



## **The New Church Newsletter**

**Hurstville Society July 2016**

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## Camp Wanawong



“I’ve learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.” *Maya Angelou*

I heard this quote some years ago, and quite like it. As a preacher I'm well aware that for the most part people are not going to remember what I say. It's not just my words we forget, statistics are shocking as to how much we forget in just 15 minutes. But I think Maya Angelou is right: we do remember how people make us feel. I think it's true with events too. We don't always remember all that much of all the content presented at a camp, but we do remember the friendships, the good feelings and of course the food! While this camp was just a weekend, it was the hope of all that participated in the organization of it that we all had a good time and left with good feelings towards each other and the church.

The good times started off with bringing in some pizzas loaded with toppings for dinner, and apparently they were good as there weren't any leftovers. We followed that up with a campfire, and for all of you who have been a little boy, your heart was warmed and troubled by seeing how much the boys enjoyed the fire. They won't soon forget the floating embers in the dark... or the adults saying, “Be careful!” We were able to successfully get them to keep their stick in the fire for a while when they were offered to roast marshmallows and make some s'mores, though loading up little untrained pyromaniacs with sugar perhaps wasn't such a good idea in retrospect. On the plus side the ground was all damp so they weren't likely to burn the forest down. As part of camp fire tradition, we did have to tell some stories. Some were tall tales, others made you groan with the punch line, and others illuminated the Lord working in our lives through various ways. We finished them off with a couple chapters of CS Lewis' “The Screwtape Letters.”

Saturday opened with a worship service on the theme of “A letter to me.” We read in the first few chapters of Revelation that the Lord writes letters to the seven churches, giving

them kudos for the things they do right and also offering pointed criticism for areas they could do better at. So we tried to take that lesson and write letters to ourselves thinking about what would be said to us. This was followed by a session presented by **Rev Julian Duckworth** who explored with us what June 19<sup>th</sup> means to us, and offered a reason as perhaps why it was June 19<sup>th</sup> that the disciples were sent out. The idea is that June 19<sup>th</sup> is just before the longest, lightest day in the northern hemisphere, and that perhaps it is to serve as a symbol for us that the Lord has provided us with greater light and clarity, but that there is more light still to come.

Our other morning session was “New Church vs. Old Church.” We took a comparison chart of 12 distinctive differences between the Old and New Church, divided up into three teams and played Pictionary to hit on a key distinction. We'd discuss it for a couple minutes and then move on to the next. The children were all too eager to be up front and doing the drawing, and all the teams did very well in guessing 11 of the 12 categories correctly.

The afternoon was beautiful, despite the impending rain. It was sunny and warm so people got a chance to do whatever they wanted, and many took the opportunity to head out for an extended bush-walk through the beautiful area. That evening our attention was turned to playing some games. Every Australian camp has a tournament of sorts, usually table tennis where some talented soul from Canberra or Melbourne plays in the finals.



In order to keep the tournament tradition, but make the championship available to a wider pool of people, we had an “Ultimate Plinko Tournament.” If you're not familiar with Plinko, it's a game from the US TV show “The Price is Right.” There's no skill, just luck. Our tournament was rigged so that every kid won in the first round, but despite that, **Murray Heldon** vanquished them all and took home the Ultimate Plinko Tournament Championship trophy. He received his trophy with great humility and thanked his trainer and all the little people who helped him get to this glorious pinnacle of life.

There's a rumour that Foxtel has approached him for a documentary that will chronicle how the son of a carpet layer went from humble beginnings to the Ultimate Plinko Tournament Champion. Check your local listings for an air date.

However, the games did not end there! We played some Russian Roulette, however, instead of guns and bullets we used eggs. We started with a dozen eggs, 8 of which were hard boiled. The player had to pick an egg and smash it against their forehead. The kids were all too eager to give it a go and every kid went up there one by one, took an egg and smashed it against their forehead. All were hard boiled. Then the crowd called for their pastor to take a chance in the hot seat... and somehow everybody thought it was funny that he was the first to literally have egg on his face. Couldn't have happened to a nicer guy I'd say.

The next morning we kicked off with a session that was an overview of the book of Revelation, putting the big picture of the story out there, and noting that there is a lot of transparency in the New Jerusalem, and therefore no secrets. Everybody was asked to



write down a secret of their life on a piece of paper, and think how they'd feel if it were to be revealed! Revelation is giving us warning that to be angelic, we need to be transparent too, where our inner life and outer life are in integrity.

The kids were presented with New Church Day gifts and then got a chance to slay the dragon by destroying a piñata, which we've tried to make into a bit of a tradition here.

By the end people left with a well fed belly, a smile on their face, and some memories of some good feelings that they can carry all their life, even if they don't remember a word that was said. That's good enough for me.

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## **The Intense Blessings of an Affirmative Attitude**

by Bill Hall

What an intense blessing it is to have an affirmative attitude in our lives. This means that whenever a negative attitude sweeps into our minds, we have the power from this teaching to reject the negative attitude and instead adopt and live from an affirmative attitude.

Our daily lives are made up of innumerable activities, some of which we enjoy and others which may be a little mundane but are still necessary for our welfare and happiness. Mundane things would include washing up after eating. Washing up is a necessary use but we may feel like putting it off. But a positive attitude enables us to perceive that if we leave a task for too long, that task becomes less attractive.

Our church teaches, and Rev Doug Taylor stated, "Use is the key, the criterion, the end." When we are enjoying the uses we are performing, our minds have an affirmative attitude toward those uses. So we see that by performing those uses we are contributing not only to our own welfare but to the welfare of others.

As we move forward toward a new day, let us rejoice in this teaching of the New Church which enables us to lift our minds and hearts above the narrow, restricted view of our activities and responsibilities.

Let us keep our minds and hearts firmly on an affirmative attitude throughout our daily lives, always being willing, with the help of the Lord and His angels, to live as the Lord



would have us live, forever being of use to our neighbours, not with the motive of self love, but from joy that comes from being useful to others.

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## Australian Census

We recently received this letter from Kevin Attwater, who is the Secretary for the NCIA, and he brings to our attention an important matter regarding the upcoming census.

Dear New Church Members and Friends,

You may be aware that there will be a national census in August 2016. 'The New Church in Australia' is registered with the Australian Attorney-General's Department as the principal body for all New Church Ministers and activities across Australia. Other names such as 'New Church', 'Sydney Society of the New Church', 'Swedenborg Church', etc., are not recognised by the Attorney-General's Department.

Thus it is essential that when you fill in your census form under religion you put '**The New Church in Australia**'. Please share this with your Society members and friends to ensure we get the right numbers for New Church people in the census results.

With Love and Light, Kevin Attwater.

While many of us have stronger affiliation to the General Church of the New Jerusalem as a parent body, it will be far more useful to fill out your census stating "The New Church in Australia" as it will help us keep the numbers up. Keep in mind that having sufficient membership is important so that our weddings and rites are recognised, so don't miss this opportunity to register as The New Church in Australia.

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## Perth Visit

I had the opportunity to visit our friends in Perth the first weekend of June. Turned out it was a great weekend to be away as Sydney was hit with a major storm, but it was also a great weekend with the folks out on the west coast. We had a couple of doctrinal classes geared to the adults, looking at the meaning of Jesus calling Himself the "Son of Man" as well as exploring what the Bible means when it says, "You are gods." We had a nice church service on that Sunday, followed by a shared lunch that was well attended.

It is a good group out there, and it is made more exciting by the fact that there are a number of small children that have been born into the group over the last couple of years, and they've got two more on the way. We also had a first time attender who had just come in contact with a long lost friend who invited her to church with us... and so she came! It is interesting times in Perth, and we hope for their continued growth.

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## Working Bee and Send Off

We've scheduled a working bee for **Sunday July 17**, so that after church we can spend some time tidying up the property. Main items on the agenda are weeding, removing the rubber tree at the base of the tennis court, and more weeding.

After the work though it'll be time for lunch – we're ordering in pizzas to keep it easy (please RSVP) – and then giving a send-off to **David Baissac**. We've had David with us since November as he's been in Australia on a working holiday visa, but soon he's going to be heading back to Mauritius for some time with his family before heading off to the USA to begin his training at Bryn Athyn College Theological School. It'll take him four years to complete the program, but when he's done he'll be a shiny new minister! We've really enjoyed having him here, and we'll be sad to see him go, and who knows, maybe he'll be back pastoring in Oz someday.

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## Camp at Stanwell Tops 1-7 January 2017

It might be a bit hard to think about the summer camp in the middle of winter but please start making plans now. The Hurstville Society is taking on the organising of the camp which will be from 1-7 January 2017, just 6 months away. **Deposits and final numbers are required by 1st September** with final payments by 1st December.

It is many years since we had a camp at Stanwell Tops and the facilities are better than ever. This camp will utilize the Grevillea site. All rooms are dorm style and include a double bed and ensuite.

The location is stunning and it is almost right on our doorstep. Apart from ready access to the Royal National Park and beaches on site activities can include abseiling, rock climbing, archery, high ropes course, giant swing and other exciting physical activities.

Booking forms have been sent to previous camp attendees and there are more at Baringa. Subsidies are available on application. However for more information and an online booking form or expression of interest form please go to:

[newchurch.net.au/camp-thetops-2017](http://newchurch.net.au/camp-thetops-2017)

## Birthdays

Happy Birthday to **James Kermond** (10<sup>th</sup>), **Babbette Horner** (14<sup>th</sup>).

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