

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.

Temporarily the Hurstville Society is without a **Pastor**. During this period the Society will be served by lay leaders and visiting preachers.

Worship Services are held each Sunday at 10:00 AM. **Sunday School** is held concurrently with the worship service.

Young People's Group is held once a month in conjunction with the Young People's Group at the New Church at 2 Shirley St, Roseville.

A tea and social in conjunction with **discussion** meets on the 1st Friday of each month (January excepted) beginning at 7 00 pm. This will be conducted by visiting ministers when available or lay led as appropriate.

Bible Study and Discussion Classes previously held midweek have been suspended until further notice.

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

Temporary editors – Owen & Margaret Heldon
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 August 2008

Gifts from the Lord

by Coleman Glenn

We often say that the Lord gives us gifts. This is, of course, true; the Lord gives us talents and abilities, knowledge and delight, wisdom and love, and the chance to live to eternity. It would be foolish to deny that the Lord gives us gifts. But there is an important point about the Lord's gifts to us that we need to keep in mind. *Divine Providence* n. 316 says, "All who are led by the Lord ... even see that what is in man originating from the Lord is always the Lord's and never man's." This is a profound statement about the Lord's gifts with us. Even the good things which we call "gifts" from the Lord are actually *still* the Lord's; they have not become our *own*; rather, they are continually being loaned to us by the Lord.

Thinking of the Lord's gifts this way is a valuable tool for letting go of pride. It is one thing to say, "My intelligence is a gift from the Lord," or,

“My compassion is a gift from the Lord” – but it is another to acknowledge that even these things are not *in* us. The Lord has not given us intelligence and made it our own; rather, He is continually allowing us to understand through *His* intelligence, which He allows us to experience *as if* it were our own. It is a humbling thought, but also a freeing thought.

The truth that we have nothing of our own is, in fact, one of the most freeing thoughts there is. *Divine Providence* n. 320 states, “If man believed, as is the truth, that all good and truth originate from the Lord, and all evil and falsity from hell, he would not appropriate good to himself and account it meritorious, nor would he appropriate evil to himself and account himself responsible for it.” I find this truth to be the single most powerful truth in the Writings. We *can* do good and not ruin that good by taking credit for it. We *do not* have to blame ourselves for the evil that assaults us.

But immediate objections spring to mind as soon as I hear this truth. *New Jerusalem and its Heavenly Doctrine* n. 160, for example, says, “Confessing one's sins is recognizing evils and seeing them in oneself, acknowledging them, considering oneself guilty and condemning oneself on account of them.” How is this consistent with acknowledging that all evil is from hell and *not* considering oneself responsible for evil? At first glance, these two teachings are hard to reconcile. If we look closer, though, it is not too hard to see how these two truths can be consistent.

In the context of self-examination, we need to acknowledge that we have evil intentions – that is, that there are evil things we would do if we had the chance. We need to make ourselves guilty and condemn ourselves for it, or in other words, we need to face the fact that we have been *choosing* these things, or that we *would* choose them; and we need to acknowledge that if we do not remove them from our lives, they will take us to hell. But we *also* need to acknowledge that the evil ideas and affections did not originate with us. If an evil thought enters our mind, it is more useful and true to say, “That thought is from hell, and I do not want it in my mind,” than to consider that evil thought to be a permanent part of who we are, part of our character that we cannot change. We can hold ourselves guilty for intending sin, but still acknowledge that the inclination to sin and the

before going to China for 2 weeks.

Since March this year **Margaret Heldon**, and sometimes **Ralph Horner** and other family members have been regularly travelling to visit their mother/grandmother **Grace Horner** who lives on an isolated property 45 minutes drive from Tamworth NSW. Our thoughts are with Grace who has memory loss and is needing extra support at this time.

Apologies to **George Markou** for misspelling his name last issue.

Society Hike in Blue Mountains

On **Saturday 2nd August** there will be a society hike in the Blue Mountains doing one of the passes (Federal Pass or National Pass). This will enable us to show Coleman Glenn this World Heritage National Park and also enable Norm Heldon to continue the tradition he started last year on his 90th birthday of walking the Federal Pass. Anyone interested contact Owen or Margaret Heldon (02) 9545 3823 for more details.

No Church One Sunday Per Month

As mentioned in previous newsletters and as proposed at the last Society Meeting there will be NO CHURCH on one Sunday per month during periods when we do not have a minister serving in Hurstville. Generally this will be the **first Sunday** of the month to make it easy to remember but in August it will be the second Sunday (10th August) as the first Sunday is Coleman Glenn's last Sunday and farewell. After that the dates will be: 7th Sept, 5th Oct, 2nd Nov and 7th Dec. On these dates people are encouraged to attend church at Roseville.

Birthdays

Happy Birthday to **Norm Heldon** (1st), **Grace Horner** (7th), **Emily Kermond** (7th), **Mark Brettell** (8th), **Rhonda Hall** (12th), **Rebekah Horner** (17th), **Larah Walsh** (21st), **Graeme McLeay** (22nd), **Robert Cooper** (28th), **Ralph Horner** (30th)

News Notes

We are happy to report that **Margaret Ward** is making good progress in her recovery from last month's heart operation. You can't keep a good girl down and Margaret has already been back attending church courtesy of husband Jim's chauffeuring service. Great to see you back Margaret.

Jan Lindsay is also on the path to recovery after her heart operation. However that path has been a bit rocky and Jan found herself back in hospital courtesy of a clot. However that is now resolved and we hope to see Jan back very soon.

Our friend **Bill Hall** in Rockhampton also spent time in hospital recently having had a fall and broken his hip. He is now back home and managing with a walker and the help of friends. The hospital has put in an application for him to move to a ground floor unit and we hope that can happen soon. Keep up the good work Bill.

Looking forward to October we will have a visit from **Rev Doug** and **Christine Taylor**. It will be great to see them and Doug has kindly offered to take a service while he is here. The Taylors will be staying in Baringa from 21st to 28th October before heading to Adelaide to visit family.

It was a nice surprise to get an email from **Huiling Sun** who is back in Bryn Athyn since May and writes to say that she and husband **Robert Cooper** are expecting a second child next March! At the end of August Robert will be working in Florida on a three month assignment as part of his training. He is expecting to graduate and be ordained next June. How time flies.

Welcome back to **Patricia Walsh** who spent over a month in the USA mainly visiting son **Rev Garry** and **Laurel Walsh** and girls in Washington DC in the USA.

Stuart Heldon has recently been holidaying in Indonesia and West Timor with two mates, surfing and relaxing. **Murray Heldon** has managed a whole 20 hours at home in between a 2 week business trip to Mumbai,

thoughts associated with it are not a part of us, but are from hell.

There is another powerful implication of this teaching. The last number in the chapter, *Divine Providence* n. 321, says, "So far as anyone shuns evil and turns away from it so far he wills and loves good." The same number says that those who believe that all evil is from hell pay attention only to the evils in themselves, which they shun and send back to hell. The point is this: because all life flows into us from either heaven or hell, if we shun evil then good necessarily flows into us. We do not need to worry about what good to do or try to force ourselves to be good; if we shun evils, then we will *want* to do good, and it will give us delight. *Apocalypse Explained* n. 979 expresses this truth:

Good works are all works done by a person when evils have been removed as sins. For the works done after this are done from man only as if from him; for they are done from the Lord, and all works done from the Lord are good, and are called the goods of life, the goods of charity, and good works... Cease, therefore, from asking in yourself, "What are the good works that I must do, or what good must I do to receive eternal life?" Only cease from evils as sins and look to the Lord, and the Lord will teach and lead you.

This double teaching – that all good is from the Lord, and that all evil is from hell – frees us from pride in ourselves, and it frees us from guilt for evil thoughts that enter our mind. It's a perfect illustration of what the Lord taught when He was in the world: "If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

If man only believed, as is really true, that all good is from the Lord and all evil from hell, he would neither make the good in him a matter of merit nor would evil be imputed to him; for he would then look to the Lord in all the good he thinks and does, and all the evil that flows in would be cast down to hell from which it comes. (Heaven and Hell 302)

My Trips Around Australia

by Coleman Glenn

Canberra Two weeks ago, on the 8th of July, I set out by train for Canberra. Upon my arrival at the Canberra train station, I was greeted by Phillip Richards, who took me to his house, where he and his wife Eleanor acted as two of the most hospitable hosts you can imagine for a whole week (they had been expecting me for only two days). I had a wonderful time in Canberra – I was shown the parliament house, the war memorial, the Deep Space Communications Complex, and kangaroos in the wild at Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve. I was invited to dinners and lunches and teas by the Richardses and the Ridgways and the Moffats, all of whom treated me with great kindness.

On the more ministerial side of things, we had a doctrinal class (well, really a doctrinal discussion) on the Purpose of Life, and I was impressed by the keen insights and questions offered by all present. I attended David Moffat's excellent spiritual growth group on Sunday, and again I was inspired by the thoughtful contributions made by all the attendees.

While I was there, Lavender Ridgway passed away at the age of 89 (see notice elsewhere in this newsletter). I was grateful to be there to be able to take the memorial service. And I am grateful for all the encouragement and support that I was given by everyone while I was there. If I visit Australia again, I'll be sure to stop by and visit my friends in Canberra.

Perth Shortly after returning from Canberra, I set out for Perth. I was greeted at the Perth airport by a whole crowd of people: John and Moira Frost, Val and Richard Hart, and Alex Benjko. I was whisked away by car on a beautiful drive along the river to a café in the equally beautiful Kings Park, where we all had coffee together. From the park I got my first good view of Perth – a beautiful city overlooking the Swan River, gazing at its reflection and South Perth on the other side of the river.

August, counselling at a camp for New Church teens in the middle of August, and heading off to Glenview in September on my practicum. I will miss Australia – the land itself, the cities of Sydney and Canberra and Perth, the city of Hurstville – but of course I will miss you, my new friends, most of all. But I will keep in touch! My email address is coleman.glenn@gmail.com and I welcome emails and phone calls and letters. And if you're ever in the States, look me up – I'm eager to return some of the hospitality that I've been shown during my too-short time in Australia.

Coleman

Farewell to Coleman Glenn

After church on **Sunday 3rd August** there will be a **Pot Luck Luncheon** in Baringa to farewell Coleman Glenn. Please bring a savoury and sweet to share. Drinks will be provided.

The society is most grateful to Coleman for spending his summer vacation working so hard for the church not only in Hurstville but also in Canberra and Perth (see elsewhere in newsletter). Coleman says "I could stay another year and still be excited and delighted at all the new people I was getting to know, all the places I was visiting". We wish he could stay and certainly hope he will be able to return some day. He will most definitely be welcome.

Tea and Doctrinal Class on 1st August

In our doctrinal class on the 4th of July, we talked about the first law of the Divine Providence: that a person act from freedom according to reason. On Friday the 1st of August, we'll take a whirlwind tour through the remaining four laws of the Divine Providence. All of these laws teach us how we can act in cooperation with the Lord so that we can be carried along in the stream of His Divine providence. "Divine providence is universal, that is, it is present within the smallest details of all; and people in the stream of providence are being carried along constantly towards happier things, whatever appearance the means may present." *Arcana Coelestia* 8478

congregation that desires its support.

I know you join me in welcoming Theresa to the General Church Outreach team. She began work on 1st July.

Her contact information is:

Email: Theresa.mcqueen@newchurch.org

Phone: (267) 502-4906

David Lindrooth 1/7/2008

A Fond Farewell

But I just got here! When I was asked to come to Australia for seven weeks, I thought to myself, “Seven weeks – that’s a fairly long time, I suppose.” Here is what I have learned in my time here: seven weeks is not a long time. At all. I could stay another year and still be excited and delighted at all the new people I was getting to know, all the places I was visiting. In the end, seven weeks feels more like seven days.

Divine Providence n. 49 says, “Suppose thought to go on for ten or twelve hours; may not this interval of time appear as one or two hours, or even as one or two days? The apparent duration is according to the state of the affection from which the thought has sprung. If the affection is one of joy in which one does not think of time, ten or twelve hours of thought seem no more than one or two...” I must have been thinking often from an affection of joy, because the time has flown by.

And yet, despite the fact that I feel like I have just arrived here, I also feel that the people I’ve met have been life-long friends. Everywhere I’ve gone, from here in Hurstville to Canberra and Perth, I’ve been welcomed with open arms and loving hearts. I will not forget the family dinners, the bushwalking, the long conversations, the trips to the city, the parties, the doctrinal classes – all the good times that I have been shown by the people here.

But sadly, I have to leave. I’m in a friend’s wedding on the 8th of

During my stay in Perth, Bernice Brown acted as my hostess, and she made sure I had everything I needed. During my stay in Perth, I was shown all around the city and beyond. Alex – who will soon be a schoolmate of mine at the theological school in Bryn Athyn – took me on a beautiful drive up the coast to the Moore River, then back down to the city through the picturesque Chittering Valley. On Friday there was a terrific storm, and John and Alex and I got to sit in a café by the river and watch it rage outside. The whole group shared several delicious meals, provided by all.

On Saturday afternoon we were given a wonderful presentation on the Grand Man by Mary Smuts and her daughter Lisa. We had two doctrinal classes, one on Divine Providence and the other on “mediate goods.” On Sunday evening I got to hang out and talk about the church (and what America’s *really* like) to some teenagers at the Dwyers’, and we finished up my visit on Monday evening with a discussion about outreach and the future of the Perth circle. The visit was an inspiration and a pleasure: it’s exciting to see people so dedicated and so excited about the church, and I trust that the group there will only continue to grow stronger.



The skyline of Perth from King’s Park

Lavender Ridgway

13th August 1918 – 8th July 2008



Betty Mary Lavender Ridgway was born and raised in Durban, South Africa, but throughout her long life she travelled all over the world and called many countries home. Together with her devoted husband Rex and their four children, they lived in South Africa, Rhodesia, the UK, and for a long time in Canberra, Australia.

In Canberra, Lavender was tireless in her dedication to the New Church. She and Rex listed their home telephone number

under “Swedenborg Information” in the Canberra phone directory; they invited inquirers to come to their house; and she gave out countless books, even setting up a “Free Books” booth at the Australian National University’s “Market Day.” After Rex’s passing in 1992, Lavender continued to live in Canberra with her daughter Heulwen until 1998, when they moved to England. They returned to Canberra in January of 2008.

Lavender was thoroughly devoted to sharing the Writings and welcoming people into the New Church, and she was thoroughly devoted to her husband Rex. We can imagine them now being reunited in the spiritual world. And perhaps they are still welcoming newcomers – now into a heavenly kingdom and a heavenly home.

Journey at Sea

The **Rev. Martie Johnson**, Chaplain in the U.S. Navy, will be running *The Journey* campaign for 6,000 ship mates on the Aircraft Carrier *Stennis* over a six-month period at sea beginning in October. He will be offering this

year’s “Building Healthy Relationships” and last year’s Journey – “*Realizing Spiritual Freedom*” – on the ship’s next tour.

This opens another chapter in the General Church’s quest for meaningful contact with at least a million people. General Church Outreach is gearing up to support the effort.

This is the same aircraft carrier that was the focus of a popular and compelling documentary series aired on PBS in the spring.

The Rev. David Lindrooth, Director of Outreach, says, “I cannot think of a higher impact use of this material. General Church Outreach wants to extend its gratitude to Chaplain Johnson for his vision and leadership in making this happen.”

The Joseph Project

A General Church system for supporting congregation development and growth

I am pleased to announce the hiring of **Theresa McQueen** to the position of Joseph Project Manager. Theresa’s background working with this office, working with congregations, and in business will be an asset to us as we move forward in an exciting new direction.

This past May, the General Church Board voted to fund a new, more coherent way of supporting the development of emerging New Church congregations world-wide. The Joseph Project is a system that will offer support, mentorship, and resources that are tailored to the specific needs of individual congregations helping them become healthy, growing, self sustaining General Church Societies. The Joseph Project will consist of a team that will help find workable solutions to **any** challenge that a congregation encounters in its various stages of development as it looks toward evangelisation and growth. In the beginning we will focus on several pilot projects both in the US and Overseas. As the program matures, the Joseph Project will open its enrolment and offer its services to any