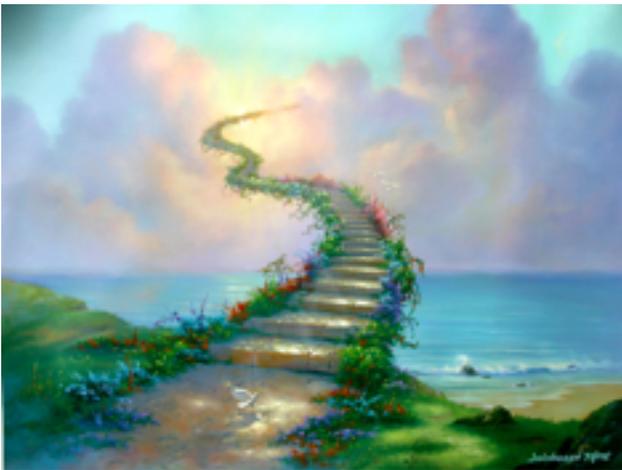




# PEACE RIVER NEW CHURCH CURRENT

NEWSLETTER OF THE DAWSON CREEK CHURCH OF THE NEW JERUSALEM

SEPTEMBER 2013



## BEGIN A NEW LIFE

By Rev. Coleman Glenn

*“Actual repentance is examining oneself, recognizing and acknowledging one’s sins, praying to the Lord, and beginning a new life.” (True Christian Religion 528)*

This month, Rev. Mark Pendleton will be in town to offer a workshop on a program he has developed called “Begin a New Life: Four Universal Steps of Life Change and Spiritual Transformation” (see the next article for more details on the workshop and the program). The program is based squarely on teachings found in the Heavenly Doctrine, particularly in the book *True Christian Religion*, on the steps of repentance. These steps, summarized in the quote above, are the most important thing we can do in this life to cooperate with the Lord in His work of regenerating us, that is, giving us new hearts and new minds.

Different passages in the Writings break these steps of repentance down into different numbers; *True Christian Religion* breaks them down into these four:

### 1.) Examine Yourself

The first step in the process of repentance is to examine our lives, to see where we may be sinning against the Lord. It is not enough to simply look at what we have actually done - we also have to look at our intentions. *True Christian Religion* says, “True repentance is examining, not only the actions of one’s life, but also the intentions of one’s will” (TCR 532) That can sound difficult - how do we know whether or not we are intending something evil? The passage goes on to explain:

“Man examines the intentions of his will when he examines his thoughts, for in these the intentions make themselves manifest; as, for example, when his thought, will, and intention incline to revenge, adultery, theft, false witness, and to lust therefore, also to blasphemy against God and the holy Word and the church, and so on; if he continues to direct his attention to this, and to inquire whether he would actually commit these evils if fear of the law and for his reputation did not hinder; and if after this scrutiny he determines that he will not will to do these things, because they are sins, he truly and interiorly repents; and still more when these evils are delightful to him, and he is free to do them, and yet resists and abstains.”

There are a few key things to notice in that passage. First of all, the best way to get at our intentions is to ask “would I do this if I wasn’t worried about getting caught?” And secondly, notice that even if we are attracted to an evil, and it would be enjoyable, we do not *intend* it if we wouldn’t do it because it is a sin against God. The Lord is the one who gradually and over time removes our attraction to any given evil; but we are responsible for whether we intend it to the point that we would act on it given the chance.

## 2.) Recognize and Acknowledge Your Sins

After we've examined our lives - what we have thought, intended, and done - we are able to move on to the next step - to acknowledge that things we have done wrong are not just bad habits, they are actually sins against God. What is a sin against God? The worksheets for the "Begin a New Life" program have a good summary: "Sin (as far as recognizing it is concerned) is any such thing that you discover is not only damaging or destructive, but also against God's universal standards of behavior (summarized in the biblical Ten Commandments), against God's Word, and thus against God." A sin is a sin because it breaks one of God's commandments. But it's not just about breaking an arbitrary set of rules. A sin is a sin because it acts contrary to God's will, which is that humans live in love for one another and for him. Murder, for example, is a sin because it involves a person using the life that has been given to him by the Lord to act contrary to the Lord's own will, which is to give life to all.

Recognizing and acknowledging our sins also means taking responsibility for those things that we have thought, intended, and done; rather than making excuses, instead saying, "Yes, I thought or intended or did that, and it was sinful." And even beyond that, it means recognizing and confessing to the Lord that from ourselves, we are nothing but sinful. As it is said in *True Christian Religion*, "The confession is to be that we see, recognize, and admit to our evils, and that we are discovering that we are miserable sinners" (TCR 539). As painful as this part of the step is, it's vital if we are going to change - we need to acknowledge our complete dependence on the Lord for help, and our own inclination toward evils of every kind.

## 3.) Pray to the Lord

After we have examined ourselves, recognized evils in ourselves, and acknowledged our guilt for those evils, we need to pray to the Lord. The truth is that we need to be praying during every step of this process, but in this step prayer is the primary focus. *True Christian Religion* explains what that prayer should be: "Prayer should be that the Lord may have pity, grant the power to resist the evils of which one has repented, and supply the inclination and affection for doing good, since man without Him cannot do anything (John 15:5)" (TCR 539). After we have acknowledged our own miserable states, we acknowledge that the Lord can help us. We ask Him for power to resist. And we ask that He change our hearts, so that

we stop wanting to do the evil things that we've seen in ourselves.

*True Christian Religion* emphasizes that it is vital that this prayer be directed to the Lord God Jesus Christ - a personal, loving, present God - rather than an idea of God as a distant invisible force in the universe:

"The Lord God the Savior is to be approached because He is the God of heaven and earth, the Redeemer and Savior, to whom omnipotence, omniscience, omnipresence, mercy itself, and also justice, belong; also because man is His creature and the church is His sheepfold; also because in the New Testament He frequently commands men to approach, worship, and adore Him....That man is not "to climb up some other way" [as said in the Gospel of John] means that he is not to approach God the Father, because He is invisible and therefore inaccessible, and conjunction with Him is impossible; and this is why He Himself came into the world, and made Himself visible and accessible, and conjunction with Him possible; which was done solely that man might be saved. For unless in thought God is approached as a Man, every idea of God perishes; it falls as sight does when directed out upon the universe, that is, into empty nothingness, or into nature, or into what is met within nature." (TCR 538)

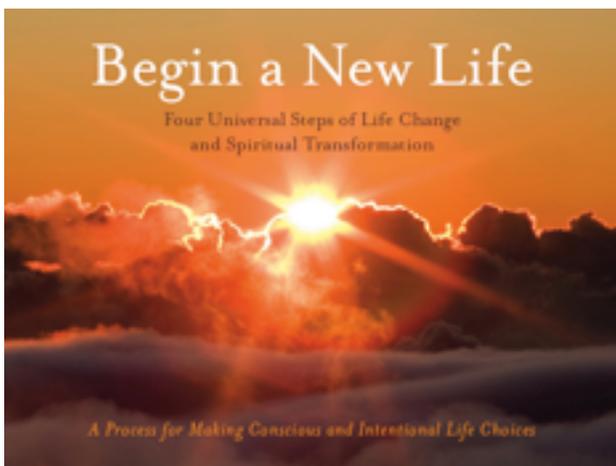
## 4.) Begin a New Life

This final step is the most important step of all: after we have recognized and acknowledged the sin in ourselves, and prayed to the Lord for strength to resist and for our hearts to be changed, we must act completely as if on our own power (while still acknowledging that it is the Lord within us) to stop thinking, intending, and willing that evil.

It is vital that once we have begun to live a new life, we remain committed to living in that way. The book *New Jerusalem and Its Heavenly Doctrine* says, "After a person has examined himself, and acknowledged his sins, and after he has practised repentance, he ought to continue steadfastly in good, even to the end of his life. For should he afterwards relapse into his former life of evil, and embrace it, he becomes the subject of profanation; because he then conjoins evil with good; wherefore his latter state becomes worse than the former" (NJHD 169). This does not mean that we will be perfect in an instant; as a passage from the book *Conjugal Love* states, "As soon as anyone purposefully or deliberately refrains from some evil because it is a sin, he is kept by the Lord in a purpose to refrain from the rest. Consequently, if he then does

evil unwittingly or under the sway of some overwhelming lust of the body, still it is not imputed to him [i.e., he is not held guilty for it], because he did not purpose it to himself, nor does he defend it in himself" (CL 529). We may slip up from time to time, but the important thing is that we remain in the purpose of refraining from that evil.

At first, this takes all the force of our active will, because we are attracted to the evil that we have been in the habit of doing. But if we continue resisting it as if of ourselves, and praying to the Lord for His aid, eventually that evil loses its appeal, and ultimately becomes hateful to us. When this happens, we come to know the full extent of the Lord's forgiveness and mercy - that He has given us new hearts and new spirits, as He promised.



## “BEGIN A NEW LIFE” WORKSHOP DETAILS

As mentioned above, Rev. Mark Pendleton of the Glenview New Church will be traveling to Dawson Creek in September to offer a one-day workshop on "Begin a New Life," the spiritual growth program he has developed based on the steps of repentance from the Writings. The workshop will take place at the church on **Saturday, September 7th, from 8:30 a.m. until 4:30 p.m., with a break for lunch.** Admission cost is a suggested donation of \$20 to help cover Mark's travel costs; if that's more than you're able to afford, though, feel free to offer whatever you're able, or nothing at all - we don't want money to be an obstacle to attendance. Rev. Pendleton will also be preaching in Dawson Creek on Sunday morning, with a sermon on a related topic: "'Little By Little: Spiritual Growth is a Gradual Process.'"

The seminar provides practical tools and worksheets for the practice of repentance, which the Writings lay out as the most fundamental responsibility on our parts for being regenerated. Besides the seminar itself, Rev. Pendleton has developed a six-week program, with weekly hour-long meetings for participants to discuss how they're doing. For those six weeks, our sermons in Dawson Creek and Grande Prairie will follow the program topics. In Grande Prairie, we will only be able to cover every other week, but there are materials for small groups to meet on their own during the off weeks.

I'm really excited about this program. I know it's very early on a Saturday, but I would love to have participants from Grande Prairie as well as Dawson Creek (at least with the time change you could leave a little before 8:00 and still get here on time...). It's also an event that would be great to invite friends and family who aren't involved in the church to - the program is easily accessible to newcomers, and it provides a tangible, hands-on introduction to some core New Church practices, rather than just talking about abstract beliefs.

There are a few things I need your help with:

1.) We'll break for lunch on Saturday; would you be willing to bring something (e.g. sandwiches, veggies) for that lunch? We'll only have an hour or so, so something that requires less preparation, or that can be prepared ahead of time, would probably be best.

2.) For those in Dawson Creek: for the six-week program, would you prefer to meet as one whole group with me (Coleman) as the leader, or would you prefer to meet in smaller, more private groups? The program works best if you can find a group of at least five or so. Groups will meet for about an hour once a week on whatever evenings look like they'll work best for the most number of attendees. (For a better idea of what these meetings will look like, visit [www.beginanewlife.info](http://www.beginanewlife.info) and look for the item on the left that says "Six-Week Program for Small Groups.")

3.) If you plan on attending - even if you're not 100% sure you'll be able to - please let me know ahead of time so we can have a rough idea of how much we need to bring in the way of materials.

Please let me know if you have any questions or thoughts. As I say, I'm really excited about this program, and I hope it will be an opportunity to serve not only the existing New Church members, but the broader community.



## ISABELLE MARIE LOUISE EAGLE FRIESEN

Our dear friend Isabelle Friesen passed away on Sunday, July 21, 2013 at the age of 72 years. Born August 30th, 1940, at the Valley River Reserve in Manitoba, to Catherine Anne St. Paul Eagle and Andrew Eagle, Isabelle met and married Harry Friesen in 1956. After moving to several different towns, Harry and Isabelle eventually settled in Dawson Creek in 1965. Together Isabelle and Harry had five children: Danny, Bev, Cathy, Dave, and Doug.

Isabelle was an integral part of the Dawson Creek New Church community, cooking for various different church suppers, visiting all the different church families, and participating in the life of worship. Community mattered a great deal to Isabelle; she often spoke of the need to bring everyone together, and she gave generously to every community she was a part of: the church community, the aboriginal community, the communities of Dawson Creek and Rolla, and many others.

One of Isabelle's greatest joys was teaching schoolchildren about native traditions – making crafts, bannock, dream-catchers, and talking about their heritage. Perhaps she loved this so much because it combined two of her passions: her lover for her community

and her love for her children. She deeply loved her own children, her grandchildren, her great-grandchildren, her nieces and nephews, and all the other children who she treated as part of her family.

We rejoice to think of Isabelle being reunited with loved ones who passed on before. She will be greatly missed here, but it is encouraging to think of her serving in a new community: the community of the Lord's kingdom. We can be confident and hopeful that she is now engaged in those things she loved most in this world: the work of bringing people together in community.



## CHURCH CAMPOUT

Although we had a smaller turnout than in some years, due to a number of factors including rainy weather, those who attended the church campout at Moberly Lake had a great time. Highlights included games where attendees worked together to act out the different parts of things like race cars or blenders - lots of laughter there! On Saturday evening we had a good conversation about the human form of heaven, and the different roles we all play in society. And on Sunday morning, the Catholic diocese was once again gracious enough to let us use their little church for a service, where everyone at the camp wrote down a use they had seen another camper performing and posted it on a cut-out of a human body that the children had coloured in the day before. Thanks so much to everyone who came, and a special thanks to Danelle Kilber for all the work she did to help organize the children's activity!

## TRIP TO MANITOBA

In July, several members of the Friesen family from the Dawson Creek congregation made their way east for a school reunion in Roblin, where some of them had attended school, or had siblings who attended school. Other friends and relatives came from elsewhere to meet them: Walter and David Middleton, and Cheryl Titanick, as well as Viola and Bob Olmer from Pittsburgh. Tracy Bouchard took a picture of this rose bush, which is pretty much the last original thing left from her Grandma Friesen's old yard in Roblin, Manitoba:



Some of the family members went on from Roblin and made it as far as Winnipeg, where they met up with Esther Friesen Marque, who is 79 years old - an aunt whom some of them had never met. Esther lived in Dawson Creek for a short time before moving back to Manitoba. Tracy got a picture of herself with her granddaughter Addison and her Aunt Esther:



From all accounts, those who took the trip had a wonderful time getting to see relatives who lived far away - as well as getting to spend some quality time with relatives who live close by!



### 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 e-mail [pastor@dawsoncreeknewchurch.ca](mailto:pastor@dawsoncreeknewchurch.ca).**

# CHURCH CALENDAR

## SEPTEMBER 2013

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
1 <b>11 a.m.</b> Family Service <b>12 p.m.</b> Pastor's Council meeting	2	3	4	5	6	7 <b>8 a.m.</b> Final Registration for workshop <b>8:30 a.m.</b> "Begin a New Life" workshop (ends 4:30 p.m.)
8 <b>11 a.m.</b> Traditional Service with Rev. Mark Pendleton: "Little By Little: Spiritual Growth is a Gradual Process"	9	10	11	12	13	14
15 <b>11 a.m.</b> Traditional Service: "Examining Your Life" <b>4:30 p.m.</b> Worship and Class (Grande Prairie)	16	17	18	19	20	21
22 <b>11 a.m.</b> Traditional Service: "Recognizing and Acknowledging Our Sins"	23	24	25	26	27	28
29 <b>11 a.m.</b> Traditional Service: "Praying for Help" <b>4:30 p.m.</b> Holy Supper Service (DeBolt)	30	1	2	3	4	5

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