

Student Testimonials

From Religion 101: Introduction to New Church Doctrines

Gathered by instructors Ray Silverman, Grant Schnarr, and Thane Glenn

This is my favorite class ever.

I feel that I'm here at Bryn Athyn College because God wants me to be.

Before this course, I had mixed feelings about the Bible and how beneficial it can be to a person's life. I think I had a tendency to associate the Bible with those who read it as if it was a rulebook. This negative association caused me to steer clear of the Word. What I have learned over this class, however, is that the Bible is not just a book full of stories; it is a multidimensional tool that we can all use to help us in all areas of our lives.

I guess I am sort of a "Swedenborgian" because I agree with a lot of what "Swedenborgians" believe and feel about life. The New Church idea of Good and Truth being in all religions is very interesting and eye opening. It's nice to think that we're all children of God's love and if we follow God's Good and Truth, we will live in Heaven with him for eternity.

I was raised with the belief that we must do everything God said we have to do or we just should prepare ourselves for consequences. I was taught that if we did not follow his every word, we would get punished. In the class I have learned that God is Love, not a bully or punisher.

At first, I believed that this class was to get us to join the New Church. Now I am really excited to learn about the New Jerusalem and the way that heaven works. I am eager to fill in the gaps about God and what heaven has to offer. I am going into the New Jerusalem with an open mind and ready to learn. I have come to realize that the teachings of God from Swedenborg really interest me. I have learned more about God in these past couple days than in my whole life.

I find the class extremely interesting, especially the answer as to what the holy trinity is, because it is seemingly very confusing. The Lord Jesus Christ is in fact one with the Father. They are one. The Lord explains by recounting, "When you look upon me, you look upon the Father."

I thought the New Church was more of a cult than a Christian religion. This class has helped me to see the New Church, Emanuel Swedenborg and his teachings in a way that I never saw before. With every new topic, my prejudiced ideas seem to fade while I believed more in Emanuel Swedenborg's teachings because they made more sense. It was easier to see God as love and myself as an object and receiving vessel of God's love than a God who condemned us all to hell. Now I believe in love, charity, and freedom.

Not being a member of the New Church, I thought this class was going to be one in which Swedenborg's teachings were going to be drummed and forced into us, a system where we would become slaves to things and concepts we might not believe in. Instead I had to get used to a class where individual thinking was greatly appreciated and even more, encouraged. A class where we had to examine ideas and develop our opinions and thoughts on them, based not on what we had just been taught and taken as truth from the beginning, but rather on a careful objective look.

I have learned so much in this course that it is hard to say specifically what I've learned, because much of it has become part of my own reasoning.

I plan on continuing this journey for knowledge for the rest of this life, and the next.