



The New Church Newsletter

Hurstville Society July 2022

Contents

[Keeping Mothers Away from Racetracks and the Tyranny of Safety](#) by Rev Todd

[Clergy Meetings Bryn Atjhyh USA](#)

[New Church Day Celebrations](#)

[Virtual Retreat 7-10 July](#)

[Society Meeting](#)

[Birthdays](#)

Keeping Mothers Away from Racetracks and the Tyranny of Safety

by Rev Todd Beiswenger

One of my favourite pastimes is to load up the trailer and head out to the go kart track for the day. It's a nice day out where my mind really gets to switch off the ordinary and onto something different. I've been doing this for years, and every now and again somebody will make a comment like, "Isn't that dangerous?"

I just shrug my shoulders and say, "Not really." A kart can change direction extremely quickly, so avoiding others isn't all that hard, and as such I've never had a serious accident in one. I do wear a helmet, gloves, and a neck brace so injury isn't particularly likely even if I do get hit. I think people think of drag racing or V8 Supercar crashes where the cars flip over, but go karts are really low to the ground, so you're not likely to flip one over... or so I thought. My eyes were opened when a friend of mine invited me out to the track because his then 8-year-old son was going to be racing at the weekend event. While the boy had done some practice laps with nobody else on the track, and put down some good lap times, this would be his first experience at going up against other racers.

It didn't take too long for the kids to prove me wrong, and demonstrate that it really wasn't all that hard to flip a go-kart. You just had to be an inexperienced driver, and there were many of them out there that day which of course only makes things worse. What had happened was that one kid took a turn too fast, and spun out. No big deal, except that there were two other karts jockeying for position right behind him, and instead of one of them making an appropriate course correction or hitting the brakes, the two moving karts hit each other in such a way that the front wheel of one hit and jumped on top of the back wheel of the other which then shot the kart into the air and flipped it with one kart landing upside down and the other crashed and tangled up in a tyre barrier. While the kids involved in the accident actually were fine due to wearing appropriate safety gear, I noted quite a number of Dads saying, "Sure glad Mom didn't come out this weekend and see this! She would have never allowed us back again!"

It's true! Mothers have a well-earned reputation for looking out for their babies, and to my eyes they keep expanding the influence and power of their kingdom. At first it started out with car seats, then doing away with "dangerous" playground equipment like merry-go-rounds, free hanging ropes and monkey bars. How I'm alive today is a mystery to the modern mother. The problem is that these days not only is physical pain an unacceptable risk, but we are making mental pain an

unacceptable risk as well. Society is demanding that we make sure everybody is in a “safe space.”

The Lord in His Word tells us that He does want us to live in safety, saying “In peace will I both lay me down and sleep, for Thou Jehovah alone makes me dwell in safety” (Psalm 4:8). We’re told that “to make to dwell in safety” signifies a state of peace (AC 3384), which makes sense because if you’re safe, you’re at peace. I think the debate is how we become “safe.”

The cultural narrative of the day seems that we have to prevent people from encountering facts, ideas, or beliefs that are inconsistent with their own because they cause the person distress. We have to shield the individual from psychological obstacles and cushion them from both the blows of everyday life as well as from all other individuals who think differently. In this paradigm, how do we keep people safe? It’s simple: set up a system of censorship and propaganda where free speech and dissenting opinions are no longer tolerated, and the next thing you know you’ve got what we call “cancel culture.” I prefer to call it the “tyranny of safety,” but feel free to call it what you want. Whatever you call it, it allows us all to act like children, deferring to our authoritarian leaders to protect us from anything that makes us feel uncomfortable.

The Lord on the other hand gives us a very different idea of what has to happen, and what we have to be like in order to be safe.

You perhaps recall the part of the Exodus story where Moses kills an Egyptian, and it turns out that there were witnesses to the event. The Scripture says, “So Moses feared and said, ‘Surely this thing is known!’” (Exodus 2:14). Moses wasn’t wrong! However, the Writings tell us the real reason Moses was unsafe.

“[A person] is unsafe because he is not strong in truths; for people who are strong in truths are kept safe from harm wherever they go, even if they are in the midst of hell. The reason why people who are not yet strong in truths are not safe from harm is that untruths link them up with evil spirits” (AC 6769).

I think many people will read that explanation and suggest that “not being strong in truth” is really not the same thing as fearing for one’s physical safety, but would Moses have really needed to be afraid of Pharaoh if he really had the understanding and command of the truth in a way that enabled him to present to Pharaoh that his actions were just? A person like that isn’t one who fears others, but is one who is feared by others!

Okay, fair enough, we don't really want to go around having everybody fear us. I think the image we're given is that we want evil and evil people to fear us "strong-in-truth" people the same way predators of the jungle fear the lion. In Genesis, Jacob on his deathbed gives blessings on his sons, and blesses Judah with some lion-like qualities.

⁸ "Judah, you are he whom your brothers shall praise;
Your hand shall be on the neck of your enemies;
Your father's children shall bow down before you.

⁹ Judah is a lion's whelp;
From the prey, my son, you have gone up.
He bows down, he lies down as a lion;
And as a lion, who shall rouse him? (Genesis 49:8, 9)

The Writings say that the "Judah" person is "safe" when "among all kinds of evil, even when in the midst of the hells" (AC 6370). Notice, he's not safe because evil has been censored, or the Lord has protected Judah from encountering any sort of uncomfortable ideas. Judah has the truth, so lies have no impact on him. Judah has his hand on the neck of his enemies! That's a powerful position to be in! He's not cowering to his overlords begging for protection because he is powerful, which is to say he's strong in the truth. He's no victim. Even when he's sleeping, who is going to mess with him?! Nobody.

The Word is very clear that we're going to have to fight some battles to make spiritual progress as we can see by the massive conflicts and judgment that must happen before we finally get peace and safety. Before Noah sees the rainbow, there's a flood. Before the resurrection, there's the crucifixion, and before the New Jerusalem descends there's, well, there's the chaos and insanity described in the book of Revelation. The Writings tell us that there is no avoiding these battles if we want to enter heaven:

At the present day too those belonging to the Church who have filled their minds with worldly and also earthly ideas and have acted in such a way that the truths of faith have become tied up with them are sent down to the lower earth, where they likewise have battles to fight. These battles continue until their worldly and earthly ideas have been separated from the truths of faith and other notions have been introduced, of such a nature that they cannot be linked together any longer. Once this has been accomplished those people are raised from there into heaven; for until such ideas of theirs have been removed they cannot possibly be in the company of angels. (AC 7090)

Fighting these battles isn't one of those high-minded theological ideas without a down-to-Earth practical aspect to it. In Pamela Li's book titled, "Overprotective Parenting," she notes the following traits found in children of overprotective parents:

Worry and anxiety	Lack of coping skills	Social anxiety and phobia
Fear of failure	Depression and damaged sense of well being	Low esteem and self-motivation
Poor conflict management and psychological self-defense skills	Indecisiveness	Sense of entitlement and maladaptive narcissism
Functional somatic symptoms including pain, fatigue, and gastrointestinal distress	Delinquency, depression, and personality disorders	

It sure looks to me like being overprotective has had the opposite of its intended effect. These people aren't happy. Don't you think that the world would be a better place if fewer people had those issues to deal with? What it all comes down to is that we're going to have to fight these battles eventually, and I think it is obvious that we'd all be better off if we dealt with them sooner than later. It's going to require us to be more militant, to take our lumps, and to oppose the tyranny of safety. Do you remember what a big coward Gideon was before the angel of the Lord came to him? That's what modern culture wants you to be. The Lord wants you to be Gideon the warrior. In order to make that happen I think it all starts with keeping mothers away from more things than just racetracks.

Clergy Meetings, Bryn Athyn, USA

As I'm writing this the first two days of meetings have been completed. As you might imagine, it has been nice to catch up with some old friends during the social time before and after the meetings. While I had expected to enjoy that part of the meetings, I'm happy to report that I did enjoy today's presentation and discussion. I figured it wouldn't be much fun as it was dealing with the contentious issue that is LGBT stuff in society, and more particularly a deep look into what the Writings do and don't say on it. But the presenter did an excellent job of being engaging, and the critiques of the presentation were also well done. In fact, it is my hope to take all of this and repackage it into a class or two. I say "or two" because the paper that the presentation was based on was 68 pages long! So there is definitely going to have to be some editing. Nevertheless, I think it will be worth doing because there were some pretty common questions and concerns raised which to my mind were addressed in a clear way. Maybe we'll take a look at this for our August class.

Another presentation of interest was looking at the future of online church. I was aware that churches in general have seen declining attendance the last few years, but I was surprised to learn that even some of the larger churches (i.e., non New Church churches) were seeing significant declines in attendance as well. These are organizations that were supposedly doing everything right! They had well paid bands performing their music, they had hosts of volunteers greeting people, they had small groups to join in... and yet, they too have been struggling. It's no fun to struggle and see a church that we love shrink, but it does bring some comfort – at least to me – to see that it isn't just us, and not even just the New Church.

However, there does seem to be an opportunity to increase online attendance. Some of this we've already done, but the folks at New Church Live have just implemented a new website designed to get people to the live stream service, and also make it easy for people to find an archived service that would be relevant to their current state of mind. Not only that, but they've integrated their pastor's calendar into the site so a person can schedule in a pastoral counselling session as well. It all sounds interesting, but we'll have to check back in six months to a year to see how it is going for them and then figure out if there's anything there worth replicating for us.

[top](#)

New Church Day Celebrations



For the first time in several years, the Sunday we celebrated New Church Day actually fell on June 19th. The weather forecast kept saying we were going to get rain that day, which was undesirable, and not just because we wanted a nice day.

We had a very clear reason for wanting it to not rain. You see, every year we have a red dragon piñata and let the kids take turns slaying the dragon. This is good fun! In past years when it has rained we've had to do this indoors, but with the recently repainted Baringa, we really didn't want to damage the paint by slaying the dragon indoors. Thankfully the Lord provided a beautiful day, and the dragon was slain any damage to Baringa.



In the picture on the right Zaeli, Aneira and Riley are drawing the heads on the Great Red Dragon

The younger kids also received their New Church Day presents, which included a framed picture of the Lord, a framed copy of the Lord's prayer and a cape like that which the angel Michael wore. Also there was a gift using the New Church colours of red and white which was a white shirt and red paint for the child to create their own design.



Zaeli with her picture of the Lord and Aneira in her Michael cape holding the little information label which was included.

The words are: The angel Michael represents people who love the Lord and are trying to be good.



After receiving their presents we had a New Jerusalem cake, which was only consumed after we sang “Happy Birthday” to the church. The cake was decorated by the children, Lucy, Riley, Aneira and Zaeli. Overall we had a good day, and hopefully created some good memories for the kids.



[top](#)

Virtual Retreat 7-10 July

Just a reminder that the Swedenborg Community Victoria is running a virtual retreat July 7-10. There are sessions at 10am and 8pm on the 7th and 8th, one at 10am on the 9th, and 10:30am on the 10th. If you want more details on them, you can check last months newsletter or Swedenborg Community Victoria's website. Mostly though I wanted to include the Zoom link for you to use if you want to join in:

[https://us02web.zoom.us/j/2074775351?
pwd=ZEdFT0x1OTRVWFdOMzZqcEcrZ2dTdz09](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/2074775351?pwd=ZEdFT0x1OTRVWFdOMzZqcEcrZ2dTdz09)

[top](#)

Society Meeting

Our next Society Meeting is scheduled for after church on July 17th, and we hope that all our locals will join us! We've got some centenary celebrations planning to do: we laid out the framework last year, and now, with only four months to go before the Nov 12-13 celebration weekend, it's time to figure out just who's doing what to help prepare to welcome the world. Many hands make light work: let's share the load and 'knock this out of the park!' -Coffee, tea & bikkies for all who attend the meeting; there isn't much else on the agenda, so hopefully we can work through this at a reasonable pace. See you on the 17th!

[top](#)

Birthdays

Happy Birthday to **James Kermond** (10th), **Babbette Horner** (14th) and **Danita Horner** (15th)

[top](#)