



The New Church Newsletter

Hurstville Society November 2020

Contents

[A Story About the Misapplication of Doctrine](#) by Rev Todd Beiswenger

[October 2020 Virtual Women's Weekend](#)

[New, Hurstville New Church Youtube Channel](#)

[General Church Assembly Update](#)

[In Memory of Frank Rose](#)

[Birthdays](#)

A Story About the Misapplication of Doctrine

By Rev Todd Beiswenger

I couldn't believe it. Within the walls of Baringa we were housing a liar. We'd been doing this for years and had done nothing about it. This liar, also known as a bathroom scales, was something I utilized every now and again. It kept giving me larger numbers than I thought was actually correct. I decided to be smart about it, and before I would step on it the next time I reminded that scale that "Thou shalt not bear false witness" is one of the Ten Commandments, and that it would be wise of it to show accordingly. It didn't listen.

Not long later my wife, the resident health nut, decided she would take a month and go "sugar free," and had invited me to join along. I really have a very limited desire to inflict misery on myself, so I started thinking about how to justify not participating. It wasn't too hard. You know that pleasing feeling you get when you learn something cool? Well, that is the effect of consuming spiritual food, and as such, that's the reason why natural food tastes so good: because it corresponds to that effect we get from consuming spiritual food. We have an appetite because it corresponds to the desire for knowledge (AC 1480). So if eating corresponds to gaining knowledge, surely you wouldn't want to limit the intake of knowledge?

Despite my rock solid justification for consumption as usual, somehow memories of prophets and Jesus fasting crept into my consciousness, casting doubt about my interpretation of the aforementioned passage. Plus, not too long ago I'd seen a picture of myself from 22 years ago and thought it would be nice to look that way again. I thought I'd adopt a more palatable plan and go "low sugar," figuring that if it was less miserable, then I'd be more likely to stick with it. A couple weeks into the process I wasn't really seeing much of a result. The problem was clearly that deceitful, manipulative scale. I had noticed that my weight seemed to fluctuate day to day quite a bit, one day it showed I weighed 4kgs more than the previous day. It was playing games with me. This just proved to me that this scale was clearly a pawn of the enemy. Lying had become such a habit for it that it could no longer keep its story straight.

I decided to look on Amazon to see how much a new, non-evil, scale would cost. I found a perfect one. This scale has sensors in it, and it can wirelessly connect to an app on my phone that will tell me not only weight, but BMI (body mass index), body fat percentage and a host of other data points. "Maybe" I thought, "I do weigh more, but its muscle from the gym?!" I had been going regularly, and really, I don't care about weight, but I didn't want to end up like many other pastors whose belt buckles live in a place where they are never to be seen. So with great hope I stepped on the scale, and looked over at my phone app to see what all the numbers would be. It turns out that this scale would wield the hammer of truth on me, joining in solidarity with its mate from Baringa, and then taking things a bit further. You see, in the app, it didn't just declare a number, but actually rendered a judgment about that number, and it said, quite literally, that I am "overweight." I kept on the "low sugar" diet for a couple more weeks, and saw some minor improvement. But I also found that this regimen was leaving me low on energy, and more irritable than

usual. I started to wonder if there was a doctrinal solution to this. I decided to look up the correspondence of sugar. Well, none is given. Sugar is only mentioned in the Writings a few times, but only in reference to something else. However, we can find information about the meaning of “sweet” and “honey.” Take a look at this: “That ‘honey’ denotes delight is because it is sweet, and everything sweet in the natural world corresponds to what is delightful and pleasant in the spiritual world” (AC 5620). Clearly this is why I was miserable and irritable! By denying sweet things I was not allowing myself to feel the effect of that which was delightful and pleasant in the spiritual world! Sugar is not the enemy, sugar is my friend!

This really got me thinking... maybe I’m going about this all wrong. The Lord never tells us not to eat sweet things, and come to think of it, He never tells us to eliminate fat from our bodies either. Fat throughout the Bible is actually a good thing! I have heaps of examples to back this up, and the Writings agree. “‘Fat’ means the celestial itself, which also is the Lord’s. The celestial consists in everything that is an aspect of love” (AC 353). In a number of places we’re taught that “fat” is more specifically a symbol of the good things done that are a product of our love.

This is why there are heaps of rules given to the Israelites about giving the fat of animals to the Lord via sacrifice, because we’re supposed to worship Him by doing good things from a loving intention. Then it hit me: have you ever seen a skinny Buddha? He’s a happy, smiling, fat guy. With all the symbolism we’ve been looking at from the Ancient Church that found its way into modern religions, you’ve got to think that the reason Buddha is portrayed as fat is because he’s loving. (Is that also the reason we always see Jesus as skinny? Because He came to give us the truth, not the love? Maybe.) So being fat is a good thing, right? It’s an indication we have lots of love!

I wondered if there were limits to it though. Some people consider gluttony a sin, but guess what, if you look up any form of the word “glutton” or “gluttony” in the Writings, you’ll come up with the Lord telling us that He’s going to make us drunk and fat! “And you will eat fat till you are glutted and drink blood till you are drunk, from My sacrifice which I will sacrifice for you. You will be glutted at My table with horse and chariot, with the mighty, and with every man of war” (Ezekiel 39:18-19).”

You’ll find something similar in Isaiah 55:2
Why do you spend money for *what is* not
bread, And your wages for *what* does not satisfy? Listen carefully to Me, and eat *what is*
good. And let your soul delight itself in fatness.

I don’t know about you, but letting my soul delight in fatness sounds pretty good to me. I certainly would delight in having some chocolate chip cookies, which would allow me to participate in the correspondences of appetite, sweetness and fatness... all of which are good things!

My wife, well, she seems unconvinced of my logic. She says that our bodies are “temples” and that they are “not our own,” (1 Corinthians 6:19) and that we need to keep them in

good working order so that we can be useful to others. Maybe so, but I tend to think that I'm more useful when I'm hopped up on sugar and caffeine as opposed to not. So yes, this may leave me "overweight." But heaven isn't for skinny people, or muscly ones, it's for kind and useful ones, and definitely not for lying scales.

[top](#)

October 2020 Virtual Women's Weekend

This spring's women's weekend was a special one: whereas women relatively local to Sydney had gathered in person for insights & fellowship in August 2019 and March 2020, our October 16-18th Virtual Women's Weekend was attended by women not only from Sydney and Canberra as before, but also Adelaide, Melbourne and Perth. We were sad not to be able to be physically together for this event, but so glad to have women from across the country joining us, this time! A total of ten ladies gathered via Zoom on Friday evening, Saturday and Sunday afternoon for a variety of activities ranging from ice breakers and sharing of personal charitable project experience to examination and discussion of 'Rachel' from the Bible and the topic of 'Use' and instruction in JennTangles (Zentangle), with casual conversations and catch-ups mixed in throughout.

We didn't get to experience the full range of interactions we would have, sharing quarters for 36 hours, however we made the most of what we had and were thankful to have access to the technology that enabled this to happen at all. If our pattern continues, we'll look forward to getting together again – hopefully in person, presuming all goes well!! – in autumn 2021, however only time will tell. In the meantime, we wish everyone good health and much joy, and that we may all be a blessing to those around us!

[top](#)

New, Hurstville New Church YouTube Channel

You may have seen an article I wrote for *New Church Life*, that was also published in *The New Age*, about my journey of trying to grow my YouTube channel. In that article I lay out a number of things that have gone right, and things that have gone wrong as I try to get the teachings of the New Church out to a wider audience. Despite the things that have gone right, the one thing that keeps bothering me is that despite my subscriber base increasing every month, I'm really not seeing an increase in views when I publish the next video. So I keep asking myself how can I do better in this area?

I've had this thought in my mind that one of the obstacles to the growth of the channel is the live-streamed worship services. You see, if you watch a video on my channel, YouTube is likely to recommend another video from my channel the next time you go to YouTube. So if you watched one of the videos that I promoted, one that was short, nicely edited and such, but the next one you get is a worship service... well, you might not watch a whole lot of that. So you click off. Then if the next one is a worship service, you probably don't click on it at all, and the next thing you know YouTube isn't recommending my videos to you even though you already subscribed to the channel.

By putting the worship services on a separate channel just means that if you've watched one of my videos, the next video that will be put on the channel will also be of a similar style, which hasn't currently been the case. Hopefully this will lead to greater views by people who have viewed before, and overall more non-paid views.

I think this idea also makes sense from the perspective of the church, in that by having a "Hurstville New Church" channel, we can put that on something like the new sign out front that we're working on. This channel will also be a good place for me to upload any classes that get recorded on Zoom. In fact, I've started doing that already. The only downside is the potential for losing people who have been watching the worship services over to the new channel. To that end I did post a video on the original channel to let them know what is going on, and for now I'm creating weekly update post on YouTube that has the link to the worship service on the new channel. I've also put a link on our website to the new channel, or you can access it through this link:

https://youtube.com/channel/UCfIPEk7DRiaq0eIL_xtwSIA

We'll see how it goes, but so far it seems to be working. If you have any difficulty with any of this, please let me know!

[top](#)

General Church Assembly Update

The original plan was to have an assembly in Bryn Athyn this past June, celebrating the 250th anniversary of the Lord's disciples being sent out in heaven to proclaim that "The Lord God Jesus Christ reigns." Well, I don't have to tell anybody why that assembly didn't happen last year. Their "plan B" was just to have it in June 2021, however they've now officially scrapped that idea too. Considering that the GC has members, societies and schools all around the world, they were really wanting this to be an event with a strong international presence, but the odds of that being feasible by June are pretty low. Of course, travel by June may be possible, but the logistics of pulling the event together in such uncertain times makes planning basically impossible. For example, I was supposed to be a presenter at the assembly, and they certainly can't count on me now.

That said, the GC is planning to have clergy meetings in June. At this point I don't know that I'll bother to go. I'd like to, but if it is still going to require a 2 week quarantine to return, it probably doesn't make a whole lot of sense. Not to mention that I've heard plenty of stories of Australians having a hard time getting a flight to come back, and I don't really want to get stuck over there. So we'll see how things look as the time gets closer, but at this point I'll probably just have to give it a miss.

[top](#)

In Memory of Frank Rose



Many readers will fondly remember **Rev Frank and Louise Rose** who served the Hurstville Society for 3 months from June 2006 when we were without a pastor. Frank passed into the spiritual world on 15th October at the age of 93. His photo hangs in our minister gallery in Baringa as well as one of his beautiful watercolour paintings.

Our newsletter of July 2006 reports, “It has been a pleasure to welcome **Rev Frank Rose** and his wife **Louise** who arrived in time for our **June 19th** celebrations. The first of these events occurred on Saturday evening 17th June with a **Progressive Dinner** beginning at the home of **Murray and Lori Heldon** progressing to Baringa for the main course and finishing at the home of **Mike and Kerry Lockhart** for dessert.

Special thanks for a wonderful evening go to the hosts mentioned above and to **Trevor and Maureen Mahy** who not only joined us for the evening but also cooked the main course. Frank gave a talk on what he had learnt in 50 years as a pastor about how to grow the church, debunking some popular myths and telling us that his last pastorate in Tucson which enjoyed significant growth was due to a lengthy stay as pastor (not changing your pastor every three years!) and concentrating on getting “satisfied customers” or making sure you meet the needs of the people you are serving.”

In the time Frank and Louise were here Frank also conducted the funeral of **Theo Kirsten** and the baptism of **Matthew Cooper**. He ran a series of classes in *Living Spiritually* and also classes in watercolour painting.

Birthdays

Happy Birthday to **Cliff Adamou** (2nd), **Jesse Horner** (3rd), **Brian Heldon** (8th), **Cathy Kermond** (11th), **Skye Horner** (11th), **Lori Heldon** (30th)