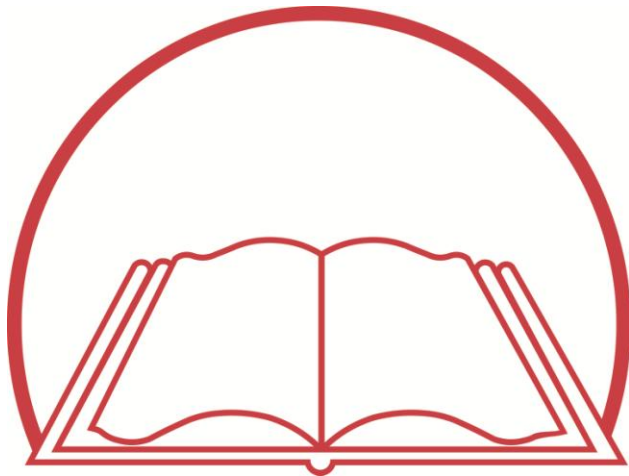




PEACE RIVER NEW CHURCH CURRENT

NEWSLETTER OF THE DAWSON CREEK CHURCH OF THE NEW JERUSALEM

MARCH 2012



WHAT DOES THE NEW CHURCH TEACH?

By Rev. Coleman Glenn

What do you say when someone asks you what the New Church believes? It can be a hard question to answer. On the one hand, it's simple: we believe that we should follow the two great commandments, to love God and love our neighbor. But ALL Christians believe that. On the other hand, there are the 30+ volumes of the Writings, which seem impossible to condense into a short, easy answer. So, what does the New Church believe?

Fortunately for us, Emanuel Swedenborg was asked this very question, and he had a short, simple answer to it. The book *Conjugal Love* recounts a time when a spirit came to him asking him what these new teachings were that he had been publishing. In response, Swedenborg told the spirit that there were five "precepts" of the New Church (which was the same word he used for the Ten Commandments (i.e., Ten Precepts)). Those same five precepts appear in several different places throughout the Writings. And just as the Two Great Commandments summarized the teachings of the Ten Commandments, these Five Precepts are another helpful way to

look at the most important teachings on what it truly means to follow the Lord.

The story in *Conjugal Love* recounts that the spirit ran up to Swedenborg "with a threatening expression and heated tone," and demanded that Swedenborg tell him what the New Church doctrines were, wanting to see where Swedenborg was wrong (since he was sure that he was). Swedenborg answered, "The doctrines of the church that is meant by the New Jerusalem are as follows:

- 1.) There is one God, in whom is the Divine Trinity, and that God is the Lord Jesus Christ.
- 2.) Saving faith is to believe in Him.
- 3.) Evils must be fled from because they are of the devil and from the devil.
- 4.) Good deeds must be done because they are of God and from God.
- 5.) These must be done by a person as though he were doing them from himself, but he must believe that they are from the Lord in him and by means of him."

Unsatisfied with this answer, the spirit demanded that Swedenborg present evidence for these points from Scripture. For the first two points, Swedenborg did so. For the first point, that the Trinity exists within the Person of the Lord God Jesus Christ, he referred to passages such as John 10:30: "I and my Father are one," and John 14:6: "I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life; no one comes to the Father except by Me." The second point, that saving faith is to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, he demonstrated by passages such as John 3:36: "He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; but he who does not believe in the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on Him."

For the final three points, Swedenborg did not even quote any Scripture, saying that the entire Word teaches these things throughout, and that there was no need to quote any one particular passage to prove it. The spirit could come up with no response, and eventually went away annoyed.

There are plenty of things that Swedenborg's answer doesn't get into about the New Church – the internal sense within the Word, the nature of heaven, etc. But it's useful, not just as a way to let people know the basic teachings of the New Church, but also as a reminder to ourselves of what the most important teachings are. And just like the Ten Commandments and the Two Great Commandments, we see all of them throughout the Word. The first two precepts especially have to do with love to the Lord, because they tell us about Who He is, and how we can respond to Him. The second two especially have to do with love toward the neighbor – the second great commandment, and the second table of the Ten Commandments. And the final precept shows how these two things really make one – because when we act in charity toward our neighbor, we're allowing the Lord's love to act in us and through us. That is how we love the Lord.

That final precept – “these must be done by a person as though he were doing them from himself, but he must believe that they are from the Lord in him and by means of him” – is the key to understanding why all five precepts are necessary. Throughout history, some people have tended to emphasize charity and good deeds at the expense of faith, while others have emphasized faith at the expense of charity. The reality is, they need to be married. If we're going to have the Lord doing good “in us and by means of us,” we need to know who He is and what goodness looks like. And God shows Himself to us most fully in person as the Lord Jesus Christ. If we try to conceive of God – and His will for us – as anyone other than the Lord Jesus Christ, we'll have a wrong idea of Who He is, and so when we go to do good, we will be acting less from Him and more from ourselves.

There's plenty more to New Church theology than just those five points. They don't answer the question of “how is the New Church most different from other kinds of Christianity” – but they do sum up the essence of what it means to be part of the New Church, not in the sense of an organization, but in the sense of the Lord's Church on earth. These five simple points are worth memorizing as the key doctrines of the New Church.

PASTORAL TRAVEL IN MARCH

Rev. Coleman Glenn will be away this month from March 5-12 to help lead a young adults' weekend at Lake Wallenpaupack in Pennsylvania. On that Sunday, March 11, Rev. Calvin Odhner from the Olivet New Church in Toronto will be preaching.

If you need to reach Coleman while he's away, feel free to call him on his cell phone: (250) 467-2313.

EVENT: “WHAT IS THE NEW CHURCH?”

On Thursday, March 22nd, at 7:30 p.m., we will be hosting an event at the church called “What Is The New Church?” It's an opportunity for community members who may have seen the church, or seen our page on Facebook, or talked to members of the church, to come and learn a little bit about who we are and what we believe. It's also an excellent opportunity even for those who are already familiar with the church to be reminded of the church's basic teachings. Rev. Coleman Glenn will give a brief presentation on the basic teachings of the New Church, followed by some time for questions and answers.

Afterwards, we'll invite everyone downstairs for coffee, tea, and snacks. It would be wonderful if as many members of the congregation as possible came out to show their support, to help provide refreshments, and to get to know some of our visitors. And please invite your friends!

WESTERN CANADA CAMP

This year, we will be holding our annual campout at Camp Emile at Moberly Lake from July 20-22. People are welcome to arrive in the late afternoon on Friday, July 20th, and must leave by late afternoon on Sunday. Stay tuned for more information as the summer approaches. If you have any questions, please contact Helene Friesen.

LADIES GROUP MEETING

The Ladies Group will be holding a meeting after church on March 18th. We'd love to have as many ladies as possible come out for this!

JUNE 19th VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Jane Myatt will be organizing the New Church Day gifts for this year, and she'd love some other volunteers to help out. We'd especially appreciate it if someone would be willing to sew four Word bookmarks. Please contact Jane if you're able to help out.

VISIT FROM REV. CALVIN ODHNER

On the weekend of March 9-11, Rev. Calvin Odhner, assistant to the pastor at the Olivet New Church in Toronto, will be making his first visit to the Peace country, along with his wife Maggie. Calvin will offer a doctrinal class in Silver Valley on March 9th, and give church in Dawson Creek and Grande Prairie on March 11th. **On Saturday, March 10th, we will be having a potluck supper for Calvin and Maggie at the church at 5:00 p.m.**, followed by a doctrinal class. Please come out and welcome our guests!

REPORT ON THE CANADIAN / MIDWESTERN U.S. CLERGY MEETINGS

From February 22-25, I (Rev. Coleman Glenn) attended joint clergy meetings between the Canadian and Midwestern United States New Church ministers in Oak Arbor, Michigan. Altogether there were twelve ministers in attendance. We had two jam-packed days full of worship, prayer, presentations, discussions, and fellowship. During the days, each of us had a one-hour block to give a presentation on a topic of our choice, including discussion.

Over the course of the two days, we had presentations on healthy ways for the laity and the clergy to work together, on questions around membership within the General Church, on how to reach out to younger people, on principles of conjugal love, on hearing the Word speak to us personally, and on the question of why bad things are allowed to happen. I gave a presentation on atheism, looking at what the Writings say about it, as well as asking how we can have constructive conversations with atheists, and with those who love them and are concerned about them.

Our hosts in Oak Arbor were extremely gracious and welcoming. On Thursday evening they invited us to a coffee and dessert social, and it was a great chance to talk to the people in the congregation there, and share the things that excite us about what's happening in the New Church.



THE DAWSON CREEK CHURCH OF THE NEW JERUSALEM

9013 8th Street
Dawson Creek, BC V1G 3N3
www.dawsoncreeknewchurch.ca
(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.

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

CHURCH CALENDAR

MARCH 2012

| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat |
|--|-----------|-----------|-----------|--|---|--|
| | | | | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| All events occur at the Dawson Creek Church of the New Jerusalem unless noted otherwise. | | | | | | |
| 4 11 a.m. Family Service | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 7:30 p.m. Doctrinal Class (Silver Valley) | 10 5:00 p.m. Potluck Supper & Class w/ Calvin & Maggie Odhner |
| Rev. Coleman Glenn away until March 12. | | | | | | |
| 11 11 a.m. Traditional Service 4:30 p.m. Worship and Class (Grande Prairie) | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 |
| Rev. Coleman Glenn away. | | | | | | |
| 18 11 a.m. Traditional Service 12:30 p.m. Ladies Group Meeting | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 7:30 p.m. "What Is the New Church?" event | 23 | 24 |
| 25 11 a.m. Traditional Service 4:30 p.m. Holy Supper Ser- vice (Debolt) | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 |