



# PEACE RIVER NEW CHURCH CURRENT

NEWSLETTER OF THE DAWSON CREEK CHURCH OF THE NEW JERUSALEM

JANUARY 2014



## A NEW BEGINNING

By Rev. Coleman Glenn

There's an image that we sometimes see around the beginning of a new year: the old year personified as an old man, with the new year coming in to replace him as a baby or a young child. The new year is a good time to start thinking about new beginnings. And it's a good time for us to think about them no matter how old we are. I just turned 30 last month. From the perspective of my teenage self I am *ancient*; but of course a lot of you who are reading this newsletter will laugh at that and say, "Thirty? You're practically still a kid!" It's all a matter of perspective; we reach the ages that seemed very old to us when we were younger, and suddenly those ages don't seem to be quite *so* old.

But even if in many ways we still feel the same as we did when we were much younger, we do notice the effects of getting older. Some of these are good things: we notice that we have more patience than we used to, maybe, or we realize we don't care as much about worldly possessions or money as we did when we were

younger. But on the other hand, we notice downsides to aging. There are the physical downsides, of course, and some of the mental downsides that come along with that – slower reflexes and a dimmer memory, for example. But there can also be spiritual downsides; and perhaps the biggest one of these is the worry that there are things about us that will never change. I've heard a sentiment expressed by people of many different ages: "I'm too old to change."

Now when we hear someone else express this thought, we can sometimes be quick to dismiss it, with a quick, "Oh, you're never too old to change!" But let's acknowledge that there is some truth behind this worry. The longer we have lived a certain way, the stronger the habits we have formed become. For a person who has intentionally done some evil for a long time, that evil will be difficult to root out. The book *Doctrine of Life* says that combat against evils, which are temptations, are not too heavy "except for those who have relaxed all restraints upon their lusts, and who have deliberately indulged them; and also for those who have confirmed themselves in rejecting the holy things of the Word and the Church." Evils in intention, when confirmed in one's life, do become very difficult (but not impossible!) to root out. And this should be motivation for us to try to nip evil in the bud, to notice evil thoughts as soon as they enter our mind and say, "I do not will this because this is a sin against God."

But this does not mean that the case is hopeless. While there is *some* truth to the feeling that "I'm too old to change," there is *more* truth to the truth, however trite it might sound, that we are never too old to change. *True Christian Religion* 720 says that as long as we're alive in the world, we have the opportunity to repent and be born anew:

A person shuts heaven against himself by the rejection of faith and by evil of life. Nevertheless he is continually maintained in the possibility of repentance and conversion; for the Lord is continually present, and urgent to be received, for He says: "I

stand at the door and knock; if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me." Rev. iii. 20. The blame, therefore, lies with the person himself, if he does not open the door. It is otherwise after death. Then heaven is closed, and cannot be opened to those who, even to the end of life, have unworthily approached the Holy Table; for the interiors of their minds are now fixed and confirmed.

As long as we're in this world, we have the opportunity to change our ruling loves.

That passage from *True Christian Religion* says that after death, the interiors of our mind cannot change. Other passages from the heavenly doctrine make it clear that after death our *ruling love* cannot change – that is, if we died loving ourselves more than we loved God, we will continue to love ourselves most after death. But this does not mean that we ever reach a point where we have been perfected, where we can say, "I don't need to change anymore." *Arcana Coelestia* 10048 says, "The regeneration of man begins in the world and continues to eternity, for when a man becomes an angel he is always being perfected." And *Conjugial Love* 71 says, "No love can ever become pure in human beings, nor in angels. But because the Lord primarily regards the intention that is in the will, therefore to the extent that a person has the intention and perseveres in it, to that extent he is introduced into the purity and holiness of [a] love, and gradually makes progress in it." Even angels need to be perfected, and even angels are constantly changing. Think about what would happen if a 30-year-old told an 80-year-old, "I'm too old to change." The older one would probably chuckle and tell the younger one he was still young, still had plenty of growing and changing to do. But now think of how absurd it would be for that 80-year-old to say, "I'm too old to change" to an angel who's been continually changing for thousands of years!

As that passage from *Conjugial Love* says, we can never be perfect – what matters is that we are making progress, that we are *intending* to change and striving in that direction. So, what do we do now? Make a small change, a step toward the Lord. Then another. Then another. Do this with the prayer that the Lord Jesus Christ will change your heart, then act as if of yourself to make that change. And five years from now, ten years from now, when you think, "I'm too old to change," you'll be able to look back and remember feeling that way before – and you'll see that you *have* changed since then. You still won't be perfect, but if you continually take steps in the right direction, the Lord will gradually change your heart.

## THE NEW CHRISTIAN BIBLE STUDY

From Steve David, founder of the New Christian Bible Study

The New Christian Bible Study Project ([www.newchristianbiblestudy.org](http://www.newchristianbiblestudy.org)) is a New Church outreach initiative that's capitalizing on two factors:

1. There are lots of Bible readers worldwide, looking for meaning in what they're reading, and
2. In the New Church, we've been given the real meaning.

There are lots of other Bible commentaries for the online reader, but the REAL internal sense is still sort of trapped in the printed volumes of *Arcana Coelestia*, *Apocalypse Revealed*, and other works. To get in front of those millions of Bible readers, we need a really good Bible Study site with features that compare well with other similar sites, AND that has the internal sense shown to readers as they go along. The New Christian Bible Study Project is building it. We have organized three sets of information into a big, fast database:

1. The text of the Old and New Testaments: We have this online in 44 languages now.
2. The text of the Writings: We have them integrated and online, in English, Latin, and one work in Swedish, so far. A bunch of the Writings in other languages are queued up, yet to be prepped and imported, and we're scouting out others.
3. Plain-language explanations of stories, words, and concepts. These can provide bridges for readers, so they don't have to drop into the deep end of the Writings without help.

From these 3 pillars of data, we're able to make all sorts of connections. The most obvious ones, probably, are the places where the Writings cite or explain scripture. Already, anyone reading the Word online can come to our site, read that section, and see links to the places where Swedenborg cites or explains that text. Another new feature on the site provides plain-English explanations for over 300 commonly occurring words in the literal sense. Wherever those words occur, we generate a link, which can pop up a brief explanation of the word and its correspondences. We've started with fairly common words, so most Bible text pages show at least some links. The idea of correspondences is right there for the user to grab onto. This combination, Bible text + Writings + Explanations, in one application, is a keystone for church growth. As it develops, it will be a dynamic platform that supports daily reading, research, sermon-

writing, online discussions, translation, local congregations, and small groups. We're very excited about the project. It started in the Pittsburgh New Church Society, but it's become a global New Church project. It's already useful, and it's getting better all the time. We have completed a big list of tasks, and we have another ambitious list of things still to do. If you would like to help, there are lots of opportunities:

1. You could **research and write** explanations of words in the Word, or of Bible stories.

2. Are you **artistic**? If some of your work illustrates concepts from the Word, or from Swedenborgian theology, maybe we could use it.

3. Are you **bilingual**? We need help **translating** explanations.

4. Are you able to help **financially**? The project needs it! There's no endowment, and no cushion. Donations fund the software development. The project is about halfway to its design goals. It's working really well -- visitor traffic is growing 45% each month, and lots of NC people have gotten involved in helping. If you would like to donate, visit the site, click on the donate button, and see what method could work best for you.

Thank you for reading this. Please come and visit the site, to see what's going on!

## VISIT FROM BISHOP BRIAN KEITH

The Rt. Rev. Brian Keith, the executive bishop of the General Church, and his wife Gretchen will be visiting the Dawson Creek congregation and Grande Prairie circle this March. We're still working out the details of the trip, but Rev. and Mrs. Keith will be here over the weekend of March 21-23. **If you'd be willing to host them for their stay – either in Dawson Creek or in Grande Prairie – please contact Rev. Coleman S. Glenn.** Thank you!

## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING: JANUARY 18th

The Annual General Meeting for the Dawson Creek Church of the New Jerusalem will take place at 7:00 p.m. on Saturday, January 18<sup>th</sup>.

There will be several important things to discuss at that meeting. First, at that meeting we hope to put together a statement to be sent to the General Church administration on what we're looking for from visiting

ministers over the next year. The Rev. Bradley Heinrichs will be in attendance as a guest to listen to the discussion and answer any questions. Secondly, we have a few board members stepping down, and they will need to be replaced. **One of those board members who is stepping down is Tracy Bouchard, who has served as treasurer for the last 25 years.** That means that we will need to find someone to take her place. If you have any suggestions or wish to volunteer, please speak to chairman of the board Bert Friesen, or to any board member (Tracy Bouchard, Dorothy Friesen, Travis Crandall, or Helene Friesen).



## 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 & 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) 782-0710 or (cell) (250) 467-2313, or e-mail [pastor@dawsoncreeknewchurch.ca](mailto:pastor@dawsoncreeknewchurch.ca).**

# CHURCH CALENDAR

## JANUARY 2014

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
<b>Sermon Topics:</b> January 5: Breaking the Chains January 12: Crossing the Red Sea January 19: Food and Water in the Wilderness January 26: Receiving the Ten Commandments			1	2	3	4
5 <b>11:00 a.m.</b> Family Service	6	7	8	9	10	11
12 <b>11:00 a.m.</b> Holy Supper Service <b>4:30 p.m.</b> Worship & Class (Grande Prairie)	13	14	15	16	17	18 <b>7 p.m.</b> Annual General Meeting
19 <b>11:00 a.m.</b> Traditional Service with Rev. Bradley Heinrichs	20	21	22	23	24	25
26 <b>11:00 a.m.</b> Traditional Service <b>4:30 p.m.</b> Holy Supper Service (DeBolt)	27	28	29	30	31	

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