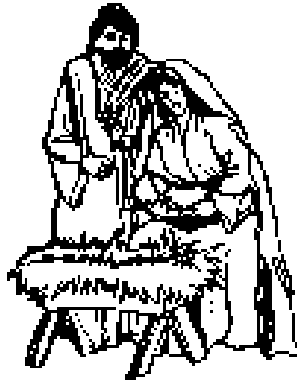




*The General Church of the
New Jerusalem*

PERTH CIRCLE

December 2004 / January 2005



I see Him, but not now; I behold Him but not nigh;
there shall come forth a Star out of Jacob, and a
Scepter shall rise out of Israel and shall smite through
the corners of Moab, and break down all the sons of
Sheth (Num. 24:17).

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The Lord's state at birth

by Rev. Dandridge Pendleton

"Now the Lord had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will cause thee to see." (Genesis 12: 1)

The historical circumstance of the Lord's conception and birth is the cornerstone upon which rests the Christian faith. And yet the Virgin Birth is a tenet that men understand not. Over the centuries, this lack of understanding has led increasingly to question, to doubt, and even to open denial with regard to the Virgin Birth. This doubt and denial lead inevitably to a negation of the Lord's Divinity. For this reason, the manner of the Lord's conception and birth is one of the arcana into which it is now permitted to enter with understanding, and which is explained and confirmed in the Writings.

Implicit in the Lord's state at birth were all the states of glorification that were to follow. A comprehension of the basic purpose and procedure of this glorification is fundamental to our interior acknowledgment of the Writings as Divine revelation. For only through a rational understanding of the states that were induced upon the Lord, both at His birth and throughout His life on this earth, can we perceive how God could have become man, yet without forfeiting His essential Divinity.

At the time of the Lord's conception, Mary was espoused to Joseph. In those days this relationship was considered a legitimate marriage. It was not a full state of union, however. For there was prescribed a certain period of time, during which there should be no physical consummation of the marriage.

With regard to this relationship that existed between Mary and Joseph at the time of the Lord's conception - a state of legitimate marriage, yet not one of physical intimacy - the Writings

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give only one direct reference: that "it was necessary for Him to be born of a virgin in legitimate marriage with Joseph" (*God the Savior*). Suffice it here to observe that Joseph would seem to represent the function of the heavens, as that medium through which the Lord descended and accommodated Himself to conception, yet *from* which He took nothing into His essential Divine. Even so, Joseph himself contributed nothing to the conception of the Divine seed, yet his established relationship with Mary provided that the birth of the Lord should be regarded as legitimate in the eyes of men. Mary, we are told, represents the church as to the affection of truth (*Canons II*, chap. ix), which affection must be present in some measure in order for the Lord to be born, as it were, with man.

There is, however, another and more tangible reason why the Lord was born of a virgin, and not of the seed of man. For the Writings reveal that the soul of man is contained in the seed of the father, while the material substances from which the soul weaves its physical body in the womb are contributed by the mother (AC 1815, 2005, 3290). The Lord, we are told, was born as any other man, *but with this exception*, that His soul was the Divine itself (AC 1460). This last was of necessity to the accomplishment of the glorification.

Our thought concerning the Lord's birth should be conditioned by the fundamental statement that He assumed the human according to His own Divine order of creation (TCR 89). The essence of this order is the going forth and descent of life from the Lord through discrete media, whereby this life is successively accommodated, even down to the ultimate plane of matter at rest. With this ultimate matter the descending life clothes itself and commences its return to the Lord in completed forms of use (cf. TCR 33; DLW 52-56, 291, 294). It follows, therefore, that the Lord, who willed to take on the human according to the order of His own creation, submitted Himself to this same ordered pattern of successively descending degrees in creation, and so accommodated His inmost Divine to the ultimate plane of womb-life.

The Lord's state at birth is said to be most arcane (AC 1414), that is, most secret, most deeply hidden. It is this arcane state
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that is representatively depicted in the words of the text: "Now the Lord had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, to a land that I will cause thee to see."

"Abram" here represents the Lord as to His assumed human. "The Lord," or "Jehovah," represents the Divine life, which formed and constituted the inmost soul within that human from its very conception. By the Lord's speaking to Abram, we read, is here signified the "first mental advertence of all" (AC 1410), the first stirring of mental life with the Lord as a baby. The Lord's command to Abram, to "get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, to the land that I will cause thee to see," compasses the whole of the glorification process that was to be. For these words signify that the Lord was to recede from the corporeal and worldly things of His external man, in order that the spiritual and celestial things of His internal man might be presented to His view (AC 1411-13).

In the *Canons* (V: iv) we are told that the Divine seed from which Mary conceived was the Divine truth from the Divine good, in its essence infinite and uncreate. In contrast to this, we learn that the spiritual seed-bed of all human conception is also truth from good, *but truth in finite and created form*, having impressed upon it the blemish of hereditary evil (*ibid.*). The difference, then, is that the soul-primitive of the Lord was in itself Divine - pure Divine truth proceeding from His Divine love, unobstructed by the network of paternal hereditary evil that constitutes the outermost degree of every human soul (cf. DLW 432; AC 1438). For the seed, or soul-primitive, from the father with every man is the first receptacle of life from the Lord, "but such a receptacle as it was with the father; for the seed is in the form of his love" (DLW 269). This being so, had the Lord been born of any other than Divine seed, His reception of love and wisdom from the Divine would have been perpetually finited, or limited, by reason of His having a human, paternal heredity. Had this been the case, the glorification could not have been possible.

The Lord indeed had a paternal heredity. But this was a Divine heredity from Jehovah, or from the Divine love itself. The Lord also had a maternal heredity from Mary which was in itself evil

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(AC 1444). It was of necessity that the Lord should have this maternal heredity adhering to Him from birth. For we read: "the Lord underwent and endured the most grievous temptations, temptations so great that He fought alone and by His own power against the whole of hell. No one can undergo temptation, unless evil adheres to him; he who has no evil cannot have the least temptation.; evil is what the infernal spirits excite" (AC 1444). And the number concludes with this striking assertion: "In the Lord there was not any evil that was actual, or His own, as there is in all men, but there was hereditary evil from the mother" (*ibid.*).

The maternal heredity served as the medium whereby the hells could approach the Lord while He was on earth, thus enabling Him to close with them in the bitter combats of temptation, and thereby conquer and subjugate them, *without at the same time destroying them*. For had the Divine itself of the Lord come in contact with the hells, without the mediation of His Human, they would have been destroyed in an instant; even as our earth would be consumed by the unmediated fire of the sun.

With specific regard to the Lord's state at birth, we are informed that He alone was born a spiritual-celestial man, while all other men are born natural, with the capacity of becoming either spiritual or celestial by regeneration (AC 4594). In Him truth was conjoined with good, or love, from birth (AE 449; a). But we are also told that His human was not Divine from birth, because it was contaminated with hereditary evil from the mother (AC 6716). Thus, there existed in the Lord's natural man from birth two kinds of good (AC 3518). The good, or love, which He had from the Divine was "His own" [proprium] (*ibid.*), while the good in His natural from the mother was "in itself evil" (*ibid.*). This latter good, however, was of service for the reformation of the natural, after which this external, or mediate, good from the mother was totally rejected (*ibid.*). Hence the statement that "the will in the Lord . . . was Divine from conception, and was the Divine good itself; but the will that He had by birth from the mother was evil" (AC 5157; cf.. 1573: 3).

This reference to two kinds of good, or two separate wills, in the Lord - the one Divine, the other in itself evil - may well give us pause for studied reflection as to just what was the Lord's "will" from the Divine, and what his "will" from the mother. From a study of the doctrine concerning the motivating loves with which the Lord was invested from birth it becomes clear that He never willed, nor even tended toward, actual evil. For He was born spiritual-celestial (AC 4594), having from birth a desire for good and a longing for truth (AE 449: a). In Him truth was conjoined with good from the beginning (*ibid.*). His ruling love - His proprium - was from the Divine paternity, and was an inmost desire to save the universal human race (AC 2500). In the light of these teachings, we cannot think of the Lord's temptations as having involved the least desire or will toward evil on His part. When yet, on the other hand, we are assured that the Lord was tempted, to a depth utterly beyond any human sustaining or comprehension. Now, since there was in the Lord no actual evil (AC 1444, 1921), nor even the desire thereto, on what basis, then, could He enter into temptation?

In number 1573 of the *Arcana Coelestia* it is stated that hereditary evil existed in the Lord only in His external man, and that from this hereditary blemish there was also falsity in His external man. But note well that this falsity was not derived from the *principles* of falsity (*ibid.*). That is to say, the falsity in the Lord's external man did not enter or become confirmed in His interiors by any will toward evil. In this, the Lord stood completely apart from all other men. It was this falsity in His external man whereby, although He did not appropriate it to Himself, still the Lord could be tempted. For He was assailed by these falsities in the form of appearances from the hells; appearances which, during His states of temptation, seemed in themselves to be true.

Reflect upon the statement, that when the Lord came into a perception of the perverted state of the race, He "willed to withdraw from that perception. The reason is manifest, namely, that the perception from the Divine, and the thought therefrom concerning the human race, that such was its quality, struck Him

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with horror" (AC 2222). In this there was temptation inconceivable to the human mind. For the false appearance, insinuated into His human by the ever present hells, was that the race had fallen to the point where men could not be left in freedom and still be saved. So intense was this temptation that our Lord, God Himself, in His state of humiliation, willed to overlook, thus not to acknowledge, the existence of this low estate with the race. And without this acknowledgment on His part, the glorification process itself could not have been achieved. The hells would have been victorious in their quest to subjugate humanity completely, and all mankind on this earth would have perished. Thus we come to see that the Lord's states from birth were such that His temptations, while they were to involve nothing of active evil on His part, were nevertheless to induce upon Him the uttermost of grief and despair, even to the seeming failure of His Divine love to bring salvation to men.

From this it is evident that the hereditary evil from the mother, which resided in the Lord's external man, and which is referred to as a "will," was not perceived by Him with desire. It was *in* Him, but never of Him; in Him, as that ultimate organ through which the forces of evil could approach and assault, but never, even for an instant, of Him; for the whole purpose and endeavor of His inner Divine love was the subjugation of this very infernal influx and its co-responding proprium, or will, in all men. This self-induced veiling of human proprium, taken from Mary, gave rise to compelling anxiety from false appearances with the Lord - the appearance that He could not save mankind; the appearance, as He hung upon the cross, that His Divine soul had deserted Him. This last is said in the Writings to have constituted the final and most grievous temptation, wherein the Lord cried out in the extremity of anguish: "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" But the actual will of the Lord - that which was His very own, and which He perceived as His inmost love and desire - was Divine from birth.

Thus did the Lord bow the heavens and come down. Yet in His descent to conception and birth, He took nothing of human proprium into Himself, into His interiors, either from angel or Church of the New Jerusalem November 2004

man. And in the return process of glorification, He was to bring even the external frailty of the human additament that He had assumed into a full union with the Divine soul that was His very life. He was to break clear at last of all accommodations and appearances. And in so doing, He was to subjugate the hells fully even on the natural plane, reorder the heavens, and maintain the spiritual freedom of mankind.

New Church Life 1954;74:565-570

Moore River Retreat

Once again, Moore River provided us with a lovely venue for our church retreat.

The sound of a motor bike outside heralded the arrival of Norm and Lois- their youthfulness ensuring the noisy commotion continued, until meal time when at least some people managed to use their tongues for eating instead of talking!

As usual there was plenty of food, both spiritual and natural. The details of neither were overlooked.

John led the discussions on some stories from the book of Daniel; King Nebuchadnezzar's dream of the image of gold-silver- bronze, iron and clay; the fiery furnace for Daniel's three friends Shadrak, Meshak and Abednigo.

We were assisted by the Dole Notes in understanding the various levels of correspondences imbedded in the stories and how they apply to us in our daily lives.

Submitted by Val Hart

Visit by Rev Garry Walsh

Rev Garry Walsh visited us on the 3rd November. He was welcomed at the airport by a small contingent who had morning tea at the Frosts.

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He led us in a Holy Supper service at the Smuts home, followed by a shared meal. The evening culminated in a doctrinal class which led to discussion and profound thought on Divine Providence.

Thank you Garry for your nurture at a time when you were probably jet lagged and exhausted. We appreciate it very much!

Visit of Rt Rev Peter Buss and his wife Lisa.

We anticipate with pleasure the visit of Peter and Lisa again! There will be a Holy Supper worship service on Friday evening 3rd December, followed by a shared meal at 10 Broome Street.

Peter will be dedicating our new WORD that has been given to us by Bryn Athyn.

Carols in the Park will be held on Sunday 12th December at Len Shearer Reserve, Marcus Reserve, Booragoon. Family funtime from 4.30pm to 6.45pm, Carols begins at 7.00pm. Programme and candles available for \$2. Last year some of us gathered here for the evening and enjoyed a most beautifully orchestrated carol evening by the Mount Pleasant Baptist Church.

Carol Singing

You are cordially invited to an *evening of carols* at 35 Ewing on Sunday evening 19th at 7.30pm.

Christmas Eve Service (see calendar)

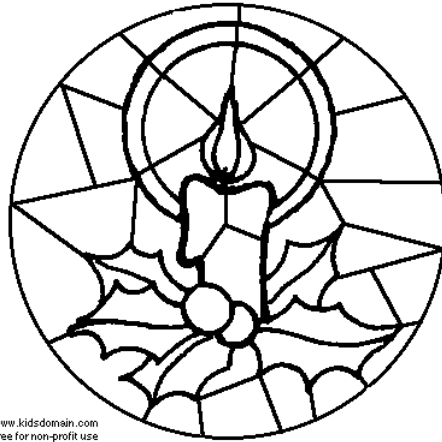
We hope to repeat the delight that we all experienced last year on Christmas Eve when we met for worship, and shared a special sit down supper in a spirit of harmony and festivity. A real community experience!

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December Calendar 2004

Friday 3 rd December	Worship 5.30pm Holy Supper Bishop Peter Buss Shared meal 7pm	10 Broome Street South Perth (off Douglas St.)
Sunday 12 December	Worship 10.30am Followed by a shared meal	10 Broome Street South Perth (off Douglas St.)
Sunday 12 th December	Carols in the Park Shared picnic at 5.pm onwards	Len Shearer Reserve, Marcus Avenue , Booragoon 7.00pm
Sunday 19 th December	Worship 10.30am Followed by a shared meal	10 Broome Street South Perth (off Douglas St.)
Sunday 19 th	Carol singing 7.30pm	35 Ewing Ave
Friday 24 th December	Evening worship 6.pm followed by a shared meal	10 Broome Street South Perth (off Douglas St.)
Sunday 26 th December	Evening worship 5pm followed by a shared meal	35 Ewing Ave
Sunday	Evening worship	35 Ewing Ave

Jan 2 nd	5pm followed by a shared meal	
Jan 9th	Evening worship 5pm followed by a shared meal	35 Ewing Ave
Jan 16th	Evening worship 5pm followed by a shared meal	35 Ewing Ave
Jan 23rd	Evening worship 5pm followed by a shared meal	35 Ewing Ave
Jan 30th	Evening worship 5pm followed by a shared meal	10 Broome street



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10 Broome Street, South Perth

(off Douglas Street)

***Times and venues of Worship during
December and January***

are itemised on the calendar

*Experience a new meaning and level of understanding
of the Bible and Creation.*

*Reach new satisfying states of peaceful tranquillity
and calm through inner faith and deep conviction in
God's Divine plan for us.*

*Enjoy happiness and joy by living principles of
charity and use in your everyday life as taught us by
the Lord God Jesus Christ.*

Reach out to others with love and understanding.