



## **The New Church Newsletter**

**Hurstville Society April 2022**

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## **The New Church Newsletter**

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### **Putin's Slavery**

by Rev Todd Beiswenger

I remember it clearly, because the line just didn't make any sense. As a kid, the original Star Wars movie was on TV pretty regularly, so I got to see this scene a number of times, and every time I just didn't think what Obi-Wan Kenobi said was really true. You see, at the end for the movie, we get a scene where Obi-Wan Kenobi and Darth Vader are in a lightsaber duel. Kenobi says, "You can't win Darth. Strike me down and I'll become more powerful than you can imagine." Vader called Kenobi's bluff, killed him, and it seemed quite clear that Vader not only won the duel, but was the more powerful warrior.

As I've gotten older, and more educated through the Writings, I've come to think that actually Kenobi was right. Evil can't win, and even when it seems like it is, it isn't. Let's take for an example the war in Ukraine. While the invasion doesn't seem to be going as well for Putin as he had planned, it does seem that evil is having its day. You can rationalize that Putin is acting out because NATO expanded further east than promised, but still Putin is unleashing a great evil on the innocent people of Ukraine. While the final outcome isn't clear at the time of writing, it does look like Russia will at least come away with some sort of victory as the West refuses to enter a direct war with Russia.

All of this is to say that like Vader, Russia looks more powerful than its enemy. But the Writings give us a different perspective to think from, teaching us that at its core, all evil is slavery. Think about that. Do you think of slaves as "powerful?" I don't. People want to be freed from slavery so they can regain their power. This isn't rocket science, right? You don't have African-Americans wishing they could be slaves again so they could regain all of their power! The Israelites didn't need God to free them from Egypt because they were so powerful as slaves!

Swedenborg gives us a great little story at the end of *Divine Providence* which illustrates the slavery of evil. He's speaking with some evil spirits, and they ask him to write about them. They say,

[W]e cannot help harassing [good spirits and angels, and so] we are driven off and cast into hell, where we suffer terribly."

I said, "Why do you harass good people?" They answered that they could not help it, it was as though a rage came over them when they saw angels and sensed the divine aura around them. I said, "This makes you like wild animals." When they heard this, a rage came over them that looked like blazing hatred, and to prevent them from doing any harm, they were taken back into hell. (DP 340)

Do you see that? In those few lines we are told twice that they couldn't help themselves from being evil. They're like wild animals because they have no control over themselves. They're slaves.

Good people are the opposite because they have control over themselves. You may recall that a couple of years ago there was a tragic accident in Sydney. Danny Abdullah, a father of six sent his three oldest children and their cousin down the street to buy some ice cream. What happened on the way was that Sam Davidson, who was drunk and hopped up on drugs, drove his car off the road and ran over the four children. They were all killed, and a couple of others were injured as well. Davidson was a slave to his addictions, and once again evil had won the day. Or so it seemed.

The Abdullah's were God-fearing Christians. Evil feeds off of making us miserable, and what better way to make people miserable than to kill their children. I'm sure the demons were thinking big, hoping to destroy their faith in God in order to make them slaves as well. Yet that's not what happened. I heard an interview with the Abdullah's recently, and this is what they said:

"Grief with faith gives hope. We don't live in the past. The kids are in front of us. We're going to be reunited with them in the next life. That's what faith does. As Christians it does give us that hope that we'll see them in the next life, and we know that 100%. They're preparing a place for us now."

"To be honest, Danny and I have built our family, and Christ has always been in the middle of the family. We've still got our family, and we've grabbed them close to us and focused on the healing and that's why we were able to forgive and to accept that these children have entered into the kingdom of God. Rather than say we have lost our kids, we were saying we were blessed because our kids are in heaven, they made it to heaven."

"That's all we ever wanted was to get our kids to heaven."

Honestly, I was blown away hearing them speak. We're taught in the Writings that what the Lord wants is a heaven from the human race. He wants us to become angels. These people lost their children and are basically feeling like they won the lottery. Why? Because they know their kids are in heaven. As such they have forgiven Davidson, and have acknowledged that his parents have essentially lost a child too in this tragedy. Wow. Those are not the words of victims, but victors.

This is how evil ultimately loses. They struck down those children, but in doing so they populated heaven, thus actually defeating their own purpose. What we often forget is the power multiplier for the good side when we add just one angel to the ledger. The Writings tell us that one angel "is more powerful than ten thousands of spirits in hell," and so the Writings confirm what Kenobi said because with those four children heaven now has more power than the hells can imagine. Can you imagine fighting a war where if you kill one of

your enemy, they multiply not by one, or ten, but by tens of thousands? How could hell possibly win?

They can't and I think they know it. When you think about it, they really only have a narrow window of opportunity – the course of this lifetime – to snag us for their slave. There are plenty of people who will put forth hellish propaganda, saying that forgiveness is an “emotion,” and that we cannot choose our emotions, and so we are not to blame if we cannot forgive somebody. But “cannot” is the same word used by the evil spirits who “cannot” refrain from assaulting the good ones. If we say we “cannot” forgive somebody, we too are slaves... slaves to that feeling, that mindset and that anger.

Putin is no different. It has been well documented that he believes that the fall of the USSR is the greatest tragedy of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. He would like to restore the sphere of influence that Russia used to have. Basically, he “cannot” let go of the past. I don't know about you, but if a person “cannot” let go of something, that sounds like slavery to me. Putin's solution is simple. He thinks that if he strikes down his enemy, he will gain more power. Darth Vader had the same mindset in Star Wars. But the Writings actually confirm that Kenobi was right. Evil can't win, not really. The spiritual reality is often much different than what we see in the physical world. Putin may appear to be powerful, and he may appear to be getting some military victories, but what he's really doing is becoming a slave of the hells, becoming a victim, not a victor... and in the process he's making his enemies more powerful than he can possibly imagine.

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## **In Memory of Reverend Richard John Keyworth**

5<sup>th</sup> July 1943 to 4<sup>th</sup> March 2022



On the 4<sup>th</sup> of March, word was sent out that Rev Dick Keyworth passed away into the spiritual world. He had reported having COVID a few days prior, and had gone into hospital. The doctors believed that he had a heart attack, from which he was recovering. He was put on ventilation but had seemed to be recovering, but then took a sudden turn for the worse and passed away.

My first interaction with **Dick** and **Gill** was nearly ten years ago. At the time I had been ordained for just under a year, so I was still very new to the ministry life. We'd come to Australia on a visitor's visa in March 2012, and flew to New Zealand in May as a way of renewing our Australian tourist visa and meeting the people of the Auckland New Church. It will be no surprise to you that the Keyworths offered to host us while we were in Auckland. This, of course, was a nice offer, but

you may not know this about me... you see, at the time one of the most terrifying things of pastoral life for me was being invited to other people's homes. What if they served food that I just couldn't stomach? What if I was uncomfortable being in their home? What if I was uncomfortable with the people? I knew all of that was part of the job, and getting to know a colleague seemed like a reasonable idea. I decided to just plunge into the unknown and agreed to stay with them for a few days.

On the trip over, we had some visa issues, which resulted in us missing our flight and catching another that was a red-eye special and put us at the Keyworth's at about 6:30am the next morning. "What are they going to think of us?" I wondered. "Were we disrupting their plans? Would they be upset? Was it okay to arrive at their place at this early hour?" At the time Zach was only 5 years old, so how would they deal with a potentially cranky, under-slept kid? All sorts of thoughts ran through my mind, all of which feel rather silly now. Clearly I didn't know the Keyworths. They were no strangers to disruption and plans gone awry! We arrived and the house was already up and active. I explained what had happened, and it turns out there was probably no better family to crash with when you've got a young, exhausted child with you. Serving as foster parents for 30 years at that point, they had certainly seen worse. They understood that what we needed most was some sleep, so we laid down for a couple of hours, refreshed, and started again.

I saw that while Dick and Gill were a pastoral family, with ideals that reached to the highest heavens, but they also lived in the real world. It was so good to just be able to relax. We had a great time touring around with them the next couple of days.

Now, while we did have a good time, there was a price to be paid. You see, in Dick's eyes this was his shot to bend the ear of the new, young pastor, and so for those couple of days I'm pretty sure I heard the "Greatest Hits" of Dick's sermons. "Fish on the right side of the boat," he said. That is, if you want to grow the church, you do it by actually doing good things in the world, not by lecturing. In case I didn't hear it on that trip, he was sure to repeat that message to me many times over the years. I've found out in listening to others eulogize him that apparently he promoted that message to everybody, whenever he had the chance.

It's a good message to put out there, and coming from him I particularly appreciate it because he not only talked the talk, but he walked the talk. Many have observed that the Lord called fisherman to be His first disciples, and that he instructed them to become fishers of men. Dick was a fisherman, and he became a disciple too, fishing for men. He cared about the Writings, and he knew the doctrine well, yet what made him universally respected by all who knew him was that he did his fishing on the right side of the boat just as he called us to do.

He's now doing his fishing in the spiritual world, and while we'll miss him here, I'm sure that he's now able to effect even more goodness into this world than he ever could before.



## Vale Rev Richard Keyworth

by Owen and Margaret Heldon



Richard was born in New Zealand and attended the New Church in Newton Road, Auckland. He decided to become a minister and went to the UK for his training, afterwards coming to Australia to serve the Adelaide New Church then returning home to be pastor of the Auckland New Church.

He enjoyed attending church camps, many of them here in Australia. It is from these camps that we were able to get to know Dick, his lovely wife Gillian, as well as their children. They were always a lot of fun and Dick had a wonderful way of connecting with all ages in his instructional sessions. He

was also musical, playing his guitar and singing to entertain us.

Thanks to the wonders of modern technology it warmed our hearts to be able to watch the live-streaming of Dick's funeral service from the Purewa Cemetery and Crematorium in Auckland on Friday 18<sup>th</sup> March. In a touching closing the Rev David Millar, Director of Spiritual Training of the Australian New Church College, had recorded a video of himself giving the final prayer and committal to his friend, mentor and colleague in ministry.



### **New Church Family Camp Adelaide Hills January 2020**

Revs Dick Keyworth, Julian Duckworth, Howard Thompson, Todd, Ros Taylor, David Millar Jane Siebert

## **Sigourney Weaver with a Baringa Display Case!**

A few months ago we had Baringa repaired and repainted, and part of that project was to clean the place out of things that we just didn't need or want anymore. One of those items was a display case that was made by the late **John Hall** many years ago. It was designed to be in the church and be the place to put any brochures, pamphlets, newsletters, etc. However, in the ten years I've been here, it has resided in the corner of the Baringa bookroom and none of the materials on it ever seem to leave it.

Anyway, the point is that we listed the display case on Facebook Marketplace, and a woman contacted me who wanted to acquire it. However, about an hour after I agreed to this, I had another woman contact me who wanted to use the unit for a TV show set. Apparently they were creating an old library, and thought it would be perfect for that. This sounded interesting to me, but the first woman was already on the way to pick it up.

However, when she arrived it was clear that she wasn't going home with it. Her car was just way too small. I told her about the TV woman, and said that I'd like to see if there was a way that everybody could win. I called the TV woman. It turns out that the studio only needed the display unit for a few days, and they were willing to pick it up and deliver it to the first woman when they were done with it. Plus they made a donation to the church. Everybody was happy.

If you want to see this hand made wooden display case, look out for it on the show "The Lost Flowers of Alice Hart" starring Sigourney Weaver on Amazon Prime. The show tells the compelling story of a young girl, Alice Hart, whose violent childhood casts a dark shadow over her adult life. After a family tragedy in which she loses both her abusive father and beloved mother in a mysterious fire, 9-year-old Alice is taken to live with her grandmother June on a flower farm, where she learns that there are secrets within secrets about her and her family's past.

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## **The Tickerstish**

Last month's lead article opened with the following sentence: "I faded into a dreamlike visionary state in which an evil tickerstish demon's cackling laughter jarred my nerves." As you may recall, the article included an account of a demon that was described as a "trickster." Production of the monthly newsletter includes having a couple of other people who help with formatting, fix typos, and call to my attention the need for clarification or correction. However, key to receiving such advice is actually heeding it.

You see, my faithful editors sent me an email prior to publication saying essentially, "What is this word 'tickerstish?'" The problem is that despite what was actually typed, my brain read it as it was intended: tricksterish. Now, to me even "tricksterish" is an unusual word, so it wasn't surprising that it was questioned. Therefore I just explained that I was quoting from the author, and instructed them to just run with it.

A few days later Jenn sent me an email after reading the newsletter asking, what does the word "tickerstish" mean?

I said, "What?!"

"Tickerstish."

I started laughing because suddenly it all made sense. I checked the newsletter and sure enough not only had I made a typo, but I didn't even see it when it was called to my attention. However, we now have a bit of a new inside joke in the house. Whenever we feel the hells pouring their lies into our minds, we say, "Ah, the tickerstish is kicking up a fuss." We find that using such a silly word to name the hells lightens things up a bit, and can bring a laugh and a smile to a moment when we're not feeling our best. Part of the fun for me is that so often we have these images of demons as red skinned, horned creatures who we think have so much power, but to call it instead a "tickerstish" just seems to take away all of that and reduce the image to more of a moronic clown that actually isn't very smart or scary. So instead of believing the lies it is injecting into our minds, it is easier to dismiss it, because, after all, who listens to a tickerstish?

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## April Services

It is going to be a busy month in April. Here's a quick rundown of what is coming up:

**3 April** – Pulpit swap with Rev Howard Thompson of the Roseville New Church. We've been doing these for a while, and as always it is a good way to mix things up a bit. Like our normal services, this will be livestreamed on YouTube.

**10 April** – Palm Sunday. The Saviour knows it is time to make a move, so He travels to Jerusalem where His followers think He'll take over as king.

**15 April** – Good Friday. Things don't go as Jesus' followers imagined. Betrayal by one of His own leads to His arrest. The Jewish authorities call for His death, and in order to appease the crowd the Roman government grants the request. This service will include the Holy Supper.

**17 April** – Easter Sunday. Hard to believe, but He is risen. Funny thing is that He told them that all of this would happen, and that He would rise. Maybe they should have paid more attention to what He said. Maybe we should pay more attention.

**24 April** – ANZAC Day Service. We are blessed to be living in a peaceful nation, but that peace did not come free. In this service we honour Australia's fallen heroes.

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## New Class Schedule

Time keeps moving forward, and as a result all of our congregation is, well, getting older. Going out at night these days is simply less appealing, and with more people having retired, it opens up different parts of the day. As a result, at our last society meeting we decided to change up our doctrinal class schedule. Instead of meeting on Monday evenings twice a month, we're going to try meeting on Thursday mornings at 11am once a month. Our first one will be on **April 7<sup>th</sup>**.

We still plan to run an approximately one hour class, and we'll follow it up with a social bring-your-own lunch. I still intend to offer the classes on Zoom and YouTube live stream for anybody who can't or doesn't want to physically be here. I will publish links to classes in our weekly update as usual, but if for some reason you're not on that weekly email list, but want to get the links for class, just let me know and I'll add you in.

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## Easter Food Drive

While there is a war in Ukraine, there are actually plenty of problems to deal with in our own country. While massive flooding in certain parts of the state and western Sydney have certainly garnered some headlines, the heavy rain affected a lot of people even if their homes weren't 15 meters under water. In an effort to help out locally affected people we do want to continue our support of the Kogarah Store House by supplying them with various non-perishable food and pantry items. This year we're going to collect up through Easter (**April 17**) so as to give as many people the chance to contribute as possible.

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## Belated Clean Up Australia Day

Clean Up Australia Day is traditionally on the first Sunday of March - this year, March 6th. A small crew of HNC folk have pitched in to help clean up our neighbourhood these past few years, and would have again on March 6th except for its coincidence with a church working bee! As such, we decided to postpone our Cleaning Up effort: let's get out there at **8:30, Sunday, April 10th**, and collect some discarded face masks and fast food containers! We'll start and end at the church: bags will be provided, bring gloves if you're so inclined. Any questions, talk to Jenn. Thanks, in advance!

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## Birthdays

Happy Birthday to **Todd Beiswenger** (3<sup>rd</sup>), **Donna Heldon** (5<sup>th</sup>) **Dylan Johnson** (7<sup>th</sup>), **Riley Evans** (11<sup>th</sup>), **Aneira Robson** (14<sup>th</sup>) **Huiling Sun** (20<sup>th</sup>), **Kerry Horner** (22<sup>nd</sup>), **David Horner** (25<sup>th</sup>), **Lucy Evans** (27<sup>th</sup>), **April Hams** (28<sup>th</sup>). Missed last month **Margaret Ward** 7<sup>th</sup> March – Sorry.

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