



## **The New Church Newsletter**

**Hurstville Society June 2022**

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## A Native American New Churchman Explores Psychedelics

By Rev. Willard Heinrichs

*Editor's Note: It's not my intention to write about psychedelics every month. In fact, I had intended to finish the topic last month, and this article was supposed to go in last month's newsletter but we ran out of space. While Rev. Heinrichs stated to me that he has no desire to have a psychedelic experience himself, I do find his story about them and the changing views of them in Native American culture fascinating.*

Back in the late 1960s, through the course of my pastoral visiting in the western United States, I made friends with a man known in Native American circles as "Buckskin," but more commonly called "Slim." He's long since graduated to the spiritual world now. After the death of his missionary parents, he was orphaned and then raised by Native Americans in the mid-west. Slim studied and practiced for a portion of his life Native American religious practices and crafts – the crafts to the end of his life. Ultimately he became known to chiefs, shamans, and elders of numerous tribes to the point that he was able to sit in on meetings of the Grand Medicine Lodge. In mid-life he found the Heavenly Doctrine and converted to the New Church, becoming a very interested and thoughtful student of the Heavenly Doctrine who exhibited a humble loyalty to their teachings as he found them in the text of revelation.

On occasion he expressed a knowledge of the teachings and unique insights as regards their application, given his unusual background, that both surprised and delighted me. Also when he discovered passages that looked in a different direction than what he originally believed, his response could be summed up as: "If this is what the Lord says, then that is what is true." He would then move on, incorporating the new Divine information, into his belief system.

One of his interests was investigating the religious beliefs and practices of Native Americans in the light of the Heavenly Doctrine. To accomplish this he carried on an extensive written correspondence with chiefs, shaman and, "old people" of numerous tribes. It was from these interactions that led him to investigate the use of psychedelics in spiritual experience. The predominant testimony that he received from his correspondents was that the "old people" had told them that originally there was no use of psychedelics associated with religious experience. No such external thing was desired or needed.

But, they said, as decline set in with various tribes there were those that began to experiment in the use of these things to gain religious experiences. At first such people were expelled from the tribes, in part because the spirits that were contacted in the experiences were of a doubtful character, not of the obvious good character of those that were involved without the use of psychedelics. However, his correspondents reported to Slim that they were told by the old people that as spiritual and moral deterioration continued in the tribes, and legitimate spiritual experiences without the use of psychedelics became rare, proponents of the use of psychedelics were no longer expelled, but were more and more accepted, and the use of psychedelics in some tribes, especially in the southwest U.S.A., became the standard in some quarters. But originally this was not so.

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## **CSIRO to Develop Psychedelic Medicine**

Just as I had put the topic of psychedelics down, I came across an article on news.com.au that shows that the Hurstville newsletter on the topic was actually a little ahead of the curve. The article states that CSIRO is now working with biomedical companies to improve and develop medicinal psychedelics in Australia. Their goal is to “improve and develop psychedelics to help people with mental health issues, including depression, addiction and post-traumatic stress disorder.”

Researchers are aiming to determine whether they can be an effective treatment with psychotherapy – the CSIRO says the results have been promising so far.

“CSIRO is well-placed to contribute to this emerging area of research, which could lead to life-changing advancements in mental health,” CSIRO scientist Peter Duggan said.

“Clinical trials, both here and internationally, have been using known psychedelics – usually MDMA or psilocybin ... with impressive results, but there’s still much to be learnt about how these drugs work and how improvements to their chemical composition could enhance patient outcomes.

“By working with local industry to improve drug design and the patient experience, CSIRO can push Australia into a leadership position in the development of these potentially life-changing medications.”

“Natural MedTech is working to develop psychedelic treatments for several unmet neurological disorders,” chief executive Mark Hestermann said.

<https://www.news.com.au/lifestyle/health/mental-health/csiro-working-with-biomedical-companies-to-improve-and-develop-medicinal-psychedelics/news-story/6c2a6e5dedaf5aadb62ba2abfb76f21>

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## **June Class – Licentious Love**

As reported previously, we’ve moved our classes schedule to once a month on Thursday mornings at 11am, and the June class will be on Thursday the 2<sup>nd</sup>. The class should run for about an hour, and afterwards it will be a BYO lunch in Baringa.

The topic for this class is going to be “Licentious Love,” which is to say we’re going to take a bit of a tour through the ugly, second part of the book “Conjugal Love.” It’s been a while since I’ve worked through it myself, and so it has been interesting to read through it again with fresh eyes. One of the things that I find surprising in what I’ve read so far is what seems to me to be an acknowledgement of practical realities. Yes, there’s a call for keeping sex only within marriage, and all of the other ideals you’re probably familiar with, but at the same time it does read to me like the practicalities of the natural world were given more weight than I remember. Anyway, it should make for an interesting class and discussion.

As usual, I will make the class available via Zoom and YouTube live stream if you want to join in electronically. This will also mean that if you don't get this newsletter before the class happens, you will be able to watch the class online through the Hurstville New Church website or YouTube channel.

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## **New Church Day Celebrations**

It's time for our annual New Church Day celebrations, and as you might expect, we're holding them on Sunday June 19<sup>th</sup> this year. As per our custom lately we'll be having a family style, all ages church service at 10am, followed by a slaying of the dragon piñata and capped off with a pot luck lunch.

If you're interested in coming, particularly if you've got little children (we like to give New Church Day gifts to the younger ones), please RSVP to [jenn@beiswenger.net](mailto:jenn@beiswenger.net)

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## **Virtual Retreat ~ 7-10 July, 2022**

Once again, David Moffat is running a virtual retreat, following the one in January. It enables people from across the country (and the globe!) to meet together, considering a variety of topics, and we don't need to commit to attend every session either. So far, the program looks like this:

- Thursday 7 July
  - 10:00am - Question Time
  - 8:00pm - Question Time
- Friday 8 July
  - 10:00am - Responding to an Objection to Swedenborg, Rev David Moffat
  - 8:00pm - Women Reading the Bible: A discussion
- Saturday 9 July
  - 10:00am - Howard Thompson
- Sunday 10 July
  - 10:30am - Sacred Scripture, chapter 12.

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## **Online Class – The Creation Progression – July 29, 7pm**

Over the years we've done a number of pulpit swaps with the Roseville New Church, and now we're half way through a class swap. A few weeks ago David Moffat did his part and presented a class for the Hurstville Society via Zoom on "How to Think Spiritually." Next I'll be presenting for the Swedenborg Community Victoria (formerly known as the Melbourne New Church) on the topic of "The Creation Progression."

This presentation looks at how we create our own reality in this world. *True Christianity* states, "Every love has a purpose. If you understand all this in the right way, you will be able to see the universe as a coherent work from beginning to end, a work holding purposes, means, and results in indissoluble connection" (TCR 47). Let's make an attempt to understand all of this in "the right way" so that we can guard against believing things that are not true, and also bettering understanding why other people believe some things that to us may seem obviously not true

If you wish to join in, send David Moffat an email ([d\\_a\\_moffat@yahoo.com.au](mailto:d_a_moffat@yahoo.com.au)) to get on the mailing list for the link

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## **Women's Weekend ~ Dec 9-11, 2022!**

It's official, it's booked: our next women's weekend will again be held at The Tops and via Zoom over the early summer weekend of Dec 9-11, 2022! (*We were shooting for spring – this was the first available!*)

We'll have a mix of fun and inspiring sessions, we'll assemble birthing kits to send to pregnant women living in rural communities and low-resource settings around the world, and we'll definitely also take some time just to hang out with our 'sisters'. If you're a New Church-minded woman in Australia or New Zealand interested in jumping onto this bandwagon, whether in person or virtually – or if you've got any questions about our women's weekends – drop Jenn a line! ([jenn@beiswenger.net](mailto:jenn@beiswenger.net)) She looks forward to hearing from you.

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## **Ongoing Gifts of the Pandemic**

Let me be perfectly clear: I don't miss lock downs, travel restrictions and the atmosphere of fear that we experienced the last couple of years. However, just as the Lord promises, good things do come out of bad situations, and I thought I'd take this space to point out one that I've noticed. What I see is that these days there is a lot more Christian content being put online.

While it was well publicized that many churches resorted to streaming services, and using Zoom to connect with their congregations, there's also a lot more music that has been posted to YouTube the last couple of years as well. This has been a really welcome development as our long time pianist retired from the position, and a lot of the accompaniment music that the GC has recorded isn't of the highest quality... and there's

not a lot of it either. With music available on YouTube we can play some old hymns that the GC doesn't provide music for, or maybe upgrade the quality on the ones that they do. Not to mention it adds to the selection of music to choose from for preludes and postludes.

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## **Pastor to Clergy Meetings and Holiday**

For the first time since 2018 the General Church is holding clergy meetings in Bryn Athyn for the entire clergy. In 2019 we had regional meetings, and here in Hurstville you may recall we hosted the region which included Korea, Japan, New Zealand and Australia. Then we had 2020 and 2021 meetings cancelled, which brings us to 2022.

The meetings will run June 21-25 on the theme of "Serving Together." As the world becomes more fractured and polarized, maintaining the ability to serve together becomes all the more essential. So you'd think there would be a bunch of presentations on subjects where we can all agree on everything and therefore leave the meetings feeling a sense of brotherhood and unity of purpose... but I don't think that's how it's going to go down. Instead it looks like we've got some challenging presentations which will force some tough conversations, tough conversations that we really do need to have.

After the meetings I'm going to take some holiday time to see friends and family, as well as revisit some of my favourite restaurants, which I'm really looking forward to. I'll probably come back 10kg heavier and unable to see my toes, but nothing some time at the gym can't fix. However, this does mean that I will be away for three Sundays, as I land back here on July 13<sup>th</sup>.

Regarding church services, there will be a lay service in Hurstville on June 26<sup>th</sup>, but no services will be offered on July 3<sup>rd</sup> or July 10<sup>th</sup>. I would encourage you to consider heading to Roseville for those dates, or perhaps join in on the Virtual Retreat on the 10<sup>th</sup>. Normal services will resume here on July 17<sup>th</sup>.

## **Birthdays**

Happy Birthday to **Angela Caldwell** and **Michelle Heldon** (8<sup>th</sup>),  
**June Kirsten** (9<sup>th</sup>), **Izaak Horner** (17<sup>th</sup>)

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