



The New Church Newsletter

Hurstville Society April 2019

Contents

[Patience in the Wake of Tragedy](#)

by Rev Todd Beiswenger

[Proposed Women's Weekend](#)

[Spit to Manly Walk](#)

[Pulpit Swap](#)

[Ros Taylor Visit](#)

[General Church Outreach Efforts](#)

[Assistant Bishop Affirmation Process](#)

[Birthdays](#)

Patience in the Wake of Tragedy

By Rev Todd Beiswenger

The refugees seeking safety in a far off land were culturally different than those of their host country. They threatened to take jobs from locals in the new land, and were certain to strain welfare budgets and government resources upon their arrival. Crime? Yes, they brought some of that with them too. Oh, and they practiced a foreign religion. They were Catholic!

I don't know if you're familiar with this story, but what I'm referring to is the migration of large numbers of Irish to the US in the 1800s. It really got underway in the 1840s when a pathogen swept through Ireland's staple crop: potatoes. You may have heard of it as the "potato blight," and it was devastating because Ireland at the time consumed around 7 million tons of potatoes every year. This blight went on for seven years, and the population of Ireland was nearly halved by the time it was over. About 1 million perished, but 2 million left Ireland – nearly a quarter of the Irish nation - for the United States.

The people arriving were tired and poor. They were unskilled. Did I mention that they were Catholic? Boston was a city of 100,000, and saw 37,000 Irish arrive in the span of a few years. The discrimination wasn't subtle. Newspaper job ads would say right in print that "No Irish Need Apply." People were clamouring to return to the America that used to be, a land of "Temperance, Liberty and Protestantism." Political parties grew out of the discontent, promising that they would only elect native born citizens, as long as they weren't Roman Catholic.

I don't know about you, but I think this is eerily similar to some of the same things we are seeing today. Just change out "Catholic" for "Muslim" and "Ireland" for the "Middle East" and this account would probably pass for current events. The fact is this basic story has been happening all around the world for hundreds of years. It's not new. I'm a little familiar with this particular story because I grew up in the suburbs of Philadelphia, and in 1844 we had what is known as the "Philadelphia Nativist Riots." The riots were a result of rising anti-Catholic and Irish immigrant sentiment. The nativists were spreading false rumours that the Catholics wanted to remove Bibles from public schools, which set off some rallies that culminated in the destruction of two Catholic churches, numerous other buildings and the death of about 20 people. While I'm in no way advocating for the proliferation of automatic weapons, it is worth noting that all of this was done without automatic weapons.

When I think of the tragedy of what happened in Christchurch, I think about the long and troubled history of people fleeing their homeland and finding persecution in their adopted homeland. Creating a multi-cultural society is hard, there's no doubt in my mind about it. It can be done, but it takes time. Today, the Irish are well integrated into Philadelphia, Boston and the US, but it wasn't done in a year, or even a decade. While I know we all wish that people could just meet, shake hands and sing "Kumbaya" together, the reality is integrating new populations is hard work. It takes time and effort to reach out, to get to

know the new people, and find common ground. It is the things that we have in common that will bind us, and allow us to appreciate the differences in each other as well. When we don't have things in common though, or we are not aware of what we have in common, it creates a tension that can lead to problems.

In the spiritual world, integrating new souls into a community is easy, because what is happening is that like-minded people are coming together. There is no integrating of different cultures into one space, rather there is separation. "The angels of any given heaven are not all together in one place, but are separated into larger and smaller communities depending on differences in the good effects of the love and faith they are engaged in. Angels engaged in similar activities form a single community" (HH 41).

Communities and individuals are further or closer together based on how similar their inward natures are. The result is you won't have a white-supremacist in the proximity of a Muslim heaven. Their inner natures are going to be quite different, and therefore there is no proximity. Based on how I understand what is taught in "*Heaven and Hell*," the one probably won't even realize that the other even exists.

The Lord orchestrates the whole process and we're taught that "Kindred souls gravitate toward each other spontaneously, as it were, for with each other they feel as though they are with their own family, at home, while with others they feel like foreigners, as though they were abroad. When they are with kindred souls, they enjoy the fullest freedom and find life totally delightful" (HH 44). I think that this gives us a different picture of multiculturalism than the one we tend to imagine in the world today. Heaven is perfected by variety, but at the same time, there doesn't seem to be quite the spectrum of variety on a local level. Sure, everybody is different... they'll look different, dress different, do different specific jobs, but at the same time they will be bound together by beliefs and loves that are of a deeper nature.

Sports teams are great examples of this. You can have people from all sorts of different backgrounds come together and get along because they are bound by the single goal of winning. Police and Fire Departments are known for this sort of comradery as well, as they form bonds because they know that their life is in the hands of the people around them.

Yet the general image of this world is quite different. Not only are people of different loves in close proximity, but we have good and evil people mixed together as well. In the Gospels, Jesus tells us the parable of the wheat and the tares. The sower sows the wheat, and then an enemy comes along and sows some weeds. Eager friends of the farmer want to separate the two right away, but Jesus says that they are to wait and let the two continue to grow until harvest. Then they'll be separated. That's the picture of this world. There's good people, and there's bad people, and they're mixed together like the wheat and the weeds. Eventually though, they will be separated.

Like the farmer's eager helpers, we too can feel a desire to do something, anything, in the wake of a tragedy. But what I take from the Word, and from the history of other immigrants fleeing to new lands, is that what we need is kindness and patience. Let justice run its course on this terrorist, and in our communities continue to put forward the message that our understanding of God is quite unique because we believe that there is a

place in heaven for all good people, not just Christians. We believe in a multiculturalism where no matter what you love, you'll be with others who love it just as much as you do. We believe in the reality and eternity of the afterlife, and that while this pain is very real for those affected now, before long the harvest will come and there will be no more pain, and no more suffering. After all, the Lord Jesus Christ does reign.

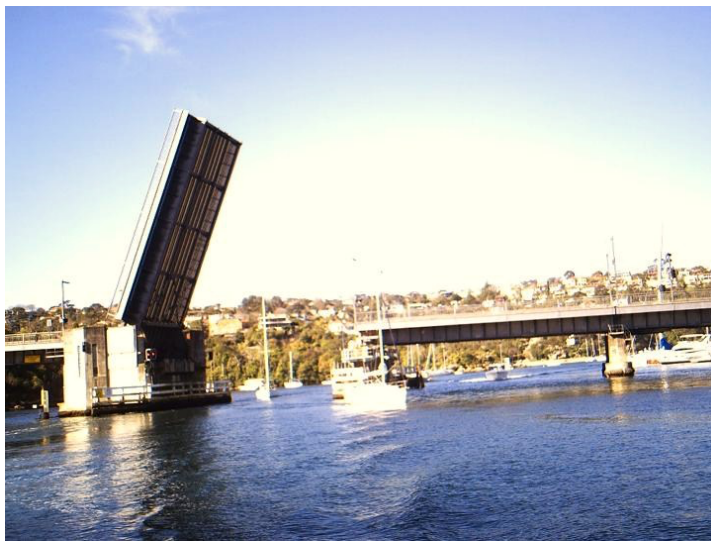
[top](#)

Proposed Women's Weekend

Like-minded women gathering together for fellowship, faith, food, fun.... Does this appeal to you? It won't float everyone's boat, but if your interest is piqued at all, please read on! **Jenn** has the idea of hiring a house somewhere around Sydney for a Friday-evening-through-Sunday-afternoon weekend - perhaps Fri Aug 9 - Sun Aug 11, if that works for people? - and gathering interested women to share thoughts, stories, friendship, food, and a bit of spirituality/religion, too. She has ideas, and is open to suggestion as well. Cost will depend on where we stay, number of people, how we choose to do food,.... If you're at all interested, please let her know (jenn@beiswenger.net, 0411 719 754).

[top](#)

Spit to Manly Walk



We did it! We've talked about doing this walk for quite some time, but this time we actually did it. Part of the delay was trying to figure out whether or not there would be sufficient time to do it after church on a Sunday when public transit fares are cheap. We decided to give it a go, and it all turned out really well. We got a 12:30 train out of Hurstville, took that downtown and picked up a bus that

dropped us off on the western side of the spit bridge. Then our 10km walk commenced.

We didn't make it too far, maybe 2kms or so, before we came across a beach with crystal clear water that was beckoning for a swim. Unable to resist, most of the boys were captive to the siren call of water play. But before too long, the boys were out, and the walking resumed.

The walk itself lived up to the billing of a very scenic trail. We saw the bridge rise to let some boats through, and as we walked along the coast we got to see one perfect view of the harbour after another. We ended up at Manly, where we grabbed a bite to eat, and then took the ferry back to Circular Quay and the train back home. It's fair to say that we were

all pretty well exhausted by the end. But it was a nice afternoon out, and we hope you'll join us for our next, likely shorter, walk.

[top](#)

Pulpit Swap

Just as Julian and I did a twice a year pulpit swap, Howard (**Rev Howard Thompson**) and I are intending to carry forward that arrangement. This time it'll be a little different in that we're going to swap on **Palm Sunday**. We've never swapped on an occasion like this before, but you've heard my takes on Palm Sunday for the last seven years, so it might be nice to have somebody else's presentation on it this year. I hope you enjoy it!

[top](#)

Ros Taylor Visit

Ros is currently in Adelaide assisting the church there, but she has kindly offered to help out our church, as well as Roseville and the Swedenborg Centre for four weeks from April 12-May 11. You may be aware that she is currently working towards ordination in the Convention church, and has a long history of work in the New Church. During her time in Sydney, she'll be staying in Baringa, and has agreed to offer a couple of classes, one on April 15, and the other May 6.

[top](#)

General Church Outreach Efforts

The Media Outreach division of the General Church is producing some new online content, and they want to know what you think!

The Spiritable Podcast: Hosted by Luke David and Richard Glenn, including a variety of interesting guests, this video podcast explores everyday life issues with a grounded, spiritual perspective, and does not shy away from a bit of comedy and laughter. This podcast is especially good for young adults, the spiritually curious, or perhaps the spiritually bored. Look up "Spiritable" on YouTube or anywhere you find podcasts (Spotify, iTunes, Tune-in, etc.)!

The Grand Human Project: Outreach's Facebook page that produces lots of videos and inspirational messages with a fresh new voice. It should show up first in a Facebook search!

phoneitforward.org, a relationship building tool using New Church philosophy as it's backbone to promote ongoing friendships!

Hidden Things in Heaven Podcast: hosted by Judah Synnestvedt, this podcast goes on a detailed, verse-by-verse exploration of Genesis alongside highlights from Arcana Coelestia. It's for anyone who wants to apply the Word to his or her life through a deeper biblical and scriptural study! Find it on iTunes.

Check it all out, have fun, tell your friends, and let us know what you think! Send us your feedback or questions at grandhumanproject@gmail.com

Assistant Bishop Affirmation Process

Rt Rev Peter Buss Jr has sent out the following letter announcing the opening of the Assistant Bishop affirmation process. I'm including this here in case you are a member and did not receive the letter. Here it is:

I write today to announce the opening of an Assistant Bishop affirmation process. The **Rt. Rev. Bradley Heinrichs** and the **Rt. Rev. David Lindrooth** have been nominated to serve in the position of Assistant Bishop within the General Church. They have been affirmed by the General Church Clergy and by the General Church Board. Now it is your turn. It is only after the affirmation of all three groups, including the General Church membership, that they can carry that title of Assistant Bishop. I welcome your participation in this important process.

From the standpoint of logistics, General Church members will receive a ballot in the mail (for those for whom we have mailing addresses), and may already have received a ballot via email (again for those for whom we have email addresses). Each member will have a unique number associated with their name. You can vote either online or via paper ballot. We request your vote by **May 24, 2019**.

You can find out more about Brad and David by visiting www.about.newchurch.org/about/bishop-selection/. There you will find a letter from each of them, the statement of faith and purpose that they delivered at their ordination services, their curriculum vitae, and some samples of their work.

As can be imagined David, Brad and I have been having many useful conversations together, and we have been talking with many of you. We are excited at the opportunity to serve. I would be grateful for the support of the membership for these two people to serve as Assistant Bishops.

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)

[top](#)