Along with a church full of people I was privileged to be present in Melbourne, Australia, on Sunday, January 14th, for the ordination Service for Chris Skinner, now the minister serving the congregation at Mount Waverley and the Group in Ballarat. For those of us responsible for assessing it, and testing it, there has been no doubt about Chris's call to Ministry. It's been there for years and his ordination was the realisation of a dream.

I do believe, emphatically, that people are called to Ministry. Sometimes they can be mistaken about what they believe to be such a call, and sometimes we can be. But there have always been those and, I also believe, will always be those, whose deep yearning is to serve the Lord in this way, opening up to others the truths and teachings of His Word and inspiring and encouraging them to live the life the Lord urges upon us. As those of us present at a round-circle discussion about it in Britain in the early 1990's heard, some of our ministers, looking back, were confident they could see signs of their call to Ministry in their childhood and adolescence. And, as I more recently heard, and affirm, once the call gets hold of you, you cannot escape it. Sooner or later (as Chris discovered) it catches up with you. The Old Testament prophet, Jeremiah, spoke of his call as being like "a burning fire shut up in my bones" (Chapter 20, verse 9). He was at the time all for running away from it, but he couldn't.

Whilst theirs is a vital, and sacred, use, are Ministers (or potential ministers) the only ones who are called to serve? For the rest, is it all haphazard and random, depending on inclination, circumstances, whom you know, 'lucky' breaks, and so on.

The teaching of the Writings, or Doctrines, of our Church clearly indicate that the answer to that question is "far from it!"

They show us, firstly, that everyone is born to be of use. Everyone. As one of our ministers wrote recently, "within the affection of every angel's will is a latent vein which draws the mind on to the doing of something" (Rev Lawson Smith). And it's the same with people on earth, even though they may shun the angel, or angelic potential, within themselves. The reality is that few people can stand by idle for long. Most despair if their life has no value in the eyes of others - if, in other words, they can't see themselves as being of any use to any one. We are born to be useful.

Here is just one angle on this, in my opinion beautifully put, from the book Arcana Caelestia:

"The inner level of every human being has been fashioned in such a way as to receive life from the Lord and is nothing other than an organ for the Lord's life. Consequently it has been fashioned to be of service to the Lord, for every useful purpose that love to him and charity toward the neighbour demand" Arcana Caelestia 5947

(Continued on page 2)
Just read that again, will you? "The inner level of every human being has been fashioned to be of service to the Lord, for every useful purpose that love to Him and charity towards the neighbour demand."

It’s virtually saying we cannot help ourselves. We have this inner urge; this yearning, from deep within; to be of use and service. And it’s not at first about monetary reward, though in time this looms large as a factor. The thing is, from the way we are made we need to feel useful. We are created, or "fashioned", in such a way that we have to serve. We need an outlet. We are frustrated when we haven’t got one.

But more than just a general urge, or call, arising from the way in which we are created, to be of use and service to others, it is, as I read and understand the Teachings of our Church, a call to specific roles and spheres of usefulness. And this is the second point I highlight here with you.

No one person can do everything. Indeed, what is abundantly evident is that we are all born with different capacities and abilities. Even amongst children of the same family it is crystal clear that this is so. And this stems from each of us having been created at the outset for a specific use, and place, in the ‘Grand Man’ which heaven is.

All then are called and all, as I understand the teaching given, are called to specific roles and uses. Our different talents and aspirations will take us into different fields of endeavour. Some are happiest working with people. Others are in their element in often lonely research. Some work with their heads, some with their hands. And so on. But the call from the Lord, in and through all these various activities engaged in, is to be of use; to cherish the privilege of being able to make a contribution to the good of the community and the well-being of others; to celebrate our opportunities via work and the multitude of other contacts we have with people to change life, and lives, for the better; to make a difference.

The Lord, indeed, calls us all to serve.

Rev Ian Arnold
From the Adelaide Newsletter

Ordination in Australia

The article above, by Rev Ian Arnold, starts by mentioning the ordination of Chris Skinner in Melbourne, Australia. Chris had trained for the ministry by dispersed learning through the Australian New Church College in conjunction with courses from the New Church College here in the UK.

The picture opposite recently appeared in the Essex County Standard with the headline:

“Three ‘lads’ meet up in Australia”

All three men emigrated from Brightlingsea to Australia 30 or more years ago.

The ordination service was attended by 140 people and John Cunningham represented the Brightlingsea congregation. Friends, neighbours and relatives of Chris and Margaret Skinner were also present including two daughters.

Editor
The tombs broke open and the bodies of the saints (many holy people) who had died were raised to life. Matthew 27:52

You can be a saint only if 1. You have died. 2. You belong to the Eastern Orthodox or Roman Catholic Christian churches or one of the more obscure sects of Islam. So anyone who has ambitions in that direction had better stop reading this now!

The first canonised Roman Catholic saint was Ulrich, bishop of Augsburg, who died in 973 and was made a saint in 993. Martin Luther eliminated the worship of saints in the reformed Christian church although some Protestant bishops tried to reinstate some of them. The saints’ days linger on; most famously as St Valentine’s Day, St Patrick’s Day and other national saints days.

So where are the New Church saints? Has there been no-one good enough? I know my wife has been a saint for putting up with me for nearly 40 years, but that doesn’t count! Helen Keller would fit the bill. A courageous lady who overcame great physical problems to become a wonderful fund raiser for the blind and disadvantaged. But she would have been horrified at the idea.

The writings of Swedenborg have some observations to make about saints. From my viewpoint they are unfortunate. He tells us that some of the saints are in hell. Today, many still worship and offer prayers to the saints calling upon them for aid. I realise that such devotion would be better directed to our Lord Himself. But these people find comfort and help in their worship. Destroying it could harm them.

But what about the "the saints who rose to life"? These events followed the Crucifixion. There weren’t any "saints"! The gospels were written in the 1st century AD and the first saint was not made until the 10th century. Later translators have realised this and changed the text to read "many good people" or "martyrs" as in the book of Revelation.

But these scenes are not recorded in the Roman nor the Jewish annals. Why not? Because they were spiritual events. They showed the immediate results of the Lord’s crucifixion and His approaching resurrection. The veil of the temple was torn in two. In the risen Jesus, people saw and can still see God Himself. For the Jew, God was a mystical force behind the screen of the Holy of Holies. For the Roman, He was split into many parts; Jupiter, Mercury and many others. They even went to the supreme folly of making their emperor a god even when he was still alive! But, no longer could God be apart from man. Our Lord brought His Supreme Divinity down to the flesh and blood of Man. This brought a release from captivity and entombment all those who had died and could not fulfil the goodness of their natures. The Roman world was a slave world. It took centuries to perish, but perish it did.

Whether we believe in the risen Jesus or not, we have the freedom to chose our spiritual future. If we wish it, we can pray directly to a Divinely Human Lord. We can approach Him directly and He can help us directly. He is present with us down to our every thought, feeling and action. No longer is He a God in the clouds, hidden away. He is a God with us who has experienced every fear, every heartache felt by us and a great deal more.

All the good loves and true ideas which lie buried deep in our hearts and minds, He can raise to life again. He breaks open the entombed spiritual values deep within us and raises them to life again.

Geoffrey Bentley
The Future of the Church?

The President, in his address to Conference last year, strongly emphasised the need for us to prepare willingly to welcome change in the Church, and as I was reading it, I was reminded of a statement made by the Rev Robert Gill, when he was President and speaking about the future of the Church. He said that all the New Church has to offer to the world was its teaching. I felt at the time that he had not taken in mind the many uses the Church was fulfilling in pastorates, such as pastoral care, social gatherings and ceremonial occasions, like funerals, weddings, baptisms etc. But the way things are developing I feel that he was speaking prophetically. The Church is moving very much into being an educational and publishing organisation while church life, as we have known it declines.

From what I read, the emphasis is on distance leaning, writing and publishing. In his address the President mentioned how in our early days we had taken on board many Victorian traditions, and styles of church buildings, so if we move away from these traditional forms, we shall see an end of our familiar church life. We shall have an organisation very much like the Jehovah Witnesses, which is first and foremost a publishing body. They are very proficient in outreach, they form groups and when a group becomes large enough they erect a very functional building. Our old Spring Hill church was sold to the Jehovah Witnesses, and they converted it to a simple but comfortable meeting hall.

If we do evolve in this direction, instead of ministers we shall have paid writers, colporteurs, educationalists, directors, and so on. It may be that we shall be more in line with the New Testament with Rabbis and Scribes. Our buildings, if we have any, will be like synagogues, with a very simple ritual. The difference with the Jews, in those days, was that their method of teaching was very verbal, with few members who could read. In the New Church we seem to aim at the conversion of the literate. I feel that we fail to have in mind the thousands who are illiterate, and the millions who read only magazines and newspapers. A number of years ago the College organised a day's seminar on Ministering To A Non-reading Public. The leaders began by showing us statistics illustrating the reading habits of the people in this country, very few of whom actually read books of a serious nature, and even less who read theology. As far as I know this seminar has had no impact on our thinking in the Church. Is it to be assumed that the New Church has to be first and foremost a reading church?

What in fact is a church? The word ‘church’ is derived from the Greek ‘kyriakon’, meaning ‘belonging to the Lord’. The word ‘Kyrios’ meaning ‘the Lord’. If we become simply a Swedenborg Movement, will we be any different from, say, a Newtonian Movement, or a Darwinian Movement?

We could define the Christian Church as a body of people, large or small, who hold to the testimony of the Gospels, who meet in fellowship for instruction and worship and live out the Gospel in their daily affairs. Now if we add the Swedenborgian interpretation of the Gospel, we have a specific branch of the Christian Church, but still a church in the full meaning of the word. It may be that we feel that to hold to this simple style of church life would be regressive, and that in holding to the teachings of Swedenborg we must become strongly esoteric with a powerful emphasis on theology, psychic knowledge and life after death.

In the early years of our organisation there was a universal interest in theology. Even illiterate mill workers would meet in groups to discuss doctrine and have the Writings read to them. In the established churches there was persecution of those who deviated from standard beliefs and further fragmentation of the church. We remember that the Rev John Clowes was against the formation of a distinctive Swedenborgian Church, but such was the opposition of the traditionalists in the Church of England, that splinter groups formed and grew into quite large New Church congregations.

In the western world, a sort of Christian humanism seems to be growing. The idea of a Creator God in the sky or an all-powerful father figure is ruled out. Christian human values are revered and Christian traditions upheld, with belief in a spirituality within our humanity, the Scriptural idea of the kingdom of God within us. The possibility of a life after death being left as an open question, or the idea that we shall find out when we get there. May be that will be the future of our church, in spite of our planning. We shall find out when we get there.

Rev John O Booth

We know that the Son of God came and gave us understanding, so that we might know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true, in His Son, Jesus Christ. He is the true God and everlasting life.

1 John 5:20 (Emanuel Swedenborg quotes this part of John’s Epistle at least 25 times in the Writings. It is quoted more than any other reference in the Epistles)
Retreat Weekend March 9—11 2001

Have you ever been to a retreat? If not, allow me to encourage you to do so! I and thirteen others gathered at Purley Chase on 9th March for a weekend entitled ‘A Lenten Journey, Jordan to Jerusalem’; and it was one of the most enjoyable -beneficial times I have spent. We followed the journey of our Lord from his time spent around Galilee, healing and teaching to the Last Supper. We followed him mentally, emotionally and spiritually in a variety of ways.

In the session 'Follow Me', beautifully led by Rev Mary Duckworth, we imagined what it would have been like to be called as a disciple in Galilee. With the use of symbols e.g. a blue sheet representing the Sea of Galilee, a small net denoted the fishermen, a purse, the tax collector; jewellery for the rich man etc. The story was read from the word with additional pieces written as if by the disciples involved. We were asked to meditate, using the Bible, or inner contemplation on our own calling. There were five other sessions, entitled 'Journeying with the Son of God', 'On the Sea of Galilee', 'Journeying with the Son of Man', 'Entering Jerusalem' and 'Celebrating the Holy Supper'. Clifford, with the aid of some very atmospheric music helped us visualise the different moods of the Sea of Galilee. Using the stories of Jesus calming the storms, we meditated on our own mental and spiritual 'storms' and reflected on how the Lord has helped us through them.

One of the most moving experiences of the weekend was the session 'Journeying with the Son of Man', when we meditated on various works of art, choosing one to look at in a negative way and another positively. As nothing is by coincidence the ‘choice’ of paintings were, for many, a very emotional and meaningful experience.

Marion Curry led a ‘Rejoice, Dance and Sing session’ on Saturday evening in which we were able to testify our love to the lord using circle dance and hymn singing. Throughout the weekend we were given time to reflect, in silence, in the house or grounds. We also had two meals in silence. These times were never, for me anyway, awkward or embarrassing but an opportunity to go deep within, a time to focus on others and the gifts given to us by the Lord. We could even notice with more appreciation, the food on our plates; the rich variety of colour, texture and taste!

Our journey ended so appropriately with the celebration of the Holy Supper administered by Rev Clifford Curry.

Our thanks to Irene and Wilf Woodhouse for attending so well to our bodily needs, to Marion for her organisation, but especially to Rev Clifford Curry and Rev Mary Duckworth for such sensitive and imaginative leadership.

Rachel Turner
From the Bournemouth Newsletter

Isn't it a pity,
Isn't it a shame
How we break each other's hearts,
And cause each other pain
How we take each other's love,
Without thinking anymore
Forgetting to give back
Isn't it a pity

Some things take so long, but how do I explain?
When not too many people
Can see we're all the same
And because of all the tears,
Their eyes can't hope to see
The beauty that surrounds them -
Oh isn't it a pity

George Harrison
Traditionally, College students have been semi-resident, spending much of their time in College, attending lectures, discussing topics that are thought-provoking, using the facilities such as the fine library, and generally inspiring each other. Under the new Dispersed Learning scheme of things, our three ordination students, Rita Russell, Esther Byrne and David Gaffney, work at home and attend tutorials in a variety of locations, one of which may be the College. Are they missing out on the availability of facilities, and of other students for mutual support?

To avoid this situation, the Principal, Rev John Presland, has organised a series of "Students Together" sessions for the three students. Two of these sessions have been organised for each of the two semesters in the College year. At each, a variety of topics are set up to take advantage of the availability of the group. For example,

- Each student has organised a short act of worship, or matins.
- Everybody has undertaken a book review on a relevant or controversial subject and presented this to the others for discussion. Books recently reviewed have covered prayer, the Jewish Kabbalah, and the universal effect of colour on health in this world and the next.

Group discussions on pastoral issues like bereavement take place and of course the opportunity for some tutorials is taken.

The next sharing week will take place during May, and will incorporate a visit from the former Principal, Rev Ian Arnold. It is eagerly awaited. In addition, Rita, Esther and David attend the Winter and Summer Schools, held in February and July, when many of the other non-ordination students participate and add to the learning and sharing process.

All of these sessions, whether they involve many students, or just a few, are lively, inspiring and enjoyable. Most important of all, everyone who attends feels that they have been spiritually enriched.

Alan Bowie

PS. Since the last news item was written, a 28th student has joined the ranks!

The New Church College News

April 2001

The New Church College

The 137th Annual Meeting of Governors will take place at the College
25 Radcliffe New Road, Radcliffe, Manchester
on Saturday, 30th June commencing at 2.30 p.m.

Everyone is invited to come and see

"A College Fair"

Visit our stands and see what's happening!
Try the new computer catalogue of over 4000 books
Be a Distance Learner
Meet the Staff, Students and Friends on their stands
Learn more about Gift Aid
Have a cuppa!

Business meeting will commence at 4.00 p.m.
In my opinion

A famous politician once said, “There is no such thing as society”. Well, there is certainly the term, society, so I decided to check out how the dictionary I have defines it. I was given a selection of five words that could be used to portray its meaning. Three of those words were populace, public, and people.

Surely the politician wasn’t saying there was no such thing as people, public, or populace. Everyone knows the earth is literally over-populated with people, and its a very public place. Obviously another meaning must be inferred when trying to understand what was actually meant by the statement.

There were two other words suggested, that could be used to describe further meanings. One was association, and the other was community. It is very unlikely that people anywhere can exist without some degree of association, and an association of people can be said to be a community. It was at this point I felt I was getting nowhere fast, so I decided to try and get in perspective, what the word society meant for me personally.

As I understand it, the one sure bonding force, that can transform a group of individuals into a society, is the mutual affection for being of good use to one another. This affection is derived from the love of good for the sake of good itself. It provides the basis for real conjunction to take place between one and all.

It is the only means of achieving that degree of sharing and caring for others, sufficient enough to enable them to feel a sense of belonging. Any affection shared with another and thus reciprocated, causes people to be united, which in turn, provides the social commitment that is free from the usual hypocrisy, that gives the appearance of genuine fellowship.

I have realised that a society cannot be formed out of a group of individuals lacking affection for the love of good for the sake of good. The affection derived from the love of good in their case is entirely focussed on promoting their own good, regardless of others.

In conclusion, I admit that the politician was at least half right. It seems that a real society can only be achieved by a psychological evolution, rather than a political revolution.

George Young

Newsletter Nuggets

The Scottish Association Committee met a few weeks ago, with a very lull agenda. Plans are being made for us to participate once again at the Dumbarton Festival on Saturday 21st July 2001. Each time we take part we learn new lessons, and as a result we hope to have a more attractive stall this year. With this in mind we are gradually assembling the equipment needed for us to mount a New Church display (anywhere in Scotland) at very short notice. We shall be purchasing our own portable frame and awning in order to provide shelter from both rain and sun. In addition we are putting together boxes of the various resources needed to mount a good display. We still have a considerable quantity of last years very popular balloons, and these will again be handed out to children free of charge.

Also this year, we shall be taking part in the Renfrewshire Doors Open Day, on Saturday 8th September. We shall have a new attraction at this for 2001; now that we have a television with combined video player, we shall he able to run the excellent film on Swedenborg, 'The Man who had to Know'. This will be repeated regularly throughout the event, and we hope that it will prove to he a good talking point with our visitors.

The next Worship Leaders day on Thursday, 19 April, will he led by the Rev John Presland, Principal of the New Church College, Manchester.

We plan to begin a new topic, a study of some of the Old Testament people, starting with Adam. Although the day is called 'Worship Leading', it is by no means confined to aspiring leaders. In fact, anyone who is at all interested in New Church teaching will find the day enjoyable and worthwhile.

The programme is friendly and informal; we assemble at about 10.30 for coffee, and at 11 o’clock we start our study. We break for a bring your own packed lunch (and conversation) then, when we’re ready, resume studies until about 3 o’clock. Please come along if you can.

From the Chester Newsletter

From the Paisley Newsletter
Six generations back - Six forward

I was born into the New Church. My father Eric and mother Marjorie were married at the Anerley New Church in South London in 1937 having become members a few years earlier. Eric was no stranger to the New Church. He had been baptised at the Academy of the New Church (later known as Michael Church) in Brixton in 1908. With his parents Henry and Charlotte and sister Olive he moved to the South Norwood area during the First World War and lost touch with the church in Brixton. As a result the family joined in the life of a local Congregational church where Eric's future wife was a Sunday School teacher. In his mid 20's Eric expressed an interest in finding a more local New Church and his father suggested he tried the church at Anerley. Thus started a lifelong involvement in that church.

Henry's father Ezekiel first came into the New Church in 1867 when he applied for the job of caretaker at the recently built church in Camberwell. Ezekiel was a slate cutter, busy at work roofing the many new houses being built in the rising London suburbs. Ezekiel and Ann, his wife, had a large family, one daughter and five sons. In the 1870's a caretaker's house was built alongside the church and the whole family lived on the premises. Later, the split between the Conference and the Academy affected this family, as it did many others, and some members stayed at Camberwell whereas others, including Henry, transferred their allegiance to the new group.

Henry grew up in the Sunday School at Camberwell as did Charlotte Emma Searle whom he married in 1903. Charlotte was one of eight children of Alfred and Mary Ann Searle. Charlotte's mother Mary Ann was one of thirteen children born to Camp and Mary Ann Penn.

Camp Penn had been baptised as an adult into the New Church on the 18th May 1828 at the church in Cross Street, Hatton Garden, London. Camp Penn's father John Denston Penn was a shoemaker who grew up and worked in Northampton. At some stage in his early 20's John Penn must have come across the New Church because he was baptised as an adult into the New Church in 1806, although I do not know where this baptism took place.

I am very fortunate to be able to trace my New Church heritage back through six generations and 200 years to John Denston Penn. But I am not alone in this. There are many people in the UK and overseas, also involved today in the life of the New Church, who can equally identify John Denston Penn as an ancestor.

But what of the future, what will the relevance of the New Church be to our descendants six generations forward in 200 years time? Fortunately we don't know and it is impossible for us even to begin to imagine the changes that will have occurred. Just imagine how difficult it would be for John Denston Penn to understand how this copy of Lifeline is produced on a computer! And change now is happening even faster than it has over the past 200 years.

We can look back at the past and be fascinated and enthralled by what we learn, but looking far forward is really of little benefit. Whatever we imagine for the future will be nothing like what really happens. Whoever we are and whatever our past or future holds, what is most important is what we are doing right now, today.

Alan Misson

The London and Southern Area held it’s annual meeting on Saturday 24th March at West Wickham, followed by a social event.

Visitors came from Greenhill, Southend, Kensington and Bournemouth and places in between.

The picture shows a traditional ‘chocolate eating’ competition being enjoyed by all.
Two articles from the past

The Van and the Man

It is with great pleasure that we can inform our readers that the Evidence Society has been able to secure the services of the Rev. W. R. Horner as Van Missionary. Those who know Mr. Homer will easily understand how great an acquisition he will prove to the work. He has already shewn his fitness for missionary work, and the Societies at Wallasey and Chester owe much to his zeal and ability. A fluent speaker, sympathetic in his treatment of questions, enthusiastic in his desire to see the Church extend her borders, he will bring to the work a whole-hearted interest. He commences his new duties immediately, and early in the coming week the van will leave London on a prolonged tour. Mr. Horner will not go alone. Mr. John Cozens, a member of the Plaistow Society, has volunteered his services to help in the work. He will keep the van in order, distribute literature and advertisements, and will, as far as possible, leave Mr. Horner free to devote himself to the purely missionary part of the work.

The exact route of the van during the first few weeks will be settled during the next few days, and a weekly account of its movements will appear in Morning Light. It has already been determined that the first tour is to be into the South and West of England. The winter will be spent in Devonshire and Cornwall, where a vigorous campaign of missionary work will, we trust, be productive of good results. Mr. Horner will communicate with and visit all isolated receivers in the districts traversed by the van. He will visit Bournemouth, and will probably engage in missionary work there for some weeks.

The van, of which we give an illustration, is a large, roomy, and well-equipped vehicle, built of solid mahogany. It is painted dark blue, relieved with fine, white lines, and the lettering upon it is in gold. All who have seen it have been impressed by its handsome appearance. It is fitted with powerful Blanchard Patent High Power Inverted Incandescent Oil Lamps, the gift of Mr. O. V. Macfarlane. These lamps are of such high power that the dark evenings will be just as suitable for the Missionary’s work as the brightest hours of the day. The horses shewn in the illustration do not belong to the van. For the present the hauling of the van will be arranged for with contractors. It should be noted, however, that Mr. Cozens is accustomed to the management of horses, and if anyone cares to help the Van Mission by presenting one or two horses they will be thankfully received by the Evidence Society.

The Swedenborg Society has agreed to provide all the books that can be sold by the Missionary. This refers, of course, to the Writings. The books must be sold at the usual price, and the proceeds will be devoted to the upkeep of the Van. The Missionary and Tract Society has granted ten pounds worth of literature for the same purpose, and the Evidence Society will be prepared to print other necessary books and pamphlets.

Morning Light Saturday August 5 1911

OPENING of the NEW JERUSALEM TEMPLE.

ON SUNDAY next, the 30th of July, the neat and elegant Erection, which is now completed, and called the NEW JERUSALEM TEMPLE, situated in Cross-street, Hatton-Garden, within the Premises lately known as the Hatton-House Estate, will be opened, for the Performance of Public Worship, by the Rev. J. PROUD, N. H. M. From the rationality of the Doctrines intended to be inculcated, from the abilities of the Preacher, and from the general neatness and elegance of the place, particularly with respect to the semicircular arrangement of the Pews and Seats, the Public may expect, and in all probability will receive, the highest gratification. Service to begin in the Morning at Half past 10 o’Clock; in the Afternoon at 3; and in the Evening at Half past 6.

The Times

Friday July 28

1797
There are many websites accessible through the Internet that feature Swedenborg or the New Church. To ensure the widest possible interest in these sites I intend publishing from time to time some information on well known, and not so well known sites. This is the second feature, the first was in the December 2000 issue.

Editor

www.swedenborgmovement.org

This website presents the Swedenborg Movement and its publication, Outlook. An online version of Outlook can be accessed as well as an archive of earlier issues.

Forthcoming events are listed and links are provided to other Swedenborgian and New Church web sites around the world. There is also a section of general information which presents such topics as:

‘The language of myth, dream and reality’
‘Correspondences, the key to ancient wisdom’
‘Christ in a new age’

www.fountainpublishing.com

This is a very different web site which presents the Art, Music and Literature of a New Christianity. An online shop is provided where customers can purchase books by Fountain Publishing as well as other books by publishers such as the Swedenborg Foundation. A selection of CD’s is available and a variety of cards.

As the home page says:

“We look forward to serving you with products that promote the beauty of messages from the Bible and the Writings of Emanuel Swedenborg through the arts”

www.newchurch.org.au

The New Church in Australia has its own web site where information is provided on all the different churches in Australia. It provides information about Emanuel Swedenborg, answers to frequently asked questions and links to other New Church web sites around the world.

The welcome message includes these words:

“Discover for yourself why this little known, but much loved, 250 year-old church provides parishioners of all races in all countries a deeper and totally rational understanding of what it means to be a Christian in today’s world.”
Readers Letters

(from an early age, Jesus became increasingly aware of the depth of the Word and therefore who he was. His grasp of truth at the time of his crucifixion must have been almost infinite and so any external worldly temptations would be non-starters for him and, I suspect, for the hells tempting him at that point.

If the attacks were on his love for the whole human race and also the spiritual world, given that it comes from the human race, might not the final temptations involve attacking Jesus’ perception of the way the Divine Love works through the Divine Truth with those in hell and on earth whose ruling loves are love of self and the world? You might like to link this idea with TCR 126. Here we read, In temptation it looks as if a person is left to himself but he is not, since God is then most closely present in his inmost, and secretly gives him support. When therefore anyone is victorious over temptation, he is most inwardly linked with God, and in this case the Lord was most inwardly united with God His Father.

Therefore Jesus must have experienced a feeling of total abandonment on the cross. In this apparent isolation from the Divine he could only hold fast to all the truth (now almost Divine) in his human, and which was assaulted in the last temptation? To give way in his human would have been to deny the reality and power of Divine Truth; in remaining true to it and therefore confirming the Divine, were the Human and the Divine then inwardly united?

Yours sincerely,

Rev Alan Lewin

Dear Editor,

What I understand The Revd Mr Hasler, in his article - Lifeline of April 2001 - to say in a rather roundabout way, is that Senior Citizens should be able to devote some 8 to 16 hours per week to working for the Lord within the New Church.

But working for Him embraces far more than serving within the confines of the New Church, or any other denomination for that matter. I am sure many SC’s who read Lifeline will want to inform Mr Hasler that the greater part of what they do each and every day is done for the Lord and in His name.

We do not have to be readers of particular books or papers, join study groups, or even become a political animal. How many of us, on a voluntary basis, care for and help the people older or younger than ourselves who live in our street i.e. cook them a meal, shop for them, walk their dog? In fact some may play the organ, read the lesson, or write and lead the prayers in the Church we attend Sunday by Sunday. Maybe we work in the local Hospice or Hospice shop or give at least one day a week to helping in the local hospital, i.e. feeding patients, running the clerical side of various clinics, etc. All ages of human beings including small children are able to give of their time and talents daily, weekly or whenever. And as our Lord says: “I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.”

Matthew 25 v 40 NIV

Pauline Grimshaw, in her letter - April Lifeline, is to be congratulated on the way she has unravelled the couched language used in the Renew Article in February Lifeline. Might it be possible that members of Renew adhere to the rules laid down by The English Plain Speaking organisation and thus write more clearly, so that the person in the pew and in the street can follow what they are attempting to tell us.

Sincerely

Judy M L Elliott (Mrs)

RENEW Programme

The RENEW Team has continued to work on producing detailed implementation proposals covering the Start Up Initiatives described in earlier issues of Lifeline.

These detailed documents include comprehensive descriptions of what is proposed together with costs and the timescales likely to be involved. Additional manpower requirements are also identified.

The Team has also produced an outline plan for how these proposals should be presented to Conference and a possible timetable for the Conference agenda.

The detailed documents, plan and timetable are being presented to the Conference Council meeting on 10/11 May.

It is hoped that the June issue of Lifeline will contain some of this further detail as part of the preparation for Conference.

Alan Misson
Dear Editor,

Thank you for Lifeline - some of the items I especially enjoy are those about people who were very interested in Swedenborg but are well known for other reasons - William Blake, Helen Keller, Robert Browning, John Flaxman among others.

While looking through some old books recently I came across a paperback of Edith Sitwell's poems which was published in 1952. Almost the first third of this slim volume is an essay she wrote to explain her rather 'difficult' and unusual work. I found this laborious reading, but was suddenly jolted wide-awake by this lovely paragraph:

"Seeing the immense design of the world, one image of wonder mirrored by another image of wonder - the pattern of fern and of feather by the frost on the windowpane, the six rays of the snowflake mirrored in the rock-crystal's six-rayed eternity - seeing the pattern on the scaly legs of birds mirrored in the pattern of knotgrass, I ask myself, were these shapes moulded by blindness? Are they not correspondences, to quote a phrase of Swedenborg, whereby we may speak with angels?"

Swedenborg is not mentioned again in this essay but I wonder what is known about Edith Sitwell's interest in him; also did her famous brothers Osbert and Sacherell, also study the Writings?

Yours sincerely,

Joan Farrar

Dear Editor,

The details of the 'Renew' proposals are very heartening. Many thanks and congratulations to the Team and everyone involved for all the thought and hard work that they have put into it.

We're wondering whether the overall structure of the New Church movement is also under consideration. We mention this as one of the first thoughts we had on reading the proposals was that our national church already has a full time Education Officer in the person of the Principal of the College; and that although we have no Communications Officer, we have people doing this work part-time for Conference, the Missionary Society and New Church House.

Perhaps the time is coming for us to think of bringing all of these under one legal roof. Having our work divided between four separate legal entities inevitably involves duplication of officers, councils, accounting, auditors, meetings, etc., much of which with our limited personnel resources we could well do without. Should we be thinking of some form of amalgamation, whilst preserving the purposes of all dedicated trust funds?

Yours sincerely,

Geoff and Margaret Cunningham

Dear Editor,

Rev Bruce Jarvis writes eloquently in your April issue on how he sees Easter. However I felt very disturbed with his descriptions of the nature of the Lord's ultimate challenge and the temptations on the cross. I feel that Jesus was experiencing something far deeper and profound than Bruce describes.

We can read in AC 1690 that the whole of the Lord's life was love towards the whole human race and that it was against this love, which was his life, that temptations were directed constantly from his earliest childhood through to his last hour. He did fight against self-love and love of the world with which the hells were filled but surely it involved a fight against this in somehow being an acceptable and life enhancing way of existence for those in hell and people in this world. I cannot believe that he ever, and certainly not on the cross, thought this was acceptable for him in terms of an earthly kingdom and worldly adulation. The Writings show that,

(Continued on page 11)