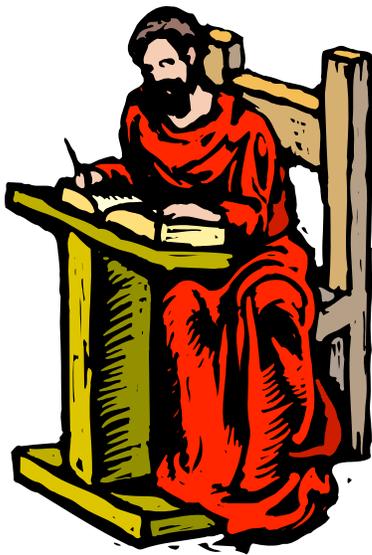




# PEACE RIVER NEW CHURCH CURRENT

NEWSLETTER OF THE DAWSON CREEK CHURCH OF THE NEW JERUSALEM

NOVEMBER 2012



## GOOD BOOKS FOR THE CHURCH

By Rev. Coleman Glenn

Late in *Arcana Coelestia*, the earliest published work of the Writings, there is a passage that explains why certain books are to be considered “books of the Word” and others are not. The passage states, “The books of the Word are all those which have an internal sense; and those which have not an internal sense are not the Word” (AC 10325). The passage goes on to list which books are to be considered books of the Word. Based on this passage – repeated in *New Jerusalem and Its Heavenly Doctrine* and *The White Horse* – organized bodies of the New Church have always considered the books listed there to be the Word in a way that the other books of the Bible are not.

But what are we to do with those other books of the Bible? Different New Church organizations have

had different answers. The Swedenborgian Church of North America tends to include them regularly in sermons and articles. The General Church, though (the denomination that the Dawson Creek church belongs to), has tended to downplay them. This past June, Rev. Dr. Jonathan S. Rose presented a paper to the council of the clergy in Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania, suggesting that we may have made a mistake in ignoring those other books of the Bible, especially the Epistles, the letters of the early apostles. At the meetings, Dr. Rose reviewed the way that the Writings use and refer to the book of Acts and the Epistles, showing how Swedenborg used them more and more to confirm New Church doctrine.

The earliest works of the Writings contained very few references to Acts and the Epistles, and no direct quotes. However, starting with the publication of *Divine Providence* in 1763, we begin to find references; and in *True Christian Religion*, the last book published by Swedenborg, we find them on almost every page. In fact, several passages in *True Christian Religion* say things like, “This can be confirmed by the following passages from the Word” – and then go on to quote only from the epistles. Even the basic statement of faith of the New Church, found in the introduction to *True Christian Religion*, includes a reference to the first epistle of John.

What’s going on here? In a letter to his friend Dr. Beyer, dated April 15<sup>th</sup>, 1766, Swedenborg explained his view of the epistles:

“With reference to the writings of the Apostles and Paul I have not included these in *Arcana Coelestia*, and this for the reason that they are doctrinal writings, and so are not written in the style of the Word as are the Prophets, David, the Gospels, and the Revelation. The style of the Word wholly consists of correspondences, on which account it effects an immediate communication with heaven. In the doctrinal writings, however, *there is another style*

*which indeed communicates with heaven, but mediately.* That they were so written by the Apostles was in order that the new Christian Church might commence through these, on which account doctrinal matters could not be written in the very style of the Word, but in a manner that might be more clearly and more directly understood. *Nonetheless, the writings of the Apostles are good books for the Church, maintaining the doctrine of charity and its faith as strongly as ever did the Lord Himself in the Gospels and in the Revelation, as can be clearly seen and observed if one attends to the matter while reading those writings.*" (emphasis added)

According to this letter, those other books are "good books for the church" – and in fact, they bring about communication with heaven, just not in the same direct way that the books of the Word do.

At the clergy meetings, Dr. Rose suggested that we may even go a step further and call the epistles part of the Word, following the example of *True Christian Religion*, even though they are clearly "the Word" in a different sense from those books listed in *Arcana Coelestia*. He suggested that those books of the Word listed in *Arcana Coelestia* are the Word in the fullest sense, since only they contain a complete, continual internal sense; but that the epistles can be considered "the Word" in that the apostles wrote them by inspiration from the Lord. He suggested that maybe the reason for the lack of references to them early in the Writings on was to really emphasize this distinction, to emphasize which books of the Bible were the most important; but that after he'd done so, it was useful to bring back in those other "good books for the church."

But if they don't have the same kind of internal sense as the books of the Word itself, what's the use in these books? For one thing, we make it very hard to talk with other Christians if we start off the conversation by saying we do not believe in the whole Bible. But beyond that, there is a lot in those books that we can learn from – powerful, inspiring teachings about what it means to *practically* love our neighbours, and teachings about who the Lord is, and what He did in the world. The phrase "God is love" – one of the central teachings of the New Church – is found only in the first epistle of John. And one of the most frequently quoted Bible passages in the Writings is Colossians 2:9: "In [Christ] dwells the fullness of the Godhead bodily." When rightly understood, the epistles confirm all the Lord's own teachings when He was in the world – that true faith involves obedience to Him, and that He is the visible manifestation of God.

## FAREWELL, FRED AND MERLE!

Fred and Merle Hendricks, long-time members of the Dawson Creek Church of the New Jerusalem and residents of Fort St. John, have started their move to Penticton, after selling their farm in the summer. They're still in the process of looking for a place to live in Penticton, and in the meantime have been visiting family in Canada and the U.S. We wish them all the Lord's blessings in their new home!

## BIRTH: EMILY ALEXANDRA SPARROW

Congratulations from the Dawson Creek and Grande Prairie New Church to Devin Sparrow and Jaid Oulette on the birth of their daughter, Emily Alexandra! Emily was born on October 2<sup>nd</sup> in Edmonton. Mother and baby are doing well. May the Lord bless the family!

## WANTED: A NEW STOVE

The stove at the church has been having problems recently, and we're looking into the possibility of replacing it. Before we start looking at options for buying, is there anyone who has a working stove that they're looking to get rid of? Please call Rev. Coleman Glenn with any leads. Thank you!

### THE DAWSON CREEK CHURCH OF THE NEW JERUSAEM

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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) 782-8035 or (cell) (250) 467-2313, or email [pastor@dawsoncreeknewchurch.ca](mailto:pastor@dawsoncreeknewchurch.ca).**

# CHURCH CALENDAR

## NOVEMBER 2012

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
28	29	30	31	1	2	3
4 <i>(Daylight Saving Time ends in Alberta)</i> <b>11 a.m.</b> Family Service <b>12:15 p.m.</b> Board Meeting <b>4:30 p.m.</b> Worship & Class (Grande Prairie)	5	6	7	8 <b>7:00 p.m.</b> New Church 101	9	10
11 Remembrance Day <b>11 a.m.</b> Traditional Service	12	13	14	15 <b>7:30 p.m.</b> Doctrinal Class (Silver Valley)	16	17
18 <b>11 a.m.</b> Traditional Service <b>4:30 p.m.</b> Traditional Service (Debolt)	19	20	21	22 <b>7:00 p.m.</b> New Church 101	23	24 <b>7:00 p.m.</b> Holy Supper
25 <b>11 a.m.</b> Traditional Service	26	27	28	29	30	1

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