



The New Church Newsletter

Hurstville Society October 2024

Reversing the Order of Life

By Rev HyunJin Yang

Odyssey Incident

It was around 8:00 am on a bright, sunny day just a few days after my arrival in Sydney. I found myself sitting in the Odyssey, the car owned by the church. This time, I was not sitting in the passenger seat, but in the driver's seat and I was about to hit the road for the first time ever here in Australia! Yet I found something quite weird and even uncomfortable: the fact that I was sitting on the right-side seat. And it was not because something was wrong or right - I was in fact sitting on the "right" side!

- but only because all my driving experience in South Korea and America was left-hand drive in the left seat on the right-side of road.

I would imagine this part of the story is not a surprise for the readers. But what happened so soon after leaving the house, within the first 10 minutes of my drive, came at me as a big, and very unpleasant, surprise: I bashed the left-side mirror of the car into another car's right-side mirror. Luckily, there wasn't any damage on the other car. I did check it! However, the Odyssey mirror has a missing piece of plastic that broke off that will keep reminding me of how unprepared I was.

Reversing the Order of Life

The incident, being a wake-up call, prompted me to work on right hand driving on the left-side of the road. I did work hard for a while. I found that so much of my attention was being directed at reorienting myself in a reversed way that a teaching for the New Church found me in a refreshing way: the order of life to be reversed. There is a certain parallelism between the teaching and my driving experience. The teaching basically tells us that from birth we all are born into an inverted order of life, that that order is to be reversed, and that reordering of it into a correct order of life is our regeneration. Here are a couple of passages that teach it:

Thus, the state of a person's life is inverted from his birth, and must be entirely inverted again in order that he may be saved. The end of regeneration is, that the internal or spiritual man may rule, and the external or natural man serve. This is actually effected after a person is regenerated. For after regeneration the love of self and the world no longer reigns, but love to the Lord and towards the neighbor, thus the Lord and not a person. Hence it is plain that a person

cannot be saved unless he is regenerated. (The New Jerusalem and Its Heavenly Doctrine 183 - Edited)

The following passage emphasizes that this reordering of our life is our external man (or our external self) becoming subservient to the internal man (our internal self), and that the correct order of life is where the master of one's life is the internal man or the internal self.

Each person has an internal and an external man. The internal man is what is called the spiritual man, the external the natural man. Both of these have to be regenerated for a person to be regenerated. In the case of someone who is not regenerated, the external or natural man is the master, and the internal is the servant. But in the case of someone who is regenerated, the internal or spiritual man is the master, and the external is the servant. This shows clearly that from birth one has the correct order of life turned upside down; thus what ought to be master is servant, and what ought to be servant is master. For a person to be saved that order has to be reversed and the only way this reversal can happen is by being regenerated by the Lord. (The New Jerusalem and Its Heavenly Doctrine 179 - Edited)

This Is a Big Task.

Going back to my jarring adventure with driving, I noticed that reversing the order of my external life was manifesting in more than just my driving skills, but many other minor changes that were requiring that I do things reversed. Simple things such as finding door handles, refrigerator handles on the opposite side and checking right side of roads for cars before crossing... all of these things took effort. This set of changes needed practice and concentration.

And the whole experience was sobering, not only as an alarming incident, but also as a lesson for how big our task of regeneration can be. It led me to better grasp the depth and the weight that our regeneration can carry in the reordering of the reversed order of life, where we move from our external life ruling us towards the Lord ruling us from within.

To illustrate a bit, it begins from our learning that despite the fact that we feel just so right with the way things are, it is actually the opposite way from the “correct” way. It begins with this sobering realization that our current way needs changing. It becomes real, conscious work, as we move away from our old way of loving the material world to the right way to walk and live, the Lord’s way. It becomes our daily practice as we learn to put the Lord and the neighbor first. In time it becomes an acquired skill, ability and hopefully an unconscious habit as we develop our life affections around living for others and finding joy in that lifestyle.

Tenuous Connections Give Me Hope for the Future by Rev Todd Beiswenger

A couple months ago the lead article was titled, “Has Physics Been on the Wrong Track for 100 Years?!” Basically I had heard an interview with Terrance Howard who was making the claim that physics was making a mistake by stating there was a vacuum in space. Howard instead said that there is an ether that fills up what appears to be empty space, and my article was pointing out that the Writings definitely agree.

However, that wasn’t the only area in which Terrance Howard and Swedenborg would agree. It was just that the previous article was already getting long, so I felt I had to leave the other stuff out and maybe come back to it at a later time. So now is the time, but I should mention that the connections I’m making here are a bit more tenuous than the

ether. That was a clear cut area of agreement, whereas this, well, it takes a bit more squinting to see it. But let's get to it!

Let's start with the "the breathing universe." Howard says we have been misled by Newton, who said everything moves in a straight line unless affected by something else. We get this picture when people talk about the big bang theory: there's a "bang" and then everything starts flying out from the central point. But what Howard is wanting us to see is that's not how things work. He says it is incorrect to think that there's this never-ending expansion, because it would be like we are constantly breathing out. Therefore we have to account for the inhale, or the contractive forces, as well. In Howard's theory, there are two opposing forces: electricity and magnetism, and they are what creates these cycles of expansion and contraction.

I don't really want to get into all the details of how he thinks this works, but I do think that he's on to something. In the New Church we also believe in two forces of expansion and contraction that operate on a smaller scale: the heart and lungs.

It is with charity and faith in man precisely as it is with the motion of the heart called systole (contraction) and diastole (dilation), and the motion of the lungs called respiration. There is, moreover, a complete correspondence of these organs with the will and the understanding of man, and thus with charity and faith. (DFaith 19)

The Writings go to great length to make the connection between our ability to think and our ability to breathe, but in the following passage we get even more:

...the affections of a man's love and his consequent thoughts are changes and variations of the state and form of the organic substances of his mind... Some idea of these may be obtained from

the heart and lungs, where there are alternate expansions and compressions... such are the changes and variations of the state of the heart and lungs... There are also similar changes and variations in the organic forms of the mind, which are the subjects of man's affections and thoughts. (Divine Providence 319)

What I take from that is that our mind basically “breathes,” and we can see it when we notice the changes in our thoughts. This is where I start making what some might call a “tenuous connection.” If breathing is essential to our thinking, does it make sense that the universe would also breathe as Howard claims? When we examine the teachings of the Grand Man, we see that it’s a repeating pattern: individuals are an image of the Lord, but so is a country, a planet, and one would imagine a galaxy, so perhaps the universe as well. While I couldn’t find a passage that states that the universe “breathes,” it feels like it makes sense that there would be two forces of expansion and contraction considering how fundamental the heart and lungs, i.e., charity and faith are.

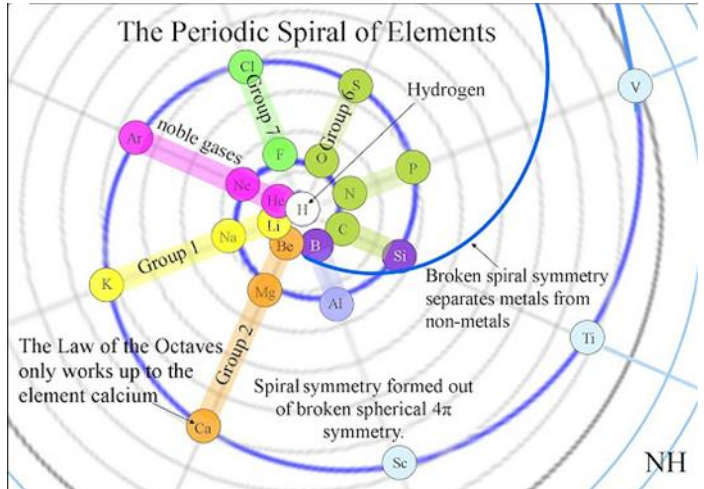
But the passage goes on and is a good segway to look at another tenuous connection:

...these changes and variations are vortex-like inward and outward gyrations, after the manner of perpetually circling spirals wonderfully combined into forms receptive of life... In the good those spiral forms are moved forward but in the wicked backward, and those that are moved forward are turned towards the Lord and receive influx from Him; while those that are moved backward are turned towards hell and receive influx from hell. (ibid)

I’m focusing on the “vortex-like” gyrations, those “circling spirals” that are part of the structure of our mind. If you know anything about chakras, the preceding passage will sound very familiar. The connection

back to Terrance Howard though is that he claims that vortices are part of the structure of the universe, and they are created by an interaction of magnetic fields and electrical charges, that is, those forces of expansion and contraction, aka the breathing of the universe.

Howard goes on to say that in order to understand the universe, we have to think in terms of curves instead of straight lines. One example he gives is the periodic table of elements. We've probably all seen it: all of the known elements listed in



rows. But Howard says we really should have the periodic table in a spiral. It's probably hard to grasp in this small image, but what I'm hoping you can see is that with this arrangement the elements are grouped differently, and therefore we can better see how they're related.

Overall, I can admit that these connections I'm making are tenuous, but at the same time I feel that there's something very real here because the teachings we have about the Grand Man leave me believing that the universe is a fractal in nature, i.e. the same patterns repeat over and over. If we, a heaven in miniature, breathe, then so must heaven... and everything in between. So while I'm not convinced Terrance Howard has all of the details sorted out, I do think he's at least pointing us in the right direction to think about how it is that the universe breathes, and the

resulting creation of spirals and vortices that are some basic structures of life.

What I love about this stuff is that while it isn't particularly practical to my life right now, it feels like it is a step in the right direction towards a world where science and spirituality are not adversaries, but partners. I think that world will come eventually, and it will be a result of people like Terrance Howard who push us to rethink everything that we think we know. When that day comes, it won't surprise me at all if we look back and finally understand what the ancient Egyptians, Hindus, Mayans, and other cultures knew, as well getting a greater appreciation for everything Swedenborg told us hundreds of years in advance.

HyunJin's Ordination

It's been 10 years since we had one of these ordination services. Essentially, in the General Church we have three degrees of the priesthood. This is based on the doctrinal idea that there is a trinity in everything that is "complete." We see this throughout the Scriptures, so when the General Church was set up, it seemed to make sense to have three degrees of the priesthood.

After a person has gone through theological school, they are ordained into the first degree, also known as the "teaching" degree. Typically ministers remain in this degree for a



couple years while they apprentice in a congregation, but are then elevated to the second degree, aka the “pastoral” degree when they are ready to lead a congregation.

For this particular service, David, HyunJin and myself discussed how we wanted to run it... as in, who should preach? Since HyunJin’s parents were in town for the ordination, and they had never seen him preach before, we thought it would be good for HyunJin to preach. In the end, we deemed it appropriate if I opened the service to symbolize the transferring of the job from myself to HyunJin, but that then HyunJin could take it from there. Then at the end David would perform the ordination ceremony.

And so, that’s what we did. Personally I received a fair bit of positive feedback on the service, as people liked seeing the three different stoles (white, blue and red) on chancel, and experiencing the three different personalities in the same service. It isn’t often that you have three ministers speaking in the same service!



Rt Rev David Lindrooth dispensing his wisdom at lunch after the ordination

Afterwards we had a catered lunch to celebrate. Many thanks to Lori, Jenn, HuiLing, Kristen and YoungHee for coordinating the lunch, setting up everything and cleaning up! From my perspective I really appreciated the large turnout for the event. It certainly helped that Roseville cancelled their service in order to participate here, but thanks to everybody who make the effort to show up and support HyunJin as he takes the next step in his journey.

The Episcopal Visit

We've had the great pleasure of having David and Aven Lindrooth visiting Australia for 12 days. They've certainly stayed busy!

There was a four day trip to Perth, a day in Roseville, and regular visits/meetings with myself, Howard and HyunJin. Not to mention Dave was still plugged in to his other tasks and responsibilities, so yes, he was busy.



Literally a full house in Perth! Church service held at the home of Mary Smuts.

Personally I find these visits really useful. Not only do they bring some extra energy and life to the normal week, but it is a chance to talk about things that are my mind regarding the church. This visit was a bit different because of my impending departure, and so this was a good opportunity to discuss some things regarding my future.

As much as we like Dave, we also find that it's great to have Aven here as well. Jenn and YoungHee in particular enjoy talking about life as a Pastor's wife. Hopefully you were able to spend some time with them during their time here.

The Retreat is On!

We've had some difficulty with retreats and camps the last few years, but the 2025 Retreat at Stanwell Tops is ON! Thank you to everybody who has signed up, and now that we have the minimum numbers we can encourage anybody who is still undecided to go ahead and join in! You won't be the only person there! The last I saw we had 42 signed up, but we would love to see the number closer to 50 than 40. After all, "40" represents temptations! "50" on the other hand represents "what is full." We'd rather this camp be "full" than in a state of temptations!

Just a reminder, it will be from January 2-6, and contact nciaretreast@gmail.com with any questions or to book in for the event!

Last Call: Spring 2024 Women's Weekend: Hornsby, Nov 15-17

Step right up, step right up! Our November women's weekend is next month, and the **deadline for registration for in-person attendees is October 16th**. Join us for fellowship, inspiration, service and fun. And maybe some good eats, too. 😊 The cost is expected to be approximately \$160 per person for lodging, plus a self-catered meal

contribution; financial aid is available (*please don't let money be what holds you back!*). If this is all news to you, check out last month's newsletter, talk with a previous attendee or contact Jenn (jenn@beiswenger.net) for more info, and to register. Good times ahead!

Birthdays

Happy Birthday to Stuart H (10th), Zach B (10th), Murray H (13th), Darren K (20th), Cameron W (20th), Jenn B (27th)

What's "new" about the "New Church?"

A very common question, to be sure. Well, it all started just over 200 years ago... the main branches of the Christian church had become less correct, and one man named Emanuel Swedenborg had written volumes about how Christianity was missing the point. Some readers of Swedenborg realised he was right, and formed a new organisation that would strip away the centuries of politics and tradition and get back to what Christianity was supposed to be about: loving God and loving each other. Everything else could be seen as merely a difference of opinion if those two main principles reigned supreme through this new church.

As a result we believe in a positive Christianity, one where we look to the best in ourselves and others while still holding ourselves accountable to a higher standard and taking responsibility for our lives. Nowadays we're not so much "new" as we are "different." We still keep the name, and yet make every effort to incorporate the ideals that were instrumental in being "new" over two centuries ago.

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