



The New Church Newsletter

Hurstville Society September 2019

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Advertising on YouTube

By Rev Todd Beiswenger

You may recall that back in April I produced a video about the New Church understanding of the Easter story, and that it was advertised on Google, YouTube and Facebook for a couple of weeks. It was successful in that the video did get a lot of views very quickly, but we also learned that not all of the views were really equal.

With that experience in hand, starting on 16 July I began advertising my “Creation Story Explained” video on YouTube. It would appear as a suggested video in a column to the right of the main viewing window for people who YouTube thought it would be relevant for. No keywords were used, I was just trusting the YouTube algorithm to do the job. Geographically it would target only Australia.

Like with the Easter campaign, there were some interesting results. The video certainly got watched. Here’s what the ad basically looked like:



Yes, it’s a little choppy, but Google restricts the number of characters used in each line. Anyway, Google placed the ad 186,771 times, and out of that 1,985 people watched the video. That means 1.06% of people clicked on the ad. Out of that, the channel gained about 1 new subscriber each day, and it also picked up 22 “earned views.” An earned view occurs when someone views your video ad, then later watches another video on your linked YouTube channel, within 7 days of the initial view. If a person views multiple videos, it’s still one view, so it’s really counting the number of people who watched at least one more video after the promoted one. These are generally regarded as the Holy Grail in the advertising world, and so it’s really good to see these as well as picking up subscribers.

On the negative side, despite the fact that the video is saying it is Biblical allegory, a number of people gave the video a “thumbs down” which lowered its like/dislike percentage from 85-90% down to 65%. I was also a little disappointed that only 1.06% of people were clicking on the ad.

I went a different direction with Campaign #2. It was using the Adam and Eve video, and the ad looked like this:



Adam & Eve Are Ancient Symbols, Not Literal People

It's a Story About Your Inner Life
This World Is An Illusion

This campaign used key words to find its targets, and the list was pretty simple: Bible Study, Adam and Eve, Creation Story, Swedenborg and Offthellefteye. This ad ran 3,488 times in the US, Canada and Australia, and was viewed 84 times. The view rate was much higher at 2.41%, but it cost 25 cents per view to get these. Total cost \$20.81. No earned views came out of it, but it is a pretty small sample size. These key words apparently just aren't searched on all that much. For example, "Swedenborg" was only searched 256 times, "offthellefteye" had 6, so it was "bible study" that had the most with 2,716 searches.

I wasn't really happy with either of these campaigns... the first was good for volume, but also seemed to put the videos in front of a negative audience. The second campaign just wasn't really generating much traffic. As a result I decided to chase some low hanging fruit and advertise to people who would be more likely to like the videos. I put together a new campaign that would advertise to people who were watching Offthellefteye, the YouTube channel for the Swedenborg Foundation that is hosted by Curtis Childs and Jonathan Rose.

Geographically, it was targeted to people living in Australia, US, Canada, and New Zealand. This time I created six different ads, promoting five different videos. I was thinking that if a person is watching OTLE, then they're at least in theory more likely to already know the name Swedenborg, and also be affirmative to Swedenborg's philosophy. As such, some of the ads were very direct, saying, "Swedenborg's Explanation of the Creation Story," or "Swedenborg Describes Noah's Ark as You've Never Heard." The Adam & Eve video was given the headline "A Rational Look at the Bible." I tried two different approaches with Cain and Able, going a bit more new age-y with them saying "Our Inner Life Needs Balance Too" and "Yin & Yang in the Bible." David & Goliath got "Master the Basics of Spiritual Living."

The results were much more to my liking. These ads ran a combined total of 233,854 times, and got 3,870 views, good for a 1.65% view rate. I can make that sound more impressive by saying "The view rate increased by over 50% from the first campaign!" Which is true. This campaign picked up more than a subscriber a day, but not two, around 1.3, and it got 71 earned views... more than triple the first campaign. As hoped, the "dislikes" stopped, or at least nearly stopped, and I started picking up some "likes" again so that now the Creation story video is up to 70% like/dislike. Plus this third campaign was actually less expensive than the first, \$107 vs \$135. This makes my cost per view for the second campaign about 3 cents, compared to 7 cents for the first and 25 for the second. The Creation Story, Adam & Eve, and Noah's Ark ads did the best with the highest view rate and getting 64 of the 71 earned views. I suspect this is partly due to the fact that those stories are simply just the ones that people are more familiar with and have more questions around.

All told, from all three campaigns, the channel has picked up 38 new subscribers, and had about 6,700 views over the past month. When you consider that without advertising I was getting around 4 or 5 subscribers a month, this is a massive increase. This leads me to thinking about what could be done advertising like this for the local church. Consider this: the third campaign generated 200 views in Australia... that's a couple hundred people watching OTLE in Australia, who also watched one of my videos. Of that campaign's \$107.70 cost, \$6.89 of that was from Australian views.

What I'm thinking at the moment is running a specific campaign that targets Sydney, OTLE users, and has some very specific key words that will be favourable to us. The main question on my mind is what would the ad direct them to. It could be that they get a generic video that ultimately directs them to our website where they can then click on the specific video that they're after. I don't think that's the best solution though. Maybe the ad directs them to one of the current videos, but I just need to add some text at the bottom of the video that says, "If you like this, please join us live! Check out our website for details..."

Anyway, I know that this is a lot of information, and I'm open to ideas and suggestions. As I think you can see, a campaign like this won't cost much because there won't be a lot of hits on it, \$1 a day would be a sufficient budget actually. Taking the lessons from these two campaigns I think a good target group could be put together... and who knows, maybe somebody will actually show up!

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Faith's NDE Event Postponed

Last month we announced a special event, where Faith Green was going to talk to us about her near death experience. Unfortunately she's had a medical emergency, so the originally planned date is not going to happen. Once she's recovered we'll work again at figuring out a date, but for now this event is on hold.

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Women's Weekend Review

by Jenn Beiswenger

Last month a group of New Church ladies gathered in Wentworthville, NSW, for a women's weekend. The eleven of us - 4 from Canberra, 4 from Roseville and 3 from the Hurstville society - trickled in on the Friday afternoon/evening with humble attitudes, optimistic outlooks and willing spirits, prepared for a weekend of sharing, insights, service, food and fun. Over the course of two days we did a lot! We took deeper looks into the Biblical characters Eve, Sarah, the woman clothed with the sun. We also discussed spiritual connections with menses, shared thoughts on loss & grief, assembled 200 sterile birthing kits for childbearing women in developing nations, participated in a guided meditation on the Lord's Prayer, and still had enough time to get to know each other through fun games, casual conversations, sharing meals and tight quarters together!

Although the space and program had their limitations, the overall experience was a very positive one for everyone. Some of the comments about the weekend included, "a great forum for like-minded women" and "a great time coming together to share in fellowship with other women; a time for enabling women to heal through sharing and support". (There are photos of the weekend on the church's Facebook page, if you'd like to see them -- go to www.facebook.com/HurstvilleNewChurch, click on 'Photos' on the left-hand side and look for 'Women's Weekend Aug'19'.) I know that some interested women were not able to come to this one, so I'm considering offering a carbon-copy repeat sometime within the next 6 months; if you're interested in participating in that, please let me know (jenn@beiswenger.net).

The ladies who did attend also expressed interest in making this a recurring event, so we'll work around developing a continuing program as well! Keep your eye on this space, and on the Hurstville New Church Facebook page (www.facebook.com/HurstvilleNewChurch), for information. Thanks to all who participated in this women's weekend, and also to all who helped us along the way, including in our birthing kit fundraising efforts. Your support is much appreciated!

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Friday Night Excitement

At our house, we normally order in some pizzas and watch a movie on a Friday evening, and August 9th was no exception. Jenn received a call from our neighbour, one that she ignored because we were in the middle of the movie. But when the neighbour called again 10 minutes later, she decided she should pick it up. Jenn summoned me to come outside saying, "Somebody has hit your car." Knowing that my car was in the driveway, I said, "How?"



Well, the picture answers one "how," which is how my car was hit in the driveway, but it only causes us to think of another "how." As in, "How on earth did this happen?" The simple answer is the driver of the ute pulled into the Baringa driveway to do a 3-point

turn, but then stomped on the accelerator pedal thinking it was the brake. This thrust the ute forward, running over the church sign, then across the garden and into my car.

The driver and ute are fully insured, so overall this isn't a big deal. This will give us the opportunity to reconsider what sort of signage we want out front. As one member pointed out, the church says "The New Church" on it, so perhaps we don't need another sign out front saying "The New Church" as well. If that's the case, then what should we put on a sign in front? We could do something that is more informational, like saying just what is "new" about the New Church, or some sort of changeable sign.

This is now the part where I ask you for your input and feedback, and in order to incentivize people to respond, I'm going to put forward this sign as a proposal. With lots of flashing lights and shiny bits, it's sure to catch a lot of attention. I'm sure the neighbours would love it.



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Birthdays

Happy Birthday to **Owen Heldon** (6th), **Carolyn Heldon** (8th), **Klaire Horner** (9th), **Liam Johnson** (10th), **Sylvia Hicks** (13th), **Karen Evans** (13th), **Jeffrey Heldon** (15th), **Phillipa Horner** (15th), **Phillip Walsh** (29th).

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