

# All Things New

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*And He who sat on the throne said, Behold, I am making all things new.*

Revelation 21:5

NJHD 246. *Every church begins from charity, but declines there from in process of time, thus to falsities from evil, and at length to evils. There is a comparison of the church at its beginning and decline with the infancy and old age of man, and also with the rising and the setting of the sun.*

Churches go through cycles that mirror a human life. Churches tend to decline over time, just as human bodies wear out. But we have a hope for the New Church that it can last forever. This is because spiritually the Church is the Lord's kingdom on earth, and the Lord's kingdom is an eternal kingdom. The Lord's makes the New Church, "new" and something being made new continually does not need to decline or wear out.

Typically natural organizations do progress and decline, and so there is a tension between the natural progression of earthly things and the spiritual potential of the New Church. When I think about the General Church is in this cycle, I am aware that adults today are many steps removed from the generation of the people who built these communities. Naturally speaking this is a challenging place to be since we are several steps removed from that sense of newness and shared commitment, which brought people together into this community. Tradition alone does not sustain a natural organization, especially one with the important spiritual calling of the Church. We could choose to look at this and fear that our natural organization is doomed to decline, or recognize the opportunity that "with God all things are possible."

We don't know whether natural organizations of the New Church can be continually be made new, but we do know that individuals can be regenerated and made new, and new generations can take on the Church for themselves. The Lord then is giving us the opportunity to find Him and be led in new ways no matter what else is happening. So whether we see new organizations arise or continuous renewal of the same forms, the Lord is constantly making new beginnings.

*For every smallest fraction of a moment of a person's life entails a chain of consequences extending into eternity. Indeed every one is like a new beginning to those that follow. AC 3854.*

From this perspective, I have hope for the future of this community. The New Church is not about just being new a long time ago. We can't just look back on the history of the organization or count on the wisdom and sacrifice of previous generations to carry us forward. If we want the church to thrive, WE must make it happen. We need to dedicate ourselves, not just to a private religious life, but to continually re-committing, and making the sacrifices to renew the church community.

DP 3.2 *That the universe, with all things in general and in particular therein, was created from the Divine Love by means of the Divine Wisdom can be confirmed from all things in the world that may be examined by the eye. ... Observe the order, step by step, in which the tree grows from the seed till it produces new seed; and consider whether there is not in every step a continuous endeavour to propagate itself further; for the goal to which it tends is seed, in which its prolific principle exists anew. Then if you will but reflect upon this spiritually also, and this you can do if you please, will you not see wisdom displayed?*

*Moreover, if you will reflect deeply enough from the spiritual point of view, you will see that this prolific principle is not from the seed, nor from the sun of this world which is pure fire, but that it is in the seed from God the Creator, to whom belongs infinite Wisdom. You will see that it is present not only at creation but also continuously afterwards; for maintenance is perpetual creation.*