

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 2007

On Music In Heaven

By Rev Don Rose

The book "90 Minutes in Heaven" was published some ten years ago.

It was limited at first to religious book stores, but it got national attention and has now sold more than 1 million copies. The writer, the Rev Don Piper, was presumed dead in a car crash. But his mangled body came back to life, and he recounted a vivid experience of heaven lasting only 90 minutes.

What he remembers most vividly is music. Books describing near-death experiences go back 30 years to the best-seller, "Life After Life" by Raymond Moody. Since that time, many people have been emboldened to tell of their experiences. Piper was aware of those reports. I will tell what

he thought of them presently.

Other writers have briefly mentioned music. For example, in Moody's book is a report of a woman who nearly died from internal bleeding. At the moment she collapsed, she testified, "I began to hear music of some sort, a majestic, really beautiful sort of music."

Piper gives top emphasis to the music. He wrote, "It was the most beautiful and pleasant sound I've ever heard . . . I felt awestruck, wanting only to listen . . . I felt as if the heavenly concert permeated every part of my being." It was "the single most vivid memory I have of my entire heavenly experience. I call it music, but it differed from anything I had ever heard or ever expect to hear on the earth. The melodies of praise filled the atmosphere."

He says that even now occasionally as he drifts off to sleep, he still hears faint echoes of that music. "I cherish those sounds and at times I think, *I can't wait to hear them again.*"

Did he imagine that experience? Who can say? It is good that he lived to write his book, and so touched many readers.

How interesting it is that Piper was doubtful about books on near-death experiences, and he is still not sure about them. In his final chapter he writes, "Despite my scepticism – even today – of many of their testimonies, I have never questioned my own death." (page 200)

Each one of us is free to find what rings true and to respect what others favour, even if we are not sure about it.

My own particular faith tradition is related to the testimony of Emanuel Swedenborg, who claims, not minutes, but years of such experience. He wrote of music flowing into the souls of listeners and bringing their affections into harmonious relationships. "No human singing, however heavenly its sweetness and harmony, can compare with that of those angelic choirs."

Royal National Park to Audley and then back up the escarpment to Loftus, a total of 13 kilometres. We had hoped to see the waratahs though we knew we were a few weeks late to see them at their best. Well we saw one!

We are sorry to hear that **Audrey Favell** is in St George Hospital.

It is with happiness that we report that little **Skye Horner** has recently returned home from hospital after many weeks in intensive care.

Pancake Breakfast

Our hardworking interns Sarah and Carling have offered to organise a Pancake Breakfast before church on **4th November**. It is quite a while since we have had one of these but they have always been very successful. It will be fun to do it again. We will start at **8.30 am** so you don't get indigestion eating right before church. Please make a donation to cover costs.

Farewell to Sarah and Carling

It's time for another farewell! Come and say thank you to our wonderful interns for all their help. Please bring something to share for a **Pot Luck Lunch** after church on **Sunday 11th November**. The Lunch will be in the Manse due to the Richard Morse Room being used by the aboriginal school.

Sermon topics for November

4th	Dwelling Together In Unity	Rev Christopher Bown
11th	Courage	Rev Terry Schnarr
18th	Consent And Determination	Rev Robert S Junge
25th	Obtaining Conjugal Love	Rev Frederick Chapin

Birthdays

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

Treasurer's Report

Murray Heldon reported that generally speaking at present expenses were in line with expectations as our Society continues having visiting pastors several times a year. However he pointed out that our income was not sufficient to pay for a permanent minister even if one was available. When the time comes we may need to consider employment on a part-time basis.

Christmas Dates

For your diary you can note the following dates. Christmas Day is Tuesday 25th and we will have a 10 am service as is normal. However instead of the Christmas Eve service we have had in the last few years the meeting decided that we will have a Sunday Evening service on 23rd December. A Holy Supper will be held on Sunday 30th.

Society AGM This will take place on 25th November after church.

News Notes

Games Evening

In place of our usual doctrinal class on Friday 5th October we did something a little different. Following the evening meal our interns **Sarah** and **Carling** organised a very successful Games Evening albeit with a Hurstville New Church flavour. First of all we had a Quiz with some easy questions and some hard ones. e.g. When the society was officially recognised in 1913 how many people were in it? [Answer -11] Then we were divided into two teams and our knowledge of Bible stories was tested. The Sunday School flip charts were unveiled with the story name covered up and we had to guess the story (some hard, some easy). Finally the two teams were given some strange props and told to go and construct a skit. Plenty of laughs from this. Maybe Cliff Adamou can perform *Singing in the Rain* for the Talent Night at the Summer Camp!

Society Hike

On Saturday 13th October on a glorious, cool, sunny day a group of seven intrepid hikers set out from Waterfall Railway station and hiked through the

Toward the end of his life Swedenborg wrote of adventures in the life to come. One of them begins as follows: 'Once there was heard from heaven the sweetest melody.'

Another begins, "One morning most sweet singing was heard from high above awakening me from my sleep." The adventures which followed may or may not ring true.

Accounts of glimpses into heaven will continue to be told, and they may cheer our day, calling to mind the words of the Psalm: "Praise the Lord with the harp. Make melody to Him with an instrument of ten strings. Sing to Him a new song."

Looking To The Future

by Norman Heldon

As the Hurstville Society doesn't have a resident pastor at present it is probably true that we cannot do much in the way of evangelisation. We may, if the opportunity arises talk to people we think might be interested in the New Church, but money spent on newspaper ads would probably be wasted.

However, we do have these wonderful teachings about the Lord, about life after death, of the happy lives of angels, and of the way we should live here to attain the heavenly state to which the Lord is constantly trying to lead us. Also other doctrines too that we would love to share with others, not just for the sake of adding new members to the Church, but from the motive of love to the Lord and to the neighbour. Although they might not be aware of it, all people do need these teachings – "Good news right from Heaven" as Johnny Appleseed called them.

There is much talk these days about healthy living, especially of the right kinds of food to eat, but not talk of the spiritual nourishment that is even more necessary.

So, what can we do? We can look ahead, plan for the future when we have a pastor again. In some New Church publications there are very useful articles on evangelisation, and what other societies are doing, what Outreach methods are successful. We can all read for instance General Church Outreach and New Church Connection, keep copies of them in Baringa. We could build up an Evangelisation Fund so that when the time is ripe we'll have the money for newspaper ads, brochures, flyers etc.

On newspaper ads I think we should give thought to what kind of ads would be intriguing and capture people's interest. Use perhaps short quotes from the Writings; there's no lack of those, to show that the New Church has something new to offer. Also we could think about how to answer questions about the New Church.

Which reminds me of an astonishing question put to Bronwen Henry, Editor of General Church Outreach, by a four year old boy. He asked, "How is the Lord in every country and with everyone at once?" No wonder Bronwen was speechless for a bit. She writes: "My initial response was that the Lord was more loving, more wise and 'bigger' than we could ever imagine."

A tough one – think it over.

A suggested answer. Let's say the little boy's name is Johnny and this is Mum speaking: "Johnny, you have a very good, loving Daddy. In church you hear your friends say 'Our Father who art in Heaven' Don't you think it is nice that He is the loving Father for everyone – everyone in the whole world and that someday He wants us to have a happy home in heaven with Him."



The following is sourced from the website of The Baltimore New Church.

Pastor's Corner (Rev Robert Junge)

One of the most fundamental teachings of The New Church is that people should be in spiritual freedom. Consequently, The New Church values free inquiry and does not believe in putting pressure on people. We feel that the

there too.

The school is Ngalangangpum School, we are located in the Kimberley, WA in a remote Aboriginal Community called Warmun. Warmun is Kija (the local dialect) for Eagle. The 18 students will be aged from 11-15, for many of them this is their first trip out of the Kimberley, many have never been on a plane and none of them have ever been to a place as big as Sydney. They have been busy fundraising for their trip and there is a great school spirit amongst them. The trip is a learning trip as well as an adventure for the students. We aim to broaden the minds, knowledge and worlds in which the students exist. We are trying to make the curriculum we teach more real to these students who are very removed from the globalised world as we know it. We hope to promote the value of education as well as the value of their culture and being proud of who they are and where they come from.

We will be visiting many places, such as Canberra (at the moment it looks like the 19th/20th) Taronga, Sydney Aquarium, Darling Harbour, Imax, Canberra, the Blue Mountains, St Mary's Cathedral, Luna Park, the Powerhouse Museum, the art gallery, ice skating, School Visit to MSJ Milperra, Bondi, Cronulla Beach, Kurnell, Botany Bay, a Harbour Bridge Climb, a jet boat ride and more!! I think we are going to be busy!!

We have made a little movie (windows media file) of our community which we will bring with us and leave with you, you might like to show it at a church gathering or send it to your church members.

**** Smoking Ceremony**

Smoking ceremonies are conducted by Aboriginal people with specialized cultural knowledge. The ceremony aims to cleanse the space in which the ceremony takes place. Given the significant nature of the ceremony, smoking ceremonies are usually only performed at major events.

From: [Aboriginal Cultural Protocols And Practices Policy](#) (source NSW Premiers Department)

As mentioned last month Ngalangangpum School will be making use of facilities in Baringa, especially the Richard Morse Room during their stay.

Report From The Society Meeting 21st October

Pastoral Visits

Rev Alain and Jeanne Nicolier We are extremely pleased to welcome back Alain and Jeanne who will be arriving on Wednesday morning 28th November and staying until Sunday 17th February flying out in the evening. This means that we will have a pastor here for Christmas and the Summer Camp. During their stay here the Nicoliers will visit Perth and probably other locations as well. Welcome Luncheon will be Sunday 2nd December.

Rt Rev Alfred and Henrietta Acton The proposed visit in January and February by the Actons has been postponed until January 2009. This is due to the overlap with the Nicoliers and the rest of Alfred's year being already planned. However they ARE keen to come and help.

Bishop Kline We do not have any confirmation of dates for the proposed Episcopal visit. However Tom Kline has pencilled us in for Easter which falls on 21st – 23rd March 2008. This will be confirmed when we know.

At this stage Bishop Brian Keith has said that he has no one else in mind for 2008.

Visit from Children of Ngalangangpum School

The following email was read out at the meeting. It was written by Leanne Mahy who is organising the visit of the aboriginal children.

We arrive Saturday 10th of November and leave Saturday 24th of November. We are in the process of getting the itinerary finalised! Looks like it will be a fun trip!!

*We are having some Sydney Aboriginal people come to Dudley Street in the first few days of our visit. [Now confirmed: this will be late on Sunday afternoon, about 6 pm.] They will do a welcoming ceremony for us. It is really important for these students to feel that they are welcomed so they are safe to visit the land, smoking** is a part of this. I think it would be nice for a few people from the church to be at the ceremony to welcome them to stay*

Writings revealed through Swedenborg are from God, and certainly want to let people know that those Writings exist. People can't be in spiritual freedom to decide what they think about the Writings if they've never heard of them! But we don't feel it's our place to force the Doctrines' teachings on anyone. Christ's statement about "Ask, and it will be given to you" (Matt. 7: 7) is in effect our motto - people asking is the first step.

What The Bible Does Not Say

by Rev Douglas Taylor

The English translations of the Bible never refer to the God of the Old Testament as "Jehovah," but as "the LORD" - written in all capitals.

There is one verse (Judges 6:24) in the Authorized or King James version where the name "Jehovah" does indeed occur, but it is not speaking of Jehovah in Person but refers to an altar built by Gideon and named "Jehovah-Shalom" (Jehovah is peace). However, in the New King James Version this becomes "the LORD-Shalom."

So, whenever we find the name LORD in capital letters, we should know that in the original Hebrew the name used is "Jehovah." Here are but a few examples:

"Jehovah bowed the heavens also and came down" (Psalm 18:9).

"And it shall be said in that day: 'Behold, this is our God; we have waited for Him, and He will save us. This is Jehovah'" (Isaiah 25:9).

"Prepare the way of Jehovah, make straight in the desert a highway for our God" (Isaiah 40:3).

"I am Jehovah. That is My name. And My glory I will not give to another" (Isaiah 42:8).

In that last quotation, the translators changed it to: "I am the LORD. That is My name." Jehovah would never say that, because in His infinite wisdom He knows that LORD is a title, not a name. That is also known to a number

of finite human beings, but apparently not to all of them.

We can only regret that the translators changed what is quite clear in the original and obscured it, that is, that it was Jehovah God the Creator who came on earth as the Saviour to save us.

Why did the translators do that?

The following passage, though not speaking directly about the translation of the Old Testament, nonetheless provides a possible explanation:

“The Jews since their earliest age have not dared and do not dare to utter the name Jehovah; and for their sake the writers of the Gospels and the apostles were unwilling to use it, and used the name Lord instead, as is evident from various passages transferred from the Old Testament into the New, where the name Lord is used instead of Jehovah (as in Matt. 22:37; Luke 10:27, compared with Deut. 6:5, and other passages).”

(True Christian Religion 297 in explanation of Second Commandment of the Decalogue)

Dinner and Introduction to *The Journey*

Friday 2nd November

This month in our regular doctrinal class time slot we plan to give you an overview of The Journey program which has been or will be undertaken by at least 18 societies and groups worldwide. The program is based on a book by Bishop Tom Kline called *The Journey* about the journey from Egypt to the Promised Land and has been adapted for group and individual study by The General Church Outreach.

The following words are taken from the Oak Arbor General Church website, one of the societies that have made a major commitment to the program.

Join us in The Journey, a program that will help you take a positive and meaningful step in your personal and spiritual growth. We are a community that is focused on helping individuals, couples, and families make progress

on their spiritual paths. This course focuses on teachings from the ancient book of Exodus in the Old Testament, presented with new insights that are easy to grasp and apply to everyday life. The Exodus story is about your own escape from negativity and pain, and your personal journey to a new way of living—a life of true freedom, happiness, and peace.

Each story of the Bible contains an inner, spiritual lesson that mirrors our every struggle and every triumph. This inner meaning was revealed in the 18th century to Emanuel Swedenborg. It is the basis for this program, and is taught every Sunday in New Church congregations around the world.

There are three core components to this program: individual study, small group participation, and Sunday worship. The purpose of the program is to help people make progress on their journey in the context of a supportive and welcoming environment. You can participate at whatever level you prefer, absorbing new ideas through listening and reading, or contributing your own thoughts and reflections during discussion times.

For more information go to:

<http://www.oakarbor.org/worship/Journey.html>

<http://www.newchurch.org/resources/journey/welcome>

At our dinner and class on Friday 2nd November the plan is to show you the materials that are available and discuss how we could incorporate these into a program we might run next year. There is a variety of material: daily, weekly reflections and activities, audio material and sermons and a personal workbook. We will “dip our toes in the water” so to speak and do a small sample of the program to see what we think.

"In the Word 'to journey' means to live and progress in life." *Heaven and Hell* 192

"The closer we come to God, which is something we have to do as if completely on our own, the closer and closer God comes to us." *True Christianity* 89