (See for example the parable of the Sheep and Goats in Matthew 25)

So we have another wonderful picture of how we can search the Word of God and fail to find enlightenment or how we can try to reach out to others to lead them to the Lord without success.

If we keep to the left and make our objective one of faith alone, if we seek truth for its own sake, or try to persuade others of the importance of our teachings in their own right we will fail, just as the disciples failed to catch any fish. We will toil all night and not catch anything.

What the Lord teaches here to the disciples and us as well is that our motive must be right sided. Our desire must be to seek in the Word truths that we can apply to life and which will change our hearts, and the same principle applies to others.

We must seek to show how the teachings of the Church can be applied to life and how they can change life for the better. Going fishing on the right side is all about the good of life, not the truths of faith.



And having made this initial step, getting our motives right, we are ready to recognise the Lord when he breaks bread. The Lord breaks bread with the disciples and they really know him, just as we can really know him as we share all the goodness he offers us with others.

The closing chapter of John's gospel teaches us a great deal about how the disciples were inspired and encouraged to go out into the whole world and preach the gospel.

To achieve this they needed to remember that it would be the Lord working through them who would achieve success and also that their motives would be to show how life could be different if the teaching of Jesus were lived out in practice.

What a powerful picture this also is of our discipleship.

We must acknowledge that any good we achieve is only from the Lord working through us and we must make sure our motives are the right ones.

Have we followed the Lord's simple instruction and cast our nets on the right side of the boat?

Alan Misson

New Church Children's Society Annual General Meeting

Saturday May 17th at 12.00 noon on the school platform of Derby New Church

The New Church both nationally and universally mourns the passing to the higher life of Rev Alan Hardy. I came to first know Alan in 1957 at the time that he was serving in the Merchant Navy. Gwen Hardy (née Smith) is my cousin so I claim a family association. Gwen, his wife of over 45 years, met Alan when they were both teenagers and they married in their early twenties. A steady and reliable church worker, he acted as a deacon and often represented Southend at the annual conferences.

On leaving the Merchant Service, Alan worked in industry in carpentry and metal fabrication and construction. He also put these skills to good effect at Purley Chase. It was in the early 1990s that Alan changed direction to study at the New Church College for the ministry. His pastoral fieldwork training was at the Burnley New Church. He was ordained in 1996 and elected to continue to serve at Burnley until 1998. There and since then Alan contributed much to church life, starting both a Spiritual Insights course and a fortnightly Prayer Group. He also visited and offered counselling at the Pendleside Hospice. Throughout all his ministries he displayed empathy; radiating kindness and a warm gentle sphere of influence.

In 1998 Rev Alan Hardy and Mrs Gwen Hardy moved to Brightlingsea, a small coastal town in East Anglia where have lived followers of the New Church doctrines since 1840 and before. Among them in those early days was one John Griggs, Gwen's great-great grandfather. His daughter Julia Griggs married Frederick Smith at the Brightlingsea Church on Christmas Day 1869. Subsequently they settled in Southend-on-Sea.

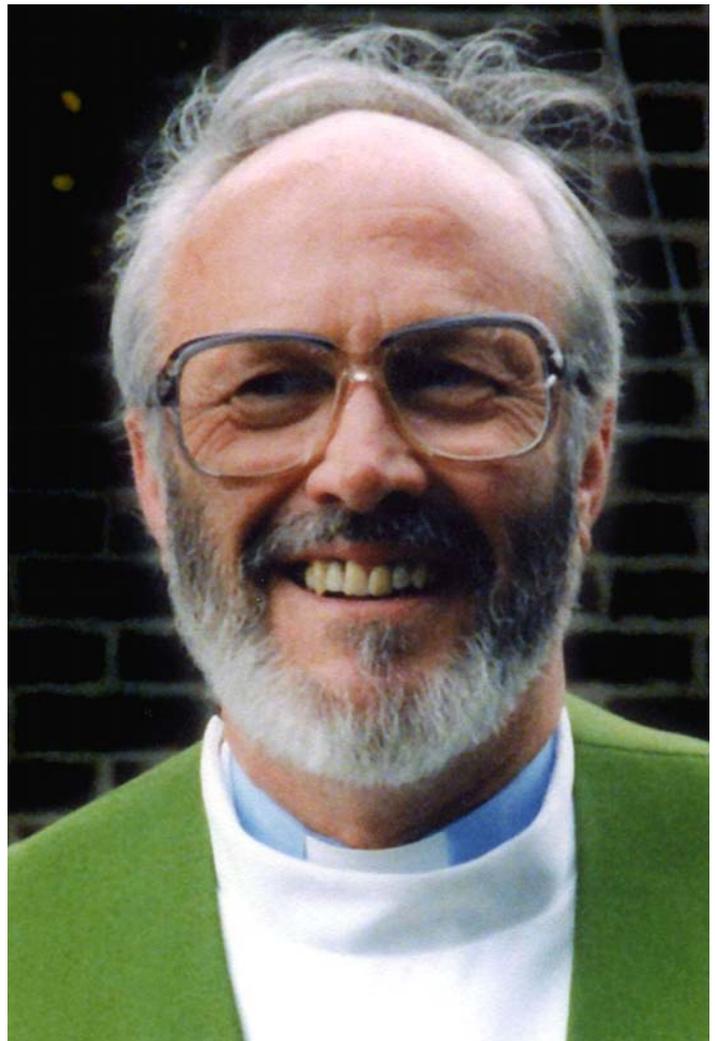
Since Brightlingsea is barely a twentieth of the size of Southend, Alan's move in 1998 to the smaller settlement was viewed a little askance by some of the Southend Society members – they ventured to suggest or claim Alan as their own. But the posting (like all things) was under Divine Providence and Alan was to find and plough particularly rich pastures at Brightlingsea – whilst he might have found Southend rather constraining. Alan gained both the deep affection of the Brightlingsea New Church faithful, but also wider acceptance by the diverse Christian and secular elements of the town. These included Churches Together, United Services and leading opening prayers at Town Council meetings. In due time he was to be "Recognised and Declared a Freeman of the Cinque Port Liberty of Brightlingsea".

Alan had a love of music, and interests in computer and digital photography. He had a light-hearted sense of humour. He is survived by Gwen, two daughters, a son and three grandsons. Services of Celebration of Alan's life were held both in Southend and Brightlingsea where tributes from a wide range of people were expressed.

More knowledgeable heads than mine acclaim Alan Hardy's addresses and sermons to be doctrinally sound. For my part I always gained spiritually from his services. He was a thoughtful committee member and excellent chairman, and if others were prone to digress, he certainly didn't!

Alan's last service before formal retirement from his resident ministry at Brightlingsea took place in May 2001. Thereafter he and Gwen 'retired' to Southend. I write 'retired' with some irony, as for seven years he continued to lead services at Southend and London, and visited Brightlingsea for a weekend each month to lead divine worship and enjoy fellowship with his former flock. Now he renews acquaintances in the Spiritual World. Parting is such sweet sorrow: that turn of phrase is fortified, as parting from loved ones is only for awhile.

Peter Cunningham

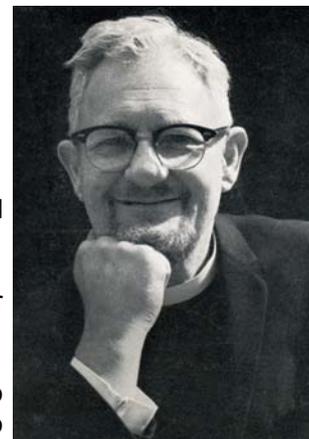


The Upper Room

From 11th May 1974 to 1st February 1975 the Herald, the forerunner of Lifeline, published a series of fifteen Meditations by Rev Brian Kingslake using the title - The Upper Room.

His meditations and the accompanying prayers seem as relevant today as they did over thirty years ago and are now re-published in Lifeline in the same series.

The term 'Upper Room' can be seen as representing the higher levels of our minds into which enlightenment from the Lord can flow when we seek to know the truth and wish to apply it in a life of usefulness to others. Such enlightenment involves our coming closer to the Lord just as the disciples came close to Him at the Last Supper.



Rev Brian Kingslake
1907 - 1995

5. "Spiritual Maturity"

READ The Beatitudes, Matthew 5: 1-12

The person who is spiritually mature is so little concerned with his own self-importance, and so secure in his sense of one-ness with the Lord, that nothing can throw him off balance. He is not hurt when people fail to appreciate him, or make snide remarks. He is not shy or self-conscious, nor does he dread being conspicuous. He is not afraid of making a fool of himself, for he knows that, separated from the Lord, he is a fool, or worse! He has nothing of his own wherein to trust, and his own contribution to any situation, if not inspired by the Lord, is worthless anyway. All that is valuable in him is from the Lord; and he has the absolute assurance that what is from the Lord in him is very valuable indeed, whether it is recognised by others or not! If circumstances go against him, and he suffers failure, pain or loss, he can always slip inwards into the presence of his heavenly Father. Thus he has immense endurance, and is never lonely or afraid. People recognise his inner strength, and come to him for support in their own troubles. Am I fully mature yet, as a God-filled Christian? What must my next step be?

PRAYER

Dear Father, I am ashamed when I realise how far I still am from achieving the ideal of spiritual maturity laid down in the Beatitudes and other parts of Your wonderful Sermon on the Mount. I still suffer too much from a sense either of inferiority or of superiority. Help me to be utterly content to live all my life from and with You.

Preston New Church Society

Closing service at 2 pm
Sunday, 27th April 2008

Service conducted by Rev Alan Lewin

Followed by an informal reception
Refreshments included

All friends invited

Please contact:

Lesley Hale email: lesleyhale@sky.com

Kildwick Open Day

Saturday 28th June

Further details will be provided in the June issue of Lifeline.



Atonement - 3

At the Ministers' Seminar in Autumn 2007 Rev Christopher Hasler gave three lectures on the Atonement, a theological concept that is of central importance to some Christians but which is at total variance with New Church Teaching. The lectures have now been edited and abridged for publication in Lifeline with the help of Rev Bruce Jarvis. Below you will find the third and final lecture.

Discrimination against the New Church?

In my first lecture I said that we (the New Church members and readers) start our journey to the cross from a very different angle than traditional theology. So much so, that we really have nothing in common in our understanding of the event. But I also reminded you that there have been recent stirrings of opposition to the orthodox view that the Father demanded a sacrifice in order to be able to forgive humanity. But of course, even this criticism still rests on the doctrine of three Divine Persons, so that it is still unacceptable to us. We also really have nothing in common with the traditional understanding of what Jesus actually achieved by his life - never mind as to who he really was!

I also suggested the possibility that our doctrines are strongly opposed from the spiritual world, mainly by diverting mankind's interest towards other attractions: either on falsely-based religions, or towards purely secular cravings such as drugs, sex, lust for wealth and power, celebrity status and inordinate interest in celebrities whose rise and fall seem to preoccupy most of the newspapers and magazines available on the stalls.

Who then has time for the insignificant and unknown New Church? It is worth noticing that even in the USA – where church attendance attracts 60% of the population, and there are no preferred state churches, even there, the New Church is a tiny minority and its growth is hardly noticeable. Some have adopted the American way of forming settlements and isolating themselves from the rest of humanity – and this works to some extent, but suggests a secret society. Here at home, we are not even very good at keeping our own families within the Church. So we often wonder in our own hearts, what is the future going to bring?

Perhaps I believe that the U.S. President Reagan was right, when he forecast, "You ain't seen nothin' yet!"

Certainly, the book of Revelation clearly promises persecutions, which will get stronger and more violent. Am I being paranoid? Have I depressed you enough? How can we cheer ourselves up? Where can we find redemption or have an Emmaus Experience during which we realise that the Lord has been with us all the time and teaching us that all these things that are coming to pass have been foreseen and well provided for?

Emmaus Experience

I had it some 60 years ago at the New Church College when we were studying Arcana Coelestia volume 2, particularly the inner meaning in Genesis chapter 12. This chapter is strictly the first historical chapter in the Bible after the early chapters which are pure parables of creation and the early stories of man's fall and the flood. They are all deeply significant, but in no sense to be treated as true history. If only the Arcana had been more widely read after its publication (1749-1756), the fundamentalist rigidity might not have taken root so deeply in people's beliefs.

Swedenborg explains that this story of the Call of Abram has a deeper inner sense which describes the childhood of Jesus and his slow realisation that he had some important mission to accomplish.

I mentioned earlier that there are a number of books and legends which claim to answer the questions about the unknown years in the life of Jesus and where he learnt the deep wisdom which clearly he attained. Books which describe that he travelled to Tibet, India and Egypt, and there are legends that he came to Glastonbury where he was taught by the Druids. In fact most Christian countries seem to have what amounts to folk stories about the time when Jesus and Peter had travelled through their country and put certain wrongs right.

There is something rather charming, even genuine in such legends, because they show that all Christian countries feel that the Lord belongs to them and knows of them. They can't be taken as historical evidence but they do carry an inner reassurance and comfort. Still the question remains: how did Jesus know and learn who he was, what his mission was? The answer is really so simple, that we ought to be ashamed for not realising it: He learnt everything he needed to know from the Word, the Hebrew Bible! He was born as a normal child, which means into ignorance and so had to learn everything since he had no instant knowledge or wisdom. He had to learn as you and I had to learn, otherwise there would have been no point to the incarnation if he wasn't truly human. And Genesis 12 begins to describe that process for us. But first, let me ask you this.

The Queen's Opening of Parliament

Imagine that you are watching the Queen riding in the

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golden coach of State for the opening of Parliament. The reporters are busy describing the scene. The question is this: What would you like to know? Whether on this busy day she rose up earlier than usual? Or what she had for breakfast; what is she wearing and which jewellery? This is how the commentators usually fill their time during the ride, and later the newspapers will go into far greater detail. This is the usual tittle-tattle of the media.

Now suppose I was in the position to offer you an insight into what she was really feeling and thinking. What does she make of Gordon Brown, or her previous Prime Ministers? Or the Leader of the Opposition, or the MPs in general. Or what about Prince Charles? Is she delaying her abdication for some deeply personal reasons? Now wouldn't that information hit the headlines!

How well do we know each other?

The more you ponder about it, the more you realise that we really know very little about each other and this is even true in marriage. Could you truthfully answer such questions as, "What *does* she / he really think about me? Is she / he happy or frustrated? Why is she / he looking so stressed and worried? What's going on?"

Do we really know each other? Have you even been struck with such thoughts? With the admission that this is said by a *man* (who is less perceptive than a woman) I believe that in this sense we are strangers to one another. And rightly so – we need to have our private thoughts and feelings without having them paraded before the world, including psychiatrists, the police, priests, judges and the judiciary in general, educators and politicians and even our own family. Otherwise, our life would not be our own and we could be manipulated and lose our inner freedom.

But there is one exception to this rule of absolute privacy. We are permitted a peep into one mind which does not need to hide anything from us. This is the mind of our Lord and the inner sense of the Bible is open to us as it was to Jesus when a child. That is the inner meaning of Gen 12. It describes the first sparks of awareness in the child when he was still very young.

And Jehovah said to Abram, "Go away from your land and the place of your nativity and from your father's house to the land that I will cause you to see. And I will make of you into a great nation, and I will bless you and I will make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonours you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed." Verses 1-3

The events described here and in what follows took place in history as they are recorded; yet the historical events as described are representative, and every word carries a spiritual meaning.

'Abram' is used to mean in the internal sense the Lord. 'Jehovah said to Abram' means a first awareness of all things. 'Go away from your land' means the bodily and worldly things from which He was to depart. 'And from the place of nativity' means bodily and worldly things that were more exterior. 'And from your father's house' means such as were more interior. 'To the land that I will cause you to see' means the spiritual and celestial things that were to be brought to view. (Swedenborg in Arcana Caelestia 1407)

In some ways, these words are very sad. They must have been sad for Abram. It is never easy to separate oneself from one's family and country and to go into the unknown. But in the case of the child Jesus, this inner urge, as yet hardly understood, was nevertheless a separation from all that was familiar, reassuring and 'homely'.

Try to imagine it: To be so uniquely alone and sensing the inner command not to get attached to anything that brought comfort and reassurance. His life was a life of constant separations from what belonged to him by birth through his maternal heredity.

These intimations came to Jesus with strengthening intensity and each demand was ever stronger and more pressing. It must have made him feel lonely, for as yet he could not fully understand his own inner divinity but he had to feel and eventually come to understand that he was different and had a mission. As yet this must have been only very dimly seen. But it is beautiful, as well as a great privilege to follow it in this and the following chapters which are full of separations, journeys into the unknown as he comes more and more to recognise the voice of Jehovah within himself.

Perhaps the strangest thing of all is that **we** should be told all this. That **we** should be given this astounding revelation of what Jesus' life was all about. But unless we learn about this, we shall never be able to understand the Atonement! Why did the Divine come to assume the human mind with all its faults and to begin to fill it with divine love, wisdom and mercy? There was no 'Immaculate Conception' otherwise Jesus could not have known human temptations. The Jewish heredity was an essential part of the whole process.

Yet it is a process in which we are also involved, and which we recognise. It is not unusual for us to feel lonely in childhood, or to daydream of some unrealised greatness that we want to attain. Think about your childhood dreams because they do reflect at least to some extent the stirrings of divine awareness and longing for greatness in every child. And suddenly, the whole idea of the Atonement takes on an entirely different character. It no longer feels strange and foreign. We can feel that divine hopes and dreams are not so alien to us.

The wonderful thing is that there was absolutely no need for a Second Person in the Trinity to experience and accomplish all this. The One Lord God, Jehovah God Himself, assumed that human body with all the

history of the Jewish people as his own heredity. That is why he needed the Word, which describes that history, with its many examples and warnings of how easy it is to lose control and freedom if we are not on our guard against the ever present encroachment of hellish desires of selfishness, lust for power and glory into our hearts. How beautifully these temptations are summarised in the 3 temptations in the wilderness and also in the history of enslavement, loss of land, loss of faith and loss of freedom!

We can also see how perfectly the Lord understands our own weakness and faults without judging us or rejecting us. As we get this great, privileged glimpse into his own inner life we feel so much closer to him, and, hopefully, towards each other. As I said earlier, we cannot fully look into each other's heart and mind, but we can accept each other in love and on trust.

Redemption and Salvation was not accomplished purely on the cross to settle some strange legal arrangement between unforgiving and wholly forgiving divine persons 2000 years ago. It is an ongoing living process which takes place every time we turn to the Lord and ask him to strengthen us in our weakness and errors.

To think about the Lord's childhood from genuine, not invented knowledge, to get a glimpse of what he thought, still in the human, yet having intimations of inner divinity, is a tremendous privilege. These thoughts are beautifully described in the long Psalm 119, which itself is based on the Hebrew alphabet, each stanza of 8 verse begins with the same letter of the alphabet. The Psalm is therefore all-containing: as we may say - from A to Z! So here is what we may be thinking of when we read:

*How can a young man keep his way pure?
By guarding it according to your Word.
With my whole heart I seek you;
Let me no wander from your commandments!*
v 9-12

*Teach me, O Lord, the way of your statutes;
and I will keep it to the end.
Give me understanding, that I may keep your law
and observe it with my whole heart.* v 33-34

*Oh how I love your law!
It is my meditation all the day.
Your commandment makes me wiser than my
enemies, for they are ever with me.
I have more understanding than all my teachers,
for your testimonies are my meditation.
I understand more than the ancients,
for I keep your precepts.* v 97-100

Such words would sound very boastful, but in the case of the Lord, he really did have far greater wisdom than any 'wise' man in the world!

*I hold my life in my hand continually,
but I do not forget your law.
The wicked laid a snare for me,
but I do not stray from your precepts.*

*Your testimonies are my heritage for ever,
for they are the rejoicing of my heart.*
v 109-111

This Psalm is a privileged glimpse into the inner life of our Lord while he was struggling with the human heredity he received through Mary. Thus he gradually and eventually fully restored the presence and power of the Divine in humanity.

The human race had turned itself entirely towards the world and even religions had become corrupt and dominated by selfish leaders. It was as if humanity had lost its inner receptors which should have been tuning in to heavenly outpouring of love, mercy and truth.

In his life, Jesus did not really change anything in the Divine, but restored in **humanity** the ability to 'hear the angels sing'! We can, if we wish, tune in to the sphere of heaven and turn off the turbulent influences of hell.

As we read the Gospels, there are passages which suggest that the Lord was different from the Father to whom he prayed and whose will he tried to do in everything he said and did. We must see that when his consciousness was dragged down into humanity's weaknesses, then he felt alone, because it was the human heredity which filled his consciousness. Yes he was afraid, since so much was at stake and he alone could turn the tide of the new flood overtaking humanity.

This again is similar to our experience since one moment we may feel very close to the Lord and our heart is joyful and warm. Then as easily something happens to us and we fall into utter despair and the recent closeness is gone. We are back in the pit of hopelessness. Heaven is no more, we begin to doubt everything that a moment ago we believed and were sure of. And yet, we are told that the Lord is never closer to us than when we are tempted, since without his unseen presence, we could not hold out for one moment.

The Lord had conquered all such human weaknesses and temptations, he completely identified with the Father and could say to the disciples:

*Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and
the Father in me? the words I speak to you I do
not speak on my own authority; but the Father
who dwells in me does the works. Believe me
that I am in the Father and the Father in me.*

John 14, 10

News from the Churches ...

The Church Mouse Lunch Club

I am afraid that it is not just a rumour - the lunch club will be ending in March. It was launched in February 1991 when 29 meals were served and we discovered how popular the home - made soup was! The aim was to provide a good meal at low cost for pensioners living near the church, a friendly social atmosphere in which to enjoy it, and some spiritual food for thought offered to them at the end by our Minister. It has been very satisfying to fulfil that aim and I have enjoyed it. Including this March, there will have been 188 Tuesdays when our team of lady volunteers have donned their aprons and beavered away in the kitchen. We have usually cooked and served around 40 three course meals at a session, and were very thankful for the installation of a dishwasher! I would like to record by grateful thanks to ALL those who have helped in any way over all the years. I am not going to name them for fear of missing someone out. There are some diners (and kitchen staff) who were there on the first occasion and are still coming! Sadly, some of the team feel it is time to hang up their aprons, and rather than lower our standards there seemed to be no other option but to finish.

From the Bournemouth Newsletter

Sunday Seekers Report, 2007

Sunday Seekers attendance has been fairly constant this year. We've had 9 girls and more recently 2 boys – 1 the brother of 2 of our girls and the other the grandson of Ann and Roy Thomason. The children have been following the New Church syllabus of lessons, using Junior Manual Year One. In July our very successful summer project took the theme of creation. The children made the most spectacular collages showing the record in Genesis of the seven days of creation. Unfortunately our Summer Fun Day was very wet, and had to take place indoors. Nevertheless a good time was had by all. November brought the start of preparations for Christmas, when the children used their handmade puppets to tell the Nativity story, and sang the carols they had practised, during the Christmas Family Sing-Along celebration. The Seekers must also be applauded for their excellent support for the Save The Children Fund which, with the help of everyone attending Family Services, saw a record contribution of £900!!

From the Chester Newsletter

Colours of the Rainbow

On Sunday 10th February our Sunday Club presented to the Church the 7 banners they had created during a special service 'Colours of the Rainbow'. As each colour was introduced and hung on the wall, the children explained the hidden meaning of each colour through stories, poems and bible readings.

The inspiration behind this project came from the Rev Clifford Curry's booklet 'Colours of the Rainbow' in which he explains the spiritual meaning behind the rainbow based on the teachings of Emmanuel Swedenborg.



"The mystical importance of the rainbow is intuitively perceived by almost everyone. It brings out the childlikeness in us ... the 'look what I've found' spontaneous desire to share. It inspires a sense of joy and optimism, linked to another childlike quality - wonder." - Clifford Curry

The seven colours of the rainbow describe the wholeness of a person, when that person's potential has fully opened out. Each stage of the process of regeneration is represented by a new colour developing out of the one before. The hearts on our banners highlight this journey. You will notice, for example, that the original red heart gradually reduces in size as we start to understand the importance of others and God's love instead of our own selfish needs.

From the Accrington Newsletter

90th Birthday Party

On the 2nd February, Revd. Robert Gill and his wife Nan invited the whole Paisley Society to an "Open Day" in their home. Although this allowed us to enjoy seeing their impressive new kitchen extension, the main purpose was a surprise 90th birthday party for Dorothy Turner whose birthday fell on 1st February.

Dorothy has made a valuable and probably unique contribution to the New Church dating back from before the last war. Having only recently stood down from her role as Church Secretary Dorothy continues to attend all the Committee Meetings. Dorothy also probably holds a record for 'attendance' as she is our organist and still plays for the service every Sunday. She has the respect, affection and admiration of everyone in the Society and her birthday party was a happy occasion which allowed us to express our gratitude to her.



Nan Gill provided an outstanding range of food and drink for us all to enjoy and used her skill and artistry to make and decorate a wonderful cake for Dorothy – complete with organ, flowers and music.

From the Paisley Newsletter

Church Income

As most of you probably know, the basic rate of Income Tax goes down from 22% to 20% in April. This means that the church receives less relief from your gift aid donations. At present, every £100 donated provides us with a total of £128.20. From April every £100 will produce £125. This means that gift aid donations will need to be increased by 2.6% for the church to maintain the same level of income.

Although salaries and pensions generally increase with inflation, the income of the church tends to be static as people's donations remain the same, year in year out. During the six years that I have been treasurer, most people have contributed the same amount. With inflation at around 3% a year, this effectively gives a net decrease of over 18% in this period.

To counteract the above and bring us back to the level of income we had in April 2002, people need to increase the contributions by one fifth. I am, therefore, asking everyone to review the donations they make and to consider whether they are able to make an appropriate increase.

From the Derby Newsletter

From the Writings ...

Seeing that 'the morning' in the proper sense means the Lord, His coming, and so the approach of His kingdom, what else is meant by 'the morning' becomes clear, namely the rise of a new Church, for that Church is the Lord's kingdom on earth. That kingdom is meant both in a general and in a particular sense, and indeed in a specific sense:

- the general being when any Church on earth is established anew;
- the particular, when a person is being regenerated and becoming a new person, for the Lord's kingdom is in that case being established in him and he is becoming the Church;
- and the specific, as often as good flowing from love and faith is at work with him, for this is what constitutes the Lord's coming.

Consequently the Lord's resurrection on the third morning, Mark 16: 2, 9; Luke 24: 1; John 20: 1, embodies in the particular and the specific senses the truth that He rises daily, indeed every single moment, in the minds of regenerate persons.

AC2405:8 Commentary on Genesis 19:15

From the Governing Council

It is difficult to know where to start when reflecting on the meetings held from 11th to 13th March in the comfort and security of Purley Chase. In my time on the Council we have not experienced such depths of pain nor such high points, so I suppose that I should just tell you about both and the in-between as well!

Many things come to the Council which are outside our control. Ever changing laws continue to force us into 'hard places' which feel uncomfortable and necessitate further legal advice to answer concerns. With our faithful and unflinching commitment to the exciting and increasingly successful renovated Purley, and some unsold properties, it is not surprising that we are experiencing a cash flow problem. This makes some decisions difficult but our priorities must still be met and a 4% pay rise has been agreed to ensure that standards are maintained.

There is other good news as well. Following her ordination at Conference Chris Bank will begin full-time ministry at the Keighley Church and a trial scheme has been agreed for 'recognised lay pastors' based on a recommendation from the Ministry. Subsidies enable a family Conference to take place again; there will be children and young people of all ages, their parents, grandparents and many others - with another full and varied programme to look forward to.

Nevertheless we need to respond to cash flow problems. It was agreed to look at expenditure but, more positively, to find ways to encourage greater income. A group is concentrating on this and you will have the opportunity to respond to some creative results of their work before long!

Council members are not removed from the grief and pain of many in the church as it shrinks, indeed all are involved in the experience to varying degrees. Churches have been visited, CAM was set up some years ago and continues to offer effective support and requests for help have been answered whenever possible.

Inevitably, however, some buildings are no longer viable with all the sadness which this brings. It was really good news to learn that Preston members are moving into newly rented premises, feeling refreshed and excited having taken this hard decision. All council members send their very best wishes to them for their renewal.

The Council is considering the future of the Conference and strategies to achieve this. We are asking how we might try to fulfil our mission statement in the next few years. Council members recognise that they are not the only people to answer this and wish to instigate discussions within the Conference. Consequently, at the start of the second 24 hours and after a short break, members reconvened to welcome three of the four current ordination students. Sadly Becky Jarrett was unable to be present but her vision was heard. Chris Bank, Jack Dunion and Helen Brown shared in small-group and very preliminary brain-storming where all the restrictions, concerns and need for results or decisions were let go. The sense of release for council members was a blessing. The result was startling. The sphere was wonderful. We listened to each other and seeds began to be stirred. It was just a tentative beginning of what must be a long process involving many people. Whole new areas were glimpsed through the visions of the students. If you would like to listen to the students and share in the strategic planning process please come to Conference from 27th July. Details will be sent out soon and appear in Lifeline.

Let us all pull together to grow the Lord's church on earth in whatever way we can. He assures us that wherever two or three are gathered together in his name he will be with them. We aim to offer a rich variety of ways in which his people can gather - the rich variety of heaven - here on earth.

Judith Wilson

Honorary Life Member of Conference

At its May meeting the Governing Council will vote for a Member of Conference to be recommended to be appointed as Honorary Life Member by the Conference annual meeting in July 2008. Any member, society or group wishing to suggest names for consideration by the Council should send them by the end of April to:

Michael Hindley

Chief Executive of The General Conference of the New Church
59 Campernell Close, Brightlingsea, Colchester, Essex CO7 0TB
or by email to michael.hindley@generalconference.org.uk
or by telephone him on 01206 303800.

Spiritual Wisdom - a 2008 makeover

The world of computing and the internet has come a long way since the initial design for the Spiritual Wisdom web site was established in 2004. One of the most significant factors in the design was the screen size used to view the site. Back in 2004 more than 40% of computers had screens with a size of 800x600 pixels and around 50% had screen sizes of 1024x768 or over. It was essential, then, to design the site to meet the needs of both popular sizes so the design proceeded based on the smaller screen size of 800x600.

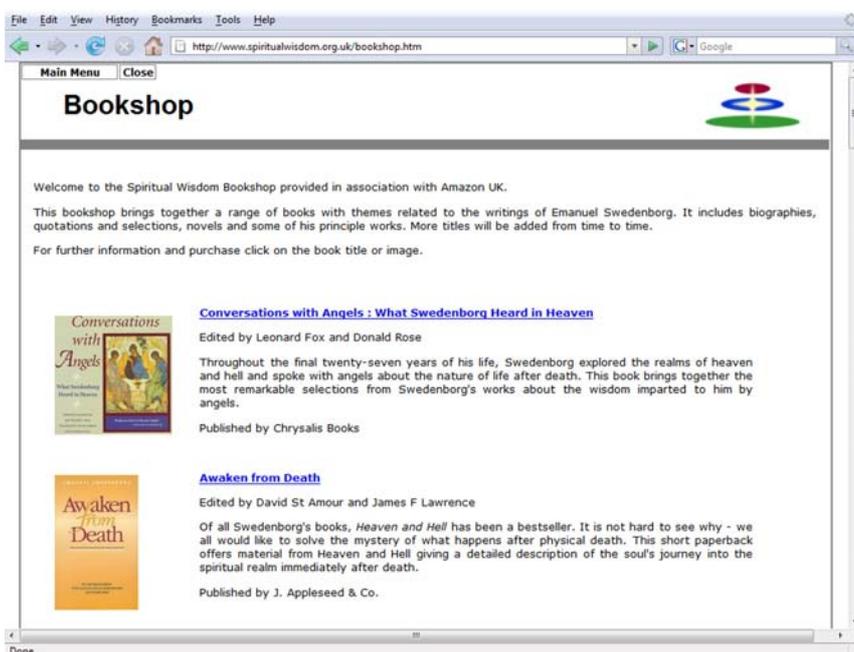
But the situation has rapidly changed with larger and more detailed screens coming on the market for lap tops and desk top machines. By the end of 2007

the number of people using a screen size of 800x600 had dropped below 10% - a redesign of Spiritual Wisdom began to look essential to reflect the changing market.

The redesign has now been completed with the aim of the site being best viewed in 1024x768 pixel screen size. The result is that the declining number of users of 800x600 screens will need to scroll the screen rather more than they would have in the past. During the redesign the opportunity was taken to improve some of the technical aspects of the site and the visual appearance and it is hoped that the majority of viewers will appreciate the changes.



www.spiritualwisdom.org.uk



A year ago a 'bookshop' was opened on the Spiritual Wisdom web site in partnership with Amazon UK and at no cost. However the benefit of using Amazon is the fact that every time a book is ordered through the Spiritual Wisdom Bookshop Amazon pay the General Conference a small referral fee.

Now although the Bookshop has been visited a reasonable number of times only 42 books have been ordered and delivered making a total of only £26 in referral fees for Conference.

There are now 21 books in the Bookshop so take a look and see if there is something you need. The prices are very good, delivery from Amazon is usually excellent and Conference directly benefits.

Go to the Spiritual Wisdom web site and click on Bookshop at the bottom of the page.

Young Adults Weekend

On Friday 25th January, a group of twelve young adults met for a weekend at Purley Chase, joined by two 'young at heart' adults and the leader, Rev Clifford Curry. The subject of the weekend was 'Christianity for a changing world; the four individual gospels', which seemed most fitting as there were people from a number of different denominations. It was lovely to have a couple of people who had not been to Purley before as part of the group.

On the Saturday morning we were introduced to the different gospel writers, and who they might have been writing for. This was new to many of us, and it was interesting to discover why stories which are so familiar to us may have been written in different ways. We thought about how many of us live with guilt in our lives, and carry it behind us like a truck full of rocks, and we thought about how to let go. We also did a Myers-Briggs personality test, which was illuminating to say the least! After an afternoon of walking and fierce competition in the games room, we carried on by trying to work out which personality type each gospel writer may have been, and how that type of writing may suit different groups of people. We compared the first and last chapters of Matthew with the same in Mark, and the general consensus was that Mark moved at a much faster pace!

Our different personalities certainly showed through in the evening when our hosts Helen and Dan Curry gave us the opportunity to show our artistic side by ripping up pieces of newspaper into particular shapes in the dark, and by creating a self-propelled vehicle out of toilet rolls, washing-up bottles and straws.



After a sacramental service, we carried on with our discussions on the Sunday morning. Cliff was brave enough to ask for questions the day before, and we covered a variety of topics such as laughter in heaven, and the differences between New Church and other Christian beliefs on sin. It was good to hear opinions from other Christians, and to realise how much we have in common, as well as looking at the differences. One conclusion that was drawn was that variety is important in the heavens.

We had a lovely weekend, and our thanks must go to Clifford Curry for leading us, Helen and Dan Curry for organising and hosting the weekend, and to Dave and Anne and the team at Purley for making us so welcome and for feeding us so well!

Becky Jarratt

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