

The New Church Newsletter

Hurstville Society September 2005

When Your Blessings Are Abundant and "Too Much"

by Rev Don Rose

(reproduced from an article originally published in The Intelligencer, a publication in the Philadelphia area)

In the Bible story, a beautiful tabernacle was to be constructed in the wilderness. Only those whose hearts were in it were asked to donate costly materials. And donate they did! They gave "more than enough", in fact "too much" (Exodus 36:5,7)

That is a human phenomenon. There are outpourings of human generosity. When someone is lost, volunteers eagerly give their time and effort for the search. My son, serving in Iraq, was amazed at how many cookies and goodies were sent by caring Americans.

Love is inexhaustible. My mother had 12 children, and she was sometimes asked how she could possibly have enough love for so many. But love comes from an infinite source, and there are accounts in the Bible to dramatise this. The Psalm that begins, "The Lord is my shepherd" says "My cup runs over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever."

A cup that runs over is a lovely picture of "too much".

Consider this verse in the Gospels. "Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom." (Luke 6:38)

There are stories in the Bible about miraculous abundance. Elijah the prophet provided a widow with an endless flow of flour and oil (I Kings 17). And Elisha the prophet provided enough precious oil to fill all the empty vessels that could be found (2 Kings 4). Jesus fed thousands, and there were baskets of fragments left over. These are stories that dramatise the nature of love.

"When an angel does good to anyone, the angel receives more blessedness than he gives." We'll get to the nature of heavenly life in a moment.

Jesus said to a woman at a well, "Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give will never thirst. But the water that I shall give will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life." (John 4)

The land of promise is not just one with a sip of milk and bit of sweetness. No, it is as a land "flowing with milk and honey." This is about the joy of heaven. I don't know anyone who has written more about heaven than Emanuel Swedenborg: "Heaven in itself is so full of delights that viewed in itself it is nothing else than blessedness and delight; for the Divine good that flows forth from the Lord's Divine love is what makes heaven in general and in particular with everyone there, and the Divine love is a longing for the salvation of all and the happiness of all from inmosts and in fullness." ("Heaven and Hell" 397)

Food and external things are outward symbols of inner blessings. There is the warm satisfaction that one can be useful to others and helpful to those in need. There is the joy of serving and of making a difference for good. There is the joy honouring One who came to us that we might have life and that we might have it more abundantly.

Spiritual Gardening

by Norman Heldon

Nowadays, as cities grow, and more people live in high rise apartment blocks, so there are fewer gardeners. But, as Vera Glenn points out in her book "Heaven in a Wildflower", we are all spiritual gardeners. How we live determines the kind of surroundings we'll have in the spiritual world, so as a passage in the Writings tells us, we can be building our heavenly garden while we are here. (see Coronis 7)

"When with the man of the church faith is conjoined with charity, he is like a garden and a paradise." (AC 7626) "Therefore, in the Word, a regenerate person is compared to a garden or paradise. (AC 8326)

So, there is the garden of the mind as well as the garden in which we grow our trees, shrubs, flowers and vegetables. Both need planning, preparation of the two kinds of soil, weeding (from our minds the weeding out of sinful delights), planting, watering, weeding again. Sensible gardeners get advice from experts to assist them. For help with the building of our spiritual garden we go to the Word. In the early chapters we learn about Adam and Eve, who represented the people of the Most Ancient Church, living in the Garden of Eden that corresponded to the intelligence and wisdom of those people. We can picture their surroundings matching their celestial state. The first Psalm speaks of the person who "delights in the law of the Lord", being "like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth its fruit in due season". We think too of the Parable of the Sower, who is the Lord, and how His truths are unfortunately rejected by some, but welcomed by others. In the Word seed means truth, field doctrine and garden wisdom (TCR 350).

In our garden now at the Hurstville church, whose 100th Anniversary we have been celebrating, there are many new, beautiful shrubs and flowers, also figures of animals and birds and a water feature, plaques also that give botanical information and also the spiritual significance of all these things. The 19th century poet Tennyson wrote, "And I looked into the future, far as the human eye could see." He saw for instance, "the heavens filled with commerce". The thought comes that we might look into the future also to the time when the glorious truths of the New Revelation are more widely known and loved, when the makers of Botanic Gardens will also show by their signs that the beautiful things in gardens have heavenly messages for us.

Finally, it may seem surprising that Emanuel Swedenborg, despite the many arduous hours he devoted to writing scientific and theological works, was also a keen gardener. What great relaxation that must have been! We learn also that, while enjoying beautiful gardens in Heaven he was given to perceive the spiritual correspondences of the plants and flowers.

More History

As our readers are aware, the Foundation Day of the Hurstville New Church is July 11th 1905 and the August 2005 Newsletter reported on the Society's 100th Anniversary Celebrations of this date. Continuing in the spirit of the Anniversary the remaining issues of the Newsletter for this year will contain some excerpts from the periodical New Church Life [NCL] pertaining to the early history of the Hurstville Society. These will only be a small selection from the wealth of information available.

NCL November 1907

AUSTRALIA. The Nineteenth of June was celebrated by the little circle in SYDNEY, of which Mr. Richard Morse is the leader, by a feast of charity in which the elements of prayer and praise were not lacking. The passages in the True Christian Religion on The New Church as the Crown of the Churches (nos. 756-790) were read by Mr. Morse, who followed the reading by some remarks on the significance of the day. There was but one toast, to the growth of the New Church, which was responded to by the most recent member of the society, Mr. John Worrall. The latter, it seems, had been brought up in the New Church in England, but had drifted away, and had finally become an attendant at the Church of England. Quite recently he suffered great financial loss, a loss however which he now views as a blessing in disguise. To quote his own words, "Being troubled and depressed, and having no particular aim, I set out for the city, and took a seat at the railway station to wait for the train. Alongside me was a man reading intently. I ventured to remark, as I looked on the book, 'You must have something good there; where are you going?' He replied, 'I am going to worship the Lord.' 'Can I go with you?' 'I shall be delighted,' he said, 'but I'm afraid you will be disappointed, there are so 'few attending.' I reminded him that where two or three are gathered together in the Lord's name, He is in the midst. So I went. That man was Mr. Dupen, [a member of the circle], and the book he was reading so intently was one of the Heavenly Doctrines. That day. (January 20th). was

the turning point back to the Church." . . .

The history of the Church clearly shows the intimate connection existing between the observance on New Church Day, and the principles of acknowledgment of the Lord in the Writings and of the distinctiveness of the New Church, with all that these principles imply. We are not surprised, therefore, to learn that the celebration by the little Sydney circle is in all probability the first observance of the Nineteenth of June in Australia. May it not be the last.

NCL November 1912

AUSTRALIA. From the NINETEENTH OF JUNE SOUVENIR [a publication by Richard Morse] we learn that the society in Sydney, of which Mr. Richard Morse is the leader, is steadily maintaining its work.

Services have been held regularly each Sunday as hitherto. Owing to the exorbitant rents which were demanded of the tenants of the Queen's Hall, services at that address were discontinued on the last Sunday in November. All meetings are now held at 12 Botany Road, Alexandria. . . .

The 10th vol. of the ARCANA COELESTIA now occupies the Sunday reading meetings, the 9th vol. having been finished early in the year. The Wednesday meetings completed the reading of TRUE CHRISTIAN RELIGION, and, next month, will finish HEAVEN AND HELL, after which the DIVINE LOVE AND WISDOM will be taken up, being followed by THE DIVINE PROVIDENCE.

NCL August -; September 1913

Mr. Richard Morse, of Sydney, N. S. W., Australia, has been authorized to preach and administer the Sacraments of the Church, pending ordination.

NCL September 1914

AUSTRALIA AND INDIA. As previously reported in the LIFE, the Rev. Frederick E. Gyllenhaal, on the 30th of March, started on his long journey from Philadelphia to Durban, South Africa. On his way through the West he visited his relatives and childhood friends in Glenview, and his former parishioners in Denver, leaving San Francisco on the 7th of April, and arriving in Sydney, Australia, on Monday, April 29th. Here he was met by the Rev. Richard Morse and his faithful little circle, for whom, during two weeks, he preached, held classes and administered the Sacraments at Miss Taylor's home, 180 Regent street, Redfern, a suburb of Sydney. . . . In the afternoon of Sunday, May 10th, he visited Hurstville, where he baptized four children of Mr. and Mrs. Hellberg and two children of Mr. and Mrs. Morgan.



Pictured is Fredrik Wilhelm Hellberg. father of Norman Heldon

(surname changed)

NCL December 1919

FROM THE GENERAL CHURCH OF THE NEW JERUSALEM IN AUSTRALIA, TO THE TENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY MEETING IN BRYN ATHYN, OCTOBER, 1919.

Dear Friends: In the Providence of the Lord, circumstances have concurred to enable me to meet with you face to face on this auspicious occasion, and to speak the greeting that comes from the hearts of our people in Australia.

The members of the Church in that distant land rejoice in the knowledge that they are part of an organization that so truly appreciates the character of the Revelation given by the Lord at His Second Coming, and that so truly promulgates it by teaching and by life, as does the General Church of the New Jerusalem. . . . Affectionately . . . RICHARD MORSE.

ASSEMBLY NOTES.

At the Sunday service on October 12th, the Bishop ordained the Rev. Reginald W. Brown, the Rev. Karl R. Alden, and the Rev. Theodore Pitcairn into the second degree, and Mr. Richard Morse into the first and second degrees, of the priesthood of the New Church.

Australian New Church College News

Philippines

By now most people will have been aware that the College has trained to ordination 3 Filipino students. Ronnie, Rico and Septhan. Rev Julian Duckworth and Rev Ian Arnold went to the Philippines to attend the ordination ceremony in May this year. Some of you may not know that the College is currently training a fourth Filipino student -; Elpidio Enriquez. Elpidio is due to complete his studies for ordination by Feb/Mar 2007.

Local Students

Recently the College has had two sincere, local (Australian) enquiries regarding studying with the College. This is good news! The college always welcomes enquiries about its courses. People are welcome to study a single course e.g. "Divine Providence" or "Self-Witnessing", or a full course of study toward ordination with the College.

Changes to Coursework

Finally, the College has set itself the major task of re-writing and re-formatting courses. As you may be aware, the College has traditionally sourced its coursework from the UK College in Manchester. As the Australian New Church College now grows and meets the demands of Australasian students, we need courses that are relevant to our corner of the world and the unique forms of ministry that are unfolding within it. Some of the re-writing and re-formatting has begun already. However, an intense effort is now being planned and gotten underway. We will keep you informed of new and innovative courses that are available to potential students of the College.

For information about studying with the College, or other enquiries, please contact either Rev Ian Arnold (Principal) or Julie Barns (Education Consultant) on (07) 3369 0054. We do have an answering machine service and are endeavouring to make it more prompt in taking your calls when the office is unattended. Do please hold the line and wait to leave a message. We will be happy to return your call.

Listing of Donors

The Development Office has let contributors to the Academy know that we plan to list all donors in the upcoming Annual Report. This will include all donors in the past fiscal year, grouped by classes, with special categories for friends and others. No contribution amounts or categories will be included - just names.

Listing donors is common practice in most educational institutions, but we realize this will be a cultural change for the Academy. (We do not plan to list contributors to the General Church.) This is one more way to show appreciation for all who support the Academy. Anyone who prefers to be listed as anonymous may do so, but we will be printing names unless specifically asked not to do so.

Welcome to Bishop Peter and Lisa Buss

Bishop Peter and Lisa Buss will be arriving on Friday 9th September for a stay of two and a half months (until Monday 21st November). To welcome them there will be a **Pot Luck lunch** on **Sunday 11th September** after church. Please come one and all and don't forget to *bring something to share for lunch!* This is your chance to show Peter and Lisa how much we appreciate their generosity in serving our Society at this time while we are without a permanent pastor.

Society Calendar Items

Please note the **Friday Dinner and class on September 16th**, which has been rescheduled from its normal 1st Friday timeslot to await Bishop Buss's arrival.

September 18th after church is the **Annual General Meeting** of the **Property Trust**. This is usually short and will receive the audited accounts for the year as well as the annual report and the election of councillors.

Also on **September 18th** is the **Theta Alpha Guild AGM**. Although scheduled on the same day as the Property Trust AGM this should not matter due to the expected short duration of the Property Trust Meeting.

Society Hike

It is still hoped to hold a Society Hike during September for those who are interested and able to make it. Please contact Owen or Margaret Heldon (ph 9545 3823) and they will try to gauge which of several options will best suit. One is a half-day hike say on a Sunday afternoon not too far away (say Royal National Park) and the other is a full day hike/picnic further afield say in the Blue Mountains or Southern Highlands.

News Notes



Sunday 14th marked a big day for **Jeffrey Heldon**. Firstly, after church he was presented with a laptop backpack by **Owen Heldon** on behalf of the Sons of the Academy. The Hurstville Sons group has always supported New Church education and one of the ways it has done this is to provide assistance to young men attending the Academy of the New

Church in Bryn Athyn USA. (The Theta Alpha Guild has provided assistance to young women.) Jeffrey will be using his new laptop computer in his education in the High School in Bryn Athyn. By comparison some of you may have noticed in the archives on display at the 100th Anniversary, a picture of the gift presented to **Garry Walsh** when he attended the Academy for the first time. In those days an appropriate gift was a briefcase. Times have changed!

Following church some people stayed on and were joined by a number of Jeffrey's school friends for a combined send off/ birthday party held at the tennis court at the back of the church. Jeffrey turns 16 on 15th September. He flew out of Sydney on 23rd August accompanied by his father Murray.

Goodbyes were also said to **Sam** and **Kristen Johnson** who have now left on an eight week overseas trip taking them to Thailand, Japan (meeting with **Kerstin** and **Tomoya Okubo** and **Sophie Gospadarcyk**), Ireland (meeting with **Wendy Cole** and **Sonia Hicks** and fiancée **Adam**), Scotland (meeting with **Carolyn Heldon**), England (meeting with **Karen Lockhart**) and amongst other places Bryn Athyn USA (meeting with **Jeffrey Heldon** and too many other people to name). Have a great holiday Sam and Kristen and we look forward to seeing you back in a couple of months.

Sadly we have to report that **Dot Heldon** is in hospital and has been very sick from salmonella poisoning. Doctors are hoping her condition will improve soon and she will be able to move to respite care in another hospital. We are all praying for continuing improvement.

Also needing hospital attention is **Norm Heldon** who will go into hospital at the end of the month for a skin graft because of skin cancer on his leg.

Taking a break this past month have been **Mike** and **Kerry Lockhart** who have enjoyed a week's holiday at O'Reilly's Rainforest Guesthouse in the Lamington National Park in Queensland. Also taking a short break were **Owen** and **Margaret Heldon** spending a couple of days at Bundanoon in the Southern Highlands.

September Birthdays

Happy Birthday to **Owen Heldon** (6th), **Carolyn Heldon** (8th), **Klaire Horner** (9th), **Sylvia Hicks** (13th), **Karen Lockhart** (13th), **Jeffrey Heldon** (15th), **Phillipa Horner** (15th), **Emily Hicks** (26th) and **Phillip Walsh** (29th)

Gathering Leaves

Gathering Leaves 2006

A Retreat for Women of all Branches
of Swedenborgian Organizations

The View from the Canopy
Historical and Personal Perspectives on
Swedenborgian Faith from the Branches

May 19-21, 2006

Temenos Conference and Retreat Center
1564 Telegraph Road, West Chester, PA 19382 USA
610-696-8145; www.temenosretreat.org

The Program Committee will be accepting workshop proposals through September 30th. We are looking for workshops that explore the history of theology, liturgy and community and that share personal experiences of spirituality, worship & relationships.

To submit proposals, share ideas or receive registration materials, go to the Temenos website at www.temenosretreat.org. (Registration is limited)

"The leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations." Rev. 22.2

September 2005 Calendar of Events

Note: All events are located at the church at 22 Dudley St, Penshurst 2222 (off Hillcrest Ave) unless otherwise stated. Contact the Hurstville New Church on (02) 9580 1589 for more information or email us at newchurch@ontusnet.com.au

All are welcome and refreshments are served after church each Sunday.

Sunday	Sep 4th	10 00 a.m. Worship (Lay Service)
Friday	Sep 9th	Bishop Peter & Lisa Buss arrive
Sunday	Sep 11th	10 00 a.m. Worship followed by Pot Luck Luncheon
Friday	Sep 16th	7 00 p.m. Dinner & Class
Sunday	Sep 18th	10 00 a.m. Worship followed by Property Trust AGM & Theta Alpha Guild AGM
Sunday	Sep 25th	10.00 a.m. Worship