



Hurstville 1905
New Church



The New Church Newsletter

Hurstville Society September 2026

The Joys in Heavens

By Rev. HyunJin Yang

“It is the one who is least among you all will be great.”

(Luke 9:48)



Why Did These Have to Be Witnessed?

Spiritual accounts found in the Writings can make some people wary. They may raise questions about why these experiences had to be ‘witnessed and heard’ in the spiritual world, and whether they were for real or merely a figment of someone’s imagination.

Emanuel Swedenborg anticipates this reaction from many readers. In the very first page of the book, *Married Love* or *Love in Marriage* (traditionally known as *Conjugal Love*), he writes:

I foresee that many people who read the following chapters and the remarkable stories after each chapter, are going to think that the stories are imaginative inventions. (n.1)

In the next line, he adds that these accounts and teachings are given for a new church which the Book of Revelation refers to as the “New Jerusalem” (Ibid).

One reminder for people in the New Church is that we do not call it ‘new’ in name only. We do so because we base our Christian faith on a ‘new’ understanding—essentially on Scripture’s spiritual meanings and their heavenly doctrines.

Such a ‘new’ understanding, introduced in the first chapter of the book, concerns the joys of heaven. This is given—or rather, it had to be given—because the world, especially the Christian world, was and still is in such a deep ignorance of what heavenly joys are, and about what the life to come will be like (See ML 2.2). In other words, the new understanding is given so that we can have a true vision of heaven and thus begin a new life that shapes us and prepares us for a life of heaven both here on earth and in the life to come.

If you will, you can test this out for yourself. Take a moment to think about what heaven, a life of heaven, and its joy may be like. Do you imagine a paradise where you may idle away the time as you please, and where you indulge in eating, playing, and feasting with friends? Or do you picture it to be a place where you hold great possessions and power to ‘reign with Christ’ as mentioned in Revelation 20:4, 6 and 3:21, but based on material-

stic and self-serving interpretations of it? (See also ML 3.5).

Heavenly Joys in Serving and Being Useful

Once we make it through the first few pages of *Married Love*, the goal and the mission of these spiritual accounts become manifest: they are to challenge our old assumptions and renew our understanding based on what was heard and witnessed in the spiritual world. We are challenged to see and ground the joys of heaven on a single principle and its vision: **usefulness—that is, serving others**. As we read as follows:

You see now that the joys of heaven and eternal happiness do not have to do with location, but with the state of a person's life. The state of heavenly life comes from love and wisdom. And because useful service is the containing vessel of both love and wisdom, the state of heavenly life comes from a combination of these two in useful service. (ML 10.7)

I don't know what readers may have expected. It may come as a surprise for some to learn that heavenly joys are neither about personal indulgence in a paradise and joy thereby, nor holding distinctive honors and positions that set us apart from others, but entirely about usefulness.

But such usefulness is not self-effacing. That is, it does not mean a lack of personal meaning, joy, and reward. Rather it is quite the opposite. By the act of rendering such usefulness or being in such usefulness, we are most fully aligned with the purpose and meaning of our being. Each of us renders useful service to others based on our unique spiritual love and a sense of purpose. As we engage in and love the work of such service, we are blessed inwardly. Regarding this, we read:

For the kingdom of Christ, namely, heaven, is a kingdom of useful services. The reason is that the Lord loves all people and so wills good to all, and good means useful service. Now because the Lord performs good or useful services indirectly through angels, and in the world through people, therefore to those who faithfully perform



useful services He gives a love of being useful and its reward. The reward is internal blessedness, and this blessedness is eternal happiness. (ML 7.3)

Although we will never be able to fully grasp what heavenly joys are like until we experience them in the next life, we may say that we have caught a glimpse of it when we experienced deep gratification following hard and earnest work. And yet, this joy was not due to self-righteousness, nor from accomplishing a personal goal for self-actualization, which in the end, could have been quite self-driven and egocentric. Instead, we were deeply filled from within by the good work itself—by our effort to bring goodness and truth from the Lord into our actions, into spiritually good service for others. Moreover, we found joys in sharing what we received from the Lord with others.

This Is a Core Christian Teaching

The understanding about service to others and its heavenly virtue and joy is not meant to just sound noble; It is not mean to just sound new; As a matter of fact, it is purely Biblical and a core Christian principle that the Lord Jesus Christ Himself teaches plainly in His own words:

“It is the one who is the among you all will be great.” (Luke 9:48; See also Arcana Coelestia 3417:3).

“Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one’s life for his friends.” (John 15:13)

Furthermore, to serve, not to be served, is the Christian calling. It is an example that the Lord embodied and demonstrated throughout His life on earth.

“Whoever desires to become great among you, let them be your servant. And whoever desires to be first among you, let them be your slave— just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.” (Matthew 20:26-28; see also Mark 9:35, 10:43)

While this is a core—if not the most essential—Christian teaching, it is one that is either forgotten or most often slips our minds. And so, it is one that we must tether ourselves to, to ensure that we keep coming back to in faith and in life.

Notably, *Married Love* (n. 7.2-3) directly refers to the Lord's teaching, awakening people from their delusion and allowing them to see that the Christian life is found in service, and thus heavenly joys are found in such service, not the other way around.

Why were these spiritual accounts witnessed and told to us? Because this core Christian truth needed to be seen in a spiritual light once again, having been buried so deeply to the point of extinction. But now anyone who is willing can see it as their true vision of heaven.

Some More Passages

In the following, I will quote a few more passages from *Married Love* (or *Love in Marriage*). We can note how each one, without fail, circles back to the idea of service and use, whenever they speak of the joys of heaven and eternal happiness.

The angel answered, briefly, "It is the pleasure of doing something that is of use to oneself and to others, and the pleasure in being useful takes its essence from love and its expression from wisdom. The pleasure in being useful, springing from love through wisdom, is the life and soul of all heavenly joys." (ML 5.3)

Love and wisdom do not emerge except as an idea, because they only reside in affection and thoughts of the mind, but in use they become real, because then they are in the action and work of your body. And where they become real they also become substantial. And because love and wisdom emerge and become substantial in doing things, it is use that excites us, and use is doing the work of your calling faithfully, sincerely, and industriously. (Love in Marriage 16)



A love of use, and the devotion it brings to usefulness, keep the mind from branching out and wandering around soaking up all the desires that seep in enticingly from your body and the world through the senses, and that scatter to all the winds true religion and true morality, and the benefits of them. But a devotion to use wraps up religion and morality, binds them together, and puts the mind in a state to receive wisdom and its truth. And then it puts aside the illusions and mockeries of both falsities and aimlessness. (Ibid)

Useful services are spiritual when they have to do with love toward God and love for the neighbor. They are moral and civic services when they have to do with love for the society or civil state in which a person resides, and with love of the companions and fellow citizens with whom he is associated. Useful services are natural when they have to do with love of the world and its necessities. And they are corporeal when they have to do with the love of self-preservation for the sake of higher uses. (ML 18.1)

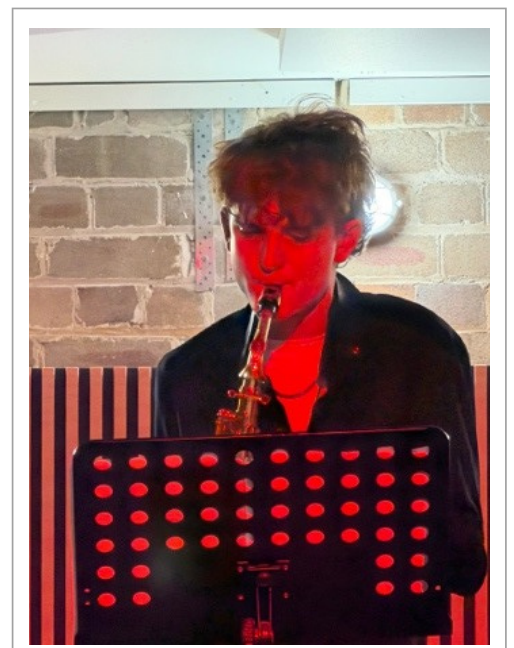
Society News

■ Harper Smith on Stage for a Gig

(June 28)

A four-piece band featuring guitar, drums, Saxophone, and piano—did a gig at the Rising Sun in Sunday evening. It was their first gig on the newly refurbished stage in the corner of the second floor.

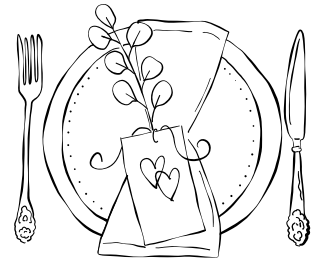
Harper played Saxophone. And his gig was the standout of the night—no exaggeration. Ask HyunJin, or Murray or Lori who were there to witness it!



The gig drew around 60 people, maybe even more. There were some familiar faces in the crowd, including Loretta, not to mention Harper's parents, Nick and Naomi.

The evening was quite something and refreshing, and it was especially meaningful to see a young man thriving with his talent.

■ A Lebanese Dinner One Evening (July15)



Five of us met at a Lebanese place in Oatley for dinner—not for someone's birthday or for celebrating something.

It was Cliff's invite where he said, "I will fix it for you." If it was your first time hearing this, it might take a moment to fully grasp what that means. Eventually you learn that he will take care of everything for the occasion. No one viewed that as a chance to gorge themselves for the day, but we naturally ordered plenty of food to explore, enjoy, and have great conversations over.

It is not always easy to go out and get together like that, especially with the young adults included. Sometimes scheduling is difficult, and sometimes, we are just a bit hesitant. But everything worked out wonderfully for the evening. Looking forward to the next one. And it won't have to be at all on Cliff again.

Movie Outing (August 18)



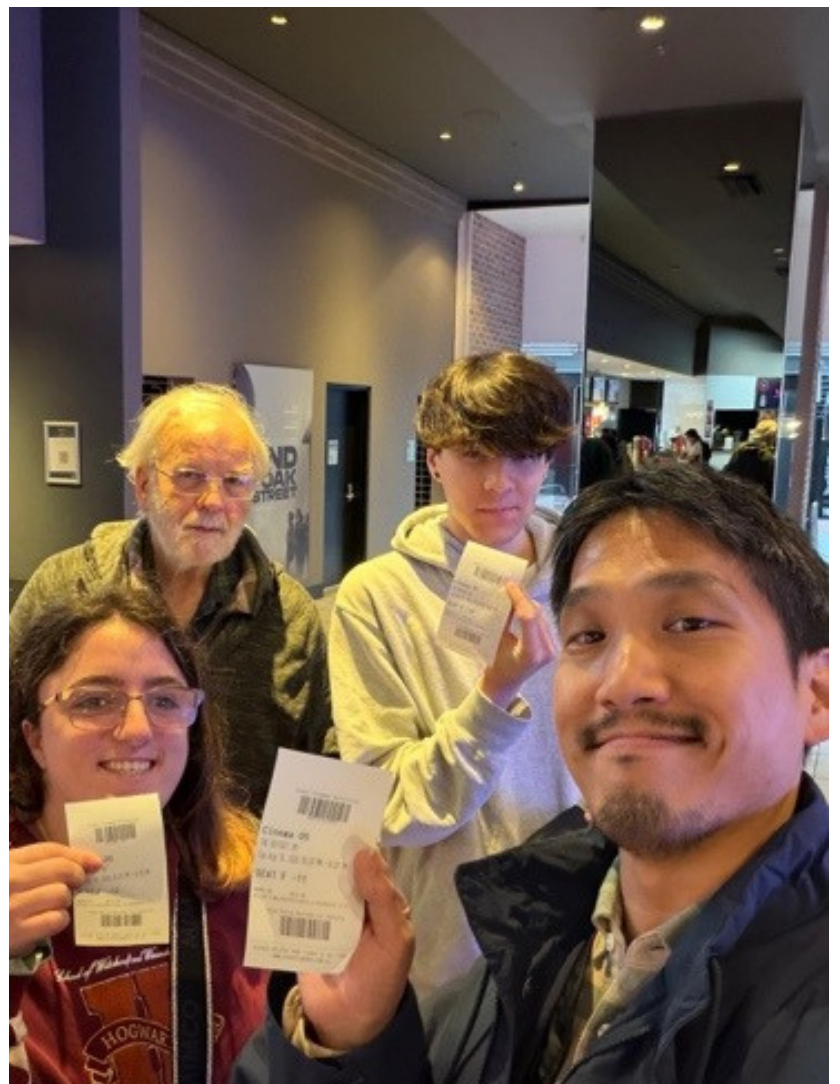
I made the call to watch the movie, ‘the Odyssey’ at the theater because I wanted to experience a film shot 100% with IMAX cameras and no CGI used. The movie did utilize digital and special effects, not a single CGI was used, even for the scenes of the giant with one eye—Polyphemus—and many others!

I am personally not a theater guy. The movie was my first movie to watch at the theater in Australia, and my first ever to watch at any theater in about four years. But I felt had to try it out.

So, how did the movie go? Well. The movie was anything and everything but disappointing. The visuals, realism, and suspense of the movie exceeded, by far, my expectation.

My call for the movie day was to share an experience for the great movie with my church people and especially with the young adults.

Unfortunately, not everyone could make it due to their other commitments. Four of us went—Matthew, Skye, Ralph and me.



We will make next time better! By the way, if you find a great, theater movie to watch together, give me a shout. I am not always one who knows what is up at the box office, so your tip-off can be really helpful. I look forward to going for another great one, sooner than later.

HyunJin

■ Visits from the Roseville New Church (Aug 14 and 27)

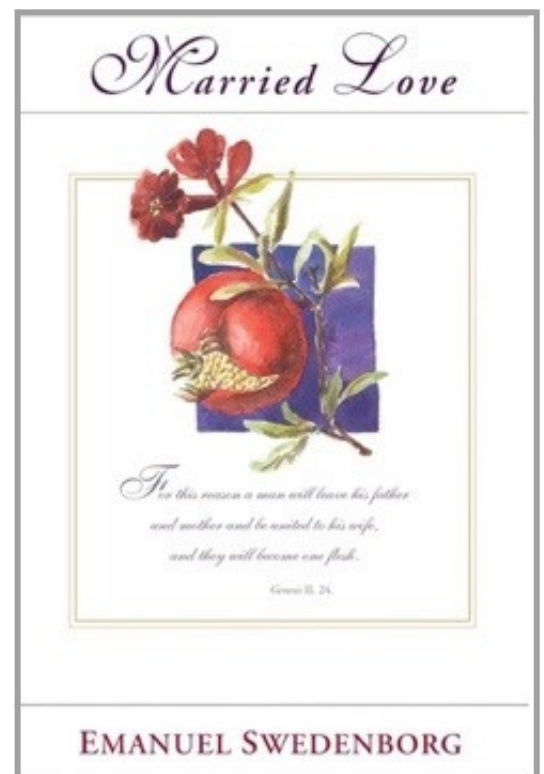
The Roseville New Church is in search of their new minister, following the departure of Rev. Howard Thompson. As part of the search, they have invited and had their two candidates over in Sydney from the Swedenborgian Church of North America (also known as Convention).

Pastor HyunJin and several others—Murray Heldon, Ralph Horner, Cliff Adamou, and Carolyn Heldon—met with Rev. Julian Duckworth and the candidates at Baringa, on two separate days—Rev. Rachel Madjerac (Aug 14) and Ben Guntur, a candidate for ordination (Aug 27).

■ Monthly Reading/Discussion Group on *Married Love*

We will continue our newly introduced monthly reading and discussion group on *Married Love* (or *Love in Marriage*). The month September will be our third month. (Our next quarterly doctrinal class will be October)

Following our August reading on 'Marriages in Heaven,' our September readings will be 'Married Partners After Death' (Paragraphs 45-56, about 14 pages), and 'Truly Married Love' (Paragraphs 57-73, about 10 pages). The reading totals are 24 pages, which is manageable for a daily reading routine.



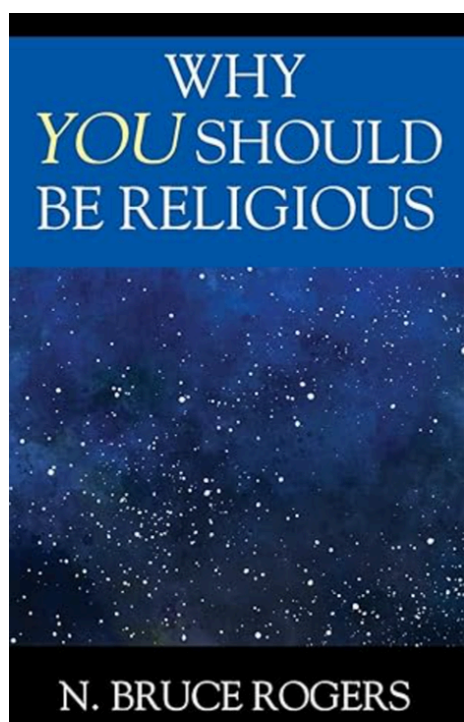
For our discussion meet-up, we will meet on September 30 (Last Wednesday of each month), at 2:00 p.m., at Baringa. This slot in the early afternoon still works for our regular attendees. We may decide to move it to another day and time if others want to join but have different availabilities.

It is not too late at all for you! If you are considering joining the reading and discussion group, feel free to contact HyunJin at pastor@hurstvillenewchurch.com for your interest and any enquiries.

■ **Pastor Attends COM meetings in Melbourne (September 14-18)**

Pastor will be away for four nights and five days to attend the council of clergy meetings that are held in Melbourne. He is excited to meet with the NCIA clergy members. It will be one of the two occasions each year to meet with them face to face, to discuss doctrines, build camaraderie, and others. The other time to get all together will be at the Family Retreat in January 2027.

■ **New Church Publications – Recently Published!**



Why You Should Be Religious

by Bruce Rogers

This new book is written by the Rev. N. Bruce Rogers who has been an associate professor of Religion and Latin in Bryn Athyn College and served for many years as a General Church translator.

Book Details

Compelling and well-reasoned. A must-read!

In *Why You Should Be Religious*, the author offers several reasons why religion is important, both to the individual and to society. These inclu-

de arguments for the existence of God and the miraculous nature of life. He follows this with a list of the various theistic religions existing in the west today, including his preference for Christianity, and the book concludes with the importance of religion to civilization, the final and best reason to be religious.

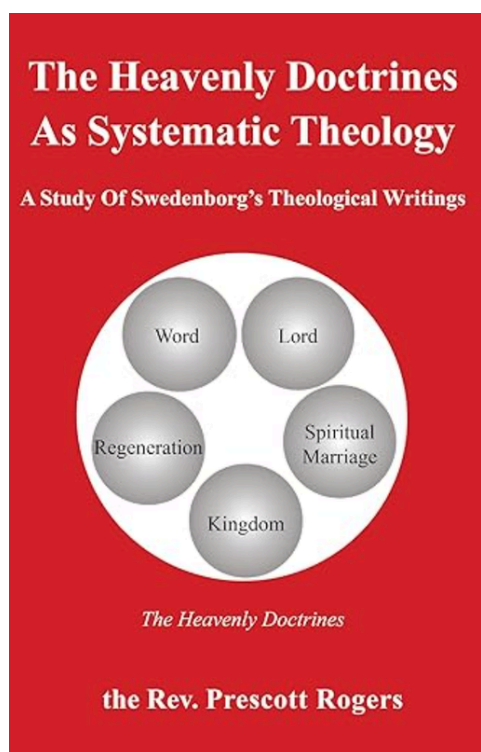
About the Author

N. Bruce Rogers is a retired academic with a background in physics, psychology, research biochemistry, and sacred languages. He has two master's degrees, one in Classical Studies and one in Christian theology. His academic awards include election to Phi Beta Kappa and a Woodrow Wilson Fellowship. The author and the bride of his youth have three middle-aged sons and six grandchildren. – Outskirts Press

Purchase Advice

The book is Available for purchase on Amazon! If you find it a bit expensive on Amazon, you could purchase it as a PDF here at <https://outskirtspress.com/whyyoushouldbereligious>

The Heavenly Doctrines As Systematic Theology



This new book was written by the Rev. Prescott Rogers. The following is an announcement from the General Church's bookstore.

The General Church's bookstore, New Church Books, is pleased to have copies of Prescott Rogers' new title *The Heavenly Doctrines As Systematic Theology* for sale. Based on the course he taught for many years at Bryn Athyn College, this book is a study on how all of the major teachings in the Writings of the New Church are integrated into one seamless whole.

For more details, see a review of the book written by the Rev. Michael D. Gladish in the January Issue of *New Church Life*, pp. 47-49. Purchase at <https://newchurchbooks.com/>



Birthdays!

*Owen Heldon, Carolyn Heldon, Klaire Horner, Liam Johnson,
ylvia Hicks, Karen Evans, Jeffrey Heldon, Phillipa Horner,
Azalea Robson, Phillip Walsh,*



-  Editor - Rev HyunJin Yang
-  22-24 Dudley St., off Hillcrest Ave. in Penshurst
-  0490 412 692, 02 9580 1589
-  pastor@hurstvillenewchurch.com
-  <http://www.hurstvillenewchurch.com/>
-  <https://www.facebook.com/HurstvilleNewChurch>
-  <https://m.youtube.com/@hurstvillenewchurch2493>

