



# New Church Canadian

A Bi-Monthly Newsletter of General Church in Canada

Issue 205

## “WORSHIP” IS AN ACTIVE VERB!

By the Rev. James P. Cooper

Modern Western culture has introduced some subtle assumptions into our forms of worship. So much of our experience of the world is passive that we sit back in comfort in the privacy of our own homes and watch someone work very hard to entertain and inform.

This has led to “sound bites” instead of real information. A national leader may give an important speech that involves complex ideas, but all you get on the news is a sentence fragment because they assume that if you have to listen to too much, you’ll get bored and channel surf to something else. And, ironically, we think ourselves “informed” because we watch the news.

As a culture we’ve lost the patience to listen all the way to the end of a compound complex sentence. We have begun to think that our comfort is an essential element of every aspect of life, and it’s our right to be

protected from anything difficult or boring.

Now, let’s throw the pandemic into the mix. It’s been almost a year and a half since regular services have been offered in Canada. Many of us have gotten quite comfortable with the routine of watching church on TV or the computer while sitting in a comfortable chair with a cup of tea or coffee.



So, is there something about worshipping together in church that is important enough to get us up and

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dressed and out of the house on a Sunday morning? Soon, that's going to be a choice. Here are some teachings about worship to remind you why it's important to make the effort.

Bishop W. F. Pendleton wrote in his book *Notes on Ritual* (Pages 42-43), "...Active co-operation is given throughout the Writings as a prime essential of the regenerate life, and what is prime in that life should be represented in worship. In fact, ritual is reduced to its minimum if the congregation does not take an active part in the service. It is notable, that in those denominations where the doctrine of justification by faith without deeds of the law has been applied to the extreme, there has been a large removal of ritual, or the co-operation by the worshipper. Where man is regarded as a passive recipient in his life, the same is reflected in worship.

"It follows, that in the New Church, in which a daily obedience to the Commandments is taught as essential to salvation, there should be a sufficiency of ritual; which, as taken from the letter of Scripture, teaches everywhere the co-operation of man with God in the work of regeneration, or the doctrine of life."

We should reflect, therefore, on some of the basic elements of our worship to see if we can discover and appreciate the importance of an active role in worship as a means of improving our spiritual states, a part of the process of repentance, reformation, and regeneration.



Let us first consider the role of the offertory – which simply cannot happen when you're at home. It is sometimes called "the first thing of worship" not because it is the most important, but because it ought to come first because it's not really worship unless there is recognition that the one worshipped is

actually superior to the worshipper. There must be a belief that there is a being outside of oneself that is greater than oneself, or there cannot be any worship. It is not worship to come just to listen to homilies about living a happier life – that's "instruction" and has its own value. Worship requires submission to a higher authority. That submission or humbling of self is represented by giving a gift of something that we ourselves value. It is intended to be an acknowledgement that God Himself is the giver of gifts. It is an acknowledgement that God is superior to us. It puts us in the proper state to receive instruction and direction. Why would we feel compelled to follow the instructions of an equal?



Then there is the role of music. Just as words are the language of ideas, musical tones are the language of affection. A "good" song is one where ideas expressed in the words are supported by the feelings expressed in the rhythm and tones. We might also observe that a "good" hymn is one that we are familiar with and are therefore able to join in. Having a congregation sing the same song helps to bring everyone into a similar state – like a society of heaven. There is the element of freewill choice – to sing or not to sing. There is also the need to be acutely aware of what other people are doing – the words, the rhythm, and the notes – and making a concerted effort to fit in with what other people are doing in order to act non-selfishly. These are essential skills for working "harmoniously" with others.

There is a dual role of music in a church service here in the world. On the one hand to provide appropriate music that stirs affections for the

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Lord and heaven, to draw on affections stored away from childhood, and to stir many different affections, both joyful and sad. On the other hand, for the individual members of the congregation to make a sincere effort to take part, for it is a symbol of spiritual co-operation.



Another important part of the service is the Psalter or other readings of scripture where the minister and the congregation speak together. It represents the communication between each of us and the Lord. Communication is not one way. Ideas have to pass back and forth. There are lots of examples in scriptures such as the story where Abraham argues with God over the future of Sodom. The purpose of this two way communication is to provide us with the feeling that we are doing things as if of ourselves, all the while acknowledging that we are being led by the Lord.

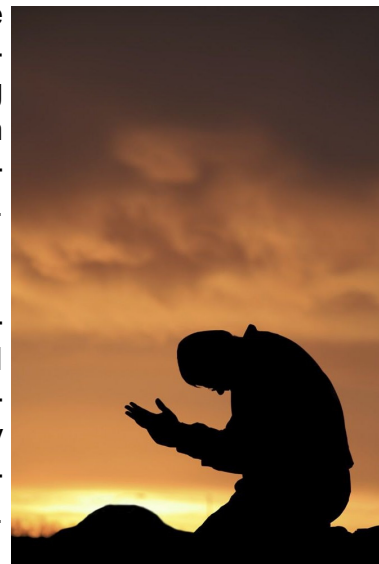
The Psalter is important because we have the priest, representing the Lord, reading a line of scripture, followed by the people reading the next line. It is intended to be a representation of the way that we communicate back and forth with the Lord. He teaches us something. We try it out for ourselves and learn from the experience. He gives us a new truth, and we see it from the perspective of the recent lesson and the newly acquired wisdom. As the cycle continues, we become wiser and move closer to heaven. This is distinctly different from the use of the lessons read from the pulpit which is intended to represent instruction directly from the Lord.

It is a tradition in the General Church that we say the Lord's prayer together with the minister while on our knees. There are churches with a tradition of silent prayer or prayer sitting or prayer standing. They have their own reasons for doing what they do. In the New Church we kneel when we say the Lord's prayer because of what "bending the knee" represents.

"This is said of the coming of the Lord; and "every knee shall bow" signifies that all who are in natural good from spiritual good will worship Him, the "knee" signifying the conjunction of natural good with spiritual. This shows that bending the knees signifies acknowledgement, thanksgiving, and adoration from spiritual good and delight in the natural" (Apocalypse Explained 455:14).

"Kneeling is an outward representation of the state of humiliation, which is a fundamental of worship; sitting is a posture of rest and meditative reflection, and is at the same time representative of a state of receiving instruction; while standing represents elevation of thought and affection" (Ritual, W.F. Pendleton, p. 20).

"...The act of kneeling is an outward representation of humility of spirit, and by reaction tends to cultivate it" (Ritual, W.F. Pendleton, p. 34).



The lessons are read from the lectern, and it is our tradition to limit the minister's comment to a brief word of introduction if it is deemed necessary. The point being that it is the Lord's Word that is being presented and it should be listened to non-critically with attention.

The sermon which follows is very different, and whenever possible the minister moves from the

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lectern to the pulpit to represent the distinction between quoting directly from the Word in the lessons and the minister's own understanding and application of what the Word says in the pulpit. It should be listened to carefully but with affirmative doubt.

All the elements of worship that have gone before add a special quality to the sermon and make it a form of instruction unlike any other, because it is delivered to people who are in a sphere of worship and who have made a conscious effort to prepare themselves to receive that instruction. It's not television. It's not the same as reading the Word at home – or even family worship, although these are both valuable in their own right as extensions of and supports to worship as part of a congregation.

The Lord distinguishes between goods done to family and those done to strangers, and He asks us to make the effort to bring ourselves into harmony with others – even people we don't like – because it is good for our souls. Worship is supposed to be active because it involves spiritual effort on our parts. To deliberately and specifically put aside the natural and material sides of our lives for the sake of something spiritual.



Sunday worship is distinct from other forms of instruction, such as a study group or a doctrinal class because of the deliberate effort to prepare the will through music and prayer to receive the instruction from the Word on an elevated (or more interior) level. Worship is not only important to each individual worshipper, it is also important to the life of the congregation because

by bringing the diverse elements together in a common purpose, a common voice, it creates spiritual harmony.



And it is even important to the life of the church in the heavens. The Writings speak about how even purely external rote going through the motions of ritual can inspire the very simple spirits to states of genuine worship – and their worship inspires the same in the higher degrees of angels!

How much more profitable it is for us to make the effort to come into internal worship, to prepare ourselves ahead of time by thinking about what we are about to do, by reflecting on the importance of the various elements of worship, and by leaving the cares and thoughts of the world at the door so that the mind is free to enter into the presence of the Lord, and to worship Him in a sphere of peace and holiness so that He may enter in and dwell with us? So, as the pandemic finally begins to wind down and it becomes safe and appropriate for us to gather in public spaces once again, it's time for us to start looking forward to being able to actively worship the Lord together as a congregation, to remember all the good things that happen when we take an active role in our worship of the Lord.

*"The Lord is present in a very different way with those within the church who are in spiritual love and thence in faith. With these there are good spirits and angels not only in their external worship, but also at the same time in their internal; and therefore with them there exists a communication of heaven with themselves; for the Lord flows into them through heaven through their internals into their externals" (Arcana Coelestia 4311:2).*



## FROM THE REGIONAL PASTOR FOR CANADA

by Rev. James Cooper

Friends, we are getting closer to the pandemic finish line! Businesses are starting to open again, people are gathering on patios for a nice meal out, and there's a general sense that we're almost there. There will still be grieving, of course, for the people and things that have been lost. Grieving never really ends, it just becomes manageable over time – but it's beginning to look like it's time for the healing to begin.

In that spirit, I want to share some good news with all of you. First, I'd like to welcome the Rev. Justin Schorran to Canada. Justin is newly ordained and has been assigned to the Carmel Society in Kitchener. If you follow Carmel Church's live streaming services, you saw his first service on Sunday, July 11. And if you didn't catch it, it's still available on Carmel's YouTube library. Justin is just recently married to Denali Heinrichs, who has been hired as a teacher at the Carmel New Church School. Welcome to you both!



I'd also like to welcome the Rev. Jong-Ui Lee back to Canada as Assistant to the Pastor of the Olivet New Church. You may recall that Jong-Ui has been the pastor to the Gwangju congregation in South Korea for the past twelve and a half years. You may also recall that he lost his wife a few years back, which was part of the reason that the family returned to South Korea. Jong-Ui has four grown children, two living in South Korea, and two living in the United States. Jong-Ui and I worked together at Olivet for 3 years and I'm very much looking forward to working together again.

We had our Zoom New Church Day celebration in June and about 15 people attended from all over Canada. I'm grateful to Rev. Michael Cowley for providing the talk this year. Also, thanks to Michael for making it out to Alberta on his motorcycle to meet with members in the Dawson Creek and Grande Prairie congregations at Moonshine Lake Provincial Park. Michael reports the trip was both fun and rewarding because it was nice to be able to worship – and socialize a bit - in person.

As things appear to be opening by the end of summer, I have booked a flight and am planning a visit to Dawson Creek and Grande Prairie for Sunday, September 12. The travel industry is still a bit chaotic with planned flights being cancelled for lack of passengers. My flights have already been changed twice, but I built some extra time into the schedule so it should work out. I'll be contacting the people in Dawson Creek and Grande Prairie directly in due course to finalize the plans and talk about what should be done going forward.



I just got an email from the Roundhouse in Vancouver telling me that they are opening again and wondering if I want to schedule a room for meetings. I'll be in touch with our Vancouver members shortly to get counsel about how to proceed with the bookings. Also, I'll be asking about a possible visit in October. Watch your email!

In the meantime, I hope you are taking advantage of all the live-streaming services and the ever-growing library of recorded services that can be found on various congregations' Facebook or YouTube sites.

# A Farewell to the Cole Family

By Eileen Niall  
Delivered after Church on June 20, 2021



Good afternoon everyone!

Today we are here to say goodbye to a special family as they embark on a new chapter in their life. The Coles have been here in the Carmel New Church for 13 years. It was 13 short years ago when our new Assistant to the Pastor, Nathan, his wife, Vera, and son, Otto, then a small baby, arrived in our community of Caryndale. Since that time, we have seen their family grow as they welcomed their other children: Eleora, Jasher, Corin, Marek, Aiona, Heron, and Thorin (whom I just got to hold for the first time last week).

I had the opportunity to get to know the Cole family very well over the years since their arrival. Early on, I invited myself into their home, and that then developed into regular visits by me since then. I enjoyed getting to know the family and experiencing how their children participated in the household chores, including working as a team to clean the bathrooms and sort the laundry. I enjoyed watching the children emptying the clean clothes from the laundry basket onto the living room floor, and then each child gathering his or her own things to put away. I think this might have been a family tradition in Vera's family as I was once there when her brother initiated this practice and made it fun for the kids. The children are very supportive of each other as I often saw the older ones always eager and ready to help the younger ones if needed.

Sometimes there were disagreements that had to be settled; one way that restored calm and good spirits was to read one of the children's books to them all. The children would all crowd onto the couch and listen to the story. It was always a special time for them to be together and read a book. The children love books as well as art. I was adopted into the family as an aunt. Sometimes I would get notes from the children addressing me as "Aunt" and at other times as "Ant." I liked the latter; it always put a smile on my face.

Over time, I also developed a friendship with Vera. While having a cup of tea, Vera and I would have talks about raising children, as well as about religion. I truly enjoyed those opportunities and will deeply miss our conversations!

When I think of the Cole family in the future, I will think of fun, joy, laughter, and especially of love. I will miss you and wish you the very best in Kempton.

**"Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed  
for the Lord thy god is with thee whither-soever thou goest."**

Love to you all,

"Ant" Eileen



# WHAT IS NEW CHURCH EDUCATION?

by the Rt. Rev. Peter M. Buss, Jr.

Simply put, it is spiritual education guided by New Church principles. A next - level definition describes some of the key goals: *To open the eyes of children to spiritual reality, helping them to become loving, wise, and useful human beings, and they make progress on their journey toward heaven.* The fact is, Divine revelation has a tremendous amount to say about this subject. Here are eight ways of describing New Church education:

## 1. “Bringing the Lord to Children and Children to the Lord.”

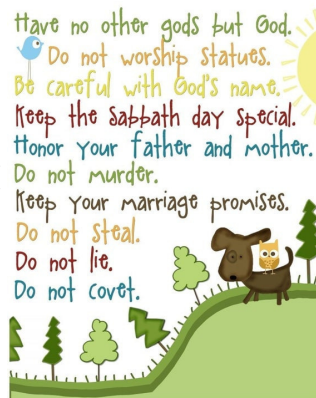


There is a famous episode from the Lord's life recorded in three of the Gospels, where parents brought children to Him "that He might touch them." The disciples, as you may recall, rebuked those parents, thinking, apparently, that the Lord was too important to be bothered with children. But the Lord said, "Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them, for of such is the kingdom of God" (Mark 10:13 - 14).

This quote, perhaps more than any others in the Word, has become a focal - point for the use of New Church education. It's about bringing children to the Lord. It's an intentional commitment on the part of parents that that the Lord influence their children's lives. So they take their children to church, or seek resources to teach them about the Lord. The church can respond by "bringing the Lord to children" in every children's talk, Sunday school lesson, video, or school classroom.

## 2. “An Extension of the Home.”

Another key quote from the Word that speaks to this use appears in the book of Deuteronomy. After calling the Israelites to pay attention to the Lord's commandments, particularly the first and great commandment to love the Lord their God, the instruction continues, "You shall teach them diligently to your children ..." (Deuteronomy 6:6 - 7). So much of the imagery of that text focuses on the home and what happens in it. Many a parent has correctly heard the call to teach their children the contents of the Word — the stories as well as the do's and don'ts from the Lord's perspective. As children get older, it might look like conversations focused on the spiritual principles that lead to wise decisions. Again, parents will often turn to their church for assistance, so that their children can launch into life with a strong sense of what the Lord teaches.



## 3. “Success in This World and the Next.”

Success is a word that has many connotations, some of which lend themselves to getting ahead in this world and making lots of money. It can also capture a much more noble pursuit. Nowhere is that better evident than in the commission of Joshua. He was to meditate in the Book of the Law and do according to all that is written in it. "For then," the Lord said, "you will make your way prosperous, and then you

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will have good success.” (Joshua 1:8).

The phrase “good success” brings into the equation the Lord’s definition of achievement. It means being a good person or successfully living according to the teachings of the Word. It includes successfully raising a family, or serving in a job that intentionally makes the world a better place, or developing skills of truly wise friendship. It is for these reasons that some people have used the phrase, “success in this world and the next” to capture the spirit of religious education in a New Church context.

#### 4. “Opening the Eyes to Spiritual Reality.”



In the Psalms we read, “The eyes of all look expectantly to You...” (Psalm 145:15). In the Gospel of Luke we learn of two disciples on a journey to the town of Emmaus shortly after the sad story of the crucifixion. The Lord joined them, but they did not know Him until He dined with them and broke bread. Then it says, “Their eyes were opened, and they knew Him” (Luke 24:31). So it is with the spiritual dimension of raising children. The goal is to open their spiritual eyes so that they may come to know the Lord and see the things He wants to show them.

This begs the question, “What would you most want your children to see as they grow?” Wouldn’t we want them to see people worshiping on a regular basis, praying, or opening copies of the Word and learning from them? And wouldn’t we want them to see examples of honesty or kindness or usefulness?

#### 5. “Helping People Become Loving, Wise, and Useful Human Beings.”

There is a phrase that captures the goal of some of our New Church schools, namely to “feed the mind, touch the heart, and prepare for life.” This three - part purpose was chosen because it describes who we are as human beings (see True Christianity 744). We have minds that can think and learn, we have hearts that can care and love, and we have bodies that are incredibly capable of useful action. And a growing desire to become a loving, wise, and useful person is what makes us “truly human” ( Conjugial Love 269).



The beauty of this way of thinking of education is that it accords with the coaching and guidance that most parents and teachers do on a daily basis. “Was that kind?” “What a thoughtful thing to do.” “What would be a wiser way of handling the situation?” “Can you help me?” “Hey you’re really good at...” And so on.

6. “Developing Spiritual Habits.” We know that we learn through repeated trial and error, or through practice ( see Arcana Caelestia 1050). It is not unreasonable, then, to see the whole process of development as a series of habit - forming activities. The amazing thing, though, is it’s not just about developing certain skills. It actually gets to the heart of character formation, and in spiritual terms, the development of a heavenly disposition. A teaching along these lines reminds us that what becomes habitual and ingrained in our character “flows spontaneously into action” (see Arcana Caelestia 3843) .

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So we might ask, “What do we most want to become habitual with children as they grow?” or “What do we want to flow spontaneously into action?” The list includes such things as apologizing and taking responsibility for their actions, considering the usefulness of what they are about to do before they do it, responding with kindness, speaking truthfully, treating others with respect, being generous with their time and energy, persevering, and many other things.

## 7. “The Formation of Conscience.”



A seventh way of viewing this use of spiritual education focuses on the internal motivation of each child. We know that parents, teachers and others provide useful boundaries for children as they grow. “No, you are not allowed to walk home after dark by yourself.” “You need to say sorry for what you just said.” “It would be really great if you took better care of your things.” But isn’t the goal to not have to say these kinds of things as often? We rejoice when children choose to do the right things without being asked or corrected.

The word that the Word uses for this process is conscience. Conscience is that “still small voice” in our minds where the Lord speaks to us, letting us know what is good and what is bad (see 1 Kings 19:12). It is formed “from things revealed in the Word” (Arcana Caelestia 371). We know that conscience is strengthened by the use of it, and weakened by the ignoring of it. We learn that people who act in accordance with conscience experience “the quiet of peace and internal blessedness,” whereas those who act against conscience “experience disturbance and pain” (Heavenly Doctrine 133). A wise parent or teacher might say to a child, “If you feel bad about it, it’s probably a good thing,” or “The best way to avoid a guilty conscience is to be honest,” or “Notice how good it feels to do something that really helps someone else.”

## 8. “Fostering Innocence.”

A final way we could define this use is as an effort to foster innocence. Once the Lord was asked, “Who is greatest in the kingdom of heaven?” In answer, He set a young child in the midst of them and said, “Assuredly, I say to you, unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 18: 1, 3). It isn’t hard to see the Lord urging those people toward internal purity, the kind of purity we see in little children. We know that children generally have an openness to learning and being taught.

Of course they can be stubborn and self-centered, but more often than not they know they’re not the ones in charge, and submit to the authority of the adults in their lives. This willingness to follow those in charge, or openness to guidance, is captured in a far-reaching definition of innocence given in the teachings of the New Church, namely “a willingness to be led by the Lord and not by ourselves” (Heaven and Hell 280). The goal in terms of education then, whether in the home or in a church or school setting, is to support that openness and willingness to be led — to guide young people to that “nothing to hide” state more often in their lives, and to bring the Lord into the equation as often as possible.





## SEEKING STUDENTS WITH INQUIRING MINDS

The Washington New Church School is pleased to announce our young and growing new high school – **The White Horse Academy**. Our vision is to serve students near and far who would like to have an individualized, New Church, high school education. We are harnessing the power of the internet to connect our students with both live and recorded classes and, as important, with each other.

When accepted to the program, students and parents meet with their education coach to formulate their individualized plan of study which will include the necessary courses to earn a high school diploma, as well as a plan for experiential learning and the development of a portfolio showcasing the student's skills, knowledge and service to community.

If you are or have a rising high schooler please contact us. We would love to share more details about our program with you.

We are excited to build a network around our vision of individualized, New Church education for our students. If you are someone who loves creative education and raising children in the New Church we would be thrilled to be in touch with you, even if your high school years are long behind you. If you have a talent that you love sharing with others and are familiar with tools such as Zoom or Office 365, or are willing to learn new skills, contact us. We want to make you part of our team. Call or email us. We look forward to hearing from you.

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## Bryn Athyn College of the New Church NEW 3-COURSE GRADUATE CERTIFICATES IN RELIGIOUS STUDIES

*Our graduate programs in Religious Studies are ideally suited for those preparing for further graduate study in religion or theology, those looking for professional development in the work of ministry, teaching, ethics, and leadership, those with background in Swedenborgian theology looking to deepen their knowledge, or those seeking personal spiritual enrichment.*

**Bryn Athyn College is pleased to announce  
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These certificate programs are ideal for people interested in focused graduate study of the teachings for the New Church but who are not prepared to commit to a full Master of Arts in Religious Studies program. Programs can be taken remotely or in person.

For more information, please see our website: <https://brynathyn.edu/mars>  
contact program director **Thane Glenn**: [thane.glenn@brynathyn.edu](mailto:thane.glenn@brynathyn.edu)  
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**General Church in Canada Worship Services**

**Carmel New Church**  
Kitchener, ON



11:00am  
In Person  
(Phone  
Ahead)  
and  
Online

**Dawson Creek New Church**  
Dawson Creek, BC



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**Olivet New Church**  
Etobicoke, ON

10:30am Online Only until further notice



**Editorial Deadline for the September / October 2021 Issue:**  
September 15, 2021

*We always welcome your comments, letters and articles!*

Please send submissions to Sandy Kuhl, Editor NCC  
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Phone: 519-696-2070 Email: [sandy.c.kuhl@gmail.com](mailto:sandy.c.kuhl@gmail.com)





