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## Worship Leaders & Teachers

**Jan 6**—Worship leader, Doug; teaching by Lois; Communion; potluck

**Jan 13**—Worship leader, Do-reene; teaching by Pat

**Jan 20**—Worship leader, Vangie; teaching by Lois

**Jan 27**—Worship leader, Doug; teaching by Pat

## Dec Attendance

Nov 25	18
Dec 2	19
Dec 9	22
Dec 16	20
Dec 23	24
Dec 24	26

## Awaken to the Logos, Life, and Light: Eight Steps to Enlightenment

By Jerry Truex; Dec. 30, 2012

*Every person participates in the Divine Word or Logos from which they receive Divine Life and Light.* These are shocking claims, but I contend it is the message of John’s Prologue (John 1:1-18). To accept these claims, we must take eight steps.

The **FIRST STEP** involves grasping the fundamental axiom of the Prologue: *The Word/Logos—the universal expression and agent of God—is the source of everything that exists.*

John 1:1, 3a-b. <sup>1</sup> In the beginning was the Word [Logos] and the Word was with God and the Word was God. ... <sup>3</sup> All things came into being through him [the Logos], and without him not one thing came into being. (NRSV)

With a **SECOND STEP**, we see that *everyone created by the Universal Logos also participates in the Logos.* This is disclosed in John 1:3c-4. There are two basic punctuation options.

NRSV John 1:3-4. <sup>3</sup> All things came into being through him [the Logos], and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being <sup>4</sup> in him was life, and the life was the light of all people.

NIV John 1:3-4. <sup>3</sup> Through him [the Logos] all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. <sup>4</sup> In him was life, and that life was the light of men.”

Notice how the NRSV links the end of verse 3 and the beginning of verse 4, which I’ve underlined. I can’t go into detail about the original Greek but, in my judgment, the punctuation of the NRSV is arguably better (Raymond Brown, *The Gospel According to John I-XII*, Anchor Bible Vol. 29 [New York: Doubleday, 1966] 7).

The critical phrase is “what has come into being in him was life.” The syntax of the Greek is difficult. Scholars have offered several options, but two are regularly held.

(a) "what-has-come-into-being-in-him was life"

(b) "what-has-come-into-being in him was life"

Some scholars argue that (a) is the best reading. If so, the subject is "what-has-come-into-being-in-him." It does not refer to all of creation, but only a narrow part of creation, namely, those "in him," in the Logos, those born of the Logos or "from above" (Jn. 1:12; 3:5). I don't think this is correct. The immediate context of John 1:1-5 is universal, not narrow, in scope.

Other scholars argue that (b) is the best reading (Brown, *John*, Anchor Bible, 7). As such, the subject is "what-has-come-into-being." It refers to the whole creation, not a narrow part of it. Moreover—and this is important—the whole creation, everyone and everything, was life in him, *in the Logos*. In this way, the Prologue announces that every person is not only created *by the Logos*, but also participates *in the Logos*.

When we take a **THIRD STEP**, we awaken to a stark realization: *Participating in the Universal Logos is Divine Life*.

John 1:3c-4a "... What has come into being<sup>4</sup> in him was life [zōē] ... (NRSV)

The question is what does "life" refer to? Natural life, Eternal Life, Divine Life, or what? As it turns out, John always uses the term "life" (zōē) as a reference to Eternal Life or Divine Life (Brown, *John*, Anchor Bible, 7). Hence, everyone who participates in the Universal Logos—which is every person ever born—has Divine Life or Eternal Life.

This comes as a surprise for most Christians, because most Christians believe that Eternal Life is reserved for those who explicitly believe in Jesus. However, a close reading of the Prologue shows that the Universal Logos and the Divine Life are inseparable. And, if all participate in the Universal Logos, then all have Divine Life. No exceptions.

The **FOURTH STEP** takes us into the mystery of God: *The Universal Logos and the Divine Life are inextricable from the Divine Light*.

John 1:4b. "The life was the light of men (NRSV)

Notice that "the life" and "the light" are grammatically interchangeable. If all people participate in the Universal Logos and the Divine Life, then all have the Light. The Logos and the Life function as Light for all people. All participate in the Logos. All share in the Life. All have the Light. This is corroborated by John 1:9-10.

John 1:9-10a.<sup>9</sup> The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.<sup>10</sup> He [the Light] was in the world..." (NRSV)

Verse 9 can be translated in various ways. I follow the NRSV, which connects the verb "was" (*ēn*), which is in the imperfect tense, with the present participle "coming" (*erchomenon*). The two verbs—stay with me—form an imperfect periphrastic construction that can be translated as "was in the act of coming" (J. H. Bernard, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to St. John*, Vol. 1 [Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark 1928] 10).

The periphrastic construction, difficult to translate in English, means the Universal Logos *was coming through a certain duration of time in the past*. It denotes "an act which began in the past ... having continued over a period of time up to some undefined point" (James Brooks and Carlton Winbery, *Syntax of the New Testament Greek* [Lanham, MD: University of America Press, 1979] 91-92).

Some people believe this "coming" refers to the coming of "the Word that became flesh" in John 1:14. However, the "past continuous" aspect of the imperfect periphrastic construction points to something *before* the event mentioned in John 1:14. Verse 10 confirms this: "It [the Light] was in the world." The past tense expressed by the verb "was" (*ēn*) means the Light came into the world *before* "the Word became flesh," *before* the Incarnation.

This forces two questions. How did the Light come into the world *before* the “Word became flesh”? And does it continue to come after the Incarnation?

The **FIFTH STEP** answers the questions in this way: *The Divine Light of the Universal Logos lights up every human being before, during, and beyond the Logos becoming flesh in Jesus Christ.*

The proof is found in the phrase, “which enlightens everyone” (*ho phōtizei panta anthrōpon*) (John 1:9b). First, *phōtizei* means, “to give light, light up, or enlighten.” Second, *phōtizei* is a present tense verb, stressing continuous action, never stopping, even now. Third, the subject doing the action is the Light. The Light is the agent or source of *phōtizei*. Fourth, *phōtizei* is a transitive verb, indicating the verb requires an object in the accusative case to complete its action—the Light does not light up itself, but rather the Light lights up something else. That something—the object in the accusative case—is “every person” (*panta anthrōpon*). No one is excluded.

Putting it together, every person has existence, life, and light in and through the Logos-Life-Light from Adam to Armageddon before, during, and beyond the event mentioned in John 1:14.

When we take a **SIXTH STEP**, we discover that *some people reject the Universal Logos and so cannot receive the Logos made flesh, namely, Jesus Christ.*

The question is, if all have access to the Universal Logos, why are some people oblivious to the Life and Light of the Logos? Verses 10-11 tells us why.

John 1:10-11. <sup>10</sup> He [the Logos] was in the world and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. <sup>11</sup> He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. (NRSV)

Some people refuse to acknowledge the Universal Logos. They deny or lack awareness of the Logos, even though they participate in the Logos. One way or another, they turn their backs on the

Logos, the very Reality that creates them, the very Reality that envelops them and gives Life and Light.

In denying the Logos, they become disaffected from the ground of their own being and choose to live in darkness and death.

John 3:19-21. <sup>19</sup> And this is the judgment, that the light has come into the world, and people loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil. <sup>20</sup> For all who do evil hate the light and do not come to the light, so that their deeds may not be exposed. <sup>21</sup> But those who do what is true come to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that their deeds have been done in God." (NRSV)

As the remainder of John’s Gospel bears witness, people who reject the Universal Logos—perhaps we could say they reject *the Logos Within*—cannot identify or receive the *Logos that became flesh.*

In the language of John’s Gospel, they don’t know *who Jesus is* or *where he comes from.* Alienated from the Universal Logos on an implicit and unconscious level, they alienate themselves from the Incarnate Logos explicitly and consciously.

The **SEVENTH STEP** reveals good news: *Some people receive, believe, and become children of God* (John 1:12-13).

John 1:12-13. <sup>12</sup> But to all who received him [the Logos], who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, <sup>13</sup> who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God. (NRSV)

It is important to note verses 12-13 refer to the Universal Logos, not the Incarnate Logos, who is not mentioned until John 1:14.

This means people are able to receive the Universal Logos, believe in the name of the Logos,

become born of God by the power of the Logos, without explicit knowledge of the Incarnate Logos, Jesus Christ.

The **EIGHTH STEP** presents the climax of the Prologue: *The Universal Logos became a particular human being, namely, Jesus Christ.*

John 1:14b. <sup>14</sup> And the Word became flesh and lived among us ... <sup>17</sup> ... Jesus Christ ... (NRSV)

Only with verse 14 do we hear that the Logos becomes flesh in one unique individual, identified as Jesus Christ in John 1:17. Jesus reveals the fullness of the Universal Logos in particular human form (John 1:16).

When people encounter the *Logos Incarnate*, either personally or through reading John's Gospel, they encounter the *Logos Within*, they awaken to the *Universal Logos* in which they participate and, like the man born blind, see the Light, which has always been there, for the first time (John 9:1-41).

This interpretation has implications for evangelism, the message about God's action to renew humanity through active participation in the Logos. Evangelism is not sharing a message that is foreign or extrinsic to people, but rather it means helping people recognize and receive the Universal Logos—made visible in the Incarnate Logos—in which they already participate, but from which they have become alienated.

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## Servant Groups

Immigration Servant Group: Lois (264 3686) or Pat (262 2644)

Women's Discipleship Group: Cindy (832 0050)

NT Greek Reading Group: Jerry (263 0204)

Ladies Reading Group: Vangie (263 0204)

Hospitality Group: Geneva (262 2644) or Doreene (265 3848)

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## Prayer Requests

1. Please pray for our church as we discern our future.
2. Please continue to pray for Jerry and Lori Acosta and their family and ministry. Pray that their Sunday morning services will be well attended. Pray that those that attend will grow in faith.
3. Continue to pray for healing for Belinda.
4. Pray for spiritual healing of the neighborhood of the church.
5. Continued prayers for Erna.
6. Pray for those needing work in our congregation.
7. Continued prayers for the youth of our congregation.

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## Luke 5:1-6

Once while Jesus was standing beside the lake of Gennesaret, and the crowd was pressing in on him to hear the word of God, <sup>2</sup>he saw two boats there at the shore of the lake; the fishermen had gone out of them and were washing their nets. <sup>3</sup>He got into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon, and asked him to put out a little way from the shore. Then he sat down and taught the crowds from the boat.

<sup>4</sup>When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into the deep water and let down your nets for a catch." <sup>5</sup>Simon answered, "Master, we have worked all night long but have caught nothing. Yet if you say so, I will let down the nets." <sup>6</sup>When they had done this, they caught so many fish that their nets were beginning to break.

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## Nonattachment

"When you are detached from the world, you see everything coming from the hands of God, always fresh and beautiful." — Bede Griffiths, *Return to the Center*.

# MCS January 2013

[www.mcswichita.net/calendar.htm](http://www.mcswichita.net/calendar.htm)

**Verse of the Month: Luke 5:1-6**  
**Song of the month: You walk along our shoreline (SJ 99)**

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2	3	4	5
6 9:30 am: Prayer 10:00 am: Wor- ship 11:45 am: Potluck	7	8	9	10	11	12
13 9:30 am: Prayer 10:00 am: Wor- ship	14	15	16	17	18	19
20 9:30 am: Prayer 10:00 am: Wor- ship	21	22	23	24	25	26
27 9:30 am: Prayer 10:00 am: Wor- ship	28	29	30	31		



## Mennonite Church Of the Servant

Our mission is to welcome all people into a community covenanted to follow the way of Jesus Christ through

- Committing ourselves to radical and biblical spirituality
- Living in relational and accountable community
- Seeking Christ's peace within and in the world

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