



The New Church Newsletter

Hurstville Society June 2016

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Should We Elect a King?

By Rev Todd Beiswenger

I don't think that I'm alone in finding the world of politics frustrating. We know the cycle of events. Politicians promise change, they get elected, and then they do some of the things they promised, and other things that they didn't promise and we don't like. Surely they all spend money on things we don't want them to spend money on, and they don't spend money on the things that we think are important. What is most maddening of all is that politicians waste money on projects that don't really need to be done, but they do them because they want to be re-elected, and what better way to get votes than to lavish money on potential voters, right?

People have been talking about that problem of democracy for centuries, and it led one Alexis deTocqueville to famously say, "A democracy can only exist until the voters discover that they can vote themselves largess from the public treasury." Implying that the people will inevitably bankrupt the nation once they realize they can outspend the budget. Sounds about right to me. How many democracies can we name that run a balanced budget?

So it got me wondering... maybe we'd be better off with a king? Not just any king, but a good king. I know, they're hard to come by, but what if we had somebody who would actually do the right thing? A king who would actually make the hard choices because he wasn't afraid of losing re-election. Yes, it's a crazy idea. I was actually pondering it because some time ago a New Church friend said to me something like, "You know, Swedenborg makes a case for a good monarchy." My friend was asserting that the Lord wants us to not have a democracy, but a monarchy. I thought it an interesting idea, one that I didn't recall seeing anywhere in the teachings, but certainly one worth further investigation. So I did.

I spent a fair bit of time trying to find some teaching that said this in one way or another. This is the closest I found:

"It is well known, that, in order that anything may be perfect, there must be a trine in just order, one under another, and a communication between, and that this trine must make a one, not unlike a pillar, - at the top of which is the capital, under this the smooth shaft, and under this again the pedestal. Such a trine is man: his highest part is the head, his middle part is the body, and his lowest the feet and soles. In this respect, every kingdom is like a man; there must be a king there as the head, also administrators and officers as the body, and yeomanry with servants as feet and soles." (Coronis 17)

There may be a temptation to cling to the quote, "there must be a king there as the head," but when we look at the context of what is being said here we can see that the point being made is that in anything that is perfect there is a trinity. The example of a king is just that, an example of how a government can be a trinity.

In the work, "New Jerusalem and its Heavenly Doctrine," there is a small section on church and civil government. It does state that we do need government:

"Order cannot be kept in the world without having governors to note everything that happens according or contrary to order, rewarding those who live orderly lives and punishing those who are disorderly. Failing this, the human race will inevitably perish. For everyone inherits by birth a tendency to wish to rule over others and to possess other people's goods ... So there must be governors to keep human societies in order." (NJHD 312, 313)

But there doesn't seem to be any prescription for the type of government. In going through that section there is not a statement that says we must have a monarchy, and in fact it doesn't even give us anything that even suggests any mild preference for it. Instead, we are given qualities of what the governors should be like. What should they be like? "They must be learned in the law, wise and God-fearing." (NJHD 313)

This good, learned, God-fearing monarch will also know that, royalty consists in governing in accordance with the kingdom's laws, and in judging justly in accordance with them. A king who looks upon the laws as above him is wise; one who looks upon himself as above the laws is not. A king who looks upon the laws as above him attributes royalty to the law, and the law is his master. For he knows that law is justice, and all justice which is truly justice is Divine. (NJHD 322)

While these are good, positive attributes that a king should have, they are also attributes that we want in a Prime Minister, President, or whoever is put in charge of the government. The Lord isn't telling us we need a king, but He is telling us that whoever we put in charge of the country should be a good, wise and God-fearing person.

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Perth Visit

It has been about a year since I last made a pastoral visit out to Perth, and as such I'll be heading out there for the weekend of June 3-5. There will be a lay service in Hurstville that weekend, and as such no Sunday School. In Perth we'll have the opportunity for a class, some social time, and of course a Sunday morning worship service.

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Clergy Meetings

Regional clergy meetings were held May 3-7 in Tokyo, and I had the privilege of attending them. They are a pretty big deal for the Asian ministers because all of them are part time ministers. They have normal jobs to finance their life, but they do ministry on the side as a volunteer, unpaid function. So these meetings are a particularly important part of their professional development as it is an opportunity to get help from others and share any successes that might help another congregation. The most popular workshop we did was a preaching workshop, where each minister gave a 5 minute sermon and we then offered feedback as to what was good about it and what could be done better. I think we

all walked away from that one seeing things that we could incorporate into our own preaching.

However, the meetings also serve a social purpose as well. Working in the ministry can be lonely work, and full of disappointments when things do not go as you would hope and like. Therefore having a few days to be with like minded people who share the same passion for spreading the teachings of the New Church is also valuable for the refreshment of the mind.

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Wedding: Michelle Heldon and Dylan Robson



What would seem like to many as a foregone conclusion finally happened on 23rd April 2016 at The Orchard Farm at Tallong in the Southern Highlands of NSW. Michelle and Dylan finally got married. Some celebrities have had three marriages in the amount of time that Michele and Dylan dated, but unlike many a Hollywood marriage, this one has the stuff to go the distance.

Family and friends from all around the world gathered to show their support of this union, and even the weather co-operated enough that even though there was rain nearby, it was dry throughout the festivities. And the festivities were wonderful. From an outdoor wedding conducted by **Rev David Moffat** from Canberra that included a wonderful blend of traditional and non-traditional elements, a picnic, and a simply staggering amount of work put into the details of decorating the venue, it was truly an event worthy of the occasion. We wish them nothing but the best on this new stage of life.

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Babies!



We get to announce two babies this month! First to arrive was **Lucy Anne Ellard Evans**, daughter to Karen and Michael Evans. She entered the world on 27 April at 4:22pm, weighing in at a sturdy 4.22kg . . . something tells me that 422 is going to be a lucky number for little Miss Lucy. Perhaps we'll have to change her birthday to 22 April just to make things consistent. Karen and Mike are over the moon with their two little girls, and no

doubt that grandparents Mike and Kerry Lockhart are beaming with joy as well.



Coming into the world the very next day, 28 April is another little girl, **April Elida Hams**, born to parents Rachel and Phill Hams. She's their first child, and also the first grandchild for Owen and Margaret Heldon. For Norman Heldon this is his twelfth great grandchild!

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Holiday in China

During March and April **Huiling Sun** and her son **Matthew Cooper** spent a month holidaying in China visiting relatives and doing some sightseeing which included Beijing and The Great Wall of China.

Huiling says: "It was good to see the places after many years away. While it was good to see family and friends, I do feel that China is a bit too overwhelming now. Maybe I am too used to the relaxed way of life in Australia. China has definitely changed a lot. However, in a country where people use their smart phones to pay for everything, Google, Facebook and most overseas websites are blocked. I feel isolated informationwise."

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Thanks from Heulwen Ridgway

Hello Todd and everyone at Hurstville,

After what was for me a very successful participation via telephone link in a Hurstville small group, several members of my group came to visit me in Canberra. I already knew Jenn, who drove the Hurstville members, and I met Cliff [Adamou] for the first time, and renewed acquaintance with David [Baissac]. Not only did we all put faces to voices but it was a very satisfying end to the small group experience. I think that we had all grown to love each other, appreciate the New-Churchmanship in each other, and benefit from the support that was so freely offered in our progress along the path of our lives.

Many thanks to those who came to visit me and to others who were unable to come this time but sent good wishes. My good wishes to all in my small group and to all in the New Church in Hurstville.

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Last Call, Really, For Camp Wanawong

It's real. It's happening. June 17-19. Weekend camp down in Loftus. We start at 6 pm Friday and finish at lunchtime Sunday. You don't have to come for the whole weekend. Most importantly we do have to make catering plans, but if you want to bring your own food, that works too. Let me know if you want to come for the day on Saturday, or maybe just for Sunday morning worship. There will be no church service at Hurstville

If it helps pique your interest, we will be running with a New Church Day theme. One of the sessions will be titled, "New Church vs. Old Church" which will hopefully be a fun and interactive session aimed at teaching the kids the main teachings of the New Church. I've enlisted the help of **Rev Julian Duckworth** who will be running the other family session on Saturday morning. I'll be running both worship services, as well as some camp style games and with any luck we'll have a campfire with which we can tell campfire stories around as well.

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Tennis Court Repairs

Over the past several months we've started to see the artificial surface of the tennis court degrade in a few places. It was worst on the service lines, particularly at the near end where it had disintegrated into nothing, leaving a rather large barren spot. At the end of April we hired a contractor to come in and make repairs to four spots. It isn't a beautiful result as the new patches are a much brighter green than the rest of the court, but I've talked with a number of the tennis regulars and they are quite happy with the repairs as it plays much better and is clearly safer too. People quite like our court overall, and these repairs will keep it usefully functioning for a while a longer.

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Experiencing an Earthquake

After the clergy meetings the Beiswengers took some holiday time to explore Japan a little bit. A day at the Disney Sea theme park was for Zach the highlight of his trip. Mine too, but not because of the rides. At about 9:30 that night a 5.6 magnitude earthquake hit about 10km from us. I tell you, you haven't lived until you've been inside a building and watched it move! Nobody was hurt, and no damage was noted, but Disney closed down after that as a safety precaution. We didn't pay for that ride, but it was best ride I experienced that day. Zach preferred the roller coasters.

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Movie Night

It's time for another movie night! Please join us on **Friday, June 24th** for another night of **Ice Cream & Ice Age**, with the next instalment, *Ice Age: Dawn of the Dinosaurs* and plenty of ice cream and popcorn to go around. We'll begin dishing out the ice cream at 6:15pm and start the movie at 6:30pm. It'll be our treat - a birthday celebration, in honour of New Church Day. Hope to see you there!

Birthdays

Happy Birthday to **Angela Heldon** and Michelle **Heldon** (8th), **June Kirsten** (9th), **Isaak Horner** (17th)

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