



New Notice Board at Purley Chase

See article on page 7

Temporary Business Manager for Lifeline

For the time being Nigel Sutton is acting as the temporary Business Manager for Lifeline. Payments for invoices and other related queries should be sent to him at 42 Hillside, Findern, Derby, DE65 6AZ

Lifeline

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Lifeline is published in the first week of the month by the General Conference of the New Church. Articles and notices should reach the editor by the end of the second week of the month prior to publication.

ISSN 0308-3624

new church

Lifeline



Seaburn Dene Membership Service

(See page 11)

May 2009
 Number 373

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

“The wind blows wherever it pleases”

Who spoke these words? Why, Jesus Christ, of course! You can read them in context in John's Gospel, chapter 3, where Jesus has a conversation with Nicodemus about what it means to be '*born again*'. Incidentally, when YOU read that passage, note that the Greek implies being '*born from above*', which helps us to key in more easily to the inner meaning of Jesus' words.

Climatologists are telling us that we must be prepared to endure much more frequent periods of high winds, hurricanes, and the like, which cause so much damage and destruction, and often cause loss of life. For many of the victims, their lives on earth will never be quite the same again, even though aid and support will hopefully be available to assist recovery. The British Isles do not normally suffer the extremes of climatic conditions experienced in some other parts of the world, but experience shows that we are not immune. The occasional extremes help us to understand just a little of what many people have to cope with quite regularly. Let us pray that victims everywhere may be helped to recover in spirit, and to feel the Spirit of God breathing strength and resilience into them.

Like all the elements, the wind is a force that has its positive and negative characteristics. We see evidence of this in the Word of God, where there are incidents that show the wind acting in both ways. God Himself is said to *ride on the wings of the wind*. (Psalm 104:4) The prophet Elijah learned an essential

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For the current issue of Lifeline, back issues and other resources visit:

www.new-church-lifeline.org.uk

Letters

Dear Editor

Centenary Appeal

I was very moved by the centenary appeal by the South African New Church. The project to complete stage 2 of their project to build a college at Orlando seems to me a wonderful goal.

How to answer this appeal at this time of economic crisis is a difficult problem. Here at Burnley we give our Harvest collection to a different charity each year. I know this is a way off, but they say charity begins at home, perhaps if we all sent our harvest collections to our brothers and sisters in South Africa it would be of some small help to them.

Sue Wilson Burnley

ps What about the collection from Conference Service?

Dear Editor

Jars of change

During the last six weeks, the West Wickham New Church collected the very satisfying amount of sixty-three pounds for the WaterAid Lent appeal, "Jars of change for jars of water". Imagine all our churches filling jars with small change FOR CONFERENCE.

Remember, "Tall oaks from little acorns grow". Why not start now?

Elisabeth Brooks West Wickham

Change of Email Address

Please note that Gwendolen Rowe's email address has changed to:

gwendolen.rowe@talktalk.net

Another post which needs filling is that of Council Recorder. Noreen Simpson has minuted the meetings for nearly 5 years but wishes to stand down. She has taken her part fully and been a friend to all members of the Council. She will be missed and maybe will miss her involvement just a little? She will surely miss the wonderful Purley food!

There were many other items on the agenda, concerning employees and employment, churches and groups, people and buildings, maintaining what is valuable to us and receiving news of activities around the country. There is much to celebrate when people are working with the Lord and Trustees have the benefit of hearing all about it. This work has its truly joyful side.

Judith Wilson (with thanks to William Wordsworth) March 2009



We read that when Jesus was baptised, the heavens were opened and John saw the Holy Spirit coming down in the form of a dove. This was because baptism stands for regeneration and cleansing, and so does a dove. How can anyone fail to see that the dove was not the Holy Spirit, nor was the Holy Spirit in the dove? In heaven doves are often to be seen, and the angels know that, when they are, they are correspondences of affections and consequently of thoughts about regeneration and cleansing in the minds of some bystanders. So as soon as they approach them and engage them in conversation about any subject other than what they were thinking about when they appeared, the doves immediately vanish.

True Christian Religion 144:1

lesson on Mount Horeb when he discovered that Yehowah was not in the great and powerful wind, nor in the earthquake, nor in the fire, but in the *gentle whisper*. (1 Kings 19)

One of the intriguing things about the word 'wind' in the Old Testament is that it is a translation of the Hebrew term 'ruach', which is also the word translated in many places as 'spirit'. Throughout the New Testament, the common Greek term 'pneuma' is translated as 'spirit', and in the Nicodemus story there is a subtle play on words by Jesus that is not easy to translate into English.

He is teaching us that the way the Spirit of God works in us is like the natural wind. We cannot tell just when God's Spirit will flow into us, nor exactly what effect it will have upon us when it comes. Yet, like all good sailors, we must be on the lookout for signs of its coming and then make good use of it in our lives.

Most of us want security and certainty and predictability. But how limited and boring and unexciting that would be. If we are wise, we realise that an element of danger and surprise is welcome and exhilarating. The life of religion is not about natural safety and freedom from danger. Risk-taking and putting ourselves 'on the line', and relying upon the mercy of our Heavenly Father, are essential factors in spiritual life.

Just as there is an element of risk in the natural birth process, so there appears to be a danger as we are being born of water and the Spirit. The change from being natural people to being heavenly and angelic citizens of the kingdom of God involves some tempestuous times for us.

Natural winds occur because of differences in air pressure. This phenomenon illustrates the potentially destructive power that exists within us as the battles rage between good and evil, truth and falsity. We experience these as fierce forces when passions of any sort are unleashed. However, as we become wiser and more experienced, it is possible for us to detect the warning signs of oncoming storms and take appropriate action. In these ways, the gentle voice of our loving God has wonderfully powerful effects on us, and we are brought closer to Him and held safe in His arms.

I say again: we cannot foretell exactly where the Lord is leading us. But we can become increasingly prepared to accept and respond to His gentle leading.
"So it is with everyone born of the spirit."

Rev Bruce Jarvis

United Search for Divine Providence

Session 7



Every person is taught by the Lord by means of the Word, and yet does not feel the operation of Providence but should acknowledge it.

The 4th Law of Divine Providence -

The Lord leads teaches every person by means of the Word and doctrines, and yet it feels that we are doing this by ourselves. (DP 154-174)

In this Session we shall deal with the 4th and 5th Laws of Divine Providence. To have a clear concept of these fundamental laws is very important, because the rest of the book is based on them, and everything will then become much easier.

We live in a world which is in deep turmoil and is divided into many conflicting ideologies. You may know that song about God: "He's got the whole wide world, in His hand" but alas, it does not look like it at present. In our study we shall find out how the Lord controls everything by means of His Providence, and yet, we must not be aware of it in any way. That may seem strange at first, but I will ask you at this point to read a short story which will explain this quite simply. But while reading it imagine that you are Moses and the Lord has given you a difficult task to do: to marshal all your feelings and thoughts and to lead them to the Promised Land (or heaven). But at crucial times, in temptations, you seem to lose the presence of God and you seem to be completely in the dark. What is going on? Now please read **Exodus 33:12-23**. Afterwards think for a while what it may mean in your life.

So there we are, apparently left on our own and in the dark, in the cleft of the rock and covered up! But that is not the reality, because the Lord is never closer to us than when we are tempted. We have to take some hard decisions and we really are 'squeezed' in a cleft of temptations, in darkness and seemingly alone and frightened. In fact the Lord is covering us up with His hand. The book we are studying goes into minute details as to what happens during temptations, and why we need to be 'in the dark' and feel completely alone. But that is only an appearance. The Lord is there and provides an equilibrium in which we can tip

From the Governing Council

Purley Chase luxuriated in sunshine for an extra meeting held on 18th and 19th March. 'A crowd, a host, of golden daffodils beneath the trees, fluttering and dancing in the breeze'. Spirits were uplifted by the beauty of the Lord's creation and the wonder of our residential centre which feels like a home to so many. Having previously economised unsuccessfully with fewer, but longer meetings, members felt refreshed and invigorated to continue their work for the church in this time of change and financial constraints.

The meeting focused on growth areas in which our activities are attracting and involving new seekers. The four priorities of the Council - Churches and Groups, Purley Chase, SOLCe and New Ways of being Church - were discussed in relation to this and to the central organisation. Our Conference vision was before us: '... of a network of individuals and groups interacting together to share spiritual insight and understanding in an open and non-judgmental way, in order to promote spiritual growth through the application to life of the Word, and the Writings of Emanuel Swedenborg.' There were no decisions, but an openness to be led by the Lord and an acceptance that our considerable economic pressures will constrain us in the near future. The discussions now move to the Committee of Ministers, small combined-council groups and then to Conference in July.

Conference finance is difficult as many readers will know. The Council's recent appeal letter raised a very pleasing £7000 including tax on gift aid, for which trustees are most grateful. The situation remains, however, that we can no longer afford many employees. This will be resolved as people reach retirement but, obviously, the future will be different. Meetings are being held throughout the country to inform all church and group officers and to discuss what can be done to help. We are looking for ways to economise and yet keep the spiritual life of the church alive. We continue to belong, to love our church and to let the Lord lead us. Our senior Minister has taken the theme for the AGM from Mark 10:49 - 'Cheer up! On your feet! He's calling you'.

The AGM will be at Swanwick, from 27th to 31st July and there is much to encourage everyone to come along. The programme is exciting, with a different feel to it. There will be more families than last year with more involvement planned for them. There are choice sessions and there will be discussion on the way ahead. The Council needs a new vice-Chairman and 2 Trustees, to be voted in at the AGM. Nominations are needed by New Church Day, 19th June, so please will you DO something about this? It is such an important role and a chance to be involved in policy making. Any current trustee would answer questions willingly if asked.

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.



Rev Brian Kingslake
1907 - 1995

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.

.....

15. Intercession

READ Luke 7:1-10

Not only is it possible to contact loved-ones who have left this world through death and become angels in heaven; we can also contact loved-ones still in their physical bodies, even though they may be thousands of miles away on the other side of the globe. This has been scientifically demonstrated by experiments in telepathy. Normally the contact is above (or below) the level of consciousness; but, in states of deep meditation, we can consciously "tune in" to the spiritual wave-length of anyone we know, anywhere on earth. This, of course, is the basis of intercessory prayer, and of spiritual healing at a distance.

PRAYER

(Sit comfortably, and systematically relax every muscle from scalp to toes. Then "tune in" to specific individuals whom you want the Lord to bless through you. Open yourself to the Lord, and make yourself a channel of His healing life.)

Dear Lord, fill me with Your Holy Spirit, so full that I overflow. May I channel this overflow to and Lord, bless us all !

.....

This is the last in this series of 15 meditations - Editor.

the scales in whichever way we want. We also learn that if we did feel the operation of Providence, we would immediately react against it. We would no longer feel free, or even human. We would feel that we have no other alternative but to do what the Lord has decided is right for us. There would be anger and resentment. So what exactly is the Lord doing to us? He is only holding us in an equilibrium: "I will cover you with my hand, until I have passed by" – that is, until we have decided which way we want to go. Let me assure you, we are free to decide to lead a hellish life and the Lord will not stop us. He also knows the consequences of our decision and is already providing for them. But the responsibility is ours; so remember: "I myself am to blame if I do anything which I know is against the commandments." Unless the Lord held the balances in His hand, the hells would simply swamp us and we would never be free to decide anything.

If we have taken wrong decisions, the Lord never abandons us. When we were young, we probably disagreed many times with the rules and advice of our parents and yearned to do our own thing. If things had turned out badly our parents still cared for us and sheltered us. That was the Lord fuelling their love with His Divine mercy for His creation.

While we are reading this book, let us just pause for a moment to see what is happening. First of all, we are beginning to have a much better concept of the Lord's nature. But since we were created in his image and likeness, we are also getting to know ourselves! See 157.

Think about it: Heaven is always close to us and angels are aware of our uniqueness and individuality. (164) We receive enlightenment whenever we sincerely turn to the Lord and read and meditate on His Word. It really is inspiring to realise that the Lord alone teaches us and enlightens us. No teacher or preacher can really do that, though s/he may move us; the inner self is entirely in the Lord's hands alone. (162-174)

**The 5th Law -
The Lord does not let us see or be aware of the operation of Providence,
but still we should know about it and acknowledge it. (DP 175-190)**

We have touched on this already, but we may doubt that we would react so strongly if we perceived the operation of the Lord's Providence. Would it not be just wonderful and would we not welcome it? Well, unfortunately, no we would not. It would soon feel like an intrusion and interference in our life, against our personality. This is stressed a number of times. We would soon be in revolt, because we would realise that the Lord is trying to lead us away from all the things that are dear to us. We might even do worse things just to prove we can. Therefore the Lord leads us gently, imperceptibly, away from our inclinations and

(Continued on page 6)

habits of many years. But the gentle influence does teach us that when we are a little bit less selfish, and less demanding that everyone does things 'My way!', then a sense of peace enters our hearts, and the unselfish life carries many of its rewards. We realise we can do many things to bring a happier atmosphere all round (183). This is quite a difficult section to read and absorb, but it provides such a deep, psychological insight into the way the Lord leads each one of us into heaven and towards Himself.

Meditation and Prayers without words -

Psalm 25 – Read this Psalm slowly, one verse at a time and sense how each one establishes a close relationship with the Lord. Invite Him into your life and acknowledge those dark moments when you felt you were utterly alone. Yet He was there at every step.

Psalm 119 - This is the longest Psalm and has 22 sections of 8 verses each. In the Original each verse of each section begins with one and the same letter of the Hebrew alphabet, so verses 1-8 all begin with an **A**, 9-16 with a **B**, etc. New Church doctrines explain that the spiritual sense of this Psalm contains the prayers of Jesus to the Father, even from His earliest days when the Divine within Him seemed distant. Who else could say the words in verses 97-101? You may like to read one section a day and feel close to the Lord as a young boy and man beginning to realise that He had a very great task before Him. And He did feel weak and was often filled with fear that He might not be able to overcome those human inclinations He had from His human inheritance. While all this was experienced on a deeper level, yet our temptations do follow the same pattern. As stated earlier, we are very close to the Lord in temptations, but we still have to do it 'as if we were alone'.

A note.

I realise that these Notes are not following the same pattern with which I started. I apologise for this, but in the beginning I just had no idea how this course would develop and I wanted to encourage each reader to do it more or less as it comes to him/her. These Notes, I hope will help, but do not use them too rigidly : let your thoughts lead you whichever way they will. I confess that each Session so far had brought me new surprises (and some difficulties), but it does not seem the right idea to decide just how everything is going to be done before we know how it may turn out. So bear with me, I do not know what will happen, but we need to pray for guidance, trusting that we shall be given the right answers when we need them.

The Lord bless you,

Christopher Hasler

individual develops, and permeating all levels of human and divine life. The text is cleverly broken down into pithy sections, each with its own sub-title.

I found the author's explanatory notes very helpful, both those giving additional technical background information, and others that help place the particular teaching into a more general context. A useful "cautionary note" is provided on page 145, when the author warns that comments in the Writings about the state of the Church in Swedenborg's day should not necessarily be applied to today's Christianity. In these sensitive times, the author might well have made a similar point about the Jewish religion.

As so often, the sharp-eyed reader comes across a number of minor mistypings, and I think the book would benefit from adding page numbers to the list of illustrations. Some readers would welcome a bibliography. But these are relatively marginal matters, and should not be allowed to detract from the value of this new publication.

I hope *The Five Ages* will be widely read. Its important and fascinating contents helps us more easily to grasp the great sweep of what the Heavenly Doctrines have to say on this subject. It is also possible that some of our groups may welcome the opportunity to use this book as a text for a study course.

Bruce Jarvis

The Five Ages : Swedenborg's View of Spiritual History

Extracts from Emanuel Swedenborg with commentary by P L Johnson. Swedenborg Society, 2008; ISBN 978-0-85448-154-5; xv + 243 pp; £11.95 + p&p.

Seaburn Dene Membership Service - See picture on front page

The photograph on the front page is of a group of members of the Seaburn Dene New Church congregation who took up membership on March 29th in a service led by Rev Bruce Jarvis and Peter Schofield. They are, from left to right: Edna Lay, Audrey Anderson, Sheila Robson, Nancy Scott, Rev Bruce Jarvis, Tonia Osborne, Liz Regan and Jean Shaw. Liz became a Member of Conference last year as she was one of Seaburn Dene's representatives. The others have all become Members of Conference.

It was a very happy occasion with a serious element as they made their Pledge of Commitment, received a blessing, and then read passages from the Scriptures. Afterwards they signed the Seaburn Dene roll, and were presented with copies of Swedenborg's *The New Jerusalem and its Heavenly Doctrine*.

Book Review - The Five Ages

I have a new book on my bookshelves. The remarkable and rewarding thing is that it is actually on a bookshelf. That means it has been read, unlike a number of others which remain piled up with bookmarks inserted, awaiting that elusive spare time to finish them.

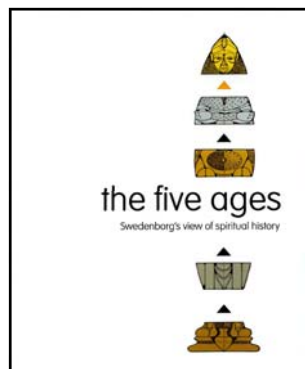
I have long known of Patrick Johnson's deep interest in the subject matter of his book. Indeed, I think I must have read articles by him, probably in the Swedenborg Society magazine, *Things Heard and Seen*, which he edits. Or possibly in the pages of this journal, which he edited before the present incumbent. How glad I am that, at last, we have the fruits of his labours in this latest Swedenborg Society publication.

Lifeline readers familiar with the Heavenly Doctrines of the New Church will very likely have some awareness that they have something to say about the successive ages of mankind, though there is no one volume of Swedenborg's Writings that deals specifically with the subject. The teaching is scattered through volumes of the *Arcana Coelestia* (*Secrets of Heaven*), with additional references in other books, notably *The Coronis*, published posthumously.

Patrick Johnson's endeavour has been to bring together "a selection of quotations from Swedenborg's many books which I hope cover all the main points he makes about his five churches." More than that, he adds to the text his own linking comments to give continuity and to add "new historical, archaeological and anthropological information which was not available to Swedenborg."

The author of *The Five Ages* presents his material in seven chapters, the first introducing the concept of five ages, followed by one dealing with the nature of the church. Then follow 5 chapters, one for each of the ages. The main text comprises 215 pages, the remaining pages providing useful endnotes, an informative appendix on World Age Patterns, a list of Quotations from the Writings, and an Index. The World Age Patterns index offers very helpful background information on the widespread teachings on the concept of Ages or Periods in human history found in the world religions and in mythologies.

I have to confess that once I'd begun to read *The Five Ages*, I actually found it more or less compulsive reading. The teaching itself I have always found enlightening and convincing. There is a wonderful wholesomeness about it, linking the historical spiritual development of the human race with the way an



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

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.

Hello from Purley Chase Centre

January 2009 started off with a birthday celebration and then we had several events where people came to Purley Chase for the first time. We are also now having people call in for coffee when they are out walking around the area. A new notice board has gone up at the end of the drive (see picture on back page) so we are now able to put leaflets and information out and invite people to come in and see for themselves what we are about. We have had very positive feedback from all new comers into the building and so hopefully they will be coming back and telling others about the centre. The Guides were here in February and they brought us three new bird boxes for the garden. During the year we now have Guides/Brownies three times. This is quite uplifting in the present climate and good to see local people using the centre.

We are also pleased to say people are using the centre for short breaks, we had a couple staying with us for three nights after seeing an advert in the *Retreat* magazine and a gentleman for two nights. So things are happening and we are getting known in the wider world; in-fact we have just had an enquiry from someone living in Lisbon.

We are fortunate to have this building and the teachings of Emanuel Swedenborg, and I am sure the Lord is leading us to use it for His work in the world. There are many people looking for peace, spirituality and enlightenment and we will do our best to fulfil this need. Please help us by spreading the news of Purley Chase Centre amongst your friends.

Hope to see you at Purley Chase this year.

Best wishes **Anne Gaffney**

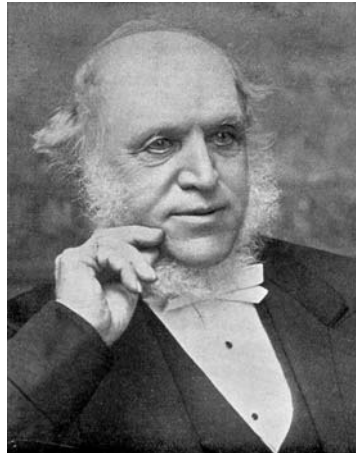
The New Church Historical Society

The Society is holding its 2nd **Get-Together at the Purley Chase Centre** from **Tuesday October 13th 2009 to Thursday 15th October 2009.**

Anyone interested in the history of the New Church is very welcome to come along either for the whole period or as a day visitor. Our first Get Together took place in October 2007 and proved to be a most successful and enjoyable event.

On Tuesday evening Patrick L. Johnson will give the Society's Annual Lecture when his subject will be "Cross St and Camden Road - New Church Focal Points".

During Wednesday and Thursday there will be a number of shorter talks and snippets. The programme arranged so far includes subjects ranging from David Mooki's discovery of a copy of True Christian Religion in a South African secondhand bookshop in 1909 to the story of how a New Church organ found a new home in Latvia. The life and work of three New Church ministers Woodville Woodman, Jonathan Bayley and Rev Charles W. Leadbetter will be featured and we will also hear something of the history of the Swedenborg Society as it approaches its 200th anniversary in 2010. And if you would like to hear what mysteries lie within a Vestry Cupboard or some early history of Purley Chase; which of our churches contains wood from the "Mauretania" or who the locomotive builder was with a New Church connection then all will be revealed. There will also be photographs and items of memorabilia on display.



Rev Dr Jonathan Bayley

The Society publishes an Annual Journal and this year's, which is the 10th edition, has just been published. It proves to be another excellent issue and contains the following articles:

- The New Church in Norwich and Norfolk
- Edward John Broadfield (a Newchurchman who was a very highly respected citizen of Manchester)
- The New Church Movement among South African natives - written by James F. Buss in 1917
- The New Jerusalem Churches in the Philippines
- Living through the Blitz in World War II - written by Flora L. Cann in 1941

- The Testimony of Robert Hindmarsh at the trial of those who organized the Meeting known as the "Peterloo Massacre"
- The Rev William Hill - Newchurchman and Chartist - written by Charles Higham in 1904

If you would like to join the Society – members receive a copy of the Journal - or come to the Get Together please contact Pauline Grimshaw or Maeve Hawkins

email: pauline.grimshaw@virgin.net Tel: 01204 574047
 email: maeveh@btinternet.com Tel 01246 270812

Editor's Note

A short article on David Mooki can be found in the *Dictionary of African Christian Biography* on the internet. The Dictionary can be found at www.dacb.org Select 'Stories' on the Home Page and then use the 'Find' box to search for David Mooki. The first search result will take you to the article. Alternatively go straight to the page using this address:

www.dacb.org/stories/southafrica/mooki_david.html



Jonathan Bayley	Head	Mar	57	Minister New Jerusalem Church Argyle / Square Kings Cross	Sancashire	Salford
Lydia Co. do	Wife	Mar	50		do	Manchester
Edward do do	Son	Mar	19	Carpet Trade	do	Accrington
Maria do do	Daughter	Mar	14		do	Accrington
James do do	Son	Mar	15	Carpet Trade	do	Accrington

This is the entry in the 1861 Census showing Jonathan Bayley when he was Minister of the New Jerusalem Church, Argyle Square, Kings Cross. It also shows his wife Lydia, sons Edward and James and daughter Maria.

Womens League Benevolent Fund

The Annual General Meeting will be held at the Accrington Church on Monday May 18th at 7pm. Please come along if you can - you will be most welcome.

May Liversedge Secretary