

## ***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](mailto:newchurch@optusnet.com.au)

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

Call or come at anytime.



---

### **The New Church Newsletter**

**Hurstville Society September 2004**

---

### **Laurel Wreaths and Other Awards**

By Rev. Garry Walsh

#### **An Olympic Overview**

Many of you have probably been watching this year's Olympic Games. And, no doubt most people would have noticed that the Athens organizers have returned to the ancient custom of awarding successful athletes with laurel wreaths in addition to the gold, silver and bronze medals. It is a gesture that would have felt like it was missing if it was not practiced in this city where the concept of the Olympic Games first began.

In a brief overview of the history of the Olympics by Professor Thomas Scanlon of Ohio State University we read how some of the traditions of those ancient games set patterns that are still followed in the modern Olympics, the first of which was in 1896 in Athens.

The ancient Olympics were part of a religious festival honouring Zeus, the chief Greek god. Like today's, the games included opening rituals, questions about eligibility and allegations of bribery. Athletes trained and ate specialized diets.

Like the gold, silver and bronze medals that are its modern-day counterpart, the original Olympics' laurel-wreath prize was more symbolic than valuable, but winners gained prestige that could set them up for life.

The competitors were free men and boys who spoke Greek, and the contests were track and field events plus boxing, wrestling and equestrian contests. Preliminary heats determined which athletes would compete.

Most spectators were men. It was a capital offence for a married woman to attend. Fathers could take their daughters to the games, presumably to get them in the mood to marry the scantily clad athletes. Girls did not compete at the Olympics, but at games in honour of the goddess Hera. Single men were allowed to attend the Heraiad, also perhaps as a marriage incentive.

The Olympic torch, the notion of the amateur athlete, and the concept of gold, silver and bronze medals are all inventions of the modern games.

### **Medals and Prestige**

It is perhaps a shame that so much emphasis has continued to be placed on the gold, silver and bronze medals and the prestige that comes with being awarded one. It is an even greater shame that we tend to keep such a close eye on the overall medal tally, as if our country's value as a nation hinged upon our ending the games near the top of the list.

Originally it seems as if the point of the games was to provide athletes with an opportunity to make a name for themselves. It is mildly regrettable that this is still often the case. However, in our modern era, surely we should be striving to find the true spirit of the Olympics, not in the medals or the laurel wreaths, but in the personal and collective achievements of all those athletes who have devoted their time and energies to giving the best performance they could possibly give.

In October they will be holding a weekend retreat north of Perth at Moore River. And, in November they will welcome Bishop Buss and Lisa for the celebration of the marriage of Verity Smuts and Tony Phan.

(Note: The Perth Circle Newsletter is sent out via email, and can also be viewed online at <http://www.newchurch.org.au/perth-gcnj>.)

## **Hurstville Society News**

Looking ahead a **Society Meeting** is planned for 17<sup>th</sup> October before the pastor's trip to South Africa. The **AGM** will be on 14<sup>th</sup> November.

It is pleasing to announce that **Dot Heldon** has been released from hospital and has been able to return home. Hopefully her new medication will prevent her from having any more small strokes and she will gradually regain strength and begin to feel like her old self again.

In other news, **Mike and Kerry Lockhart** are getting excited about their upcoming month-long trip to the US beginning late September. This will give them a chance to catch up with family and friends. Not the least of these is son **Scott** and wife **Kimberly** who are on the move to Atlanta so that Scott can take up the new position he has recently accepted.

Our young people are doing plenty of travel. **Naomi Heldon** is still in South East Asia and will be exploring a number of countries there until mid October. Meanwhile **Carolyn Heldon** has left North America, spent two fabulous weeks in Ireland and is now in Scotland where she met up with former Bryn Athyn college friend Dave Morris. She has now secured a live-in job at the Arisaig Hotel on the north west coast of Scotland. See how beautiful it is at <http://dspace.dial.pipex.com/arisaighotel> .

## **Birthdays**

Happy Birthday to **Owen Heldon** (6<sup>th</sup>), **Carolyn Heldon** (8<sup>th</sup>), **Klaire Horner** (9<sup>th</sup>), **Sylvia Hicks** (13<sup>th</sup>), **Karen Lockhart** (13<sup>th</sup>), **Jeffrey Heldon** (15<sup>th</sup>), **Phillip Horner** (15<sup>th</sup>), **Phillip Walsh** (29<sup>th</sup>).

If you arrive at Maroochydore Airport Sunair Bus will take you directly to the Camp site. Costs vary according to number of adults and children travelling. (Tel: 07-5478 2811)

Please check the various terminals for times and to confirm charges. Looking forward to seeing you all in sunny Queensland in January 2005.

Kind regards,  
Gaye Heldon

### **Academy of the New Church News**

At a special meeting on August 4, the Academy Board voted not to adopt the Real Estate Committee's proposal to build a golf course on the north campus.

The Board also voted to employ the Sasaki Group as a master planner as part of the Academy's strategic planning effort. Gael Coffin, formerly of the Washington New Church and now living in Kempton, was elected to the Board as a replacement for Craig McCardell who has given many years of devoted service on the Board and a lifetime of support to the Academy.

Ned Asplundh  
Publications Specialist  
ANC/GC Development Office

### **News From the Perth General Church Circle**

It is always a pleasure to read the Perth Circle's monthly Newsletter and to hear about everything that is taking place in their part of the world. Theirs is very much a self-supporting congregation, with the various elements of their weekly Sunday morning worship services being picked up by an increasingly large cross-section of the group. The young people in particular are taking a very proactive role.

### **The True Spirit of Competition**

While we cheer if our team's competitor does well, ultimately it is the personal stories of courage, endurance and sportsmanship that touch us most deeply. In addition, consider the spirit of hope that can come from seeing North and South Korea marching in the opening ceremony as a single, united team. Along the same lines, it was great to see how the Iraqis were airlifted to Greece by the Australian military acting on behalf of a coalition of the nations currently engaged in the combat there. It is even greater to see that despite terrible circumstances during their preparation that their soccer team has succeeded beyond all expectations.

We hear that to the winners go the spoils and perhaps this will always be the case. But, at the end of the day, it is those who fight hardest against adversary that will ultimately end up being the real heroes. A medal may not always end up hanging around their necks. But, a laurel wreath should be awarded to them as well for it is the personal triumphs that most define what the Olympics are surely all about.

### **We Are Not All Olympic Athletes**

With this in mind it is worth considering the obvious fact that not all of us were gifted with the talent and opportunity to make it to the Olympics. We may have found that our talents lie in other areas. Yet, despite this, our struggles against adversity may be essentially the same as those who have made their way to Athens. Like the athlete who works as hard as they can to beat the odds, we are also required to strive to produce our best efforts. And, it is important to note, that we will be required to and indeed supported in our efforts to do this for all eternity.

### **Eternally Striving To Do Our Best**

In the life to come, people are continually encouraged to strive for their best. This is the reason why there are contests in that world as well. As an example of this we are given a description of some of the contests that take place between young people who are maturing to adulthood in the next life.

“On the edges of the city, in its outskirts, various activities go on. There are running games, ball games, and games with rebounding

balls, called rackets. Competitive exercises are held to show who is quicker and who is slower in speaking, acting and comprehending. And the quicker ones receive several laurel leaves as a prize” (CL 17:4 and TCR 745:4).

Notice that while there are sporting contests that seem very similar to the ones that might take place in this world, the real tests of talent and skill seem to have more to do with enlightenment, reflection and the ability to express ideas. It is the individual proficiencies in these areas that the contests are aiming to refine. And, it seems, these youthful contests are a precursor for the contests that many will choose to participate in once they achieve full spiritual maturity. Here is a description of one of those contests.

### **Angelic Contests**

In Conjugal Love 132-136 and True Christian Religion 48 we are given a description of an amphitheatre set in woods at the summit of a hill. Within this amphitheatre was a level, paved area where seats were arranged in the form of a square. It was here that an angelic contest was to take place. A table was in the middle of the paved area. On it was a piece of paper containing questions that had been prepared by angels of the highest heaven. The paper was bound with a seal until the contest began.

The seal was broken and the paper was read. The contest that day was found to involve the answering of three questions plus a final united task. The first question involved explaining “What the image of God is and likeness of God into which man was created.” The second question was, “Why does man not come by birth into the knowledge necessary to any love, whereas both higher and lower animals come by birth into the knowledge necessary to all their loves?” Thirdly, “What is symbolized by the tree of life, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and by eating of them?” Finally, all those assembled were to collectively combine the three explanations into a single statement that could be written on a piece of paper and laid on the table in the centre.

## **Bishop Peter Buss’ Next Visit**

It is a pleasure to announce that Bishop Peter Buss together with Lisa will be paying us a visit in November. Unless plans change we expect them to be with us from the 18<sup>th</sup> to the 21<sup>st</sup> of November and then again from the 25<sup>th</sup> to the 29<sup>th</sup>. This means that Bishop Buss will be here to lead the Friday Doctrinal class on the 19<sup>th</sup> and the Young People’s group on the 26<sup>th</sup>. He will also conduct the Sunday church services on the 21<sup>st</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup>.

Bishop Buss has indicated his desire to spend personal time with as many of you as possible. Because his and Lisa’s schedule is already beginning to fill up, those who would like to invite them to their home or meet with them in some other way should plan ahead and get their request in early. Bishop Buss can be contacted either directly at [pmbuss@aol.com](mailto:pmbuss@aol.com), or via Garry.

## **Additional Information – Summer Camp at Alexandra Headlands, Qld**

Would you please advise all those interested in attending the January 2005 Summer Camp that there are regular shuttle services to the Camp Site Grounds at Alexandra Headlands from the Brisbane Transit Centre (if arriving by train or bus), Brisbane Airport, and Maroochydore Airport. This might alleviate any concerns as to how to get from the rail or plane destination to the camp grounds and of course there will no doubt be several private cars available to do the shuttle should the regular service not be convenient or available for any reason.

There is a train from Brisbane Airport to the Brisbane Transit Centre every 15 mins at a cost of \$10 per adult one way (half price for 5 – 14 yr old.) (Tel: 131230)

The cost of an adult fare – one way – from Brisbane Transit Centre, Roma Street to Alexandra Headlands is \$11.60 (half price for 5 – 14 yr old) and takes just over 2hrs. (Tel: 131230)

## **New Planned Giving Coordinator - Academy and General Church**

At their meetings in May, the Boards of the Academy and the General Church authorized the hiring of a Planned Giving Coordinator on a part-time, one-year trial basis.

After a search and interview process that included candidates inside and outside the Church, the Joint Planned Giving Committee is happy to announce that we are contracting with Walter C. Childs III. (The search was conducted by members of the Planned Giving Committee: Hyland Johns and John Kern, co-chairs, Dan Allen, Bruce Henderson and Louise Pollock. Bill Buick was involved in the process but recused himself with Walter because of family relationship.)

Walter had served in the Development Office and has 14 years of experience in planned giving for the Church and the Academy. After leaving the Development Office, he formed an independent consulting business, has been director of two non-profit organizations, has been teaching at several area colleges, and is pursuing a PhD in Applied Management and Decision Sciences.

Under terms of a detailed contract, Walter will be working on planned giving for the General Church, the Academy and local societies through June of next year. He reports directly to Bruce Henderson as Director of Development, who will report to the Planned Giving Committee and both Boards. Walter also will be working with Dan Allen and Bill Buick as treasurers of both institutions, and will be in close contact with society treasurers and contribution chairs.

Walter's duties will include: educating people through the Church about the benefits of planned giving; contact people about making planned gifts for the Church, the Academy and/or their local societies; and providing liaison with legal, tax and financial professionals, as needed. He will be expected to generate planned gifts well in excess of the costs of the position.

Walter will be working out of his home office, and anyone interested in finding out about planned giving may contact him at 215-947-0944, or [walterchilds@yahoo.com](mailto:walterchilds@yahoo.com), or you may contact Bruce Henderson at 215-938-2526 or [bruce.henderson@anc-gc.org](mailto:bruce.henderson@anc-gc.org).

## **The Point of the Contest**

It is interesting that the point of this competition was not to determine winners and losers. It was instead an opportunity for the participants to stretch their minds in the quest to come up with their own best response to each question. The group on the seats to the north began first. Once they had provided their best answer they willingly passed the question to those on the seats to the west. There was a certain expectation that those to the west would be able to expand on the answer, which they dutifully did.

In this way each question was passed in turn from the north, to the west, to the south and to the east. Each of the first three groups did their best and each of these graciously accepted that the next group would have slightly more insight than they did.

The final statement written on the paper was a fully collaborative effort that highlighted the spirit in which the contest was held. They were all victors because they all put forward their best efforts and they all had important and enlightened contributions to make.

They were also all rewarded. Each group received gifts that they were proud to show to others. For the most enlightened angels who had been seated at the east, those gifts were laurel wreaths that were set with rubies and sapphires.

## **The True Spirit of Competition**

This angelic example helps describe the true spirit of competition. Here was a competition free from bloated egos or animosity. The best performers were openly rewarded, not so much for their own sakes it seems, but for the sake of allowing others to recognize those people who could provide the clearest insight when they found themselves pondering similar issues.

## **Fostering the “As of Self” while Remembering the Lord**

There is another element to all this. The Lord in His Divine mercy has given us an “as of self.” This means that we feel as if *we* have personally achieved something when we are successful. The runner at the Olympics who is first home in the marathon or the gymnast who does the most perfect

routine feels proud that *they* have achieved something very special, and indeed they have. There is an inner glow that comes from putting in a personal best performance, especially when that performance eclipses the performance of others. No one should ever be ashamed of feeling that glow. A person should not feel embarrassed by the thump of pride that comes with a job well done. If pride in success were something to avoid, angel contestants would never receive outward and public tokens of their achievements. For angels, this pride and these tokens do not cause a problem, because, within their hearts, they will never stop being aware that it is really the Lord alone who has made their success possible.

### **Athlete's Pledge**

*"In the name of all competitors that shall take part in these Olympic Games, respecting and abiding by the rules that govern them, in the true spirit of sportsmanship, for the glory of sport and the honour of our teams."*

(This pledge is read by a selected athlete prior to the commencement of competition. It is now accompanied by a signed oath from each competitor signalling their intention to abide by anti-doping rules and the spirit of fair play.)

### **A Further Thought About the Uniting Power of Competition**

I ran across the following account on the website of a group called Operation Mobilization. It is written from what might be considered a slightly different orientation to our own. This however, does nothing to undermine the essential validity of the message.

### **The Olympics Goes To Bosnia**

(From [www.om.com](http://www.om.com))

A week-long sports outreach in Bihac, Bosnia, this July was a big hit with both the kids and their parents! For many children in this city,

summertime is long and boring. There is little for them to do, and it can sometimes be a dangerous thing to have too much time. For that reason many parents came each day to watch the games from the sidelines, and to support their sons or daughters.

Each day different team members had a chance to share with the group of kids--and often with their parents--about what they believe about God. One man thanked them for organizing the games, but asked if we would not talk about Jesus with them because they are Muslims. Another mother also expressed her appreciation. Through a number of conversations she was able to hear the simple truths of the gospel.

But more than the parents, the outreach impacted the kids and showed them the love of God. Each day, after the fun of competing in a variety of sporting events from hockey to football to the high jump, they heard someone from the team sharing valuable lessons like these:

"It's not important whether you win or lose the games we play, but whether or not you are a winner at the game of life! ... We must honour God in the way we live our lives ... God loves you, and with Him you will be a winner!"

It was a simple message, but God used it to touch hearts. After building up enough courage, one little boy came to Hugo (a member of our OM team) at the end of the games and asked, "Do you believe in Jesus?" Hugo simply replied "Yes, I do." "Well," the boy said, "I was just wondering. I don't, 'cause I am Muslim, but my best friend in the next town does." And then he ran off.

The impact this week had is immeasurable, but we are hopeful that many seeds of love were planted in those participants, that will one day become a great tree bearing much fruit.

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR PRAYERS!!!**