



The New Church Newsletter

Hurstville Society March 2019

Contents

[Science & Spirituality on Heredity](#)

by Rev Todd Beiswenger

[Working Bee Thanks](#)

[Journey Program Wrap Up,](#)

[Potluck Lunch](#)

[Food Collection Kogarah Storehouse](#)

[2020 Adelaide Church Retreat](#)

[Post Church Tennis and Lunch](#)

[March Excursion](#)

[Baringa Tennis](#)

[Just for Fun](#)

[Birthdays](#)

Science & Spirituality on Heredity

By Rev Todd Beiswenger

At my Grandmother's house, she had a picture frame that had each of her three children's photos in it, each photo taken at the child's 18th birthday or thereabouts. As a kid growing up, I saw this picture fairly often and never really thought that I looked like my Dad. One day, when I was around 20 years old, I stepped into the washroom at the car dealership where I worked and much to my surprise I saw that picture of my Dad staring me back in the mirror! Truly I was shocked, because in my mind I still did not look like my Dad. Yet, here I was, confronted with a reality that I could not deny as it was staring me right in the face. I did look like my Dad. At least when he was the same age.

I would think that my experience isn't too uncommon, to see your parent in the mirror. Our parents pass down other things too as well, some for better, some for worse. But can you imagine this: you're a Jewish person having a tough go of things, anxiety is starting to take hold and so you decide to seek help and go to a therapist for some counselling. You lay it all out to them, and they respond with something like this: "Of course you're anxious, you're Jewish!"

This isn't a made up scenario, but rather taken from an article in The Atlantic written by Olga Khazan. She goes to her therapist and she says that no matter what is stressing her out the response is always a variation on the theme of: "Well, like all Ashkenazi Jews, you have a lot of intergenerational trauma. You know, because of everything that's ... happened."

Olga isn't really happy with this response, because while she understands that prior generations of Jews have had to deal with persecution, she personally hasn't, and doesn't want to blame her issues on traumas from generations past. My initial reaction was "Good on you!" for not wanting to be a victim, and wanting to take responsibility for her own life. Yet, at the same time, I think the therapist is on to something.

The whole issue of heredity is a core issue in New Church doctrine, and it hangs on the fact that Jesus was part Divine and part human, and it was the Father's Divine heredity that needed to be brought forward and allowed to expel what was given from the mortal mother. It's a different dynamic for us as our fathers aren't Divine, but we are taught that as time passes our parental heredity does manifest itself more and more into our lives as we get older.

The Writings state it like this: "...on the one hand there is that which he has inherited from father and mother, on the other that which flows in from the Lord by way of heaven. While a person is growing up that which he has inherited from parents manifests itself more and more, if he is such that he does not allow himself to be regenerated." (AC/SH 3603)

I think the key information that Olga is missing is that she needs to allow herself to be regenerated. Because as the therapist says, it seems that hereditary stuff is starting to shine through, but in order to move past it she'll have to become a new person. Her own person. I think it's interesting that the quote above from Arcana is written as an explanation of Genesis 27:40, which states "when you grow restless, you will throw his yoke from off your neck." This is what Isaac says to Esau after Jacob has stolen Esau's blessing, but I also see it in Olga's situation. She's growing restless with her life, and she's got to throw the yoke of heredity from off her neck. This is what it is to become born again, to leave the old behind and, like Jesus, adopt a heredity from the Lord.

Science isn't quite to this point yet, but they are discovering that it is in fact quite a bit more than facial features, hair colour and eyes that we get from our ancestors. There's a new study in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences by researchers from the National Bureau of Economic Research. They found that the sons of Union Army soldiers in the US Civil War who endured gruelling conditions as prisoners of war were more likely to die young than the sons of soldiers who were not prisoners. This is despite the fact that the sons were born after the war, so they couldn't have experienced its horrors personally. In other words, it seemed like the stresses of war were getting passed down between generations.

Because the study authors controlled for other factors that might have influenced the sons' longevity, like socioeconomic status and the quality of the parents' marriages, they believe this effect on mortality is working through epigenetics, or the process by which genes are switched on and off. These epigenetic changes are inherited by later generations, setting diseases in motion.

Epigenetic links have also been established in animal studies. For example, mice that have been taught to fear the smell of cherries when it was paired with an electric shock had children and grandchildren that also showed signs of anxiety when exposed to the odour, even though they had never "learned" the painful association.

There are a number of other studies that have suggested that traumas are passed down via some epigenetic mechanism, but the problem with all of these studies is that they only examine the statistics of a given group and not actually the genes themselves. Essentially, it's all speculation. For the New Church reader though, it is all quite plausible. We're taught that:

"As to our spirits, each of us is in some community--in a heavenly one when our good desires are in control, and in a hellish one when our evil desires are in control. We are unaware of this while we are living in this world, but in spirit that is where we are. We could not go on living otherwise, and that is how the Lord is guiding us" (DP 278).

Olga's therapist is right, even if she doesn't realize that the lives of her ancestors have connected her via heredity to the same spiritual communities her ancestors were tied to. This connection isn't just magic. In order for us to have this link, there is going to be a physical correspondence with the spiritual world, which allows that connection to happen.

Is it via epigenetics? I don't know. But imagine that it is... if you change the genes, what will actually happen? Will the spiritual connection just manifest anyway since the natural is a result of the spiritual? Again, I don't know. I just like the fact that science is seeing that our past does matter. It's a good reminder to me as well, because as much as we aren't supposed to play "victim" in this life, we do need to appreciate that some have had a more difficult circumstance to start from, and have more personal obstacles to overcome.

For those who are feeling the victim, we don't have to wait until epigenetic sciences improve. Divine Providence gives us a solution: "We must see that we are in a hellish place, must want to get out, and must ourselves make an effort with what seems to be our own strength." (DP 278). So we might look in the mirror and see our parents, and even see traits passed on down from grandparents, but let's make sure that while we enjoy the good aspects of that, that we also make the effort like Esau to throw off that yoke of oppression and leave the past behind.

[top](#)

Working Bee Thanks

Once again, thanks to everybody who participated in our quarterly working bee. The work done goes a long way to keeping the place looking respectable. The back gardens still need a lot of work, but there is a plan in progress to overhaul the gardens. We've had a Walk and Talk from A Garden for Life with Narelle Happ who is a garden designer and horticulturist. The next stage is for a landscaper to come in and do the groundwork. Since that hasn't happened yet, what we do on these working bees is all the more important to keep the grounds in good order. Every bit helps, so *thank you* for taking time out of your Sunday (or other day, if applicable!) to pitch in. We appreciate it!

[top](#)

Journey Program Wrap-Up Potluck & Food Collection

We're mid-way through our 'Love Over Ego' spiritual growth program, with everyone at HNC participating in their own way, including Sunday worship services + Sunday School, Monday evening group discussions and home study. The final day of this program will be on **Sun March 17th**, and we invite everyone to join us in a **pot-luck lunch** together.

Such spiritual examination often brings with it a deep sense of gratitude, and with this in mind we invite everyone to bring - in addition to a plate to share at our lunch - a non-perishable food or toiletry donation, to 'pay forward' the wealth that each of us experiences in our ordinary lives, to share it with those less fortunate by way of the **Kogarah Storehouse**. Our small group always goes above and beyond with these collections, so *thank you* for giving a piece of yourself to help others in need: it may be a *small* thing to us, but it's a *big* thing to them.

[top](#)

2020 Adelaide Church Retreat

It's been a long time since there was camp in Adelaide, but that streak is set to end in January of next year. Carolyn Heldon, Chris Kendrick and the NCIA Board have booked the retreat. Bookings are now open for Monday January 6th to Sunday 12th to be held at the Nunyara Conference Centre, in the Adelaide Hills. Here's a bit from the Nunyara website about the facility:

“Nunyara is a camp, conference and retreat centre situated on spacious grounds in the Adelaide Hills - only 20 minutes from the Adelaide CBD. With an enviable view of the city, it is no wonder this Conference and Retreat Centre was named ‘Nunyara’, meaning ‘place of healing’ according to the Kaurna people... With arguably the best meals in the industry, the fully-catered centre offers convenient accommodation for rural schools needing to be close to Adelaide, relaxing conference facilities for corporate planning days and unforgettable urban camping experiences.”

I'm rather interested if their claim of “the best meals in the industry” actually holds up! New Church campers have been to a number of venues, so we will know how their food stacks up! I took a look at the Nunyara website, and while there is still no pool, it looks like there are more activities for the kids than this past retreat. I'll have more details about all of this in future newsletters, but in the meantime more information can be found on the web page below, and bookings can be made online or by post:

<http://newchurch.net.au/new-church-retreat-program/nunyara-new-church-retreat-2020>

[top](#)

Post-Church Tennis & Lunch

A good handful of people turned up for our post-church tennis & picnic, on Sunday Feb 17th! Not everyone had a hit, but those who did had a good time on our beautiful 'new' court, and all of us enjoyed each other's company - and the gorgeous weather! - as we lunched around the big table nearby. I think these events are becoming more fun as the boys are growing and getting better at actually playing tennis. They still have this desire to hit the ball as hard as they possibly can, which would be fine if we were playing cricket, but in this case the result is the ball not remaining in the court, let alone in bounds! On the positive side though I think only two balls ended up off the property this time! No date is yet set for our next one, but let's do it again in the spring - stay tuned! (see picture next page)

[top](#)

March Excursion

We briefly discussed excursion ideas around the lunch table, on that tennis-and-picnic day, and although we haven't settled on any details, we're leaning towards a full-day excursion – date still to be decided - perhaps on Sat March 23rd? - and possibly to the Spit Bridge/ Manly walk, to Kiama or up Gosford way. *If you have any thoughts about any of these, please let us know!* We'll announce the final plans soon, in a weekly update and on our church Facebook page. We hope you'll join us, whenever and wherever it might be!

[top](#)

Zac, Liam, Dylan and Todd playing tennis on the new surface



Baringa Tennis

We've received news that two of our four ladies' competitive tennis teams have made it to the semis/finals in their comps! The dates of these games have yet to be confirmed, but we're excited for them and wish them all the best. *(-Their success is due to the new court surface, no doubt.... ;))*

[top](#)

Just For Fun

The story goes that a certain court jester went too far one day and insulted his king. The king became so infuriated that he sentenced the jester to be executed. His court preyed upon the king to have mercy for this man who had served him well for so many years. After a time, the king relented only enough to give the jester his "choice" as to how he would like to die. True to form, the jester replied, "if it's all the same to you my lord, I'd like to die of old age."

[top](#)

Birthdays

Happy Birthday to **Don Macfarlane** (7th), **Debbie Walsh** (7th), **Graham Horner** (12th), **Edward Horner** (18th)

