



The New Church Newsletter

Hurstville Society February 2019

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Jindabyne Retreat Review

By Rev Todd Beiswenger

It was probably 2004 or 2005, and I had made arrangements to make a product presentation at Ford Motor Company in Dearborn. One of my colleagues had arranged to make a pitch at General Motors in Detroit, and I was enlisted to be the presenter there too. It was going through my mind that I was now selling to the big boys, and that everything had to go right. No mistakes would be made, and no detail to be overlooked. I had a Dell laptop that was fairly robust, but I was well aware of the possibility of technology going awry, so I brought every possible cable and adapter I could think of to make sure my computer talked to their projector. Failure was not an option. Since I was prepared, everything went just as it should.

In the past 15 years or so, apparently I lost that lesson. These days I travel with a tablet, and a single video adapter to connect to the projector. I've never had a problem... until now. Suffice it to say, I did not have the adapter or port that the venue needed in order to connect to the projector, and since I rely on technology to help give my presentations some punch with audio and video clips, I was wondering just how I was going to recover. Thankfully **Claudia Horner** was there, who not only had the right output on her computer, but the right software too.

As a result of fiddling with technology we started our first session late, and having not learned our lesson, starting late became a bit of a camp theme. It would have been more acceptable if we were on an island so we could claim to be on "Island Time!" However, what I realized later was that we were on "Country Time," where people are relaxed and easy going. This made me feel okay about camp running late until I realized the implication of all this was that I was an impatient "city boy." I could only imagine my easy going, country mother looking down from heaven and telling me to relax.

I must have heard her, because once we all settled into "Country Time," the whole thing ran quite well. We had a different array of presenters this year as opposed to last, in fact, I think I'm the only one who was a presenter this year and last. While it is normal to have some different presenters year to year, this was the first time in 27 years that **Ruth** and **Julian Duckworth** were not there, and as a result Julian was not a presenter. Instead his replacement, **Howard Thompson**, took his spot, and we also had the help of **David Millar**, **Joe Vandermeer** and **Sarah Walker**.

Not only did we have new presenters, but it was a new venue as well. To be perfectly honest, I was a little sceptical of the choice of venue, as it didn't have a swimming pool and some of the other activities that we normally like to see on site to keep the kids busy and happy during the afternoons. The reality was that it didn't take long though for us to fall in love with this new venue. We made it down to the lake one afternoon to get in a swim, but overall the kids had no trouble staying busy by playing board games, running



around, riding their bikes and interacting with some of the wildlife on site. There were alpacas, horses, and kangaroos roaming around freely, and the horse in particular was very tame and willing to let the kids come up and pet it, which was a new experience for most of us city dwellers.

Aside from that, I'm sure the kids got into some general mischief that we're unaware of, but it seemed like they limited their trouble to minor squabbles, and it freed the adults to have some downtime and pursue their own agendas. Some adults went on bush walks, others worked on puzzles, took lessons from **Jenn** on how to Zentangle,

did yoga with **Julie**, or just sat and hung out with people that they haven't seen much of in the last year. For many one of the highlights of the week was the opportunity to **climb Mt Kosciuszko**, the highest mountain in Australia. The weather was kind and the scenery



spectacular. The picture above shows Owen and Margaret Heldon finally reaching the summit.

The evenings also had some entertainment on offer each night, including a “Price Is Right” style set of games, two trivia events, square dancing and the always popular talent night. Considering we only had 55 or so campers, we had an impressively high number of acts. By my count there were 18 acts, and many of them were not solo acts, so there was a very high participation percentage at the talent show.

All that said, my challenge at the moment is to give you insight into how our time in Jindabyne made people *feel*. It’s one thing to give a rundown of the schedule and say that we did this or that, but that’s not really what these yearly events are about. It’s really about experiencing a heavenly community right here on Earth. Usually when people think of heaven, they think of a place we go after we die, one where there will be great joy, happiness and bliss. The Writings tell us that heaven is not just a place, but also a state of mind and as a result the joy, happiness and bliss of heaven can be had here and now.

The problem is that when we do experience it here and now, it becomes painful to leave it behind. As I saw people tearing up as they said their farewells, it was clear that people knew that they were leaving behind something really special. A place where our spiritual understanding grows, but more importantly a place where because of our shared spiritual beliefs it allows for deeper friendships to be created and maintained. I know for me, these retreats are the highlight of the church year, and based on what I observe, I don’t think that I’m the only one who thinks that. Hope to see you at next year’s retreat!

Next year’s retreat will be held from January 6th to 12th at Nunyara Conference Centre in the Adelaide Hills yet only 20 minutes from the Adelaide CBD.

For more information about this year’s retreat including photos go to www.newchurch.net.au and click on New Church Retreat.

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Spiritual Growth Program: Love Over Ego

Love Over Ego follows the biblical story of Daniel from his early days as a child captive in Babylon, to becoming one of the most respected leaders of the nation. Throughout each chapter, we witness the clash between the ego of the Babylonian rulers and the humble confidence of Daniel and his friends. The story offers a rich narrative for exploring questions such as: What is the difference between arrogance and genuine confidence? What is our true identity?

As Daniel and his friends boldly face the powerful Babylonian rulers, we glimpse ways that vanity, manipulation and desire to control never hold up to the grounding power of confidence, love and true self-worth.

These themes are as relevant today as they were thousands of years ago.

In times like these, we as members of the human race can learn to rise above petty issues, put aside differences and simply help one another, remembering our shared humanity.

For times when we find ourselves getting lost again in a self-focused mindset, *Love Over Ego* challenges us to remember what matters most. Like Daniel who stands amid lions, and his friends stand in the middle of fire, we also have the option to stand true to our values even in hard times. We invite you to join us in this program, as we practice letting genuine love take priority in our lives. If you would like more details on the program, check out our webpage where there's a link to the New Church Journey site.

We'll be starting this program on **February 10th**, and it will run for a total of six weeks with discussion groups happening on **Monday evenings at 7:30pm**. These programs have been popular over the years, and we encourage you to join in!

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Working Bee

Although this newsletter is coming out too late to give advance notice of our Feb 3rd working bee, we nonetheless want to acknowledge everyone who turns up for them: we really appreciate your help! Whether you come to every quarterly bee or a few per year, whether you stay for an hour or three, every bit helps, and our gardens benefit from every iota of effort put into them. Special thanks are due to those who do come to every one and who do stay for three hours: thank you, very much! - And here's advance notice for upcoming working bees: they will be held on the **first Sunday of each new school term**, which this year will be **May 5, July 28 & Oct 20**. Thanks, in advance, for your participation!

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Post-Church Tennis & Picnic

Let's have a hit! What with our court being so nicely refurbished, and the weather being so pleasant, let's take advantage of the beautiful opportunity to enjoy a spot of tennis after church, accompanied by friendly fellowship and food. Bring yourself a picnic lunch (water & melon will be provided) and comfortable shoes, and your racket if you've got one (we'll have some available to borrow, too). **Sunday, Feb 17th**. Hope to see you there!

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March Excursion

With the temperatures dropping slightly in the beginning of autumn, it might be a nice time to get out for a group outing in March. We've earmarked **Sunday Mar 10**, after church, for such an event, although no plans have yet been made (and we can wait and see whether the weather is suitable before committing to a date!). Might you be interested? Should we stick with a Sunday afternoon, or move it to a Saturday (morning into afternoon) for a longer experience? Where would you like to go? Spit Bridge to Manly walk? Watsons Bay (around the South Head)? Rose Bay to Watsons Bay? Federation Cliff Walk (Watsons Bay to Dover Heights)? These, and more, are suggested on the

website www.bestsydneywalks.com. Please give it some thought, and let us know! - You can email either Todd (todd@hurstvillenewchurch) or Jenn (jenn@beiswenger.net) with your input. Thanks!

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Conversation in the Womb – A Parable of Life After Delivery

This lovely parable is from Your Sacred Self by Dr. Wayne Dyer

In a mother's womb were two babies. One asked the other: "Do you believe in life after delivery?" The other replied, "Why, of course. There has to be something after delivery. Maybe we are here to prepare ourselves for what we will be later."

"Nonsense" said the first. "There is no life after delivery. What kind of life would that be?"

The second said, "I don't know, but there will be more light than here. Maybe we will walk with our legs and eat from our mouths. Maybe we will have other senses that we can't understand now."

The first replied, "That is absurd. Walking is impossible. And eating with our mouths? Ridiculous! The umbilical cord supplies nutrition and everything we need. But the umbilical cord is so short. Life after delivery is to be logically excluded."

The second insisted, "Well I think there is something and maybe it's different than it is here. Maybe we won't need this physical cord anymore."

The first replied, "Nonsense. And moreover if there is life, then why has no one ever come back from there? Delivery is the end of life, and in the after-delivery there is nothing but darkness and silence and oblivion. It takes us nowhere."

"Well, I don't know," said the second, "but certainly we will meet Mother and she will take care of us."

The first replied "Mother? You actually believe in Mother? That's laughable. If Mother exists then where is She now?"

The second said, "She is all around us. We are surrounded by her. We are of Her. It is in Her that we live. Without Her this world would not and could not exist."

Said the first: "Well I don't see Her, so it is only logical that She doesn't exist."

To which the second replied, "Sometimes, when you're in silence and you focus and you really listen, you can perceive Her presence, and you can hear Her loving voice, calling down from above."

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Birthdays

Happy Birthday to **John Hicks** (9th) and **Mike Lockhart** (11th)

