

## **Lesson 12: CHARITY, CHURCH AND RELIGION**

*Doctrine of Charity, chapter 12*

### **Introductory Ideas for the Twelfth Lesson**

This chapter is brief and sketchy. It consists of manuscript fragments. However, Swedenborg mentions other works in the chapter that cover the union of faith and charity. The first treatment mentioned is the *Doctrine of the New Jerusalem about Faith*. This book is published in *The Four Doctrines* (in the Swedenborg Foundation edition.) Numbers 25-33 are directly on the topic and would be good reading for your own background. Some of the passages may be shared with the students so they can gain a fuller understanding of the concepts. Students should be lead to see the difference between a faith that we have inherited from our childhood (historical faith) and a faith that we have made our own. Here are a few starter questions:

1. What does the word "church" mean?
2. What does the word "religion" mean?
3. How are these two concepts related?

### **Some Key Points in Chapter 12:**

**Charity 198** is a nice summary of the essentials of life. Perhaps you could print out the statement "All religion is of life and the life of religion is to do good." (Doctrine of Life 1) The students could decorate this, or take it to hang in their rooms.

**Charity 212** talks about the importance of a united will and understanding. This is a fundamental New Church idea. People of other faiths believe that there salvation can happen by other means. In the New Church, we believe that for us to truly have religion in our lives we need not only to believe, but also to act on the truths. "By their fruits you shall know them."