



## A Latin Word of Rare Beauty

One of the jewels in the crown of the New Church is its teaching concerning conjugal love. Yet many people tell me that this is a teaching which can sometimes leave them feeling puzzled, unhappy or even excluded. Perhaps this is not surprising as conjugal love relates to our most private, intimate, and powerful feelings. Many live with guilt, disappointment, or sadness in relation to these deep feelings towards the opposite sex. Despite this, I do firmly believe that conjugal love is an important gift to us all and that everyone's life can be enriched by its sphere and influence.

I should perhaps explain the word 'conjugal'. You will not find it in a standard English dictionary and many assume that it is a misprint for 'conjugal'. In fact it is not a misprint, but a deliberate choice made by many translators of Swedenborg's Latin. The eminent Cambridge scholar John Chadwick gives the following explanation in his translator's introduction to the book 'Conjugal Love' [Swedenborg Society 1996 edition]:

*"Latin has a regular form conjugalis which Swedenborg discarded in favour of the very rare conjugalis. His reason for doing so has been much debated, but the obvious fact is that conjugalis is the adjective derived from conjugium 'marriage' and it is thus distinct from conjugalis which is derived from conjux 'a married partner'."*

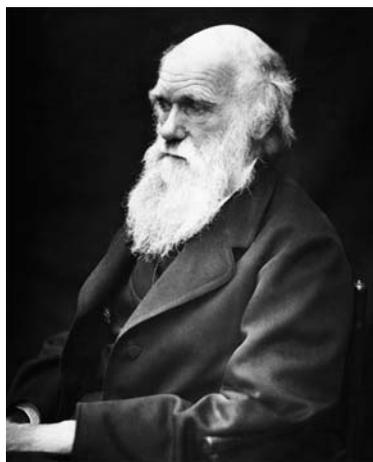
Does this mean that conjugal love is an ideal that can be pursued even in the absence of a married partner? I think it does; let me try to explain how this can be. The origin of conjugal love does not lie in the physical union of a man with a woman, for the remarkable teaching is that,

*"Conjugal love is the product of the marriage of good and truth" Conjugal Love 61*

This concept of a marriage union between good and truth is familiar to most New Church folk for it lies at the heart of the regenerate life. No good we do is genuine unless it is in complete accord with spiritual truth, and no truth we know is alive unless it is wedded to goodness in our loving and our actions.

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**Do you recognise  
this example of our  
species?**

**See page 5**

**March 2009**  
Number 371

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

All who seek to be true to their religion are by implication at work marrying good to truth in their daily living. This is just as much so with the single, divorced, or widowed person as it is with someone who is married. Indeed, it can be equally so with the person locked in an unhappy marriage to an abusive or unfaithful spouse. When good and truth are married together in a person's mind and life he or she is linked directly with the Lord, and angels of heaven are in close attendance. The necessary conditions for the experience of conjugal love are now met in that person and such love is coming into being with them from the Lord, either in an actual marriage or in potential.

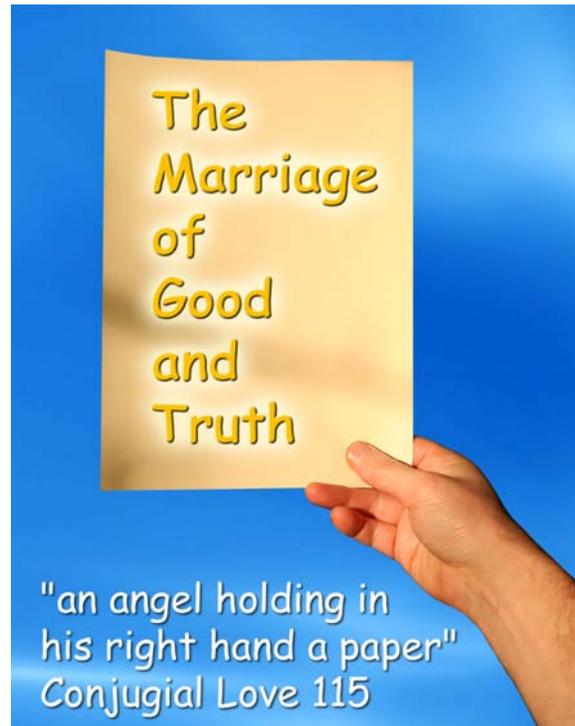
Whilst it is true that the full experience of conjugal love will only be enjoyed in a marriage relationship, nevertheless many of its blessings fill the hearts of those who respect it and long for it in their own lives. For anyone who, despite the lack of a marriage partner is faithful to the conjugal ideal, the Lord is quick to provide compensations and heavenly blessings. Within their hearts and minds grow wisdom, innocence, peace and an abiding trust in the Lord's providence. As a result their outward life is orderly, pure and full of kindness; they make good friendships and are held in respect by right thinking people. For them marriage may be delayed awhile but the promise of it is assured:

*"The Lord provides like-minded partners for those who desire truly conjugal love, and if this is impossible on earth, He provides for it in the heavens."* Conjugal Love 229

The ideal of conjugal love is one that all New Church people can aspire to and share in. Indeed it is a beautiful gift to everyone who is becoming regenerate through the faithful practice of their religion. In a world which often appears to undervalue the sanctity and importance of marriage, we can seek to make a truly prophetic witness. We can express our support for

marriage and uphold its sanctity in all our words and actions. We can regulate our personal behaviour by means of the principles that define conjugal love. Lives lived in such a way are lives of rare beauty, with close ties to heaven and links with the Lord. This is one important way in which we can each help to strengthen the witness of the New Church upon earth.

**Rev Robert A Gill**



## Debt Disaster Theft

With all the millions, billions and trillions being spent to put right our battered economy little has been said about how the money could have been better spent providing food, water and a roof over their heads for the millions suffering in poverty around the world.

We got ourselves into the credit crunch, or should it be the debt disaster, by a mixture of irresponsibility, greed and possibly corruption both at an individual and a national level. And now we are spending, and already losing, an unbelievable amount of money that could have been put to good use elsewhere in the world.

On April 16th 1953, in Washington DC, President Dwight D Eisenhower gave a speech on the subject 'The Chance for Peace'. During his speech he said:

*"Every gun that is made, every warship launched, every rocket fired signifies, in the final sense, a theft from those who hunger and are not fed, those who are cold and are not clothed. This world in arms is not spending money alone. It is spending the sweat of its labourers, the genius of its scientists, the hopes of its children."*

We could perhaps paraphrase his words in the modern context by saying that –

*"Every bank saved, every toxic debt written off, every fortune made by 'short' selling, is in the final sense, a theft from those who hunger and are not fed, those who are cold and are not clothed."*

What have we done?

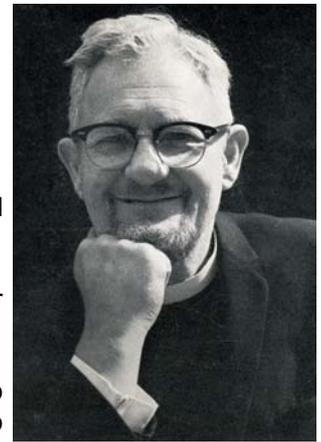
# The Upper Room

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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

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## 13. Being Tempted of the Devil

READ Luke 4:1-13

If we were never exposed to evil, we should not develop resistance to it, but we would remain weak and flabby, unworthy of our heritage as children of God. So from time to time the Lord allows evil spirits to assault or allure us. They stir up filthy lusts, envy, resentment, indignation, self-love, self-pity, putting all kinds of nasty ideas into our heads. At the same time they cunningly try to make us think that these evil thoughts and affections are our very own and that we are responsible for them ! In so far as we accept them as our own, they indeed become our own, in which case they will eventually destroy us. But if we can realise the true origin of the temptations which assault us, and turn the whole situation over to the Lord, then the evil spirits are powerless to harm us. Eventually they will leave us and go somewhere else, and we shall be all the stronger for the encounter. In this way comes spiritual growth. "Get thee behind me, Satan!" said Jesus. I can say the same in His strength. Am I ready to say it whenever the need arises?

PRAYER

Help me, dear Lord, to snap out of my evil moods and tempers, realising that the 'me' that is horrible and nasty is not the real 'me' but a false character imposed upon me from Hell. Lift me free of it, I pray, and may I remain unscathed by the experience, waking up into reality as from a bad dream.



"Ponder, then, whether a spider that is weaving a web with the utmost skill is thinking in its tiny head, 'I am going to lay out threads in this sequence and then stabilize them with perpendicular threads so that my web doesn't fall apart when the air shakes it violently. At the outermost ends of threads that run in to the centre I will fashion a seat for myself. There I will sense if anything comes in and will hurry to the centre. For example, if a fly flies in and gets caught, I will quickly go in and wrap it up and it will become my food.'"

**True Christian Religion 335:3**

To put this quotation in context please read the whole of Swedenborg's fourth memorable occurrence as described in TCR 335 - Editor.

# A Winter of Discontent!

Throughout the winter we have been plunged into a period of deep global economic recession. Everyone is beginning to feel, or suffer from its effects. But what of the spiritual recessions that it mirrors? Who talks about that, or even notices when such happens?

It seems that economic cycles of rise and fall are inevitable. No one knows how to prevent them. So also with the cycles of the seasons, and the intellectual, emotional and physical rhythms of the body. Such rhythms are reflected in the Bible in the recurring cycles of feast and famine, along with the rise and fall of the people's faith and trust in God. All such rhythms are clearly here to stay - in fact, they are an integral facet of all created life.

The problem is the occurrence of extreme cycles with their potentially very destructive consequences. Can they be avoided? It is generally agreed that the intensity of the current economic downturn has been fuelled, if not actually caused, by inordinate greed - where getting more has never been enough, but has been allowed to spiral destructively out of control.

*"Take heed and beware of covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of one's possessions."* Luke 12:15



Part of Rembrandt's painting of the 'Parable of the Rich Fool' from Luke 12:13-21.

There is a recurring basic spiritual problem that lies behind the occurrence of all great downturns - that of the human tendency to forget and ignore the one Giver of all that is good - our loving Creator God. Isn't it the case that it is when we are at our most successful and things are going well, that we most tend to forget where all our strength and power to achieve come from? When everything is going so well it can seem that we don't need God. If things continued to keep going well, our realization of our dependence on God would recede further and further into the mists of mythology - or at best become no more than mere lip-service. As the Word puts it, we may then in effect be saying to ourselves,

*"My power and the strength of my hands have produced this wealth for me."*  
Deuteronomy 8:17

Spiritually, as human beings, we all tend to be at our most vulnerable when "the sun is shining", rather than "when it rains". Downturns, in the cycles of our life - whether material, natural or spiritual, can actually help to keep us from becoming too complacent, confident and arrogant in our own capabilities. They can help turn us back to reunite with the Lord, as our Creator and eternal Sustainer. The Lord knows this, of course, and reminds us,

*"When you have eaten and are satisfied, praise the Lord your God for the good land he has given you. Be careful that you do not forget the Lord your God.."* Deuteronomy 8:10,11

Cycles are inevitable and even essential, But great downturns can be avoided by moderation in all things. Any period of recession is an opportunity for us to make up for our tendency to forget in times of plenty. It is a time to remember how the Lord works in us and through us, and to return to the Lord humbly, contritely, and with renewed thankfulness and trust in him as our only eternal Rock.

*"But remember the Lord your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth"*  
Deuteronomy 8:18

May we all, despite the current economic recession, continue to feel blessed by the Lord in countless other ways.

**Rev Michael Stanley**

# Fighting for the Truth

*And God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the seas and over the birds of the air and over the cattle and all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth".*  
Genesis 1:26

You wouldn't think that this verse could cause so much argument in the world today. Yet it has. It is 200 years since Charles Darwin was born and 150 years since he published his book on the '*Origin of the Species*' in which he set out the theory of the evolution of all living creatures including ourselves. In David Attenborough's TV programme about Darwin, he quoted this verse as causing 'all the trouble'. What trouble?

The word he objects to is 'dominion'. In his view, this has given scriptural 'carte blanche' to Man's use of the whole plant and animal worlds. It has allowed free rein to the misuse of nature, leading ultimately to the exploitation of forests and, ultimately, to climate change. The Christian Church's defence of this verse from Genesis has been weak. At best, the church has pointed out that later in the Genesis account of Creation, Man was placed in the garden of Eden to look after it, not to exploit it. The creationists' insistence that the 1st chapter of Genesis is the absolute truth of how all creation on this planet came about has been even more irrational in its presentations.

What ARE we to make of it all?

I like David Attenborough - he has made some wonderful television programmes showing us wonders of the natural world that we could never see for ourselves. Despite his avowed atheism, he has shown us wonderful secrets of our Lord's Creation. He has been the means, however unwitting, of revealing the amazing power of Divine Providence. When great men and women make pronouncements which challenge our ideals, it causes disquiet to cherished beliefs. It is very hard fighting for the truth, yet it must be done!

When will people understand and accept that the account of creation in Genesis is NOT and never was intended to be about the origins of life on this planet?

SOME - too few - have realised that it is a wonderful Divine parable about you and me! It describes in outline the process of how we can become angels. It is the preface to what the rest of the Word describes in great detail. This deep spiritual fight has nothing to do with the theory of Evolution of plant and animal life in this world. Charles Darwin was mostly correct in his observations and deductions although another man anticipated his findings by some years. The concept of the 'survival of the fittest' can be applied to all life including businesses and even churches. The New Church doctrines have no problems with this. It has problems when men use the

Word to argue that the Genesis account of Creation isn't true or has no bearing in this modern world. So what is this verse all about?

What is mankind to have 'dominion' over? Remember, this is happening on the 6th day of Creation - very late in the development of an angelic nature. Each 'day' describes a progression from being completely self-orientated to being completely Lord God orientated - from lesser enlightenment to greater enlightenment 'The evening and the morning was the first day' and so on. Spiritual days go from knowing and doing less to knowing and doing more for our Lord. Our days go from getting out of bed to getting back into bed at night.

In Swedenborg's day most only reached the 1st day and scarcely anyone reached the 6th and 7th days. Let's hope that things are better now!

Our Lord starts with us in a very self orientated state, spiritually 'void and without form'. We have all sorts of bad traits within us 'our beasts of the spirit' be it greed, lust, craving for what others have, telling lies and many more. Slowly, too slowly all these inclinations of our own hearts have to be transformed into being content with what we have; not telling lies - then telling the truth - isn't that a long process! The most famous example of this in literature is Ebenezer Scrooge in 'A Christmas Carol'. He changes from being a miserable, mean miser at the start into a happy man of great generosity at the end of the story.

Our Lord suppresses our evil desires and skewed notions and replaces them with truer ideals and a desire to help people around us. It is a very long process with many trip-ups along the way. These new ideals and loves are the spiritual fish of the seas, birds of the air, cattle according to their kinds and every living creature that creeps that our Lord gives us to rule over in this world! These new qualities of spirit given to us on this 6th day of creation are what our Lord gives us to have 'dominion' over

BE not discouraged when illustrious and clever people ridicule the Word of God.

Be not discouraged when church leaders put up such feeble arguments to rebuff the ridicule.

The time is coming - albeit slowly - when the spiritual messages within the stories of the Word WILL BE UNDERSTOOD!

There is a very long fight ahead of us. Do not despair. It may take generations before greater understanding of these wonderful messages comes about. Meanwhile give eternal thanks to our Lord that they have reached us!

**Geoffrey Bentley**

# United Search for Divine Providence

## Session 5



### **A person should remove evils from his life and only then can the Lord remove evils from a person's inner self.**

#### **The 2nd Law of Divine Providence**

– this Session is in 7 subsections (DP 100-128)

An elderly couple moved to a neglected cottage and garden. Both worked very hard, and after 6 months everything looked lovely and the garden was blooming. A vicar went past and said, "How beautiful! It's wonderful what the good Lord can do!" The old man replied, "You should have seen what it was like when He had it on His own."

No, this is not disrespectful; rather it puts in a nutshell the main lesson of this Session. When we work with the Lord, then beautiful things will happen. We need to be pulling out the weeds! Read Matthew 7:15-23 and 23:23-28. Both are important!

#### **1 Every person has an internal and external of thought. (DP 103-105)**

This is challenging teaching! We all have an inner, secret self and an outer thought by means of which we communicate with the outside world. We are invited to examine our real, inner feelings and thoughts and compare them with what we say or do in the outer world. Are they the same or are they different? Let this become your inner reflection for this month! Watch yourself to see if your the inner and outer selves differ. Unless we do this, how can we ever possibly improve ourselves?

#### **2 The quality of our inner thinking dominates the outer. (DP 106-110)**

Not an easy section to read, but it gives us an insight into how our mind functions and how the two opposing loves strive for domination: love of others versus love of self. So we are invited to analyse something that is very secret and private. The inner always rules the outer and that is the image we present to the world. Indeed, we ourselves can be beguiled by the outer image and judging by our actions begin to feel we are benevolent and fine people. Hence in 109 we are asked to look deeply into the inner motivation and our outwardly 'generous' personality. What is our real 'end-in-view'? It is well argued in 109 in which we learn that we appoint a sort of Deputy, or Stage Manager, to present us to the

outside world as a charming, reliable person even while we are hiding selfish motives. Is this unfair? "Know thyself!" is the answer.

But how marvellous when the inner and outer are in harmony, when the love towards others is as strong as the love of self, since both are necessary for a balanced life.

#### **3 The inner self cannot be purified while the outer is in evils. (DP 111-113)**

Clearly, outer evils are an obstruction to any inner change, so these paragraphs may appear discouraging. But let us see them as a celebration of our human ability to change things for the better! We can put many things right so that the Lord can be more immediately present. We can switch off obscene programmes! Be more understanding and forgiving towards 'difficult' neighbours! Be polite to people who are rude! This is a marvellous power given to us by the Lord and is a perfect example that when we act well in our outward life, then the Lord can change things in our inner self. The Lord can't make our garden beautiful if we do not start pulling out the weeds, (see again 107) So, let's get on with it! Read also the Lord's strong words in Luke 13:1-5.

#### **4-6 The Lord can't remove the evils in our life unless we cooperate with Him. (DP 114-122)**

For centuries the Christian Church has been caught up in a doctrinal conundrum. Quite rightly it has taught that we should acknowledge and confess our sins, especially before partaking the Holy Supper. On the other hand, the Church has also taught that our sins have been cleansed by the sacrifice on the cross. The difficulty arose because the Church had divided the Godhead into 3 separate persons and only God the Father can forgive our sins. In Divine Providence it is pointed out that we should look only to the Lord Jesus Christ Who is the incarnate God (Who can only be one) and is the Source of all life and forgiveness. What blocks His forgiveness is not some doctrinal conundrum but purely our own refusal to see our faults and to repent of them. We must make the change happen – that is what this session is all about.

A little warning in 117 explains that many people simply do not know that they are in evils, and therefore leave things alone. Please think deeply about this!

But why go on and on about it? Because our spiritual life depends entirely on our decision to recognise that left to ourselves, we shall remain in our depraved and

selfish state and we shall never see the need to do anything about it. Yet what comes through is the realisation that the Lord has complete respect for our freedom of thought and action. It is our responsibility – it is what makes us human and different from the animal kingdom of nature. It is our human potential. Read the Beatitudes with this thought in your mind: Matthew 5:1-12 and verses 43-48; also 6:1-4, 16-18.

**7 It is the continual endeavour of the Lord to unite us with Himself, in order to give us the joys of eternal life. (DP 123-128)**

This paragraph (123) makes an appeal to our common sense with respect to the belief in God. How could God be three distinct persons? Yet from our own experience and common sense we know that we are a trine of soul, body and activity: thus we are an image of the one personal God and there is no other to whom we can turn.

The next paragraphs 124-127 may seem a bit difficult, but what they teach is that when the Lord approaches us, He never acts separately on a single part of us, but on the whole person. Consider this: when the hells tempt us, they do the opposite and concentrate their efforts on single issues: sex, riches, celebrity status and so on. In these battles we just can't conceive of any consequences of our actions. We must have what we

crave! The Lord takes an eternal view and preserves our inner freedom. So much of what He says appears repetitive. It makes me think of a loving mother who keeps 'nagging': "Have you done your homework, brushed your teeth, taken money for the bus?" Oh stop going on, Mum! As we get older we learn about the anxiety of love towards those we love. That is how it is with the Lord's love for us – whoever we are!

He goes on reminding us, and in 128 we have an example of this.

**Prayer and Reflections**

Use passages in 128 and read around them to make them a bit longer and realise the Lord's love and concern for you, as well as His respect and care that you should have the right to choose. If He appears 'nagging' or repetitive, try to sense the love behind it and compare it with your love for your family. Sense the beauty of it and respond with your love to Him. Again, there is no need for words; He understands what you really feel and that is quite enough - your words couldn't do it justice!

Christopher Hasler

This session is part of a complete course being published in Lifeline for use by individuals and groups. It is also available online as a leaflet which can be downloaded and easily printed.

To find out more go to: [www.new-church-lifeline.org.uk](http://www.new-church-lifeline.org.uk)

Click on Resources and then United Search for Divine Providence. You will find an Introduction and Invitation to the course and the Session notes as they become available.

**Your mind is a garden,  
your thoughts are the seeds.**



**You can grow flowers  
or you can grow weeds.**

*"And God said, Let the earth cause tender plants to spring up, seed-bearing plants, fruit trees bearing fruit, each according to its kind, in which is its seed, upon the earth; and it was so."*

Once the earth or the individual has been made ready in such a way that he can receive from the Lord heavenly seeds and produce some measure of good and truth, the Lord first of all causes something tender to spring up, which is called 'a tender plant', then something more useful which reproduces itself and is called 'a seed-bearing plant', and finally something good which bears fruit and is called 'a tree bearing fruit' in which is its seed, 'each one according to its kind'.

**Arcana Caelestia 29**

# News from the Churches ...

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## Toy Gift Service

This was our first major event of the Christmas Season, and it fulfilled its promise. Never before can we recall seeing so many toys and gifts filling our gift area so quickly. The children enjoyed looking at the many things which others had brought. The service was enjoyable too, and the only problem was that the ladies who were destined to receive the gifts, didn't arrive! (Their car had let them down at the last minute!) But all ended well; they arrived to collect the presents on Monday, and were overwhelmed at the quantity. They were extremely apologetic and wrote us this lovely letter, which we print below:

My name is Pat and I would like to say Thank you all for inviting Brenda and myself to your church today, also to accept the gifts which you have so kindly donated for the Asylum Seekers Children. Brenda and I have been working with Asylum Seekers and their children for a number of years. Brenda originally with the NHS and more recently with the accommodation providers Clear Spring.

As for myself I have been with children services for over 25 years, the last nine working solely with Asylum Seekers. Last year was the first time we have been able to have a Christmas party for the children in our group, as the accommodation provider had donated a cheque for the event. This went very well; all religions, traditions and cultures became as one for the sake of their children. This year we were able to get only half of the amount as last year, but with help from people like yourselves who donated gifts, we should manage this. The party is planned for 20<sup>th</sup> December 2008 at the Bangladeshis Centre in Tatum St.

Now I have explained why we would like your gifts. Firstly Brenda and her colleagues collect the families and single males from the refugee Service in Villiers St. to transport them to their new homes. Most of these people are terrified and very vulnerable. They do not know the area, language or often the local authorities. Police (in uniform) quite often cause great fear, as do the services that we provide. A case of fear of the unknown! Once into the property it is our duty to ensure that the children are safe, registered with a GP and schools, and are adequately dressed for the British weather These are quite often clothes that have been donated along with used books and toys. Like all children in this country the children should be protected and allowed to be children. Toys and books are something of a mystery as many do not know how to play, due to the war or terrorism in their own country. Thankfully after a while when people have begun to mix and meet up at drop-ins, women's groups, etc they begin to settle and not be so traumatised. In reality we become more a friend than social workers or care assistants, and support is very high on our list. We have many tales of the fortunate families who have moved on to jobs or universities, to the extent of becoming Social Workers (in training), or chefs, learning art and design, or doctors and nurses Many of these families do not want to live on handouts; their only wish is to work and pay taxes like other people. There is so much to tell, but time is not available. All I can say is, Thank you all from everyone who will benefit from your generosity.

## From the Seaburn Dene Newsletter

### Annual Meeting of the New Church College

**The Annual Meeting will be held at the College on Saturday, 4th July 2009 at 14.30**

In addition to the business meeting, we will be hearing from Helen Brown and Jack Dunion as they complete their ordination studies and prepare for ordination

The work of the College continues to develop, and we would like to invite you, whether or not you are a Governor, to join us for the afternoon.

**David Haseler**, Secretary

## Nativity 2008 review

The Nativity service is one I personally look forward to every year, and once again we were entertained by an innovative take on the old story. To watch children perform this old and very well known story is always a pleasure, but it has taken on a whole new level since the grown ups agreed to join in. Their willingness not only to be involved, but to entertain, is a joy to see.

I would like to compliment the narrators on their wonderfully clear and loud voices. Many a production has been spoilt by mumbling, causing the audience to be unsure of what is going on. That was definitely not a problem in our nativity. Thank you to the Rainbows and Brownies for providing the additional angels. A host of angels always adds something to a nativity scene. Also the shepherds, for their excellent control of the sheep. The cleaners reported no droppings this year! How did you manage it? My compliments to Millie and Phoebe for their duet. You were very brave to stand up and sing in front of the whole church, well done girls.

Now what can I say about the 3 wise men. Fantastic costumes, some definite ad-libbing during the procession down the aisle, and then the fantastic solo verses during the hymn. Was that a first? I am not sure, but excellently performed. How are you going to better that next year gentlemen. Herod was his usual entertaining self, and you could tell the jealousy not only of the new baby king but also of one the wise men's superior head gear. How could he let that happen? Next year could prove to be interesting, keep your eye on that one.

However, the children managed to stick to the script and everyone was in the right place at the right time (and if they weren't no one could tell). The grand finale was very grand as usual. Thank you one and all for a very enjoyable service and making our church loud and proud in front of visitors. I look forward to the 2009 performance.

Joanne Whitehead  
**From the Keighley Newsletter**

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## Our Friday Mornings

Our church here in Brightlingsea has hosted a coffee morning for all corners every Friday for many years now. It's an occasion for lots of friends from the town to get together, exchange news, and talk things over. It's a happy gathering, often with plenty of laughter.

The year 2008 must have been one of the worst for coffee morning weather for many years; and it's inevitable that the first thing we're inclined to do when we meet our friends there is to commiserate about the rain, the gloom, and lately the freezing cold. However it's all soon forgotten, and good humoured laughter takes over. The bad weather is surely much like all the bad news we get assaulted with each day. Credit crunches, store closures, middle-east battles, rising prices - doesn't it go on and on? And like the weather, it seems there's little or nothing you and I can do about it.

Perhaps we should think less about unpleasant things that we can't alter, and be thankful for the many good things that we can see around us if we look. The dedicated care of our doctors, nurses, carers, teachers and others is so easy to take for granted. Instead we should feel thankful, and express our thanks in our prayers to the Lord who inspires all genuine goodness.

A friend of mine from many years ago once taught me a little rhyme about the weather - one which I've not heard since but have never forgotten. It goes like this:

*Whether the weather be cold, or whether the weather be hot,  
We'll weather the weather whatever the weather  
Whether we like it or not.*

Geoff Cunningham  
**From the Brightlingsea Newsletter**

## In Memory

## W Geoffrey Straw 1927 - 2008

After his long, drawn out, at times very painful illness with it seemed some lack of urgency concerning his early treatment; and although still in need of convalescence it was good to see our dear old friend Geoffrey back here with us again so recently. Isn't it always the way how one regrets not getting a picture of him sat next to his namesake Geoffrey Turner and in conversation while enjoying the refreshments after the Carol Service?

Geoffrey had been attending Sunday Services here [at Kensington] since August 1987 but countless years before when he first came to London he attended the New Church at Camberwell. It closed and with the remainder of that congregation he too joined the members of our other Church then at Anerley. That congregation moved first to South Norwood and then on to West Wickham, east of Croydon in Kent. Geoffrey retained his membership of that group but chose to come here each Sunday simply and practically because the journey was much more straightforward for him.

Appearing to us to be so vulnerable, when out and about negotiating London's busy streets and public transport, Geoffrey's confidence was boundless. He walked with a real purpose. When on familiar ground, perhaps on his way to a good classical music concert or company annual general meeting there was no stopping him. He didn't readily accept offers of help but over the last few years he quite obviously relished the occasional door to door homeward drive in Lionel Friend's car. After a cup of tea his step would visibly quicken lest he not be ready to depart at a second's notice. More than just the lift though, I am sure he enjoyed the in-car conversations he was able to have with Lionel.

Although he valued his privacy, without fail Geoffrey would always let us know if his plans meant an absence from a Sunday service. These warnings became familiar, sounding almost like a public address

announcement: "I won't be here next week as I shall be at my home in Derbyshire". Geoffrey really was in so many ways an enigma. I mean, how on earth did he manage to look no different the older he got? In fifty years he's always looked the same!

Just who else do you know that on one hand could quote chunks of Milton's Paradise Lost or discuss with you Houseman's A Shropshire Lad, or English composers and on the other hand explain how bookmakers work out betting odds going on then to relate his time working at White City Dog Track? He could analyse lists of balance sheet figures, spot mistakes and suggest corrections in the time it would take some of us to find a calculator. He might have seemed to some to keep a tight reign on his clothing allowance but never let it be said that his leather soled and uppered black toe-capped shoes were anything less than polished to a mirror finish.

Geoffrey was modest, unassuming and loyal; supporting so many events. There was no great show when he entered a room; he was just always there in the background. Quietly spoken, when he did have something to say you could be assured his views were measured, tempered and wise. I remember his mildly delivered yet firm admonishment of me for abstaining when a matter of business came to the vote. Geoffrey did not abstain. He stood his ground even when he was on his own.

Seeing him regularly here at the Church and at the Swedenborg Society, where I sat next to him at the monthly council meetings, it's very hard for me now to accept that we will never ever see again this little gentle man for whom I am sure we all felt nothing other than great respect, real fondness and deep affection.

**Howard Turner**

## In Memory

## Mary Booth 1909 - 2008

Mary Booth of Perth, Western Australia, passed into the spiritual world on 11th September, a few days after her 99th birthday. The elder daughter of George and Bertha Spencer, she grew up in Bolton (where her sister Winnie's family still live) and in the sphere of the New Church in the South Lancs. Area. She also attended Summer Schools at Purley Chase.

Married to Robert Booth for 52 years, and mother of David, Elizabeth and Andrew, she spent most of her married life in Perth, where she became a devoted member of the New Church congregation. Her teaching

and musical skills were put to good use here over several decades. In later life she bravely endured the early loss of David's wife Judith (née Savage of Birmingham) and only 9 months later her daughter Elizabeth, wife of Rev Bruce Jarvis. Grandmother of 8, great-grandmother of 13, and great-great-grandmother of 1, she leaves behind a loving family, and is entering now into the joy of her Lord.

**Rev Bruce Jarvis**

Many of the items on a very busy agenda were overshadowed by the Conference's financial situation. In presenting his report, the Treasurer made us very much aware that our income was falling very far short of our expenditure; the 2007/2008 figures showed an expenditure of £643,000 with an income of £381,000. Clearly we could not go on spending at this rate.

Why had this happened? We knew very well that expenditure on the refurbishment of Purley Chase had drained our monetary resources, and that we would be in a financial 'dip' for a year or two afterwards. But we had not taken account of the coming credit crunch and global recession. How could we? Because the market for property and land has suddenly gone flat, we are unable to sell two properties which should by now be yielding us investment capital. And because of global recession and the unprecedented drop in interest rates, our investment managers are unable to meet our needs for investment income. A double whammy for the Council to take on board!

Of course the credit crunch will end and the recession will cease, and we shall once again be able to sell unwanted fixed assets. But when will this be – if only we

knew! We have to believe that things will go our way once again before too long, and that we have to hang on for the time being. And I know, this is not easy.

So what can we do? Of course there must be a real reduction in expenditure. But something like a 10% cut in travel expenditure is insufficient to stem the outflow. Our chief expenditure is on human resources, but to stop employing people just like that is not easy. The Council wrestled with options for a considerable time and made many decisions to explore avenues for cost containment. The details of this cannot of course be reported. But one definite step is to arrange two meetings, one North and one South, for Treasurers to get together to review the position and suggest some next steps. If the church is to have a strategy that leads to growth, we have to overcome this situation. Otherwise, as someone put it, we're doing the equivalent of choosing new colours for the deck chairs for the 'Titanic'.

**Peter Schofield**

## Committee for Auxiliary Ministry

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CAM is delighted to offer a fifth collection of contemporary sermons produced by Rev Leslie Chambers. There are once again eight sermons in the set.

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Faith is an affection for truth resulting from willing truth because it is true; and willing truth because it is true is the essence of a person's spirituality.

**New Jerusalem and its Heavenly Doctrine 112**

# Letters

Dear Editor,

Footnote to Jew and Gentile - February 2009

You raise a very interesting point. Unlike you I think that Swedenborg did meet and talk to groups of British, Dutch, Germans, Jews, Catholics, Mohammedans and Africans in the World of Spirits.. As Swedenborg says "*It needs to be grasped that the condition in the spiritual world both of each nation and people in general and of each individual in particular depends on their acknowledgement of God and their worship of Him*" [TCR 795].

Race, creed and geography have a profound effect on the way our minds are conditioned and the way in which we acknowledge God and worship Him. This is the old debate on nature versus nurture. As Swedenborg points out the nature of the British and the Dutch (in the 18th Century) differed from those of other European nations because they were the only ones with a strong tradition of free speech. The people of Hamburg provide an interesting variant, "*they are nowhere to be found*

*gathered onto one community ... because their minds are continually looking around and as it were travelling outside their own city*".

The nature of our ruling love must be strongly influenced by the culture in which we have been brought up. By the time we get to heaven (as opposed to the World of Spirits) national differences may become less marked. With globalisation and large bodies of immigrants with different cultures, national differences may become less marked. But I still suspect that, for example, Muslims of Pakistani origin who have lived in England will in the World of Spirits be more likely to associate together than with Muslims who have lived all their lives in Pakistan. Swedenborg's view of Africans is a bit odd. St. Augustine of Hippo was a North African with a totally different race and culture from the bulk of Africans South of the Sahara - and I think it is they whom he really sees as having a special spiritual quality.

Yours sincerely  
**Guy de Moubray**

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Phone: 01827 781 2370

[www.purleychasecentre.org.uk](http://www.purleychasecentre.org.uk)

## Lifeline

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