



The 'bunkhouse'

Pictures from Youth and Family Team activities

(see pages 25&26)



Relaxing after a long walk at Fountains Abbey

new church

# Lifeline



A rainbow in the fields near Chartwell, Kent.

(see page 16)

## Lifeline

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

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ISSN 0308-3624



January &  
February 2017  
Number 456

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

## Editorial

Firstly I need to apologise for the very late arrival of the printed edition of the November/December 2016 issue of Lifeline. This was not due to delays by the editor, printer or distributor but rather a failure of the parcel delivery company to deliver the set of Lifelines to the right address in Kensington, London. For a while it seemed possible that the parcel would be recovered from the wrong address and the correct delivery made. But this did not work out so the printer elected to print, at his cost, another set of Lifelines which were then correctly delivered to our distributor Howard Turner and so finally on to you our customers.

The September/October issue contained the Keynote Address delivered at Conference by the Spiritual Leader, Rev David Gaffney. The last section of this address appeared in short summary form and David has now taken the opportunity to expand on the last section of his address in two further parts, the first of which is published in this issue.

I have often thought how important it is to choose our words carefully when we seek to communicate something of New Church teaching to those not familiar with the language of the Writings. So I am very pleased to be able to publish in this issue on page 9 a presentation on the subject of *Language of Outreach* given by Stephen Russell-Lacy at the Ministers' Seminar in September 2016.

Happy New Year

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Pictures from Youth and Family Team activities

(see pages 25&26)

A busy family weekend



Sunday lunch at 18+ weekend



Our Golden Statues

Yorkshire. We were lucky to enjoy unseasonably warm weather and were able to toast marshmallows, light sparklers, eat round the campfire and play football in the grounds well into the evening. We heard the story of King Nebuchadnezzar and the fiery furnace and thought about the things that we put before the Lord in our lives. The children cut out photos of these and stuck them on a picture of a golden idol. The event was sponsored by the NCYA and we couldn't have managed without the help of Gwendolen Rowe, Keith Dunbar, Pauline Grimshaw and Clive Goalen who worked tirelessly to ensure all the food was cooked on time so that we could all enjoy our hotdogs, jacket potatoes and hot chocolate.

Finally, a weekend for young adults aged 18 and over was held at Purley Chase at the start of December. We were lucky to have been booked in on the weekend of the Carol Concert and were able to enjoy the beautiful decorations all around the building. Our theme was *Christmas* and we explored the question "Why did God come to earth as a baby?" and looked at the correspondences of the key characters and events in the Nativity story. Lots of fun was had as always and two more weekends are planned for this age group in 2017.

### Jenny Jones

#### A note from Rev Jack Dunion:

*The newly formed Youth & Family Team have completed our first year and I am delighted to say that both Robert Clark and Jenny Jones are now officially in post as Youth Leaders with Becky Jarratt also joining the team. We have learned a great deal over the year and at our second annual meeting in November we laid plans which will put that learning to use in furthering our aims and objectives; a big thank to the whole team for their great work and I will look forward to working with you all in the year ahead.*

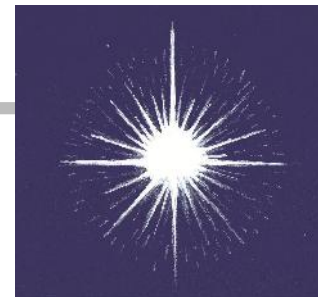
## Council Meeting Dates

Future Meeting Dates of the Council are:

**2017** March 10-11    May 5-6    September 15-16    November 17-18  
**2018** March 2-3    May 11-12    September 14-15    November 16-17

Please remember that details of anything you would like the Council to consider should be sent to the Company Secretary, no later than ten days before the meeting.

## What star do we follow?



Numbers 24:17 - Balaam the prophet's oracle:

*I see him, but not now;*

*I behold him, but not near.*

*A star will come out of Jacob;*

*A sceptre will rise out of Israel.*

The Old Testament is a record of the decline of the human race. The picture given to us in the first chapters of Genesis - Adam and Eve and the Garden of Eden - is one of innocence, a childlike trust and obedience. All too quickly, the precious gift of human freedom asserted itself, and it was not long before men and women began to move away out of that innocence. The desire to assert independence, and to rely on self-judgment, displaced the earlier states. The story takes us through the Tower of Babel, where men thought they could reach up to heaven by their own efforts, to the point where their decline brought about a great flood of falsity - the story of Noah and the Ark. The image of infancy, childhood, adolescence, and young adulthood

So it goes on through the histories and the prophets. They reached the point where God could only reach them, and hold them to some kind of external spiritual life by the hope of receiving rewards for good behaviour, and punishments when they disobeyed Him. The Church of that day introduced a system of outer traditions, rituals and practices, and eventually reached the point when they couldn't tell the difference between the commandments of God and their own man-made rules. Jesus Himself said to the religious authorities:

*You have nullified the word of God for the sake of your tradition.*

Matthew 15:6

This is precisely why almighty God had to come into the world, so that men and women might once again know about the true way of life, the way of love for God and for one another. You see, the point had been reached when the power and lure of darkness had become almost irresistible. Even people who were inclined to look to God found it very difficult to get a true and clear understanding of what was going on. Materialism, confusion and fear reigned - it was indeed a time of great darkness.

Do you see now the reason for Jesus Christ being born the way He was - during the hours of darkness? The true light had come to dispel the spiritual darkness, and so there was a perfect correspondence in the physical circumstances of His birth - night-time and darkness.

In many ways, we can see great similarities between the state of the world then and as it is now. There's no need to go into details. But there is great materialism right across the world. There are battles for power, both political and economic. There is great confusion as religions have lost their grip on followers, and their capacity to teach a right way of life has become weakened by all manner of moral dilemmas, and immoral behaviour amongst the leaders.

But there is a difference, an important and vital difference, between the time of Christ's incarnation and today. Because of His incarnation and the rescue of the human race from the power of hell and darkness, humankind can never again be completely overwhelmed by evil and falsity. And because He has made His promised Second Coming, and opened up and revealed to His people so much more of the glorious truth about Himself, about creation, about the inner meaning of the Word of God, about the spiritual world, and so much more - because of that coming His light is shining, and the darkness can never overwhelm it. So, despite the human capacity to turn away and ignore Him, despite our desire for power and possessions, the Lord's power is always available to people who want something better and higher.

The Wise Men followed that star in the east. They drew upon the ancient knowledge preserved down the centuries and preserved from the Ancient Word. Balaam's words were there, within them, and when they were prompted they responded by following the light of their inner, spiritual eyes to its source - the Saviour and Redeemer, Jesus Christ.

So then, what star are we to follow? What is it that can guide us to the Lord Himself? Well, it's all there within us, laid down over the years, the knowledge given to us about loving one another, about being obedient to the Lord, about kindness and compassion, about forgiveness and empathy, about spiritual riches that will last and not fade away. It's all there within us, waiting for us to respond.

And we respond by our journeying, by our steadfastness when the light seems to disappear and hostile forces work to trap us, by our persistence, by the daily worship of caring lives, and by our gifts to Him and to one another of love, of faithfulness, and obedience to the life of heaven.

*On coming to the house, they saw the child Jesus with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshipped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh.*  
Matthew 2:11

**Rev Bruce Jarvis**

## News from the Youth and Family Team

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Wow! Autumn has been a really busy time for the *New Church Youth and Family Team* and, of course, lots of families and young people from all around the country.

Firstly, we are very pleased to have welcomed Rev Becky Jarratt to our midst. Becky is based in York and gets involved with lots of our events with her own children as well as working with the teenagers at Family weekends and running "Make a noise for God" regularly at the West Thorpe Methodist church. We are really excited that she has joined our team.

Way back in late September, a new Family weekend was held at the Foxlease Guiding centre in the New Forest. It had originally been planned that this would be a weekend for teenagers but due to a variety of reasons, we didn't have enough teenagers to run the event. After only a small panic the weekend was hastily opened up to families and was a resounding success. Yes, it rained nearly all weekend and leaked through the ceiling onto beds, yes, the showers didn't really work, yes, we had to do our own cooking (!) but we had a fantastic time and were joined by families from as far North as Bradford. Some of our families visited for the day, most stayed at the bunkhouse itself and two people even camped in the grounds - but we had over 40 people attend the weekend at some point which isn't bad for a bunkhouse with 28 bunkbeds. Thanks go to Rev Clifford Curry for leading us in thinking about *The Parables of Heaven* and to everyone for "mucking in". The weekend will run again in October 2017.

A couple of weeks later, many of the families were back on more familiar territory at Purley Chase for the third Family Weekend in the year. As usual, we were full to bursting and a great time was had by all. I personally enjoyed not having to organise the catering this time and, as always, thanks go to Anne Gaffney and the Purley team for their wonderful food (all served on time - which we failed to achieve at Foxlease two weeks earlier).

In between the two Family weekends, we organised a walk in North Yorkshire at Fountains Abbey. We were expecting to celebrate a birthday so we were laden down with picnic and birthday buns. Unfortunately, a road closure prevented our families from the North East from reaching us meaning that the remaining walkers had to film themselves eating the buns and singing *Happy Birthday* before posting this on the Purley People Facebook page. Despite our numbers being depleted, we had a great Autumnal walk around the Deer park. The next *Walk and Talk* is booked for Saturday 28th January.

In Mid-November, a bonfire party was held at Kildwick New Church Centre in

### **On looking after money**

Whether rich or poor, be wise stewards of your resources for the betterment of the Lord's Kingdom and mankind; this is spiritual

### **On needs and wants**

We often want what we don't need; keep these in balance; this is spiritual

### **On pleasure and joy**

Pleasure is of the senses, joy is of the spirit; keep them in balance; this is spiritual

### **On judging others**

Clearly, we have to make judgements about others' behaviour, the Lord said: "Judge righteous judgment." (John vii 24). This is spiritual.

### **On science and the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil**

The Lord can't be proved to exist through natural science, He won't allow it; if God could be proved by natural science, it would destroy our faith in Him and we would be lost - unable to regenerate. This is spiritual.

### **On doing all these things for the Lord and the neighbour**

We are commanded to Love God and your neighbour as ourselves. To Love God and the neighbour is to endeavour to live according to His Commandments for His sake. This is spiritual.

### **On the spiritual life**

To draw sensible and balanced meaning (or doctrine) out of the Lord's Word, and to live according to it is called religion, and the practise of religion is the spiritual life.

## **Womens League Benevolent Fund**

Reluctantly we have decided to close the above fund. This is not due to a lack of money but no one seems able to take over the administration at the present time. The money will now be transferred to Conference funds. Thank you all for your support over the last 22 years.

To our auditor Mr David Sharrock, to Mrs Barbara Stanley and committee members past and present our very sincere thanks.

**May Liversedge**  
Secretary

**Audrey Walton**  
Treasurer

## **From the Council**

Your Council met in early November at our warm and welcoming Purley Chase. It was good to be together again as a group of friends working with the aim of enabling the activities of the Church to continue where possible, and to grow where there is potential. The varied agenda reflected these positions.

Sadly two further churches are planning to close next year and we thank the people local to those premises who are helping the hard-working Property Managers and the Company Secretary with this work. The Council recognises the difficulty of this decision for local people: it is a brave move which can bring release in some ways. In these times of increasing regulation it can be the only option for some. Be assured that the Council will only require what is legally necessary and knows it is placing a burden on hard-working members.

Financial issues were dominant in this meeting as we try to minimise the forecast deficit whilst continuing to encourage new projects. Following the resolution in 4.2.3 of September's Minutes (available on-line) Council checked the Common Investment Fund accounts and agreed a letter which should now be with all Unit Holders. We re-appointed the Financial Advisory Committee, consisting of David Haseler, Andrew Bentley and David Sharrock, thanking them for their work with our investments. Council is kept informed and agreed the Investment Policy recommended for this next year. So far our investments continue to do well and we hope this will continue in these uncertain times as Conference increasingly relies on investment income. We also agreed an updated list of Bank Signatories and limits, prepared for us by David Haseler. Sally presented the accounts for Conference and Purley in the very clear way she has. If you have not experienced this please book for Conference this next year and experience the new and clear presentations of what are very complicated accounts.

The Conference is at Swanwick from 25th to 28th July 2017 and Richard Cunningham is preparing the programme. Please get in touch with him if you have any offers or requests. Conference is a family event with shared worship, 'work' and recreation. Our forefathers would not recognise it! Please give it a go if you have not experienced this joyful get-together of like-minded people.

During the above week you will hear about new activities and particularly the exciting work with younger families. Council was delighted to approve successful completion of both Becky Jarratt's and Robert Clark's probationary years. They are both part of the youth team, a growing area of the organisation with new and exciting activities. Purley is another hugely successful growth area thanks to Anne and David Gaffney, and also all who take part in the many activities - either

as leader or by participating. There are changes ahead as David contemplates semi-retirement.

One more new area to mention is [www.newchristianbiblestudy.org](http://www.newchristianbiblestudy.org) a research tool which is being developed by New Church people in America. As agreed previously Council has doubled the amount gifted and has sent £9200. If you have not explored this site then please give it a go. There are many jewels to be found.

Council recognises that the world is changing very fast around us and we move slowly behind. We ARE moving though with the increasing welcome involvement of younger and new people we are taking advantage of technology, new forms of worship and different ways of being a 'Community'. We trust that the Lord is guiding us as we try to 'do justly, love mercy and walk humbly' with him.

**Judith Wilson**

## New Centre Leader for SOLCe

As you may be aware we have been without a Centre Leader at SOLCe for some time.

We are pleased to welcome the new Centre Leader, Karen Nolan.

Karen will be an excellent addition to our team. She has extensive experience working in human resources so will be very good at the administrative and organisational duties associated with the role. She has experience in working with and leading teams of both professionals and volunteers. This is complemented by her strong interest in spirituality. She was drawn to this post, as she is currently studying for an Advanced Diploma in Integrative Transactional Analysis Psychotherapy.

Karen starts work in early January and we are all looking forward to her being part of our community.



there is no hidden agenda. But with the naturally rational there is usually a mask to disguise true motives. The smooth running, orderliness and harmony of our societies, is constantly under the threat of corruption; from people who would use unscrupulous methods to get more than their fair share of money, goods and services for their effort. Many of the professions and trades for instance are well paid, and many an unscrupulous person will endeavour to gain access to qualifications without gaining the correct level of proficiency, by cheating if possible and also by attempting to bring about a lowering of standards which will then allow them access to promotion in the professions by dubious means and bullying behaviour.

### **On responsibility - do not arm the bad to do harm to the good**

Be careful whom you empower; this is spiritual:

The following quotation from Swedenborg's book *The True Christian Religion* emphasises this point. A simple example would be selling arms to trouble makers as opposed to defenders. Or on the personal psycho-spiritual level, feeding a 'lower' tendency we may have which will cause our 'higher' tendencies to come under attack. Or giving a person who is clearly drunk, more drink so that he may harm himself or others. Or promoting people - without due and sufficient research into their background - into positions of power where they are able to cause damage. Etc.. This latter example also applies to those people we 'give' ourselves to as partners without due consideration as to their character. These things are often done with the best intentions when they operate from 'natural good' but for the long term benefit of mankind, we need to change out natural good to 'spiritual good' which has in it, discernment or wisdom.

*Those who are by nature compassionate, and do not make their natural compassion spiritual by putting it in practice in accordance with genuine charity, believe that charity consists in giving to every poor person, and relieving everyone who is in want, without first inquiring whether the poor or needy person is good or bad; for they say that this is not necessary, since God regards only the aid and alms. But after death these are clearly distinguished and set apart from those who have done the beneficent works of charity from prudence; for those who have done them from that blind idea of charity, then do good to bad and good alike, and with the aid of what is done for them the wicked do evil and thereby injure the good. Such benefactors are partly to blame for the injury done to the good. ... (from TCR 428)*

Clearly, this principle applies to us all and is a great lesson in the learning.

PART 3 to follow on the headings below:

and our conceptual frameworks (our sciences) are based on this premise.

We do not love our children because they achieve what we want them to achieve at school in order to make ourselves look good in the eyes of our friends or neighbours. This is conditional love and is destructive to our children's wellbeing. We love them because they are our children and additionally that they are content happy children who have enjoyed using the gifts and talents they have because they are loved. Not all parents however love the Lord - who is Goodness - and the neighbour, but their opposites, and there can be consequences, as these hard hitting words of Swedenborg point out:

*... the love called parental love exists equally with the bad and the good, and is sometimes stronger with the bad; ... As to the duties of parents to children in particular, they are inwardly different with those who are in charity and those who are not, although externally they appear alike. With those who are in charity, that love is conjoined with love towards the neighbour and love to God; for by such, children are loved according to their morals, virtues, good will, and qualifications for serving the public. But with those who are not in charity, there is no conjunction of charity with the love called parental love; consequently, many such parents love even wicked, immoral, and crafty children more than the good, moral, and discreet; thus they love those who are useless to the public, more than those who are useful. (from TCR 431)*

Those who love the Lord and the neighbour above the worldly acquisitions and themselves are spiritually rational people, and tend to honesty. Those who love themselves and the world above the Lord and the neighbour tend to put themselves above others and are not averse to dishonesty in order to get what they want.

*Every man rightly educated is rational and moral; but there are two ways to rationality, one from the world and the other from heaven. He who has become rational and moral from the world only, and not from heaven, is rational and moral in word and gesture only, but is inwardly a beast, and even a wild beast, because he acts as one with those who are in hell, where all are wild beasts. But he who is rational and moral from heaven also, is truly rational and moral, because he is so at once in spirit, word, and body; the spiritual being within these two latter like a soul actuating the natural, sensual, and corporeal; it also acts as one with those who are in heaven. Therefore there can be a spiritual-rational and moral man, and also a merely natural-rational and moral man. These two are not distinguished from each other in the world, especially if the man has by practice become imbued with hypocrisy; but they are distinguished by the angels in heaven as easily as doves from owls or sheep from tigers. (TCR 564/2)*

In other words, with spiritually rational people, what you see is what you get,

## Sponsored Student Monitoring Group Report

*This report arises from a meeting on 11th November 2016 with Alison Southcombe.*

*Alison's second year has now been completed and Alison, when she met with us, expressed with joy her beginning to 'walk the walk', feeling an increasingly personal connection with Swedenborg and his writing.*

*Alison gives a flavour of her experiences of the last year below:*

.....  
I'm now in my third and final year of study and the content of my course has slowly been shifting from studying the SOLCe modules to a more interactive people-focussed path. I have been gaining really great experience with worship leading which has been very interesting, as I have been able to develop themes from the Word and then build on these using the writings of Swedenborg to fully open these ideas up.

It is with great excitement that I have been starting to develop material for group sessions - and have been able to present my ideas at Summer School, Ministers Committee and at a Weekend course at Purley. As I will be assuming the role of Programme Director at Purley, it has also been hugely useful to start to visit other retreats and study centres dedicated to spiritual gathering and development. This means I get a feel for the types of courses and experiences that are available to spiritual seekers and it will help me create my own programme of events at Purley.

My first experience of another type of centre was a stay at a Christian community in Dorset in the autumn, and it is this experience I would most like to share with you in this article; as my time there provided food for thought for the future and much of unexpected hilarity. I stayed for just under a week, joining the "Just Community" programme which was designed for everyone staying to do a lot together, whether active tasks and jobs, shared reflection or relaxation and fun.

The four elements of "work, worship, study and play," initiated as the pillars of this community continue as the basic framework of day to day living. At the end of breakfast the Warden would share out the jobs for the day - these tasks could comprise: veg prep, table setting, table clearing, table wiping, washing up and sweeping the floor. There was also seasonal work outside to be undertaken by all, which proved a great opportunity to get to know other people staying for the week. The Community had two purposed grown reed beds, planted up as a final treatment for their sewage system. These had become very overgrown with nettles and one of the main outdoor jobs whilst I was there was to clear these reed-beds ready for re-planting. We were all warned to leap out of the bed when

waste water started to flow out of the pipe that ran down the centre of the bed. As the timing of this was rather random - there was a lot of leaping in and out of the large bed and much companionable laughter. I suppose there is nothing like the run off from the sewage system trickling over your boots to break down the barriers between people newly introduced!

On our final evening, everyone staying had to contribute by preparing the evening 'feast' and as a vegan theme was chosen I was given a suitable recipe for the dessert. This comprised sweet potatoes, dried apricots and tinned coconut milk. After simmering all the ingredients together in a pan I whizzed everything to a puree and poured it into dessert bowls. Well, it was a very stodgy and strange pudding recipe and not one that I will be passing on to Purley, and later that evening I was to be found secretly poring over the Morrison's Christmas food magazine up in my bedroom at the community, and imagining feasts of golden roast turkey and delicious treats...

All our tasks were carried out 'lightly' without great seriousness and with a sharing and playful attitude. In the evening many people would do their knitting whilst sitting around the fire and others would complete fiendishly difficult jigsaw puzzles. There was also a great emphasis on getting outdoors which I took to with gusto - I had taken walking boots and also gardening attire so as to be able to go outside at every opportunity.

Thinking about spiritual content at this community, at each mealtime there was a grace (not necessarily and obviously Christian - very often just a simple remembrance of thankfulness). Every morning there was a seed time service - to set right intention for the day and each evening a harvest service to gather in the fruits of things achieved. This was a shared service rather than being led by any one person. Whilst there were talks and discussion groups, there was actually less course content and more being and working together which facilitated personal growth and insight.

It has to be said there is happiness in shared work. Going shopping in the local town and visiting the market stalls for ingredients for our final evening feast was great fun; and gathering autumnal twigs and berries from the hedgerows for table decorations brought the seasons into our celebration.

One of the main things I learned was that sharing and opening up to others through working together is a hugely valuable growth experience; and if when confronted by 'new' situations and people, we can meet the unfamiliar with curiosity and openness, there are rich rewards to be gained.

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**Submitted by Rev Helen Brown on behalf of the Sponsored Student Monitoring Group**

and in times gone by persuaded their employees that this was what God wanted; that the more we produced, the better we were as people and the more likely to go to heaven. But the stress created in these circumstances, brings us out of being present with the usefulness of the work and the joy of the application of the gifts we have, and in fact, effectively brings us into hell. There still remains in our societies a remnant of the protestant work ethic which developed in the early centuries of the Reformation.

### **On swapping things**

Put service before profit and profit will follow; this is spiritual

As children my friends and I often swapped things, I'm sure that many of you did also. I needed or wanted such and such which my friend had and vice versa. We had little or no concept of their monetary value, but this was of no consequence; each had what the other wanted so we swapped them and both were happy. This same concept is alluded to by Swedenborg who says that even in adulthood, the Dutch continued to possess this spiritual quality and they took it with them to the afterlife when they died:

*And the reason why the Dutch occupy those quarters of the Christian centre - the areas where spiritual heat and light is received - is that trade is their chief love, and money a mediate love subservient to it; and such a love is spiritual. But where money is the chief love and trade the mediate love subservient to it, ... that love is natural and springs from avarice.*  
(Swedenborg True Christian Religion, 801 paraphrased)

Also:

*Then Jesus said to his disciples: "Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat; or about your body, what you will wear. For life is more than food, and the body more than clothes. .... But seek His kingdom, and these things will be given to you as well. (Luke 12:22 - 31 parts)*

This applies to all that we do. His kingdom is in loving God and extending charity to the neighbour - service in use. If our primary motive is to love and serve, or to serve and love, then all the 'things' we need will come to us as well. Wouldn't it be good if this was the standard business model?

### **On professional standards**

Support or have an interest in quality training institutions to get properly qualified people into the right jobs; this is spiritual.

We all begin as children and we lay the foundations to grow spiritually as we begin to experience the world and life, and incline ourselves positively to a multiplicity of 'education'; especially if we give God the credit for our existence,



## Walking with Jesus - Part 2

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In the September/October 2016 issue of Lifeline the keynote address, given by Rev David Gaffney, Spiritual Leader, at Conference, was printed. But David has now written further as follows:

.....

Towards the end of the 2016 Keynote Address I listed a number of headings and gave a brief summary of how I thought about them based on my understanding of the Word from Swedenborg's perspective, here is what I said:

*"If I had more space, I would have liked to have written about the following, so I have given a heading and a brief summary of each of them. To do these things for ourselves is natural but to do them for God and our neighbour is spiritual. To walk with Jesus our friend is spiritual."*

I have been asked if I would extend these brief summaries which I originally gave in my Keynote Address in Summer 2016, so I have done it in two extra extensions: PART 2 and Part 3

Here is PART 2:

### **On metering our workload - the evils of the protestant work ethic**

Enjoy being useful, but avoid the whip; the Lord wants us to enjoy our work. This is spiritual:

True usefulness is heavenly. This is using our God given talents and gifts in a way which brings us joy in two ways: purely from exercising the gifts as the Lord's joy flows into the use of them and also by the fact that our contribution adds to everyone else's contribution to provide a whole and complete service for the support and wellbeing of mankind. There is no real need to rush, it is more important to be in the present, and to be present with the work we are doing, the use we are performing. Then the work will be done at the perfect pace. If someone loves their work, then they won't 'work' another day in their lives. Modern mass production techniques tend to alienate us from being in the present with our work or use. But even in these it is probably possible to enter into a love of doing, and the timelessness of the 'present,' provided that external pressure to produce output beyond what is reasonable and comfortable is not exerted. I think the Lord wants us to enter into this sense of timeless, being with our gifts.

Some employers - from greed or the need to be competitive - may want more output from their workers than will allow for this 'true and timeless usefulness'

## Language of Outreach

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Presented at Ministers Seminar September 2016 by Stephen Russell-Lacy

**Summary** We have a different take on so many old church words - so why use the old church words?

### **Adding meaning to messages**

I've been interested in the language of outreach from the perspective of the psychology of communication. The trouble with psychology is that people say it's just common sense. But it's easy to make communication mistakes and so I feel it helps to try to be explicit about them.

One basic point is that communication can fail if the receiver adds meaning to the message not intended by the sender. This sometimes happens in everyday conversation. For example my wife sends me a text asking me where I am. I interpret the message as suggesting I'm late coming home when actually she is just wondering if the car is playing up again. I've added meaning to what she is asking because of my guilty conscience. So it's partly my fault. But it is also hers. She might have been more specific in her text.

When we are communicating more profound messages the scope for talking at cross-purposes increases. By and large people think in the idioms and unquestioned assumptions of their own times. We may say 'love is the basis of all good life'. But our hearer may assume that love means 'sexual love' and that 'good life' means 'pleasure.'

As we know, three hundred years ago, Swedenborg chose to rely heavily (but not exclusively) on traditional Christian terminology and scripture. Since then we have been seeing the end of the age of religion at least in north-western Europe (This we think of as the 'Consummation of the age'). We live in a secular society with a diminishing Christian heritage.

I want to suggest that non-churched listeners may add meaning to what we intend to say when we speak using church language. They may mistakenly think they know what we mean because they have some small degree of familiarity with the words used.

### **Attitudes to Christianity**

When building a bridge to reach out, you need to know something about where it stretches to. Something about the other bank. What do people in our country

think? What are their beliefs that may help or hinder communication between us? Many people these days I would suggest are turned off from Christianity. One commentator Steve Hollinghurst wrote that people are seeking to make sense of their own spiritual experience without reference to a religious heritage. He went on to say:

*Many see Christians as unspiritual, so they don't expect to encounter God amongst Christians or associate their spiritual experiences with the Christian faith. (Steve Hollinghurst, Mission Shaped Evangelism 2010)*

Today I sense there are many spiritually-minded who, whilst rejecting church language, are nevertheless interested in the deeper side of life. There may be signs of revival of spiritual life (What we call the Second Coming) but I suspect if so this is taking forms that are different from traditional services of religious worship.

### **Spiritual but not religious**

Often we hear the phrase 'spiritual but not religious'. Those who identify themselves as 'spiritual but not religious' use the word 'spiritual', with rather a wide meaning e.g. to include not only any kind of personal striving and sense of responsibility, and belief in something beyond the individual, but also astrology, crystals, tarot, biorhythms, numerology and telepathy etc. They are trying to make sense of their own deeper experiences without reference to a religious heritage.

*The problem is not that people in our day and age do not encounter God; it is they do not recognise that it is God they are encountering. (Steve Hollinghurst, Mission Shaped Evangelism 2010)*

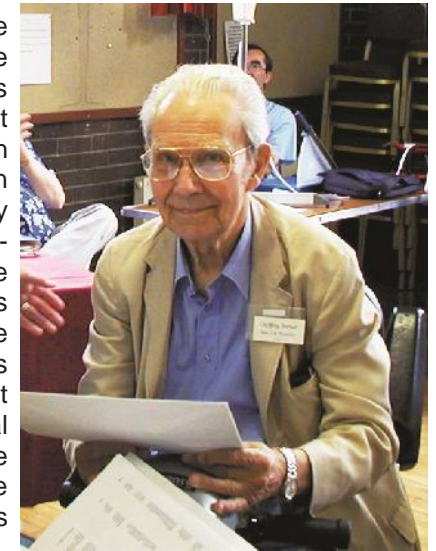
### **Negative connotations**

Words and phrases can have negative connotations. I think many people don't like church language because it has been used to express false doctrine. From a New Church point of view, I would say Christian leaders have corrupted the truths of faith in their doctrines of:

- tri-personalism
- vicarious atonement
- justification by faith alone
- original sin

This makes the task, of conveying what Swedenborg called the 'True Christian Religion', quite a challenge.

Members of the Kensington Society of the New Church, and those who know the General Conference, will be aware of his beliefs in the teachings of the church and, at least to some extent, his long association with the national organisation. He has been Secretary, Treasurer, organist and Sunday School teacher in the Kensington church - where he met his wife-to-be, Edyth, in the 1930's - and was a member of the Overseas Missions Committee and Council of the greater organisation for many years. His record of 60 consecutive years attendance at the Annual Meeting of the General Conference has not been reached by anyone else. He also visited Purley Chase, the church's Midlands retreat centre when he was a young man and, more recently, was a regular at the Senior Studies weeks, until his medical condition made it impossible.



**Geoffrey Turner  
at Conference 2006**

Geoffrey's love of music encompassed playing the piano and organ, and the cello. He had a long playing history with the Civil Service Orchestra, the Post Office Orchestra and also, the Pearl Assurance Orchestra, followed by the Wembley Philharmonic Orchestra and latterly with the Brent Symphony Orchestra, which, incidentally, was led for several years by his grandson, Barry.

Geoffrey had three children, four grandchildren and six great grand-children - and the latest addition to the family was always the favourite of the moment. He loved all little ones. In later years, when the amputation of his left leg as a result of cancer limited his mobility, he moved into a one bedroom flat.

Geoffrey was a private man - his feelings were not often seen, and he was sparing with his praise. However, he knew what he liked and, if encouraged, would let you know. His time was precious to him; he read neither novels nor poetry. He was meticulous in his paperwork, keeping copies of everything, so that he could always find out what he needed to know. His knowledge of the financial world led him to look after his own investments, with considerable success, which allowed him to be independent in his old age.

His final days, in the care of MHA, were quiet, and the staff at the Kenbrook home in Wembley looked after him with great care and attention, and his eventual passing was calm and peaceful with members of his family at his bedside.

## In Memory

## Geoffrey Turner 1915-2016

The following memorial notice is taken and edited from the Kensington New Church Newsletter by kind permission of the editor, David Friend.

.....

We record here the passing into the spiritual world of Geoffrey Turner, our oldest member, at the age of 101. His contribution to the life of the Kensington Society cannot be overemphasised - few, if any, can remember the church without his presence. A funeral service, conducted by Rev Gillian Gordon, was held on 4th November, at which some 40 people were present - family, friends, acquaintances and members of the staff at the Kenbrook Nursing Home, where he had lived for the previous 33 months. During the service the following tribute was paid.

Geoffrey was the third of his parents' five siblings, but outlived all the others. Born in Shrewsbury in 1915, he moved to Glasgow with his family whilst he was still a schoolboy. From school he moved into the Post Office telephones division as a trainee - and retired in 1975 in the position of Senior Executive Engineer. During his career he had served as a tutor at the Post Office Training School in Dollis Hill - a post gained at the age of 24 - trained servicemen during the war to set up and maintain field telephone systems, had a responsibility in the design of the motorway automatic emergency telephone system, and was seconded to the Metropolitan Police for three years to oversee the design and renewal of the communications system in the then New Scotland Yard building.

His knowledge of electronics, and skills with wiring and a soldering iron, allowed him to construct his own television set - a pile of orange boxes in the corner of the living room with a green screen on the top for viewing! Members of the family, and neighbours, were delighted to watch the coronation on this electronic wonder!

Geoffrey enjoyed driving, and from an early age owned an Austin 7, bought for £41. 9s. 0d, which, it is reported, carried him, his wife, Edyth, and their three children to Scotland to visit his parents - a mammoth journey in a vehicle of its size in those days! His subsequent ownership of a whole string of motor cars has generated more stories than can be told just here. However, his most recent vehicle, a Renault Kangoo, was fitted with a hoist to lift his scooter into the car so that he could travel to Kew Gardens and Conference in Swanwick, Derbyshire, among other places. It is now used as the run-about for Purley Chase, where it has been christened 'Geoffrey' in his honour. Apart from his work, Geoffrey's other interests included his church, extended family, music, photography and gardening - not necessarily in that order.

I would like to ask :

- How do we communicate with those who have been turned off religion by negative connotations of church terms?
- Do we need to modify our use of traditional church language?

### Non-church-goers

These days, less than 10% of people in the UK attend organised Christian religion even occasionally. I assume most of them listen to their clergy and are sympathetic to the message of the Bible. Today, many of these belong to denominations that are mostly out of fashion. Given their rate of decline, some of the smaller ones - including our own - are at a high risk of becoming no longer viable. I wonder if you would agree that among the reasons for not going to church possibly include dislike of:

- Organised religion and the external authority it implies - being told what to believe.
- The image of God - thought of as a punitive deity.
- What they see as superstitious, moralistic or self-righteous attitudes of some so-called religious people.

There are an increasing number of non-church-goers who are brought up with little or no familiarity with Christianity, its scripture, rituals, beliefs and institutions. They have a 'pick and mix' attitude to what to believe, feeling no obligation to accept what any one religion teaches. Their numbers will probably increase further as subsequent generations have no contact with the churches. Many don't identify themselves even nominally as Christian. These include secular humanists, those of other religious faiths, those who identify themselves as spiritual but not religious, and atheists.

### Who is a Receptive audience for our teachings?

Swedenborg wrote about those he called 'the gentiles'. They are outside organised Christianity yet have their own religiosity. By religiosity I understand spiritual awareness and beliefs. He also wrote that the New Jerusalem will be formed mainly amongst these gentiles.

*When a new Church is established by the Lord, it is not established among those within the Church but among those outside it, that is, among gentiles. These are referred to many times in the Word. (AC 4747:3)*

He says this is because not having the truths of faith they make no false assumptions which hinder them learning the truth. (AC 2986:3)

*There are no stumbling-blocks to hinder them. Thus their state is such that they are better able to receive truths than those who belong to the Church; and all those among them who are leading a good life receive truths without difficulty. (AC 2986:3)*

To my mind we live at a time in British history when 90 % of people no longer belong to the church but are nevertheless still influenced by the false assumptions of the Christian church.

### Building bridges

When trying to build bridges to non-religious people, I suggest we need to understand which church words and phrases might turn them off. For example the word 'doctrine', for those who don't use it, has a connotation of 'indoctrination'.

In general I would say we need to speak with them in terms of an individual perspective rather than that of a culture of religious life and language that they would seem to have rejected. My reason is that surveys indicate that non-church-goers often assume that being spiritual is more dynamic, personal, emotional, and experiential. At the same time religion is often seen by them as more static, institutional, belief based and negative.

I believe the Spiritual Wisdom website has made a great start in showing what can be done in conveying religious teachings to people who find religious words a turn off. But the challenge continues.

The following table contains, for each church term, my understanding of its negative connotation together with alternative suggestions that emerged during the discussion of many of them. Often a phrase rather than a single word is better as an alternative to the traditional church term. By getting at the spirit behind traditional terms, we can find expressions that are more meaningful to people today.

The table continues on the next pages:

Church Term	Negative Connotation	Suggested alternatives
God	Male supernatural entity external to us controlling the universe	The Divine The One The Source The Higher Power The Divine Being The Source of true love Goodness and love Itself

had had an experience of the numinous or transcendent, some small glimpse of the higher reality. I should add that this was something that just 'happened' to me. I had not sought it in any way. It may have been what Roman Catholics call a 'gratuitous grace'.

I saw my father once more, in hospital the following Friday afternoon, and he died that evening. When someone close to one dies, as we all know, there is so much to do in terms of arranging the funeral and other things that there is often little or no time for reflection and contemplation. My father was a serious and well-read man, but he was very agnostic and sceptical about religion. So, it was a great surprise to me that, a few weeks before he was taken ill when he and my mother were visiting us for my birthday in February, he suddenly said quite out of the blue that 'Swedenborg had visited heaven'. Our three small children demanded our attention at the time and I never sat down with my father to have a serious conversation with him about this. The opportunity did not recur and that is something I regret, but my memories of my father, which are many, will always be accompanied by memories of that remark of his and of my experience on the Purley Way.

I hope I have not lingered overlong in writing of this personal experience, one which I am sure is shared by very many people, although the external circumstances may differ greatly. To say what I and countless others have experienced is simply a matter of neurochemistry is to me no answer at all. The beauty of the rainbow and the promise of divine love for which it stands is not something that can simply be 'explained away' by reference to scientific facts and theories. In an earlier passage of the Arcana, AC232, Swedenborg writes of a 'thick darkness' that results from trusting only our senses. Let us accept the promise signified by the rainbow, not in some fundamentalist, literalist sense, but by using our imaginations, in the proper sense of that word as given by the poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge, as 'a repetition in the finite mind of the eternal act of creation in the infinite I AM.' Perhaps, in Dennis Duckworth's words, we will all slide down rainbows throughout our lives.

### Richard Lines

Lifeline Deadlines	Latest date for copy	Publication
March/April	Friday 17th February	First week of March
May/June	Friday 21st April	First week of May

expression does not refer to any particular church or denomination) appear with rainbows as it were around their heads. That, if I may say so, is a wonderfully 'poetic' thought, one that immediately raises one to a higher plane. In a long passage of exposition that follows in Arcana Caelestia 1042 and 1043 Swedenborg shows how the 'spiritual rainbow' originates in the rays of light which come from God, who is the source or 'sun' of all wisdom or intelligence.

Many years ago I heard Dennis Duckworth, a New Church minister who will be remembered fondly by many of us, declare that the people of Accrington in Lancashire used to say that the Swedenborgians of that town, where there has long been a New Church, would slide down rainbows in their clogs. 'I've been sliding down rainbows all my life', continued Dennis, although I forget if he added that he wore clogs.

But while we are dwelling on the personal, let me describe an experience of my own. Over thirty years ago my father who was an apparently healthy and vigorous man who had just turned 76, was struck down with pericarditis which left him in a greatly weakened state. He and my mother lived on the south coast near Bognor Regis and I remember going down to see them one Sunday, taking only our younger son Edward who was then 4 years' old. My mother believed in giving her son a proper Sunday lunch and a roast (I believe it was a chicken) was waiting for us when we arrived. But what I do remember clearly is that my father, for the first time ever, handed me the knife and fork and asked me to carve. It was a symbolic moment, as if my father were handing over the headship of the family to me. It was clear from what I observed that he was gravely ill and this impression was confirmed by the conversation I had with my mother when we took a walk by the sea after lunch.

It was late March, just before the clocks went forward, and I was anxious to get home before dark. It was a cold, blustery day with intermittent heavy showers. Just as I was reaching Croydon on the A23 at the point where the road descends from Purley past the old aerodrome and there is a fine view of the Crystal Palace television transmitters, the rain had stopped, the sun came out and there was a magnificent rainbow in the sky. You will understand that I was full of anxious thoughts as I drove home, but on seeing the rainbow I was overcome with a wonderful feeling of peace and contentment. It was only for a fleeting moment because the rainbow soon disappeared, but what I felt at the time was very real to me. I did not share this experience with anyone else at the time, but many years later I was to describe it (in a lecture to the Swedenborg Society that was later published) as being akin to what is conveyed by the words of the medieval mystic Mother Julian of Norwich famously brought to us by TS Eliot in his poem 'Little Gidding'. 'And all shall be well and/All manner of thing shall be well'. It was as if I was being prepared for the difficult days that lay ahead. Some might say I was just deluded, but from reading of the experiences of others, many of them much richer and much more profound, I am sure that I

Church Term	Negative Connotation	Suggested alternatives
Faith	Blind religious conviction. An exercise in afterlife insurance	Inner knowing Love for what you believe Belief in truth Inner code Inner confidence Experience Acceptance of Divinity Acknowledgment of the Divine Trust in the Divine
Evil	In all people due to original sin	Destructive tendencies Deviation from love Extremes of self-love Spiritual insanity Spiritual sickness Negative state that undermines our potential
Last Judgment	Discrimination and condemnation by a punitive deity	Self-realisation Self-awareness & discernment A general separation Final self-assessment Becoming the witness Paradoxical salvation Distinguishing good and truth
The Lord	Historical figure through which salvation is exclusively found	Creative designer The Divine Human Heavenly Father The Christ-within Human Divinity
The Word	Authority for belief coming from the Bible	Divine communication Deeper meaning of sacred writing
Sin	A moralistic judgment which condemns	Wilful wrong-doing Intentionally distancing oneself from the Divine Going against higher conscience
Divine Trinity	Irrational notion of three Gods that should be blindly accepted	Love, wisdom and use Three-fold aspect of Divinity The Divine's soul, selfhood and activity. Heart, head and hands
Damnation	Eternal punishment by a punitive deity	Self-destruction State of self-condemnation Continuing desire to be distant from goodness

Church Term	Negative Connotation	Suggested alternatives
Truth	What is absolutely right according to church authority	Reality Divine ideas Enlightened thought Ideas that lead to good Your truth
Church	A building representing conformity to official creeds of organised religion	Spiritual community Like-minded people providing mutual support
The Fall	A past event making all humanity guilty of evil due to original sin	Development of the ego Change to materialism Historical increase in natural-mindedness Growth of self-reliance
Resurrection	Life after death in one's existing body	Individual survival Revival of normal awareness Life in one's spirit body Resuscitation of spiritual freedom Awakening in the spiritual world
Worship	Paying homage to an external supernatural figure	Submission to Divinity Mindfulness Being useful Expressing love to the Divine
Redemption	Atonement for human sin that is a form of cosmic child abuse	Divine rescue mission Divinity overcoming destructive influences
Angels	A superstitious notion of non-human spiritual beings	Good spirit people
Being reborn	Instant salvation through religious conversion	Inner journey Travelling towards one's true self Conjunction

In people's struggles or temptations the Lord carries out an individual redemption, just as He did a total redemption when He was in the world. By struggles and temptations in the world the Lord glorified His Human, that is, He made it Divine. It is likewise now with people individually; when someone is subject to temptations, the Lord struggles for him, overcoming the spirits of hell who assail him; and after his temptation He glorifies him, that is, renders him spiritual.

**True Christian Religion 599**

## The Rainbow

*Whenever the rainbow appears in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and all living creatures of every kind on the earth. Genesis 9:16*

The rainbow, that most benign, if most ephemeral, of natural phenomena has never failed to capture the human imagination, from the writers of the Book of Genesis, the prophet Ezekiel, the writer of the Book of Revelation, through the Romantic poets to ordinary men and women of our own age. We know today, as Swedenborg did but as the ancient writers certainly did not, that the rainbow is 'nothing else than something produced by the conversion of rays of sunlight in raindrops'. In Swedenborg's day Newton's analysis of white light into the colours of the spectrum was quite a new discovery. For Mark Akenside, an 18th century poet, the new scientific discovery made his aesthetic appreciation of the rainbow that much keener:

*Nor ever yet  
The melting rainbow's vernal-tinctur'd hues  
To me have shone so pleasing, as when first  
The hand of science pointed out the path  
In which the sun-beams gleaming from the west  
Fall on the watr'y cloud [...]*

For another poet, John Keats, writing in the second decade of the 19th century, this 'cold philosophy', as he called it, 'will clip an angel's wings...' and 'unweave a rainbow...'. Yet, I suspect that most of us would echo the words of another poet, Wordsworth: 'My heart lifts up when I behold/A rainbow in the sky'. The rainbow, an ordinary if not all that frequent phenomenon of nature, is something that never fails to delight us, even in the drabest urban environment. 'Come and look at the rainbow', we say to one another, and then in a moment it is gone. 'The rainbow comes and goes' is another phrase from Wordsworth. I suspect that our delight in seeing a rainbow is not diminished by knowing that this is a simple natural phenomenon with an explanation that was first given to us by Isaac Newton at the end of the 17th century. It is our minds, and more specifically our imaginations, which take this lovely thing and convert it into the stuff of fairy tale and legend, but more importantly than that, into that of religious experience.

Using the 'doctrine of correspondences', that natural things stand for spiritual goods and truths, Swedenborg tells us that the rainbow represents regeneration and stands for the state of a regenerate spiritual person. In the next life, he tells us, those who have been regenerate members of the spiritual church (and that