



The New Church Newsletter

Hurstville Society August 2019

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The Lord's Prayer and Israel Folau

By Rev Todd Beiswenger

It's the staple of every church service, worship at camp, and for many of us, part of our daily routine. Yes, the Lord's Prayer is recited an awful lot, and as I've thought about the hub-bub going on regarding Israel Folau I've thought a good way to sort through the situation is by looking to this oft-repeated prayer.

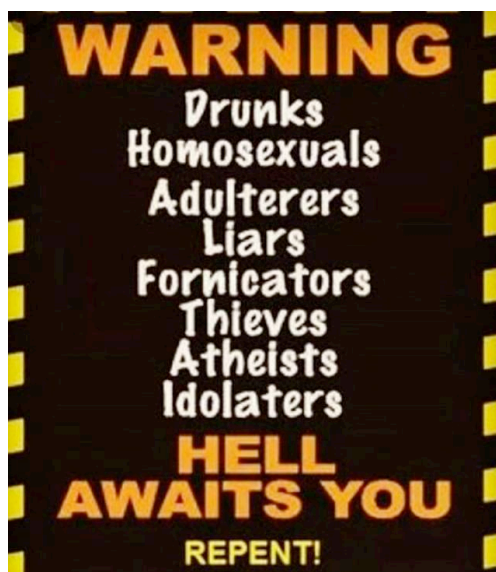
Many people are clamouring that Folau should be compassionate, and not judging. But you see, one of the ironies of the world today is that when we get rather focused on "not judging" others that we in fact "judge" and fail ourselves to offer compassion to those who we think are "judging" and uncompassionate. I think this is the kind of thing that the Lord's Prayer is designed to help us avoid.

Our Father, who art in the heavens, hallowed by Thy name... as we enter into this discussion, let's turn our thoughts upward, putting some holy respect into the conversation considering that we are calling on the great I AM.

Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so upon the earth. Now that we've invited the Lord to the conversation, let's be reminded of what our goal is. Our goal is His will, not ours, and just as importantly we are trying to establish heaven on earth. Not Todd's kingdom, which admittedly I am partial to at times, but that's why we do this exercise... *Thy* kingdom, and as in heaven so upon the earth.

So really, what does that mean to have heaven on earth? Well, I take it to mean that we need to think and act like angels. With that in mind, here's a quote from Apocalypse Explained on how angels look or "judge" us:

[T]he wise do not look at the works, but at the life that is in the works, namely, at the intention. This is especially true of the angels who are with man; they do not see his works, but only the intentions of his mind, and conclude therefrom what the man's state is. (Apocalypse Explained 185)



If we're going to bring heaven on earth, part of that is going to come from us doing likewise, which is judging each other on our intentions. In this case, what is it that Folau intended? In case you've not actually seen what he's posted, here's a screenshot of the post that started the furore. The commentary on this that I've read has been focused on Folau saying homosexuals are going to hell, but the reality is he's calling out a number of Biblical sins. What is the intention here? My guess is that Folau thinks he is offering a public service message. He doesn't seem to be hating any of these groups, just offering a warning.

If you're on the highway speeding, and

somebody says, “Slow down, speed camera ahead” it isn’t a matter of them hating you, but rather warning you.

Some might disagree with my interpretation, and claim that Folau was hating on these people. Maybe he’s indirectly saying how great he is, implying that he isn’t on the list. Sure, you could make arguments like that, but the fact is we really don’t know that to be the case any more than what I’ve proposed. That leaves us with a choice: we can ascribe a good motive to Folau, or a bad one. Can you guess which one the angels would give him?

Give us this day our daily bread. Bread is about goodness, so yes, please give us some goodness in our life. And if you remember the feeding of the 5000, that bread is meant to be multiplied by giving it away. So yes, we want some bread, but we want it with the intention of giving out goodness to others around us. This, I believe, helps put us in, or return us to, the right frame of mind when dealing with someone who is upsetting us... someone who perhaps isn’t letting us establish OUR kingdom on earth.

And forgive us our debts, as we also forgive our debtors. Right. We’ve all got problems, none of us are perfect, and we are all in need of forgiveness. Can you feel the outrage subsiding? No matter how much you may disagree with Folau, and no matter how right you may be on this issue, we’ve all got debts that need to be forgiven. Remember how much you loved the story of Jesus dealing with the woman who was caught in adultery? Whoever was without sin was to cast the first stone. Nobody did. Are you willing to cast the first stone at Folau?

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. In the New Church lexicon, “temptation” is really about being concerned that things aren’t going to turn out well, so those who don’t like what Folau had to say are perhaps upset that the world isn’t still the way *they* want it. Or maybe they’re concerned that the Lord’s vision isn’t coming to pass... that would be a better interpretation to put on it.

For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen. Ah, right, we need not worry or fall into temptation, because He’s got this. It’s going to be okay. Take a deep breath and relax. With any luck, now you can look at this Folau situation with the same compassion for him that you’re asking him to display because really we all want the same thing: heaven on earth.

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Special Event!

Faith Green Had an Incredible Near Death Experience (NDE) and Will Be Speaking To Us About It

A friend of mine produces the “Spirit Sisters Podcast,” where she interviews women who have had paranormal, spiritual and near death experiences. I came across one episode where she interviews Faith Green, and quite frankly it is one of the most interesting near death experience accounts I’ve ever come across. It is so interesting that I’ve invited her down to speak to us, and she’s agreed. After some negotiation we are pleased to confirm

that Faith will speak to us on **Monday September 16th, 7pm**. This is the kind of event that we hope that people will invite their friends to, because the story is just that good.

I would encourage you to listen to the podcast before coming, and you can just Google “Spirit Sisters Podcast” and then scroll down to the one titled, “Hell on the Way to Heaven - Faith's Near-Death Experience.” It’s an hour long, but I think you’ll find the time well spent. Faith talks about how she had dealt with drug addiction, relationship abuse, and how it impacted the spirits who were with her. She also got a look into the future as to what would happen if she chose to stay in the afterlife, versus what would happen if she returned.

There’s a lot happening in this story, and so much of it is compatible with New Church theology, that I expect it will be a useful evening for us as well as for her. I really hope that you can prioritize this event on your calendar and invite some friends to come along too. It will be well worth it!

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Adelaide Retreat Booking Reminder

If you are interested in attending the next Australian New Church Retreat, this is your reminder to actually book in. We need as many bookings as possible by **September 1** so that we know if we have enough to actually hold a retreat. These events are always enjoyed by the participants, and a good way to catch up with old friends while also making new ones. Plus you’ll learn something too! Oh, and most importantly you won’t have to cook or do dishes for a week. What more could you want?

You can get a full look at all the details on newchurch.net.au, but here’s a quick rundown of the most important information:

The 2020 New Church Retreat will be held from **Monday January 6th to Sunday January 12th 2020** at the Nunyara Conference Centre. Nunyara is situated 20 minutes from the Adelaide CBD, on spacious grounds in the Adelaide Hills, with an enviable view of the city. ‘Nunyara’, means ‘place of healing’ according to the Kaurna people.

The cost of the retreat includes the full week of accommodation and full catering. Accommodation is in either an air-conditioned room separated into two twin rooms with single beds and a shared bathroom or a shared room with bunk beds and shared facilities. Rooms will be allocated dependent upon bookings, the twin room price below is for a guaranteed twin share room, subject to availability. Unfortunately we are not in a position to offer single rooms.

Bookings are subject to availability and a deposit will need to be paid before specific rooms are confirmed in writing. A pillow and a blanket are provided, other linen including a towel can be hired on request with your booking.

Adult (18+)	\$500
Twin Room	\$550 (per person)
Student (14-17)	\$440

Young People (9-13) \$375

Children (3-8) \$250

Pre-School (0-2) Free

A pensioner holding a current Australian Government issued Pensioner Concession Card will be eligible for \$45 off the adult or twin share rate per pensioner.

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Pastor's Breakfast

We've had a couple of these so far, and it looks like we're going to have a third. The success of them has encouraged the Pastor to hone his technique and raise his game, so with any luck the pancakes will be even better this time... and maybe we'll have some bacon too. Bacon definitely makes pancakes better. This is scheduled for **August 18th, 8:30 am**. Spiritual pancakes and bacon to follow at 10am.

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Society Meeting

We've got a society meeting scheduled for **August 25th**, so please come if you can. Among the items on the agenda will be an update on the project to update the gardens behind Baringa. Norm Heldon put a lot of effort into them, and they've fallen into disrepair since he's been heaven-ized, so we're in the process of getting some professional help to get them back into good order. Also there will be updates on other projects and endeavours, as well as some planning for the Halloween party... which will be here sooner than you expect!

If any of these are of interest to you, or if you have any project of your own that you'd like to propose, these meetings are the place to do it.

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Parlour Games Night

Scrabble, Five Crowns, Forbidden Island - what's your fancy? These are just some of the games that will be on offer on **Saturday, Aug. 17th 7pm** during our Parlour Games Night.

Many games and nibbles will be provided; bring your own, bring a friend, bring a plate to share if you are so moved. Let's hunker down on a cool winter's night for some good, old-fashioned fun together!

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Breaking the Shell, *Connecting the Spiritual Cascade to the Physical with New Church Science.*

The Swedenborg Scientific Association would like to introduce the ***Theistic Science Group***, a collaboration of New Church scientists and theologians working on a model of scientific principles based on the axiom of spiritual-natural causation. If natural things

and processes are derived from spiritual causes, how can these be described in scientific terms?

Using doctrines from Swedenborg's scientific and theological works, the *Theistic Science Group* asks "How does spirit descend into nature, creating as it comes?" Questions of the origin of matter, Divine order in nature, and the emergence of organic forms are being addressed by the group. Their process will be reported at this first *Theistic Science Symposium*.

Saturday, October 12, 2019, 9AM–5PM, Pendleton Hall, Bryn Athyn College, Bryn Athyn, PA. Free registration requested.

See <http://swedenborg-philosophy.org> for details, updates, and registration. Housing available for a charge at the BA College. Talks will be live-streamed and put on *YouTube*.
Contact: SwedenborgScientific@gmail.com.

Topics as follows

Ron Horvath, chairman, on who and what is the *Theistic Science Group*,

Reuben Bell – The Emergence of Organic Forms

Andy Heilman – Introduction to discrete degrees in New Church Science

Ian Thompson – Enneads of Spiritual and Physical Sub-degrees

Steve Smith– Puzzles and Fine-Tuning in Physics and Biology,

Ian Thompson – A Mechanism for Spiritual Influx into the Physical

Ron Horvath – Summary remarks: Where are we going from here? Not just an intellectual experience; a call to action in research and observations of spirit acting into nature according to the principles discussed today.

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Birthdays

Happy Birthday to **Emily Kermond** (7th), **Rhonda Hall** (12th), **Rebekah Horner** (17th), **Larah Walsh** (21st), **Ralph Horner** (30th)

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