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New Church Day 2023 The Apostles' Memories *By Revd Brian Talbot*

(I gave this sermon at Kearsley on Sunday 18th June 2023.)

In three places in *True Christianity* Swedenborg talks about a vision he had on 19th June 1770. The LORD “called together the twelve disciples who followed him in the world. The next day he sent all of them out to the entire *spiritual world* to preach *the gospel* that *the LORD God Jesus Christ* reigns and that his kingdom will last for ages of ages ... also that ‘people who come to the wedding feast of the Lamb are blessed’ (Revelation 19:9). ... This is what the LORD was referring to when he said, ‘He will send out his angels and they will gather his chosen people from one end of the heavens to the other’ (Matthew 24:31).” (*True Christianity* 791)

In paragraph 4 of *True Christianity* Swedenborg makes the point that they are “now angels”. They are no longer the disciples who were bickering about who was the greatest in the kingdom of God. They were no longer the disciples that denied knowing Jesus or betrayed him. They no longer believed that

he was a mere mortal: ““What kind of man is this? Even the winds and the waves obey him!”” (cf. AE 815:7) As angels they knew that he was the only LORD God, the sole Divinely Human Deity, not a mere human being who did miracles and taught amazing parables, or one of three persons in the Deity. Mary the mother of Jesus told Swedenborg that she now believed that Jesus was completely God not her son.

In *True Christianity* 108 Swedenborg mentions that the LORD has formed “a new angelic heaven” of people “who believe in the LORD God the Saviour and who go directly to him”. “Each apostle was assigned a territory to cover. They are carrying out their assignment with complete enthusiasm and energy.”

The LORD told the Apostles “You are witnesses of these things” and “You also must testify, for you have been with me from the beginning.” (Luke 24:48; John 15:27) They were to be his “witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all the Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” Following Judas’ suicide the disciples wanted a replacement from “one of the men who have been with us the whole time the LORD Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from John’s baptism, to the time when Jesus was taken up from us. For one of these must become a witness with us of his resurrection.” “For we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard.” (Acts 1:8; 1:21-22; 2:32; 4:20; cf. 5:32; 13:31; 1 Peter 5:1) The Apostles were primarily witnesses and ideal to spread the angelic ideas about the LORD Jesus – but not just verbally!

Swedenborg tells us that our Book of Life is our “inner memory”. It “is such that everything – absolutely everything – we have ever thought, said, or done from early infancy to extreme old age is imprinted on it in the finest possible detail, even if it looks vague and shadowy to us.” (*Secrets of Heaven* 2474 [LHC]) Our Book of Life also includes our most loving thoughts and intentions.

What we need to remember is the teachings about the Book of Life and particularly the Apostles’ Books of Life. All the memories of the Apostles complete with how they felt, what they thought, what the LORD thought and felt, what bystanders thought and felt, are recorded in their memories. Secondly, these memories can be projected and become living, cinematic, technicolour, sensurround, holograms, that can be seen and felt by any observer. Swedenborg often calls them “representations” or “mental images” or “ideas” or “symbolic mental imagery”. “It should be remembered that in the next life the ideas contained in a person’s mind regarding any matter at all present themselves in a visual, true to life way, and that the nature of everyone’s belief is investigated by means of this presentation.” (*Secrets of Heaven* 10736) Swedenborg portrayed birds, insects, buildings, gardens, groves, palaces and meadows.

But the commentary of those holograms is not that of first century Jews, but of angelic followers of the LORD! (TCR 4:1)

When these memories are transmitted to individuals in the World of Spirits, who are “subjects” or ambassadors or emissaries of heavenly communities, they are then shared with communities, because everybody shares memories. Communities can then share with other communities. More linked than the Internet, the interconnectedness of people in different heavenly communities, ensures accurate passing on of memories. The living, holographic movies of Jesus will be shared exponentially throughout the spiritual world.

The LORD's coming again is not only through Swedenborg, (*True Christianity* 779) and "his presence in every individual", (*Secrets of Heaven* 3900:9e) but also through sending out his disciples throughout the whole spiritual world to share their memories of him in the form of holograms.

I have far more references in the Writings to support the argument that I have put here. If you want the complete article, email brian.talbot@generalconference.org.uk