

MARGARET CAROL FRIESEN
A Memorial Address by Rev. Coleman S. Glenn
July 18th, 2012
Dawson Creek, BC

“One can see how great the delight of heaven must be from the fact that it is the delight of everyone in heaven to share his delights and blessings with others; and as such is the character of all that are in the heavens it is clear how immeasurable is the delight of heaven.” (Heaven and Hell 399)

What makes heaven to be heaven? People over the years have had many different ideas about what heaven will be like. Some have imagined it as a life in the clouds, where people who have died spend their days playing musical instruments. Others imagine it to be state of bodiless emptiness, where people’s souls flit about like breaths of air. But the Writings for the New Church, revealed to the 17th century scientist Emanuel Swedenborg, give us a very different picture. Swedenborg’s spiritual eyes were opened so that he could see into heaven and hell – and the heaven he saw was not a place of disembodied souls, or people sitting around with nothing to do, but people living much like they had on earth, but without all the problems we find on earth – a heaven where real people, in spiritual bodies, live active lives of love and useful service to each other. He saw heaven as a state of being where each person’s greatest wish was to share his own happiness with others.

Imagine how heavenly that kind of life really would be – if everyone’s primary purpose was not to get things for themselves, but to share things with others. Every farmer growing grain primarily so that he could feed his neighbours; every mechanic working on vehicles from a love of making those vehicles more useful; every artist creating art for the sake of sharing the joy that they saw in God’s creation with other people. That attitude, shared by every angel, of wanting to give what he has to another, ultimately does not come from the angels themselves, but from the life of the Lord that they have within themselves. They see that love and generosity within themselves not as something to pat themselves on the back for, but as a gift from God. And this is the truth – every good gift is from above, and every heart that is truly generous is a heart that is being or has been reborn in the Lord. Because God is love, and as we read in that passage from the book *Heaven and Hell*, “The Lord's love is a love of sharing everything it has with all, since it wills the happiness of all.”

If there’s one word to sum up that attitude of wanting to *give* what one has to another, the word might be “generosity.” And when Carol Friesen’s family was asked to think of words to

describe Carol, the first word that came to mind was *generous*. That heavenly love of giving to others was something that Carol seems to have expressed throughout her life in this world.

Margaret Carol Friesen – better known as Carol – was born on March 28th, 1936, in Melfort, Saskatchewan to parents Leonard and Josephine Swanson. Josephine died shortly after giving birth to Carol, and Carol was raised in her early years by her granny and grandfather. She moved quite a bit throughout her childhood, being raised by several relatives – her granny and grandfather in Saskatchewan and then Victoria; her Uncle Alphonse and Aunt Maggie in Toronto; and back in Vancouver, by her Uncle Tommy and Aunt Helen Cummings. When Tommy and Helen moved to Dawson Creek, they brought Carol with them, and Pop and Granny followed a year later.

It was in Dawson Creek, in the summer of 1952, that Carol met Dan Friesen. They met on a double date, and within a few weeks they were seeing each other – and already talking about marriage and kids. At that point Dan was driving truck; and when Carol was told to steer clear of truckers, since they were “the scum of the earth,” she indignantly responded, “I don’t care – I love him, and I’m going to marry him!” When Carol set her mind to something, she usually did it, and sure enough, the next summer she *did* marry Dan, on July 4th, 1953 in the United Church.

Their first child, Darlene, followed soon after, and Carol began her new life as a devoted wife and mother. Altogether she and Dan had five children: Darlene, Debbie, Gary, Danelle, and Grant. She loved and cared for all the children – although the older four insist that Grant, the baby of the family, was *especially* cared for. In later years, Carol showed the same love and care for her 18 grandchildren and 10 great-grandchildren.

In those early years, Dan’s job trucking took him to Whitehorse, Yukon. Before deciding to move the family he drove up for a visit, and spent the whole trip home worrying about whether he could convince his new bride to make the move up north. When he got home he mentioned it as a possibility – and immediately Carol agreed to it. Again, Carol had a strong will, and when she decided to do something, it happened – and so they moved to Whitehorse. A few years later the family returned to an acreage just outside of Dawson Creek, where Dan founded Friesen Trucking with his brothers, and there Dan and Carol began to raise their children. Some time afterwards, Carol’s uncle Tommy granted her the farm, and Dan and Carol became suitcase farmers, spending weekends with their kids out on the farm. In 1974, Dan and his brother Corney

split up their business; Corney took the cranes that they'd operated, and Dan took the farm out in Silver Valley.

Carol liked being on the farm, and she especially loved to garden. She took quickly to the life of a farm wife. At one point, there had been foxes stealing chickens and geese, and a bobcat had been seen in the area as well; so Dan told Carol she'd have to learn to shoot. He taught her how to shoot one day, and the day afterwards, while Dan was out in the fields, that bobcat showed up, chased up a tree by the dog. The kids who were there remember well their mother coming out of the house, and without hesitating putting the gun to her shoulder and shooting that bobcat right out of the tree.

Carol was wonderful with the animals on the farm, and animals everywhere. She loved her cocker spaniels. Once when a sow was having trouble giving birth, Carol went right out and helped deliver the piglets. There was a goose on the farm that the kids lived in fear of. The goose would hiss and rush at anyone who came close – except for Carol. Carol could walk right into the pen and take the eggs out from under that goose.

Carol loved to cook, and by all accounts was a wonderful cook. And she loved to cook for other people. It was one of those areas where her generosity showed. She liked to know ahead of time if anyone extra was coming to dinner, because she didn't like to just give them what was on hand – she wanted to prepare a proper meal for any of the guests. She loved Christmastime especially, when she could cook for people, but also when she could give gifts, which was another one of her greatest joys. She always had a gift for everyone.

Carol's generosity showed in other ways too. She loved to work on arts and crafts – she was a very talented painter and potter. And she loved to share that gift with others. Once she made a painted basket for her grandson Jared to put eggs in to sell (and of course bought most of the eggs herself). Besides making things for others, she'd encourage and help others in their own creativity. Some of her granddaughters' most vivid memories are of working on crafts for hours and hours with their grandmother. She gave classes to the schoolchildren on pottery-making, using the pottery wheel and kiln in her basement.

Later on, Carol opened a store, Carol's Country Crafts, here in Dawson Creek. Even that was as much a chance for her to offer things to other people as it was to make money. She loved that little store, where she'd sell her own crafts, as well as beautiful and interesting things she'd found elsewhere. Her grandkids also remember the way that she'd give them candy every time

they came into that store, just as her own kids remember the way that she'd always buy them treats on Saturdays when she brought them into town.

Along with that soft, generous heart, Carol did have a very strong will. Her son Gary remembers when she quit smoking cold turkey. Several days had gone by, and she said to Gary, "Did you notice anything?" "No," he said. "I quit smoking!" she said. Since it had only been a few days, Gary thought maybe she'd waver back and forth a few times before quitting for good – but she never did. When she made up her mind to do something, she did it.

Of course, sometimes that strong will could mean heated arguments with kids or husband. But she was not the type to hold a grudge; she'd phone up after a fight and apologize, and forgave easily.

And when Carol and Dan went through struggle or arguments, they knew that in those struggles they could still turn to the Lord together. Going from church to church as a child, Carol found her home in the New Church, which just made sense to her. She especially loved the teachings about conjugal love, or true marriage love, and it showed in her commitment to her husband, her commitment to raising their family together. And in the New Church community, her generosity showed, as she'd volunteer often, and even organized entire campouts for the girls in the congregation.

She believed in the reality of a life after death, a life that she is now entering into herself. It's a reality where she will continue to be able to give generously of herself, just as she loved to here. And it's a world where she will be able to give more generously, because she will be free of all the natural limitations that come from living in this world. When Carol was younger, she was a wonderful athlete. In Toronto, she won trophies from running in races. She loved to camp, and to swim, and to sing and dance. She loved to be active. In her later years here on earth, she lost the ability to do some of those things. Health problems made life difficult sometimes. She faced those problems bravely, with her incredible strength of will, but at times she did feel discouraged and saddened by the loss of her legs, which meant the loss of the ability to do some of those things she loved.

But now she is in the spiritual world, in a spiritual body, a body that is whole. With the eyes of the spirit, a spiritual body looks very much like an earthly body – a person is still a person there, and still in human form. But that spiritual body is vastly more perfect than the earthly body. It is not subject to disease and death. And if a person's heart has been shaped so

that their primary loves are to love God and to love their neighbour, their body gradually transforms to become a perfect, beautiful image of that love in their hearts. Carol will have legs again; Carol will walk again, and run again, and swim again, and dance again. Carol will be free from those diseases that she battled throughout her life. Like most of us, Carol probably still has some learning and growing to do, old habits to break, new habits to learn – but we know that if she sets her mind to do it, she will do it. If she continues to look to the Lord and to serve others with a generous heart, she will be prepared to live in a home in heaven.

Her spirit is still present with those who love her. Heaven is not a far off or foreign land – it's right here, all around us. The spiritual world affects us far more than we're aware of. When we think of someone with love, their spirit is present with our spirit. And especially when two married partners are in true marriage love, the spirit of the one who has passed on continues to live with the spirit of the other, so that when they are reunited, they love each other even more perfectly than they did on earth, because they have left behind earthly limitations and obstacles.

There is sadness that Carol has left us, that we will not see her for a while. But we also rejoice for her, in her new spiritual body. We rejoice as we think of her reuniting with loved ones. We rejoice to think of her embracing her mother, finally getting the chance to meet her. And we rejoice as we think of her getting another chance to talk to her beloved grandson Zack. We can imagine her beginning to live a life of generosity in the other world as she did here, a life that *is* heaven. And we too who are here can be part of that life, by bringing that same spirit of generosity more into our own lives. When we do that – when we truly live with that desire to share whatever happiness we have with others – then the Lord's kingdom comes. The Lord's will is done – as it is in heaven, so also upon the earth. *Amen.*

Readings:

The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever. (Psalms 23:1-6)

35 [Jesus said,] Nevertheless love your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing back, and your reward shall be much, and you shall be the sons of the Highest; for He is kind to the

ungrateful and to the wicked. 36 Therefore be merciful, as your Father also is merciful. 37 And judge not, and you shall not be judged; do not damn, and you shall not be damned; release, and you shall be released. 38 Give, and it shall be given to you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall they give into your bosom. For with what measure you measure, it shall be measured back to you. (Luke 6:35-38)

37 But that the dead are raised, even Moses showed at the bush, when he calls the Lord the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob; 38 and He is not God of the dead, but of the living, for all live to Him. (Luke 20:37, 38)

A person is said to die, but still he does not die; he is only separated from the material body which had served him for use in the world, but which can no longer be of any use to him; for the person himself lives. He is said to live because a person is not a human being from the body but from the spirit; for it is the spirit that thinks in the person; and the thought with affection, which makes the spirit, also makes the person. Hence it is that when someone dies, he only passes from one world to another. (Heaven and Hell n. 445)

In order that every person may live for ever, what is mortal with him is taken away. His mortal part is the material body which is taken away by his death. His immortal part, which is his mind, is thus unveiled and he then becomes a spirit in human form, his mind being that spirit. (Divine Providence 324)

One can see how great the delight of heaven must be from the fact that it is the delight of everyone in heaven to share his delights and blessings with others; and as such is the character of all that are in the heavens it is clear how immeasurable is the delight of heaven. It has been shown before that in the heavens there is a sharing of all with each and of each with all. Such sharing goes forth from the two loves of heaven, which are, as has been said, love to the Lord and love towards the neighbor; and to share their delights is the very nature of these loves. Love to the Lord is such because the Lord's love is a love of sharing everything it has with all, since it wills the happiness of all. There is a like love in every one of those who love the Lord, because the Lord is in them; and from this comes the mutual sharing of the delights of angels with one another. Love towards the neighbor is of such a nature, as will be seen in what follows. All this shows that it is the nature of these loves to share their delights. (Heaven and Hell 399)

Those who are in heaven are continually advancing towards the spring of life, with a greater advance towards a more joyful and happy spring the more thousands of years they live; and this to eternity, with increase according to the growth and degree of their love, charity, and faith. Women who have died old and worn out with age, if they have lived in faith in the Lord, in charity to the neighbour, and in happy conjugal love with a husband, advance with the succession of years more and more into the flower of youth and early womanhood, and into a beauty that transcends every conception of any such beauty as is seen on the earth. Goodness and charity is what gives this form and thus manifests its own likeness, causing the joy and beauty of charity to shine forth from every least particular of the face, and causing them to be the very forms of charity. Some who beheld this were struck with amazement. The form of charity that is seen in a living way in heaven, is such that it is charity itself that both forms and is formed; and this in such a manner that the whole angel is a charity, as it were, especially the face; and this is

both clearly seen and felt. When this form is beheld it is beauty unspeakable, affecting with charity the very inmost life of the mind. In a word, to grow old in heaven is to grow young. Such forms or such beauties do those who have lived in love to the Lord and in charity towards the neighbour become in the other life. All angels are such forms in endless variety; and of these heaven is constituted. (Heaven and Hell 414)

People who had lived with their partners in a state of truly conjugal love are not actually separated by the death of one; for the spirit of the deceased continues to dwell with the spirit of the one not yet deceased, and this until the death of the other, at which time they come together again and are reunited, loving each other even more tenderly than before, because they are in the spiritual world. (Conjugal Love 321)

As a father has compassion upon his sons,
So Jehovah has compassion upon those who fear Him.
For He knows our formation;
He remembers that we are dust.
As for man, his days are as grass;
As a flower of the field, so he flowers.
For the wind passes over it, and it is not;
And the place thereof shall acknowledge it no more.
But the mercy of Jehovah is from eternity and even to eternity upon those who fear Him,
And His justice to the sons of men;
To those who keep His covenant,
And to those who remember His precepts to do them.
(Psalm 103:13-18)

1 Let not your heart be troubled; believe in God, and believe in Me. 2 In My Father's house are many abodes; and if it were not so, I would have told you; I go to prepare a place for you. 3 And if I go, and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am you may be also.... 27. Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives, give I to you. Let not your heart be disturbed, neither let it be frightened. (John 14:1-3, 27)