



# PEACE RIVER NEW CHURCH CURRENT

NEWSLETTER OF THE DAWSON CREEK CHURCH OF THE NEW JERUSALEM

JANUARY 2013



## KNOWING THE WAY AND WALKING IN IT

By Rev. Coleman Glenn

When I first starting reading the Writings on my own, I would often skip the memorable relations – the short inter-chapter accounts in the later books of the Writings that describe events Swedenborg experienced in the spiritual world. Often they didn't seem to have much to do with the main chapters, and I was more interested in getting the basic doctrines from the more systematic material in the chapters. And, to be honest, I wasn't entirely sure why Swedenborg had included the stories of the spiritual world – they seemed a little strange, and didn't seem entirely necessary.

Apparently some of the Writings' earliest readers had similar responses. Count von Hopken was one of Swedenborg's earliest supporters, but he had doubts as to why Swedenborg included the memorable relations

in his books. Hopken wrote in a letter to a friend describing Swedenborg's response when asked why he included those memorable relations:

“I asked him once why he wrote and published those memorable relations, which seemed to throw so much ridicule on his doctrine, otherwise so rational, and whether it would not be best for him to keep them to himself, and not to publish them to the world. But he answered that he had orders from the Lord to publish them; and that those who might ridicule him on that account would do him injustice; ‘for,’ said he, ‘Why would I, who am a man in years, render myself ridiculous for fantasies and falsehoods?’”

The Lord had commanded Swedenborg to include those memorable relations. Why? I think there are several reasons. In the introduction to *Heaven and Hell*, Swedenborg writes that the reason heaven was opened to him was in part to keep those in simple faith from being persuaded by academic people that it was irrational to believe in heaven. Part of the reason for his call was to demonstrate that heaven was real, and the specific stories about events he experienced help illustrate the reality of heaven and hell better than rational arguments could.

There are other reasons, too, that the Lord chose to reveal the nature of heavenly life and hellish life. One of my favourite passages on this is *Divine Providence* 60:

Heaven is granted to none but those who know the way to it and who walk in that way. This way can be known to some extent from knowing the character of those who constitute heaven, and also by knowing that no one becomes an angel, that is, comes into heaven, unless he carries with him from the world something of the angelic character; and in this there is present a knowl-

edge of the way from walking in it, and a walking in the way through a knowledge of it.

One reason that the Writings talk about the character of angels is so that we here can “walk in the way from a knowledge of it”; and by walking in the way, we gain a deeper understanding of what it means to be an angel – there is a “knowledge of the way from a walking in it.”

Lately I’ve been thinking about some of the practical applications of this idea, and one line of thinking that’s been helpful to me is this: “Will I still enjoy this when I’m in heaven?” Or, “Do I *want* to still enjoy this when I’m in heaven?” If I’m thinking of making an off-colour joke, for example, and I think, “Is this the character I want to have or think I’ll have in heaven?” – the answer is generally, “No.” But on the other hand, there are memorable relations where Swedenborg hears angels joking or laughing – so there is a place for laughter and humour in an angelic nature. That’s one of the uses of the memorable relations – helping us to see how we can have an angelic character without thinking that that means we have to go around without ever having fun or smiling. The fuller our picture of heaven, the fuller our ability to live a heavenly life here – and the more heavenly our life here, the more real heaven can seem.

Of course, this world is *not* heaven, and so if we’re dealing with worldly things - say finances, for example - the answer to the question of whether we’ll be dealing with this in heaven is “no” and we still have to do it. But if we think instead, “How would I go about this task if I were an angel?” - that can reframe the way we approach even the worldly, mundane parts our daily lives. And the truth that the life of heaven *is* a life of everyday, useful activities helps us see how we can walk in a heavenly path even now while we’re on earth.

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## ANNUAL MEETING

The annual meeting of the Dawson Creek Church of the New Jerusalem will take place on January 20th, 2013, immediately following the morning church service. Besides the regular business, we’ll need to elect two new board members. Please come out and support the church - attending a meeting may not be the most glamorous way of serving the church, but it’s very useful and needed. Thank you!

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## JANUARY CLASSES

Beginning in the new year, we are going to be having two doctrinal classes each month. The first will be a “New Church Basics” (which we were calling “New Church 101”) class, and the second will be a traditional doctrinal class. Newcomers and old-timers will get something out of both, and are welcome to come to any class. Classes will usually take place on the second and fourth Thursday of the month, although in January they will be on the third and fifth Thursday.

The “New Church Basics” class on January 17th will be on the topic of life after death, and we’ll look at the general teachings on heaven, hell, and the world of spirits. On January 31st, the doctrinal class will look specifically and in depth at the teachings on hell: what hell is like, who lives in hell, and how a merciful God could allow people to go to hell.

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## NO CHURCH ON JAN. 6

On December 30th, Rev. Coleman Glenn and Miss Anne Grace Hurd will be married in Toronto. They will be away from Dawson Creek until January 11th, and since a replacement minister could not be found, there will be **no services on January 6th**. See you in the new year!

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### THE DAWSON CREEK CHURCH OF THE NEW JERUSALEM

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(250) 782-8035

**Worship: Sundays at 11 a.m.**

**For information on services in Grande Prairie and  
Debolt, please contact Mrs. Lavina Scott at  
(780) 957-3625**

**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) 782-8035 or (cell) (250) 467-2313,  
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# CHURCH CALENDAR

## JANUARY 2013

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
30 NO SERVICES	31	1	2	3	4	5
REV. COLEMAN GLENN AWAY FOR WEDDING						
6 NO SERVICES	7	8	9	10	11	12
REV. COLEMAN GLENN AWAY FOR WEDDING						
13 11 a.m. Traditional Service 4:30 p.m. Worship & Class (Grande Prairie)	14	15	16	17 7 p.m. New Church Basics: Life After Death	18	19
20 11 a.m. Holy Supper Service 12:30 pm Annual Meeting	21	22	23	24 7:30 p.m. Doctrinal Class (Silver Valley)	25	26
27 11 a.m. Traditional Service 4:30 p.m. Holy Supper Service (DeBolt)	28	29	30	31 7 p.m. Doctrinal Class: Hell	1	2

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