



## **The New Church Newsletter**

**Hurstville Society July 2019**

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## Regional Clergy Meetings Review

by Rev Todd Beiswenger



**Back row:** Sachio Nakato (Japan), David Millar (Australian New Church College), Gyu Yang (Korea), Howard Thompson, Peter Buss, Dave Lindrooth, Todd Beiswenger

**Front row:** Nang Hyun Kim (Korea), Soon Cheol Lee (Korea), Seung Gil Kim (Korea), Dong Yang (Korea), John Jin (Asia Regional Pastor), Chiyoung Yoon (Korea), Dick Keyworth (New Zealand)

Not appearing Shiro Matsumoto (Japan) & Darren Brunne – left early

I don't know about other ministers, but when I signed up for Theological School, I actually got pretty much what I was expecting: learning the doctrine of the church. However, as time passes I'm starting to think that one course that was missing in my education was a class in event planning. It seems to be an essential job duty in the priesthood.

In the time leading up to the meetings, we sorted out accommodation, transportation, meals, presentations, various meet ups with others, as well as some outings in and around Sydney. It was pretty amazing that everything went according to plan... flights arrived on time, luggage wasn't lost... the most nervous I got was wondering if the Koreans were going to wander off on their own and get lost. But, at least to the best of my knowledge, it never happened.

Here's what did happen: we did get an interesting presentation from Assistant Bishop Dave Lindrooth giving us a bit of insight regarding people who are inquiring about the church through [newchurch.org](http://newchurch.org). Dave showed us a map of the USA that showed just how few and far between our congregations are, illustrating the problem that for 98% of the

people who do inquire through the website there is no congregation close enough for them to participate in. The General Church has always been spread pretty thin outside of a few cities, but it seems that this is only going to be even more so the case in the future.

Bishop Pete Buss gave us a presentation on Providence and the Church, reassuring us that everything is happening to plan, and believe it or not, there are no surprises for the Lord. However, we have to pay attention to what is happening around us in order to cooperate fully with the Lord's plan.

Rev John Jin, the regional pastor for Asia, spoke about the problem of idol worship in Asia. This has been a problem for people for a long time, and we see it as a regular struggle in the Old Testament stories, and John was showing us that it is still a big issue in China, Japan and Korea. He went on to talk about the other challenges and opportunities that China presents, including the difficulty of teaching religion in China.

Rev Gyu Yang from Korea, and Rev Shiro Matsumoto from Japan both spoke independently of how they are trying to reach out to their respective countrymen, and what struck me was the similarity of approach. Both were coming at it from the afterlife angle, with Shiro giving a short presentation on his translation efforts into Japanese. Rev Yang in particular told a story of how he created a presentation on the afterlife to give at retirement centres. He eventually took it to a Christian conference, but got kicked out of it because it wasn't mainstream Christian. However, there was a twist of fate when a couple of years later he reapplied to the conference and it turns out that the person going through the applications was an attendee at one of his presentations at the retirement centre who was moved by the presentation... so he said Rev Yang is in! Every year since, Rev Yang gets to present the New Church view of the afterlife at this Christian conference.

We also invited Rev David Millar to join in the meetings to present his Logopraxis approach to reading and applying the Writings to life. Since church attendance is declining around the world, new approaches such as this can be used as a different gate to bring people to the Word... which after all, is our goal.

However, as is usually the case with meetings, some of the most valuable interactions happen outside the presentations, and I think these meetings were no exception to that. One of the challenging aspects to GC employment in Australasia is the isolation, and so it is rejuvenating to put on an event and make friends with others who are in a similar situation... even if the event planning training has been a trial by fire course!

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## **Patience is a Virtue**

by Jenn Beiswenger

“Patience is a virtue,  
Virtue is a grace;  
Grace is a little girl  
Who wouldn’t wash her face!”

This is a nursery rhyme my mom used to encourage patience in me as a child – and which I have the privilege of reciting to my own child as well. In trying to find the source of this rhyme, it quickly became clear that there is no single origin. The introductory line can be traced back to *The Canterbury Tales* in the 14th century; however, it’s possible that it actually dates back as far as the 3rd or 4th century A.D.

Whatever the case, the idea that ‘patience is a virtue’ has been around for a while, and with good reason. I appreciated the explanation given by [yourdictionary.com](http://yourdictionary.com): “Part of the reason this has been a long-standing truth throughout history is because patience often goes against our instincts. It’s something everyone struggles with, including our earliest ancestors. The good news is, patience is a skill that can be learned over time. The more we exercise patience, the less likely we are to become agitated when forced to wait for something. Mastering this virtue will make for a happier life. That’s certainly one of the reasons why it’s so famously touted by writers and philosophers alike.”

The virtue of patience came to my mind a couple of months ago, after the driver of the car-carrier truck behind me ever-so-politely came to my car, in stopped traffic, knocked on my window and gently requested that I not dart in front of him as I had done. He said that if I’d signalled my desire to change lanes and waited a little while, he’d have let me in. Fair enough.

Right after that incident, as the Christian radio station that I usually enjoy hosted its week-long semi-annual fund drive (which meant that I was hearing more pleas for money than pleasant music), I found myself station-surfing to find an alternative. I landed on a member-supported station playing an enjoyable tune. After that, though, they aired a long track of guitar and pan flute instrumental melody. This is not my normal choice of music. I usually prefer songs with meaningful words, often with a quicker beat. On that day, however, already mindful of cultivating more patience in myself, I chose to stay on that station, sit with it, and enjoy it for its slower pace and calmness. I still don’t particularly enjoy that style of music, but it was an interesting experience to let that song be, to just be patient and not switch stations again right away.

Another reason to be patient on Australian roads (where I live) is the preponderance of speed cameras. While I understand the value of such devices in calming particularly violent or dangerous stretches of road, they are mostly revenue-raisers in this country. The law does not allow for much lenience either: drive at a speed beyond a few kilometres per hour over the speed limit will elicit a ticket and hefty fine. Although I prefer to drive freely, still responsibly, but without checking my speedometer every few hundred metres, a fear of fines lightens my lead foot somewhat.

Those situations, combined with noticing some other instances of unnecessary lane-changing in relatively heavy traffic just to get a car length or two ahead, have got me thinking more and more about how driving, unless explicitly in a race, isn't actually a race! Arriving somewhere on time is important, but, under normal circumstances, not critical. Getting my child to school on time is a good habit to be sure, but if we happen to be a little late sometimes, so what? It won't be the end of the world: I'll write an explanatory note, and we'll each be on our ways.

I have the propensity to want to be exactly on time, which is a very narrow window of time, which means I'm always prone to being a teeny bit late. Somewhere along the way, I apparently decided that being early was not cool! In light of my new awareness of patience, however, I have a new appreciation for being early, and being patient until the right time to enter the building, or join the party, or whatever the scenario. It is disrespectful of me to make someone else wait; I just need to suck it up.

Wanting to bring the Lord into the conversation, I was curious to see what He has to say about such matters. I came upon a couple of instances from His Word, including explanations thereof in the Writings for the New Church:

“The seed that is in the good ground, these are they who in a simple and good heart, hear the word, hold it fast, and bear fruit in patience.” (Luke 8:15)

The Heavenly Doctrines describe that “‘to bring forth fruit in patience’ signifies to do truths and goods even when living amid falsities and evils, that is, among those who are in falsities and evils.” (Apocalypse Explained 813:4)

“If anyone shall lead into captivity he shall go into captivity; if anyone shall kill with the sword he must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints.” (Revelation 13:10)

Again, in the Heavenly Doctrines we read that “‘the patience of the saints’ signifies the temptation of the faithful, or of those who are made spiritual by the Lord, because ‘patience’ signifies spiritual patience, which is patience in sustaining temptations; and those have that patience who fight in themselves against the falsities that are contained in the dogma of faith alone and that adhere to it; for that faith is confirmed by reasonings from the natural man and from the Word wrongly applied and thus falsified. The temptations that such sustain when they fight against falsities are meant by ‘patience.’” (Apocalypse Explained 813:2)

I am really glad to have found these passages, and they're shedding a new light on the concept and importance of cultivating patience! Learning patience in this world is useful for a variety of worldly reasons, such as for health and safety (and for the law and personal finances, i.e. not breaking the law and not going broke on account of speeding tickets!), and now we can see the next, spiritual dimension of this virtue. It's about facing temptation, which, superficially, includes resisting the urge to zoom ahead or cut someone off, automotively or otherwise, but which, on a deeper level, extends into rationalising things from our natural minds and from the Word and applying them incorrectly to life matters. The Lord urges us to practice patience, to sustain temptation, and promises that,

as a result, we will be implanted with truths and be made spiritual, as we trust in Him and work to do goods and truths even amid the falsities and evils in this world around us. These sound like reasons enough to me!

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### **Overcomer Movie**

Every now and again I get an email from Five Loaves Media, a division of the Koorong and Crossroad family, and their mission is, “bringing quality Christian movies to Cinemas in Australia, New Zealand, Fiji and PNG.” These are the same people who made the “Flywheel” movie we watched at Baringa a few months ago.

Last month an email came through recently promoting their latest movie “Overcomer,” and it was inviting pastors to a pre-screening of the movie. While I enjoyed Flywheel, my expectations weren’t all that high for “Overcomer.” I’m happy to say that my expectations were definitely surpassed, and am very happy to recommend this movie. Since the creation of “Flywheel” they have definitely raised their level of performance.

The key question that they are discussing/answering in this movie is “What do you allow to define you?” Again, I wasn’t really inspired by this idea, but in the end I really enjoyed the movie. It comes out on August 22<sup>nd</sup>, so keep your eyes open for it!

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### **Women’s Weekend Full!**

Jenn has been busy putting together a women’s weekend, and is happy to report that it is sold out! This is good! The response has actually exceeded capacity, so she’s actually had to turn some people away, but it has raised the question about offering an encore performance. Some are already queued up for the next women’s weekend, and if you too are interested in attending the next one, but haven’t spoken up at this point, please email [jenn@beiswenger.net](mailto:jenn@beiswenger.net) to register your interest.

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### **Inspirational Quote**

This came through a “Daily Inspiration” email that was forwarded on to me, and it is a good quote because it really underscores the importance of trying to convince people that there is a world beyond the physical senses.

“You cannot be spiritually reborn without some knowledge of the new or spiritual life, of the true things that you ought to believe and the good things that you ought to do. You cannot learn these things on your own, because on your own you can comprehend things only through your physical senses. Your physical senses give you information about the material world and yourself, not about heaven and God. Spiritual knowledge comes only from revelation.” (New Jerusalem and Its Heavenly Doctrine 177)

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## **Working Bee**

School holidays are right around the corner, and you know what that means? We're due for a working bee, that's what it means. As per usual, we'll have it on the last Sunday of the school holidays, which in this case would be **28<sup>th</sup> of July**. We'll order up some pizzas as well, and if I can get a count of who will be participating in advance maybe we can order some better quality pizzas from Italian Job on Saturday evening to have for lunch on Sunday. I'll try to remember to send a reminder in the Weekly Update just prior to that Sunday.

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## **Birthdays**

Happy Birthday to **James Kermond** (10<sup>th</sup>), **Babbette Horner** (14<sup>th</sup>) and **Danita Horner** (15<sup>th</sup>) **Anna** and **Erik Heldon** (23<sup>rd</sup> June)

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