

Sydney Society Newsletter

Issued by the Sydney Society of the New Church
Established in 1875

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The Faith of the New Church is summarized as follows:

There is one God in whom is the Divine Trinity. He is the Lord God and Saviour, Jesus Christ. Saving faith is to believe in Him. Evil actions are not to be done because they are from hell and of hell. Good actions are to be done because they are from God and of God. These are to be done by a person as though they are done by himself, yet believing that they are from the Lord working in him and through him.



...and he who has no money, come buy and eat!(Isaiah 55.1)

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The Swedenborg Association has a special event on Oct24th
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The Minister of the Sydney Society is Rev. Julian Duckworth and he can be contacted at any time either by telephone (02) 9416 7026/7032 or by a personal visit to 4 Shirley Road, Roseville, for any pastoral help or guidance. Let the Minister know in good time about pastoral concerns with people - including yourself too - so that he can give help where and when it is needed.

FROM THE MINISTER

WHY THE EARTH IS ROUND

Have you ever wondered about that? Maybe not. If someone had asked me before yesterday why the earth is round, and why it's a sphere (and not flat!) I would have said that it is because by rotating (as it has always done) this tends towards making circles. (Think about stirring a cappuchino!) But apparently I'm wrong there.

I might have also suggested that it is really to do with galactic aerodynamics; in other words because as well as rotating on itself, the earth is travelling round the sun which is also travelling extremely fast through space. So, all this travelling has led to the earth forming curves allowing it to travel through space without over-heating or having ridges which could slow it down. It isn't a brick! (Think about the nose of a Qantas jet). But goodness me, I'm wrong again.

So let me reveal the real reason why the earth is round (and why planets and stars are always round.) It is because of gravity, the pull towards its own centre that every planet has. So, everything that is part of planet earth (which is still solidifying), actually snuggles down to be as much a part of the whole as possible, to be close, to fit in. Isn't that just a lovely thing! (It's like being in a nice warm bed.) And this gravity cosyne leads to the most efficient shape of a sphere.

If anything is less than 1000kms in diameter, it won't happen because the gravity isn't strong enough and the rocks are too hard to pull in. So asteroids stay chunky, but not planets. Now you know!

But of course that is only the scientific explanation of why the earth is round. If you go behind the science and start thinking about God, who makes great use of science to get things the way He wants them to be, then there are even better reasons why the earth is round.

A round earth doesn't have any start or finish and nor does it have a top or a bottom. Go anywhere on a round earth and eventually you will come back to where you started. Any two places on a round earth are linked by a straight line 'as the crow flies'. What a fantastic shape to demonstrate such noble things as equality and fraternity.

But I'm attracted to the gravity thing (if you'll pardon the pun) and particularly to the idea of it making over aeons of time everything snuggle down to be as much part of the whole thing as possible. I can really relate to that. I like to fit in. I need to find my place in life. I also need a few corners and sharp bits of my make-up to shift or shatter so that I can bed down with my bedfellows and not stick out or hurt them with a nasty corner or elbow jab.

I wonder if the spiritual world is round. Someone will tell me, don't be silly, the spiritual world isn't a 'thing', it's a 'state'. It's never able to be filled up (that's a relief!) and it can just keep on expanding and including more and more people that God loves creating. Fair comment, but I do think that it's best thought of as being round, because every community in heaven has a centre and some suburbs all around, and because God is the Centre of everything and we are all snuggling down to be as close to God as we can get. And if Love is the whole essence, then, for me, curves show loving much more than straight lines and corners.

I can't do better than leave the final word with a verse from one of the Psalms which seems to say what I've been trying to... "As the mountains are around Jerusalem so the Lord is around his people, from this time forth and for evermore." (Psalm 125.2) Navigate it all well.

Julian

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WHAT WENT ON AT THE CHATSWOOD SEMINAR

If you remember, we decided to hold a day seminar called ' Staying Spiritual in a Crazy World' at the Dougherty Centre in Chatswood, doing what we did for its own sake and benefit. Advertising had been extensive and yet there were just 12 of us taking part in the workshop which, considering the value of the title and the low charge, was a bit disappointing. There was heavy rain, but that's no excuse.

The people who came enjoyed the day a lot and said so, and went home benefitting from being there. The sessions were led by Todd Beiswenger and myself, and varied enormously in content and style. Each session slotted into the overall topic very well, that of giving help to people to stay in touch with what matters, to cope, and to find techniques to make use of in a world which regularly alarms, demands, shocks and knocks.

Thankyou to Ruth for organising the morning and afternoon teas which gave people the chance to meet and mix which they did, and thanks to the Sydney Society for providing most of the funding for the advertising.

I have never been one for giving up because of low response. So it is on with the next outgoing activity which will be managed by Todd at Homebush in the next Mind, Body, Spirit Festival from Thursday October 23rd to Sunday 26th. We hope some of you will be able to go there and come over to see us. Todd is arranging a display of chosen books which are all to do with helping people find their way with life. They are very well chosen and should work well for discussion right there and usefulness in reading afterwards.

And while on the subject of being out-going with our contribution to spiritual health and benefit, one good person is currently doing sterling stuff in major maildrops, of Tributes to Swedenborg. It was great to hear a church member report that she was delighted to actually get a Swedenborg leaflet in her own letter box! How unusual – How Wonderful!

FRIENDSHIP GROUP NOTES



We will be meeting again for our next Friendship Group on Wednesday October 1st, starting with coffee and cake at 10.45 a.m.

Julian will give us a talk on ‘Windows’ and draw widely from personal experiences, the Bible and New Church ideas.

After this we will enjoy our shared lunch together. We would love to have you join us for this, and everyone is welcome.

Glen Hart

OUR ANGEL SERVICE

At the last Angel Service, with seven there, we sat in a circle and did something different and very ... stimulating. If you know the party game where you have a famous person or whatever stuck on your forehead and you have to ask questions to work out who it is, this was a variant on that. But we used spiritual qualities instead. Each person, with a sticky label and texter, wrote a quality and put this on the forehead of the person next to them, all round the circle.

It certainly wasn't easy, but what happened was that the group worked very hard and deeply to give each person's word shades of meaning without giving it away. That itself was a useful thing to do because it made us all think what a word really means.

The words were: Respect, Empathetic, Mothering, Commitment, Faith, Forgiveness and Fisherman. It took us almost the whole hour to complete and it's highly recommended.

... while mentioning labels, I found I still have a whole box of many 1000s of labels suitable for a now extinct printing device. All in great condition and very suitable for envelope re-labelling or even jam jars. If you would like a batch, just let me know. They would be very easy to post if you live at a distance.

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SNIPPETS FROM THE SCRAPBOOK

The best things in life usually are not things. - Anon

Our fears are always more numerous than our dangers. -
Seneca

Success is getting what you want. Happiness is liking what you get.
- Anon

We shall never cease exploring and when we arrive at our destination,
we will have returned to the same place, only to know it for the first
time. - T S Eliot

We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give.
- Winston Churchill

Don't pray for a light load, pray for a strong back. - Church sign
Stella Green

MORE ABOUT THE 2015 CAMP – Phillip Island, Victoria

It's been more or less agreed that there won't be a set theme for this
Camp, but each presenter will choose what he or she wants to do a



session on. That means there will
be good variety.

There are about 85 people to date
booked in for the Camp. You can
still make your booking and the
leaflets giving the costs and
details are available or can be
sent to you.

Monday 29th December – Sunday

January 4th.

We usually have a few overseas visitors coming to the Camp and I
have just heard that someone from the USA is likely to be there with
us, who has never been to a Camp, nor, I imagine, to Australia before.

Swedenborg Centre News

Update on the Swedenborg Radio Program Talks

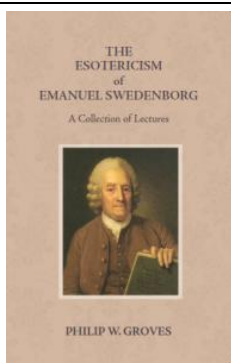
A major project in 2012 was providing the text of over 100 Swedenborg Radio Program Talks (of the 1970s and early 1980s) onto the website – **swedenborg.com.au**. The presenter was in most instances the Rev Ian Arnold. This is a great spiritual resource as it provides many examples of the relevance of Swedenborg's ideas and insights for our lives. Phase 2 has begun in scanning and editing additional talks, in preparation to adding them to the website soon.

Some of the new titles are:

- ★ People's Unseen Spiritual Associates
- ★ Who was Jesus
- ★ The Ten Commandments
- ★ The Life and Mission of Emanuel Swedenborg
- ★ The Beatitudes
- ★ The Lord's Prayer

If you haven't seen what's already on offer you can go to **Learning Resources** (under **Services Offered**) and find the transcripts.

New Book soon to be available



I'm looking forward to the Triam Press publication of '**The Esotericism of Emanuel Swedenborg**' by Philip Groves.

This book is a collection of lectures given by Philip Groves to his groups during 1986. All chapters relate, directly or indirectly, to the work and teachings of Emanuel Swedenborg, although not always in an obvious way.

It will become available for purchase in late October.

Michael

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SOCIETY NEWS

Two weeks of demolition and construction work finished the hall deck replacement which is an impressive new addition to our grounds. It's a lovely colour and gives the impression of being even slightly larger?

It was very nice to have Anne Stephen at church after treatment in Mount Wilga, looking very well, the day before she drove back to Bundanoon. We send her our love and very best wishes.

It was also great to see Michael Chester and Julie Beynon recently back from an overseas trip which they both said they thoroughly enjoyed.

The Board of the New Church in Australia is physically getting together to meet at the manse on Friday October 10th and Saturday 11th. We have things to deal with of course but if you wanted to call round and catch up with them, around 12.30 p.m. on either day would be fine.

Our best wishes to Cynthia Marcroft who is making real progress after breaking her wrist and is about to get out and about again. She hopes to join us at church soon.

Judy Probert is 'looking fabulous' Dave says, and she is beginning a new course of treatment which has an excellent trial history. Much love to you, Judy, from everybody.

I made the decision to stop using the blue hymnbooks and have the words of anything we sing on the service sheet itself. That means we can extend our choice as we wish. If you have a favourite hymn or suggest a new hymn you've come across which we might enjoy having a go at, feel free to say.

Also, due to their now poor condition, it's likely that the hymn books will be disposed of pretty soon. If you would like to take one home as a memento, by all means do.

Ruth will be going to England on October 18th for 2 weeks to be with her parents. We wish her and them a lovely time together.

OUR BIBLE STUDY GROUPS



We are starting to look at John’s gospel until at least the end of this year.

In the first session, which was an introduction, we saw that John’s gospel is by far from being just another ‘take’ on Jesus’ life, work and words. It is so different from Matthew, Mark and Luke, and its main emphasis – from the word go – is the

divinity of Jesus. It offers a group so much to get into.

STEWARDS AND FLOWERS FOR OCTOBER

Sunday	Steward(s)	Flowers
5 th (Sacr.)	Graham Hanna	Elizabeth Kemmis
12 th	Wayne Kasmar	Ruth Duckworth
19 th	Michael Chester	Lydia Chua
26 th	Tracey Glendenning	Volunteer

SYNCHRONICITY SPOT

Where two apparently unrelated events meet up



I came across a very good example of synchronicity when I read through Rev. Don Rose’s “Coincidence Viewed from Above”.

He writes that during World War 2, an American woman was assigned to New Guinea. There she received a letter saying that a man she’d never met had also been assigned in the Australian forces to New Guinea. The man’s name was Norman Heldon and, like her, he was a reader of Swedenborg.

Having just read the letter, she looked out of the window and saw a convoy of trucks pulling up. On impulse, she selected one truck and called out to the first person who emerged, “Do you know Norman Heldon?” The answer was, “I am Norman Heldon.”



Swedenborg Association of Australia Inc.

North Ryde Group - Telephone: (02) 9888 1066

website: www.swedenborg.com.au



Soirée for the spirit

FRIDAY 24TH OCTOBER 2014 at 6.30pm

Swedenborg Centre,

1 Avon Road, North Ryde

Cost: \$25; concession \$20

Bookings essential. Limited to 30 people.

Join us for this very special evening, designed to feed your appetite for yummy food, satisfy your ears with soulful live music, and feed your soul with inspiring ideas and social connections!

Limited tickets, so will sell fast; be quick to register your place at the feasting table by calling 9888 1066.

The evening features a special 'Book Club' segment to remember Ursula Groll (1949 – 2014) and her unique understanding of Swedenborg's Writings.

The program commences at 6.30pm giving you time to mingle and enjoy yummy dips. Around 6:45 we will be guided in a centering exercise to let go the busyness of the day and be more in the moment. Then we move onto a short film, a delicious dinner (Thai food and water provided, **BYO drinks**), and delightful music. Two guests will discuss Ursula Groll's books '**Spiritual Unity of East and West**' and '**Swedenborg and New Paradigm Science**' with an opportunity to ask questions and recommend similar good reads. The evening ends with supper starting around 9:15pm.

THE PILLARS OF NEW CHURCH BELIEFS



Continuing a series presenting our beliefs in plain English.

This time we will look at the idea that **God is present with us.**

I read about a lady whose husband had died and how she said that now he wasn't in the next room or in the city, but was present with her all the time. "I talk to him of course."

That's a helpful bridge for the truth that God is present with us all the time. He isn't only present with certain people (whatever they might think about that!) and he isn't only present when we are being good. He's never not there...and that's true for every single person.

The real starter is that for us to be alive, God **must** be present, keeping us alive by giving us our life all the time. I often think that's the main thing God does – he just keeps flowing in. It's not done with clockwork; we are not 'set going'.

But that is only part of it. God is present with us, and knows our deepest wish, every motive and unknown (to us) fear. He always knew them. We can't keep anything from God. God isn't judging anything about us; he is only concerned with how he can help us find our way and feel right, or whatever it is we need.

But God, being on the inside of us, won't suddenly press buttons to make things happen. I would almost say that he 'tweaks' or adjusts things. If he is present and isn't doing anything, that seems absurd. It is not all up to us and yet God wants us to feel that it is, and yet God 'tweaks' slight impulses which we pick up on.

The aim – as far as God is concerned – is for us to respond to him (or at least to what is better than before). If we get to that, then God isn't just present (like he always is), now we're joined to him and he can be more joined to us. It's a working relationship. Like that lady who lost her husband said, "I talk to him of course as he's always with me now."

FROM ANOTHER TRADITION

ĀSANA or POSTURE



From Hinduism, Āsana in Sanskrit means ‘to sit and be’. It is the word for the posture for yoga. Āsana “seats” the body in a particular position – standing, sitting, lying down, twisting, inverting, bending forwards or backwards – each of which leads to

physical opening (greater flexibility and improved flow of energy), purification and spiritual awakening.

Initially it is to be undertaken under the careful guidance of a teacher, but eventually to be practised alone as a meditative discipline. Tradition says that there are all told 840,000 yoga Āsanas, many of which represent the natural position of animals as well as things like mountains, trees and the sun.

Most devotees practise 50, often in set series, and its practice strengthens the muscles and encourages proper alignment and releases tension and fatigue. Āsana also has spiritual benefits of spiritual equanimity and a quiet mind that makes it possible to notice your physical patterns and habits and eventually become free of them.

FINAL FABLE

A young man was in a café with a friend who asked, ‘How come you never got married?’ The young man said, ‘Oh, I looked for that perfect woman. I found a beautiful lady in Cairo, but she was unkind. I found a generous woman in Baghdad, but we had no interests in common. One lady after another. Then I found her. She was beautiful, intelligent, charming and kind. We had everything in common. In fact, she was perfect.’

‘Well,’ said his friend, ‘what happened? Why didn’t you marry her?’

The man took a sip of tea. ‘It’s a sad thing. It seems she was looking for the perfect man.’