

What price Family Conferences?

On the third day of Conference 2009, the treasurer gave a report on the state of Conference finances. He drew a strong parallel between the years of plenty and the years of famine as described in Pharaoh's dreams which were interpreted by Joseph. The Treasurer stated that we find ourselves in the "lean years" due to the continuing annual deficit, so the Governing Council is already looking at ways to economise.

On the following day we heard that a saving of about £15000 could be made if the 2010 AGM were to be a simple two day business meeting, which would include the essential legal requirements as defined in the original trust deeds. Apart from the shorter length, a big part of the saving would be made by holding the Conference at Purley.



(Continued on page 15)

Lifeline

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new church

Lifeline



The manner in which God flows in with all His Divine life can be grasped as somewhat resembling the way the sun of the world flows in with all its essence, which is heat and light, into every tree, into every shrub and flower.
True Christian Religion 364:2

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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.

The Have's and the Have Not's

Let me share some powerful statistics with you.

- Seventy per cent of the world's children suffer from malnutrition.
- One tenth of the world's produce is eaten by insects before it can be cropped.
- One third of the world eats two thirds of the world's food.
- Two thirds of the world eats one third of the world's food.
- Every year, the amount of genetically modified food doubles.
- Every year, the Sahara desert encroaches another kilometre on the surrounding terrain.
- Every year, a total of land the size of Wales becomes un-cultivable.
- Enough food is produced annually to feed the world's present population one and a half times over.

(Statistics from UNESCO)

On a recent radio program I heard some more stark statistics. The world's present population is about 6 billion. Of these, 3 billion live on roughly 2 US\$ worth of food a day. A further 1.3 billion live on about 1 US\$ worth of food each day. There are the have's and the have not's. The same program went on to make a further point about having and not having. The popular idea - and partly true - is that with technological progress, the undeveloped countries of the world

Contents

The Have's and the Have Not's	2	Hope	10
Seeds	4	Eve's Report	13
United Search for Divine Providence - 12	5	Letter from Bristol	14
From the Governing Council	8	What price Family Conferences?	16
Committee for Auxiliary Ministry - Advert	9		

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(Continued from page 16)

This was not a popular suggestion and time was made available on the following day for an extended discussion on the subject. All the speakers felt very strongly that a full Family Conference is essential so that families are able to attend and that there is adequate time for the Spiritual aspects of the meeting.

In an effort to save some costs, it was resolved that the meeting would be reduced to just four days. However, it would still include families but the venue would have to be 'The Hayes' in Swanwick to accommodate the numbers. This decision was greeted with a great wave of enthusiasm as most people valued the presence of children at the event.

However the financial difficulties will not go away! As a spontaneous gesture, a collection was taken to help with the costs. Some people signed IOUs or pledges and others donated cash. The total raised or pledged on the day was £1264, of which cash was £124. As the latter was not Gift Aided, I will donate the amount that would have been generated by Gift Aid.

I have also received additional sums through the post and promises of contributions that will be generated by fund raising events in local churches. If these promises and pledges are realised, the estimated donations would exceed £2000. Many people have indicated that their donations should help subsidise the costs of the young families. Other members who are entitled to free places at Conference have agreed to pay their full costs.

If you feel you can help please send your promise, pledge, IOU or cheque (made payable to 'The General Conference of the New Church') to me so that I can report regularly on our efforts. It would be wonderful if we could raise the £15000 the Governing Council was originally planning to save. Many thanks for all your generosity.

Kathie Brooks

(Continued from page 14)

spurred us to write this letter, and we would hope that other Societies will also make public their concerns for the future – or, better still, accounts of their successes in overcoming their anxieties and difficulties. Can it really be the case that we are like the BEF of 1914: lions, albeit elderly lions, now led metaphorically by well-meaning donkeys ?

Yours sincerely,

Dr. Robert Gilbert
Mrs. Margaret Grindell
Mr. John Lewin
Miss Mary Thomson
Mr. Peter Wright

Letter from Bristol

Dear Editor, **Quo vadis ?**

The Bristol Society of the New Church is numerically small but we are fortunate in that we can afford to cover both our running costs and the upkeep of the building. However, in common with many other churches and secular institutions we are also an ageing group, and although we strive to maintain our church worship as a witness to the Christian faith in this inner city suburb, it is an increasingly difficult struggle.

We believe this presence and our witness to be the primary functions of our church, and we endeavour to promote awareness of the church in our local community by making the best use we can of the premises. We licence the church for use by another small Christian denomination and we have a number of appropriate secular activities from time to time, but what we urgently need is adequate ministerial support. In the absence of a resident minister and with only occasional, but much appreciated, support from the ordained ministry it is difficult to draw in the public to our services of worship.

We are well aware that the General Conference is currently in difficult financial straits and that the human resources for ordained and lay ministry are dwindling, but is there any way in which useful advice and practical support can be provided for our Society and for other Societies which find themselves in a similar plight ? What best can we do to draw people – especially younger people – into our church, and when they have come to ensure that they return again and again ?

Is there any mechanism that could be established, within the bounds of what is practically feasible, to encourage or enable ministers and ordinands to officiate at services of Societies in need? We press our limited skills into the task of providing what we like to think are engaging, if not terribly inspiring, services but none of us is a professional in this field - nor, for that matter, in the field of creating and maintaining a website: an essential tool today for publicity and communication.

We appreciate the good work done at Purley Chase, but it does seem to us that the General Conference is more concerned with promoting that Centre at the expense of the local churches. This may be, and we dearly hope that it is, a false perception, and the General Conference website does provide information on the local churches, but we feel that direct action on the ground at a local level is the best way to serve the prime purpose of the New Church: to witness to the Christian faith through our worship in the Swedenborgian tradition.

Even if no practical help can be given, is it not possible for the General Conference to acknowledge our presence and our purpose and to provide moral support and encouragement to us and to other Societies, so that we feel less isolated and can be assured that there is a continuing central commitment to a New Church presence throughout the country ?

Sometimes we have felt that this is just not so. Recently we decided to make a substantial donation to the General Conference, but we were met with a lack of interest and have concluded that the money should now be used instead to benefit the church in other ways. It is this seeming indifference from above that

will begin to pick up economically. But a bishop from Honduras spoke from his heart when he said, "How will my people even start to develop? There's no work so they can't afford a thing. They will simply get left further and further behind. The gap will always get bigger." And an aid-worker commented that for many people in the third world it is simply a matter of survival.

In the Lord's Prayer we pray, "*Your will be done, as in heaven so upon the earth.*" It is not the Lord's will that any child or family should wonder where on earth (!) their next mouthful of food will come from. But it is a daily reality for millions of people. When the Lord was anointed with costly oil, one of the disciples cried, "*Why was the ointment wasted like that? For this ointment could have been sold for more than three hundred denarii and given to the poor.*" And we might ask why not indeed? And Jesus pointed out that the poor are always there with us, "*But you will not always have me.*" What was the Lord trying to point out? Was He getting His priorities right?

I understand what the Lord was saying along these lines: In this world you will always meet poverty in some form or other, material poverty, poor efforts, poor responses, emotional deprivation, spiritual blindness, and all the other forms that poverty can take. The Lord knows the state of any poverty completely but His prime concern is not with the poverty but with our salvation, with each person's eternal state. We can seek to redistribute the food stocks of the world and that is a humanitarian need. But the deeper need still is to develop the sense of God in life because that is eternal. And when God is the overriding factor in peoples' lives, the poverties will begin to clear. It's that one single equation which becomes so challenging and provoking for us. Poverty - starvation - simply exists in this world because somehow God is not being put first of all. Think on this when you celebrate harvest.

Rev Julian Duckworth

Edited from the Sydney Newsletter, February 2000.

Generally speaking married couples have an inner beauty of face, since the husband gets from his wife the charming blush of her love, and the wife gets from her husband the bright gleam of his wisdom, since there the two partners are united in soul. Moreover, each appears to be fully human. This happens in heaven, because true marriages do not exist elsewhere; beneath heaven one finds only temporary alliances which are formed and broken.

Conjugal Love 192

Seeds

Only 'The life of charity consists in thinking well of others and wishing well to them' and 'True marriage is the jewel of human life' were left.

On the evening of Wednesday July 15th, the Derby folk held a service in the manse back garden. On a weekday night at 6.30 we should have foreseen that this would be awkward for working and younger members of the congregation. So 10 older people met with Rev Catherine Lauber.

We were very fortunate as the rain had flowed the evening before and that morning (and the following evening as it happens). Electrical leads to a laptop trailed across the grass so that music could be used. Rev Catherine led us to think about seeds, to sing the Johnny Appleseed grace standing by two apple trees and to meditate about being a tree.

We wondered what we would be asked to do that cannot be done during a normal church service. We were given passages from the writings to put into plastic cash bags from the bank. Each person read out their quotation for the rest to know what was involved. What were they for?

The answer came in the form of brightly coloured latex balloons filled with helium. We had to hold on tight for each other while the quotes were tied to the 9 balloons. Where did that 10th balloon go? Each quotation listed the Spiritual Wisdom web-site and our minister's e-mail address.

After a prayer, we released them into the bright evening sunshine. They looked spectacular, glinting with an array of colours, resembling sperm as one member observed. Truly spiritual seeds floating away.

Only the 'Life of charity' and the 'True marriage quotations were not used. Will we hear of the others again, who knows? They certainly gave us a lot of pleasure.

Geoffrey Bentley

Change of Address

Helen and Andrew Newton

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may take the form of religiously-based belief, while for others it is about 'personal worth and contribution to ideals they hold dear, such as family life, care for the environment or world justice'.

Reading *Arcana Caelestia* 6577 and 6578 (commenting on Genesis 50:21), it is clear that 'consoling', or 'reassuring' as the New International Version puts it, means hope, which is connected with the understanding of truth, while 'speaking to the heart', or 'speaking kindly' as the NIV has it, means trust, an attribute of the will received through good, or love. Good and truth, will and understanding, are joined in a marriage, so that hope does not exist in a vacuum as it were, unsupported by anything of substance.

The hospice movement and palliative medicine, whether or not (as is often the case) its practitioners are people practising a specific religious faith, are things founded on hope, on a sense that life has meaning and that so does death, but they are also founded on love, because I cannot believe that anyone would want to devote himself to such difficult and painful work without a profound love of their fellow humans. Before we take steps to make it easier for people to 'do away with themselves' and, perhaps more importantly, for others to be enabled to assist them in this regard, we should pause for reflection. Is assisted suicide the most loving way of caring for terminally ill dear ones and is it consistent with that 'larger hope' that is at the heart of all religion?

Richard Lines

Eve's Report

I really enjoyed conference. I liked seeing my friends Libby and Lucy and my cousins Jason and Arran.

I started drawing round my feet on the first day in our group; I decorated them on the next day so that they looked like penguins. On the next day we all did big feet. Then we all stuck on our feet we did. On the day of the service we showed our work. And we did a song that Marion taught us all about Jesus healing people. I liked my group.

I did the labyrinth with my mum, it had a painted tree trunk and the lines we followed were rainbow colours, it was very big.

I had fun at conference I hope I can go next year.

By **Eve Nicholls**

'Hope springs eternal' we often say, but Tennyson's grand poetry expresses, I believe, a deep longing within the human heart for immortality, a longing which modern materialists have done their best to extinguish. Religious people are often inclined to say that they hope because they believe, but the Spanish philosopher, scholar and novelist Miguel de Unamuno, like Tennyson a reader of Swedenborg, said that it is the other way round:

And in fact we do not hope because we believe, but rather we believe because we hope. It is hope in God, it is the ardent longing that there may be a God who guarantees the eternity of consciousness, that leads us to believe in him (*Tragic Sense of Life*, 1913).

Let us return to the present day. The suicide of Sir Edward and Lady Downes and similar cases have prompted a debate about suicide versus palliative care. The palliative care of the dying has long been associated with Christian believers and the founder of the modern hospice movement, the late Dame Cicely Saunders who established St Christopher's Hospice at Sydenham in south London, was herself a practising Anglican and was inspired by the work of Roman Catholic nuns at St Joseph's Hospice in Hackney. But in the recent debate palliative care of the terminally ill has come in for some fierce criticism from supporters of assisted suicide. So I was particularly impressed by a letter published in *The Times* on Friday 24th July from Kathryn Mannix, a consultant in palliative medicine in Newcastle upon Tyne. It is a long letter from an expert in her field. I was especially moved by her two last paragraphs and I quote them now:

I am saddened by the number of contributors who feel anxious about dying. Perhaps they have been witness to one of the unusual difficult deaths that do still occur, or perhaps the way in which our society has increasingly hidden death away over the past five decades has deprived them of the comfort that comes from repeatedly seeing the end of life well-lived with courage, pleasure in each day and peace of mind despite the imminence of the unknown. Witnesses of good deaths do not appear to feel a need to enter into this type of correspondence. This unfortunately means that the difficult and tragic is overrepresented in the discussion. How can we redress this balance, so that we do not misunderstand and fear death as a society, and thus legislate in ignorance based on fear?

That eloquent conclusion strikes me as a timely warning against hasty legislative action. I cannot answer Kathryn Mannix's question, although one can point to loss of religious faith in society as a whole as a contributory factor. Does the longing for immortality, so eloquently articulated by Tennyson, Unamuno and others, have no resonance today? In her letter Kathryn Mannix is careful not to express a religious view, but she does say that each person is on a 'spiritual journey through which they interpret the meaning of their lives'. For some this

United Search for Divine Providence



Session 12

Evils are permitted for the sake of the end, which is salvation.

Divine Providence permits evils, otherwise they could not be seen and removed and no one could be saved. (DP 275-284)

This is really a strange but wonderful chapter. Since Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) started to use psychoanalysis, many theories of the human mind have been proposed, mostly by those who base their theories on the assumption that man is descended from the apes; and to suggest that man is a spiritual being is not acceptable in modern psychoanalysis. In short, science supposes that apes have ascended by evolution from the amoeba, but humans have descended from apes. Perhaps there is more than a grain of truth in this as Session 12 may show. While in the last session the Lord allowed us a rare view into His mind, and how it operates, and why it does some surprising things, now He is revealing to us how our minds work. While all living things have developed in the order of their use – thus 'ascended' from primitive to complex - mankind has indeed 'descended' from the order into which they were first created into the disorder in which we all now find ourselves. This Session is really a revelation of the human psyche – warts and all. It is very important to study this section in DP with great care and attention. No one can give you such an accurate picture of what is going on in your mind.

Section 1 (275-276) Is this the most difficult part of the whole book? In some ways, yes; it explains why evils in us and in the world are permitted. Originally people were born into order and with love towards the neighbour. But gradually, over thousands of years we have degenerated into selfishness, and we love ourselves first. We have destroyed the order into which we were created, and that is our main problem. Our only hope is that when we have children, we are still able to love them more than ourselves – at least for a little while. That is a glimpse of the goodness into which we were created; but alas, even in that there

is a creeping selfishness: "They are my children!" However, we are not judged or condemned for the way we are born. It is not our fault!

Section 2 (277) The first thing stressed is that 'every person is born evil' by inheritance from a long line of ancestors. The hope is that we may recognise this fact and be willing to withdraw from evil, but it will be with considerable difficulty. It will be a slow and long process, because our selfhood does not wish to change. No wonder that preachers who promise instant salvation and forgiveness from our sins were and still are popular! There have been many false teachings which place their hope in the mercy of God, who 'if He so desires' can remove our sins and make us pure. But it simply does not work that way. Throughout our lives we have been accumulating experiences - emotional and intellectual - which have formed our expanding mind. We are nothing but the full record of our memories. If God were to 'wipe the slate clean of the naughty bits', we would be in the terrible and sorry state of the Alzheimer sufferer : parts of our memory and personality would be missing. So whatever is done has to be done with our willing consent. The Lord, who gave us freedom, will never undermine that freedom or take it away. This is as precious as the apple of our eye! Read Psalm 17.

Section 3 (278) This section has 6 subheadings, each one explaining carefully how Providence operates with us in orderly and systematic ways. It is essential that evils must be allowed to appear and be seen and judged and repented of. Many false doctrines have led people to make a general confession of sinfulness, asking God to cleanse them. In fact, unless we really look into our desires and examine our ways, we shall not even believe that we are sinful. It is a form of escapism - a way of blaming God for everything that has happened; but as far as I am concerned, "Nothing to do with me mate!"

Section 4 (279) Since all our experiences - emotional and mental - leave a permanent record on the mind, it cannot be stressed enough that God cannot wipe the slate clean. But what is possible is that we can recognise our former mistakes, be ashamed of them, and begin to push them to the background and open ourselves to the slowly increasing awareness of the loving and useful life that we may begin to lead under the Lord's guidance and example. But consider the fact that since we are born with these strong selfish tendencies, we may recall that even in early childhood we enjoyed getting away with something 'naughty': say, pinching an apple from a neighbour's garden: the excitement, the danger, the prize! These hellish impulses do start earlier than we realise. There is a tremendous lot of psychoanalysis in this section; but this psychoanalysis is written under the Creator's guidance. Our minds, as much as our brains, are organs; but the mind is made of spiritual substance: it is not a formless abstraction. Take special notice of **279:7** – the mind exists in its own form and substance which is indestructible! We are here reading about the anatomy of our minds – something quite unknown to science!

allegedly corrupting youth. In the years before the passing of the Suicide Act 1961 there was a play, *The Burning Glass*, that attracted attention in which the leading character, who happened to be the British Prime Minister, committed suicide. Its author, Charles Morgan, received a letter from an admirer criticising the conduct in the play of the Prime Minister's wife who had accepted her husband's suicide. In his reply Morgan, after citing the example of Socrates, continued: *If we believe, as many Christians appear to believe, that this present life on earth is the only testing stage in the life of the soul, then it would follow that we are not entitled to release ourselves from it. But my feeling is that this life is only one room in a great and mysterious house; that all in this house is God's; that to pass out of this room into another is not the act of finality which some suppose it to be, and that if a man is impelled by his conscience to turn the handle of this door, it is not for us to prevent him.*

That is a most interesting view and would, I suspect, be received now with more sympathy by Christians and other religious believers than would have been the case in the early 1950s when the play was first performed. But society has 'moved on', as the trite phrase has it, a great deal since then and it seems that those who wish to end their lives in a clinic in Switzerland do not do so in order to achieve the next stage of spiritual life but in despair on account of their immense suffering and hoping only to end it all and to 'cease upon the midnight with no pain', as Keats put it. Where does this despair, this 'culture of death', come from? I think one could only answer that question by tracing the history of Western philosophy and science over the last four hundred years, showing how matter and spirit have been separated, how matter alone has come to be accepted as the whole truth, with spirit relegated to the realm of fiction. It also involves a fatal separation of head and heart. Over a hundred and fifty years ago the poet Alfred Tennyson felt keenly the loss of faith encouraged by the rise of modern science. But, as a man of feeling, he needed the hope of immortality. In his greatest poem, *In Memoriam*, composed over many years to commemorate his great friend Arthur Hallam who had died aged 22, he wrote:

*The wish, that of the living whole
No life may fail beyond the grave,
Derives it not from what we have
The likest God within the soul?*

*Are God and Nature then at strife,
That Nature lends such evil dreams?
So careful of the type she seems,
So careless of the single life;*

*That I, considering everywhere
Her secret meaning in her deeds,
And finding that of fifty seeds
She often brings but one to bear,*

*I falter where I firmly trod,
And falling with my weight of cares
Upon the great world's altar-stairs
That slope thro' darkness up to God,*

*I stretch lame hands of faith, and grope,
And gather dust and chaff, and call
To what I feel is Lord of all,
And faintly trust the larger hope.*

Hope

Like those other important words, love, faith and trust, hope is a very short word. As a verb, we probably use it often in our everyday lives, perhaps without much thought, but as a noun expressing a concept it is rarer. The meaning I want to concentrate on is described in the Oxford Dictionary as an archaic one. Swedenborg tells us that genuine hope can only be imparted to those with whom the good of faith is present, but I fear that what the poet Tennyson called 'the larger hope' is not very fashionable today. Its opposite, despair, seems to have seized the imagination of many sensitive and intelligent people in our society, as witnessed by the popularity of the organisation Dignitas and its clinic in Zurich whither the latest English people to go there to commit suicide were the famous conductor Sir Edward Downes and his wife. Now I do not want to get into judging the conduct of other people. Lady Downes was suffering from terminal cancer and her husband, eighty-five years old, virtually blind and becoming deaf, could not bear to see her suffer any longer nor could he contemplate life without her. But this case and others like it does raise questions of religion and morality that are hotly debated in different arenas.

Until nearly fifty years ago in this country a person who killed himself while of sound mind committed a serious offence, what was then called a felony. While a person who had died could not be brought before the criminal courts, he or she, as a felon, could be denied burial in consecrated ground. Note the words 'of sound mind'. Very many people who committed suicide then as now were not 'of sound mind', as the old phrase has it. A person of sound mind who attempted suicide was guilty of a lesser crime, what was then called a misdemeanour. The law had long fallen into disrepute and in 1961 Parliament passed the Suicide Act which de-criminalised suicide but retained an offence of aiding and abetting the suicide of another, punishable by a maximum of 14 years' imprisonment, and this remains on the statute book. Suicide clinics, like that at Zurich in Switzerland, are illegal in this country and friends and relatives who help loved ones to go to Switzerland to die could be prosecuted for offences under the Suicide Act. I do not think this has yet happened and public opinion today might be affronted if there were to be such a prosecution, but the possibility remains. My concern today is not with the state of the law and how it might be changed, but with the changed attitudes to religion and morality that have made assisted suicide acceptable to many people in our society.

Let us start with suicide pure and simple without the involvement of others. While the Christian religion traditionally condemned suicide, other cultures have accepted it, particularly for military failure, for example in ancient Rome and in modern Japan. In ancient Athens the philosopher Socrates committed suicide by drinking hemlock, but this was a punishment inflicted by the Athenian state for

Section 5 (280-284) How often we worry about the evils which happen in the world. Every day the news is full of foul and dreadful events, and we cannot help wondering why it is all permitted. We have to come to see that evil exists, and how dreadful it really is. First we see evil in others, but eventually we have to recognise that it equally exists in us. Without that personal recognition, there will be no change. The question, "Why does the Lord allow this?" is not the point. "Why am I so selfish? Why so impatient? Why so critical of others?" That is the beginning of the solution, and the realisation that as you change yourself, even a little bit, you are already changing the world! We need to recognise the subtle destructiveness of evil which poisons and kills everything good and heavenly! But the Lord guards your freedom and gives you the power to desire change for the better. Read 1 Samuel 16:1-13 which teaches us what the Lord sees as He looks at us.

Prayers without words and Meditations

I have chosen passages which talk about 'trouble', because when we are turning to the Lord we shall be attacked by the hells, often in very subtle ways which will not seem to be from that source! But during temptations the hells are being judged and condemned and they will have many ways of hiding behind a screen. Every two or three days read one of the following Psalms: **9, 32, 34, 46, 59, 143**. When you read them, always remember that the Lord as a child and youth, right to the end of His life, was tempted; and His temptations are described (in the spiritual sense) in the Psalms. That is why He loved the Psalms so much. Read Psalm **119:97-104**.

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**

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.

From the Governing Council

A reduced Council of ten gathered on the 8th and 9th September, aware that Kathy Brooks was unable to be present. She was missed in many ways and our thoughts were with her. Lunch was the beginning of just over 24 hours of Purley Chase hospitality amidst the beauty of the green trees and gardens. The sun shone as the Senior Minister led us into thoughts about love and charity. Then began hours of thoughtful consideration on aspects of the church which we all love.

Conference 2009 was still fresh in people's minds with the CEO's detailed record of debates available for analysis and comment. The Council also received wonderful, encouraging and enthusiastic letters from families about their experiences. Such meetings of members are essential for the guidance of trustees, officers and employees as they continue the work between meetings making decisions – some very difficult – in an attempt to find the best ways ahead. There was much discussion about finance, an essential for the Council, with some interesting details. An example is that 45 adults and 16 children attended the 4 night AGM at Conference's expense costing about £14,000 (or £14k). About 10k was paid by churches for representatives and by visitors with donations amounting to about 3k. The resulting cost to Conference was about 11k of the total bill of about 25k. Following some recent generous offers of extra finance the future of Swanwick-style family Conferences is secure for some years.

Trustees also looked in detail at a recent financial forecast for the current year – a notoriously difficult exercise which can only act as a guide. Details are impossible in this report but you might be interested in some estimated numbers. It seems likely that the total cost of our ministry for 2009 to 2010 might be about £245k with about £155k for staff and about £150k for everything else. The expected income might be about £400k. These figures are necessarily inexact estimates and approximate but highlight a problem which results in difficult decisions at times.

For many members the desire for a Minister is paramount but it is a reasonable estimate that the full cost of one such full-time employee requires £1million of capital when interest rates are relatively normal. The whole Purley development cost less than this from investments; the rest was a gift for that purpose. Traditionally churches have not been expected to meet the cost of their ministerial service. All are subsidised, some up to 90% of the costs. Meanwhile the Council is trying to support the many and varying elements of Conference many of which are overseen by the link members: Kathy Brooks for Local Churches and CAM, Zoe Brooks for Finance, David Haseler for Purley, Peter

Schofield for Human Resources and Judith Wilson for Communication and Development. These areas are all on the long agenda. The ongoing income for accommodation at Purley is steadily increasing with a pleasing rise in donations as more and more people are finding this wonderful resource we offer. As always the requests and concerns of individuals and groups are considered with love and care. Help is offered wherever possible. As the organisation shrinks the workload is increasing. The Senior Minister, Chairman and CEO in particular carry heavy workloads as they try to bring help and care to needy situations – after many hours of travel in some cases.

Yet as the organisation shrinks there is also a need to accept inevitable change. Everything seems to be in the 'melting pot'. The essential elements of the Senior Minister, CEO and Treasurer roles are all being considered as new ways of delivering our own and legal requirements are sought. The Council is asking searching questions about leadership of the church. What will be our needs in 5 years and how can we best deliver them? We pray for insight and guidance, meanwhile resting in the knowledge that the Lord loves everyone – surely the most wonderful thing of all.

Judith Wilson

September 2009

Committee for Auxiliary Ministry Easter Services by Rev Clifford Curry

CAM is delighted to offer a collection of ten services for the Easter period by Rev Clifford Curry. There are services for Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter Sunday. They contain introductions, prayers, readings and talks as well as suggestions for suitable hymns. Some of them also contain ideas for suitable music to enhance the service. Worship Leaders are free to adapt them to incorporate their own ideas and style.

The set costs £5.00 if you require printed copies. If you prefer to receive copies by email these are available at a cost of £1.00 per set and CDs are also available at £2.00 per set.

If you would like to receive this new collection please send your order to:
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Cheques should be made payable to 'The General Conference of the New Church'.