

Approach the Office of Executive Bishop

Peter Buss, Jr.—February 1, 2018

Written to the General Church Clergy

Introducing myself

Friends, you have the challenging task of selecting from among us a person to serve in a very important use, and I have the task of describing for you what I think I can bring to that use.

First, let me state that I think of myself as a relatively humble person. When asked if I want this job, I have given a twofold answer. Yes, I believe that there are things I can bring to the role that I pray can help the church. But in many ways, I ask myself “who am I” to think I can provide leadership to an organization as important to the world as the General Church? The way I reconcile these is by believing strongly that the Lord asks each of us to step up in certain ways. Any organization, the General Church included, needs leadership, and if you see in me qualities that allow me to serve in this incredible way, then I will do everything I can to perform the job honorably. It would be a great honor and privilege.

A little background. I see myself as a product of the General Church, and supported by the General Church in many ways. I was born into this faith, and was raised by thoroughly New Church parents. I attended New Church schools growing up, found a wife in the New Church faith, raised four kids within three General Church congregations, and have served almost twenty-five years in the profession of the priesthood. When I step back and consider it all, I can see so clearly that the New Church faith has helped me to figure out many things about life, and to find purpose and direction. I have come to see it as my goal in life to do for others what the New Church faith does for me: help *them* figure things out and find direction. It may be convenient to phrase it in this overlapping way, but I see truth in it daily, and share it as a way of describing why the General Church is so central to my life—personally and professionally.

Professionally, I have had the pleasure of serving under three wise mentors: Jim Cooper, Eric Carswell, and Brian Keith. I have also had the joy of leading a multifaceted “school congregation,” an experience I can say was defining for me. Then of course I have had the privilege of serving in my current capacity, which has not only afforded me the opportunity to see the General Church in terms of its global reach, but also to get to know and support many of you.

I believe in self-awareness, and acknowledge the teachings on self-examination. Therefore, as a final part of this “get to know me” section, I’ll give a personal sense of my strengths and weaknesses.

Strengths:

- I am a people-person and feel an ability to get along with just about anyone. I love getting to know others and am able to give most people with whom I interact the confidence that they are heard and appreciated.
- I am a consensus builder. I communicate reasonably well, understand good process, and enjoy seeing ways that I can work with different people’s input to come to decisions that “we” can stand behind.
- I am reasonably task-oriented and efficient with my time and can process a fair amount of information on any given day.

- I like to think of myself as doctrinally-oriented and doctrinally-sound. I receive pretty good feedback on sermons, classes, presentations and papers, and believe I come from doctrine in most of what I do.
- I have a calm demeanor that allows me to absorb difficult situations without over-reacting.
- I have strong dreams of what the General Church can do to serve the Lord’s ends, and a pretty tenacious commitment to pursue those dreams.
- I have a lovely and supportive wife who is a great ambassador for the church and wonderful mother of our children. The Lord has blessed me greatly in that realm.
- I am competent at making decisions and am growing in my ability to handle the hard ones.
- I am approachable and openminded in my own way.
- I try to be a healthy person—spiritually, mentally, and physically.

Weaknesses:

- I don’t like to disappoint people and am challenged at times when others are upset with me.
- Because I’m a consensus builder, I sometimes come across as less decisive and more malleable than I believe I actually am.
- I don’t like to say unkind things about people and need help at times to say the things that would be useful to have said.
- I hold myself to high standards and can sometimes project those standards on others in ways that aren’t useful.
- I used to be somewhat of a chameleon, changing the ways I conducted myself, subtly, with different audiences. While less of an issue for me, I can still come across that way to some.
- I like to choose my words carefully, which I’m told can make me sound “political.”
- I am not a charismatic, bold, fill-the-room personality.
- If I am not confident about a decision or direction, I have been known to delay completion of it beyond what is useful. I am working on being more decisive.

Vision for the Church

The assignment before candidates is to share their vision for the church and philosophy of leadership, weaving in comments about their approach to key issues in the church. That’s a big task, and I would be untruthful if I said I had all the answers to these things. What I have to offer are thoughts in the direction of the assigned topics. I hope they give you a sense of my approach, recognizing of course that an actual vision and path forward for the General Church under the next administration will be created by a lot of priests and laypeople working together.

Two introductory concepts. The work *Divine Providence* tells us that we cannot know the future, for it would take away “fundamental humanity, which is to act in freedom in accordance with one’s reason” (n. 179). The teaching continues, however: “It is permitted everyone to employ his or her reason to form conclusions about things to come” and it calls for “a confidence that the Lord is directing their lot” while they do so (*Ibid.*). I set this teaching before any beginning vision statement I might be able to articulate. On the one hand, I believe we as a priesthood have the responsibility to work hard toward a future for the church that allows a growing number of people

to be led by the Lord toward heaven (cf. the GC mission). On the other hand, I hear the Lord saying: remain humble and willing to adjust as needed.

Secondly, we can expect that things in the church will continue to evolve. I personally have a great deal of respect for where we have been as an organization, and am internally resistant to change for the sake of change. That said, we are taught that change is inevitable, and that changes of state are to be expected—even within the church. While many of the passages in the Heavenly Doctrines describing changes in the church do so in negative terms (decline, etc.), there are some that give a positive picture of change, such as the following: “The successive states of the church...from the time of the Lord even to the present day have been like a person increasing in intelligence and wisdom, or becoming regenerate” (AE 641:4). In that context, then, the church itself can become wiser and more interior, just like we can. The hope is that the church can evolve in positive directions—as it figures out how to serve present needs more effectively and be ever truer to the dictates of the Word.

Within the next phase of the General Church, then, I believe we can expect some of the following to be true:

Reliance on the Word. One of the things the General Church has always done is “turn to the threefold-Word as the source and foundation for all that we do” (Core Value #1, GC Strategic Plan 2016-2020). We could all agree that articulation and application of the central truths of the Lord’s Second Coming is what the church is all about. That said, we live in an age, at least in certain parts of the world, where the nature of revelation itself is frequently questioned. It is a challenging time to be a church in the first place, and to make stands based on the Word that are seen as unpopular by some. It will take collective effort to keep the Word front-and-center, but I envision that we will do just that. The Word is the rock upon which this GC “house” is to be founded, and that cannot change (Matthew 7:24; AE 411, 644).

A strong priesthood. Nor can the fact that the church will be a priest-led organization, since that is what the Word mandates (HD 314; AC 10793). While I am a proponent of working in partnership with the laity for the good of the church, there is no substitute for a trained, professional priesthood.

We know the fundamental role of the priesthood: to ensure to the best of their abilities that things are done according to Divine order (HD 312); to look to the “wholeness and purity of doctrine” within the church (TCR 245); to teach the truth and lead to the good of life (HD 315); to orient people to matters of doctrine and life (AC 9272:7), and so to the Lord (AC 10792). Training men to serve in the use of the priesthood, support and coordination of those in the field, professional development and supervision of priests to ensure that each is giving of his best—all these things must continue to be a focus. This can be true even as we adapt our modes of interaction as priests, figure out better ways of reaching people with the messages of the Word, and try some new things that we believe can help the church to serve more people.

New Church education. New Church education has been one of my passions throughout my career, and it is a big part of my current job. Working with the talented people at General Church Education, as well as teachers, administrators and Sunday school leaders throughout our system, is a true joy. I envision that the GC will continue to focus attention and resources on this vital use, and that it will continue to evolve.

A trend that many of us are aware of is that New Church education used to be automatically supported and rallied around, in ways that are less apparent today. Those of us

working in this field have had some success at increasing the volume and focus on the use, but more is needed.

For starters, I believe that every pastor should see himself as a New Church educator. One of the groups of people that most pastors would love to attract to their church is young families. For the church to be able to serve these new families, congregations need a robust array of offerings for children and their parents. Pastors are integral to this process: through children's talks, support for programming, work with parents, and awareness of the many resources that the GC has to offer.

I am a proponent of our schools—GC and Academy—for they offer a deep and rich “reach” into the lives of those families. I also expect to see new forms of New Church education in the coming years—some springing out of the expertise and experience we have in systematically exposing young minds to the truths of the Word, others utilizing new technologies, and some that are yet to be conceived in the minds of creative people who are passionate about the use.

The Word focuses our attention on the vital role of parents in raising their children with the Lord and the things of spiritual life in mind. Therefore, an outcropping of New Church education is an array of support services for parents. We are wise to pour increasing energy into helping them with the challenges and joys of raising their children, drawing on the truths of the Word for guidance. How can we speak to the part of their minds and hearts that the Lord is constantly seeking to touch, where the things of spiritual life are the focus? How can we answer their call for help with the spiritual dimension of their parenting? As I find myself saying repeatedly, our answer to these questions is New Church education.

It should be noted that a percentage of the Executive Bishop's time will be needed at the Academy Secondary Schools and Bryn Athyn College. These schools have done amazing work to recreate themselves in the face of daunting financial realities, and have been successful at attracting students from New Church and non-New Church families alike. As Chancellor, the Executive Bishop has a central role in helping these institutions maintain and strengthen their New Church mission. That takes time, and the building of relationships, and the consistent awareness of when to bring a mission-centric or Word-based perspective to bear. I would be excited to engage in these uses on behalf of the Academy.

Outreach. When I served as a pastor, it became increasingly clear that the congregation couldn't simply have “an outreach committee” or “an outreach budget” and succeed at attracting new people. Most of you know it's challenging to do, with lots of trial and failure. You also know that outreach is holistic. Everything a congregation does should be a means of welcoming new people. In my current capacity I see so many of you hard at work at these very things, and trying new things too. I also have respect for our Outreach department and the church's efforts by means of it to support exposure to the truths, and lead people to find a home within the church.

I am a believer in the congregational model, for there is no substitute for a community of people who are supporting each other in living the life that leads to heaven. At the same time, it is good for us to continue to learn and grow in our ability to engage more people with the messages of the New Church outside of the congregational experience—or as an eventual entrance-way into later congregational involvement. Some of that will come through increased online video messaging. Others will utilize Bible study tools to help people find the internal sense now available to the world. Translation also fits into this section; supporting and training translators, and seeing to high-quality translations in the languages where the church is active, will always be needed.

I am also interested in pursuing some learning projects—congregations within which we are trying some new ways of doing things, with the intention of sharing successes with the rest of the church. This is not a new concept, but it is one that can be strategically important to the growth of the church around the world.

A final thought I'd share is the simple activity of focusing on the core teachings of the New Church and helping our people to articulate them. This too is not a new idea, yet consider a reality we know: there are less doctrinal class or other venues for people to learn together from the Word than there used to be. We would do well to ask ourselves, how does one come to understand the basics—the essentials of the New Church faith? Are we being as intentional as we might in focusing on those central and beautiful new truths that the Lord has given to us? The concept here is that the more people know of those truths, and see them proclaimed in powerful ways across the church, the more they can articulate their own version of those truths. Better yet, when they embrace them as principles to live by, and can testify to their power in their lives, we know that others in their spheres of influence will pay attention.

Engaging people in the life of the church. I could have called this section “the next generation” but I am a bit leery of focusing all our attention on one age group—vital though they are. I believe that some of the things mentioned here are important to those growing up and wondering about the church. I also believe that retaining people of all ages, and drawing new people in from all ages rests heavily on our willingness and openness to engage them in the life of their church.

Take “serving” as an example. Within a carefully articulated context of what it means to be “General Church” there are many ways to support the gifts and energies of the priests and lay people who wish to serve. The GC, at a congregational level, could increase its efforts to sponsor a rotating array of service endeavors that its people wish to pursue. The concept here is to encourage and support people's desire to make the world a better place based on their understanding of the teachings of the New Church. We need not be too concerned with scripting them, or think of any given activity as being permanent. However, we know that the opportunity to be useful, and to be supported by the church to be of service, could be the difference-maker to someone opting in vs. opting out.

Worship is another example. We know that worship is the domain of the priesthood (see AC 9809:8, 9925), and nothing should change our focus on providing for it. Many of us also know the value of involving people in worship where appropriate: music, tableaux, discussion times after the service, feedback loops, greeters, decorators, ushers, and so on. We know that lay people participate in other ways too, at least in some parts of the church. It is not my intention to advocate for more involvement in the service itself by lay people. It is my intention to suggest that lay people have a say in how worship services serve. Said another way, it is essential that worship services on Sunday happen throughout the church with the foundational elements of humility (AC 8271, 9377 et. al.), praise (AC 1150, 7550), and instruction in the life of charity (AE 325:3, HH 222). We are wise to provide for those worship experiences to evolve in certain ways, within the framework of these essentials, so that the greatest number of people, including those in the next generation, will want to attend.

Women's roles: I believe that most priests and lay people within the General Church agree that the Heavenly Doctrines contain beautiful and powerful teachings concerning the complementary nature of women and men. These teachings demonstrate their equality and the essential contribution of each. Yet strong differences remain as to how best to apply those

teachings within the church. It is useful that we continue to focus caring attention on the roles of women within the church, in part because of the contentiousness that remains on the subject.

I believe it is important to be clear that I do not envision the church changing its stance on ordination; the majority of the clergy, including myself, do not currently believe that the Doctrines support such a change. There is great value, however, in continuing to examine our teachings regarding masculinity and femininity. The goal would be to honor the feminine more fully as a church, and to draw more effectively on the influence, intelligence and energy of women. Anyone delving into the Word will quickly encounter teachings about marriage and raising a family, and the particular gifts given to women to support these vital relationships (CL 209, 160, 393). It is vital that the church champion these relationships. We also know the great variety of interest and personality that exists among women (and men). People are making their choices about education, home life, careers and a host of other things, and developing certain skills that they may wish to share with the church. Indeed, many women are giving of their time and love to the church right now and are serving in important ways. I believe there is significant positive potential to consistently demonstrating that offerings by women in line with the mission of the church are welcomed. Specifics would come from the people bringing ideas forward, but here are some examples:

- Relying on feminine energy and insight into how best to support marriage and family—even more than we do now.
- Drawing intentionally on insights into human interactions and how best to support people with what they are dealing with in their lives.
- Welcoming counsel from women on directions and goals within the church.
- Providing greater access to education for those wishing to make the world a better place through their professional efforts.
- Remaining open to causes spoken about in the Word that women wish to pursue.

Much of it comes down to respect—respect for the feminine as the Word describes it, and respect for the ideas and energies of individual human beings. There are things we can do to promote more engagement. I believe the church will be healthier, and that more people will be helped, to the extent that we do.

Evolving globalization. The General Church currently has a presence in twenty countries, counting only those with GC priests actively working. It has a presence in three more, and sends pastors to visit in several others. No doubt we have a stronger and more mature presence in some of these countries than in others. Many of the people in these places see the General Church as a strong organization which is the best New Church vehicle to grow the church in their cultures. An increasing amount of GC energy goes into training and supporting clergy around the world, and striving to support healthy congregations in an array of cultures. There is no indication that the trend of globalization of the General Church will do anything but continue, and that is a very good thing.

To support a global General Church, we need to reach for better mechanisms of support around the world. This too is an evolutionary thing. As I find myself saying quite often in my current capacity, the needs around the world far outstrip the resources that the General Church has available to it. Therefore we need to continue to learn how to do more with less. We are experimenting with self-sustaining activities. We are investing time and authority in local leadership. We are working toward “learning congregations” mentioned above, where the goal is

to discover some things that work and share those lessons with others. In the process, professional development sessions, facilitating the learning of English (Anglo-centric as that may sound), decision-making rubrics, compensation studies, and many other things are happening. In all of it, we should be looking toward a systematic way of doing things that is characteristically “General Church” wherever we have GC activities. Of course there will be regional differences based on culture and resources available. But an organization that is seen to be equitable and fair for all is the goal—a global GC that is increasingly proud to see development and growth wherever it is happening.

Evolving organizational structure. As a final note, the structure of the GC Central Offices will continue to evolve to meet the needs of a General Church that is...evolving. Already we are seeing a growing number of Regional and National pastors. That model is working and can be improved. The departments of the Central Offices will also need to evolve. For example, it is no small thing to organize pay-centers in countries where they do not currently exist, so that the local church entity employs its ministers, instead of having them receive a pay check from Bryn Athyn. Nor is it a small thing to expand our Outreach and GCED departments to ensure that they are better able to lend support to locations around the world. Travel is a component, as are training modules and seminars to deliver them.

Given all that is likely to happen in the church in the next phase of its usefulness, I believe we are wise to invest more time in our Episcopal office than the full time of Brian and the half-time of me that is currently allocated. I also believe in two trends that we are wise to embrace: the rise of local autonomy, and the goal of sustainable centralized support that is increasingly “investment” oriented rather than indefinitely sustained from the center. Some of these things can be considered as soon as the next administration sets up shop. That administration would also be wise to develop a roadmap, together with the clergy and Board, for how the central office structure may evolve over time.

Philosophy of leadership

Some of my philosophy of leadership will be evident in what I have already written. I hope that the following points round out my approach, and give a sense of how I would engage in the use at hand. It is useful to note that many of the themes mentioned are things I am striving for, rather than have mastered. I trust many of you could say the same.

Everything oriented to the Lord and directed by His Word. It may be assumed that the Lord is in charge of His church, but how this plays out in the leadership of the church is important to clarify. We have ample teaching in the Word that all leaders who have success do so at the hands of the Lord. Not only are there many examples of this in the Scriptures, but the two sections of the Heavenly Doctrines that deal directly with leadership point repeatedly to this fact.¹ I believe it is important for the Executive Bishop, while willing to serve, to demonstrate in speech and action that he is taking his cues from the Lord’s Word, and, as it says in *Heaven and Hell*, “[consulting] the Lord” in prayer (n. 214) as well as seeking enlightenment from the Lord “in doubtful matters” (n. 215).

Not a business. It is clear to many of you that leadership of a church is different in certain ways than leadership of a business. Having studied the business model during an MBA program,

¹ Governments in Heaven” in *Heaven and Hell* (nos. 213-220) and “Ecclesiastical and Civil Government” in *New Jerusalem and Its Heavenly Doctrine* (nos. 311-325).

and having participated for a long time in the church, I have a growing appreciation for the similarities and differences. Similarities include: adherence to mission, inspiring the workforce to be the best they can be for the mission, wise use of resources, discipline and focus. Differences relate primarily to “driving forces.” The people who choose to work for the church tend to be drawn to the mission; therefore money and advancement, although important, are not the reasons they come to work (something we share with many fine organizations world-wide). Related to this we note that people are free to associate with the church or not, and therefore have an expectation of a higher “say” in the affairs of the church than in a business. That is appropriate. In terms of leadership, a church will expect to have less of a top-down, line-of-command model, and more of a shared or “nexus” leadership model.

Consensus leadership wherever possible. The General Church has always operated under the principles of “council and assembly,” referring to gatherings where people can consider uses together (see General Church Order and Organization under “Principles”). This aligns with many teachings in the Word: about the reciprocal principle (DP 92), about the “as of self” (DP 210), about community being a “harmonious relationship of many” (TCR 686) and others. Pragmatically, we have all experienced the strength of decisions on which we have taken broad counsel, or projects that have had the benefit of feedback and input. In working with the priesthood in specific, it is my understanding that the leadership of the church is given into the hands of the whole clergy. It is incumbent upon the Executive Bishop, therefore, to involve the clergy and coordinate with them in the administration of church affairs. While he will, at times, need to make decisions on behalf of the church as his office demands, even those are best done based on counsel. It is also true that the Executive Bishop should seek the counsel and input of laity, especially regarding support for uses via boards.

Good process. Good process is a complementary concept to consensus leadership. I believe that it is important to note how pervasive “good process” is in terms of effective leadership. In congregational decisions, for example, was information communicated in a timely manner, and were people aware of when and how the decision would be reached? In pastoral placements, do people have the confidence that appropriate steps were taken to lead to the person nominated? When pay questions come up, is there evidence and rationale for the decisions made? In meetings, is the agenda sufficiently organized to allow for a good use of people’s time? When arriving at key points of focus, especially those that will absorb significant resources and time, are people confident that the right factors were weighed? One of the lessons I’ve learned about leadership, sometimes the hard way, is that decisions made with good process tend to be accepted and respected, even if people disagree with them.

Autonomy within a known context. We are taught in *Heaven and Hell* that “no other government than the government of mutual love is possible in the heavens” (n. 213). We also hold dear the concept of professional and personal freedom. To me this means that people are free to operate based on their conscience, and there is a high expectation of trust. In my experience of the General Church, we strive for this respectful, autonomous environment, where pastors are welcomed to lead from their understanding of the Word, and where people from different cultures can bring the teachings of the Word to life in ways that they know best.

A balance to this autonomy is the context of the General Church. It is important that the General Church have an identity, and that it stand for what the Word teaches. People who choose to associate with the General Church, or to work within the General Church, have the responsibility to align themselves to that organizational culture. We know that a shared

understanding of that culture does not happen automatically. Therefore, I believe it is part of the responsibility of the Executive Bishop to bring to the clergy questions relating to the overall welfare and direction of the church, so that we together can determine what our operating parameters should be and how they may evolve.

Checks and balances. We all know that a big part of leadership is to provide for the orderly functioning of the entity led, in our case the church. Many passages state just that (as for example HD 312, HH 213, 215). We know further that there needs to be order amongst the leaders. That's why we are wise to focus on "order and subordination" within the priesthood (HD 314), and on passages that talk about limits on the power of those in the highest positions (see TCR 754, HD 71). For these reasons, I am an advocate for such things as professional development reviews, consistent reminders of clergy ethics, the willingness to approach each other when something done seems questionable, the fortitude to enact appropriate consequences on misbehavior, and decisions that are as transparent as possible. I see the Council of the Clergy as an effective check and balance on the Executive Bishop, and would be quite content for us to explore other ways to ensure the priesthood's and the church's confidence that the person in charge is also appropriately subservient.

Professionalism. We all know that the Word mandates a priesthood within the church. We know too that there are others who work for the church who are striving to do their best to support the uses apportioned to them. It could easily be said that we are a "people business"—the truths of the Second Coming affect people's lives often through the agency of the people charged with sharing them. As such, we are wise to place as much support and emphasis as possible on helping our people to be successful. A corollary to that is the importance of the work. Because it is so vital we should expect people to strive for a high standard of professionalism.

Servant leadership. We are taught that governors in heaven "look to the public good as their end, and in that good to the good of the individual" (HH 217). They "do not domineer or dictate, but they minister and serve" (HH 218). "[They do not] make themselves greater than others, but less" (HH 218). To me this speaks to teamwork, and the efforts made by the leader to demonstrate that everyone's work matters. A good leader should clearly send the message that he is open to good ideas wherever they come from, and should seek to inspire people to offer them for the good of the whole. A secular concept of effective leadership points to two qualities: tenacity and rigor around the mission, and self-effacing reflexes. In other words, effective leaders stay focused on what's most important, and give credit to others wherever possible. That makes a lot of sense to me.

Other dimensions. Leadership, as all of you know, is multifaceted. One of my "go to" passages relates to planning and implementation, in which people can "hardly contain themselves" when they see a path toward what they are aiming to achieve (AC 5869). I am also influenced by teachings which indicate that leaders must know how to get things done or have the ability to lead (see HH 218). Another dimension relates to challenges and opportunities. We know that we do not get to pick the issues that come up, but are defined in significant ways by how we handle them. We know also that part of leadership is being aware of opportunities that come along, and being willing to embrace them when they do. Finally, there is the organizational engine. Much of leadership involves facilitation: running meetings, organizing work assignments, working on budgets, and so on. It isn't glamorous, but it makes it possible for the work of the church to happen effectively.

Lessons learned. As a final offering, I share a list of realizations I have come to in my career to date. My hope is that these statements round out a sense of my approach to leadership.

- Pastoral work is a tough privilege. Having served as a pastor I know that work, and have a great deal of respect for it.
- The person in charge is looked to for leadership and for management—for insights into what the organization can do to better succeed, and for overseeing a structure that allows others to get on with their work and feel fulfilled.
- New Church education is simply precious. The Lord intends it, and we should continue as a church to do all we can to promote it. Families around the world are counting on us to do so.
- Outreach is holistic, incorporating everything a congregation does, so that each part is accessible to new people.
- People are counting on the priesthood to lead, and by and large they want us to succeed.
- Where we have been as a church is important, and it is wise to take it thoroughly into consideration when contemplating new ideas. This is balanced with the need to remain willing to embrace useful change.
- Teams, with clear roles and support, can accomplish much more than any one person can.
- Relationship building based on respect and sincere interest is essential to organizational functioning, and is very rewarding.
- There will always be issues over which people sincerely disagree. While you can't please everyone, most people will respect decisions that have good process and are clearly grounded in the Word.
- What makes the General Church distinctive is its message; the truths resonate with people in deep ways, despite some appearances to the contrary.
- Communication is well worth the effort it takes to do well.
- Showing up for people when it matters most—at their wedding, around the death of a loved one, when they've just welcomed a new child into the world—helps build incredible pastoral relationships and draws people into the church more than almost anything else.
- There are things at a level above any given congregation's or pastor's work that need to happen for the General Church to function effectively. Some of those involve training and coordination of priests, translation, the development of needed materials and resources, and other non-glamorous parts of the engine that simply need to happen.
- We are stronger together than apart.
- When there's something hard to do, prepare for it, and do it with as much efficiency and care as you can.
- The General Church does good for many people every single day, the world over.