



The New Church Newsletter

Hurstville Society May 2019

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by Rev Todd Beiswenger

Happy Easter

First off, I hope you've had a happy Easter this year. As usual, the Easter Sunday service was our largest of the year, and we do love seeing everybody come together for this celebration. This was our 8th Easter here, and when we think back about the time, the kids who were little when we got here aren't so little anymore! In fact, now there's a new group of little ones! We're delighted to have them, and appreciate the distances that many travelled to be here. The kids were rewarded though for showing up, as after the service we did put on our annual Easter egg hunt. Sixty eggs were hidden, but only 56 were recovered! So if you need a sugar hit, come on over and see if you can find some eggs that are hidden in the gardens behind Baringa!



Easter Egg Hunt: Riley Evans, Lily Heldon, Aneira Robson and Lucy Evans

An Easter Experiment

by Rev Todd Beiswenger

I've written a bit before about the fact that I've been working on creating some YouTube videos that explain Bible stories from a New Church perspective. A couple of weeks ago I decided that I should do a video that gives a New Church perspective on the Easter story. Based on prior experience, I know I'd get 100 views in the first week on it if I just did my standard routine of posting it on Facebook and a couple of other sites. The majority of these views would be by people who have already been exposed to the Writings and be affirmative to the teachings. However, I thought it would be interesting this time to actually promote the video by advertising it on Facebook, Google Search and YouTube. I was right! The results *were* interesting.

Before I get into what happened, let's start with some perspective. The most viewed video I have done is "The Creation Story Explained." It was published January 2018 and has 895 views. So if you figure those first 100 views were by New Church people, it's picked up roughly 800 more views over the past 16 months which comes to about 50 views a month. Also, 8 people have subscribed to my channel after watching the video, which to me is the best possible outcome because it shows they want more of that type of content. Considering that it didn't cost a cent, that seemed pretty good. My Noah's Ark video, which was published April 1, 2019, has 130 views.

With that in mind, here's what has happened with my Easter video: it was published on April 16, and right now (April 23rd) it is sitting at 2,432 views and I picked up 12 subscribers. That number of views was way beyond what I was expecting for a 6-day promotion. Sounds good, right? Well, let's dig into the numbers a little deeper and see what else can be learned. I had three different campaigns going, so let's go through those one by one.

One was a Google Search campaign that had a worldwide audience, so if you typed in one of the keywords I had set up the ad would appear on the right hand side of the screen saying "A Different Take on the Easter Story. How Jesus Preserved Free Will." That ad popped up 21,040 times, and 821 people from around the world clicked on it. But as it turned out, those views weren't really from *all* around the world.

On Saturday evening I was checking on how things were going, and was digging into the numbers. At that point there were around 700 clicks... but when I checked as to where in the world they were coming from, the overwhelming majority of those clicks came from India & Nigeria. Most of the countries around the world would have produced one or two clicks, but the other 600+ came from India and Nigeria. I figure that this was a result of me setting up the campaign to maximize the number of clicks I wanted, and since there probably wasn't much competition to advertise in those countries for this kind of material, it was ripe for the picking. However, after I saw that, I changed the campaign to only advertise in Australia for Sunday and Monday. As you might expect, that slowed the clicks and views down quite considerably as only 53 clicked on it over the last two days. The cost for all this activity was \$45.

The second campaign was one where I promoted the video on Facebook. Unlike the Google campaign, this was limited from the start to people who were within a 10 mile radius (16km) from the church. Facebook is an American company, so yes, their radius options are in miles. Facebook reports that 4,629 people saw the ad, and of those 242 clicked on it. Of those, 32 people reacted to it by clicking "Like," "Heart," etc. There were 10 shares of the video, and 17 comments... but if you look at those comments I think you'd have to say they were... shall we say, "unsupportive" of the ideas put forth. But three people liked our Hurstville New Church Facebook page, which means they'll get our future posts automatically going forward. The cost was \$110 for this campaign.

The final campaign was one on YouTube. This one had an even smaller geographic range. I ran it just in postcodes 2215-2233, which gave us coverage in the Shire and a bit beyond.

I'm still learning about YouTube advertising, but essentially there are two ways that a promoted video will appear. One type of advertisement is where the video will appear to the right of the screen where YouTube is recommending you click on it. But promoted videos will also just start playing after a person has watched something else. It doesn't seem YouTube gives a breakdown as to the two different types, which surprises me because I think it makes a big difference in the quality of the "view." This campaign netted 1,643 views, but from what I can tell most people stopped watching very quickly. It makes sense... if a video just pops on that you didn't click on, you're likely going to quickly hop off of it. The good side was that it did generate 7 "earned views," which in the marketing world is the holy grail of views because these are views that happen because of social sharing. This campaign was \$73.

I think the results are bit of a mixed bag. In one week we had 2,432 views, and about 7%, or 168 people watched the entire 8-minute video at a cost of \$228. For comparison, on the Creation story video, about 30% or 270 people watched the whole thing... for free, but it took 16 months. The Creation video only generated 8 subscribers, where the Easter video got 12.

So what are the big lessons learned from this? Lesson #1: Don't do a worldwide campaign. Lesson #2: Don't let YouTube run the video automatically. Beyond those two, there are other things to be experimented with. Perhaps just run one of the campaigns so the effects of a particular platform are clearer. Also, is there a better local demographic to target other than everybody? Probably, but I'm not sure just what that is. If we targeted "Christians" for example, we probably wouldn't get a good response because they'll be steeped in their traditional doctrine. "New Age" people probably aren't interested in the Christian message. We could also experiment with having videos for certain questions or religious events that have ongoing advertising campaigns that are more targeted. If we note that the Google Search campaign only netted 53 views when it was restricted to Australia, we can see that it didn't cost very much to run a national campaign. What other national campaigns could we run? Or even ones that are just for Sydney?

Anyway, I thought it was an interesting experiment, and one that will require further reflection and dissection in the days ahead. It seems that there is some potential here. We did have 168 people view the whole video, so imagine having an extra 168 people at church! Or even imagine just having an extra 12, which is how many subscribers I picked up to the channel. We'd all be happy with that. I'll keep trying some things, and see how it goes, and if you have any comments, suggestions or questions, feel free to drop me an email.

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Live Streamed Church Services

For the last couple of years we've been live-streaming our services on YouTube, and we are always looking for ways to make it a better experience. One thing that we can now offer is to email a direct link to the service along with a pdf copy of the order of service. With that, somebody who is watching the live stream could completely follow along at home, participating in the responsive readings, prayer and songs. If you would like to be added to this list, just send me an email and I'll make it happen.

Regional Clergy Meetings

The General Church regional clergy meetings will be happening soon in Sydney, and it will be a good opportunity to meet ministers from around the world. There will be seven from Korea, two from Japan, and a lay leader from China. Not to mention Dick Keyworth from New Zealand will be attending, as will Dave Lindrooth, John Jin (Asian Regional Pastor) and Pete and Teresa Buss who are coming from the US. From Australia we've got David Millar, Howard Thompson and myself.

Pete and Teresa will be arriving on Tuesday 21st May, but then heading out to Perth on Friday 24th to visit out there for the weekend. However, the plan is that on **Thursday 23rd May** we'll have a dinner and class at 7pm. It's a change from our usual routine, but we've got to use Pete when he's available. If you intend to come, please let us know!

Most of the rest of the group will be arriving on Thursday 30th of May. I figure that to be mostly a day of getting people to the Tank Stream hotel downtown, with a small program in the evening. Meetings will then happen the 31st May, and 1st June.

Then on **Sunday 2nd** we'll have a church service here that will be led by **Pete Buss**. After the service everybody is invited to **lunch**, so you'll have a good opportunity to mix and mingle with all the visitors. It would be great if you could come to this service! After lunch the ministers will head out for some, as yet undetermined activity, and then people start heading home the next day.

Lastly, if you are interested in having **Pete and Teresa** over for coffee, lunch, dinner, or just a chat, please let me know and I'll try to find an agreeable time.

Society Meeting

It's been a while since we've had one, so we are calling a Society Meeting for **May 19th**. One of the main purposes is to coordinate things to do for the Regional Clergy Meetings. I think we need to figure out some sort of a small gift to give the visiting clergy, as that's what other hosts have done in meetings past. Also we need to figure out the details for the Sunday lunch.

If you can't be at the meeting and have any ideas, feel free to let me know! Those are the main things, plus any New Church Day plans, as well as some fairly routine business that needs to be discussed.

Tween/Teen Movie Night

We'll have another pizza & a movie + discussion night for high-schoolers on **Saturday, May 4th**. This time around we'll watch the 'original' Star Wars: Episode IV - A New Hope, which is full of interesting symbolism! Food at 6pm, movie starting around 6:30pm.

(Pizza, popcorn & veg sticks will be provided, bring something else to share if you feel like it.) Anyone in years 7-10 is cordially invited - spread the word! ***RSVP to Todd or Jenn by Thursday May 2nd for food-planning purposes. Thanks!***

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Working Bee

'Tis the season ~ the first Sunday in May will be the first Sunday of the new school term, which can mean only one thing: working bee! Please join us after the worship service on **Sunday, May 5th** to do some weeding in the church gardens, then stay for a pizza lunch (....then you can go out and garden some more, if you've got it in you!). Every little bit really does help, and is very much appreciated. If this date doesn't suit you, please feel free to weed at your leisure, if you're willing. Thanks, in advance!

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Pastor's Breakfast

He's at it again! Join us for breakfast with Pastor Todd before church on **Sunday, May 26th**. He'll be flipping up some flapjacks, and we'll likely have some eggs & bacon as well. (If the menu doesn't appeal to you, please feel free to BYO Breakfast but come anyway to share in the social aspect!) Bring a friend, too - the more, the merrier!

We'll kick things off at 8:30am, aiming to be done by 9:45 in time for church. ***RSVP to Todd or Jenn by Thursday May 16th for food-planning purposes. Thanks!***

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Birthdays

Happy Birthday to **John Sandow** (18th), **Naomi Heldon** (20th), **Sequoia & Ezekiel Coates** (23rd), **Matthew Cooper** (25th), **Daniel Walsh** (27th), **Brian Walsh** (31st) & missed last month (Sorry) **Riley Evans** (11th April), **Aneira Robson** (14th April), **Lucy Evans** (27th April)

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