

LOGOPRAXIS

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LOGOPRAXIS – A WAY OF BEING

Most people new to Logopraxis view it, and for that matter experience it, primarily as a method or framework for engaging with the Word in a systematic way. And on first glance, this is exactly what it appears to be, a six-step methodology for engaging with the Word, or the Texts of Divine Revelation. But the **structural or methodological side of Logopraxis is only part of the story providing a framework that supports the individual practice level.** Beyond this is what that individual-practice-level supports, for an individual's personal practice is not something done for them alone, but is done with a view to gathering material from their practice of the Word to support the life of their Logopraxis Life Group. When this material is shared with others, Logopraxis forms the basis for group life, for being in spiritual community with others whose sole purpose for meeting is to be together in the experience of the practice of the Word. From a Logopraxis perspective, this is what creates the conditions that open the possibility for the coming-into-being of the collective person, that is the Church in whom the Lord dwells as the goods and truths that pass between those who make it up. For the Lord is only found in the Word, and He is made manifest in a Logopraxis context in the act of sharing one's direct experience of the Word working in one's life. In group life, **spiritual community arises out of the exchange of goods and truths that are the product of people being willing to practice the Word in an effort to support others in their practice of the Word.**

To support the creation of a spiritual community whose life and existence is grounded in the direct experience of the Word, Logopraxis offers a specific structure for meeting together that consists of a series of three rounds. Both the individual-practice-structure and the structure-for-meeting are designed to bring people into a direct experience of the Word as the Lord, whereby **the Word as Text is apprehended to be the principal agent that guides and directs the regenerative processes** at the individual and group or collective levels.

In Logopraxis, to practice the Word is what it means to worship. Just to be clear, **to practice the Word and thus to worship the Lord means to put truths to use as the basis for self-examination and repentance.** The Word is the Lord and to practice it is what it means to do good, which is to acknowledge truths in life, which in turn is what it means to love the Lord and the neighbour.

Logopraxis reorientates a person's relationship to the Texts of Divine Revelation when they are practised consistently over a long period of time. It's methods and structures can be learnt and applied as external methods and structures, but it should be remembered that these are merely the bones of the approach which, in and of themselves, don't capture the livingness of what the Word is or how it operates within the human mind. They merely hold things relating to the practice in a certain configuration that opens up possibilities for a direct experience of the Word working within the human mind (on both an individual and collective level) to bring about its transformation from a natural into a spiritual form. And while it is true that the regeneration of the human mind is not something that can be worked for, in the sense that it is something that can be merited by a person's effort, it is also true that without effort or practice nothing transformative is possible. In other words, there needs

to be a commitment to practice but there is no guarantee that this will result in a change in consciousness. For that to happen inner work has to be engaged in for its own sake and not for anything we may think we will get from it. But there is a process of purification that needs to take place if a change in consciousness is to occur which involves coming to see our unconscious agendas in relation to spiritual growth and being willing to lay these aside.

Logopraxis is designed to support people to make the practice of the Word the central focus for their individual and collective spiritual life. When truths from the Texts of Divine Revelation are being applied to the affectional and thought life of the mind in an effort to examine their quality spiritual transformation becomes a possibility. Through this activity of self-examination change is made possible and where changes in our responses are enacted freely in an effort to shun evils in order to promote goods (which is what it means to practise repentance) we come to see and experience the power of truths from the Word operating in our life firsthand. We begin to experience what it means to live from the Word as the basis for our individual and collective spiritual life.

Living from the Word changes the very structures of our mind (patterns of belief, thinking, attitudes etc) so that **Logopraxis begins to pass from being a practice we access externally to an internalised way of being** or mode of consciousness that affects how we meet every aspect of inner and outer life. This transformation in consciousness is a transformation in our appreciation of the true nature of the Word, that it is indeed the Lord in our midst.

LOGOPRAXIS REORIENTATES OUR RELATIONSHIP TO THE WORD

The structure of the Logopraxis approach encourages a re-orientation in how people engage with the Word. Traditionally, approaches taken to engaging with the Heavenly Doctrine have been weighted toward an intellectual understanding of what its Texts have to say. In contrast, the Logopraxis approach places the emphasis on gaining an experiential understanding of their content, through the practice of what the Texts have to say.

The two approaches result in two very different kinds of understanding:

Intellectual Approach

- Results in an understanding of the text that is descriptive of its content.
- Tends to place the emphasis on the structural aspects of a thing.

Experiential Approach

- Results in an understanding of the text that is tied to its application to life.
- Will be more centered on the processes involved.

From a Logopraxis perspective when we use the phrase, **“application to life, what is meant is the life of the mind or spirit.**

Both understandings are of course needed.

However, a cursory glance over what’s on offer to support the practise of the Word shows that there is an imbalance and that this **imbalance is heavily skewed toward an intellectual relationship to the Heavenly Doctrine** as opposed to an experiential understanding born of its practice.

Logopraxis seeks to address this imbalance through offering a way of relating to the text that is directly focused on supporting the practise of self-examination and repentance using the Word. It is only through the practise of the Word with regard to the life of the mind, that an experiential understanding of the relationship between the Word and the inner process involved in the regeneration of the human mind can be gained. **Practise is ultimately the only path to an experiential understanding of the Heavenly Doctrine.**

Logopraxis offers us a way into the Word that directly supports our regeneration in the here and now. **If we engage with the Word with the intention of allowing it to speak into our life to direct our daily practise, then the Word will reach out to us with what’s required.** The insights that come through the intentional practice of the Text become the doctrine for our life. This is a saving faith. It is something very personal, having been tailored to bringing into being, the unique form of mind or use we are created to be.

A purely intellectual engagement with the Word is limited to the memory and will remain such until it is used to examine the life. Without practice it remains a merely historical faith,

but with practise it becomes a saving faith. **It is through practise that the Lord as the Word is given the opportunity to work to regenerate our mind and bring it into the form of heaven.**

What Logopraxis asks us to do, is to **take the principles of the Heavenly Doctrines and work with them with a view to confirming their truth in our own experience.** We work from a principle of positive doubt,

ie. *“The principles are true because we accept that they are from the Lord and they remain true whether I can confirm them in my experience or not.”*

In Logopraxis work we are not taking these principles to try and prove whether they are true or not. **We proceed on the basis that they are true— it’s simply a case of working to see how they are true.** Please read and reread this until it sinks in; this is an extremely important point.

Logopraxis is concerned with not just knowing the truth but also understanding how a truth or principle is true through seeing its application to the life of the mind.

There will be many times when having worked with a principle from the Text that its application will remain obscure. Does this mean I doubt the truth of the Text? No of course not! It simply means that it is beyond my ability to grasp at this time – what do I do?

I hold the question - *“How does this principle play out in me?”* knowing that when my state is such that I can receive insight into its operation, it will come.

PREMISE TRUTHS FOR LOGOPRAXIS:

- The Word is the Lord
- The Word is present through the Texts of Divine Revelation: Sacred Scripture and the Heavenly Doctrine. These Texts form the Lord's body through which His life is expressed; it is in these Texts that we can consciously apprehend the Lord Jesus Christ
- All that is contained within the Texts of Divine Revelation relate to the inner process and structures that belong to the world of the human mind
- The Word is the active agent that works to reform and regenerate the mind
- The Lord as the Word in us is the One who does the seeing (as if of oneself)
- Our minds have distinct levels, as does the Word; the levels in the Word are accommodations addressed to the different levels of the mind
- The Lord is made visible in our midst when we share our experience of the Word's operation in our lives with each other
- The Word describes what is, not what might or might not be
- All evil and falsity is from hell; all good and truth is from the Lord
- The science of correspondences is a living science

SPIRITUAL LITERACY SKILLS: Tools to learn for Self-Examination, Repentance and Non-Identification

- Ability to submit to the authority of the Text to identify, guide, and direct our inner work
- Acceptance that everything that arises in one's life does so under the Lord's providence and offers material for work
- Ability to distinguish levels of thought and feeling so as to avoid mixing them
- Ability to think from first principles and have these order lower level thinking
- Ability to separate one's sense of self from what presents in one's mental landscape (hold all thoughts and affections as "objects in the room" that are no more a part of "me" than physical objects in my surroundings are part of my body)
- Ability to compel oneself – i.e. ability to do the work as-of-self when Truths provide the freedom to work
- For the Word to be applicable to our inner life, we must learn to think spiritually. This is done by removing associations of space (or place), time, person, and matter.
- Ability to work with correspondences as an applied science

6 STEP PROCESS

- 1. Read and Note**
- 2. Review and Select**
- 3. Set a Task**
- 4. Live it**
- 5. Reflect**
- 6. Submission and Community**

The point of these steps is to come to your own way of working with the Word; a way you can sustain.

The point is not to create more mental Scribes and Pharisees who lay heavy burdens telling you there is just one, only, true way (that you are failing at) to understand the way of the Lord.

If your sincere desire is to live from the truth and you keep coming back to the Word with an open mind to learn, you can't go wrong.

At the same time, the practice outlined here has supported significant shifts in the experience and perceptions of those who use it.

The important thing is to keep at it and stay awake to the quality in the thoughts that argue against the process itself.

STEP 1: READ AND NOTE

The Text is not just another thing the Lord flows through- it is THE thing

The approach to reading the Text is not the same as the way we might approach reading a secular work. In Logopraxis work the Text is everything; it is the Lord's presence with us. This is meant quite literally but isn't meant to imply that the Text is the Lord separate from the influx of His life directly into your mind. Both are the Word and both are the Lord, and so form a One. As we shall see, our ability to perceive the Lord is grounded in the Texts of Divine Revelation.

In Logopraxis work we need to remind ourselves constantly

- **It is the Word as Text that serves as the container and foundation for the spiritual sense** (DSS 27; TCR 210-214)
- **The spiritual sense is the Word understood in terms of its application to the life of the mind** (AC 7498)
- **Apart from the Text, our experience of spiritual realities is easily high jacked by the imaginings/ fantasies of our proprium**
- **The proprium is constantly at work to derail any genuine attempts to engage with the Word as the basis for our regeneration** (see De Verbo 13)

If we can remind ourselves of these things, keeping them in mind, we might find we can bring a heightened sense of awareness to our reading.

Center Yourself

If possible spend a little time (5 or 10 minutes) centering yourself before you approach the reading for the session. There is no set way of doing this, but whatever you do, it should be something that steadies the inner activity of your mind and lifts your awareness out of external life concerns and brings you into a state of openness before the Lord. **In Logopraxis work your reading can be regarded as an act of worship.**

Reading spiritual material requires conscious attention; so if possible, it is extremely helpful to have conditions organised in a way that **minimises the potential for distractions.**

- **Minimise external distractions (quiet room, quiet time of day, give yourself the time required)**
- **Minimise internal distractions (breathing, meditation, read Scripture beforehand)**

Here are a **couple of exercises that you may find helpful to minimise the internal distractions**; they are offered merely as a suggestion for those of you who may find them useful.

The first is counting breaths.

It is a simple exercise that reigns in the tendency of my mind to follow random thought associations. Sitting comfortably in an upright posture bring your attention to your breath. Breathing normally, count silently, 1 on the first inhalation, 2 on the first exhalation, then 3 on the second inhalation and 4 on the second exhalation and so on up to 10, returning to 1 again and repeating the count up to 10 before returning to 1 once more. This can exercise very quickly facilitate a settled state of mind as your attention is drawn out of the external world and becomes focused on the Lord.

Once this is achieved either go directly to the set Text reading, or perhaps, first **read a passage of Scripture with attention**. Chapter 1 of John's Gospel might be a good choice, but you may have other scripture passages that are particularly meaningful for you.

After this Scripture reading, then approach the set Logopraxis reading.

In approaching the reading

Try to be aware that you are bringing yourself before the Lord. This will help to open up an attitude of worship within which holiness resides (De Verbo 2). This attitude has a profound effect on how we relate to the Word and how it relates to us.

As you read, the sense impressions left by the written words of the Text upon your memory, form a correspondential plane into which the Lord's inflowing life can be received and reflected back into your awareness (AC 9419.2; 10137.2; TCR 234).

The Lord is only capable of being present to us in what is His own with us (DP 53; AC 9338.6). This is why He has provided His Word in the form of a written text. (AE 112.3) This is a profound idea, that the very Text itself, being written in pure correspondences (HH 305), provides us with a memory that is His own in us; yet He offers it in such a way that it always appears to be ours. The letter of the Word is the point of connection where the presence of the Lord can be known.

When we approach the Word with openness to receiving what the spirit has to say to His Church within us, then what is reflected back, what catches our attention as we read, what we are drawn to, is where our work lies. **As we outwardly engage with the Text, inwardly we become aware of the Lord's inflowing life. The Text is the point of meeting.** It is where we come into contact with the Lord. It is the means by which what is higher can be reflected back into our low level of awareness.

Reading with Attention

Logopraxis, encourages us to try to **view the Text as descriptive of our own states of mind**. In other words it all has to do with structures and process of consciousness. Just remembering this or keeping it in the forefront of our mind when we are reading, can be an aid to experiencing the Text differently to that of a casual reading. Of course the descriptions in the Text are overlaid with the natural imagery of person, place, time and space, which makes doing this for any length of time challenging.

Here is a simple exercise in reading with attention...

The aim is to observe, how the mind tends to bring you down into what is natural.

Select a paragraph of the Text and read as you have been doing, making a determination to read with attention. When you recognise your attention has been drawn down into the literal meaning of the words, say to yourself – *“This is describing states of consciousness in me”* and try to hold your attention in this idea as you read further. You are not reading for meaning here, but training your attention, so just repeat this statement every time you find you are not present to the act of reading.

The object of the exercise is simply to get a sense of how strong the pull into the natural features of the Text is, without getting frustrated due to the Text not yielding what you hoped for.

Do this each day using a fresh portion of Text for at least 5 minutes.

Here’s a number that gives a rationale for the above exercise...

By repeated experience I have been granted the knowledge that the Word is for man a means of communication with heaven. When I read through the Word, from the first chapter of Isaiah to the end of Malachi, and also the Psalms of David, keeping my thoughts fixed on the spiritual sense, I was granted a clear perception that each verse communicated with some community in heaven, and that thus the whole Word communicated with heaven as a whole. From this fact it became clear that just as the Word is the Lord, so too the Word is heaven, since heaven’s being heaven comes from the Lord, and the Lord by means of the Word is the all in all of heaven. (True Christian Religion 272)

In Logopraxis work the very act of reading the set Text is a **spiritual exercise in conscious attention**. We all have habitual ways of engaging with written materials that are not helpful when it comes to engaging with spiritual texts. To engage with the Word in this work requires the creation of a new psychological space or place within our minds, onto which the words of the Text can fall. The idea is to be attentive or to shift our sense of self into a state of observing ourselves in the act of reading, so that we can give attention to what in the Text is reaching out to us. **In this state it is as much about “hearing” what the Lord as the Word is saying to us as it is about reading the words on the page.**

In Logopraxis we have a saying; **“don’t read for information but for application.”**

Another way of thinking about this is that we are to read with conscious attention, expecting

to hear with our spiritual ears what the Lord as the Word is saying to us as He seeks to direct us in our spiritual work for the session. So don't rush your reading. Georg Kuhlewind in writing about reading offers the following advice... *"Read no quicker than you would speak to someone who is in need of support and gentle encouragement."* If it is helpful, try to **remember that engaging with the Word carries the potential for higher realities to make their presence felt in new and remarkable ways.** So in your reading stay open to what's possible, treating your time of reading as an act of worship, which it is.

We may find it's a struggle to hear the Lord through the Text to begin with. Our own internal chatter interferes constantly it seems. What's important is that we persevere. With continued practice the interference will become less of an issue for us. **Realise that it takes time for our spiritual senses to develop, and that they only develop through use.** The Word is a creative force and as we engage with it, it looks to create us anew, to make us whole. The process involves the opening of our spiritual senses, so that we can more readily respond to the promptings that flow in from heavenly spheres of influence. These inner senses, attuned to higher realities, are only opened as we look to the Lord as the Word who speaks into our life from the Texts of divine revelation.

Reading is a spiritual practice – **through reading with conscious attention we develop "ears to hear."** The Word as something active in our life, cultivates a deeper spiritual sensitivity in us so that it remains active beyond our reading and engaging with the Text. We find we are able to read and hear what's being communicated to us when we are in contact with others, in and outside of our Logopraxis life group.

Our life circumstances and the situations we meet, become infused with new meaning as we are led by the Lord to recognise that everything offers us opportunities to develop spiritually, if we have eyes to see and ears to hear.

STEP 2: REVIEW AND SELECT

The process of reading and marking aspects that capture our attention in the Text is done with a view to selecting something to work with. **Just as when reading the Text, the process of selecting should be done consciously.** Take your time to meditatively go over those portions of the Text that caught your interest when you first read through the reading.

Feel free to hold the selected portions of the Text in mind **over a few days**, perhaps reading through them whenever you get an opportunity.

Just see what remains with you. It could be that what you need to work with presents itself in the very first reading of the Text, or it might be that nothing seems to be presenting itself.

In either case remember that **the experience you're having is a product of engaging with the Text.** The Word always provides us with something to work with, and in those times when nothing seems to stand out from the Text, we will still have our internal responses to that experience as material to work with.

People can get a little anxious about whether they are doing it “right” – there’s no need, just follow the 6 Steps and work with what comes up for you.

Try to be aware that in Logopraxis work, while to all appearances you are the one selecting something to work with from the Text, **it is in fact the Text itself that is looking to work in you.** Through the Text, the Lord supplies what’s needed for our work and regeneration.

*“For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of the articulations and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart. And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account.”
(Hebrews 4:12-13)*

Working in the here and now

From a Logopraxis perspective this can be understood in terms of **being present to the Lord and our own inner states in any given moment but especially when engaging with the Text**. This idea is an important one so far as Logopraxis work is concerned. Logopraxis seeks to instill a greater sense of awareness of the Word as the Lord present with us. It takes effort (work) to give attention to our reading of the Text so that it falls fresh onto new ground in our minds.

Through giving conscious attention to the process of reading, the way is opened so that new insights can present themselves. Without such attention the Text remains something passive for us, as it is more likely to become lost in the well-worn ruts of established meanings and associations we unconsciously bring to the process of reading.

Through conscious attention we prepare the psychological soil of our minds and increase the possibility for and fresh insights to arise in our awareness. **When our attention is consciously focused on reading for application, rather than reading for information, our experience of the text is enriched and becomes something active and living.** The Word in us responds to the Text before us, and the two meet in the heightened perceptive sensitivity conscious attention creates. This sensitivity manifests as a sphere of receptiveness to those insights that are directly related to the application of spiritual principles revealed in the Text to life.

The act of attending to the Word as we engage with it is an expression of loving the Lord and to do this with a view to supporting others is, in Logopraxis terms, what it means to love our neighbour.

Conscious attention brings our focus into the here and now so that we can be present both to the Lord as the Word and to our responses as we read. This is an incredibly useful practice for building a higher degree of sensitivity to recognising the quality of the spiritual associations that are present with us in any given moment, whether it's in:

- reading the Text,
- being in the effort to implement a task,
- being present to others in our Life Groups,
- providing summaries of our work online
- Trying to bring a spiritual perspective to deal with aspects of daily life.

If we can make an effort to give up the habitual states that reading normally evokes for us, then when we come to the Word we may find that something higher can be present whereby our experience of the Text working in our life will be that much more real in the here and now of our reading it.

It can be surprising what presents to our awareness when we read with a view to observing our inner responses. Attending to our states as we read will yield material that will reflect attitudes we have towards it, that prior to bringing an attitude of attention have largely been unaware of. Attention will help us see more clearly what kinds of things we

skip over, ignore, are drawn to, what repels us, what we dismiss as being irrelevant etc. **All our reactions and responses to the text contain material for inner work.** They are after all what the Text brings up for us, or what the Lord as the Word would have us see.

Struggling to engage with the Text

If coming to the Text is a struggle, if staying with it is a struggle, if finding a principle or formulating a task is a struggle . . . then take the opportunity to step back from being taken by that struggle and use it as the basis for your work.

Your task when you can't find a task, is to observe what struggling with the Text brings up for you.

- What is your response to the struggle?
- What kind of self-talk arises?
- What is the quality of this dialogue?
- Where does this come from?

Your struggle with the text is a microcosm that will provide you with insights into the attitudes and responses that are present in every struggle you face. Working with the Text in this way allows the Lord to build what is of Himself in us that will have a positive flow on effect into every area of our life.

STEP 3: SET A TASK

Once we have completed the set reading and have made our selection of what we have “chosen” to work with, we now come to Step 3. This step involves creating a task so that we have something specific to work with over the remaining period of the session cycle.

We are seeking to walk a spiritual path tied directly to the practice of the Word understood to be the Texts of Divine revelation as identified in the Heavenly Doctrine itself. These Sacred Texts on every turn provides us with descriptions of spiritual laws or principles that govern the operation of the spiritual world or in Logopraxis terms, states of the human mind.

What Step 3 asks of us is **to identify a single spiritual principle from our reading that we can use to live more consciously from the Word in everyday life.**

In Logopraxis we work with tasks drawn from the Text. **We are creating conditions that form the basis for opportunities towards exercising freedom through self-compulsion.** What happens most often is when we look to implement a task, all kinds of difficulties arise that seem to stand in opposition to doing it.

The presence of these difficulties and resistances gives us something to work against and if we do that work from the Text, then we are in the experience of the Lord building a new will within our growing understanding of truths. Without resistance, there is no opportunity provided for self-compulsion and the building of will in spiritual matters. So in summary from a Logopraxis perspective;

Freedom is the ability to compel oneself to work....

This requires 2 things:

1. Identify a spiritual principle - What are the spiritual realities/principles being revealed in what I am reading?

2. Formulate a task to direct our spiritual practise. - Do I know this to be true in my life or experience?

If I answer yes, I can test my response by providing illustrations from my life. If I struggle to do this then it could be that that "old devil"(proprium) is trying to keep me in the false thought that “knowing is being”. The fact that this reaches out strongly suggests that despite what I think I might know, the point of my work for this Logopraxis cycle is to work with a task drawn from this particular passage.

The earlier in the session you set this focus, the more time you will have to do the work of Logopraxis.

Step 3 can take a couple of days. If you are stuck, feel free to talk to your facilitator. They are there to help!

Posting your Task Online

Once you have your focus (or ‘task’) defined, you can post it to the group. Sharing your focus (‘task’) can help others relate to the Text in an expanded way. Posting also helps you commit to a line of action.

Task Primers

The following verb primers are taken from tasks developed from working with the book Heaven and Hell. They are offered here to assist Logopractitioners to develop tasks in their own work with the readings of the Texts.

VERB PRIMERS

- identify the quality of...
- be aware of (when)...
- to reflect on...
- to accept and consciously acknowledge...
- to observe my tendency to...
- to internally decline...
- to notice...
- to take note of...
- do I like the idea of...
- to cultivate an awareness of...
- to reflect on experiences where...
- how do I (seek)...
- to work to ...
- what is the...
- bring my attention to...
- observe the degree of...
- remember to ask the question “...”
- observe any shift of state when this truth is remembered...
- to become aware of and refrain from...
- what is my inner attitude to...

Reworking the statement

To formulate a task we may need to rework the statement or description we have selected from the Text to make it more readily applicable to the inner life of our mind. This is best illustrated from the Texts themselves. See examples in **Appendices 1**.

As general principle the closer a task or spiritual focus is linked to the actual Text we have selected to work with, the better. Try to get as specific as you can in your work from the Word and where possible try to avoid formulating more general tasks. If we can formulate a

principle from the Text first, formulating a task that relates directly to the Text should be relatively straightforward.

The “In Me” exercise

In this work of Logopraxis we operate from a principle that all revelation is given to teach us about what exists within ourselves.

Revelation is not to give us information about others.

This means that everything in the Word is relevant. If we can’t see the relevance we have work to do in order to discover how what is described finds its expression in our life. The spiritual world doesn’t exist outside the human mind – in fact it is the human mind. Everything in the Heavenly Doctrines exists within your own mind.

One simple approach that can help us to think in terms of state rather than time and space is the IN ME tool. It works by placing the words “in me” into the text to focus our attention inwardly in spots of the Text where we might be more inclined to focus externally.

See Appendices 2 for examples on how to do this with the Text.

The “In Me” approach is offered as a technique to help your everyday thinking bridge to spiritual thought and to aid in task setting. It is a means not an end, and will eventually fall away as you strive to receive the Word as the Lord.

Removing time, space (or place) and person

We are told that in order to think spiritually all ideas of time and space have to be removed from our thinking. See **Appendices 3** for examples on how to do this when working with the Text.

Setting our Task upfront as opposed to working from hindsight

When people begin using Logopraxis it is often the case that they work from what the week has brought them and use this to frame a task or connect with the Text. This is "perfectly ok" of course to get us started in drawing connections between the Text and life experience as illustrating it. But there are real advantages in working consciously with a task so that we allow the Text to shape our life in the sense of what we actually attend to.

One of the subtle differences that you will notice as to these two ways of engaging with the Text, is that working from hindsight is much more passive. To work up front with a task

requires an effort, always "...as if as of ones self..." that can open up possibilities for something higher to enter our consciousness when we remember our task.

Life conditions

Life conditions can be used as triggers or reminders. ie. *when I am talking with others I will remember to . . . , when I am running late and get in my car I will . . . , when I feel angry I will remember . . .*

However - they are not something we are trying to change. We aim to maintain our focus on inner things – which – as they change- may eventually change the external life factors. But they are not the focus.

Logopraxis work is psychological work; you are called to work with the Word in a way that brings a light onto your mental life with its thoughts and affections. It's a given that you have a life in the external world, but this external level of life with its relationships, activities, situations, and circumstances is not the direct focus of Logopraxis work.

It's important that these levels of life are kept separate in our thinking so that we can be clear about the "right" points for the application of the portion of text we are seeking to work with. When we first begin working with this approach we tend to focus on our outer life, looking for improvements in our circumstances, relationships etc.

It is perhaps one of the most difficult things of all not to have our attention drawn into the external world and see it with it's outer events, circumstances, and people as having some causal connection with how we are feeling internally. *"If only this or that would change, if only she or he would just do things this way then ... "* What we fail to see when attitudes like this dominate our sense of life is that it creates wrong ways of thinking in terms of the relationship between outer and inner life that result in unnecessary suffering. We have yet to see that **disharmonies in outer life are but outer effects that represent disharmonious relationships that exist between elements within ourselves.** The spiritual world is a world of causes while the natural world is the world of effects. This is a spiritual law and as such cannot be reversed.

Yet how often do we have it reversed in the way we relate our external to our internal life.

If we are looking to see changes in our external world thinking that such changes will provide us with relief from inner feelings of discomfort, frustration, sadness, or alternatively provide us with feelings of happiness, fulfilment and joy in life, then we don't understand the nature of the laws that govern cause and effect. We will forever be looking to see change in our externals missing, or even refusing, to give attention to our inner spiritual world which is where the cause of suffering truly lies. This attitude lives from a belief that the external world is causal and the internal world is its effect, which is an inversion of an established law

of life. This is merely **a diversionary tactic of the proprium to draw our attention away from where the real work has to be done.** Whenever our beliefs run contrary to what is true, the inevitable result will be some form of suffering.

In Logopraxis we are asked to create a task from a principle or truth that our attention is drawn to in the reading that will serve to provide a focus for our practise over the period leading into our next meeting. Because the task is drawn from a truth from the Word it provides us with something we can remember to do. **When we attend to our task in life we are put in a position to see what would otherwise not see, thereby drawing a conscious connection between our inner state and outer lives.**

Using a task from the Text is an effort to bring these dimensions of life into their proper relationship—which is to say that maintaining attention on the inner state is made the primary focus for our spiritual work, while we engage with the situations and circumstances of our everyday external life. **The practise of a task helps to keep what belongs to external life related to what is genuinely spiritual.** This is one way of understanding the principle of the Word, being that which conjoins or unites heaven (the internal man) and earth (the external man).

Working with a task in this way also gives us direct experience of discrete degrees or levels and enables us to practice keeping these separate in the sense of not confusing them so that what belongs to the external life remains in its degree while what belongs to the internal life remains in its degree.

As we come to experientially see not just that truths are true, but how they are true, the structures of our mind are actually reorganized by the seeing itself. This kind of seeing is only possible through the practice of truths from the Word; it is an experiential seeing that arises from the good of charity present in those truths we practice. It is the way the Lord as the Word saves us.

External life can only be called a charitable life insofar as our inner dimension is attended to. **It is the practice of charity on this inner plane of life that keeps external life in its proper perspective and gives it spiritual meaning.** It is in our effort to work faithfully, to be sincere in our dealings with others, to operate with integrity so far as our external employments, relationships, situations and circumstances are concerned that we become aware of our inner responses. It is this awareness that gives form to seeing what it is that needs to be worked on interiorly.

Logopraxis provides us with the tools to see how **disharmonies in outer life can be useful for our spiritual growth if we make a conscious effort to use them as a trigger** to remind us to focus our attention on our inner states of mental life. If we would do this while resisting the temptation to attribute causal properties to outer events then maybe some change might become possible in the nature of the states we choose to bring to outer events and which ultimately determine the quality of meaning we bring to them.

Failure

In external life we are conditioned to set tasks to achieve outcomes and then measure our success or failure against the degree to which the outcome we set has been achieved or not. For the most part this works so far as external projects and life goals are concerned. Where the inner life is concerned, however, this approach to setting tasks to achieve an outcome is bound to end in a sense of failure.

The purpose of a task in Logopraxis work is not to achieve a predetermined outcome that we have formulated. **Setting tasks is simply a means to enable us to bring a specific focus to our inner work.** The formulation of a task and the effort to implement it in life, creates conditions that enable us to be in life in a way that just isn't there without a task to focus our attention on something higher. Tasks bring a focus to our work that creates new conditions in which something related to the spiritual life (i.e. the life of our mind) can be seen.

So the goal (if I can use that term) in Logopraxis work in creating a task, is not to fulfil our task, it is, rather, to see whatever the setting up of a task enables us to see. This is important, as Logopraxis is not a practise that is outcome orientated. We do the practise for the sake of the practise itself and leave the outcomes to the Lord. Why? Because **any outcome we set for ourselves will be based on a complex set of preconceptions tied into the needs, wants, and expectations of the proprium** as to what it is the Lord wants for our life.

Let's take **an example** that involves a common form of a task that many of us have used to illustrate. One formulated along these kinds of lines:

For this session I'm going to be more loving/charitable to those around me (or maybe towards a particular person).

Anyone who has attempted to practise a task of this kind will know that it is impossible to achieve. What happens is I end up seeing just how far short I fall from whatever ideal I hold so far as what it means to be more loving towards others is concerned. If the goal of the task is to be more loving, then I will certainly fail. My response to this might be that I just need to try even harder, but I can assure you that when I try even harder I only end up feeling an even greater sense of failure. Why? Because we can't make ourselves more loving no matter how hard we try. In Logopraxis work it is our failure to be more loving or to measure up to the expectations we set for ourselves that turns the task into a success. It is never about being more loving – **it is always about seeing whatever our effort to practise the task, brings to the forefront of our awareness.**

This is why in Logopraxis work - success can be said to be measured in failure.

STEP 4: LIVE IT!

What you end up working with is under the Lord's Divine Providence. It will be exactly what is required, not just for you but for others in your Life Group and for the life of the group as a whole.

Work at staying conscious of your task as well as what comes up in opposition to your task.

Prepare for step 5 and consider the questions as the week goes by.

We have all experienced times when we struggle to engage with the Text, and while it may be difficult to appreciate at the time, this struggle does contain useful material for us. It's a struggle that takes the form of a lack in motivation to engage with the Text and it has its roots in the natural man/mind that constantly works to undermine the transformative presence of higher spiritual influences flowing in from the Lord.

The thing to remember (and this may only be possible by reflection after the fact) is that **the proprium, in order to maintain its dominance within the mind, gets us to buy into conclusions drawn from the appearances of the senses to demotivate us**, so that we hold off from engaging in the necessary ongoing work of self examination and repentance.

We don't engage with the Text and this has a compounding effect on our state as **the hells begin to jump in pointing to our lack of engagement as proof that this work is not for us**.

All this of course is false.

The reason we call self examination and repentance work is because it takes effort to compel ourselves to use truths to reflect on the quality of our states of mind; We know that this is something that must continue to be done to the end of our life in this world; that there will be times of difficulty interspersed with times of respite; that despite how things appear externally, inwardly the Lord's mercy is such that all things work toward the best possible outcome for all.

Can we avoid difficulties and times of struggle in this kind of work? The simple answer is no. But we can learn to navigate them by staying open to the processes that unfold as we continue to willingly place ourselves before the Word, giving it the opportunity to do its work within us.

What we feel as a lack of motivation at times is due to selfish and worldly loves we are attached to, but not yet conscious of, being stirred up and reacting to the presence of truths from the Word. It is a teaching of the Word that, **while in the throes of temptation a person feels the Lord to be most absent when in fact He is more fully present than at any other time, being in fact the one who is fighting for us**. These kinds of experiences offer opportunities to build our understanding of inner processes in the light of what the Word

teaches us, providing us with what's needed for the journey ahead. **Preparation rather than outcomes is what much of our efforts in this work is about.** In Logopraxis work we are looking to the Lord as the Word to have something higher become active in us within which a new sense of self can be established.

Attaching to an outcome

Attaching to an outcome leads to frustration, guilt, despair and other negative states because in this act **we are working from a sense that we know what the outcome should be.** This is another form of living in our imagination, making up what will be in the future. The goal of this work is to live in the moment – we don't and can't know what the future holds. Our work is in what is presenting in the now. The Lord sets the outcome not us.

We set tasks to create opportunities to observe the behaviour of the proprium and our identification with it. We are not working to change it or make it better; we are working to affirm what the Writings teach concerning it as a matter of life. **It's in our acceptance of what the Word teaches concerning the proprium that breaks its power.**

Our response to the Text is so important in this work of the moment. We all have things we want dealt with, and wish we were rid of, but it's **vital that we learn to work with what the text highlights for us and not what we think needs sorting out.**

To run with what we imagine needs sorting, is to offer as spiritual work the offering of Cain. Anger (frustration, guilt, etc) is the result which ultimately leads to the death of Abel or charity – i.e. the ability to work, for the first of charity is to look to the Lord (Word) and shun evils because they are sins, which is done by repentance or the practice of the Word in relation to the life of our mind.

Over and over the Word tells us what is reasonable to expect: given the proprium, given the natural man, given how the process of reformation works. When our expectations are not from these truths in the Word, they are not reasonable and they will make us suffer more than we need to suffer.

Separating from evil is seeing evil for what it is. The freeing is in the seeing.

STEP 5: REFLECT

-**What happened** when I remembered to implement my task?

- Did I struggle to **remember to do the task**?

-What is the Lord allowing me to **see or what has He taught** me concerning my thought and feeling life?

-**How is this connected with the reading** for this Session? (What principle from the text did I see actually got illustrated in my life?)

The struggle or tension we experience in trying to maintain our focus on doing a spiritual task, arises from an underlying attitude that thinks that in ourselves we have the power to “do”. It would appear that we have a well-developed sense of an independent “can do” self. Yet by setting tasks to give a focus to our inner work, we discover the inadequacies of this well intentioned “self’s” ability to do the simplest of things related to spiritual work. The tasks and our inability to stay with them are very useful in bringing this self to the end of itself. We need to constantly remind ourselves that the aim of the tasks we create from the text is to facilitate self-observation – to help us to see how things actually are. **It is only through persevering with trying to do the tasks that we are brought to a sense of not being able to “do”.** This is a realisation every Logopractitioner must come to before they can even begin to “do”. For it is in the discovery of our own inability that we find that it is the Lord in us who does the work, or what is the same, that our being able to “do” is from the Lord/Word.

This realisation has far reaching consequences for **it weakens our attachment to the proprium’s drive to seek merit in everything it does.** This merit-seeking-cycle only has power over a person when they are caught in the appearance that that can do from their self. The principle is that we must come to the end of our self to find our self, and we can only come to the end of our self through making efforts to do inner work, then, **when we find we cannot “do” from our self, the power to do from the Lord is present.**

The belief, that we have power or life in ourselves, is a denial of the truth that the Lord alone has life and therefore is the only one who possesses the power to act in Himself. The “my-self” who thinks it can “do” - really can’t and **what’s required is a new sense of self that acknowledges that it can only “do” from the Lord/Word.** The old self or proprium, built up from believing in the false appearances of its senses, just doesn’t want to face this spiritual fact, and never can. While we are identified with this lower self and its beliefs and feelings of having life in itself we remain bound to lower spiritual influences who live in the illusion of being able to do. Through our work with the Text we are constantly being offered truths of a higher order which if practiced, build a new sense of self, based on the experiential knowledge of truth’s operation in our life.

Doctrine of knowledge versus doctrine of life

Ongoing work with Logopraxis brings us to see that we have, in general, two very different coexisting states of doctrine.

The first is doctrine in our memory: our knowledge about spiritual realities. This doctrinal state includes a whole range of beliefs we readily subscribe to and feel aligned with. These beliefs include not only our own understanding of what the Heavenly Doctrines teach, but also what others say they teach.

The **second state** of doctrine is the more unconscious **doctrine we actually live from.**

When we first begin to seriously walk a path of inner reflection and self-examination, the distinction between these two forms of doctrine is often quite blurred. We tend to think what we profess with our lips is what we believe. **Through Logopraxis, the truths from the Word confront what we say we believe - with our actual responses to life.** For example, we might say we believe implicitly in the Lord's providence, but when we reflect on our life through the tasks we create from the Text, we see that we actually live from a raft of worries and anxieties which manifest as the effort to control and manage the people, circumstances and situations of our lives.

If we are willing to see how we actually experience life, without filtering it through who we think we are or what we believe our life should be, we will soon discover the material for our inner work.

Logopraxis can help us come to see more clearly the distinction between the doctrine of our lips and the doctrine of our actual life. **Once we see this distinction, we can be shown by the Word what is required of us.**

This isn't to say that the beliefs we profess with our lips are not truths. They may well be, but knowing truths and living from them are two very different states of life. The reflective question for us in Logopraxis work is not, "What is our doctrine?" , the question is, "What is our life?" **Seeing our life more clearly, opens up opportunities for truths from the Word to work in an entirely new way. We begin to acquire the doctrine unique to our life.**

It is this unique perspective (won only by the fresh view of our inner responses provided through the lens of our chosen Text) we share in our Life Group.

Sharing it, we are building and promoting a more perfect collective life; a community that approaches ever so slightly a living experience that Heaven's perfection is founded in diversity.

STEP 6: SUBMISSION AND COMMUNITY

In Logopraxis the “submission” is what you share at your Life Group. It is a report of what happened with your thinking in relation to doing your task and what you learned. Share what your work from the Text revealed to you.

A submission includes:

- Number for the paragraph and your chosen piece of text
- Spiritual principle implied by your chosen piece of text
- Task you formulated
- What happened when you were aware from your task?
- If you happened to see the principle from the text actually illustrated by your life circumstances in the last week

To share your work for the session, **don’t worry about bringing your whole process with the text or circumstantial story** beyond what will set the context of what you learned.

This summary of your work is the effect of the Word’s work in you. It’s not yours. You have benefited no doubt, but **the higher use of the submission is to benefit others as well**. This is how a spiritual community based on our experience of the Word is created and sustained.

What has been worked into you through your willingness to engage with the Text is what sustains the Logopraxis community.

It is our bread, which when shared, opens the eyes of our hearts that we might see that it is the Lord Himself working in our very midst as the Word (see Lk 24:30-31).

Staying Present

Our gift to the group happens primarily between meetings, it is our work to be specifically open, listening and responding to the Word. If in our listening, we hear nothing, reporting so, is what there is to share. The content of our submission only represents Logopraxis work. Our submissions aren’t to entertain or inform each other. The gift to the group is our commitment to be open to the Word and objective about our response to the proprium.

Over time we collectively put together a picture of the kinds of tasks from which nothing happens. This is valuable. It opens the mind to think differently.

The idea of loving our neighbor in a Logopraxis context is to **only offer to the group what is directly related to our experience of engaging with the Word**.

The temptation is always there to find in a Logopraxis group meeting, a ready-made platform for our proprium to share its cherished views on life. But, **as soon as we drop down into the more external levels in thought and conversation, we enter the world of opinion,**

speculation, and theorizing. This takes us away from being in what is real into the world of appearances.

Instead, if we **give our attention to our own states as others share**, and when it is our turn, only share what relates to inner work, we are open to an experience of something higher.

By participating in a Logopraxis group we are looking to **cultivate a level of spiritual authenticity** through living from our experience of the Word.

The hope is that we will be able to carry more and more of this into our lives beyond when we meet.

THE LIFE GROUP AS A HUMAN BEING OR COLLECTIVE PERSON

The Heavenly Doctrine points out that the whole of heaven when viewed from the highest perspective is in the form of a human being. That all its inhabitants when taken as a whole, form a “Grand Man” within which there exists every function and structure found in a single human being. This is because the human form is the Divine form, and therefore is that which comes into being as the only possible expression of the Lord’s life within those He is creating. The Lord is order itself, and the manifestation of that order is in the form of the Divine Human. This means that on the largest or smallest scale of creation, all is organised or strives towards a more complete and thereby perfect, human form.

To see our Life Group as a human being requires a perceptual shift whereby our sense of person, as something limited to a single individual, expands to incorporate **many individuals functioning as one in support of a common use**. In Logopraxis that use is one of supporting people to come into an ever-deepening sense of the Lord as the Word through our willingness to work from its truths, not just for our own benefit but for the benefit of all those we are in connection with.

We can encourage this shift in perception through offering ourselves gentle reminders that **what reaches out to each of us from the Text to work with provides material not just for our personal spiritual development, but also for the development of the life of other individuals in the group and for the group as a whole**. We all can relate to being supported by the Text on the level of our own personal work. As part of a Life Group we have also experienced being nurtured through what others share out of their direct experience of the Text working in their life. The idea however that we are part of a collective human being that takes form as we meet together is somewhat more abstract and so more difficult to grasp. Whether the collective human being is consciously acknowledged by us or not, it remains as something present that we each participate in and are influenced by as we engage in Logopraxis work.

The collective person is brought into being through the Word as we share our direct experience of the Text working in our lives with others. When goods and truths from the Word form the basis for being together, new possibilities for new ways of relating together in the Lord open up. In an effort to preserve these possibilities, attention has been given to how we meet when we come together.

The form of the round as the basis for meeting, fosters higher relational linkages that serve as the ground for developing a deepening sense of being in a spiritual community (i.e. being in connection with others with the express purpose of supporting each other to experience the Word as the Lord.)

In the very act of meeting, what we bring from our experience of the Word's operation in our life, becomes a living conjoining presence:

- Creating connections between us and the Lord,
- Between us and those in the spiritual world,
- Between us and each other

Many have spoken of the higher quality of contact experienced in the sphere created through sharing their direct experience of the Word working in their lives, and it is this that constitutes the Lord being made visible in our midst.

In Logopraxis work each individual is asked to attend to what reaches out to them from the Text as a basis for their personal work. From a Logopraxis perspective the individual's work is also for the sake of the others in the group and so we see **that the selection of Text has wider implications under the Lord's Providence.** In this sense what reaches out to us from the Text to work with, is the Lord's gift to us and is offered for the sake of bringing what's needed for the life of the group as a whole.

It is in making a conscious effort to see the group as a whole, as a collective human being, as we approach and work with the Text that will provide us with a stronger sense of **working on ourselves for the sake of others in our group as well as for the group as a whole.** By holding this in mind as we approach the Text and apply it to our life we can have our sense of what it means to love the neighbour expanded in relation to spiritual work within a small group context.

So in coming together as a Life Group **we are really exploring the dynamics involved in how to be together in the Word.**

This involves expanding our sense of what constitutes a human being. All the descriptions of heaven as a Grand Man made up of countless societies, with each society being a fully functioning human being that is composed of individual angels, can help us gain a fuller appreciation of what a Logopraxis group can be. The Word governs the whole of heaven and it is its reception into the hearts and minds of all there that organises it into the human form, in which the Lord dwells as a spirit within its body.

The Lord is looking to be present in our midst, and He is indeed present when the things of the Word are made the basis for our being together, for then it is the Word that leads, guides, and directs, all things toward a fuller experience of Himself as the "living bread come down from heaven."

Dedicate what you do in Logopraxis to the intention, to be of more use in your interactions with others.

LIFE GROUP RULES

A few rules to set the context of this work:

1. This is **not a discussion group or a sharing group**, it is a Logopraxis life group.
2. Nothing shared in the group is to go beyond the confines of the group.
3. No member has a right to take it upon his or her self to give advice, criticize, correct or praise what any other member posts in submissions or shares in a face-to-face group.
4. **Responses to what another member shares should be framed in the context of your own life.** E.g. How what they have shared has helped you gain a better sense of the Lord (the Word) working in your own life; or how it illustrates insight into some general principle you can use, etc.
5. As a member, you are asked to share from your experience of the Text working in your life and to avoid sharing anything you don't know to be true in your own experience. Remember that intellectual speculations do little to support genuine growth.

There is an expectation that as a member of the group, you agree to abide by the five rules above and will contribute to the life of the group by making a submission for each session when due.

ROUNDS AND REASONS

The structure of the Logopraxis Life Group meeting is based on a series of rounds designed to allow for **only one person to speak at any given time, without interruption from others.**

This structure is designed to promote a way of being with others that places people's experience of the Word working in their life, at the center of their interactions within the group.

A shared experience of the Word

From its inception Logopraxis has been an experiment in HOW TO BE, with the Word, and with others through a shared experience of the Word. It is the practice of the Word that brings everything into connection with everything else. The Lord, in the Gospels, declared that:

*“Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there I am in the midst of them.”
Matthew 18:20. By the Lord's name is meant the Word, for the Lord is the Word (AC 5502;
John 1:1).*

To experience the Lord's presence “in the midst”, is to share in the lived experience of the Word working in people's lives. It is **this lived experience of the Word, when shared with others that serves as the soul or life of the group**, where the group is seen as a collective person.

As each individual brings the gift of their life with the Word and places it upon the altar of receptive hearts, it is received by the Lord within each and every member of the group, who, through apportioning to each according to their need and capacity to receive, is made known in their midst.

Maintaining a focus on ONLY sharing our life in the Word

It is vital that people's **sharing remains experiential and doesn't cross over into intellectual speculation or theoretical discussion** about doctrinal matters that sit outside their direct experience of the Text.

The use of rounds is helpful in this regard for it limits the tendency to engage in discussion and crosstalk. It therefore helps maintain the integrity of Logopraxis, where the focus is on building a sense of connection with the Word and others, based solely on sharing the direct experience of the Word working within the mind.

Round One

The talker:

Start by sharing the chosen portion of the Text, the task, and the results of this. Focus on reporting what happened when you were present to the Lord's Word and your own inner states, or when you weren't! **Aim to keep your comments focused on observations and lessons learned.**

What you are offering is your gift to the group. It is what the Lord as the Word has given you (from your work) for the spiritual nourishment of the group.

The immediate work during this round is to use your words very consciously: don't offer excuses; keep your words focused not on what you did, but on what happened because of the conditions you set up working with the Text in step 3.

Do your best to not ramble, as there are others who need to talk.

If a member has not done the work they may also opt to just "pass" in this round.

The listener:

When it is someone else's turn, the work is to listen.

You are listening to what the Lord is teaching the group – to what he is saying to the Church in us for the benefit of the Church of the group. The picture He is painting may come through as each person speaks in turn.

The job of listening to what the Lord is saying is often harder than talking, and is an opportunity to practice self-observation during a LP meeting.

A listener might hear the Lord. A listener might hear the static and illusions of their own proprium reacting to the talker.

If your thoughts or feelings intrude, note their quality and set them aside. Re-focus on the speaker.

In a meeting our inner work can be highlighted and is a great opportunity to practice being in the present.

Round Two

The question we are holding in this round is: *“What has the Lord provided the group?”*

The talker:

Someone who talks in round two has been listening in round one and they have something they heard the Lord providing to the group and are sharing it. These are often “ah-ha” moments.

The listener:

A listener in round two may not have insights to offer, but will be fed by what is being seen and shared by others in this round.

We may start just by hearing the Lord speak through someone else directly to us and to our session’s work.

The immediate work during this round is to see (and not act on) any tendency you have to use this round to compliment, praise, affirm, criticize or correct what another has said during Round One.

This second round is also a good time to practice distinguishing between the levels in your mind of what you know from your own experience and what you have as intellectual speculation or emotional response.

We have a prayer in between Round Two and Round Three to mark the end of the active Logopraxis report and the support portion of a meeting.

Round Three

This round is for the discussion of what’s come up for people in regards to working with Logopraxis. **It is not Logopraxis itself, but is added in the meeting to support Logopractitioners as they are led.**

Talking and listening are more fluid here, but attending to our own states as we listen to others and speak about the Word is a ripe opportunity.

In all three rounds, loving the neighbour is our willingness to examine the nature and quality of our mental life, as we share and listen to others’ experience of the Word.

APPENDICES 1: SETTING TASKS

From Arcana Celestia

AC 2590. I have been taught in many ways that gentiles who have led a morally correct life and have been obedient ones, who have led charitable lives one with another, and have received some kind of conscience in keeping with their religion, are accepted in the next life, where with anxious desire and care angels instruct them in the goods and truths of faith. While they are being instructed they behave in an unassuming, intelligent, and wise manner, receiving and taking in what they are taught with ease. For they have not formed for themselves any ideas which are contrary to the truths of faith and need to be dispelled, still less any obstacles to the Lord, as with so many Christians who have led a life of evil.

Here we have a description of what are termed “gentiles” and “Christians”. Throughout the reading a contrast is drawn between these groups. This highlights the contrast between what we profess to believe and what we actually live our life from. We are being taught that our actual life determines our openness to instruction in truths in the next life. This is a general principle drawn from the reading as a whole and we could use this as something to work with. We could reword it to make it more specific and easier to apply.

Incidentally, when the Word is speaking of ‘the next life’ it is talking about life in the spiritual world, which from a Logopraxis perspective equates to the life of our mind: our spiritual world. Keeping this in mind, and coming back to the selected portion of the text, we see that what is described as ‘gentiles’ or ‘Christians’ in the next life must equate to certain states of life active in the spiritual world. As such they will equate to corresponding mental states within us all. Names denote qualities and in the case of this reading we are given ample indications of what the qualities these two names embody.

It may be helpful to think of these ‘gentile’ and ‘Christian’ states in terms of attitudes that can manifest when we are receiving instruction or being corrected. Seen in this light we begin to see that the Text, in describing ‘gentile’ and ‘Christian’ states and defining their qualities, provides us with something we can work with to help us see these states within ourselves. The Text now holds potential for application – we can use it to give form to states or attitudes of resistance and openness to spiritual correction/instruction. In other words, we can now come to see in our own experience that what the Text describes as ‘gentiles’ and ‘Christians’ can be found within our own life.

Once we are able to define a spiritual principle setting a task or spiritual focus for our work should be relatively straightforward.

In the context of the Arcana 2590 above, a task could be:

To seek to recognise the qualities attributed to gentiles and those attributed to Christians in our own mental states or attitudes.

From Apocalypse Revealed

AR 832.2 [2] It should be known that no one has any spiritual good from the Lord except through truths from the Word. For the Word's truths exist in the light of heaven, and goods in the warmth of that light. Consequently unless one's intellect is in the light of heaven through the Word, his will cannot enter into the warmth of heaven. Love and charity cannot take form except through truths from the Word. A person cannot be reformed except through truths from the Word. The church itself takes form in a person in consequence of those truths – not in consequence of those truths in the intellect alone, but by living in accordance with them. Only then do truths enter into the will and become goods.

This number is packed with principles that are openly stated...

- No one has spiritual good from the Lord except through truths from the Word
- The Word's truths exist in the light of heaven, and goods in the warmth of that light
- Unless the intellect is in the light of heaven through the Word, the will cannot enter into the warmth of heaven
- Love and charity cannot take form except through truths from the Word
- A person cannot be reformed except through truths from the Word
- The Church takes form in a person when they live from the truths they have in their intellect
- It is only by living from truths do they enter the will and become goods

We could ask the following question of any of these principles (truths) – Do I know this to be true in my own experience? If so, then I should be able to illustrate the principle from my life. If not, then I can create a task to test the principle with a view to seeing how it operates in my life.

From True Christian Religion

TCR 185 The spiritual world contains climatic zones similar to those in the natural world. There is nothing in this world, which does not have its counterpart in the other, but their origins are different. In the natural world the varying seasons depend upon how far the sun is from the equator; in the spiritual world they depend upon how remote the affections of the will, and so the thoughts of the understanding, are from true love and true faith. Everything there corresponds to these two.

As in the example from the AC above, when speaking of the spiritual world in Logopraxis we are speaking of mental states belonging to the life of our minds. Keeping this in mind opens the way for the Text to be directly applied to our inner life.

A principle that can be drawn from this number is that,

My inner state (climate) is a corresponding effect of how remote my affections of the will, and so the thoughts of the understanding, are from true love and true faith

A task formulated to work with this principle could take the form of...

To become more aware of the “climate” of my inner landscape – noting states of coldness and warmth and to try and capture the recurring patterns of thought if any that are associated with such states. Make an effort to remember that states of cold and warmth reflect my relationship to true love and true faith, and to note what impact, if any, remembering this has on my internal state.

From Heaven and Hell

HH 228. Angels have been permitted to activate my steps, my actions, and my tongue and speech, as they would, and this by influx into my will and thought; and I have learned thereby that of myself I could do nothing. They said afterwards that every man is so ruled, and that he can know this from the doctrine of the Church and from the Word. For he prays that God may send His angels to lead him, direct his steps, teach him, and inspire in him what to think and what to say, and other like things. Yet when man thinks within himself apart from doctrine, he says and believes otherwise. These things have been said to make known what power angels have with man.

The key principle in this number is...

Of ourselves we can do nothing; all activity is the product of influx; when we reflect from doctrine this is known, yet when we think within ourselves apart from doctrine, we say and believe otherwise.

A couple of useful tasks fall out of this principle.

- The first might be something along the lines of giving attention to my conversation to see how much of what I have to say comes from myself or is borrowed from others.
- The second is similar and could be run concurrently – Is what I’m saying being said with the doctrine of influx in mind or apart from that doctrine? – What happens in those times I realise that I’m not speaking from an understanding of that doctrine – does this modify what I say or my experience of the conversation?
- A third task might be to bring that doctrine to the forefront of my mind when another person is speaking and to observe the effect on my own state and view of the other person.

APPENDICES 2: THE “IN ME” EXERCISE

In the Heavenly Doctrines principles are often embedded in descriptions of things found in the other life. Rather than state the principle openly, it is illustrated it in a way that natural people (we) can relate to, in terms much like things in this life. Yet we know that angels have no sense of space and time but think in terms of states of good (space) and truth (time).

When we think from space and time in relation to spiritual realities we easily miss the application to our own lives. Our perception tends to rest in an idea that what is being described is something that will have relevance to me after I leave this world (future time). Logopraxis is designed to encourage you to think of the Text as a revelation of how the Lord's love and wisdom operates in your own inner states of life here and now. To do that we need to begin to think spiritually, like the angels, which means we need to begin to think in terms of the states of the life of our minds: we need, to the best of our ability, to remove ideas of time and space from our thought.

To illustrate this lets look at Heaven and Hell #3. It says this...

If people within the church have ignored the Lord and recognized only the Father and have closed their minds to other thoughts, they are outside heaven. Since they do not receive any inflow from heaven, where the Lord alone is worshipped, they gradually lose their ability to ponder the truth of one thing after another. Eventually they either become speechless or inarticulate. They walk around aimlessly with their arms hanging down loosely as though all the strength had gone from their joints.

On the other hand, people who have denied the Lord's divine nature and have recognized only his human nature (like the Socinians) are also excluded from heaven. They are taken a little way forward to the right and are let down into the depths, which completely separates them from the Christian realm. Then too, there are people who claim to believe in an invisible Divine called the Being of the Universe and reject any faith in the Lord. When they are examined, it turns out that they do not believe in any god at all, since this invisible Divine of theirs is actually like the first principles of nature. This is incompatible with faith and love, because it eludes [actual] thought. These people are banished to the company of those called materialists. (New Century Edition; Swedenborg Foundation)

The idea of person is strong in this passage, it talks of people within the church; of people who have denied the Lord's divine nature; then there is the use of pronouns that keep the mind in the idea of person e.g. *they and their*. The first thing to be aware of is that this use of language, when it falls onto the natural level of our minds, immediately draws a separation between those people being described and ourselves. This separation enables us to deflect what's being described and think it belongs to others and not ourselves. What we have is a description of those people over there in the spiritual world or who existed some time in the past, the implication being that, it's not something that applies to me.

So, with the first paragraph of HH #3 it might look something like this...

If people (in me) within the church (in me) have ignored the Lord (in me) and recognized only the Father (in me) and have closed their minds to other thoughts, they are outside heaven (in me). Since they do not receive any inflow from heaven (in me), where the Lord (in me) alone is worshipped, they gradually lose their ability to ponder the truth of one thing after another. Eventually they either become speechless or inarticulate. They walk around aimlessly with their arms hanging down loosely as though all the strength had gone from their joints.

Using the “in me” tool may seem a bit unnatural to begin with, but once we get beyond that, it can be quite useful for getting hold of the principle embedded in the natural meaning of the words of the text.

There are no rules about where “in me” is placed. You can be free about how you use it. It's simply a tool to jolt us out of being stuck in the natural meaning of the words to help us extract a spiritual principle we can then use to develop a task.

By placing “in me” into the text we can look to an inner application of things. We are then confronted with questions like: what are the people in me, the church in me, the Lord in me, the Father in me and heaven in me? Thankfully the Heavenly Doctrines do offer us answers to these kinds of questions through the science of correspondences. The science of correspondences enables us to map elements of the natural world to their spiritual causes.

Because the Word is from the Lord, it is Him. It is the Word that constitutes the Lord in me. When we really see that the Lord is the Word we move away from attributing natural ideas of a finite person to the Divine. We are then held in the spiritual idea of what is truly human: the Lord in His Divine Human, which is the Word.

The people “in me” refers to what populates my mind in the form of truths; the church “in me” is the mind itself or the sum of the truths that form my understanding of spiritual realities. This leaves the Father “in me” and heaven “in me”. In the overall context of this passage the Father is good separated from truth, which is described in terms of acknowledging the Divine with the lips and not through obedience to what truths teach. Heaven is where the Lord/Word is, or the state of good that arises when we live from truths as a matter of life.

So let's pull it all together. What we have is the idea that:

when thoughts (the people in me) within my mind (the church in me) ignore what the Word teaches (the Lord in me) yet continue to profess to believe in the Divine (the Father in me) my mind is closed off to other thoughts (thoughts that seek to lead me to seeing the Lord/Word as Divine) and so cut me off from heavenly states of life (heaven in me).

APPENDICES 3: TAKING OUT TIME, SPACE (PLACE) AND PERSON

The state of the Church down to the time of the Flood is described.

AC 234. And because the Church at that time destroyed itself completely, it is foretold that the Lord will come into the world and save the human race.

If we think in terms of time and space (which is to think naturally) then we cannot avoid taking this as a statement describing historical events, or what has occurred in time and space. We are told that in order to think spiritually all ideas of time and space have to be removed from our thinking. So let's try to do that...

What we know is that by Church is not meant any earthly organization but rather this term describes the quality of the mind in terms of the quality of celestial and spiritual things within it. A mind filled with goods (celestial things) and truths (spiritual things) from the Word is what is meant by the term Church, and that the more these things are found in their proper order within the mind the more a church the mind becomes.

So the phrase, "The state of the Church..." can be understood to mean "The state of the human mind..." in relation to what is good and true. We come then to the next part of the statement being – "down to the time of the flood" Now this has a clear reference to a "time" (that being "the time of the flood"). Again we are to think in terms of state, not time, and so by "the time of the flood" is meant a state when evils and falsities flood the lower levels of the mind. Or if you like, when self-love rises up and swamps what is genuinely good and true.

So we can see that what's described in terms of history starts to become related to my personal inner history of the process. I experience where my sense of self becomes so dominated by self-interest that I lose sight of what is loving and wise and run with what is self serving with all its justifications and rationalizations. With this in mind #234 can be paraphrased as follows to provide a context for personal inner work...

What's described in this reading are the progressive states of mind I pass through as I move from living from the Word to living from my own self-interest. And because the mind (Church) in that state destroys (deliberate use of present tense) itself completely....

We now come to the final part of the statement...

...it is foretold that the Lord will come into the world and save the human race.

If we read this naturally we will think of its meaning in terms of an historical event. If we read it spiritually we will see that what occurs as history is in fact representative of spiritual processes that are continually outworking themselves in the relationship that exists between the Lord as the Word and human beings as receiving agents of goods and truths from it.

Naturally understood as an historical event, this statement will be seen as referring to the person of Jesus Christ being born into the material world at a point in time. But this is not the only way in which this can be understood. What occurs in time and space and becomes fixed in a historical context on the material plane, has a reality that sits outside of spatial, temporal or material limitations. This can be seen when we see that by the Lord, is meant the Word (John 1:1). “World” in the above statement can also mean the interior world in which our spirit dwells, for this is as much a world as that in which we find ourselves bodily. And while the Lord understood as to his historical person is seen as one in the material world, as the Word “his coming into the world” refers to His appearing in the mental world of those who are awakening to the true nature of the Word, that it is the Divine Truth, and as such is the Lord Himself.

The coming of the Lord into the world is the unveiling of the true nature of the Word as the Divine Truth to human consciousness. It is this realization that opens the way for all sensual reasoning to be put down under the heel. It is only as I look to the Lord (which means to apply truths to life) that I find I have the ability to hold the lying voice of the serpent (believing how things appear rather than what truths teach) at bay so that its poisons can be rendered ineffective.