



25 Years of Sacred/Circle Dancing

See article on page 15

Lifeline

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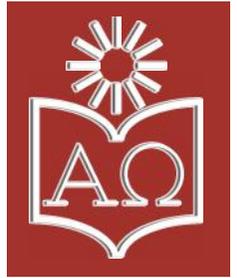
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new church

Lifeline



Consider then whether the spider weaving its so skillfully designed web thinks in its tiny head: "I will stretch threads out in this order, and join them together with cross threads, so that my web will stand up to the air pressure it will encounter. And where the inside ends of the threads meet to make the centre, I will make myself a place to sit, so that I can detect anything falling into the web and run to it ..."

I will tell you the source of their actions. Every animal, every bird, fish, creeping thing and insect has its own natural, sensual and bodily love; these reside in their heads, and in the brains in them. By this route the spiritual world acts directly upon their bodily senses, and by these it directs their actions.

True Christian Religion
335:3,6

January 2013
Number 417

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

Connection to the Lord

How lovely is your dwelling place, O Lord of hosts!
Psalm 84:1

On a particularly lovely day one June, I went for a walk at Stenson Lock on the Trent and Mersey Canal just south of Derby.



After taking a short walk, I sat down with a cup of tea and a cake to watch the narrow-boats navigate through the lock. The sun was shining and there was not a cloud in the sky. A cool breeze was blowing and I could hear the sound of water flowing through the lock gates. It was a very tranquil setting, and as I sat there with the sun on my face and the breeze on my back I felt a strong sense of appreciation for and connection with this beautiful creation. I took a moment to centre myself spiritually, and enter into the Lord's dwelling place and be grateful, offering thanks to God.

While still in this prayerful state of appreciation and gratitude, the sound of a very noisy car engine shattered the stillness of my meditation. My moment of

(Continued on page 3)

Contents

Connection to the Lord	2	Job Vacancies	9
Conference 2012 Holy Supper Service	4	New Church Children's Society	9
Not bad for £50	6	5th Essential - Loving the Lord - part 4	10
Annual Meeting of the New Church College	7	My Vision for Ministry	14
From the Council	8	25 Years of Sacred/Circle Dancing	15

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www.new-church-lifeline.org.uk

25 Years of Sacred/Circle Dancing

For the past twenty five years the West Wickham Sacred/Circle Dance Group have been dancing round 'centres', such as that illustrated on the right, with the symbolic candle and floral decorations etc.. This one was for our celebratory meeting. [See also the picture on the back page of this issue].



The group was started by Hilda Johnson who had been inspired after a dance meeting led by Patricia Russell and Michael Stanley, held at Swedenborg Hall. Armed with a couple of Findhorn's recorded tapes, she and Gwendolen Rowe taught us a dozen or more old favourites. Twenty five years later she has acquired an extensive repertoire of many hundreds of Israeli, Eastern European, modern and other dances.

The group was launched when we were in temporary premises at South Norwood and has moved firstly to the Church Building at West Wickham and later to the hall built behind it. Initially it was formed of some dozen Church members of which only four remain, but, over the years, Hilda has through advertising and personal contact recruited many scores of 'outsiders' from all over South East London who have come and gone, the current membership standing between 25 and 30.

We can only claim to have introduced one person into Church membership, but at least the meetings bring in a regular monthly income of about £30. Hilda has worn out several tape and CD machines and her right knee joint, which all needed replacements. The group hope her left knee will last a few years yet.

Patrick Johnson

In ancient times not only musical instruments and singing served to bear witness to gladness of heart but also dancing. Joyful feelings in the heart or interior things erupted into various activities in the body, such as singing and also dancing. Since in ancient times the glad feelings excelling all others were spiritual ones, ... people were allowed, when they engaged in singing and musical harmony, to dance as well and so in dancing also to bear witness to their joy.

Arcana Caelestia 8339

My Vision for Ministry

Last week I met with members of my Sponsored Student Monitoring Group (SSMG). My husband, Chris came with me so that he could have some input into the discussions, and so that he could be kept in the picture of what our plans could be. At Conference I gave a presentation of my vision of my ministry. For those of you who were not present, what I visualise myself doing is a community-based ministry, mostly during the day, during the week. I intend to work in York, as this is where we live, and where I have built up a number of contacts. I have come to realise that there are lots of people for whom weekend services do not fit their lifestyle. There are others who do not feel they gain much from a typical Sunday Service, but enjoy a different type of environment. I am hardly re-inventing the wheel here, but I am going to try and serve those people in ways that makes spirituality alive for them.

There are various groups of people I would like to work with. One that is close to my heart is parents and small children. I hope to be able to run a group for toddlers and their parents or carers, and to try and have some sort of discussion for the adults as well. I would like to work with school-age children on their way home from school. I can see how a prayer group at lunchtime might work for people who cannot get to church on a Sunday for other reasons. There is scope for working with the elderly, and with the homeless. The possibilities seem endless!

I have discussed my frustration at the necessary length of my training. As I have two little children, I do not want to miss out on their infancy by putting them in more childcare and progressing through the course faster. David Lomax has been working on an initiative called "Work-Based Training". Through this, we hope that I will be able to start some work in the community next academic year and continue my studies, but in a different format to make them relevant to what I am working on.

This feels exciting and scary to me! It was fine when it was a long way off, but now that it is closer I am having to examine how I can make it all work, with the help of David, the SSMG and my mentor. I hope to have your support, and any practical ideas that you have are most welcome. I also realise that some of my ideas might not work for one reason or another, so I hope you will continue to support me if my vision of my ministry needs to change. I also hope to include music and writing somehow – watch this space. I believe that this is all under the Lord's Divine Providence, and that I should be receptive to where He wants to lead me, even if it is not where I was expecting to go.

If you would like to get in touch, my email address is: becky@jarratt1.plus.com
or phone 01904 703 666

Becky Jarratt

connection to the Lord was broken. And I thought, well ... isn't that just life? It might seem a nice idea to be able to sit in the sun, in quiet prayer, communing with the Lord all afternoon, or for as long as your heart desires. But is that realistic? As we make our best efforts to live out our faith daily, and to regularly connect with the Lord, there will be numerous distractions that arise and knock us off our game. And then it can be difficult to reconnect and find our spiritual centre again. Luckily for us, it is not really that far away.

The title given to Psalm 84 is "*The Joy of Worship in the Temple*". The psalmist is referring to the Temple in Jerusalem which would have required a pilgrimage for the psalmist to be able to go and worship, and yet his "*soul longs*" for even one day in the dwelling place of the Lord. "*For a day in your courts is better than a thousand elsewhere.*"

Today the only pilgrimage we are required to make, is the journey within. Jesus reminds us that "*the kingdom of God is within you.*" It is there with us at all times, not only on Sunday morning, or during a tranquil moment found while enjoying the beauty of nature, but at all times and in every moment. We can tap into the kingdom of God within us, whenever and wherever we desire. And in doing so, the stresses and distractions of life will seem to be less important and hold less power over us. We can then be free to commune with God, drawing on the Lord's power to lighten our path and guide us on our way through life's challenges. And that is something to be really grateful for.

Once, having been asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, Jesus replied,

The kingdom of God does not come visibly, nor will people say, 'Here it is', or 'There it is', because the kingdom of God is within you.
Luke 17:20-21

Rev Catherine Lauber

Psalm 84

- title, 1-4 (HB 1-5) Love and desire for the church and heaven.
- 5-7 (HB 6-8) Because of trust in the Lord, the church will increase in truths and goods.
- 8-12 (HB 9-13) Her happiness arises from trust in the Lord.

Prophets and Psalms 334

This work, a series of short summaries, was left in manuscript form by Swedenborg and was probably written before 1763. HB in the text refers to the Hebrew Bible used by Swedenborg which has different verse numbering.

Conference 2012 Holy Supper Service

The following is the talk given by Rev Bruce Jarvis during the Holy Supper Service at Conference 2012.

Readings **John 17:6-19**
 True Christian Religion 347 (extracts)

From the chapter on Faith.

Faith is formed by a person approaching the Lord, learning truths from the Word, and living by them.

Firstly: faith is formed by a person approaching the Lord, because faith which is real faith, that is, the faith which saves, is from the Lord and directed to the Lord. The Lord's words to His disciples show plainly that it comes from the Lord:

Remain in me, and I in you, because without me you can do nothing.
John 15:4,5

Secondly: the reason why faith is formed by a person learning truths from the Word is that faith essentially is truth; for all the ingredients of faith are truths. So faith is nothing but a collection of truths casting light in a person's mind. For truths teach not only that one should believe, but in whom one should believe and what one should believe. Truths must be taken from the Word, because it contains all the truths which lead to salvation; and they are effective because they have been given by the Lord, and are as a result imprinted upon the whole heaven of the angels. So it is that when a person goes on to learn truths from the Word, he comes into communion and association with angels, without being aware of it.

That they may be one as we are one **John 17:11**

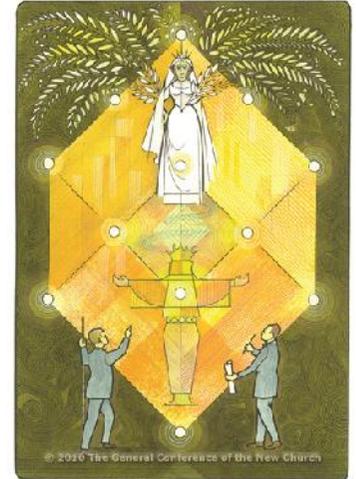
Down the centuries the Sacrament of Holy Supper, under all its varying and changing names and practices, has played a central role in Christian life and worship. For us in the New Church, the glorious teachings revealed at the Lord's Second Coming fill out the whole correspondential nature of the Sacrament given to us in the four Gospels and elsewhere. And, by the way, without this correspondential explanation, we're told, the Sacrament cannot be clearly understood and effective in its deepest potential.

When we live our lives from the Word of God we are united with the Lord in the deepest way and suffused with the light of his love. This relationship is epitomized in the beautiful image of the holy city shining with the radiance of a bride.

I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband.

"Come, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb."

Revelation 21:2, 9



Five Essentials - Aspects of Loving - a focus for the Church
5th Essential: Part 4: Loving the Lord - as our Father and Husband
Published by The General Conference of the New Church.
Downloadable from www.new-church-lifeline.org.uk

Sir Patrick Moore

Readers of Lifeline will I am sure have noticed the recent death of the renowned amateur astronomer Patrick Moore. Much has been written about him in the newspapers particularly about the fact that he lost his fiancée Lorna in an air raid during World War 2. In one newspaper the following caught my eye:

He was asked whether he envisaged that his passing could see him reunited with his beloved fiancée Lorna.
He replied:

"I don't believe partings are for ever. If we die when our bodies do, then everything would be pointless. And the universe is not pointless. The next stage? Oh, I'm sure she's there."



As a bridegroom rejoices over his bride, so will your God rejoice over you.
Isaiah 62:5

I remember the devotion of your youth, how as a bride you loved me and followed me through the desert, through a land not sown. Jeremiah 2:2

*"In that day," declares the LORD,
"you will call me 'my husband';
you will no longer call me 'my master'.
I will betroth you to me forever;
I will betroth you in righteousness and justice,
in love and compassion.
I will betroth you in faithfulness,
and you will acknowledge the LORD."* Hosea 2:16,19-20

Jesus refers to himself as the bridegroom, when asked why his disciples did not fast.

Jesus answered, "How can the guests of the bridegroom mourn [fast] while he is still with them?" Matthew 9:15 [Mark 2:19]

When might Jeremiah's assertion, 'how as a bride you loved me and followed me' have been true for you?

Teaching focus

Let us look more closely at this marriage relationship. We are drawn to the Lord, to the beautiful truths of his Word, which make sense of life and which we have absorbed into our lives and made our own, so to speak. The Lord flows into this filling us with heavenly delight.

A marriage of good and truth radiates from the Lord and flows into people, and they receive it according to the state of their minds and of their lives.

A person receives truth from the Lord, and the Lord adds good to this truth to the extent that the person applies truth in his actions.

The Lord forms a church in a person in this way because then he is joined with the Lord in good from Him and in truth that seems to come from himself. So the person is in the Lord and the Lord in him, according to His words in John 15:4-5.

Love in Marriage 121,123-124

When you come to think about it, it's not surprising that the Sacrament has remained in its central place. Communion, after all, is at the very heart of human life, whether it be between people, between ourselves and the natural or creative world, or between us and our Maker. In its essence, it is what makes life worth living. When discovered, understood and practised, communion in all its forms brings its own beautiful reward. Perhaps we see that most clearly when two people find themselves in communion and in a growing intimate relationship.

What is implied in this matter of communion? It is surely to do with our common humanity, what we share and hold in common, that binds us together. It is an irony that because of our fallen state we feel ourselves to be so separated from others, both individually and as communities - and from our Heavenly Father. It is as that disorder is turned around that we discover our Lord's intention for us, which is to receive His gift of life, and then to find our joy in sharing it with others.

Our Saviour, in that extraordinary and unique chapter of prayer in John 17, prayed that those who follow Him might be kept in His name, that *they might be one as He and the Father are one*. As you can read, He went on to pray that *they might be sanctified by the truth; your Word is the truth*. There is a very real sense in which that oneness in the Divine is to be replicated at our human level, a oneness both within ourselves and in our closeness to others.

Let's be theological for just a few seconds! The world could not be saved by the Father but only by the Son. The Word had to become flesh so that the Divine Love could be given ultimate form by means of the Divine Wisdom. Only in that way could the redemption of the human race be brought about.

So it is with us. However deep or however superficial our love might be, it can never function or achieve anything on its own. Our love has to be moderated and enlightened and given useful form by the power of true ideas. We have to be sanctified or made holy by means of the Lord's truth, essentially (for Christians) as it comes to us in His revealed Word.

This act of communion in which we are engaged this morning will be as effective as we allow and as we want it to be. The Lord is here with us in this holy place. Let's be sure we know and feel His presence. Let us allow our imperfect loves to be changed and perfected by offering our minds and understanding to Him so that He can do His heavenly work on us. As we receive the bread and wine, may we be offering ourselves to Him in humble submission, seeking only His will. So may we be one, as our Heavenly Father is one. Amen

Rev Bruce Jarvis

Not bad for £50

I was interested in John Elliott's article 'HB to RB' in the November Lifeline, partly because I had invested £50 in a copy of 'RB' some months ago. I'm not an intellectual or a scholar or unduly wealthy. These days I tend mostly to read fiction of the two books for £6.99 variety from Tesco or 20p a borrow from the church bookstall (I think I could possibly tackle 'Fictional Detectives' as a specialist subject on Mastermind) but I did know Norman had been working on the Bibliography for a lengthy period of time and was curious as to its contents. I suppose in the past couple of years or so prices have risen so steeply that £50 doesn't seem quite as much as it once was - it's about the same as filling my car tank with petrol!

I deliberately used the word 'invest' because this is a book that pays dividends. The picture on the back cover of Lifeline doesn't quite do justice to the book. For a start it's a book with a nice feel to it. Its cover is slightly textured so that it doesn't slither off one's knee. The cream tinged pages feel just right to turn over - not too flimsy yet not too thick. It's the sort of book that makes me think, 'Who on earth would buy a Kindle when you could enjoy this tactile book experience?'

I set off with the idea of reading the book straight through from cover to cover and got about a third of the way through it before deciding that this wasn't perhaps the best way of doing things. This was principally because I couldn't remember what the signs and symbols stood for and had to keep turning back to the beginning of the book to refresh my mind. So, as John suggested I have found it much easier to browse through it and pick topics to look at. I was quite amused as today it has been rather frosty and my heating has been turned up. Obviously Swedenborg had the same problems in eighteenth century Sweden hence his 'New Rules for maintaining Heat in Rooms' and 'New Observations respecting Iron and Fire and a New Construction of a Stove.' It sounds as though his stove might have been an early Aga!

Naturally perhaps as a church, we have paid far more attention to the theological writings of Swedenborg than to the other facets of Swedenborg the man. The 'RB' reminds us of all the accomplishments and the fantastic written output generated by Swedenborg. I had not been aware before of just how extensive his range of interests was and certainly I had never considered poetry to be one of his strengths before dipping into this book.

This book has made me realise again the depths of Swedenborg's natural mind and reconfirms to me the validity of his spiritual experiences and enlightenment. It is humbling too that in this day and age such a work as 'RB' with its depth of

Jesus prays often and teaches us to pray, 'Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name...' All aspects of our relationship with the Lord are embodied in this prayer. *Set aside a time to **reflect prayerfully** on each phrase and how it contributes to your relationship with your heavenly Father.*

Jesus speaks of his mission, the purpose of his life here, the trust his Father places in him, the closeness of their working together, his struggle in fulfilling his mission, their oneness. Is this what our relationship with our Father is about? A mission of love supported by love, endured through love and fulfilled by love. Beginning and ending in love.

Yet Jesus came to fulfil the law and the prophets. There was hard work, temptations to be resisted, rejection to be endured, the hells to be overcome. Love was the powerhouse, the Word of truth the sword. The inner loving Father crucial at every moment of the strife, as the Word made flesh battled with the forces of hell.

Oh that we might have such love and faith, that we might rely on the Father in us!

*You, O Lord, are our Father, our Redeemer from of old is your name.
Isaiah 63:16*

At what times are you most reliant on the Father?

Bridegroom and Husband

Our relationship with the Lord is not only one of Father and child, where we learn to obey our Father's will. Through love of his ways and through love of him, who he is and how he is - his forgiving love for us, his constant presence with us, drawing us from what would harm us and hurt others to what is good and true - we grow into a new relationship with him.

The Lord will always be our Father, the One we depend on for everything, for our very life. Yet we are invited into a more mature, more equal relationship with him, taking on responsibility just as children do as they grow up. A more intimate relationship based on love and trust, becoming co-creators with him, one of bridegroom and bride, husband and wife. The promise of this is expressed in the prophets:



5th Essential: Part 4 - Loving the Lord - As our Father and Husband

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Matthew 6:9

**Have we not all one Father?
Did not one God create us?** Malachi 2:10

**For your Maker is your husband -
the LORD Almighty is his name -
the Holy One of Israel is your Redeemer;
he is called the God of all the earth.** Isaiah 54:5

Our Father

For most of us the first love we experience is from our father and mother. We imbibe it in the cradle. It is as life-giving as our mother's milk. The holding and the caring give us a sense of security and belonging, of being. We are because our parents enable us to be.

Yet they are only the instruments of our heavenly Father's creative love which brought us into being and holds us in being. What love we have to support us! And so we imbibe an awareness of God as our heavenly Father. We have him to thank for all we have. Our first responses are of thankfulness and praise, unless our experience is damaging, then later on in our life we have the possibility of knowing the real love that comes from our divine Father.

***Pause and reflect** on your relationship with God as your heavenly Father. What is the essential nature of your relationship? ... What links might there be with your relationship with your own father? What might have made them different?*

Bible focus

As we grow up Jesus becomes our prime model for our relationship with the Father, and source of our intimate knowledge of him.

"I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth. ... no-one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him." Matthew 11:25, 27

scholarship can still be produced. It makes me regret that I didn't continue studying Latin past O level!

I don't know whether my experiences of reading the book count as a book review or not because I certainly don't feel enough of a Swedenborgian scholar to attempt a critical scholastic review. Praise in Lancashire is sparingly given but the 'RB' certainly gets the highest accolade a Lancastrian can bestow – *'It's not bad for £50.'* Thanks Norman.

Pauline Grimshaw

Annual Meeting of the New Church College

The Annual Meeting will be held at Swedenborg Hall, London on Saturday, 29th June 2013 at 14.30. We have not held our Annual Meeting in the South for many years and so we hope that many of our Governors and friends will be able to attend.

After the business meeting, the Principal, Rev David Lomax, will introduce the subject; *'What Lies Beneath : Developments in Christian Theology.'* Swedenborg wrote extensively about the church of his day, including questioning the beliefs held by churches and their people. Two hundred and fifty years or so later, there are signs of some shifts within mainstream Christian belief. These are in such fundamental areas as salvation, the Bible and the nature of God. We shall look at how some of the theology of the New Church described by Swedenborg might be visible when considering these 'fault lines'.

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

Light refreshments will be provided; a donation towards the cost will be welcomed. If you are able to attend, it would be helpful if you would contact:

David Haseler, Secretary
0121 440 8070
david.haseler@generalconference.org.uk

From the Council

A lively group of twelve met together at Purley Chase on Tuesday 20th November to work through a long, varied and interesting Council agenda. We were an equal number of women and men I now realise as I reflect on the experience. The feeling was good, the group jelled and all took an active part. I don't know if equality influenced this but we listened, talked and came to amicable decisions - not all unanimous of course!

If you are considering becoming a member of the Council, or its Chairperson, please ask to experience the next meeting in March, well before the application should be made. If this is not for you maybe Youth Leader or Pensions and Insurance are more suitable? Details of these are available via the Home page or Resources page of - www.new-church-lifeline.org.uk

If you can't fill the posts please will you help find those who can?

The Council is thinking into the future and trying to simplify its procedures. Experienced volunteers on the Rules Committee have made many recommendations which members took time to ratify. They also spent time to simplify Conference's voting system as we move into a future of fewer church members and more individuals on the central register. Without necessarily changing the way churches have representatives, Council will recommend that one vote is given to each attending member of Conference. This will be presented at the next AGM in 2013. Please plan to attend and share the decision making; this cannot come into effect until 2014 at the earliest. Change takes time.

The group is also working on several Policies in line with current expectations. Examples are such as updated Child Protection and a Bribery Policy. These will be made available when complete. Council is also concentrating on allocating supporters to all employees and volunteers so that nobody works in isolation.

Reports and minutes are also received from SOLCe, Ministry and Purley Chase, each provoking discussion. Purley Chase continues to be very successful with facilities being used to near capacity. This is largely thanks to the energies, devotion and skills of Anne and David Gaffney. We share our gratitude to them with so many people. We also recognise that they will need to retire at some point in the medium future. We plant this as a seed. Where will its growth happen?

Thanks to the generosity of our forefathers and the people of the church now, together with financial controls in place, Conference now has healthy accounts.

We have priorities for spending: human resources and ministry being top of the list.

We cannot see the future although we spend time trying at times. It is known to the Lord and he will provide for it. Hopefully he can use another of our priorities, support of green shoots, as he works with us and through us.

Judith Wilson

Job Vacancies

There are currently a number of job vacancies within the Conference Organisation.

Volunteers are needed for Chair of the Council and Trustees; Part-Time Pension Co-ordinator and Part-Time Insurance Co-ordinator.

A Youth Leader is needed, working on a salaried, permanent, part-time basis.

For full details of all these jobs go to www.new-church-lifeline.org.uk Either click on the Job Vacancies link on the Home Page or go to the Resources Page.

The New Church Children's Society

The New Church Children's Society ran a surplus last year. This year we will have a large deficit. If anyone has some spare money, please send it to the treasurer:

Mr David Thomas [address removed for online copy]

With grateful thanks, Geoffrey Bentley (Honorary Secretary)