

Rainbow's End

The Spiritual Significance of Colours

Purley Chase 13th – 15th March 2015

Clifford Curry will be exploring the spiritual significance of colour with particular reference to the rainbow which has been seen as an emblem of hope and renewal from ancient times. It appears in the ancient Bible story of Noah's ark, and we will look at how Swedenborg understands its significance in this context, and the spiritual energies associated with its colours.

Recognising that light and colour are a very important part of life for so many of us, we will also reflect on our relationship with colour both in our personal environment and in the wider world of nature. We will consider how this might help us better understand ourselves, tune in with the world around us, and appreciate the kaleidoscope of personalities we share it with.

Bookings: 01827 712370 www.purleychasecentre.org.uk



Lifeline

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Lifeline



Families Weekend

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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 good side of becoming forgetful

Welcome to another year and the future it will bring soon enough, including becoming that little bit older. Age often brings forgetfulness ("Now what was it I was going to say") but it can also bring the wish to let go of a few jaundiced opinions, clear out some of those treasured possessions, and wonderfully, bring on a touch of wisdom gained from long experience and our processing of life.

We tend to be a bit forlorn about becoming more forgetful, seeing it as an indication of where we've got to now, and perhaps remembering the time when every fact was on instant recall. I'd encourage us to see forgetfulness as a good shift and all part of the Lord's amazing management and provision for our life. As an illustration, think about the way a plane takes off. First you are on the ground with a close connection to runways, grass verges, airport traffic, and then you are airborne - a different world - with all the details now failing away as you rise, quickly forgotten. It is also, of course, a diagram about dying and eternity, but it is accurate for the process of just growing older. The little details go as the bigger picture takes shape and precedence. Note: so too with our mind.

Psalm 137 says, *If I forget you, O Jerusalem, may my right hand forget its skill.* This verse is from the 'By the rivers of Babylon' psalm, and there they were a thousand miles from home, consciously keeping up the memory of Jerusalem over several generations, refusing to forget! There are some things that we won't forget, can't forget and mustn't forget, and some things we have to work hard at to never forget ... but they are not the details of the past. They are the underlying purposes of life - who we are, why we live, what always matters - which life's cascade of details perhaps often obscured in earlier years but now they stand a

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www.new-church-lifeline.org.uk

Toby's Christmas

I'd love to shake Christmas's hand.
He is the soul of the family, bringing warmth and love to everyone around him.

He makes us come together, causing the children to be excited and joyful.
He brings Santa to life.

Christmas brings the snow, sometimes.

He strolls where ever he goes,
contentedly bobbing up and down.

He gives us the chance to stuff ourselves with turkey!

If I shook his hand I think he'd pat my head, smile, and say
"Go and have a great time, my boy".

All of this is for Jesus. After all it is his birthday!

While I'm celebrating, I try to allow myself to see the true meaning of Christmas,
when Jesus was born all those decades ago.

I can imagine the stable, but not only the setting, the feelings:
joy, excitement, love, warmth. These feelings, every Christmas,
blossom inside of all of us, and if you stop for a moment
you can feel his heart beating inside you.

Toby Jenkinson (11)

Self-love and the love of the world present a semblance of life and of joy, but because they are absolutely contrary to true love, which is loving the Lord above all things and the neighbour as oneself, it is clear that neither of them is love but hatred. For the more anyone loves himself and the world, the more he hates his neighbour and so the Lord. Consequently true love is love to the Lord, true life is the life inherent in love from Him, and true joy is the joy of that life. The existence of more than one true love is not possible. Nor consequently is the existence of more than one true life possible which is the source of all true joy and happiness, such as angels in the heavens enjoy.

Arcana Caelestia 33 Extract

Our thanks go to all our leaders for ensuring that both the grown ups and kids had a fantastic weekend.

Helen Curry

Carol Service at Seaburn Dene New Church

The Carol Service at Seaburn Dene New Church began with the traditional flurry of tinsel and costumes as Rainbows, Brownies, Sunday Seekers and friends gathered quietly downstairs to await their cue. Then, during the first verse of Once in Royal David's City, the children walked through the darkened congregation with tea lights to place on the altar. This is the way the Carol Service has begun for many years (I remember doing it myself as a Seeker, albeit with real candles instead of safe electric ones and the responsibility not to set alight the costume of the child in front...) But from here on, each year is a little bit different.

This year there was a mixture of readings, some from the gospels, and some interpretations of elements of the Christmas story and Christmas traditions which had been researched and then read by the Sunday Seekers. The Brownies sang beautifully the song Let it Go from the Disney film Frozen, and we were asked to think during their singing of how Mary would have felt after being given the news that she was to give birth to the baby king, and how she would have had to prepare herself to be brave against what others might say.

No Carol Service would be complete without the nativity tableau, and we had Mary and Joseph, a shepherd and a host of angels to help us visualise the story. The children then chose a wrapped gift from under the Christmas tree to give to the baby Jesus, before singing the first verse of Away in a Manger. Seaburn Dene is very fortunate to have several musicians who accompany the hymns, which adds a lovely depth to the music, and the readings and nativity were interspersed with joyous carols. Before the final prayer and carol, two Sunday Seekers, Rebecca and Eve, sang "In a Manger He Lay", composed by Becky Jarratt. They had only managed two short rehearsals, but sang it fantastically well.

After the service was over everyone squashed downstairs to share fellowship and warm mince pies. The Seaburn Dene Carol Service always makes me feel that Christmas Day really is around the corner, and it's lovely to be able to come along now with my own children to join in the retelling of the Christmas story.

Helen Curry

(Continued from page 2)

chance of coming into their own as the plane takes off.

One of Joseph's two sons was Manasseh (can you remember the other?) and this name means "causing to make forgetful". Manasseh and his brother were two of the twelve tribes of Israel, which spiritually means all the key things which a life centred on truth and love will have as its components. So then, one of these good component parts is to become more forgetful! I'm sure by now you are appreciating that we are not talking about telephone numbers.

To forget like that is liberating and even intended to happen. You will know that along with 'short-term' memory loss, there is normally a remarkable ability to remember the long-distant past in great detail as if it was only yesterday. Sometimes older people can even list everybody who was at a gathering 58 years ago and yet not know what they had for today's breakfast. How come? I don't really think it is just a strange quirk of the mind, not when you appreciate that that gathering happened in youth, was probably linked with happy times, maybe even involved romance, and that what we love stays on and on, deep down in us. I would add 'for ever'. Our fact-memory gives way to our love-memory engraved like the ten commandments on the permanent stone of our being.

So ... what was I going to mention? ... oh yes, the start of another year. You will have forgotten (or shelved) a lot of last year. So be it. What you lock-in of this new year will largely depend on your love for what you want to make of it. Love it and much will be retained, fritter it or grumble and much will evaporate. Take good heed of Psalm 145:

The Lord opens his hand and satisfies the desire of every living thing.

Rev Julian Duckworth

From the Sydney Newsletter

It is probably well known that nothing is ever able to enter the human memory and remain there unless there is some affection or love to attract it. If there were no affection, or what amounts to the same, no love, there would not be any discernment. It is to this affection or love to which the thing entering in links itself, and once linked to that affection it remains. This becomes clear from the consideration that when a like affection or love returns that thing reappears as well, presenting itself together with many others which, from a like affection or love, have entered in previously. This goes on repeatedly.

Arcana Caelestia 3336:2 Extract

Chiasmus

I recently came across the word 'Chiasmus' and was sufficiently intrigued that I studied what it was all about and then led a discussion group on the subject at the West Wickham church. During that discussion it was suggested that the subject might form a suitable article for Lifeline, so here it is.

Chiasmus is a Latin word derived from Greek words meaning a 'crossing' or 'to shape like the letter X'. It describes a literary form in which ideas are presented and then after a 'crossing' they are re-presented but in reverse order. The form was particularly popular in Hebrew, Greek and Latin and does appear in English, for example in Shakespeare.

In his Inaugural Address in January 1961 President Kennedy used a simple chiasmus when he declared "*Ask not what your country can do for you - ask what you can do for your country.*" Notice how the ideas of 'country' and 'you' are first presented in that order and then after a simple 'crossing' are re-presented in the order 'you' and 'country' This is a simple and very common form of chiasmus which may be referred to as ABBA where the letters A and B represent the two ideas, in this case 'country' and 'you'.

Having introduced the concept I am now going to look at a number of examples of chiasmus in the Bible starting with simple ones of the form ABBA and then looking at more complex ones.

Here are three quotations of Jesus from the gospels using this simple structure.

*But many who are first shall be last,
and the last shall be first.*
Matthew 19:30 ESV

*And he said to them,
"The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath."*
Mark 2:27 ESV

*Whoever exalts himself will be humbled,
and whoever humbles himself will be exalted.*
Matthew 23:12 ESV

I am sure these words are very familiar to all readers and perhaps this familiarity comes because the structure helps us to remember them very easily. Think about them for a moment and see whether other similar quotations come to mind.

Families Weekend

Purley was again filled with a busy collection of families at the beginning of November, and we were especially happy to welcome some adults and children for which this was their first experience of being at Purley Chase. Helen Newton led our adult sessions alongside her husband Andrew and this time we used the story of Jacob and Esau as our basis for exploration and discussion. We looked at Jacob taking Esau's birthright and the correspondence these characters had to head and heart/truth and good and the interaction of these two aspects. We talked about Jacob corresponding to our ego and about using our 'Observer Self' to look at our feelings, behaviour and reactions in a non-judgemental way, accepting we are not perfect and that the Lord does not expect us to be, nor does He judge us for this. This was particularly illustrated by looking at Blake's depiction of Jacob's dream staircase and noting the cycle of moving up towards a heavenly state and back down to a natural level as a natural cycle in our life.

The children's groups also worked with the Old Testament stories of Isaac and Jacob. During our collective worship on Sunday they shared their work with us - amongst other things the oldest group had created a snakes and ladders style board game using aspects of the stories to illustrate their dice, the middle group had cooked up a traditional lentil pottage for us to share, the youngest group had a song about Rebecca and Isaac. All three groups presented acting and readings from the stories too. In addition, unusually, this time the adults had a 'show and tell' to present to our children! This was based on our Saturday evening session entitled 'what makes your heart sing about parenting' - the dad's shared their excellent acting skills to demonstrate how much they loved the things their children did, even when they made mistakes, and how they sometimes get things wrong too! They then presented a PowerPoint of examples of moments they felt proud of their children. The mum's group read a poem describing how unique and special every child was, and we had also created a small and colourful message note which we gave to each of our children to tell them why they made us happy and proud.

Outside of the sessions and Worship, the Families Weekends at Purley Chase are an opportunity for us to share some family free time altogether too. This year during Saturday afternoon Robert Curry ran archery for the older kids and adults and we also had a scavenger walk and autumn crafts, followed by the traditional excellent firework display, then a disco early on Saturday evening and finally family games. This is always a wonderful opportunity for the children and adults to mix together and have a really fun time. The children seemed to thoroughly enjoy their weekend, and it is wonderful to see the connections and friendships they are forming with each other, and also the caring way that they interact with each other across their span of ages.

being able to help in a small way with Dave Gaffney's Egypt course at Purley.

The Egypt weekend was a great opportunity for me to gain an understanding of C. TH. Odhner's work: 'The Correspondences of Egypt'. Much opened up for me as a result of this course as it seems clear that these ancient people had at the heart of their religion a great understanding of the spiritual realm. In terms of input for the course, I developed a PowerPoint slide show that was accompanied by music as a scene setter on the opening evening of the course and also researched and read out some translations from early inscriptions. What I found really fruitful was that I felt confident in speaking out in the group and leading some of the discussion points.

Further afield, I have also had the opportunity to join a very interesting workshop at Kearsley church: 'God's Relationship with Us' as well as some great material being presented, we all had a chance for input and discussion.

Most recently I spent a week at Wellspring House in Manchester where, working alongside Phil Wood, I was able to gain an understanding of the wealth of resources available in the library, and attend some of the very interesting workshops there: 'Mindfulness', 'Christian Meditation' and 'Walking the Angel Way'. It also gave me a chance to get to know everyone linked to the college.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone for such a warm and kind welcome during these initial weeks of my studentship, I have really appreciated your support and interest in what I am doing. If anyone would like to get in contact you can reach me at: alisonsouthcombe@hotmail.com it would be great to hear stories you may have of your own early days studying Swedenborg's work!

Alison Southcombe

If anyone is interested in joining Alison in her studies as a learning buddy(s) please contact Helen Brown - helen.brown@solce.org.uk

Apology

I am sorry that the printed copies of the December issue arrived so late in the month. This was not due to any delay on the part of your Editor or Distributor but arose because of problems at the printer. It is possible the January issue may be delayed a little as well.

Editor

Now lets move on to a structure of chiasmus that is more complex than the simple ABBA used above.

*No servant can serve two masters,
for either he will hate the one
and love the other,
or he will be devoted to the one
and despise the other.
You cannot serve God and money.
Luke 16:13 ESV*

The form we have here is ABCCBA where A is the idea that you cannot serve two masters, expressed as *No servant can serve two masters*, or *You cannot serve God and money*; B involves hating or despising; and C uses the idea of love or devotion. There isn't really a 'crossing' other than the use of 'or' to link the ABC section with the CBA section.

Now I realise that the above is an English translation of a Greek text and I am assuming that the order of the original Greek has been maintained in the English.

I hope you have followed this so far and are beginning to appreciate how appealing these texts are to us as a result of using this style. But now I want to turn to the Old Testament to quotations translated from the original Hebrew text.

Firstly another example of the ABCCBA format.

*Make the heart of this people dull,
and their ears heavy,
and blind their eyes;
lest they see with their eyes,
and hear with their ears,
and understand with their hearts,
and turn and be healed.
Isaiah 6:10 ESV*

Here we have A - heart; B - ears; C - eyes; with a 'crossing' using the word 'lest' and a final statement - *and turn and be healed* - that is outside the ABCCBA arrangement.

So far these examples have been straightforward but I now want to turn to some examples that need a little more thinking about because the ideas that are repeated do not necessarily use the same words but nevertheless are related.

The first is a well known quotation from Isaiah.

*“Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord,
to the house of the God of Jacob,
that he may teach us his ways
and that we may walk in his paths.”
For out of Zion shall go the law,
and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.
He shall judge between the nations,
and shall decide disputes for many peoples;
and they shall beat their swords into plowshares,
and their spears into pruning hooks;
nation shall not lift up sword against nation,
neither shall they learn war anymore.
O house of Jacob,
come, let us walk in the light of the Lord.
Isaiah 2:3-5 ESV*

This has a format ABCDEDCBA where the ‘crossing’ E is a complete statement in its own right. A involves coming to the Lord, going and walking; B is Jacob; C involves teaching [*that he may teach ... from Jerusalem*] and learning; D refers to nations and peoples; and the ‘crossing’ E the reuse of weapons of war.

And then what about this quotation from the prophet Joel.

*“So you shall know that I am the Lord your God,
who dwells in Zion, my holy mountain.
And Jerusalem shall be holy,
and strangers shall never again pass through it.
“And in that day the mountains shall drip sweet wine,
and the hills shall flow with milk,
and all the streambeds of Judah shall flow with water;
and a fountain shall come forth from the house of the Lord
and water the Valley of Shittim.
“Egypt shall become a desolation and Edom a desolate wilderness,
for the violence done to the people of Judah,
because they have shed innocent blood in their land.
But Judah shall be inhabited forever,
and Jerusalem to all generations.
I will avenge their blood,
blood I have not avenged,
for the Lord dwells in Zion.”
Joel 3:17-21 ESV*

This is another ABCDEDCBA broadly as follows.

revelation to me, quite how quickly getting to grips with some of Swedenborg’s ideas offers illumination of the Bible. Previous ‘knot points’ can now be resolved and I now better understand the reasons for the almost constant series of battles that appear in many parts of the Old Testament.

This illumination has been greatly aided by Brian Kingslake’s book, *Swedenborg Explores the Spiritual Dimension*. His book has proved to be a down to earth starting point for digging deeper into Swedenborg’s writings. Although written in an everyday and straightforward style (you almost get a sense of Brian sitting next to you with a cup of tea and a biscuit as you read his book ...!) he is able to shed light on some very big concepts.



Alison Southcombe (left)

What has also been really interesting is to be able to use Swedenborg’s ideas as an opportunity to evaluate that which already exists within my own spiritual store-cupboard, as although I come from an Anglican background I have been a student of Qabalah and both Eastern and Western spiritual meditative systems for around 20 years. From this previous study I seemed to have a lot of threads in my hands but now find that what Swedenborg gives me is a toolkit to integrate and make workable the whole in order to start anew on the ‘great work’. So what then is this great work? The quest of the Holy Grail? The search for the philosophers’ stone? Or more properly knowledge and conversation with our guardian angel and with the Lord Jesus? Working with the toolkit Swedenborg gives us the latter options looks a stronger likelihood - as the work of regeneration of the self within the joyful ‘earth school’ of the physical plane is the key to our ultimate place within the spiritual realm. Not for nothing was the maxim “man know thyself” inscribed in the forecourt of the Temple of Apollo at Delphi!

With my tongue possibly slightly in my cheek, I can vouch for the fact that study and regeneration makes for hungry work and as I live just down the road in Atherstone, I am ideally placed to come up to Purley on a regular basis to complete my coursework as well as enjoy the fantastic food that Anne and her lovely team prepares. Aside from the obvious culinary benefits, living so close to the centre means I have been able to join in a very wide range of activities: Autumn circle dancing and Autumn studies, I joined a session at the worship leaders weekend, enjoyed the Taizé course as well as

make simple percussion instruments out of recycling, then marched around Jericho. We said prayers, then knocked Jericho down. We had a band made up of parents of children who come to Twiglets. This made it, really. We had 13 families with a total of 19 children, plus some older folk from church. There were 48 people in total. What I have been asked most this week is "When is the next one?"

Is this something that you could do in your church? I'd be happy to discuss ideas with you.

As part of my training I have been thinking about my vision for the future and how it may look. West Thorpe have said they would like to extend my contract for a further year, and I have been talking with the minister about closer links between our organisations. I'd like to develop more relationships between the parents in the local community, and create opportunities for them to discuss issues close to their hearts. I would also like to work with social media in some way, and to continue the projects I have started with using New Church teachings when looking at topical books and films. I hope to find time to compose.

I will keep you informed about how plans are going. Please get in touch if you would like more information. **Becky Jarratt**



Alison Southcombe

Sponsored student training for Purley Chase Programme Director

I am delighted to introduce to you our new full-time student, Alison Southcombe. Alison's first year starting from October 2014 commenced 7 weeks ago concentrating on foundation studies, getting to know Purley Chase and experiencing some wider church events. On the next page is a photograph of Alison at the Egyptian weekend, and her own message about her experiences so far:

Hello! I'm writing to give you an idea of the things I have been doing since joining as a sponsored student at the beginning of October.

Well, I have to say the weeks have passed very quickly and have been very productive! To kick off my studentship I launched into a fairly intensive programme, and via the module 'Insights into the Bible' I have worked through the whole of the Bible at quite a pace. Alongside this I have been working on: 'Introduction to Swedenborgian thought'.

It will come as no surprise to readers, but it has been something of a real

A - The Lord dwells in Zion; B - Jerusalem is holy; C - Foreign invaders are banished; X - The blessings of the Kingdom [*And in that day ... Valley of Shittim.*]; C - Foreign enemies are destroyed; B - Jerusalem and Judah are preserved; A - God dwells in Zion

Notice how the words expressing the repeated ideas are often quite different but the underlying concept is the same.

To conclude this look at the Old Testament here is a text from Leviticus which describes the process of cleansing a house from leprosy. I have not included an analysis of the format so see if you can work out the structure involved in this extraordinary description of ritual cleansing.

And for the cleansing of the house he shall take two small birds, with cedarwood and scarlet yarn and hyssop, and shall kill one of the birds in an earthenware vessel over fresh water and shall take the cedarwood and the hyssop and the scarlet yarn, along with the live bird, and dip them in the blood of the bird that was killed and in the fresh water and sprinkle the house seven times.

Thus he shall cleanse the house with the blood of the bird and with the fresh water and with the live bird and with the cedarwood and hyssop and scarlet yarn.

And he shall let the live bird go out of the city into the open country.

So he shall make atonement for the house, and it shall be clean.

Leviticus 14:49-53

Now I need to own up and say that none of the above quotations and analysis are my own work but merely collected from the amazing number of resources there are on the internet relating to chiasmus in the Bible. But when I had got this far in my studies I began to think about the Writings - surely as a Latin text they must include many examples of chiasmus? So I searched to see if any New Church/Swedenborgian scholar had written on this subject but I did not find any material. It may be out there but I couldn't find it. Now at the moment I do not know how to find such examples in the Writings themselves using the usual computer searching methods so I have had to rely on my own memory to bring forth possible texts and this is quite difficult to do. But nevertheless here is what I came up with.

The first is perhaps the most famous quotation that fits into the simple ABBA style of chiasmus.

*All religion is of life
and the life of religion
is to do good
Doctrine of Life 1*

Now this is clearly ABBA in English - religion, life, life, religion but a quick look at the Latin *quod omnis religio sit vitae, et quod vita ejus sit facere bonum* shows that it is not perhaps that simple.

Here is my second candidate for chiasmus in the Writings. It is from Divine Providence 60 and is preceded by these words:

We can know the path to heaven to some extent simply by considering what the people who make up heaven are like, realising that no one can become an angel or get to heaven unless he or she arrives bringing along some angelic quality from the world. Inherent in that angelic quality ...

And then follows the chiasmus:

*... is a knowing of the path
from having walked it
and a walking in the path
from the knowing of it.*

And then what about these words from Heaven and Hell 319:

*Heaven is within us,
and people who have heaven within them
come into heaven.*

My final offering on possible texts comes from True Christian Religion 18:

The underlying reality of God, the underlying divine reality, cannot be described. It is beyond the reach of any idea in human thought. Everything human thought can conceive of is created and finite; it cannot conceive of what was not created and is infinite. Therefore it cannot conceive of the underlying divine.

But during our discussion group at West Wickham Karl Birjukov came up with another quotation from True Christian Religion 101 which encompasses the real essence of New Church teaching:

Thus God became Man and Man became God

Have a look at TCR101 and you will see that this chiasmus is repeated several times and indeed elsewhere in the Writings. I am certain readers of Lifeline may be familiar with other passages that might exhibit the style of chiasmus and I am sure that the Editor of Lifeline will be very happy to print them.

Alan Misson

Sponsored Student Monitoring Group

The following two reports have been submitted by Rev Helen Brown on behalf of the Sponsored Student Monitoring Group (SSMG).

Rebecca Jarratt

Student Minister

We met with Becky and her husband in November to discuss the progress of Becky's studies and her pastoral experience she is gaining though being involved as a volunteer at West Thorpe Methodist Church. The latter has been invaluable to her, as circumstances of location and family commitments would have severely limited her experience of pastoral work and life in a faith community.

Becky having given up teaching is now a half time student and is working hard in her studies and work based experiences. Becky reports as follows;

I'm enjoying the change in my studies this year. I am still doing work-based training modules, and this means my study is more varied, whilst still covering essential New Church teachings.

As you will probably know, I am doing some family development and pastoral work for West Thorpe Methodist Church. It has been a real learning curve to go out and visit elderly and isolated people in their homes. I have a day planned with our minister to go out and lead some home communions, and will continue to do so on my own after that. I'm still working with parents and children at Twiglets, and have organised a music service-more about that later.

As part of my work at West Thorpe, there was an agreement that I would organise and lead some sort of family worship. The suggested format was Messy Church. I have to say that children's craft is not one of my gifts! I also feel that you need a big team of people at church to make this work, and the human resources just aren't there.

So, I decided to play to my strengths, and organised *Make a Noise for God* for an hour in the afternoon of 23rd November. The service consisted of a number of songs, a Veggie Tales video of Joshua fighting the battle of Jericho, then building Jericho out of banana boxes. We went into the hall to