



The New Church Newsletter

Hurstville Society April 2016

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Rev Douglas McLeod Taylor
27th October 1925 – 22nd February 2016



For the Hurstville Society the Rev Doug Taylor represents a significant part of their history. He shares the distinction of longest serving pastor with the inaugural minister Rev Richard Morse, 17 years, the only difference being that Doug's pastorate was broken up into several years at different times. He just kept coming back to the little church he loved. Born an Australian and marrying an Australian (Christine Brock) he studied overseas both as a teacher then a minister and first served the Hurstville New Church from 1963 to 1974, returning January 1989 to July 1993. When our society was without a pastor he helped out along with other retired ministers, however not just once but three times – 1998, 1999 and 2006/7.

One particularly notable aspect of Doug's ministry was the popular radio talks he gave on Sunday evenings on radio 2KY from 1968 to 1974. Doug did not shy away from any opportunity to promote/defend the church and in 1969 when the Apollo spacecraft landed on the moon he handled a TV interview deftly when the interviewer said "Doug, the astronauts have landed on the moon and didn't find moon men, what do you say about that?" Doug replied good naturedly, "Well, they had better go back and have another look!"

Many may not know that Doug was accomplished in many areas of life some of which are touched on in the Memorial Address following. His daughter Ros writes that in a History of Marist Brother's College in Mt Gambier, South Australia, where Doug attended High School there is a whole paragraph on him. It states he was an entertainer, cartoonist, one of the top French students in South Australia, an all-round sportsman, captain of the cricket team and is still on the honour roll there for voluntarily enlisting for the RAAF during WWII.

No matter where Doug and Christine lived in the world and served the New Church these words from Dorothea Mackellar's poem "My Country" express the deep love they both held for Australia.

I love a sunburnt country,
A land of sweeping plains,
Of rugged mountain ranges,
Of droughts and flooding rains.
I love her far horizons,
I love her jewel-sea,
Her beauty and her terror –
The wide brown land for me!

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Research by Margaret and Owen Heldon
Cover picture: Doug and Christine Taylor, Bryn Athyn, June 2014

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Memorial Address by Rev Walter Orthwein held in the Bryn Athyn Cathedral on 25th Feb 2016



The Lord was walking by the Sea of Galilee one day, at the beginning of His public ministry, and saw some fishermen casting their net into the sea. "Follow Me," He said, "and I will make you fishers of men," which they immediately did. (Matthew 14:18-20)

Today we have gathered here to celebrate the life of a disciple of the Lord from our own time who devoted himself to this use with enthusiasm and unusual ability: the Rev. Douglas Taylor.

A convert himself, Doug was a pioneer, a guiding light, and a tireless worker in the effort to reach out and bring more people into the New Church. A true spiritual fisherman.

And he cast his net on the right side of the boat – as the Lord would tell His disciples to do another time, when He appeared by the sea again after His resurrection. That means to teach from love, and to teach the good of charity. It is not just truths per se that attract people, but the potential for good in them. It is when people see the good that truth makes

possible, the use of it, that makes them want to learn it and live by it. This is what brings people into the church. (*Apocalypse Explained* 820.2)

It was Doug's own love for the truth, and his own discovery of the goodness contained in it, that made him a great communicator of it.

It wasn't just by chance that the first disciples the Lord chose were fishermen. It is because "fish," like all animals (and everything else in creation), represent aspects of our human nature, which is why animals are mentioned so often in Scripture.

The Lord is called a Lamb (a symbol of innocence), as well as a Lion (the power of Divine truth). He is called a Shepherd, and His people like sheep, who hear their Shepherd's voice and follow Him.

And so it goes, all through the letter of the Word. Gentle deer, ravaging wolves. The serpent that goes on its belly. That fox, Herod. A golden calf. A white horse. Sparrows that fall, eagles that soar. Faith like a mustard seed. The sea and boats and fish. And heaven itself is like a net, as the Lord said in a parable (in Matthew 13).

All these things correspond to aspects of human nature: the thoughts and affections and qualities of character that inhabit the spiritual environment of the human mind.

It was this doctrine of correspondences that captured Doug Taylor's imagination when he first discovered the New Church. He loved imagery, and used it to good effect in illustrating spiritual principles in his teaching.

There are countless examples, but let's return to "fish" for a moment. They represent a natural state of life, as opposed to spiritual. We can see how fish represent such a condition: they are relatively insensitive, cold-blooded creatures, and the underwater realm they inhabit is cold, dense, and dim. Before we are brought into a spiritual state, we all start out as "fish" – governed by natural affections, motives, thoughts and goals. An unloving, uncaring, coldly calculating person might even be called a "cold fish."

Another characteristic of fish is how prolific they are, which goes along with their more specific representation as natural knowledge. This makes them especially significant, symbolically, for our "age of information," in which facts are multiplying so rapidly people can hardly keep up with all the knowledge now available.

In a naturalistic age, a materialistic age, an age drowning in facts but lacking in spiritual understanding and sensitivity, "spiritual fishermen" are much needed to elevate people's minds into the warmth and light of heavenly life – that is, the love and wisdom emanating from the Lord, who appears as a sun in heaven.

Swedenborg was a "spiritual fisherman." It was his Divinely appointed mission to teach spiritual truths by relating them to natural truths. He was prepared for this by his many years of scientific and philosophical study, followed by a revelation of spiritual truth and

many years of experience in which he was conscious of both worlds, the spiritual and the natural. He was able, therefore, to illustrate and confirm the truths of revelation by means of science and logic – and thus to teach spiritual truths in a way that the natural mind could grasp. As Doug liked to say: the New Church is "a religion that makes sense."

Swedenborg was a unique case, of course, but the spiritual truths the Lord revealed for him to publish enable us, also, to teach spiritual truths naturally, or in a way the natural mind can grasp. That is, by relating them to things people are already familiar with on the natural level: the stories and symbolism in the letter of the Word, and the facts of nature.

And in providence, we have an ever-increasing multitude of natural facts discovered by modern science with which to fill the nets of faith and reason and so enrich our understanding of spiritual reality.

Consider, for example, how a radio (something that didn't exist in Swedenborg's day) receives an electronic signal that we cannot see or hear and converts it into sound. This provides a fine illustration of how spiritual life from the Lord – invisible and undetectable by any natural instrument – flows into a person's body and activates it. Human beings on every level – soul, mind and body – are "receivers" of life from the Lord, which, like the sound coming from a radio, appears to originate in the receiver, but does not.

The typical call for people to simply "believe" and "accept Jesus as their Saviour" is insufficient for the New Church, because the Heavenly Doctrine is complex and appeals to rational understanding. The highest kind of reason, spiritual rationality, is the ability to see how the spiritual and natural dimensions of creation are related.

Seeing this makes all things, earthly and heavenly, new. It brings heaven down to earth with rational logic and concrete imagery drawn from the world of nature and the letter of the Word; and it elevates our earthly existence into the light of heaven by revealing the Divine and spiritual reality from which it comes and which it represents, and to which it is designed to lead.

Doug Taylor was a master at presenting deep spiritual truths in a way that people new to the church could understand, by relating them to things they were already familiar with.

He had a fine command of language (as both a speaker and writer), and an ability to construct diagrams to illustrate abstract things – such as the levels and functions of the human mind, or the arrangement of the heavens. We see such diagrams in his last book, *The Hidden Levels Of The Mind: Swedenborg's Theory of Consciousness*, published in 2011.

Doug also wrote several other books, including: *Spirituality That Makes Sense*, and *Landmarks In Regeneration*. Not to mention hundreds of sermons, classes, pamphlets, and radio talks.

In addition to his academic achievements, he was a remarkably skilled and multi-faceted person – "full of surprises," as his children said.

He excelled at sports, especially cricket and Aussie-rules football (he was a great kicker). One of his heroes was Sir Donald Bradman, a legendary cricket player. (I was told that no memorial for Doug would be complete without mentioning Sir Donald Bradman.)

Doug also had considerable artistic talent, and when he was 14 years old he won a major art competition with a drawing of Sir Winston Churchill, another lifetime hero of his. He was a fine singer, and also had a wonderful speaking voice, as fine as any English Shakespearian actor – which brings up an interesting anecdote:

Sir Laurence Olivier, the famous actor and director of the Old Vic repertory company in London, brought a production of a Shakespeare play to Australia while Doug was in college. The University Drama Club was called upon to supply extras, and Doug got the part of a soldier. As he was waiting in the wings, Olivier walked past him to go on stage, tapped Doug on the shoulder and said: "Good luck, laddy."

When the play was over, the press, for some reason, latched onto Doug to interview – much to the chagrin of the director and star. Doug's acting career never equalled Laurence Olivier's, but for one brief moment there he did, in a way, upstage the great thespian.

Doug was born in Terang into a Presbyterian family and grew up on a farm at Portland, in the Australian state of Victoria. He was a very good student, but the local public schools weren't the best, so when a Jesuit Catholic school with a fine educational program happened to open up in the area, Doug's father enrolled him there – with the provision that although Doug would attend the religion classes he would not attend the Catholic religious services. On Sundays he went to the Presbyterian Church.

Doug emerged from this religious mix as an agnostic – but not for long. It was his future wife, Christine Brock, who introduced him to the New Church. They met at the University of Adelaide, where Christine was studying music education and Doug French.

They met, "as if by chance" (as it says in *Conjugal Love* 316.3) at a French Club picnic. A visiting friend from France, a young man named Henri, brought Christine to the picnic and introduced her to the club president, who happened to be Doug Taylor. "That was the biggest mistake I ever made," Henri said some years later. For Doug and Christine, of course, it was providential. They were married for 62 years, had five children and now have 12 grandchildren.

Doug was mystified and put off by Christine's religion at first, but she gave him a book of the Writings to read, *The New Jerusalem and Its Heavenly Doctrine*, and he stayed up all night reading it – and it changed his mind. He went to Christine's father, a New Church minister, to learn more about the religion. In their discussion, Mr. Brock especially focused on the doctrine of correspondences – and that was a real eye-opener. Doug loved it.

Several years later, Doug and Christine moved to Edinburgh where Doug studied for his master's degree in education. While teaching in Bristol, England, for a year, he met the Rev. Frank Rose and became especially interested in New Church education. So Doug and Christine and their growing family decided to move to Bryn Athyn USA so he could become a New Church minister in the General Church, with a focus on education.

Doug was ordained on the 19th of June, 1960. He first served the congregation in Tucson for three years, then as pastor to the Hurstville congregation in Australia for eleven years. Then he was called to be assistant pastor in Bryn Athyn, and four years later became the first Director of Evangelization for the General Church.

There had previously been an "extension committee," but Doug changed the name to "Evangelization" to emphasize the truth that the purpose was not just to increase the church's membership but to preach the good news of the Lord's second coming.

Ever the trooper, at the age of 64, Doug returned to Sydney and served as pastor there for four and a half years before finally retiring and returning to Bryn Athyn. But even then he continued to serve as the visiting pastor to the Baltimore society until he was finally too old to make the drive safely.

But his passion for sharing the truths of the Heavenly Doctrine with others never waned. He knew from his own experience what a blessing they are, and wanted to bring others into the New Church so that they could share the joy he found in its teachings, and the spiritual community founded upon them.

Just three or four weeks ago, Doug's grandson Brahm Genzlinger paid him a visit, and Doug read to him from his pamphlet, "Why Are We Here?" It's a warm picture: the 90-year-old priest reading to his grandson, evangelizing to the end.

Doug's earthly life began ninety years ago in Australia, but the passion and work that gave his life meaning, and affected the lives of so many people whom he served so faithfully, is eternal. It comes from the Lord, and lives within Truth itself, and radiates from it. It is life, or love, which is the same thing. This is the spirit within truths that make them like seeds, which are destined to grow, and multiply, and bring forth fruit.

In closing, then, let's remember the parable the Lord told about the dissemination of His Word and the various ways in which it would be received: the Parable of the Sower. In the supreme sense, the Lord Himself is the Sower – but all those who serve Him in the work of spreading the truths of faith are also sowers. They serve the Lord in providing for the human goodness and happiness the truths of His Word produce. This is the story of the Reverend Douglas Taylor:

"Behold, a sower went forth to sow . . ." (Matthew 13:3)

Kempton New Church School Expansion

Since its founding in 1979, the Kempton New Church School in Pennsylvania USA has taught over three hundred students in the light of the Lord's threefold Word. Today, we are blessed anew to be experiencing growing pains. With maxed out classrooms, the coming of our largest kindergarten ever next year and the addition of 11th and 12 grades, we are truly grateful.

If you are one who believes in the power of New Church Education to better our world, if you are excited about a K-12 New Church School supporting the development of a new generation of the New Church, or if you want to know more about us and our commitment, come see us at www.KNCS.org. Click on "Expansion" and join in our future.

"All instruction is simply an opening of the way; and as the way is opened ... heavenly things flow in." *Arcana Coelestia* 1495

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Camp Wanawong

This is another reminder that we're having a weekend camp June 17-19 down in lovely Loftus at Camp Wanawong. It is only a weekend, starting Friday night and finishing Sunday morning, so this should just be a nice time away from home where you can look at some different scenery than what you normally do on a weekend! Some of you had expressed interest when this idea came up, but have not confirmed that you want to book for the camp. If this is you, please let me know as soon as you can your intentions, even if you've changed your mind.

If you're thinking you want to come, but haven't actually said so, *please take a minute right now and send me that email!*

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Kogarah Storehouse

At the conclusion of our Living Gratefully program we were encouraged to 'pay it forward'. This coincided nicely with our semi-annual food drive -- many thanks to all who contributed to our generous collection of non-perishable food items and toiletries for those in need, via Kogarah Storehouse: 8 grocery bags full! We delivered 21.4kg of food - including cereals, soups, jars of peanut butter and 2L of lactose-free milk (we're equal-opportunity helpers!) - and 6kg of toiletries - amongst which were 13 toothbrushes, 76 sanitary pads and 26 razors. In total, 27.4kg* of stuff -- well done, friends! :)

*(*As a matter of interest, this is about the same as was donated in each of our March and December collections, last year. Good job! ...Maybe next time we'll break the 28kg barrier?...)*

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April Services

Weather permitting, there will be an **outdoor service** on 3rd April. The warmer weather is coming to an end, so I'd like to squeeze in at least one more outdoor service before we start needing heaters! We'll use the same format as the previous ones, in that it will be a family service with no Sunday School.

The following Sunday, 10 April, we'll be having one of our twice yearly pulpit swaps with **Rev. Julian Duckworth**. This is subject to change pending the approval of his feet which have been giving him trouble, but at this point the plan is for a swap on the 10th.

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April Classes

We'll be having two Monday night classes this month, on the 4th and 18th. Because our Living Gratefully program ran right up into mid-March we didn't have an Easter themed class. As such, our class on the 4th we'll be taking a look at what the “**Son of Man**” means. We find that Jesus refers to Himself as the Son of Man on a number of occasions, for example:

“And he said, “The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life. (Luke 9:22)”

Similarly, “Listen carefully to what I am about to tell you: The Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men.” But they did not understand what this meant. It was hidden from them, so that they did not grasp it, and they were afraid to ask him about it. (Luke 9:44, 45)”

We'll take a look at the occurrences where “Son of Man” is mentioned, and then look to what is revealed in the Heavenly Doctrines to unravel the meaning.

Class topic for the 18th is yet to be determined.

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Birthdays

Happy Birthday to **Todd Beiswenger** (3rd), **Donna Heldon** (5th) **Dylan Johnson** (7th), **Gaye Heldon** (15th), **Merv Kennedy** (17th), **Huiling Sun** (20th), **Kerry Horner** (22nd), **David Horner** (25th)

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