

E-READ

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

About Us

To find out more about The General Conference of the New Church, including the locations of our Churches, visit our web site at: gcnc.org.uk

Contributions

If you would like to contribute a letter or article to future issues of e-Read, please send it via email to : gemma.mclean@gcnc.org.uk

Please note that publication is at the discretion of our Spiritual Leadership.

Share E-Read

Feel free to print and share this publication.

Sign up

Sign up for E-News and E-Read email notifications at: gcnc.org.uk/signup

Home Worship

To download the latest Home Worship material please visit: gcnc.org.uk/resources/home-worship

To subscribe via email, please sign up at: gcnc.org.uk/hwsignup

Donations

E-News and E-Read are provided completely free of charge.

If you would like to donate to support this ongoing resource, please do so here:

<https://www.generalconference.org.uk/resources/donations>

Together Online 2020 Keynote

Revd Jack Dunion's 2020 keynote, delivered at the Together Online event, will be available in the 20/21 Yearbook, but can also be downloaded as a standalone document using the link below:

<https://www.generalconference.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/2020keynote.pdf>

How Are You?

by Judy Elliott

Have you, during or after Lockdown, made any changes to your life and that of your family? We have, one of which was to try a different breakfast cereal.

We chose a muesli that contained no added sugar - I am diabetic - and because it was described as being healthy, full of fruit and nuts, we looked forward to having it the next day. After breakfast John decided to work in the garden

during the morning. (This used to be my domain, but owing to osteoarthritis I've passed it over to John, a town boy who was brought up in a second-floor flat without any front-or back-garden outside. However, he has learned quickly from me what to do with seeds, plants, etc. !)

Later in the afternoon, when it was cooler, he went back into the garden to de-leaf the tomato plants, and while doing this he began to feel sick and faint. So he went and sat on a garden bench we had purchased, thanks to the Pitcairn award he had received in recognition of his translating *Arcana Caelestia*, the last volume of which was published in April 1999. (I have a nice soft ginger pussy-cat with a red ribbon round its neck which reminds us that John translated the final word of AC on 13 January 1998.)

After returning indoors John continued to feel poorly, indeed he not only vomited, which he had not done for 45 years or more, but also fainted, which because of low blood-pressure he has done on other occasions. He looked so ill I managed to get an ambulance within 18 minutes and the two paramedics decided to take him to hospital. While one of them wheeled him a few metres down the road to the ambulance the other remarked that we should get a bungalow or smaller house with a smaller garden.

Having spent about 4 hours in A & E, during which time he again vomited and was 'gone over' with x-ray, heart scan, blood test, and whatever else, John was told, 'Mr Elliott, we can't find anything really wrong with you, but go home and take it easy for 3 of 4 days.' At about 11.00pm as I looked out of our front-door I saw an ambulance draw up opposite us. A man got out with 2 bags, came over to me where I was at the open front-door and said, 'These are Mr Elliott's belongings; he's just coming.' John came slowly across the road and as soon as he was inside our house I closed the door; then he fell against the door as he fainted. When he came to we both had a drink of warm coffee, went upstairs, and got into bed. We both slept soundly that night! Next morning, I rang Stephen our son and told him John was not kept in hospital all night but had got home at 11.00pm. Stephen before he retired was a paramedic. He was so annoyed that Dad's ambulance-escort had left him to cross the road on his own after a jolting ride home. No one at the hospital seems to have cottoned on to the idea that John might be ill because of what he may have eaten. We ourselves worked it out that he must have been allergic to the considerable quantity of nuts in the muesli! And by the way we are not going to be moving from where we now live!

Being one who suffers from painful arthritis, as mentioned above, please allow me to share some thoughts with you about why some of us get or suffer pain. We get it, it may be said, because it tells or reminds us that there is something wrong in an

area of our body. Or it may also tell us, when we are fed-up and worried without reason, about something not right in our life-style, or greater still in the world around us. At the present time many of us may become depressed, that is, suffer mental pain or anguish, but have no idea why. Depression can put us off our food, make us irritable, even angry. How many of us in this low state of mind look into ourselves and try to think what we've done wrong, forgotten; or perhaps we start to blame someone else. Can you remember a time when you were so LOW that you just wanted to give up, but had no idea how to end it all? Will it all be better in the next world? Who knows?

People who get depressed should speak to a GP at the surgery they attend. Some GPs may have sufficient time to listen to you and ask you some questions. These questions can be, and often are, ones you don't like and even don't want to answer. Try this for yourself with your GP or with whoever he suggests and see how you get on. If you both agree that you need help, that person will be able to give you what help you need. Please do not expect to feel OK after one session; it can, and often does, take several sessions. The most important thing about counselling-help is that you and the person listening to you 'get on together' and trust each other. Please don't feel that because counsellors are not good-looking, slim and well-dressed that they cannot help you.

If your problem is or has to do in any way with religion in your life, why not try to speak to a priest or minister instead of a doctor, but don't always expect the one you approach to be your counsellor. Nevertheless explain why you need help and he or she should be able to recommend who and where you should turn to for that help.

May God bless you all who read this!
Judy M L Elliott

ps This morning, not long before the above article was 'going to press', I saw during the TV 'Breakfast' programme on BBC1 - as some E-Readers too may have done - Prince William, the Duke of Cambridge, talking once again about depression.

Everything Changes *by Pauline Grimshaw*

PSALM 91

For a thousand ages in Thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night.

So teach us to number our days that we might apply our hearts unto wisdom.

AC 9213

In the spiritual world there are states not seasons; for the changes of these are not those of heat and light but in those of love and faith. It should be recognized however that these successive changes are not the same for one person as another; rather they are different with each person's state of life acquired in the world.

The other week someone brought a map to church - a map of the eighteen eighties showing the area around our church. Looking at the map, and comparing it with the same place today, really made me aware of how much things had changed in such a tiny area over a relatively small amount of time. The map showed tightly packed jumbled rows of workers' cottages, mills, and the buildings and schools of our old church.

One or two street names on the map provided evidence that earlier there had been a different pre-industrial landscape, of which names such as Primrose Street, Orchard Street, and Old Hall Street were reminders of yet an earlier long-lost landscape - a rural landscape of fruit and flowers, and possibly a long-forgotten small hall or more likely a farmhouse.

When I first came to live here someone remarked that I wouldn't even know what season it was in Kearsley because there were no trees or flowers to mark the changing seasons. In the relatively short space of a little less than forty years the landscape has again totally changed. Now in summer I can't even see the short distance across to the church - it is so well hidden by trees, and the grounds are a veritable green oasis.

It is amazing how everything in this natural world gradually changes almost imperceptibly. Our physical surroundings change, the cities of today, our bodies change, our hair goes white, and even our way of thinking changes and we grow physically older almost without realizing it. Over the lifetime of most of us technology has certainly altered the way we lived. My grandmother remembered the first tram in Accrington, and now human beings can travel the length and breadth of the earth, and even into space. Communications between people are no longer by letter but are instantaneous through computers and various forms of media.

In the course of our lives our opinions and our thoughts are continually developing and changing. A seven-year old certainly does not have the thought patterns of a seventy-year old, for it is only in changing and developing our thoughts and opinions that we can achieve our potential as spiritual beings. It is the changes and the development of thoughts and attitudes that hopefully enable us to grow spiritually or the reverse as the case may be. The purpose of life here is that we will change, and through change, both spiritually and naturally, we will ultimately become angels of heaven.

Life in this world depends on changing cycles caused by the position of the sun. Summer follows spring, autumn follows summer and winter follows autumn. Without the sun, the seasons and the weather, there would be no vegetation, no animal life - no us. All of us on this earth depend on the sun, our natural sun, unmoving, solid, eternal yet the cause of so much change. What a miserable place the world would be if we didn't have change! The long tedious hours of lock-down prove this point.

As human beings we are equipped to deal with change. We have the ability to reason and to think about changes in life and to adapt ourselves to cope with them. In order to live our lives we have to acquire the opinions, skills, and abilities necessary to cope with the practicalities of living.

Our natural world however is only a reflection of the spiritual world. The Lord Himself appears as a sun in that world and all life begins with Him and from Him. The spiritual world also is a world of change but not perhaps change as we know it. As our reading from Arcana Caelestia points out when we are told that there are changes in the spiritual world, it doesn't have changes of season in mind but changes of state. Even in this world the language we use conveys the idea of state of mind rather than season. For example we might speak of people as having a wintery manner, or being chilly or cool, or alternatively being warm or warm-hearted, or perhaps 'blowing hot and cold' - nothing to do with physical feelings or the weather but rather spiritual states related to the personality.

In the spiritual world there are changes in the love and the faith that we have, and this changes the appearance of our surroundings. This depth and the quality of love that we have and the thoughts that we are thinking change the atmosphere that surrounds us.

To return to our church in the present time and to what we think about it here and now. During the relatively short time span of lock-down, church life as we knew it has changed so much, and technology has literally ZOOMED forwards. What difference this makes in the life of our church has yet to be seen. This I do know: whilst technology can be an effective and useful tool in church life, worship, and study, it cannot replace the Lord's creation - a human being in the flesh. Whilst at home alone in lock-down and whilst recently spending short spell in hospital I have realized how the love of the Lord has shown itself through the love and actions, warmth and kindness of other human-beings. Whatever the changing scenes of life the love of the Lord is always constant. May we as a church continue to be a warm and happy place where the Lord Jesus Christ is worshipped and adored.