

Religion is of life, and the life of religion is to do what is good

(Doctrine of Life 8)

The New Church is an international organization of people striving to improve their conscious relationship with the Lord, Jesus Christ, the one God who rules heaven and earth.

We extend a warm welcome to everyone, and invite you to take what you like and return it freely. We use the Bible and the Heavenly Doctrine revealed by the Lord and published by Emanuel Swedenborg to guide us in our lives, especially in our relationships. We freely share our love and understanding with each other, and try to give one another support in our spiritual journeys.

Our pastor is **Rev. Garry Walsh**. Garry grew up in the Hurstville congregation and is pleased that together with his wife and children, he is able to serve this group as their pastor. He is available on call to help people work through any of the life issues that affect their relationship with themselves, their neighbours and their Lord.

Worship Services are held each Sunday at 10:00 AM. **Sunday School** for children ages 0-14 runs concurrently with the Sunday Worship service. In summer there is child minding during the services.

Young People's Group is held every second week.

Doctrinal Classes are held on the 1st and 3rd Fridays of each month (summer excepted) beginning at 7 30 pm. Tea and social precede the class on the first Friday each month at 7.00 pm.

Discussion classes on fundamental New Church teachings are held on Wednesdays at 9 30 am.

The Swedenborg Bookroom, at 22 Dudley Street, Penshurst, contains books by and about Emanuel Swedenborg for sale or loan. It is open by appointment.

Our Address is 22-24 Dudley St., off Hillcrest Ave. in Penshurst
Tel (02) 9580-1589. Fax (02) 9570-8447
Email: newchurch@optusnet.com.au

<http://www.newchurch.org.au/hurstville>

Call or come at anytime.



The New Church Newsletter

Hurstville Society July 2005

Going Into Caves

by Rev. Garry Walsh

I have just sat myself down in front of my computer after a visit to one of the most extraordinary and beautiful places I know, the Jenolan Caves west of Sydney. Step after step, chamber after chamber, our guides had led us to magnificent sights of what happens over millions of years as rising and falling water carves its way through limestone rocks, and what happens when mineral-rich droplets flow slowly down, producing crystalline forms that are nothing short of astonishing. All the while though, my theological background kept telling me that despite the immense beauty of this place that caves tend to signify something pretty bad.

The country's initial inhabitants, Australia's Aboriginal people, knew the place as Binoomea, meaning "dark places." In many ways this name tends

to sum up the typical signification of caves. An initial study of the Heavenly Doctrine of the New Church confirms that caves have a very negative signification. A quick thought back to the Bible's Old Testament and the terrible events involving Lot and his daughters in a cave (Genesis 19:30-33) gives the reader some indication of just how bad the representative image of a cave can be. In fact, caves are, for the most part, directly connected with the evils, false ideas, and activities of hell. *Apocalypse Explained 410* tells us that when the Lord's Word mentions caves, what is being represented there are "the evils of life." In several of Swedenborg's spiritual experiences he saw the inhabitants of hell scurrying away into caverns and caves in the mountains to avoid the light of heaven.

In another reference to caves and caverns, we find in *The True Christian Religion* no. 281 a description of the type of daily existence that befalls those who choose hell as their spiritual home. The early portions of this number describe people who might have once feigned a religious conscious, but who, after entering the next life have been exposed for the lazy and selfish people they really are inside. These types of people find themselves in various situations where they quickly learn that work is required before they receive food to satisfy their hunger. But, being lazy and selfish, they try to avoid this work and as a result find themselves being moved on to more and more unpleasant situations. We are then given the following account.

When they are sent away, their eyes are opened so that they see a road leading to a sort of cavern. When they reach it, the door opens, and they go in to see whether there is any food there. On being told that there is, they ask permission to stay there. Permission is given and they are taken in, and the door shuts behind them. Then the overseer of the cavern comes and says to them: "You cannot go out again. Look at your companions; they are all working, and in proportion to their work they receive food from heaven. I am telling you this so that you may know how it is."

This passage (TCR 281:10), goes on to say that "hell is composed of such caverns, which are nothing less than eternal labour-camps." These are not places where I would particularly like to go. The idea of spending eternity

possible might be able to join us that day as we put finishing touches on the property's appearance before we ask the community in to enjoy our facilities the following week. Bring some lunch (or we will buy pizza) and stay for as long as you are able to.

Schedule of Events

- Sunday 3rd July Work Day
- Saturday 9th July Bishop Tom & Nina Kline arrive
- Sunday 10th July Worship led by Bishop Kline followed by Pot Luck Luncheon and Society Meeting
- Monday 11th July 7.30 pm Official Opening (Foundation Day) History presentation by Rev Garry Walsh
- Tuesday to Friday Church, Baringa and Gardens open
- Friday 15th July 7.30 pm Bishop Tom Kline "What the New Church Believes"
- Saturday 16th July Open Day (Displays, Food, Activities)
- Sunday 17th July Bishop Tom Kline – Worship followed by luncheon.
- Monday 18th July Bishop Tom & Nina Kline depart

Meet Bishop Tom Kline

Bishop Tom Kline will be leading the worship service on both Sunday the 10th as well as the 17th. **Sunday the 10th** also offers the only real opportunity during this visit for the congregation to meet with Tom outside of the Anniversary events. There will be a Pot Luck luncheon on this day followed by a Society meeting specifically to talk about issues relevant to the Hurstville Society's future. ***Please bring something to share for lunch.***

July Birthdays

Happy Birthday to **Lachlan Hinds** (9th), **James Kermond** (10th), **Babbette Horner** (14th), **Heather Walsh** (16th) and **Theo Kirsten** (30th)

was printed in 1869 and has an inscription in the front by Richard Morse in 1904. The restoration of the Word has been made possible by very generous donations from several of our members.

During the week:

The church, Baringa and the gardens will be open to the public between 10 am and 4 pm on Tuesday to Friday. Someone will be on hand to greet people, and show them the gardens and the displays in Baringa. There will be refreshments available.

Friday 15th July 7.30 pm:

Bishop Tom Kline will give a presentation on “What the New Church Believes”. Please invite friends and acquaintances to this event. There will be refreshments available afterwards.

Open Day - Saturday 16th July:

Hopefully the weather will be kind because there will be a number of things for visitors to enjoy on this day including outdoor activities in the gardens as well as the displays in Baringa. The church will be open and there will be food available.

Sunday 17th July:

The week will culminate in the worship service led by **Bishop Tom Kline**. Afterwards a luncheon will be served. If you are attending the luncheon you should already have given an RSVP to Lori Heldon on 9579 5248 but if not please do so ASAP.

As has been the case all along, we continue to invite people to participate in the planning of the various activities that will take place during the Anniversary week. If you can lend a hand, please talk to Garry and he'll steer you in a direction that best suits your skills and interests.

Work Day

Please also note in your calendars that there will be a **Work Day** following church on **Sunday the 3rd of July**. We are hoping that as many people as

stuck in a cave, having to do work that you probably hate in order to receive enough food to avoid feeling hungry sounds like a horrible prospect. It is however, the sad reality for all those people who stubbornly refuse to admit their laziness and selfishness and who, despite all of the prompting the Lord can provide, refuse to change their approach to life.

So, as I cast my mind back to the stunning beauty of Jenolan Caves, I still can't help feeling that these caves surely couldn't be symbolic representatives of hell. This was a place of amazement and wonder, certainly not one of mind-numbing and relentless hard work. If I were standing at the bottom of a coal mine I could see the link, but not this place. Surely this place that could only have been wrought by the hand of the Lord must be a representative of something other than hell.

Then, as I searched further through the stories of the Lord's Word, I found it. An image started to emerge of caves that held a different type of symbolism. It all begins with the story in the Old Testament of Abraham's passing.

Then Abraham breathed his last and died in a good old age, an old man and full of years, and was gathered to his people. And his sons Isaac and Ishmael buried him in the cave of Machpelah, which is before Mamre, in the field of Ephron the son of Zohar the Hittite, the field which Abraham purchased from the sons of Heth. There Abraham was buried, and Sarah his wife (Genesis 25:8-10).

In the twenty-third chapter of Genesis we find the story of the convoluted bargaining process that Abraham went through to purchase the cave of Machpelah and the adjoining field. Now, at the end of Abraham's own natural lifetime, it was time for him to be buried there alongside his wife.

The internal meaning of the cave of Machpelah is really interesting. We are told that because it was a cave or cavern, it represents obscurity. Obscurity, as we know, is a human state that comes about when a person does not have clear sight of what the Lord teaches and how to live the way that the Lord intends. It is like being in darkness rather than being in the light. During

one stage of our trek through Jenolan Caves, our guide turned off the lights to expose us to the most utter darkness we had ever experienced. In this type of absolute blackness, we were told, a person would soon become disorientated. We were told the story of one of the pioneers of the Cave's early exploration being lost without light in the caves for three days. When he was finally found, he was asked why he was lying down. He told his rescuers that he thought he was standing up. Events such as this paint a picture of how essential the reception of light into our lives is for our wellbeing. And, of course, our need of the natural sun and its light is representative of how much we need the Lord and the light of His truth in our daily lives.

With this in mind we read from the *Arcana Coelestia* that the cave of Machpelah is a symbol of "faith enveloped in obscurity" (AC 2935). This concept is provided in explanation of the details of the Genesis story when Abraham first purchased the cave. Two chapters later in Genesis, when dealing with Abraham's death and burial, we find that the symbolism of the cave changes to one of, "resurrection as regards truth" (AC 3257). This transformation in symbolic meaning paints a very optimistic picture. We see a transition from obscurity into an early state of new awareness.

All of this made me think of something our guides told us about the geological history of Jenolan Caves. They are unique because they have been forged through the only block of limestone found in the area. Limestone is fascinating because it is sedimentary rock formed from the compressed bodies of simple sea creatures that died millions of years ago. There, in the Jenolan Caves area in the Blue Mountains west of Sydney, we find a massive limestone rock that has been forced up from the ocean floor when the Australian continent came in contact with an adjoining tectonic plate. It paints a picture of a rising up from the depths, a rising up that can be compared to human resurrection and regeneration. This comparison is a bit of a leap of course. But still, it is not hard to see in the slight transformation of the meaning of the cave of Machpelah from the time that Abraham purchased it to the time he was buried in it, that there seems to be a message there of the way that the Lord slowly raises a person from their state of obscurity.

being repainted in the next week or so. The repainting will incorporate a Federation colour scheme to blend the building in with other houses on the street. While this has been going on **Norm Heldon** continues to work at an extraordinary pace on the beautification of the church's gardens. People who haven't seen the gardens recently will be staggered by the transformation. Thanks also go to all those people who have lent a hand to Ralph and Norm along the way.

Making the Event Known:

Within a week or so there should be signs in front of the church announcing to the world that our celebrations are going on. A letter drop through the surrounding neighbourhood will announce this as well. Letters of invitation have gone out to local dignitaries, but as yet it is unknown whether any will be able to attend.

A series of web pages have been added to our church's web site (see back of newsletter) featuring the program, Bishop's Kline's visit, the stained glass windows, how to contact us and a history page which includes the Flash presentation by **Karen Lockhart** which she prepared for the 2000 Assembly in Canada. This is an interactive feature which is quite extensive and is well worth the time to browse.

Greetings Received:

Margaret Heldon has already received quite a number of letters of congratulations from our friends around the world and would love to hear from you if you are unable to be here in person. A book of these messages together with photos etc. of many of the people who have responded will be available for people to take a look at from the evening of Monday the 11th onwards.

Official Opening (Foundation Day):

On Monday July 11th there will be an official opening of the week long activities. At this event **Rev Garry Walsh** will give a presentation on the history of the Hurstville Society. As well there will be a number of displays of historical items from the archives. This will also be the occasion to unveil the **restored Word** that we use on our altar. This copy of the Word

counsellors and flyers to people within the community. I visited the Swedenborg association in North Ryde, and have done various other jobs around the church that needed to be done.

My time is much shorter than most interns are able to spend with the society and unfortunately it is going by too quickly. I have really enjoyed meeting everyone in my time here in Hurstville. Everyone has been so warm and welcoming towards me, which has made my time here absolutely amazing. Every individual in this society has such a unique presence and is what makes this society unlike any I have ever visited in the past. It is really comforting for me to see the similarities in the church to what I am used to at home, but at the same time there is a refreshing sphere that surrounds this society and makes it unique. Everyone seems so passionate about this church and does their part to help it run smoothly. I have been absolutely amazed with this quality within your society and it has been a pleasure to be surrounded by it in my time here. So thank you to everyone for allowing me to come here and welcoming me so warmly into your society.

Footnote: It is appropriate that the Society also record their appreciation to Angela who has proved to be a charming companion as well as a great help. She has also managed to fit in a couple of short tourist excursions to Cairns and the Barrier Reef and, with Angela and Michelle Heldon, to the Blue Mountains. Unfortunately she has to leave on 13th July but we wish her well for the future and hope she can return sometime.

100th Anniversary Update

Little by little, step by step, the arrangements surrounding the 100th Anniversary celebrations continue to come together.

Baringa Improvements:

A huge word of thanks goes to **Ralph Horner** who has devoted countless hours to the project to construct a ramp suitable for wheelchair access. The finished job is in stunning brick red stencilling to match the barge boards on the building. It must be noted that Ralph's work has not ended there. He continues to plug away at various repair jobs in advance of the building

Casting my mind back to the experience of being in those caves helps me reflect upon the fact that, to one degree or another, we are all in some type of spiritual obscurity. There is some obscurity in our minds regarding who the Lord really is. We might know the teachings of the church in an intellectual way, but, to some degree, those teachings have probably not translated into as thorough a faith as will be required for the life of heaven. In the same way, we know many true ideas when it comes to the life of morality and use, yet we are still probably in some obscurity as to how to translate those into the living actions of our life. Perhaps the experience of having the lights turned off in the cave and seeing the total darkness that is left is a reminder of how little we really understand and how much we desperately need the Lord and the things He freely sends to us. And, along the same lines, perhaps the magnificent features found within those caves should paint a picture to us of the fact that even within the obscurity that is represented by a cave there are beautiful things that only the Lord could have created.

19th of June Celebrations

The Hurstville Society has recently enjoyed what turned out to be a very successful 19th of June celebrations. A great deal of the success came down to the new ramp and patio work in the front of Baringa that was completed just the day before. The ramp allows wheelchair access to our community building for the first time. And because of this, we were able to welcome **Tom and Shirley Taylor** to church and the celebrations afterwards.

While we are thinking about non-regular people who attended these celebrations, it was wonderful to be able to share this occasion with our intern, **Angela Allen** (please see her note to the Society which follows this), and with our old friend **Stephen Taylor** who we are hoping might continue to be part of the Hurstville congregation for a little while to come.

Back to the 19th of June celebrations themselves, the 10am service focused on the image of the holy city, New Jerusalem coming down from heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. This is an image that captures the spirit of what the New Church is all about, namely, the true and eternal

marriage of one man and one woman, and, the marriage of the Lord to the people of His church.



Artwork by Robert Cooper

Following church everyone moved across to Baringa, which had been decorated for the occasion by **Lori Heldon** and **Angela Allen**. After enjoying the main course of lunch, the gathering was presented with two cakes that had been beautifully prepared by **Margaret Heldon**. One displayed an image of the holy city, dressed as a bride, representing the theme of the morning's worship service. The other had an image of HMS Endeavour. This image provided a segue into the talk given by **Robert Cooper** once everyone had enjoyed dessert.

Robert Cooper's inspirational talk looked at the fact that many of the events surrounding Captain Cook's discovery of Australia coincided with the founding of the New Church. The date, June 19, 1770, marked both the spiritual founding of the New Church (TCR 791), and the saving of Cook's vessel the Endeavour from what seemed like imminent destruction as he and his crew tried to sail along what is now known as the Northern Queensland coastline. Robert's study makes very interesting reading. In all probability some or all of it will be found in the forthcoming editions of this Newsletter or the pages of other New Church publications.

There was something special about this year's 19th of June celebrations. Perhaps it was the ongoing transformation of Baringa, or perhaps it was because we were able to enjoy the occasion with people who might not normally have been able to join together with us. Whatever the reason, there was a wonderful feeling throughout the days events, a feeling that we

feel certain will carry the congregation into the 100th Anniversary celebrations that lie just ahead.

A Message From Our Intern, Angela Allen



I've been asked to tell you a little about myself and explain my reasons for coming to Hurstville. The answer to these questions are changing day by day and taking on new meanings as I write this. I graduated from university a year ago with a major in psychology and a minor in nutrition. Since then I have found different jobs in varying places, but didn't find any of them satisfying. As a result I went back to Bryn Athyn College's career counsellor to explore my options. She suggested the idea of an internship somewhere and suggested that the Hurstville society might need someone to help out with the upcoming anniversary.

I began communicating with Garry about this becoming a reality. I really liked the idea of going to another smaller society outside of the United States. This as a result has given me some space from the career search process and has fulfilled my strong desire to travel at the same time. I have done a fair amount of travelling in the past year and really wanted to continue to see some more of the world. I really liked the idea of doing something new and exciting for myself, but still being useful for other people at the same time.

In my time here so far I have been helping out with the many jobs that need to be done around the church. These jobs take on different forms daily. I have mostly been helping with the many things that need to be done for the upcoming anniversary such as helping Margaret with organizing the archival material, aiding Norm in the garden, cleaning the manse and getting it ready for guests to stay there, and helping Garry with invitations to local