



## **The New Church Newsletter**

**Hurstville Society August 2017**

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## The End of a Pedal Powered Love Affair

By Rev Todd Beiwsenger



For my fourth birthday I got the best surprise a kid could get: a pedal car. About a year prior we had moved out of an apartment and into a new house. With the new house came a lot more space, and my parents, seeing how much I loved cars decided to get me a pedal car! It was a Jeep, but the fact is that in my mind it was the General Lee from my favourite TV show, "The Dukes of Hazzard." It was orange, like the General, and it had a toy CB radio in it, and wheels that when I got them to the right speed they would provide an illusion of even greater speed. I was in heaven. It didn't take long before I found that I could drive this thing in a nice loop that ran through the kitchen, dining room, living room, main hallway, and back to the kitchen.

Around and around I went, and it was by far my favourite toy.

My Dad was the mastermind behind this toy, which was rather surprising in retrospect. While he always meant well, he really wasn't very good at picking out gifts for his kids. But every now and again, he hit a home run. I drove that Jeep until I could no longer fit in it, and I'm pretty sure that Dad was quite proud of this pick. Once I outgrew it though, it didn't get much use as my brother and sister just didn't care much about cars. Then the Jeep just ended up in storage in the basement.

Now when Dad was growing up, they moved every two years because his father was in construction, and this necessitated that they didn't keep any unnecessary possessions because more stuff was harder and more expensive to move. Every two years there was a purge. As an adult though, Dad saw that he had very little of his childhood, and was happy to store the items of our childhood thinking we'd like to be able to go back to them in the future. The Jeep then was going to patiently wait in storage until the time came that I had a child.

Well, eventually that time came. The Jeep was sprung from the basement and handed down to Zach. Except the problem was he wasn't really interested in the Jeep. It just wasn't his thing. Before long, the Jeep was back living in a basement again, just at my house instead of Dad's. I kept it though thinking that we might have another child who would be interested in it, but as time passed it became clear that wasn't happening either. So the Jeep continued to sit, now in the crawl space under the manse. I knew I needed to find it a new home, but just dropping at a Salvo's store wasn't going to cut it. I patiently waited for the right child to come along.



Just recently it all came together: a nice, young family with little kids that would enjoy it. Despite knowing that it was the right thing to do, I anticipated an achy heart would without a doubt be the short term outcome for me. But much to my delight, there was no achy heart, but a happy heart seeing the old Jeep being loved again.

That afternoon, after I had dropped off the Jeep, I really had a strong sense of peace and happiness about it. The effect has been that it's really brought up a lot of good, warm and innocent feelings and emotions in me, and I've enjoyed remembering driving the Jeep and reflecting on some good childhood memories.

I can't help but think of the spiritual lessons that can be found in this experience. There are teachings about usefulness, and clearly the Jeep is being more useful now than it was sitting in storage. We also have the teaching that true loving is experiencing somebody else's joy as if it was our own.

Seeing the happiness that little girl had climbing into it was certainly felt in my heart as well. But there's also a set of teachings about “remnants” and “remains” that I find applicable to this story.

Essentially remains are described as “gifts” from the Lord, and that they are “all things of innocence, charity, of mercy and of the Truths of faith, which man has had from the Lord. (AC 661)” We're taught that the Lord gives us these “remains” as small children, and that they are stored up over the course of time until we need them to help us advance our spiritual progress. In the creation story, the Spirit of God hovers over the face of the waters (Gen 1:2). This is a picture of the Lord watching over us, during which time He is storing up these states of innocence, charity, mercy and faith in us.

He knows that one day we will be slaves in Egypt, and we're going to need the memory of what true happiness actually felt like in order to free ourselves from Egypt. Those memories of what was higher and purer can be used to spur us on an upward journey.

Conversely, if we did not have those, we probably could not comprehend a higher level of happiness than what the world, i.e. Egypt, was giving us. So it is these childhood memories and experiences that are ultimately going to play a large role in our eternal salvation.

As such, I think it is no small coincidence that when you look around the world these days, you'll notice that there is a lot of money being made selling nostalgia. You see it in the movies with the “Transformers” series that is designed to appeal to the men who were little boys when the toys came out. “Star Wars” plays on this too. But we see the same appeal to our childhood loves in many different things from toys, foods, games, cars... because we do want to go back and experience the simple joys of childhood again. Not only do we want to, but it seems we need to.

It seems that my Dad was right to hang onto that old Jeep all these years. It was fun to go back, even if it wasn't really in the way he or I had planned for. While the Jeep is now gone, the memories and the childhood joy it gave me are still mine, and those are the things that the Lord will use to warm my heart at times when it starts to get cold. In that way, the old Jeep is still with me.

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## **Clergy Meetings Recap**

While in the last newsletter I wrote that some doctrinal papers would be discussed, I have since found out that there is among some people a misconception about what else happens at the meetings. I was talking with some people in Bryn Athyn, and they were interested in knowing what “big decisions” were being made at the meetings. They had some idea that there was some great future planning sessions that were happening. I had to disappoint them and say that there were no such big decisions being made.

The fact is that there usually aren't big decisions to be made. There was a resolution that passed for an addition to the GC Clergy handbook that stated that GC ministers will not and may not officiate a same sex wedding. Among the clergy this is not a controversial decision, so it took all of 5 minutes to pass. This policy was previously unwritten but understood, so it only really amounted to codifying an existing practice. However, outside of that, no new policies or decisions were made.

There were discussions about how to best work in our current culture. Some were offering advice from research, others from experience on how to best connect with the younger generation. While this is a popular topic among the clergy every year, we don't develop mandates and policy from this kind of discussion. Rather we are expected to take back what we can to our various congregations and implement those ideas if that's what the local people want to do.

We did get a variety of reports presented to us. One was a report from “The Women's Participation Task Force.” This group was formed after the church maintained its policy of the male-only priesthood, and felt a need to find ways in which women could

participate more fully along with trying to make the message come through that the ordination policy does not mean that the church thinks women are inferior. The report they submitted finished with 10 recommendations for implementation, which are going to be rolled out for consideration. It's a long report – 62 pages – and I haven't had the chance myself to read it all, but if you're interested in a copy of it please let me know as it isn't confidential.

Regarding reports about the schools, we did get some encouraging news regarding the growth in enrolment in the Academy high school as well as Bryn Athyn College. The college is now making significant gains in enrolment, somewhere between 312-350 students are expected for next year, and they project a balanced budget in the 2020-21 school year if they can continue to grow the enrolment to 480 students by then.

The high school has its enrolment goal next year of 240. This will be a slight increase from the present year. An issue for the Boys School is that there is a large enrolment bubble in the freshman and sophomore classes, necessitating triple sectioning – which adds \$170,000 to the budget to hire more part time faculty. While this is a good problem, they also know that the current 8<sup>th</sup> grade class is one of the smallest in a very long time, so they're going to have a mess on their hands dealing with the varied class sizes the next 4 years or so.

As for the theological school, they graduated one this year (Elmo Acton), and will be admitting one person (Richard Glenn from Mitchellville Maryland) for the upcoming school year.

Next year the clergy meetings will undoubtedly be focused on the selection of a new Bishop who would take office in 2019, so there will be a big decision made then. But even that decision has to be affirmed by the board and laity, so the clergy cannot simply appoint a new bishop on their own. Currently the GC board is working with the Council of Clergy to review the Episcopal Selection Process, and with a few tweaks to that process should be set relatively soon.

I think that covers the highlights of the meetings, but if you are interested in any further details about the happenings and administration of the church, please let me know and I'll be happy to chat or write further about it. Any omission isn't about secrecy! There's just only so much space in this newsletter!

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## **Accident In Adelaide**

I received an email from Rev David Moffat, who had a phone call from June Johnson... so some whisper down the lane here, but here's some of what David wrote:

June received notification that a car sped - out of control - along Oaklands Road, hitting two neighbouring houses and coming to stop on the Adelaide church grounds. The car has destroyed some glass panelling and part of one wall of the building. June said that their

outside unit of a split system air-conditioner prevented the car advancing any further into the building itself.

I believe the church is itself out of bounds, however other parts of the building are safe to use, and services will continue in the meantime in the church hall. Although the church is covered by insurance, obviously there will be a great deal to be done by June and other members of the Adelaide society before they are able to use all of their premises once more.

I am sure that all members of The New Church in Australia will join me in wishing the Adelaide society every blessing in a difficult time ahead. I have already offered the assistance of the NCIA in whatever ways are practical, and I am sure that greetings from members and friends would be well appreciated by the Society.

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## 2018 Family Camp

Has your life been busy? Have you been caught up in getting through the day to day? Wouldn't a week off be nice? Maybe with all the happenings of life the Family Camp has fallen off your radar.

At this point we've assembled a strong ministerial staff. Along with our usual superlative presenters, we also are welcoming back a blast from the not-too-distant past: **Glenn & Mary Alden**. Apparently when they left and said that they would really miss all of you, they were telling the truth! If you would like to catch up with them, this is your chance to do so.

As for the practical side of things, now really is the time to book. Bookings need to be made along with deposit by **September 1<sup>st</sup>**. If you are not sure that you can get time off for work at this point, but have a solid interest in coming, do go to [www.newchurch.net.au](http://www.newchurch.net.au) and fill out the expression of interest form and let them know of your intent. Alternatively contact one of the camp organisers directly:

Chris Kendrick [kendrickau@hotmail.com](mailto:kendrickau@hotmail.com) or

Carolyn Heldon [carolynheldon@gmail.com](mailto:carolynheldon@gmail.com) or 0434 581 994.

There are only two ensuite rooms left, so if a private bathroom is of value to you, then you really need to book fast. If you're on the fence about coming, just consider this: I've never met anybody who expressed regret for coming to camp. Most likely you won't be the first!

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## A New Aussie

The 4<sup>th</sup> of July is an American holiday, but it is also the day in which our own **HuiLing Sun** became an Australian citizen! She's been living in Australia for a long time now, and clearly has no intentions of leaving! We're quite happy about that.

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## Two New Aussies

Welcome to **Erik Norman Heldon** and **Anna Rose Heldon**, born 23<sup>rd</sup> June to Donna and Jason. A new grandson and granddaughter for **Owen and Margaret Heldon** and two new great grandchildren for **Norman Heldon**, one named in honour of the patriarch who is turns 100 on the 1<sup>st</sup> August this year.

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## Birthdays

Happy Birthday to **Norman Heldon** (1<sup>st</sup>), **Emily Kermond** (7<sup>th</sup>), **Rhonda Hall** (12<sup>th</sup>), **Rebekah Horner** (17<sup>th</sup>), **Larah Walsh** (21<sup>st</sup>), **Ralph Horner** (30<sup>th</sup>)

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