



The New Church Newsletter

Hurstville Society October 2018

Contents

[Pity for the PM?](#)

by Rev Todd Beiswenger

[Youtube Video Update](#)

[Working Bee](#)

[Hallowe'en Movie Night](#)

[No Church on Sepetember 30th & October 7th](#)

[New Books in the Library](#)

[The Naked Truth](#)

[Birthdays](#)

Pity for the PM?

By Rev Todd Beiswenger,

Imagine this: you know some one who is addicted to heroin. You've suspected it for a while, but it has got to the point where you now see the physical manifestation of the addiction. He has sores on his nostrils because he has burned and then irritated the skin. He also has burn marks on his mouth and fingers. He's not just been smoking it, he's been snorting it, and as a result gets a lot of nose bleeds. The dead giveaway though is the unhealthy looking skin. You see cuts, bruises and scabs. Heroin addicts pick at their skin and this is one of the exclusive traits of a heroin addict when compared to other drug addicts.

I don't come across this very often, but not too long ago I met some one who was like this. I could see that mentally they were just not entirely there anymore. I felt bad for her. She was the friend of somebody I know back in the States, and my friend was telling me of the effort that had been put into getting her clean. It was a sad story. She certainly had trouble in her life, and at first the drugs were an escape.

Heroin is good at that. If you look up what heroin makes you feel like, it sounds appealing! I found this on www.webmd.com:

Right after taking heroin, you get a rush of good feelings and happiness. Then, for several hours, you feel as if the world has slowed down. You think slowly and may walk slowly. Some users say you feel like you're in a dream. In an Illinois study of suburban heroin users, some described the feeling as "covered in a warm blanket, where worries are gone."

Logically we can understand that the high feels good, and we know that they should stop, but by all accounts it just isn't easy. I don't know about you, but I have a lot of pity for people who are completely hooked on drugs. I feel bad for them that they want something so badly that they completely destroy their life to get it.

But drug users aren't the only ones who relentlessly pursue pleasure at the detriment to their spiritual and natural health. How about politicians? Swedenborg writes that he was allowed to...

...feel the nature and strength of the pleasure of a love of being in control because of self-love. I was plunged into it in order to know it from experience, and it was so intense that it transcended all the pleasures in the world. It took over my whole mind from centre to surface, while in my body it felt congenial and gratifying, a free expansion of my chest. I was also allowed to feel that the pleasures of all kinds of evil deeds bubbled up from it like water from a spring, pleasures in adultery, vengeance, fraud, and slander--in general, pleasures in doing harm. (Divine Providence 215)

I think we all know that evil has its pleasures, but that the pleasure of being in control from self-love “transcended all the pleasures in the world” is one of those statements that can just make you stop and re-read what was written! It sounds to me that the pleasure of being in control because of self love is pretty similar to a heroin high. That makes me wonder if perhaps it is just as addicting. It seems to me that when Western democracies were established, the idea was that people who have a life as a farmer, teacher, tradesman, or whatever, and during the course of their life they would take some time to serve their community or country by taking public office. Nowadays though our politicians are career politicians, and while I've entertained the idea of politicians as power junkies before, this teaching about the intense pleasure of power has me wondering if I should in fact feel the same pity for politicians as I do for drug addicts.

Think about it for just a moment if you will, and consider the lengths that politicians have gone to in order to get into power or stay in power. With this latest leadership spill there are serious accusations of Liberal MPs bullying members of their own party to vote for the spill. Bullying certainly shouldn't be tolerated, and everybody knows it. So, assuming the accusations are true, why did they do it? Well, what I'm wondering is if the bullying is equivalent to some of the crazy lengths and stupid things a drug addict will do in pursuit of their high.

For example, this friend who was trying to help out a woman in addiction told me of a story where he brought her into his house to give her some safe space. He would have given her anything she needed, foods, clothes, even money if she asked. But what did she do? She stole from him. There was a loose change jar, and she took a large chunk of the contents. Twice. Rationally it was a really dumb thing to do, because she burned the one person who was trying to help her. But when you are in pursuit of the high, you aren't rational any longer.

Now, in fairness I have to acknowledge that not every politician is in it because they are immersed in an evil love of power. The Writings do point to a good love of power as well. If you want the power in order to be of service and be productive in society, it actually isn't a bad thing. In that very same number of *Divine Providence* we're taught:

"Service" means good actions, so performing services means doing good things; and performing services or doing good things means helping others and serving them. Even though the people who are doing this are eminent and wealthy, they still do not regard their eminence and wealth as anything but the means to being helpful and therefore the means to service and ministry. (ibid)

The problem though is that unlike the drug addict that has tell-tale physical manifestations, we are taught that it is really hard to tell the difference between somebody who loves power for good reasons and somebody who loves power for bad reasons. That's “because there is more fire and passion for service in people who love themselves and the world than there is in people who are not caught up in love for themselves and the world” (ibid). I guess what it's saying is that it's hard to be humble and also be successful in politics. Fair enough.

So maybe the next time you see a self-aggrandizing politician who is full of fire and passion, maybe consider having some pity on them just as you would the drug addict. They too might be hooked on a powerful pleasure that is working to take the life from the individual, and unlike the drug addict they may not even know that they too need to go through rehab. Hell has claimed another soul because they're hooked, and they don't even know it.

[top](#)

YouTube Video Update

I know that last month I wrote that we spend too much time creating new materials and not promoting the ones we've already created, but one of the projects I've been working on this year is learning how to create videos for YouTube. It's clear to me that society in general is trending away from having scheduled events and moving towards doing things "on demand." In the church we see it in the fact that people are less inclined to come to a church service, even if they are interested in spirituality. It's just that they want their spirituality on demand as well.

The Swedenborg Foundation does a lot of good work creating videos for the on-demand world, utilizing the talents of Curtis Childs and Jonathan Rose, but I've noticed that they've gone astray of their original modus operandi. For example their videos are getting considerably longer than they used to be. They're not doing the "Swedenborg Minute" or the animated ones they started out with that were under ten minutes long, and I just don't believe that the majority of people have the attention span for hour-long shows. The other thing is that they don't teach the internal sense of the Word.

I think this is a missed opportunity. There are other religious YouTube channels out there that get thousands and thousands of views, and all they're talking about how to understand the Bible.

So I decided to have a go at it. Last November I posted a fairly basic video titled, "Understanding the Bible for Beginners." As of today it has 240 views. I did another in that same style titled "The Creation Story Explained," and it went live on January 16 and has 209 views. Not a lot of views, but what I am observing is that they do continue to get regular views.

I decided that I really need to improve my technical abilities if this was going to work better, so I got a green screen, some extra lighting, new software and a good microphone. It took months for me to sort out what to buy, and then how to use it. Thankfully smart phones have cameras in them that are so good I didn't need to buy a camera.

All the effort finally produced a result and on September 1st my next video "Adam and Eve Explained" went live. It's been well received, and has 80 views already. It's still not a lot, but my hope and plan is that I'll get faster at producing these, get about 10 or so

created, and then try a little bit of advertising and see what happens. Hopefully people will enjoy the content, subscribe to the channel, and actually get something out of it.

You can help by going to YouTube and watching it too. Just search “Adam and Eve Explained” and you'll have to scroll down a bit until you see the one with my name by it. The video by the Swedenborg Foundation on this same topic has 102,000 views, so I've got a fair bit of catching up to do! But I think it shows that there is interest in the topic.

[top](#)

Working Bee

We've got one of our quarterly working bees scheduled for **October 21st**, and once again we would appreciate your help in maintaining the property. We're not asking for people to come out and spend their entire day out here, but if you figure church is over before 11am, then we chat about for a bit, start work around 11:15 or so, then have lunch around 12:30. Some people will stay after lunch and do more, others head out after lunch. In that case you're only putting in an hour or so of labour, but even that hour goes a long way towards making the place more presentable!

[top](#)

Hallowe'en Movie Night

Get ready to have some fun..... It's nearly time for our annual Hurstville New Church family-fun Hallowe'en celebration! **Saturday, October 27th 6:30pm**. This year we'll watch the movie *Hotel Transylvania 3*, enjoy a few activities and eat some yummy treats. Admission: a non-perishable food donation(s) to help neighbours in need. Family-friendly creative costumes are warmly encouraged, but not required. ;) Everyone is welcome! Questions? Contact Jenn 0411 719 754 or jenn@beiswenger.net.

[top](#)

No Church on September 30th, October 7th

The Beiswengers are going to head off on a holiday to Canada and the US. I've been looking forward to this holiday for years. It's been a long term wish to spend more than just a day at Disney World, and this year we're going to do it. Oh, sure, we're going to go visit Jenn's family in Toronto first, and meet up with my family after Disney, and that will be nice, but I see this Disney experience as something Zach will remember for the rest of his life.

We'll be leaving here on September 28, and returning 6am October 17. The plan is that we will NOT have church on September 30th and October 7th, but will have a lay led service on October 14th. You all can take a break from church for a couple weeks entirely guilt free! I do figure that I'll check email while I'm gone, but I'm going to attempt to not do it very often, and by that I mean no more than once a day. We'll see if I can stick to that though. Hopefully we'll be having such a good time all the time that checking email just won't happen all on its own!

[top](#)

New Books in the Library

We've recently received a couple of complementary books from the Swedenborg Foundation. One is "Last Judgement: Supplements," and it "contains fascinating additional details, not only about the Last Judgment but about the nature of the spiritual world." The other is "The Universe and I, Where Science and Spirituality Meet," by George Dole. In this book, "Dole exposes a whole host of obstacles that scientific thinkers impose upon themselves, and he ultimately illustrates the common ground between their work and his own."

Feel free to borrow either one of these if you're interested. I'll have both books sitting on the table at the entrance of Baringa, so if you're interested grab it there or if you're not local just drop me an email and I'll post it to you.

[top](#)

The Naked Truth

According to a 19th century legend, the Truth and the Lie meet one day. The Lie says to the Truth: "It's a marvellous day today"! The Truth looks up to the skies and sighs, for the day was really beautiful. They spend a lot of time together, ultimately arriving beside a well. The Lie tells the Truth: "The water is very nice, let's take a bath together!" The Truth, once again suspicious, tests the water and discovers that it indeed is very nice. They undress and start bathing. Suddenly, the Lie comes out of the water, puts on the clothes of the Truth and runs away. The furious Truth comes out of the well and runs everywhere to find the Lie and to get her clothes back. The World, seeing the Truth naked, turns its gaze away, with contempt and rage.

The poor Truth returns to the well and disappears forever, hiding therein, its shame. Since then, the Lie travels around the world, dressed as the Truth, satisfying the needs of society, because, the World, in any case, harbours no wish at all to meet the naked Truth.

[top](#)

Birthdays

Happy Birthday to **Stuart Heldon** (10th), **Zach Beiswenger** (10th), **Murray Heldon** (13th), **Darren Kermond** (20th), **Cameron Walsh** (20th), **Jenn Beiswenger** (27th)

[top](#)