

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 (prior notice required).

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.

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Call or come at anytime.



The New Church Newsletter

Hurstville Society March 2007

Evangelisation: Brain-Storming Session

Friday 2nd February 2007

The Pastor opened the meeting by reading the following from the Gospel of John:

“I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. However, when He the Spirit of truth has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own, but whatever He hears He will speak, and He will tell you things to come . . . These things I have spoken to you in figurative language; but the time is coming when I will no longer speak to you in figurative language, but I will tell you plainly about the Father” (John 16: 12, 13, 25).

He then remarked that these are among the last words the Lord spoke to the disciples in the flesh. They are literally the clearest prophecy of the Second

Coming, boldly promising a further revelation beyond the New Testament, and embolden us to declare the New Revelation as being from the Lord in fulfilment of His promise. It therefore has Divine authority.

This New Revelation is yet another example of the way prophecies are never understood until after they have been fulfilled. Since the Lord has kept His promise, as He always does, those who have accepted it need to cooperate with the Lord in declaring it to those who wish to hear it. This led into the discussion of why and how we should proclaim it.

Why Should We Evangelise (proclaim the Message)?

The response to that question was immediate: "Because there are people out there who need us to do so!"

The Pastor heartily endorsed that statement of purpose, and read from the following notes, which strongly emphasized the paramount importance of having the right motive:

1. The Lord will be able to bless our efforts only if we act from Him, not from self. If we act from self, we may be able to fill the pews with warm bodies; but they may have cold spirits. In other words, our motive (reason) for trying to interest people is far more important than any techniques we may discover. Our motivation will enter into every effort we make and create a sphere - either a welcoming, charitable one that wishes well to the person we are seeking to help, or one that drives people away because they will sense that it is self-serving or striving to dominate and control.

For example, if we are focused on "growing the Church," people will sense that we are interested, not in them, but in increasing our numbers, gaining more helpers, more contributors, or some other self-centred impulse.

Our aim, goal, end, or purpose should be to HELP the people out there who are hungering and thirsting after righteousness, people who know they have a need to find a more sensible religion, people who are suffering the horrible feeling of being in the dark and seeking what seems like a non-existent light.

News Notes

Pastoral Situation

Thanks to the Taylors: We have been very grateful to have **Rev Douglas Taylor** and his wife **Christine** with us for the past six months and wish them well as they prepare to spend a few weeks with friends and relations in South Australia before returning to the USA. Doug has come out of retirement and it is a tribute to his dedication to the church that he has been able to do such a wonderful job for the Hurstville Society, providing intriguing topics for the sermons and thought provoking classes. He has been ably assisted by Christine who has helped in many ways especially by providing music for the services while Margaret Heldon was away in September and October and continuing to share the duties since then.

What Happens Now? Although we have been in regular contact with **Bishop Brian Keith** regarding a pastor there is nothing definite to report at this time. From 11th March onwards we will schedule lay services and plan to have a once a month class/discussion group on a Friday along with a dinner. It is likely that we will be able to invite New Church ministers from the New Church in Australia to make guest appearances from time to time and there have been offers of assistance. Expect to hear more on this in due course. Looking further ahead we are hoping that in our winter/American summer that a pastor may be able to spend 2 to 3 months here. There has also been interest from several young people about spending some time here on an internship and we will continue to be in contact with **Soni Werner** in Bryn Athyn on this matter.

As this newsletter goes to press we are expecting the arrival of two young men from Bryn Athyn, **Owen Genzlinger** and **Garth Pitcairn**. They are here on holiday and plan to include a scuba diving course into their schedule.

Visiting **Lisa Smuts** in Perth in February were **Angela** and **Michelle Heldon** and **Naomi Heldon**. Ironically they were there on the same weekend as Rev Doug and Christine Taylor and able to join with the group on some of the activities.

On Sunday morning the sermon topic was the “Spiritual Affection of Truth”, as illustrated by the story of Martha and Mary (Luke 10:38-42). There were 18 in the congregation, plus two young ladies from the Heldon family of Hurstville. That was a very encouraging attendance, since the Circle began with only 5 a few years ago. In the evening there was a picnic in a beautiful park and a most delightful outdoor concert, making a fitting finale to a very enjoyable visit.

Retrospective

Christine and I can hardly believe that our stay here is drawing to a close. When people are enjoying themselves time passes quickly. We have only to look back over these six months to know that it has all been full of enjoyment. This is always the case in Hurstville. We will take away not only fond memories but also great hopes for the future, as the Society gradually implements the suggestions made at the brain-storming session on evangelization.

Sermons for March

- 4th The Land Flowing with Milk and Honey (Rev Douglas Taylor)
- 11th Perfection (by Rev David Ayers)
- 18th Doing Your Best with What You Have (by Rev Michael Gladish)
- 25th The Happiness of Heaven (by Rev Dan Goodenough)

Doctrinal Class for March

2nd Topic “What the Writings Say About the Lord’s Prayer”. Please come for dinner and class, the last we will have with Rev Douglas Taylor before he and Christine depart.

Birthdays

Happy Birthday to **Tracy Hinds & Mikayla Hinds** (4th), **Don Macfarlane** and **Debbie Walsh** (7th), **Graham Horner** (12th), **Edward Horner** (18th) **Bill Hall** (26th), **Trevor Favell** (27th)

This motivation can come only from the Lord. "There is none good but One, that is, God" (Matthew 19:17). No matter how hard we try, we cannot manufacture a good motive. "With men it is impossible, but with God all things are possible" (Matthew 19:26).

That is why PRAYER is so essential. In prayer, we turn to the Lord and look to the Lord. We gain the needed humility. We need to pray, first, for the right, heavenly motive, even before we pray for the enlightenment we need to help an inquirer. We are meant to be helpers, not persuaders. "Unless the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it" (Psalm 127:1).

2. With that helpful motive, we will always be “receptor oriented,” that is, we will think in terms of how our words will most likely be received (not just understood).

Reception involves the feelings. That is why we need to find out first what the other person's feelings are with regard to religion. If we spend more time on learning how he or she thinks and feels, and especially what they are looking for, we will be more successful in filling needs. We all know how delightful it is to feel that you are really HELPING the other person.

3. One of the best preparations for talking to people outside the Church is to have conversations with newcomers who have actually joined the Church. Find out what helped them, and why; what was an obstacle, and why. (We are dealing with REAL individual people; we are not just broadcasting a message to the world.)

4. This approach will help us with any advertisements we may use. They will be *need*-centred, targeting people who have been prepared by the Lord to receive the Heavenly Doctrine.

5. An interesting statistic: all the evidence is that a high percentage (68%) of new members in all churches came through personal contact with a current member. With your friends you have credentials already. With strangers you have to establish them.

To do any of the above suggestions, we obviously need to “shun evils as sins against the Lord” before we can do what is good from Him.

How Evangelise?

During some further discussion of our motivation, it was summed up by the remark that we should think of ourselves as doctors, who are working to help those who are bleeding.

We then moved on to discussing ways and means. Here are some suggestions that we should act upon:

- Leave pamphlets around at work
- Letter drops haven't worked much here; it all boils down to personal one-on-one contact and invitations.
- In the New Church culture, we want to “leave them in freedom.” but first we must *put* them in freedom;” i.e. give them a choice by telling them about the church.
- We seem afraid to follow up for fear of scaring them away, thus losing opportunities; follow up needs to be done regularly.
- If all wanted to help, no newcomer would slip through the cracks.
- A newcomer doesn't feel accepted until invited into a home.
- Invite a newcomer to do some little job so they feel part of the group.
- Leave pamphlets for the tennis folks that they can take home to read.
- Find places round here, (libraries or bookstores?) to put books by Swedenborg.
- Put some pamphlets out front at street level. (New Church Connection?)
- Place an advertisement in the Leader for several weeks , showing what the New Church has to offer.
- Talk to people on Dudley Street before going further afield.
- Join Mike Lockhart in giving new paperbacks from the Foundation to second-hand bookstores
- Keep doing something; eventually responses come out of the blue.
- Use the internet to place catchy messages.
- Which book to give? One that meets the person's needs and

There they are, the days of jazz
and joy rides,
Snaps of magic moments
lit by laughs.
If you ever find my house on fire,
leave the silver...
Save the photographs!

Fran Landesman

Pastor's Visits

During January and February the Pastor made two Church visits; first to Canberra and later to the Perth Circle.

Canberra Visit

This took place on Wednesday the 31st. of January, when 11 people, including the Rev. David Moffat, gathered at the home of Philip and Eleanor Richards to participate in a class on Martyrs and Martyrdom. There was a good discussion, several people remarking that they had never heard this subject treated from the perspective of the Writings. For the Pastor's part, he and his wife Christine were delighted to renew acquaintance with old friends and to see some new faces.

Perth Visit

From Thursday the 8th of February until the 12th the Pastor visited the General Church Perth Circle. Once again it was a pleasure for the Pastor and his wife to catch up with old friends and to meet several people they had never seen before.

On the Friday evening, after a delicious shared meal, the subject of the Class was the same as in Canberra and the response was also quite lively. On Saturday morning there was a relaxed discussion with the Young People about how to answer the question, “What is the New Church?” This was followed by a midday lunch and equally enjoyable conversation.

Similarly, in describing the process of regeneration we often say that it is a great change, the great change from being merely natural to being spiritual. It is as if we think that in some way our natural loves are *changed* into loves of a spiritual quality. But the reality is that little by little we *exchange* our natural loves for spiritual loves from the Lord through our internal man, which is always in the order of heaven. It is not a change but an **exchange**.

Douglas Taylor.

PHOTOGRAPHS

Photographs are smiles
that last forever,
Snowmen that can never
fade away,
Birthday celebrations caught
in amber,
Rescued from the vaults
of yesterday.

Faces that were once more dear
than diamonds,
Folks that kept you up
until the dawn,
Houses filled with bicycles
and babies,
Ghosts who left their shadows
on the lawn.

Photographs are holes in time's
grey curtain,
Through them we can peek
into the past,
Call upon our parents
and our children,
Pop a cork with members
of the cast.

interests. There is not one size that fits all.

- Best to make them readers before inviting to Church.
- Yet some have been attracted by the people before becoming a reader.
- Open invitation to tour the Garden and read the quotations out aloud.
- Advertise sermons with catchy titles.
- Invite contacts to Enquirers' Classes.
- Learn how to attract teens for education and fun.
- Something to read on church sign – with regular changes.
- Be patient. The Lord works slowly and surely.

Footnote: This session was recorded and is on CD for future reference.

News Item on Action News

Hopefully this item will remain available on the web. There are two videos and an article on the internet about the Bryn Athyn church and its teachings, a very well balanced presentation on a major news channel in the USA. The link is:

http://abclocal.go.com/wpvi/story?section=special_coverage&id=5016615

What The Bible Does Not Say

In the Gospel of Matthew the Lord spoke a few parting words to the disciples (and us): "Make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 28:19).

It is important to note what He did *not* say. He did not say "in the names (plural) of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, as if there were three people, but in the *name* (singular). There was only *one* Person – Jesus. The disciples therefore correctly baptised in "the name of Jesus Christ" (Acts 2:38, 8:16, 10:48)

Understanding what the Lord actually said, we can confidently state that the Bible does not say that there are three Persons in God.

Australian New Church Web Site Statistics

At the Evangelisation Brainstorming session (see lead article) a question was asked “Were any statistics available regarding how often the web site is accessed etc?” So we asked Cor Visser-Marchant from Canberra whose company hosts the web site if he had any and he replied with a lengthy list of statistics for the month of January. The information relates to the entire New Church in Australia web site and not just to the Hurstville pages but does give some interesting feedback on how the site is used.

In the month of January there were:

2,566 unique visitors who made

3,689 visits (or 119 per day)

i.e. these 2,566 visitors made 1.43 visits per person

How long did they spend viewing the website?

0-30 secs	2,748	74%
30s – 2min	345	9%
2m – 5min	163	4%
5m – 15min	163	4%
15m – 30m	95	2.5%
30m – 1 hr	107	2.9%
1 hr +	68	1.8%
	3,689	

Wouldn't we love to know who made up the 68 visits of over 1 hour!

The greatest number of visitors came from the USA followed by Australia. There were visits from many other countries but the numbers were very small compared to the USA and Australia. Some keywords used in search engines (only a small number of the overall visits) were angels, new church, life after death, young people and 9 hits from the keyword “Stuart Heldon”!

One comment that was made at the brain storming session was that it would be a good idea to have constantly changing messages appearing. In fact that does happen so look carefully next time and see what you think.

Change Or Exchange

The Lord made His human part Divine.” Those words are a summary of the Lord’s glorification process. They are quite familiar to us. We have heard or read them many times. But what ideas do we attach to them?

How are we to understand them? Do we think the Lord on earth made some kind of organic change in the substances of the human mind that He inherited from Mary? And did He make a chemical change in the material of His earthly body, so that it became Divine? If so, how were these changes accomplished?

The Doctrine of the Lord #35 steers us away from such thoughts.

“He did not transmute this human nature from the mother into the Divine Essence, nor did He mingle it with the Divine Essence. This is taught by the doctrine of faith, called the Athanasian Creed. For the human nature cannot be transmuted into the Divine Essence, nor can it be commingled with this Essence.

2] Yet in accordance with the same Creed is our doctrine that the Divine assumed the Human, that is, united it to itself, as the soul is united to its body, so that they were not two but one Person. From this it follows that the Lord put off the human from the mother, which in itself was like the human of any other man and consequently material, and put on the Human from the Father, which in itself was like His Divine and consequently substantial*; so that the Human also was made Divine.

From all this it is clear that in making His Human level Divine, the Lord did not *change* or transmute the human from the mother Mary in any way at all; instead, He gradually put it off entirely. He *exchanged* it for the Divine human from the Father, from the Divine soul within. It was not a change but an **exchange**.