



## **The New Church Newsletter**

**Hurstville Society March 2016**

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## **The Passing of Doug Taylor**

by Bishop Brian Keith

I am saddened and joyful to announce that the Rev. Douglas Taylor entered the spiritual world this morning [i.e. Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> Feb]. He can now fully re-join Christine and renew their life together, and most probably re-enter the active ministry he loved.

Doug was our oldest minister, at 90 years. He was ordained on June 19<sup>th</sup> in 1960. He first served Tucson for three years, then returned to Australia, serving as pastor to the Hurstville congregation in Sydney for eleven years. From there he was called as assistant pastor in Bryn Athyn for four years. Then he became the first Director of Outreach, serving there for eleven years. And then, at age 64, he returned to Sydney and served as pastor there for four years before finally retiring.

Doug, baptized into the New Church in 1955, had a passion for sharing the truths of the Lord's second coming with others who could be blessed like he had been. Throughout his postings he initiated radio programs and countless events focused on newcomers. And as the first director, Doug laid out the doctrinal underpinnings for outreach and worked with the clergy and laity on practical ways to convey the truths of the New Church to others. His love for the Heavenly Doctrines and people was evident in everything he did.

Doug will be missed here, but it is wonderful to think of his renewal of life. Everything he loved and stood for coming into being again, with a vigorous body and spirit! May the Lord send a blessing on him, his family and the many friends he has throughout the world. Well done, good and faithful servant.

*(Note: There will be a feature on Rev Douglas Taylor in the next issue.)*

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## **Easter Reflections**

By Rev Todd Beiswenger

The last several weeks we've been running the "Living Gratefully" spiritual growth program. The idea has been to look at how the Lord governs the world and learn to be grateful for the opportunities given to us. With Easter coming up shortly, I find that Easter makes a very sensible follow-on to the program because Easter is about being grateful for the Lord conquering over hell. The story of Jesus and His resurrection is meant to be an inspiration to us, and while there are different interpretations throughout Christianity as to what Jesus' death and resurrection means, and how those means were specifically accomplished, Christians are united that Jesus saved us all by doing it – even if we're not in agreement as to how and why.

These are important distinctions, however, because how we see God will reflect on what we see to be our duty in life. Catholics essentially see in the Old Testament the requirement of a sacrifice to be forgiven of sins. When Jesus came along, He put Himself on the cross. He was, in a sense, just another Old Testament sacrifice. But this sacrifice was unique. Jesus was playing the role of the high priest (sacrificer) and the lamb at the same time. Additionally, both roles were perfect without sin. By having a perfect sacrifice, it is now eternal.

Your mainstream protestant Christians have a slightly different spin on it – essentially that God the Father was angry, and the sacrifice of His Son would appease His need for blood. Under either of these theological belief systems people become inspired by Jesus because He was willing to give His life for us. He took the bullet for us. We sinned, not Him, but nevertheless He chose to die in order to free us from our sin. It is an inspiring story.

Yet, the New Church provides a different understanding regarding the Easter story, one that I think is actually more inspiring. Instead of taking a bullet for us, Jesus lived a life of daily perfection. Tell me which is harder: taking a bullet or being perfect? Any of us can take a bullet, but none of us can be perfect. Would you take a bullet for your spouse? For your children? Yes, I know you would. Will you act perfectly towards them? Not a chance! You have a right to be angry with him when he leaves the toilet seat up, right! And guys, no, you never look at another woman in inappropriate ways ... so while you may take a bullet for somebody, you can't or won't act perfectly towards them. *Yet that's what Jesus did.* He lived a sin-free life. Frankly, I find that hard to imagine for myself.

Jesus' story is about a man, a divine human, who would not abandon His children, His morals, or the order of the world in which He lives. Old Church or New, Jesus is inspiring because He put our happiness ahead of His own. The temptations were 'grievous'. Can you imagine the desire to kill those who are killing your children and your spouse?

Where does He get the power to do this? Technically, He gets the power from Himself. Where does the motivation come from? In this case, the motivation comes from the desire to make others happy. "In all His combats of temptations the Lord never fought from the love of self, or for Himself, but for all in the universe." ([Arcana Coelestia 1812](#))

So I ask, why do we fail so often in temptation? I put forth the idea that we fail so often because we are trying to resist the temptation for our own good, not somebody else's. Would you lay down your life for your country? I think most Australians would be proud to do so. Would you give your life for your children? Who wouldn't! Will you give up eating fast food so you don't die an early death? Not likely. Think of all the [failed New Year's resolutions](#) that happen every year.

This is my suggestion: model your life after Jesus. This is nothing new, but specifically, try to restate your personal mission. Focus your efforts on loving others. In order to better love others, it would be useful if you were not so [insert personal failing here]. Why will you stop or start doing [insert modified behaviour here]? You do it because it expresses love to others. In the process you will likely experience being born again, or regeneration. This is New Church LIFE. Self-improvement not for the sake of self nor your place in heaven, but self-improvement for the sake of others.

Now, if you really want to go for it, do it for the sake of the Lord. This is harder, no question about it in my mind. Why? Because if I do something nice for my wife, say, bring home flowers, the feedback is immediate (as long as the child isn't distracting her!). I get a big smile, a hug, and a wife that is friendlier to my presence than would otherwise

be expected. If I shun the wandering lust, or control my temper for the sake of the Lord, there is not that nice, clear, obvious 'attaboy'.

Yet, perhaps that is the reason why *Arcana Coelestia/Secrets of Heaven* deals with the Lord's childhood and temptations in such great detail. A person's life – even a Divine person – is not just a collection of facts about where they went and what they did, it is how they came to be that person. What struggles did they endure to achieve what they have in life? This is what is given to us in the Heavenly Doctrines: what the Lord went through on our behalf. He did not do it for His sake. He did it for *ours*.

When we remember how much our Father did for us, it makes His story all the more inspiring. Which is easier to do, take a bullet for your family, or live a life of daily perfection, working to get all the little things right just so that your family can be happier? Clearly, taking the bullet is easier. It can even make for an inspiring story. However, I say the harder way, Jesus' way, the New Church way, is far more inspiring.

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## **Becoming a Form of Charity**

by Bill Hall

“And the good that he does are goods of use which he does every day and which, when he is not doing, he thinks of doing. There is an interior affection which inwardly remains and desires it. Hence it is that he is perpetually in the good use, from morning to evening, from year to year, from the earliest age to the end of his life, otherwise he cannot become a form, that is a receptacle of charity.” (Dr Hugo Lj. Odhner)

What a blessing it is to know these truths and to live by them. When we live these truths, our lives are free from self-pity, doubt and despair. For the whole focus of our life is directed toward doing uses. Thus, instead of being drawn down by negative states, we are forever free to strive to do our best in our daily work.

Truly our lives become expressions of joy and hope. Thus we become a living embodiment of the following truth, “Man is not born for the sake of himself, but for others. That is, he is not born to live for himself alone but for others. Otherwise there would be no cohesive society nor any good therein.” (ibid)

Whenever we feel engulfed by self love or lack of concern for the welfare and happiness for others, let us rejoice that the New Church has provided these truths for us to live now and evermore, and thus enable us to live as the Lord would have us live, always freely sharing the blessings the Lord and our neighbours have provided for us. In this state, our focus is always to strive to live as the Lord would have us live, forever seeing every moment of life as an opportunity to do the Lord's will and not our will.

Our daily pathway may require us to overcome obstacles and difficulties along the way. But the Lord always provides us with good and truth to conquer the difficulties. “Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid or dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.” (Joshua 1:9)

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## **Living Gratefully Wrap Up - Harvest Lunch and Food Drive**

The final week of our Living Gratefully program will be on **13th March**, and the last year or two we've been celebrating harvest along with the conclusion of our spiritual growth program. As we've been working on being grateful the last six weeks, there's now a call to pay it forward to others. We'll be asking for non-perishable food items and toiletries to be **donated to the Kogarah Storehouse**, which goes towards helping the local needy.

After the church service we'll have a **pot-luck lunch** where we can share the bounty of our harvest with our friends and family. *(Note: Please bring food to share.)* The two small groups that have been meeting will combine for one large meeting which will really just be a chance to discuss the program over lunch. There's no formal agenda that we'll follow, rather just an opportunity for us to reflect and offer any feedback about the program. Everyone is welcome, whether you've participated in a small group or not!

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## **Easter Flower Collection**

On Easter Sunday we're asking that you bring cut flowers to church so that they may be shared with residents of the Bupa Bexley aged care home. We've done this before, and the flowers really brighten up their day.

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## **Camp Wanawong**

Last month it was announced that we're going to have a mini-camp/weekend retreat down in lovely Loftus on June 17-19, and ideally people were going to contact me and confirm that they were indeed coming. Some of you have done this, but perhaps not quite as many as was expected. If you are one of those who have an intention of coming, but haven't actually communicated those intentions, please let me know!

To whet your appetite the following quote is from the Wanawong website.

*Wanawong is a great venue for those seeking peaceful, budget accommodation. The open fire in the lounge room ensures a cosy hideaway for smaller groups and the glass-enclosed dining room makes a feature of the Australian bush. An outdoor chapel overlooks the valley, and there are many walking trails to enjoy as you unwind. This serene venue is hidden in the tranquil Woronora Valley yet only minutes from the suburbs of Sutherland on the southern edge of Sydney.*

Please see last month's newsletter for more details on costs etc. To secure your booking Email [todd@hurstvillenewchurch.com](mailto:todd@hurstvillenewchurch.com) or call 02 9580 1589. Bank details: BSB: 732-055 Account: 070253 Name: The General Church of the New Jerusalem. The more, the merrier!

If you are unsure about whether you are going or not, let me just simplify your life by saying that yes, you are going. Now you can inform me of this. Thank you.

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## 2017 Stanwell Tops Family Camp

In addition to booking for our Wanawong weekend camp, you are now able to make bookings for next year's January family camp as well. Posters will be arriving at the various societies advertising the camp, and booking forms will also be mailed out shortly.

Like last year you can book online, and are encouraged to do so. Go to [www.newchurch.net.au](http://www.newchurch.net.au) and look for "Upcoming Events". You'll find the booking form and more details about the camp. For details about the site you can look up [www.thetops.com.au](http://www.thetops.com.au).

However the best way to stay on top of camp details is by going to the New Church in Australia Facebook page. They've set up the camp as an event, so if you indicated there that you're interested, you'll receive updates as soon as they're posted.

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## Birthdays

Happy Birthday to **Don Macfarlane** (7<sup>th</sup>), **Debbie Walsh** (7<sup>th</sup>), **Graham Horner** (12<sup>th</sup>), **Edward Horner** (18<sup>th</sup>), **Bill Hall** (26<sup>th</sup>)

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