



# PEACE RIVER NEW CHURCH CURRENT

NEWSLETTER OF THE DAWSON CREEK CHURCH OF THE NEW JERUSALEM

DECEMBER 2011



## THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD

By Rev. Coleman Glenn

*“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men. And the Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not...And the Word became flesh and dwelt in a tabernacle among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the Only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.” (John 1:1-5, 14)*

“In the beginning...” The first chapter of Genesis begins with these words. The first verse of the Gospel of John echoes them. “In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth...And God said, ‘Let there be light,’ and there was light” (Genesis 1:1, 3). The story of creation begins with God speaking, with a word from Him. And that word from God also *is* God. When a person speaks, his words are from him, but the understanding behind those words *is* the person – to the extent that that understanding makes one with the person’s love. In His essence, the Lord is infinite Divine Love; in

His expression, He is infinite Divine Wisdom married to that love. The Word which is God is Divine Wisdom conjoined with Divine Love.

It was Divine Love – a love for creating beings to love outside of Himself – acting through Divine Wisdom that created the universe. As it is written in Jeremiah, “He has established the world by His wisdom, and stretched out the heaven by His understanding” (Jeremiah 51:15). And so in the opening words of John, speaking of the Word: “All things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made.”

The Word, or the Lord’s Divine Wisdom, created the world. And on the first day, God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light. That story from Genesis, on the surface, seems to be talking about the literal creation of natural light. But that light is not the true light. The Word itself – that is, the Lord Himself – is the true Light. “In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men...That was the true Light, which enlightens every man who comes into the world” (John 1:4, 9).

From the beginning of creation, God’s light, His truth, has been enlightening the minds of men. But at the time leading up to the advent, darkness was falling. People were less and less able to see the light, the truth about loving the neighbour and loving God. And so that Light came to lighten the darkness. And it came in a new way, unknown since the creation of the universe: it came not only indirectly into people’s minds through the heavens, but He came all the way down to the earth.

“And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us.” The Light of the world was born as an infant, born into flesh, born as a baby and laid in a manger. He lived as one of us, learning and growing as we do, but more perfectly and completely. And as He fought and defeated the hells that clung to Him via his merely human inheritance, He became more and more Divinely Human. And that light within Him shone brighter and brighter, as when He was transfigured before three of His disciples:

“And He was transformed before them; and His face shone as the sun, and His garments became white as the light” (Matthew 17:2). The process of making his Humanity Divine is called glorification, or coming into glory. “And we beheld His glory, the glory as of the Only-begotten of the Father.”

But all did not embrace Him; all did not want to come to Him. “He was in the world, and the world knew Him not. He came to His own, and His own received Him not” (John 1:10,11). Only those who loved the truth, who wanted to live by the truth, were able to love that light in Him, to have true faith. “For everyone practicing evil hates the Light, and comes not to the Light, lest his deeds should be reproved. But he who does the truth comes to the Light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they have been done in God” (John 3:20, 21)



Those who love what is good and true see the Light. The wise men from the east saw the star, invisible to the evil king Herod. The shepherds beheld the glory of the Lord as it shone round about them, as the angel told them the way to find the newborn Saviour. The old man Simeon, who had waited all his life for the birth of the Christ, was taken by the Spirit to the temple when Jesus was brought there a week after His birth; and Simeon lifted up the child, and said, “Mine eyes have seen Thy salvation, which Thou hast prepared before the face of all peoples; Light for revelation to the nations, and the Glory of Thy people Israel” (Luke 2:30, 31).

The Word was made flesh. The Light of the world walked here, on this planet, in the land of Israel. The Word *was* God, the Word *is* God – and so it was God Himself who was born here, clothed in a human form. And now we behold Him as a visible God, in Whom is the invisible, as the soul is within the body (*True Chris-*

*tian Religion 787*). We cannot love an abstract concept, we cannot love a flood of light – but we can love the Word made flesh, an infinitely loving and infinitely wise Man.

We celebrate His advent at the darkest time of the year. But we can see His light and come to that light if we live by truth. We can fall down on our knees in awe at the wonder of the Creator of the Universe born in a lowly stable. We can worship the newborn King, the expression of innocence itself, yet full of wisdom, the *source* of all wisdom. As we sing in the hymn, “O come, let us adore Him, Christ the Lord!”

---

## CHRISTMAS TABLEAUX

This year, the annual Christmas tableaux will take place on **Sunday, December 18<sup>th</sup>, at 5:00 p.m.** in the sanctuary at the church (upstairs). **There will be no morning church service that day.** All are welcome!




---

## CHRISTMAS PARTY

There will be a Christmas party at the church for children up to age twelve on **Saturday, December 10<sup>th</sup>, from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.** We will have games, activities, snacks, and lunch, along with a discussion about the real meaning of Christmas. Parents are welcome to come and stay with their kids, or to drop them off and pick them up afterwards. **Please have your child bring a small (less than \$5) gift that could be given as a prize during the games and activities.** RSVP to Jillian Crandall so she has an idea of how many to plan for (but feel free to come even if you've forgotten to RSVP).

## DEBOLT CHRISTMAS SERVICE

The Christmas service for the Grande Prairie circle will be held at the church in Debolt on **Sunday, December 11, at 4:30 p.m.** This will be the only church service for the Grande Prairie circle in December.

## ANNUAL MEETING

Looking ahead into January, the annual meeting of the Dawson Creek Church of the New Jerusalem is tentatively scheduled for the **weekend of January 21-22.** Stay tuned to the next newsletter for the exact date and time.

## LADIES' GROUP RAFFLE AND BOTTLE COLLECTION

A while back, the Ladies' Group announced that they would be willing to come pick up recyclable bottles to take to the recycle depot, with the money going as a donation toward the ladies' group. They are still willing to do that.

Also, the Ladies' Group is tentatively planning a fundraising raffle sometime in the near future. If you are interested in donating items to the raffle, helping out, or buying tickets, or if you are interested in donating your bottles, please contact Jane Myatt, Rachel Myatt, or Bev Bourbeau.

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR: REMEMBRANCE DAY

Dear Coleman,

Thanks for your recent article in the recent newsletter on the topic of Nov 11th.

I read your article on Nov 11th. It was traditional and the official New Church doctrinal explanation about defending ones country as being honorable, which I do accept but with a major proviso.

I generally agree with the explanation you present that it is honorable to die in battle for one's country. My objection is in that you included the war in Afghanistan. That is a stretch in my view. Taking the discussion out of the legitimate realm of the First and Second World Wars muddies the moral waters for me.

As per usual on New Church talks on war there is little mention of the legitimate place that conscientious objectors have in this profoundly moral and spiritual dilemma of when to die for one's country. I would like to see the position of the individual who refuses to take up arms from dubious military and government justification expanded upon.

You do mention that ..."good soldiers do not invade or attack-except if that is part of their defense." You also mention the soldiers' "willingness to go to war to protect what is good and innocent."

But in regards Afghanistan and Iraq, what is good and innocent?

Recent wars in these countries are dubious in their moral justification. I would direct people to the Remember Building #7 web-site. A growing number of people around the world are not satisfied that there was convincing evidence (truth) to justify attacking Iraq and Afghanistan. I do not believe that we as Americans or Canadians can hold our collective heads high in that carnage.

New Church people too can be duped. Some of us might be included in the willfully ignorant group encouraging our youth to do their part and die with honor in Afghanistan and Iraq.

I know of soldiers who served in Iraq, took part in the carnage of breaking down doors to homes with military assault rifles where innocent women and children were slaughtered. Some of these courageous soldiers have refused to return for duty. There has been atrocious justification for our government's aggression. I am moved to remind us all of the principle that good defends but evil attacks.

We must encourage open discussion and critical analysis of the reasons our governments – US, Canadian, British and Australian – have been engaged over in the Middle East before more of our youth die for dubious motives. In light of an expanding body of scientific knowledge that puts in doubt the official justification for the attacks on Iraq (i.e. 9/11), surely it is time that doctrinal discussion for war be expanded to include spiritual freedom which I take it would include the legitimate position of the conscientious objector and our responsibility to seek the truth before we blindly agree to pick up the gun.

Sincerely,

Norm Dyck

*Response from Rev. Coleman Glenn:*

*Thanks for this response to the article, Norm - I agree that this is an important issue that we ought to be discussing. You bring up a couple of points that I want to address.*

*First of all, the issue of conscientious objectors: I agree, it's important to honour them, as well as honouring those who join the forces. It takes courage to take a stand, to risk being called a coward, because you believe that joining the military would mean joining wars of aggression, not only wars of defense. And I don't think the Writings encourage blind obedience to one's country. The little work on Charity says that a country is to be loved the same we love any other neighbour - by loving the good in it, and discouraging the evil:*

*"For example: if I had been born in Venice or in Rome, and were a Reformed Christian, am I to love my country, or the country where I was born, because of its spiritual good? I cannot. Nor with respect to its moral and civil good, so far as this depends for existence upon its spiritual good. But so far as it does not depend upon this I can, even if that country hates me. Thus, I must not in hatred regard it as an enemy, nor as an adversary, but must still love it; doing it no injury, but consulting its good, so far as it is good for it, not consulting it in such a way that I confirm it in its falsity and evil." (Charity 86, emphasis added)*

*If a person sees his country as doing something evil, the true action of love for the country is to oppose that evil. For some, that means conscientiously objecting to war.*

*Second, the particular issue of the recent wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. In the article, I wanted to focus particularly on the attitudes and motivations of a good soldier. Now, it may be the case that those wars were deeply flawed and that they were not wars of defense; but I still think it is worth honouring the men and women who served in those wars from a love of defending their countries, even if those wars were misguided. Honouring their willingness to sacrifice their lives does not mean approving of the wars.*

*It's interesting that you brought up the willingness to defend what is "good and innocent" in relation to those particular wars, because it was actually the war in Iraq that I had in mind when I added that phrase. I was never convinced that the war in Iraq was a just war, a war of defense. I had a friend serving there in the U.S.*

*army, though. The last time he was home on leave, he told his friends that he did not want to go back - but the reason he would was for the sake of the kids there. Whatever problems there were with the war as a whole, and whatever problems were inflicted by the U.S. military, where he was, he saw the U.S. Army defending children whose lives were not valued by many of the insurgents, who wanted their specific faction to have sole power in the country. In what may have been an unjust war, he was fighting from a good motivation, and that's what I wanted to honour.*

*As you point out, though, it is also worth honouring those who from conscience oppose a war that does not seem just. I'm in complete agreement there, and I think it's worth remembering even as we honour those who did join the armed services out of a genuine desire to defend their country.*



## **THE DAWSON CREEK CHURCH OF THE NEW JERUSAEM**

9013 8<sup>th</sup> Street

Dawson Creek, BC V1G 3N3

[www.dawsoncreeknewchurch.ca](http://www.dawsoncreeknewchurch.ca)

(250) 782-8035

**Services Sunday at 11 a.m.**

If you have news or other information for this publication, or if you have any pastoral concerns, please call the pastor, Coleman Glenn, at (250) 782-0710 or (cell) (250) 467-2313, or e-mail [pastor@dawsoncreeknewchurch.ca](mailto:pastor@dawsoncreeknewchurch.ca).

Coleman's office and mailing address is  
1717 102<sup>nd</sup> Ave., Unit 5  
Dawson Creek, BC V1G 5A9

# CHURCH CALENDAR

## DECEMBER 2011

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3 7:30 p.m. Doctrinal Class at Rev. Coleman Glenn's home
4 11 a.m. Family Service followed by potluck lunch	5	6	7	8	9	10 11 am Christmas Party
11 11 a.m. Traditional Service 4:30 p.m. Christmas Service (Debolt)	12	13	14	15	16	17 7:30 p.m. Holy Supper ser- vice
18 5 p.m. Tableaux (no morning church service)	19	20	21	22	23	24 Christmas Eve
25 Christmas 11 a.m. Christmas Service	26 Boxing Day	27	28	29	30	31
Rev. Coleman Glenn away until January 6; <b>no church services on New Year's Day.</b>						

Note: all events take place at the Dawson Creek Church of the New Jerusalem unless noted otherwise.