

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 May 2005

Introduction To The May Newsletter

The Hurstville Society is currently entering a new state of transition. With this in mind you will find that this edition of the "Newsletter" includes three letters. The first is from me as pastor. This is followed by letters from Bishop Tom Kline and from the New Church in Australia Council of Ministers.

You will also find reference to a **Society Meeting** to be held following our worship service on **Sunday, 1st May**. Please try to attend this meeting if you can. It will be here that plans for the Society's immediate and longer-range future will begin to be discussed.

A Face In The House Of The Lord

Rev. Garry Walsh

The Heavenly Doctrine of the New Church paints a wonderful and unique picture of life after death. One example of this is the passage below from the New Century Edition (NCE) of the book *Heaven and Hell*. This is a passage that deals with the facial appearance of people who have left this world and are moving through their journey into the next life.

*When we first enter the world of spirits (which happens shortly after our reawakening just described), our spirit has a similar face and tone of voice as it did in the world. This is because at that point we are in the state of our external concerns, with our deeper concerns not yet uncovered. This is our initial state after decease. Later, though, our face changes and becomes quite different. It comes to look like the ruling affection in which the deeper reaches of our mind were engaged in the world, the kind of affection characteristic of the spirit within our body, because the face of our spirit is very different from the face of our body. We get our physical face from our parents and our spiritual face from our affection, which it images. Our spirit takes on this face after our physical life is over, when the outer coverings have been removed...
...I have seen newcomers from the world and have recognized them from their faces and voices; but when I saw them later, I did not recognize them. People who were engaged in good affections had lovely faces, while people who were engaged in evil affections had ugly ones (Heaven and Hell 457).*

The passage from *Heaven and Hell*, together with the ones that follow, goes on to talk about how a person cannot counterfeit their true affections in the next life. A person's facial appearance and tone of voice will be obvious signs of the type of affections that lie within.

With this eternal reality in mind we might choose to look at our own lives, realizing that there are a variety of things that we have some affection for. Although these things might be quite varied, we might also realize, at

arrangements they received made the house look like a mortuary. On top of this were the many cards and thoughts from members and friends in the Hurstville congregation.

Talking about milestones in life, **Dot Heldon** turns **90** this month. As we speak she is off on trips to Canberra and the Gold Coast visiting family who are looking forward to celebrating with her.

Marking another important milestone, Garry was fortunate to be in Brisbane on Thursday, 21st April when **Rev. Ian Arnold** was presented with a gift from the Brisbane Society marking the **40th anniversary of his ordination into the ministry**. We also hear that Ian and wife Margaret will celebrate their 40th wedding anniversary later this year.

Camp 2006

Plans for the 2006 family camp are now well under way. The host for our next camp will be the New Church in Victoria. It will be held on **Phillip Island** from **January 2 through 8**. We are told that it is a high quality facility that should hold everyone in comfort. With these quality amenities comes a slightly higher cost as well. Initial estimates suggest that the cost increase could be somewhere in the vicinity of \$50-\$60 per adult. The New Church in Australia is looking at its capacity to provide some subsidy, and individual congregations are encouraged to look at organizing their own fund raising activities to help offset these higher costs. Based upon the survey feedback following our last camp, organizers are predicting that somewhere between 80 and 100 people are seriously intending to attend. As momentum for the camp grows, that figure may very well grow beyond 100 as it did last year.

May Birthdays

Happy Birthday to **Dot Heldon** (2nd), **Ted Simmons** (6th), **Brandon Hinds** (10th), **John Sandow** (18th), **Naomi Heldon** (20th), **Daniel Walsh** (27th) and **Brian Walsh** (31st).

Yours in the Lord's service,

Trevor

Secretary: Rev. Trevor Moffat
PO Box 299, Victoria Park 6979
Western Australia
Telephone: 08 9470 9775

News Notes

The month of April saw the Hurstville Society being visited for the first time by **Rev. David Lindrooth**, Director of General Church Outreach. Although the nature and focus of David's visit was substantially altered at the last minute for obvious reasons, the visit was still a positive one. It is good that people in administrative positions within the church get to meet the people in congregations such as ours. It presents a much clearer picture of the strengths and prospects of a congregation than long distance communication will ever allow. We thank David and the General Church leadership for allowing this visit at what proved to be a difficult time for everyone.

Those people monitoring the health and general wellbeing of our friends **Tom and Shirley Taylor** will be pleased to know that last we heard they were both doing well. We all pray that the Lord blesses them with as many of these periods of good health and good spirits as possible.

While we are thinking about the Taylors, as many might recall from last month's Newsletter, Tom and Shirley celebrated their **60th wedding anniversary**. They say that the in pouring of messages of congratulations and well wishes was almost overwhelming. Among the messages were ones from the Queen with a photo; from the Governor General, also with a photo; from the Prime Minister John Howard and opposition leader Kim Beazley; from the Premier Bob Carr as well as the local members of Parliament. Bankstown Council sent what Shirley describes as "the biggest basket of fruit you've ever seen." Tom jokingly said that the number of flower

least in theory, that within those varied affections is one that is our dominant love.

At first it might be hard for a person to identify what their dominant or ruling love is. It is not something that we are not normally accustomed to searching for. However, the Heavenly Doctrine, or Writings, for the New Church suggest a relatively simple process for those who would like to find out. They say in places such as *Heaven and Hell* no. 486, that the things that we love, or the things that inspire our affections, are the things from which we gain pleasure. So it is that we can make a list for ourselves of the things that we really enjoy. For most people this list will range from things that are trivial through to things that are profound and reach down into the very core of who we are.

Prayerful consideration of the things that inspire us or bring us joy, as well as the same type of consideration of the things that are distasteful or even revolting to us, helps us to form a picture in our minds of the direction that our heart is travelling in. It won't be a complete or necessarily error free picture, for the "*Lord alone knows the hearts of the children of men*" (2 Chronicles 6:30). But, our efforts to see with the Lord's guidance the things that really motivate and please us, will be efforts that help us gauge, at least in a general sense, the face that we will see in the mirror if we leave this world and journey towards our eternal spiritual home.

The Lord's aim for us is that we may fulfil the potential that He has intended for us and that by fulfilling that potential we might join in the use and joy that is the life of heaven. For this potential to be realized it is essential that our dominant or ruling love not be one that is focused on fickle or selfish things. We might enjoy the experience of natural pleasures but these shouldn't be our primary desires. Instead, the lasting joys of heaven are founded on affections for the things that reach above the sheer delight of our natural senses or the appeal of status, wealth and power. They are founded instead on values such as charity, mercy and forgiveness. They rest on the desire for things that, while touching the outer person that we are in this world, are really other-worldly in nature.

True eternal joy is ultimately found in some form of the idea expressed in Psalm 27, verse 4.

*One thing have I desired of the Lord,
That will I seek:
That I may dwell in the house of the Lord
All the days of my life,
To behold the beauty of the Lord,
And to inquire in His temple.*

It is good for a person to prayerfully look within themselves and see whether any semblance of this desire now has a place in their heart. Is “dwelling in the house of the Lord” something that is truly being sort after? Consider what dwelling in the Lord’s house really entails. It means being willing to have our lives constantly under the Lord’s gaze, to abide by His rules and never deviate from His moral and spiritual path. Some people are drawn to this idea, others are repelled by it.

Our lives are indeed filled with a range of attractions that seem disconnected at times. Yet, when it comes right down to it, those desires or attractions can be placed in one of three general categories. They either work together with a dominant love to dwell in the house of the Lord, or they are opposed to that love. The third option is that the desire is so superficial and worldly that it has no eternal consequence. But, even when the attraction is of the natural and superficial kind, beneath the surface there lie desires that either lean towards the kingdom of God or work against it.

The dominant or ruling love within us will act to organize the more superficial loves that we all have. And, the stronger the ruling love becomes, the more our life will move from being aimless or miss-directed, to being focused on the practical and eternal goals that the ruling love seeks after. So it is, that a person whose ruling love is one of dwelling in the Lord’s house, will find that as this love grows, so too does their day to day inclination to really walk in the Lord’s path in physical, emotional and spiritual ways.

candidates coming along, so the future looks brighter.

My wife Nina and I plan to be in Hurstville for your 100th Anniversary Celebration. I am also pleased to announce that the Rt. Rev. Peter M. Buss will preach weekly in Hurstville next Fall from September 18th to the 21st of November, as well as travel to other parts of Australia and New Zealand. Both of these visits will give us a chance to meet with you and discuss plans for the future.

Let us look to the Lord as we look for the growth of His New Church.

Sincerely,

Rt. Rev. Thomas L. Kline

Message From The New Church in Australia
(Council of Ministers)

Hurstville Society of the New Church
Dear Friends,

At the Council of Ministers meeting yesterday [21st April] in Brisbane at which the Rev Garry Walsh was present, we heard of his forthcoming move to Washington D.C. In wishing him and his family well we realise that this may well leave the Holy Spirit with particular needs once Garry has left. The whole of the Council of Ministers were united and very keen to offer whatever support we can in such things as Pastoral needs and perhaps covering the Sacrament of the Holy Supper.

We do not know what direct help might be provided by the General Church which may cover these needs at certain times. Obviously the Rev Julian Duckworth and the Rev David Moffat are geographically close, but all our ministers wanted to convey their availability and give support. Please feel free to get in touch with Julian or me as the need arises and we can look at how we can possibly provide this support.

asked is that everyone stays flexible for a little while as some new patterns of worship are tried to see how well they fit. Having said this, I am not anticipating a massive departure from the styles of worship to which the congregation is already accustomed.

Although I am excited by the prospect of the job that lies ahead for me in the US, I know I speak for Laurel as well when I say how much I will miss all of you. I have grown up in Hurstville Society. And, although I have spent a large portion of my still relatively young adult life away, I will always feel as if a part of me lives in this congregation. I also can't help but feel that the loss of a resident minister at this time might be a blessing in disguise. It may very well reaffirm within every member of the congregation, the fundamental beliefs that make us "New Church." And so it seems, to me at least, as if the next stage of the journey for the Hurstville Society might be one of unrivalled promise.

-Garry

Message to the Hurstville Society From Bishop Kline

I want to acknowledge the distress and disappointment in your congregation over the news that your pastor, Garry Walsh, will be leaving. I know this was a sudden shock.

We are facing a severe ministerial shortage that we did not foresee. In just the past two years we have lost five active ministers and two senior travelling ministers due to health and other concerns. Added to retirements, this is about ten percent of our active clergy. In the United States alone we are seeing the possibility of three congregations who had full time pastors last year who will be without a pastor this coming year.

We are taking real steps to alleviate this shortage. We are establishing a fund to help second career theological students, looking at compensation figures, and beginning an active recruiting process. We have good

If any of us were to leave this world tomorrow, what would the face we would see in the mirror look like? Few of us are probably completely comfortable with what we think we'll see. The true reflection of our selves probably shows some wrinkles and warts. What we would see is likely to be a face that highlights that fact that we need work. It is possibly a face that we aren't yet prepared to show to others. Hopefully, if the Lord has been asked in to let us see a true image, then what it will be is an honest face. It will be a face that hides no faults, yet also glows with a light that comes from the positive heavenly affections we already have within us.

It really is worth pausing at times as we go through this natural life we are now living. It is worth asking the question, "Is this thing that I am seeking right now, or this emotion I am feeling, one that enhances the attractiveness of my spiritual face, or instead contributes to its ugliness?" With this type of thinking going on, we might find that we make some very different life choices.

A Message From The Pastor

Dear Friends,

As many of you now know, my time as the Hurstville Society's pastor is drawing to an end. Following church on Sunday, 10th April it was announced that I have been called to be the pastor of the Washington, DC Society. This will see Laurel and me, together with our children, returning full-time to America some time in June or July of this year. For me the timing is pending the re-issuing of my US immigration visa.

While I am delighted to have been offered this opportunity, it is not one that I campaigned for. Laurel and I had planned on living in Australia for quite a while to come. We had also made plans to travel to the US to take part in the General Church Assembly and Clergy Meetings in June. These plans would have brought us back well before the Hurstville Society's 100th Anniversary celebrations in July. Our tickets were paid for and collected before the move to the Washington Society was ever considered. I still intend to be here for the celebrations, although I am having to be flexible

with planning right at the moment.

As already said, it is a tremendous opportunity that I have been given. The Washington Society ranks among the largest of the General Church congregations. It also has a school with over 50 students and big plans for expansion. To be both pastor of the congregation and principal of the school presents huge new responsibilities that I very much look forward to.

The big question now is, “What happens with the Hurstville Society?” Unfortunately there is no clear answer to this question just yet. As some people are beginning to find out, the General Church is currently suffering from a critical shortage of ministers. This is something that is addressed by Bishop Kline in his letter which immediately follows this one.

The situation we find ourselves in leaves the Hurstville Society at somewhat of a crossroads. Perhaps it is appropriate that as the Society gears up to celebrate the 100th anniversary of its founding, that the congregation has to once more assess its purpose and its needs. Back in 1905 a group of New Church people in the Sydney area believed so strongly that the Writings for the New Church were the Word of God and therefore held Divine authority, that they felt compelled to form a group of the New Church that would be built around the living expression of this belief. Richard Morse, the principal leader of the group, had been impressed by the zeal of this approach to the Writings as expressed by Rev. Percy Billings, then Minister of the Adelaide Society. Mr. Morse’s first visit to Bryn Athyn at the time of a General Assembly in 1904 reconfirmed the fundamental importance of this idea for him and convinced him that the group that he was leading should be affiliated with the General Church.

There are clearly differences between General Church groups around the world. Each carries a flavour unique to its people and its location. Yet, each group that calls itself “General Church” adheres in its own way to the basic tenant that set the stage for the Hurstville Society.

The fledgling Hurstville Society was lay led by a small handful of dedicated people. In the years that followed the congregation grew to

become minister-led when Richard Morse was ordained into the ministry of the New Church. So it is that one hundred years after it first began, the Hurstville Society is probably facing a new period of lay leadership. Perhaps another leader like Richard Morse will emerge. In the meantime, the Society, as it was at its inception, is saddled with the responsibility of leading itself.

With self-leadership comes enormous possibilities. Other groups around the world, the General Church Circle in Perth being one such example, are finding a new strength that comes from having to engage in the Lord’s teachings for themselves, rather than relying on receiving these through the mouth of a minister. Lay leadership in worship and study situations can bring people into a closer sense of the Lord’s presence. People approach the Lord themselves, and when they come together for worship or study, they approach the Lord in charity as true neighbours.

At some stage in the short or long-term future the Hurstville Society will again be served by a resident pastor. It is in the time until then that the commitment to the basic concepts upon which the congregation was founded will be most tested. Do the people in the Hurstville congregation today still believe in the things that prompted the Society to form in the first place? The answer to this question will go a long way towards helping the congregation determine its future.

Note in your calendars that a Society Meeting will be held following worship on Sunday 1st May. This will have allowed three weeks from the time of the announcement of my departure. During this period it is hoped that members of the congregation will take some time to think about what being a part of this church means to them. It is at this meeting that plans for the future will start to be discussed. There are a number of important decisions to be made. Among these are decisions about the manse.

It is also hoped that before my departure in June or July, that the congregation might try some new things when it comes to Sunday morning worship. Traditional lay-led services that mimic minister-led services might not be the best solution as the congregation moves forward. All that is