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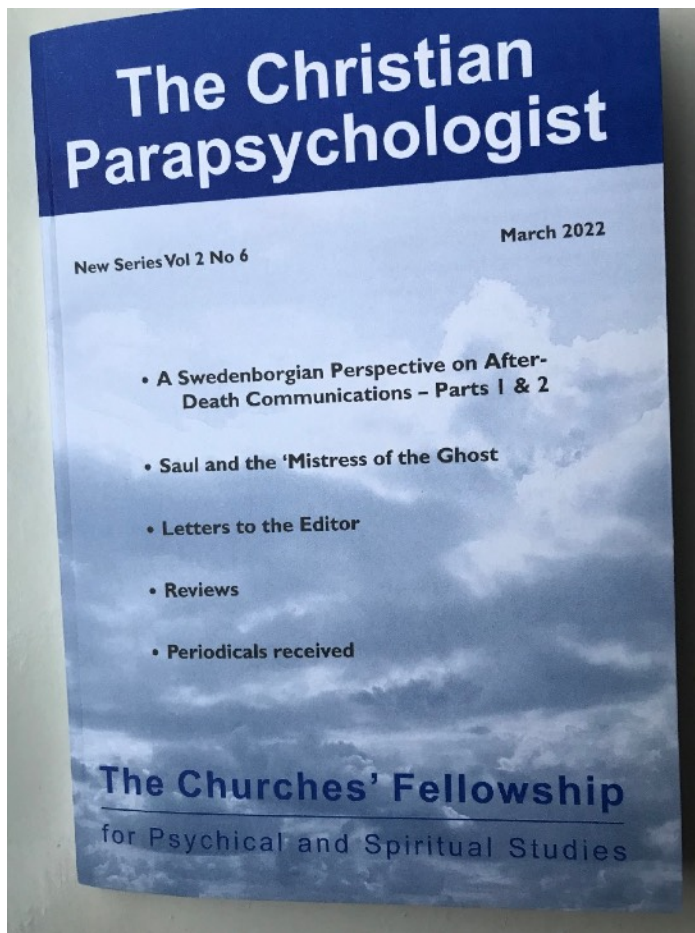
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A Swedenborgian Perspective on After Death Communications

by Revd Brian Talbot

In the latest issue of The Christian Parapsychologist (March 2022), the journal of The Churches Fellowship for Psychical and Spiritual Studies, I have a 29 page article entitled "A Swedenborgian Perspective on ADCs" or "After Death Communications. ADCs are mostly unsought visionary experiences in which we sense, hear, feel or see a deceased relative or friend communicate with us. For this to happen we have to have the senses of our spiritual body activated, and they have to have their worldly memory reactivated.

I have personal experience of ADCs. My late father has appeared in my dreams three times. I have a section in the article in which I real off examples of evidential or veridical ADCs, such as Katie being told by her deceased aunt that her mother used to pull the heads of her Barbie dolls! Sometimes our deceased relatives can make our young relatives laugh with their silly faces and dancing, or playing



hide-and-seek. Sometimes our deceased relatives can lead us out of a burning house. We can sometimes identify deceased relatives from their photographs, or children can come out with their favourite phrases or describe the clothes that they were buried in. Sometimes they can help children find their graves, even when they can't read, or predict that their dog would have seven puppies on the next day.

In the first part I examine the evidence to suggest that they take place in what Swedenborg calls the 'World of Spirits', in which we are unconsciously now, visit when we have deep dreams, and arrive at when we pass on. Support for the idea that ADCs occur in another world, is where our room changes shape, or our surroundings change

dramatically, when people levitate or fly, when they appear as full-bodied, or just head-and-shoulders, or transparent. There is also the fact that some people or animals fly through walls or windows. How can a deceased grandfather hug Chris sitting on a sofa by putting his hands through the sofa, unless it takes place in a non-physical world?

I mention my "Swedenborgian Replica Scene Theory", in which I suggest that all visionary experiences, whether ADCs or Near-Death Experiences, or Out-of-body experiences, or visions, begin in a duplicate scene in the World of Spirits. Similarly Swedenborg had replica lodgings or houses in the World of Spirits, from which to explore the spiritual world. I love hearing stories of deceased people being seen to be whole and healthy and younger, or children seen to be healthy but older.

In part 2 I explain Jesus' post-resurrection appearances according to the Writings, which just happen to explain them as ADCs! When the disciples saw the risen Jesus or angels, it happened in a replica scene in the world of spirits. Whereas when the disciples saw an empty tomb, this occurred in our world. The change in consciousness is immediate or instantaneous. In the second part of the second article I examine the claims of those like Raymond Moody or the psychotherapist Alan Botkin, who claim they can generate ADCs for other people.

Unlike previous article, I didn't hold back with references to the Writings. I documented it fully, as I used to do when writing for The New-Church Magazine, which I edited in the 1990s and 2000s. 247 references to the Writings and 5 references to pre-revelatory works such as Journal of Dreams and Word Explained.

We New-Church people or Swedenborgians have much to offer in the realm of after-life studies, such as Near Death Experiences, Out-of-body Experiences and After Death Communications. By having a good knowledge of what people have written about After Death Communications, such as Bill and Judy Guggenheims, Emma Heathcote-James, Louis LaGrand and Christine Duminiaak, we have access to hundreds of cases. By analysing these cases, we can draw parallels to what Swedenborg experienced in twenty-seven years of exploring the spiritual world, and we can offer explanations of how to understand such spiritual experiences. By giving Swedenborgian perspectives on ADCs, we can bring Swedenborg to new audiences, without non-Swedenborgians having to find the relevant references scattered throughout his 30 volumes.

A Swedenborgian ADC

An example of an After Death Experience that I didn't mention in my article is that of Karin Childs. (I first came across it in the 1993 Theta-Alpha magazine of the General Church.) Her 8 year old daughter, Annica, sadly died in a car accident.

"I dreamed that there was a very kind and wealthy family living in a beautiful house. My husband and I had agreed that this family at some point, would take our children and care for them, because that would be better for our children. This is where Annica was. She wasn't dead – she had just gone to live with this family. In the dream I went to visit her there.

She looked beautiful, with bright blonde hair and a lovely smile. She wasn't wearing glasses anymore, and she was dressed in the green jumper and white blouse that she had worn in my brother's wedding the summer before she left us. I cried when I saw Annica, because I was so happy to see her. I put my arm around her and said, 'You feel so good!'

Annica laughed, a comforting little laugh that told me everything was O.K. Then she put her arm around me and walked with me through the house, which was now her home. The family members taking care of her were very sympathetic; they seemed to know without my saying, how hard it was for me to live apart from my daughter."

This experience supports a number of teachings. Relatives will recognise us, [1] and the idea that children are looked after by foster parents, especially women, in the after-life. [2]

A Dove at the Window: Living Dreams and Spiritual Experiences edited by Vera P. Glenn (Rochester, Michigan: Fountain Publishing) page 39. 215 pages (ISBN 0-9659164-2-1)

Childs, Karen Alfelt - "Dreams, Interior Memory, and Visions" in Theta Alpha Journal (March 1993) 4-12, and letters in (September 1993) 22-25

[1] SE 290; 294; 2771; AC 1114; HH 427; 494; SE 3146e; 3545; AC 2304e; cf. HH 234; AR 875:1 = TCR 386:1

[2] HH 332-334; CL 410-411; SE 4354; 5660-5668