

Religion is of life, and the life of religion is to do what is good
(Doctrine of Life 8)

The New Church is an international organization of people striving to improve their conscious relationship with the Lord, Jesus Christ, the one God who rules heaven and earth.

We extend a warm welcome to everyone, and invite you to take what you like and return it freely. We use the Bible and the Heavenly Doctrine revealed by the Lord and published by Emanuel Swedenborg to guide us in our lives, especially in our relationships. We freely share our love and understanding with each other, and try to give one another support in our spiritual journeys.

Temporarily the Hurstville Society is without a **Pastor**. During this period the Society will be served by lay leaders and visiting preachers.

Worship Services are held each Sunday at 10:00 AM except the first Sunday of each month. But please check the calendar for each month in case of changes.

Young People's Group is held once a month in conjunction with the Young People's Group at the New Church at 2 Shirley St, Roseville.

A tea and social in conjunction with **discussion** meets on one Friday of each month (January excepted) beginning at 7 00 pm. This will be conducted by visiting ministers when available or lay led as appropriate. Please check the calendar for the month for the exact date.

The Swedenborg Bookroom, at 22 Dudley Street, Penshurst, contains books by and about Emanuel Swedenborg for sale or loan. It is open by appointment.

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Call or come at anytime.



The New Church Newsletter

Hurstville Society March 2010

The Fruits of Creation

The created universe is a wonderful gift from the Lord to each one of us. Nature from the littlest things to the greatest is a form of His Infinite giving. The Word is like one grand harvest, to which we are invited, so that we may enjoy the fruits of it. For our bodies, for our minds, and for our eternal spirits, the Lord has fashioned a world of order and beauty in which every fruit is a blessing to us, formed with seed within itself so that it shall be the means to lead to further blessings. Creation is like a giant "fruit tree that yields fruit according to its kind, whose seed is in itself" (Genesis 1:11).

For our bodies the gifts of the world are unlimited. Our surroundings are a rich storehouse filled to overflowing with gifts from the Lord, for which to be thankful. Think a minute about the vegetable kingdom. The grass carpets lawns and fields; it holds the soil in place, provides pastures for horses, cows, and sheep, and looks so beautiful. At harvest time, the golden

grain bends under the weight of its fruit. Some plants dig into the soil for food and moisture and develop roots which we eat such as beets, carrots and potatoes. Other plants reach up for air and sunlight, growing wholesome leaves such as lettuce, or stalks like corn and sugar cane. Other plants reach out to us in beauty like daffodils and violets, roses and gardenias—the lilies of the field which surpass all man-made splendour and glory. Flowers give our minds a fragrant glimpse of heaven. Then there are bushes full of berries, and vines bent low with purple grapes. And finally, at the top of the plant kingdom, we have trees, which have so many uses. Their thick foliage gives us shade. We use their wood for building and burning to keep us warm. We use their bark for cork and spices, their sap for sugar. And their fruit—olives and figs, dates and pomegranates, apples, peaches, and pears—are all designed to satisfy our sight, smell, and taste and to provide us with food, energy and life.

What's more, the Lord's way of doing things is evident in the vegetable kingdom. For He wills to give to us ever more abundantly. The Lord endowed plants with some of His own qualities, so that we may see Him in His creation. There is no end to the giving of the Lord. Consequently, each plant yields fruit whose seed is in itself. For the very fruit we eat contains many, many seeds for future plants and fruit. In this way the Lord has endowed each plant with His own qualities of infinite giving—with seeds and fruit and new seeds and fruit stretching into infinity.

But the Lord desires to give things not only to our bodies, but to our minds and spirits as well. For this reason He has ordained that we can learn about the plants we eat. We can, as it were, chew over in our minds what we learn and discover the order and truth of all created things. Our minds can delve into nature and come to understand the order of growth and many other wonderful knowledges about the plant kingdom. These knowledges are like soil in which eternal truths can germinate and grow in our minds. We can come to understand how seeds develop, step by step, to become full-grown plants, producing roots, stems, branches, leaves, blossoms, and finally, the fruit in which new seed lies hidden. We can learn how, in marvellous ways, plants use their food and sunlight and transform the simple chemicals of the earth into complex leaves, and stalks and fruits. Such knowledges can prepare us to understand order itself, the Lord's order in creation, and

Society Meeting to Consider Nomination for New Pastor

Please mark your diaries for Sunday 21st March when we will have a Society meeting to consider the Episcopal nomination for a new pastor, **Rev Robert Cooper** from 1st July 2010. The meeting will be only to consider the nomination and won't be a regular Society meeting which is generally held in April. Hence it should not be a lengthy meeting.

Robert is currently serving a twelve month assignment as an assistant pastor in the Pittsburgh Society in the USA. Please refer to the December newsletter for the article "What's Robert Cooper Been Doing?" which was a summary of his half year report.

Robert, Huiling and Matthew are very keen to return to Australia and once the nomination is approved both Robert and the Society can begin to plan the details.

News Notes

Jeffrey Heldon is arriving home from Bryn Athyn College on the 1st March for a 2 week visit with family and friends. He is looking forward to thawing out, before returning for his Spring semester.

Naomi and **Nick Smith** and **Stuart Heldon** went to Honk Kong in February where they visited **Sophie Gospodarczyk** who is working at Hong Kong Disney, and enjoyed the Chinese New Year Celebrations.

Nick and **Naomi** also had a big day outing to the Hunter Valley to do a sky dive – both survived and promised to never jump out of a plane again – well until the next time.

Birthdays

Happy Birthday to Tracy and Mikayla Hinds (4th), Don Macfarlane (7th), **Debbie Walsh** (7th), **Graham Horner** (12th), **Edward Horner** (18th) and **Bill Hall** (26th)

Services 1st Sundays in March and April

Normally we have not been holding church at Hurstville on the first Sunday of the month with the option for people to attend the service at Roseville but for March and April we **WILL** have services. In March there will be **NO** service at Hurstville on the **SECOND** Sunday enabling people to attend the Harvest Service at Roseville (see below). In April the first Sunday will be Easter so obviously we will have a service then. (Please check the calendar!)

Harvest Festival Service at Roseville – Sunday 14th March

Everyone is invited to attend the special Harvest Service at Roseville on the above date. If attending there are two things to remember:

1. Please bring a harvest offering (fruit/vegetables) to the service which will be donated to Mission Australia later in the day. (Alternatively you can send money to Ruth Duckworth before 11th March.
2. If planning to stay for the “Ploughman’s Lunch” decide the week before so we can advise numbers. The cost will be \$6.

Talk by Rev Brian O’Neill - Monday 22nd March

This month our regular Friday Dinner and Class has been moved to **MONDAY 22nd March** so we can invite **Rev Brian O’Neill** as our guest speaker. We understand his topic will be “Swedenborg’s *Journal of Dreams* and how this might be of use to us” which sounds fascinating.

Although an ordained minister of the New Church Brian works primarily in counselling and psychotherapy especially Gestalt therapy.

Brian is well known to those attending recent Summer Camps for some fascinating talks/discussions on Conjugal Love and is a very skilled presenter who always manages to introduce the lighter side to the topic.

consequently, the Lord Himself.

When we come to see the Lord in His creation, then our minds can be filled with appreciation and gratitude for all the things He does for us everyday. The fruit of genuine thankfulness can ripen in us, to nourish and delight our souls. And this fruit has seeds which lead to eternal growth. For when we think of the Lord in this way, when our hearts are filled with grateful thanks, He can be present with us as the Sun of Heaven, causing spiritual growth that can go on to all eternity. The Lord can work the miracle of creation in us, saying, “Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb that yields seed, the fruit tree that yields fruit according to its kind, whose seed is in itself, on the earth” (Genesis 1:11). And it can be so!

Author Unknown Reprinted from *New Church Vineyard*
<http://www.newchurchvineyard.org/>

Quotes from the Bible:

John 1:3

All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.

Mark 4:26-29

“The kingdom of God is as if a man should scatter seed on the ground, and should sleep by night and rise by day, and the seed should sprout and grow, he himself knows not how. For the earth yields crops by itself; first the blade, then the head, and after that the full grain in the head. But when the grain ripens, immediately he puts in the sickle, because the harvest has come.”

John 6:27

“Do not labor for the food that perishes, but for the food which endures to everlasting life, which the Son of Man will give you...”

Matthew 6:11

“Give us this day our daily bread.”

God's Ecology And Spiritual Gardening (A resumé)

by Edward F Sylvia (Reviewed by Norman Heldon)

This article was published in *The New Philosophy*, the magazine of the Swedenborg Scientific Association. The editor is Dr Erland Brock.

In his introduction Mr Sylvia writes “God created this beautiful planet to be of service to humankind – but to be used wisely. The urgent environmental issues and ecological crises in the world is an indication of a deeper spiritual crisis. A polluted world is the result of polluted thinking. Soil erosion is the result of an erosion of character, based on artificial, dead and disjointed principles. True religion involves holistic and eco-friendly thinking.”

Mr Sylvia's address to the SSA was based on his two books, namely “Sermon from the Compost Pile” and “Proving God: Swedenborg's Remarkable Quest for the Quantum Fingerprints of Love.”

He says that as a creative writer in a New York ad agency he had intuitively stumbled on the essential dynamics of Swedenborg's Science of Correspondences and nine months later was providentially introduced to Swedenborg's ideas.

He adds also, “Therefore a healthy garden that is based on sound ecological and holistic principles can offer us unexpected insights into God's grand cosmic scheme and deepest spiritual mysteries, especially concerning human salvation. For this reason Swedenborg was not only a pioneering scientist and theologian, he was also a gardener.”

Mr Sylvia pointed out that in Genesis there are described seven days of Creation. He adds, “I can now share with you Swedenborg's higher level interpretation of the Creation story from the Science of Correspondences. Each day describes a step in the sequential process by which the human heart and mind is gradually formed by God into an inner garden paradise and spiritual ecosystem. (see AC 7626).

Quoting from his description of Day Two, “We now begin to separate the

the final stages of publication and should be on the shelves by Christmas. *True Christian Religion* is undergoing editing and should be available by July next year. Visit www.swedenborg.es to learn more.

French: The Writings in French are undergoing a scanning project headed by the Rev. Sylvain Agnes in *Cote D'Ivoire*. Once the project is complete, Swedenborg's Theological Writings will be available in French via an electronic database.

Russian: The Ukrainian Swedenborg Society has just published *True Christian Religion* in Russian and is currently working on *Arcana Coelestia*.

Chinese: Translators are currently proofreading *God, Providence, and Creation*, as well as *Afterlife*. They are also working on excerpts of *Conjugal Love* by Swedenborg.

Czechoslovakian: *Heaven and Hell* is currently being published.

Message from Rev Brian Smith

Friends,

I've chosen to let each of you know about an exciting new project at NewChurchPerspective.com because I thought you might be interested.

The site is designed to post articles from a wide variety of authors seeking to digest and use the teachings of the New Church. Every week there is a new article. Hopefully you will be inspired, and drawn into considering the New Church from different perspectives. You may even have something on your mind that you'd like to share as an article.

I hope that if you like what you see, you will help spread the word so that the conversation can grow and benefit from more perspectives. (twitter, Facebook, email, whatever). Your other New Church friends may be interested in hearing about this.

Thanks

Brian

Theta Alpha International S.S.T.P.



The Theta Alpha International Sunday School Translation Project, started in the fall of 2003, has as its goal the translation into French and publication of four levels of *Jacob's Ladder* Religion Lessons. These are presently used as the basis of the Sunday school program in Côte d'Ivoire, West Africa, where they are being enjoyed by many. They will be distributed to all the congregations in Côte d'Ivoire, Togo, Benin, and any other French-speaking country that wants them.

The Theta Alpha International Executive Committee has decided to put 2010 Theta Alpha *Journal* contributions toward the Sunday School Translation Project, in part to compensate for not having produced a *Journal* in 2009. We are grateful to have a new *Journal* editor coming aboard, Angela Rose, who will work towards getting us back into our biannual publication pattern.

Thank you for your patience as we worked to find volunteers willing to manage the big commitment of *Journal* editorship, and thank you also, in advance, for your generosity towards the Sunday School Translation Project and our other uses. We look forward to playing our part in helping people throughout the world grow closer to the Lord God, Jesus Christ, in His Second Coming!

Recent Translation Initiatives

A significant part of the General Church Outreach mission is to initiate and support the translation of [Swedenborg's](#) Writings into other languages. The teachings in the [Heavenly Doctrines](#) have the power to change the lives of those who read them, offering truths that span across cultures.

Spanish: A group under the leadership of David Simpson is making a major push to publish Spanish translations of the Writings and collateral works, such as Rev. Grant Schnarr's book, *You Can Believe. Heaven and Hell* is in

higher ideas of God from lower worldly ideas. This is called “a separating of the waters” because water corresponds to information and truth. Water cleanses and refreshes the body in the same way Truth cleanses the soul.

He does not follow exactly the description given in *Secrets of Heaven* of the seven steps of man's regeneration. His main concern is the correspondential development of a person's mind so that it becomes a spiritual garden.

Mr Sylvia is himself an organic gardener. He and his wife Susan live on a ten acre farm in Southern Illinois, a project that has attracted great interest.

Quoting finally from his article, “The Garden of Eden represents a psychoscape, that is, the inner landscape of our heart and mind when we allow God to become our Master Gardener.”

For a full treatment of the Seven Days of Creation we can refer to Chapter One of *Secrets of Heaven* (Arcana Cælestia).

Trusting in the Lord

by Bill Hall

“Trust in the LORD, and do good; Dwell in the land, and feed on His faithfulness.” Psalm 37:3

No matter what problems we may be facing, the guideline from Psalm 37:3 is something we can use at all times in our daily lives. As we all know, we all have duties and responsibilities to perform every day. Our continual wellbeing depends on the useful performance we commit ourselves to.

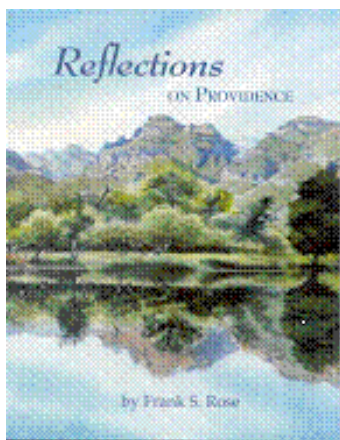
One time when I was not well I said to a neighbour that I would have to leave the cleaning for a day or two. The neighbour replied, “If you don't do it, no one else will!” The neighbour did not speak with rancour or ill-will but made a statement of the truth.

Trusting in the Lord extends to all aspects of life. When we are trusting in the Lord in this particular moment, we are trusting in the Lord's leading in all the aspects of our lives. Perhaps the most profound significance of trusting in the Lord is to trust from our whole heart that the Lord is forever leading us to heaven and away from hell. As we go forward in the day, that conviction guides our thoughts, feelings and actions toward a life of service to the neighbour and a life of loving the Lord first and foremost.

So we come to see and perceive that truly we are always receptacles of good and truth from the Lord through His angels, or else receptacles of evil and falsity from evil spirits from hell. Thankfully the Lord always grants us the freedom to choose the life of good and truth, or the life of evil and falsity.

As we progress on our daily journey toward eternal life, let us rejoice in the Lord's loving guidance of every moment of our lives. Then we shall know the peace and contentment of heaven where all trust in the Lord and do good with no thought of reward but from a love of welfare and happiness of the neighbour.

“We are not born for the sake of ourselves, but for the sake of others.”
TCR 406



Reflections on Providence
by Frank S. Rose

In this little book the author takes the reader through the book: “*Divine Providence*” by Emanuel Swedenborg, with a reflection on each of the eighteen chapters. It is pocket sized, attractive, and easy to read. This is something you could feel comfortable sharing with people who have little or no knowledge of the Writings of Swedenborg. It would make a wonderful gift.

Here is what one reader, a mother of six in Oak Arbor, Michigan, e-mailed to the author, printed with her permission:

Dear Mr Rose,

A while back several of the young adults in our group asked us if we would be willing to host a spiritual discussion group for them. We were a bit surprised because we don't have any kids in the college/young adult age group yet. But how could you possibly say no to a request like that?! We know they are all very busy so we wanted a short book that we could even read right during class.

We were thrilled to find *Reflections on Providence*. It is pocketable, and I love the joyful discovery of the LORD's teachings and tangible explanations. The reaction of the group on the first night was wonderful. . . . One by one my worries about running the group dissolved; discussions started easily, it was not too highbrow for the new comers, and we have many more people hoping to come to our next group. . . .

Anyway I wanted you to know how much we appreciate your book and how many people are benefiting from it,
Many Thanks,
Bryn Brock

Size: 4" x 5.25" - paper back
76 pages of text, plus 20 quotations from the book: *Divine Providence* and 23 nature photographs for a total of 109 pages

The book is available to order from these two sources:
The New Church Bookstore in Bryn Athyn at
<http://store.newchurch.org> (267-502-4980)
Fountain Publishing at www.fountainpublishing.com (877-736-8598)

Also, if there is sufficient interest in this book we may order some for the Hurstville Bookroom.