



New Church Canadian

A Bi-Monthly Newsletter of General Church in Canada

Issue 202

A NEW COMMANDMENT: REFLECTIONS FOR A NEW YEAR

By Rev. Michael Cowley

Jesus told His disciples He wanted them to love each other. He calls it a new commandment. When we think about the "newness" of this commandment, we might remember the Old Testament commandment to "love your neighbour as yourself." (Lev 19:18) Jesus quoted this passage several times in the New Testament, making reference to this ancient saying when He was asked what was the greatest commandment. "The Two Great Commandments" follow each other. The **"Great Commandment"**: ***"Love the Lord with all your heart, soul, strength and mind" does not stand alone, but also includes the follow up: "love your neighbor as yourself"*** (Matthew 22:35-40, Mark 12:28-31, Luke 10:25-28) ***"Upon these two hang (depend) all the Law and the Prophets."***

In other words, everything of the Word depends on these two.

What is "new" about the "new commandment"? It is the added idea to love others the same way the Lord loves us: "As I have loved you" He said. This is a major change. The Lord makes HIS way of loving us the standard for how we should love others. WWJD? What Would Jesus Do? He tells us to love THAT way, the way He does! This new commandment could not have been given until after the Lord had lived and loved.

As the Divinely Human God, Jesus stands forth as the best example of LOVE. This commandment and His timing in presenting it, came at a very



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emotionally charged moment. Just after He had eaten the Last Supper, He reminded the Apostles to have this meal in remembrance of Him, He then changed clothing, and returned dressed as a servant to wash all their feet. He again told them He had set an example which they were to follow. And then after all this He said "A new commandment I give unto you, that you love each other as I have loved you." He loves us by feeding us, sharing His time with us, especially at meals, and also by cleaning us, helping us improve ourselves and forgiving us for our evils. From there, in the Gospel story, He then sacrifices Himself for our salvation.

None of us can perfectly fulfill this Divine example which the Lord enacted. And the Lord knows this. Yet, we are commanded to try, with His help, to live

this way. To love each other with the love He places in us is His gift to us. To live the truly Christian life is to accept that, on our own, we cannot achieve this kind of love, but to know that with the Lord "all things are possible."



A NEW CHURCH TRANSLATION OF THE SACRED SCRIPTURE



Each word in the Sacred Scripture is like a precious stone given to us by the Lord, each phrase and verse is like a jewel. The words are beautifully arranged to reflect and transmit the light of heaven from within. The more a translation reflects this arrangement and beauty, the more the glory of the Lord can be seen. There are aspects of the Letter of the Word that cannot truly be brought into what is called Standard English, but a translation faithful to the original text in the light of the Heavenly Doctrine can convey to the English reader what the Lord has revealed to man.

It is with this hope that the editors of the Kempton Project offer again a translation of the Sacred Scripture to the New Church. This translation is even more thoroughly and carefully revised, keeping in mind the fullness, holiness and power, by which the Word serves the eternal purpose of conjoining heaven and earth, together with the Lord.

This new edition of the New Church translation of the Word, which has been out of print for about eight years, arrived from the printer in mid-November.

It comes in a more comfortable size than the edition that was offered in 2011. This new edition is 1½" thick and 7" x 9", which allows us to keep the large 13 point type that so many have appreciated.

The book is a red cloth hardcover volume, and we also expect to make available a limited quantity of leather-covered volumes. Please check our website for pricing and other information.

<https://kemptonproject.org/TheWord>

You can also order by e-mail, by phone, or by mail.

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Mail: Kempton Project, 1050 Mountain Road,
Kempton, PA 19529.

CAD price is expected to be \$46 plus Tax and Shipping.

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JUMPING TO CONCLUSIONS

By Rev. James P. Cooper

One of the challenges we face today is sorting out the truth from all the information that bombards us from the media. This is especially true today when we are required to spend much more time away from other people, but in the presence of our personal computers as we work from home and try to connect with friends and family by Zoom. The information comes at us like water out of a firehose, but without the cues we get from tone of voice, or body language. It makes it really hard to catch the nuances – the feelings – that would help us make sense of it all.



I like to make outlines to help me organize my thoughts. Outlines are like mental buckets where you can store similar ideas under a general heading. Then you can move the buckets around until the order makes sense, and finally get the various ideas out and look at them in context. That works really well when I'm trying to write a sermon and I need to gather teachings from all over the Word, personal experiences and other sources, and then present them in a way that makes sense. This article started life as an outline! But this is not a tool that works in every situation, so we need to be conscious of when it's appropriate, and when it's not. For example, it's a bad idea to put people in a bucket, to put a label on a group and then assume that everyone in that group will think, believe, and act exactly the same way. I'm sure you can all provide examples of this from your own experience. Fill in the blank: "Oh, you're from Canada. You must _____." It's not just about Canadians. I've been asked some very funny questions

about what "all Americans" do as I've visited other countries.

It's not just people. The Writings themselves give labels to religious and national groups and then speak about their doctrines or spiritual qualities as a group because it's a useful way to present a rational teaching, comparing one thing to another to draw a lesson out of it. It's just essential that we remember that when the Writings speak of the "Reformed Church" it's talking about the formal, written down doctrine, but it's NOT talking about what your neighbour down the street who attends a "Reformed" church actually hears when he or she goes to church, or how they live their life. It just doesn't work to put everyone into a big bucket and then think we know their individual hearts and minds. I'll just mention in passing that this obviously applies to political labels as well.

There's a story from the Old Testament that illustrates this very well. It's from the second book of Samuel and takes place in a time of terrible political strife in Israel. Saul had been selected as the first king of Israel. When both Saul and his son Jonathan died fighting the Philistines, leaving no obvious heir to the throne, the people split into two factions. The people in the north wanted to follow Saul's son Ishbosheth, while the people in the south favoured David. This led to a civil war.

Abner had been the commander of the army under Saul, and he remained loyal to Saul's family by becoming commander in chief under Ishbosheth. On David's side Joab was commander in chief. His two brothers, Abishai and Asahel were also in the army.

The two armies were facing each other by the pool of Gibeon. As sometimes happens the two commanders met, perhaps in an attempt to resolve the issue without excessive bloodshed, and agreed that each side would pick their own 12 best men, and let them "play," winner take all. The Word tells us that, "And each one grasped his opponent by the head and thrust

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his sword in his opponent's side; so they fell down together" (2SA 2:16). There was no winner, so the armies fell upon each other in a general battle.

David's army was stronger, so Abner ordered a retreat. As he ran, he found himself being pursued by Joab's youngest brother, a young man hungry for the fame that would come if he could kill Abner, a famous warrior. Abner could see that the youth was no match for his size and skill, so he tried to reason with him and suggested that he turn aside and earn honour by defeating someone of his own experience and skill. But Asahel did not listen but ran hard after him. Abner turned to face this threat, but in an act of kindness turned his spear around with the intention to just push him away with the blunt end. Asahel, "as fleet of foot as a wild gazelle" (2SA 2:10), hit the butt end of the spear so hard that it went through him anyway, killing him. As the battle raged around them, Abner left his spear in Asahel and continued his retreat.

Soon after, David's soldiers came upon Asahel's body, and all who saw it were shocked and enraged. Why would this body, one of hundreds on the battlefield, cause this reaction? Because the point of the spear was in front, which made it appear that he had been attacked from behind! Even in warfare there are rules, and the evidence seemed to say that this was not a fair fight. Asahel had been stabbed in the back, murdered. When Joab found his brother's body, he recognized the spear as Abner's and vowed

revenge. Not too many verses later we read that Joab greets Abner as if in friendship and then murders him to take revenge for this "crime."

The unfairness of it all is so apparent in a story like this. Abner was trying to be kind, to save the boy's life and we, the readers, know this. We know his intention was for good. But we can also understand that the physical evidence of Abner's personal spear facing the wrong way in the body could lead people to think otherwise.

How differently things might have turned out if Abner had been allowed to tell his side of the story. I think the lesson for us is to make sure we gather all the facts and speak honestly with one another before we jump to judgment. And just because someone carries a convenient label because of a group there are associated with, doesn't mean that you know what they think, or what they intend. The only way to find that out is to initiate a discussion and then listen carefully to what they have to say and then see if their words match their actions.

"FOR man Looketh on the outward
appearance, but the LORD
looketh upon the heart."



Samuel 16:7

AND THE PEOPLE STAYED HOME

from A Children's Book by Kitty O'Meara



"And the people stayed home. And read books, and listened, and rested, and exercised, and made art, and played games, and learned new ways of being, and were still. And listened more deeply. Some meditated, some prayed, some danced. Some met their shadows. And the people began to think differently. And the people healed. And, in the absence of people living in ignorant, dangerous, mindless, and heartless ways, the earth began to heal. And when the danger passed, and the people joined together again, they grieved their losses, and made new choices, and dreamed new images, and created new ways to live and heal the earth fully, as they had been healed."

LIVE WITH LESS ANXIETY AND MORE JOY

by Rev. David Roth



Worry

During stressful times, when unpaid taxes still lie on the table, the children argue upstairs, and images of war flash across the news, hope and patience seem hard to come by. Worry seems inevitable. But how much can we really gain from our furrowed brow? Consider this quote: “Worry is like a good rocking chair. It gives you something to do, but it doesn’t get you anywhere.” Another way to think of the futility of worry is to imagine someone carrying around a suitcase of old junk that he doesn’t use. If he complained to you about his aching back, wouldn’t you suggest he drop the suitcase?

But we tend to do the same thing, feeling troubled, tired, and pulled off-balance. We hang on to our burden because (we think) something bad might happen if we let it go. But the answer is so easy. If we simply let go—if we trust in the Lord—we suddenly feel lighter.

We hear this same message from the Lord’s own mouth when He says to His disciples, “Do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat, nor about your body, what you will put on. For life is more than food, and the body more than clothing. Consider the ravens: they neither sow nor reap, they have neither storehouse nor barn, and yet God feeds them.... Consider the lilies, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these” (Luke 12:22–24).

If we try to take the Lord’s command seriously, and avoid the habit of worrying, we can make a distinct difference in our inner nature. In the Heavenly Doctrines given through Emanuel Swedenborg, the book *Secrets of Heaven* 8474 describes the type of people who worry about the future: “They are not content with their lot, do not trust in God but in themselves, and have solely worldly and earthly things in view, not heavenly ones. These people are ruled completely by anxiety for the future....”

The passage goes on to describe, on the other hand, the kind of people who trust in the Lord: “Those who trust in the Divine are altogether different...in that they are not anxious, let alone worried, when they give thought to the morrow... They know that for those who trust in the Divine all things are moving toward an everlasting state of happiness....”

Impatience

Whenever worry enters our minds, another emotion tends to tag along with it: impatience. Often we grow impatient by worrying that life won’t turn out the way we think it should. We may unconsciously say to ourselves, “The Lord can’t handle it, so I’m going to worry for Him.”

Consider the following Biblical story, where King Saul becomes impatient with the Lord’s command, and relies on his own judgment instead. The setting is this: the Philistines have accumulated a huge army, and Saul is waiting for Samuel to offer sacrifices so he can go into battle with the Lord as his ally. “[Saul] waited seven days, the time appointed by Samuel. But Samuel did not come to Gilgal, and the people were scattering from him. So Saul said, ‘Bring the burnt offering here to me, and the peace offerings.’” As soon as he had finished offering the burnt offering, behold, Samuel came” (I Samuel 13:8–11). When Samuel shows up, he’s not happy with Saul. He says, “You have done foolishly. You have not kept the command of the Lord your God, with which he commanded you. . . .now your kingdom shall not continue” (I Samuel 13:8–11, 13–14).

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Just as Saul—when facing his enemies—worries about the risk of patiently following the Lord's orders, we tend to feel the same way when we're under pressure. We worry that if we follow the Lord's way, it won't turn out the way we want it to. Because of this impatience, worry, and lack of trust, Saul lost his kingdom.



We also may lose out when we become impatient. Specifically, we lose:

Enjoyment of the situation. We think about being somewhere else or being with someone else, so we lose the delight of that moment. Infidelity thrives on this notion. Consider this quote: “A happy marriage is not about finding the right person. It’s about being the right person in the relationship.”

Forward spiritual progress. If we aren't thinking about the present, we're either worrying about the past or the future. We get concerned with time, and this skews our perception. We think physical, lower thoughts, and we forget higher matters. Worry can't change our past or future, but it can ruin the present. When we dwell on the past or future, we lack motivation to make progress now.

Trust in the Lord. We begin to think the Lord isn't managing the universe very well. Just as Saul lost the kingdom because he trusted his own agenda, when we trust in our own ideas, we make poor decisions. Scholar Christopher Syn wrote, “Anxiety springs from the desire that things should happen as we wish rather than as God wills.” This causes us to lose the kingdom—the happiness—the Lord wants us all to have.

So how can we achieve real patience, and gain back these things we've lost? First, we can make an effort to find contentment with what we have, and focus on

being that person who is kind and loving rather than looking for that person elsewhere. Second, we can strive to make the best of our present situation, looking for opportunities to use our talents and reach out to others. And, finally, we can trust the Lord to bring good out of every situation, believing that what He says in His Word is true.

In his work, *Secrets of Heaven* (3827), Swedenborg explains how we can rise above impatience to an angelic state of love and acceptance, where time no longer matters: “When you are in a state of love...you are in an angelic state, that is to say, as if not in time.... For impatience is a bodily affection, and insofar as you are in it, so far you are in time.... By the affection of genuine love, we are withdrawn from bodily and worldly things, for our mind is elevated toward heaven and thus is withdrawn from things of time.”

In other words, if we focus on the fact that we're not enjoying something, it becomes tedious. A student squirming in a class believes there's somewhere else he needs to be. As soon as that bell rings, his whole world seems to change. But has it? We live in the world of our mind, our heart, our thoughts. A bell doesn't change that world, but what we attach to that bell—our attitude—can change. Patience comes from being withdrawn from worldly things. When we learn to love and accept the situation we're in, we find the power to change—not the situation—but our perspective. Because when we love something, we're not paying attention to time.

Life is often compared to a journey. We can shuffle our feet and mope about the path we're taking, but anxiety and impatience don't change our speed or route. Instead, we can enjoy the scenery, confident that the direction of the stream of Divine Providence will steer us toward a more beautiful vista. So don't waste today worrying. Cast your burden on the Lord. Take a glance at the flowers, or listen to the birds, and remember that the Lord is taking perfect care of each one of us, in every single moment.



FROM THE REGIONAL PASTOR FOR CANADA by Rev. James Cooper

I will confess that I thought that the pandemic would be done by now and we would be able to resume travel to the various groups in Canada by the new year. I was really wrong about that. As I write this Ontario is going into the strictest phase of lock down yet. If it's any consolation to those of you who normally enjoy visits from travelling ministers, you are now getting the same level of service as our congregations with resident pastors – live streaming. I haven't been able to attend a live church service since I led services in Dawson Creek and Grande Prairie last March and I live just a few kilometres from Olivet Church.

I must also commend our pastors throughout the church who have quickly responded to this crisis by learning the new skills required to give an effective sermon on video or lead a doctrinal class or meeting on Zoom. The quality of the videos that are being produced by a number of church centres is frankly amazing considering that none of us received any formal training in how to do this. And we should not forget that it wouldn't be possible if some talented lay members had not stepped up and figured out how to live stream to Facebook and YouTube and then make it happen every week. How will all this change the way we do church in the future? Stay tuned as we all work together to figure it out.



As many of you already know, Rev. Eric Carswell has retired as the Pastor of the Bryn Athyn Congregation, and Rev. Derek Elphick, currently serving the Oak Arbor congregation in Michigan, has been selected as his successor. This means that Oak Arbor is now looking for a new pastor as are several other places in the church. This means that pastors will be moving and taking up new positions this summer.



Bishop Buss will be working with his Advisory Council to try to sort all this out in an orderly and mutually satisfactory way.

It may be useful to remember that there are four freedoms involved in every one of these moves, and we do our best to take all of them into account. They are:

- 1) the freedom of the Bishop to consider what is best for the church as a whole
- 2) the freedom of a society to have a say in who their pastor will be
- 3) the freedom of the pastor to go someplace where he feels both called and suited to the job
- 4) the freedom of the pastor's family to have their needs met.

It's a delicate and complicated process. Bishop Brad Heinrichs and I are both on the Advisory Council and will be doing our best to take care of Canada's interests.

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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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Excerpts from **My Luminous Universe** by Helen Keller

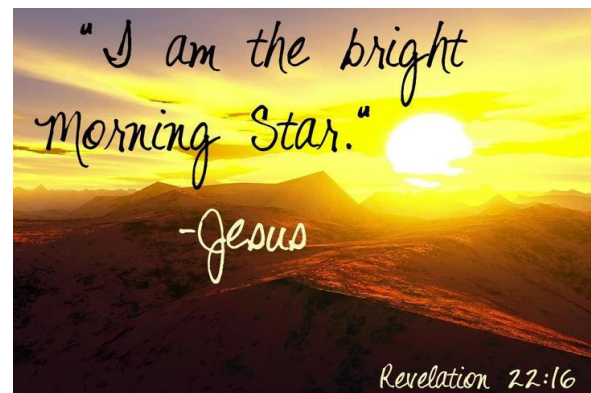
"I have caught rays of light from different thinkers- Socrates, Plato, Baco, Kant, and Emanuel Swedenborg, the Swedish seer. With Socrates I believe in thinking out the meaning of words before committing them to speech. Plato's theory of the Absolute strengthens me because it gives truth to what I know is true, beauty to the beautiful, music to what I cannot hear, and light to what I cannot see. Swedenborg has shaken down the barriers of time and space in my life and supplied me with likenesses or correspondences between the world within and the world without, which give me courage and imagination beyond my three senses.

Thus I move from one philosophy to another, constructing out of a fragmentary outward environment a luminous, resonant universe. ...

My confidence in the final triumph of idealism over materialism does not spring from closing my mental eyes to the suffering or the evil-doing of humankind, but rather from a steadfast belief that good will

climbs upward in human nature while the meanness and hatred drop into their native nothingness, and life goes on with unabated vigor to its new earth and heaven.

There are two ways to look at destiny, one from below and the other from above. In one view we are being pushed by irresistible forces, obsessed by the fear that war, ignorance, poverty, and barbarism will never be abolished. But looking up to the clock of Truth, I see that humankind has been civilized only a few minutes, and I rest in the assurance that out of the problems and tensions which disturb thinking minds and warm hearts there shall break the morning star of universal peace." *From Guideposts Magazine 1956*





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General Church in Canada Worship Services

Carmel New Church
Kitchener, ON



11:00am
Online
Only
Until
further
notice

Dawson Creek New Church
Dawson Creek, BC



See
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Pastor's
Notes
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Olivet New Church
Etobicoke, ON

10:30am Online Only until further notice



Editorial Deadline for the March / April 2021 Issue:
March 7, 2021

We always welcome your comments, letters and articles!

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