

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.

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Call or come at anytime.



The New Church Newsletter

Hurstville Society November 2008

Church May Profit From Doom

This was the title of an article in the *Sydney Morning Herald* on 30th September 2008 by Religious Affairs writer Linda Morris. The article reports on a radical proposal suggested by the head of the Uniting Church in NSW Niall Reid that would involve selling its under-utilised churches, manses and halls to give to the poor and disadvantaged. Rev Reid's proposal suggests that the church consider selling much of its estimated \$3.9 billion worth of assets, letting go of its "holy, sacred spaces as beautiful as they may be" and work to establish an "underground" community of faithful that connects with the spiritual needy in pubs, on beaches and in shopping malls.

Rev Reid says that these decisions had the ability to set the Uniting Church apart: "If we start using our resources to work towards developing an underground church now, in 20 years we may not be so rich, having used up

our resources, but just possibly we will be experiencing a wonderful harvest of people and riches of a different order.”

How would the New Church respond if it were suggested we do the same thing? The radical proposal of Rev Reid remind us of the Lord’s words to the rich man when he said "If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven."

We now turn to a sermon entitled “**The Rich Man**” by **Rev (now Bishop) Tom Kline** published in New Church Life in May 1977 who addressed these questions.

A young man, hearing the teachings of the Lord, asked of Him, "What good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?" The Lord answered that he should keep the commandments. The young man responded that he had kept these things from his youth up, and further inquired, "What lack I yet?" The Lord answered Him, "If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven." We are told the man went away in sorrow after hearing these words, because he had great possessions.

Of all the teaching given by the Lord while He was on earth, the literal teachings contained in this story have been the most difficult for men to accept. In these teachings it seems that it is not enough for a man to merely obey the commandments of the Decalogue, but he must also renounce his worldly possessions that he might someday inherit the kingdom of God. Upon hearing these teachings, many have attempted to find ways to lessen the harshness of these words. Some scholars have tried to show that the words of our text have been mis-translated over the centuries, and were originally more lenient. They maintain that the word "camel" was originally the word "rope" and that the "eye of the needle" was originally a small "gateway" or "window." When the Lord said that it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, they maintain the Lord meant it is easier for a rope to go through a small window, implying that it is a difficult task, but certainly not impossible. But no matter what excuses men have found to avoid these teachings, scholars admit that the words stand as they are

Angela and **Michelle Heldon** along with a couple of friends are at present in Vietnam on a holiday which will also take them to Laos and Cambodia. They will be away till early December on an adventure which has no definite schedule!

It was lovely to see **Grace Horner** and **Margaret Heldon** visiting Sydney on the weekend that Rev Doug and Christine Taylor were in Sydney.

Stuart Heldon has moved. His new address is 8 Upper Road, Glebe 2037.

“Love All”

The church grounds and tennis court have recently been hired by the **Sydney Film School** for the making of a short film called “Love All”. As you might guess it has a tennis theme and a love theme. A letter of appreciation has been received and reads (in part) as follows:

“Thank you very much for your help and support. The team really appreciates it. Of course everyone involved (Ralph, neighbours [ie Lockharts] etc) will get a copy of the film and we will send an invitation for the official screening in December.”

Our location was chosen because of the lovely grounds providing an ideal setting for the film with such a theme. It is the hope of the school that the film might get screened at the Sydney Film Festival.

Summer Camp 2009

There are still a few places left if you haven’t booked but would still like to attend the Summer Camp at Phillip Island in Victoria from 10th to 15th January. The theme sounds like a good one - “The Power of the Word”. Full details and forms are available from the Hurstville New Church or Rev Chris Skinner.

Birthdays

Happy Birthday to **Cliff Adamou** (2nd), **Jesse Horner** (3rd), **Brian Heldon** (8th), **Cathy Kermond** (11th), **Skye Horner** (11th), **Lori Heldon** (30th),

News Notes

It was a pleasure to have **Rev Doug** and **Christine Taylor** with us for a week in October. Their stay didn't start too well with Doug being laid low by a very severe stomach upset. Christine also had a nasty cough to contend with. However Doug was able to recover in time to give us a class on his favourite topic, talking about the church. He also took the service on Sunday 26th October on the story of "Jacob Cheats Esau", a story that really one can only make sense of with the Writings for the New Church. Christine kindly played the music for the hymns.

It was great to see Doug and Christine again. Having got the work part of their trip out of the way they are free to enjoy the next six weeks or so visiting family in Melbourne and Adelaide.

Kathryn Kennedy and **Andrew Rolles** were married on Sunday 26th October 2008 at Trinity Grammar School Chapel, at Summer Hill. Several of the congregation were able to attend what was a very lovely occasion.



written.

The statement is a deliberately hard saying - it is impossible for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.

In the New Church, with the revelation of the Lord's Second Coming, we see the teachings of this story in a new light. In the revelation now given to mankind, we can see that this story has a spiritual sense, separate from the letter. By a rich man is meant those who are wealthy in intellectual things of the world, those who have an abundance of natural knowledge. The fact that a rich man can hardly enter the kingdom of God, signifies that a man cannot discover the things of heaven and the church solely from worldly knowledge and understanding. It is only when man gives up this knowledge, that is, makes his own ideas subservient to the truths of revelation, that heavenly light can flow in. In the spiritual sense, our text clearly shows us that the only path that leads to heaven is through the truths revealed in the Word. We must approach this truth with humility.

Now there is a temptation for us to be relieved when we hear that there is a spiritual sense to this story. The man of the New Church can find the teachings given in the letter of the Word harsh and difficult. There is the temptation for us to take refuge in the spiritual sense of the Word because we hope that somehow this inner-meaning frees us from the moral and civil obligations of the letter. Just like those men who try to find mistranslations in the letter, we can be tempted to use the abstract spiritual sense as a means of divorcing our life from the moral obligations of the Word. We must be cautious not to abuse the Word in this way.

. . . There is a natural or moral plane of truth in the Word, and the man of the New Church cannot neglect this most powerful level. The Writings compare the spiritual plane of life to a house and the civil and moral plane to the foundation of that house. To live the spiritual and internal life and not at the same time the moral and civil life, is like dwelling in a house that has no foundation. It gradually sinks and is rent asunder.

When the Writings treat of the story of our text, they state that there is both a spiritual and a natural sense. As we have seen, the rich man, in the

spiritual sense, signifies the mental state of placing worldly knowledges above the truths of the Word. But in the natural sense, the rich man retains much of his literal meaning. The Writings tell us that in the natural sense, the rich are those who have worldly possessions and set their heart upon these. These men cannot enter the kingdom of heaven. Thus, to some extent, the man of the New Church has to place himself in the literal context of this story. The Lord asked the rich man to sell all that he had and follow Him. We cannot simply take refuge in the spiritual sense and say that this literal meaning does not apply to us, for as we have seen, the moral teachings of the Word apply equally to the man of the New Church, when these teachings are seen and interpreted in the light of genuine truth.

The Writings compare the love of the Lord to the head, the love of the world to the breast, and the love of self to the feet. When these loves become inverted in any way, the whole man becomes inverted and disordered.

When seen in this light, the moral teachings of our text take on new meaning in the letter. The Lord, when he asked the young man to sell all that he had and follow him, asks the man of the church to make his love of the world subservient to his love of the Lord and the neighbour. The Lord asks the man of the church to love worldly things only as a means of serving others. He asks that these worldly loves give up their ruling position in our lives and that these very loves follow the Lord. The literal command of the Lord is addressed directly to each one of us: "If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor." This does not mean that the Lord requires us to do this literally, for as we have seen, the Lord allows worldly possessions and loves so that we might be able to serve the higher uses of the neighbour and the church. But the Lord does ask that we carry out this command in our hearts. The Lord asks that we be willing to sell all and follow Him, because it is only when we are willing to do this that we truly place our love to the Lord above all other things. Each one of us should reflect upon what our answer would be if we were in the place of the young man. Would we be able to give up all the possessions that we now have and follow the Lord, or would we go away in sorrow, unable to obey this one command? By reflecting upon what our answer would be to this question, we can see something of the nature of our loves and their place in our lives.

Sunday Nov 30th The plan for worship on this day is to use one of the DVDs of a church service produced by Rev Julian Duckworth. On this day a number of regular attendees will be out of town so it seems to be a good opportunity to trial the use of one of these DVDs in a worship situation when there are limited resources for preparing a regular service. (Excerpts of these DVDs were previewed in a doctrinal class a couple of months ago but this is a different situation to using a DVD for actual worship. So we will see how it goes). If anyone would like to volunteer to preview one or more of the DVDs – there are now three – and select some suitable music for use with the service that would be much appreciated.

Sunday Dec 7th Being the first Sunday of the month there will be **no church at Hurstville** but there is a **special service at Roseville**. At this service the children will be doing a Nativity Play. After the service, there will be a shared lunch (people bringing a savoury dish, salad, or dessert) and a Church party, with gifts for the children. In addition, people who are coming to the Nativity Service are asked to bring an unwrapped present (new or pre-loved) for the Salvation Army Christmas Appeal. If you are thinking about joining our friends at Roseville for the service and lunch, please let Ruth Duckworth know (9416 7032) so that she can help decide what kind of lunch provision is required (numbers and kind of dish).

Sunday Dec 14th Worship Service at Hurstville in the morning. In the evening you may wish to attend the Carols by Candlelight at Roseville.

Sunday Dec 21st Worship service in the **evening** at Hurstville (with something for children) followed by refreshments at the Lockharts.

Thursday Dec 25th Christmas Day service at 10 a.m. Carols and shared readings along with a Christmas sermon.

Sunday Dec 28th Worship

Services suspended in **January** until after the Summer Camp. Further details next month.

who worked so hard for his people, the African Americans. His words “I have a dream” will be remembered through the ages. In his extensive library was a book titled “Emerson – Modern Anthology” and on the fly page Dr King had written: “Swedenborg enables us to understand why we were created, why we are alive and what happens to us after our bodies die. Swedenborg enables us to have the best possible understanding of God’s message as it exists in those Bible Books which constitute God’s Word.”
MLK

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Calendar Notes for November and December

At this stage the church calendar looks like this for the next couple of months or so, reflecting in part decisions made at the Society meeting

Sunday Nov 9th Worship

Friday Nov 14th Tea and Class. It is intended to take the Joseph Stories study notes by Rev Julian Duckworth and read and discuss them. Depending on how it goes this could be repeated at a later class or people might prefer to simply take the series home and read for themselves. We could do one, possibly two on the Friday night. Note this is the *second Friday* of the month.

Sunday Nov 16th Worship followed by Property Trust meeting

Sunday Nov 23rd Worship followed by AGM. The AGM is primarily for the election of office bearers and for annual reports.

The Lord has given us these teachings, not so our lives will become inhibited and devoid of pleasure, but so that we might find true happiness and see the true joys of creation. The objects of the natural world are the means or instruments whereby heavenly joys can be brought tangibly before our eyes. What a tragic thing it would be for a man to cling to these objects themselves, these dead instruments, and totally miss the joys that these things were intended to convey.

It is for this reason that the Lord has revealed these truths, that we might open our minds to the joys of heaven. "If thou be perfect, sell all that thou hast, and give unto the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven, and come, follow me." Amen

Unfortunately due to space limitations the full sermon has not been printed. Anyone wanting to read the full sermon should read New Church Life May 1977. It can also be accessed through the website www.heavenlydoctrines.org using the search words “give to the poor” or “the rich man”.

This is What We Are Up Against!

An article in The Australian on 23rd October reported the following:

“British atheists have raised £47,900 (\$118,300) to tell Londoners there’s probably no God and to get on with life. The nation’s first atheist advertising campaign has beaten its funding target in less than 24 hours, raising nearly nine times the amount it needed to post its ads on public buses in London.

Organisers hope to run more than 5,000 ads in the city over a month, telling people “There’s probably no God. Now stop worrying and enjoy your life.”

Question? Why would they want to do this? Any ideas?

Spiritual by Choice, Small by Design

The Bryn Athyn College is seriously gearing up for growth. Now that most of the new buildings and renovations have been completed on the College Campus a marketing campaign is set to swing into action with the theme “Spiritual by Choice, Small by Design”. This is a major campaign and involves:

- A billboard on the I-95, the main route between the city and the College, contrasting “most other colleges” with Bryn Athyn College with the tagline “Spiritual by Choice, Small by Design”.
- Colour ads echo the theme in *Newsweek* and *US News and World Report*.
- A website – www.brynathyn.edu – with student videos.
- A new student to student view book with personal testimonials
- A Service Day kicking off the academic year by putting the mission of “education for use” into life – and attracting positive media coverage.

Marketing Director **Andy Sullivan** says “For many years we have apologised for our size and it is time that our size becomes one of our greatest assets. *Small by Design* is meant to focus on the relationships among students and teachers. *Small by Design* helps us enter the conversation with potential students and families.

Any Australian student who wishes to study at the Bryn Athyn College can apply for assistance with the Australian New Church Education Fund.

Candela

A review of the latest issue by Norman Heldon.

Candela is the newsletter of the Swedenborg Centre at Ryde. The theme of its September issue is “Living for the Sake of Others”.

It begins with a very helpful, clear offering by Mr Joe Vandemeer, President of the Centre. He begins, “Living for the sake of others is a definition of heaven, living for the sake of self at the cost of others is a definition of hell.” Further, he urges us to examine our motives for doing something. Is it for ego’s sake or an unconditional love of others? That’s self-examination, isn’t it? - Something we must all do at times if we are to regenerate.

Rev Ian Arnold in his contribution remarks that while a few people will be remembered through the ages, like Neil Armstrong, the first man to set foot on the moon, most of us live quietly, anonymously – yet it should be our intention to do the best we can for others, and try to prepare ourselves for that special use in heaven for which we have been created by the Lord. It is wonderful to consider that in past ages and through those to come, that our Lord has created each person to be able to make a unique contribution to the happy state of heaven. That of course brings us back to the topic “Living for the Sake of Others”.

Another way of looking at it is to remember that heaven in the Lord’s sight is as one person, a being very wonderful and complex, and there are innumerable societies or communities of heaven working towards perfecting that Heavenly Man, thereby adding to the happiness of all angels. We are reminded of the Psalm beginning “I praise You O Lord, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Marvellous are Your works and that my soul knows right well.” Psalm 139.

There is also a delightful extract from an article by Dr James Lawrence, Dean of the Swedenborgian House of Studies in Berkeley California. To quote: The French philosopher Charles Peguy made a study of the incredible devotion of the cathedral builders during the Middle Ages in Europe. He writes “They get up in the morning before six and they sang at the idea that they are going off to work. At 11 o’clock they sing on going off to eat their soup. They had a vision for their work, and work became for them joy itself and the deep root of their being.”

Another interesting item in this issue is about Rev Dr Martin Luther King