

E-READ

The General Conference of the New Church **Articles and Letters**

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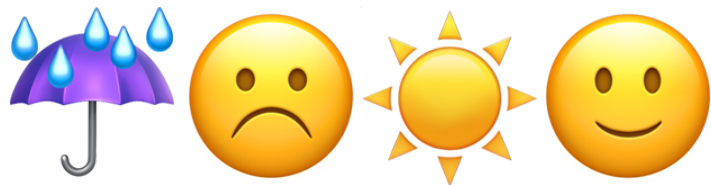
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Providence at Work Part 2

by David Friend



For the umpteenth morning in a row you wake up, pull the curtains and gaze out on a grey grizzly morning with the wind already blowing half a gale, and wish that you had been able to stay in bed for a bit longer. However, it's Sunday and you feel the need to go to church, maybe just in the fond hope that the minister will provide some sort of ray of sunshine in the gloomy proceedings. You do battle with the wind, which is trying to blow your brolly inside out, and the drizzle, which seems to be the only thing which is constant these days, and you wonder why you bothered. All that dressing up and still getting soaking wet - which will take ages to dry once you've got home again. And what greets you when you push the church door open? It's the minister rushing around doing all those last minute jobs which nearly always seem to occur, but, when he sees you, he breaks off and comes straight across with "Hello, Good Morning, and Welcome. It's lovely to see you here this morning." It really seems to make the effort all worth while. You've known all along that this will be the greeting you get - because some combination of the phrases happens every time you go to church - but it cheers you up straight away. You're glad you went that morning. Maybe

the sun will be shining before you go home again.

So what's different this morning? When I got up and drew back the curtains, the sun was shining in a rich, blue sky. I immediately felt better, even though my medical condition had not changed from that which it had been for a week or more. The wind was just a gentle breeze, and even the garden looked less like a swamp than it had done for many weeks past. The flowers were looking upwards towards the light instead of lying down in sad confusion. A few scattered fluffy cumulus clouds floated gently, and totally unthreateningly, in the sky.

What a change! But what was the change? I know that the sun had been there each morning when I got up, even though I couldn't see it. My experience of the world had assured me of that. The only real difference was my reaction to the clouds which had obscured the sun for such a long time. Our lives sometimes seem to be like that. We know that the Lord is 'up there' shining down on us with His never failing love, even when we cannot seem to see Him. Without his continual attention to our individual needs, we should not survive. However gloomy the prospects seem - and the current Covid 19 coronavirus looks far from promising - He is in charge and looking after the welfare of all people, the world over. Even though we cannot see the Lord's providence at work, we can believe in it - the sun is always shining even when we cannot see it!

Re: A Community Response (by Revd Jack Dunion, Issue #28) *from Pamela Ryder*

I found this article very moving and envious of the people who are able to assist those in need. I find here in Chester, Super Markets with empty shelves and people who do not understand what is happening and what the meaning of self isolating is. Then there are those who say but I must do this, it won't hurt will it?

As an over 70 year old, with underlying problems, all I can do is encourage those who are in a similar position as myself to be careful as possible and to phone them as much as I can. Thank you Jack for your uplifting story which gives me hope that people here can face the times ahead with thoughts of love and neighbourliness towards others.

Suggestions for Mothering Sunday *by Revd John Elliott*

Passages from the Word

Exodus 2:1-10

and/or 1 Samuel 1:20-end

Psalm 24
and/or Psalm 122:1-4

Luke 2:33-35
and/or John 19:25-27

The Teachings of the New Church

True Christian Religion 305-308

Songs of Praise

384 The Lord's my shepherd
296 O God, our help in ages past
104 Give to me, Lord, a thankful heart

Prayers

Lord Jesus, who came to share our life here on earth and make your home among us at Nazareth: we thank you for our homes and families, and especially today for our mothers and for all that they mean to us.

Bless them, O Lord, and bless our homes: and help us to find our true happiness in loving and serving one another for your sake, our Master and our Friend.

Frank Colquhoun

God grant me the serenity to accept things I cannot change,
courage to change the things I can,
and the wisdom to know the difference.

St Martin of Porres

Lord Jesus Christ, we give thanks for Thy gift of unselfish love and honest service to men and women. We rejoice that so many accept Thy gift and work in Thy name. To Thee we give praise for every deed of unselfish love, for all joy in true service. Grant us to know these eternal things amidst the changing things of the world, and to accept the joy of Thy life in all our doings.

Book of Worship (1971)

Full Circle

by Dr Peter Isherwood

There may be a few people who remember me from my days at Besses New Church from the age of about 8 or 9 years until I moved to Liverpool in 1963 and attended

Liverpool New Church and occasionally Wallasey New Church.

I drifted away from the New Church and became a member of the Anglican Church, eventually becoming Reader at St. John's, Higher Broughton. A former rector of St. John's will be well known to members of the New Church: Reverend John Clowes. When the rector I was licensed to, the Reverend Neil Handley, moved to France, I assisted him with services during the Easter and summer holidays. I assisted when the then Archbishop of Canterbury, The Most Reverend George Carey, attended the Communion Service as a tourist on holiday. Eventually, I gave up being a Reader and became an occasional church attender.

Roll forward a few years. On visits to see my mum in Radcliffe, I drove past the New Church College. I often wondered what was happening there. I decided to look at the college website. I saw a course about Old Testament People. The period of history covered by the Old Testament has always interested me, so I got in touch with the college. I decided to take the course. A period in hospital and changes in the leadership of the college delayed the course.

I was invited to a meeting with the Leader of Education, the Reverend Helen Brown, to discuss the course. As a result of that meeting, I enrolled for the course and agreed to be a 'study buddy' with a trainee minister, Alison Southcombe. The course, was not quite what I expected but I enjoyed it and learned a lot. I later joined Alison on the Synoptic Gospels course. I made a condition that Alison invite me to her ordination. Which she very kindly did.

I was invited by the Reverend Helen Brown to join the SOLCe Education Committee, which I did, and then I became the line manager of the about-to-be appointed centre leader and was co-opted on the the College Council.

When I made my first enquiry about the Old Testament People, I never thought I would be so involved with SOLCe and the New Church. Things have gone full circle.