

# 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.



*Honour your  
father and  
your mother,  
as the Lord  
your God  
commanded  
you.*

*Deuteronomy  
5.16*

.....  
*Mothers Day is on Sunday May 10<sup>th</sup> with morning tea*  
.....

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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**

### **INTENTIONS**

I had breakfast by myself the other day and I felt I wanted to read while I ate, so I grabbed the first volume of Encyclopaedia Britannica – always a good read – and came across Peter Abelard, a French monk and theologian of around 1100 AD. He's quite well-known, and famous for an intense love affair with Heloïse, which led to a child.

So on I read and suddenly got gripped by a comment that Abelard sought to understand what is important to God. After much wrestling with this, he said and wrote that God is not so much concerned with man's deeds as with man's intentions and that those are what God takes fully into account.

Hello! Did Abelard read Swedenborg? Well, of course not. Did Swedenborg read Abelard? I'd doubt that. One was from Lutheran origins, the other a Catholic. But Abelard's assertion got him into deep trouble with his church, since good deeds for God were seen as the prime indicator of God's pleasure or displeasure, or really, for heaven or hell.

Swedenborg's whole system in my humble opinion, rests on the place of our intentions. He calls it our 'will' and we have our free-will and if you **will** something you want to go and do it and you will if you can. So here in this life we have the opportunity to choose our will and become love-based people even though we might find ourselves still

doing things that aren't good because of our temperament, our background, our ignorance or weakness.

And the next life, according to Swedenborg, is the full expression of our will, where we naturally gravitate towards what we'd love to be doing. He adds 'now that we are free of our fear of the law or the loss of our reputation.' Such things disappear, leaving us will-bound. If our intention is to be loving, any hang-ups or past mistakes can be ironed out quite quickly. If our intention is to love ourselves and dominate those round us, then that's how it will be because it's what we intend.

I think Abelard and Swedenborg would find they got on very well, perhaps with areas of difference here and there, why not. You see, both of them are emphasising what goes on inside us rather than what goes on on the outside. Anyone who does that is quite likely to come close in their thinking to others who do the same.

But don't get too hung-up on your intentions. Some of them may never be clear to you, they're so subtle. And good deeds are good things of course. I'd say it's important to get your will sorted. You know what matters, so keep to that. You know what is wrong, so never do that deliberately. You believe in God, so follow what God tells you. You want people to be who they are, so let them, and help them when you can. Such things lock our will in place, for here and for eternity.

Have a think about this, a passage from Swedenborg giving a criterion: "A person can know whether he is among those from hell or heaven, by this: If he intends evil to another, thinks evil about him, and when possible does it, and takes delight, he's among spirits from hell and will be one himself. If he intends good to another, thinks good of him, and when possible does it and delights in it, he's among angelic spirits and will become an angel in the next life. Let each person examine himself in this way to discover what he is really like." (Arcana 1680)

Perhaps I should read some more on Abelard...

*Julian*



## **REMEMBERING JUDY PROBERT**

Judy very peacefully slipped away from this life into her new one on April 16<sup>th</sup> after such a long and patient six years of major illness.

The celebration of her wonderful and happy full life was on April 22<sup>nd</sup> in a crowded and overflowing chapel, with a beautiful eulogy from Dave and a photo tribute from all Judy's family.

Dear Judy! Always full of enjoyment and appreciation of everything, behind which was her attentiveness and organisation towards what needed doing. Behind all of that was her huge capacity to show, give and provide her love. She lived love, and as we heard, this involved taking in to their home those who needed to be embraced and cared for. Dave and Judy have a circle of close friends which is almost beyond counting, and everybody realises why so.

Our church too has been very blessed by their involvement and hands-on help over many years. Seeing Dave's arm round Judy all through a service, enjoying her flowers so perfectly arranged, and sharing a bright catch-up chat in the hall, these are the things we will always remember.

Our love goes to Dave and their daughter Georgie and to all the family as we keep Judy in our hearts and hand her over to God in heaven.

## **SOCIETY NEWS**

We have had a number of special services, stretching all the way back to Palm Sunday, but the two most recent ones – both centenaries – should get a mention. Our church building reached 100 years in April and we marked that during the service. Seven people came along to the service who were associated with the Congregational Church as the building then was from its opening through to 1976. After church, down in the hall, Philip Goodsell, son of Rev Noel Goodsell ran through facts and memories particularly during his father's leader time from 1948 to 1982.

The following Sunday, ANZAC centenary weekend, was also marked during the service, with a good number present. It was also the last time that Lynette Southern will play for us and we gave her a presentation. The sermon was on warfare and the fact that numerous Biblical battles are about our own struggles in ourselves. The children made ANZAC biscuits (the aroma seeping up into church – while the rest of us thought about turning swords into ploughshares but sometimes ploughshares back into swords!

There are new handrails at the side steps going down to the hall and also either side of the church front door. Thank you to Graham Hall for arranging both of these.

The manse is currently busy and for two recent days exceptionally so. Our daughter Hannah and her husband and their four children are staying with us before moving in at Killara in mid May, and along with them there we hosted 11 at the Joint Meeting on Friday and Saturday April 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup>.

Cynthia Marcroft is now permanently in Archbold House in Trafalgar Avenue, Roseville and we will see her there when that is possible and perhaps also here at church. We wish her well.

It's been lovely recently having more children in church than we have had for a while. They bring a lot with them.

## STEWARDS AND FLOWERS FOR MAY

| <b>Sunday</b>                  | <b>Steward(s)</b>  | <b>Flowers</b>   |
|--------------------------------|--------------------|------------------|
| 3 <sup>rd</sup> (Sac.)         | Graham Hanna       | Elizabeth Kemmis |
| 10 <sup>th</sup> (Mothers Day) | Tracey Glendenning | Ruth Duckworth   |
| 17 <sup>th</sup>               | Wayne Kasmar       | Jan Primrose     |
| 24 <sup>th</sup>               | Michael Chester    | Lydia Chua       |
| 31 <sup>st</sup>               | John Wilson        | Glen Hart        |

## REV. CHRIS SKINNER



Chris has been seriously ill for several years and was undergoing a number of treatments for a long time. During April, he began to get more ill quite quickly. He greatly enjoyed a pastoral visit to the hospital from Rev Ian Arnold and another soon after that from Rev David Millar and was able to talk and respond.

On Thursday April 23<sup>rd</sup> he passed on into the spiritual world, with Margaret, his wonderful wife and their two daughters Suzanne and Tracey with him.

Chris came from a small town in Essex called Brightlingsea and was involved in the New Church there and elsewhere in Britain. He and Margaret came out to Australia in 1970. Chris was an accountant and a very ethical one. He was also a lay-leader with the Melbourne New Church and the New Church in Victoria, and above all, a pastor. He applied to train for ministry and was ordained in the early 2000s. He sang wonderfully well.

Chris will be remembered by me supremely for his amazing help for a good number of years as Vice-President, and by so many others as a dedicated Camp organizer and manager – Arrabri Lodge (2x), Phillip Island (4x). He knew, as he passed on, where he was going. Our love and sympathy is given to Margaret, Suzanne and Tracey and family. Rev Ian Arnold will have the privilege of conducting the service.

## **SNIPPETS FROM THE SCRAPBOOK**

### **Some Zen sayings**

*The moment you stop pursuing contentment, it will find you.*

Great acts are made up of small deeds.

*I care not about the path that lies ahead but rather the path that lies within.*

The only obstacles to our happiness are those we create with our own minds.

*Whoever resides in stillness resides in peace.*

Truth is the essence of all things. To deny the truth is to deny our very being.

Stella Green

Stella also, with our church building centenary and its earlier Congregational use, supplied a list of famous Congregational Church people – Oliver Cromwell (1599-1658), John Milton (1608-1674), Isaac Watts (1674-1748), Harriet Beecher Stowe (1811-1906), Calvin Coolidge (1872-1933), Walt Disney (1901-1966), Francis Crick (1916-2004) The last one was the co-discoverer of DNA.

## **FROM THE SWEDENBORG CENTRE**

### **The New Christian Bible Study**

I have recently been checking out a website that is impressive and very useful for people interested in the Bible and Swedenborg's insights. There are three sets of information that have been organized and interrelated: 1. The text of the Old and New Testaments 2. The text of the Writings 3. Plain-language that can provide greater understanding for readers.

From these, all sorts of connections can be made. The most obvious ones are the places where the Writings cite or explain scripture. This website offers the Bible text in many translations and languages, and the links to the Swedenborg passages in multiple languages, and places the text side by side. This is very useful in helping people who

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wish to explore what Swedenborg had to say about particular parts of the Bible. There is also a good section on Spiritual Topics. Another feature is clear explanations of more than 300 commonly occurring words in the King James Bible.

I was recently asked if Swedenborg had anything to say about children Part of my response included the following.

There is a section in Swedenborg's *Heaven and Hell* on 'Children in Heaven'. Paragraphs 329-

345. Here is a link to the beginning of this section.

<http://newchristianbiblestudy.org/exposition/work/de-coelo-et-de-inferno/contents/3290>

Being able to recommend a section of Swedenborg's Writings to someone via this website helped me out and added to my appreciation of what is available.

Michael Chester

## VISION VALLEY CAMP

JANUARY 4<sup>TH</sup> – 10<sup>TH</sup> 2016



Vision Valley is a 30 hectares centre in bush and arable setting, 30 kms NW of Sydney.

It has everything we need for a great camp, and a variety of places to go to from the centre. Onsite activities include table

tennis, large pool, ropes courses, flying fox and giant swing, canoeing and horse-riding.

At the start of May, a brochure, application form and expression of interest with return envelope will go out to societies and individual people who have been to recent camps. We look forward to another week of learning, sharing, fun, activity, devotions, outings... all the things that make a camp a great experience.



**FOR MOTHERS (AND FATHERS, TEACHERS, FRIENDS...)****Here are 99 ways to say 'Very good!' Use often and well.**

You're on the right track now! You've got it made. Super! That's right! That's good. You're really working hard today. You are very good at that. That's coming along nicely. Good work! I'm happy to see you working like that. That's much, much better! Exactly right. I'm proud of the way you worked today. You're doing that so much better.

You've just about got it. That's the best you've ever done. You're doing a good job. That's it! Now you've figured it out. That's quite an improvement. Great! I knew you could do it. Congratulations!

Not bad! Keep working on it. You're improving. Now you have it!

You are learning fast. Good for you! Couldn't have done it better myself. Aren't you

more time and make my job fun.

it. You're getting it that time! That's

Nice going. You



proud of yourself? One

you'll have it. You really

That's the right way to do

better every day. You did

not half bad.

haven't missed a thing!

Wow! That's the way! Keep up the good work. Terrific! Nothing can

stop you now. That's the way to do it. Sensational! You've got your

brain in gear today. That's much better. That's first class work.

Excellent! That's the best ever. You've just about mastered it. Perfect!

That's better than ever. Much better! Wonderful! You must have been

practicing. You did that very well. Cool! Nice going. You're really

going to town. Outstanding! Fantastic! Tremendous! That's how to

handle that. Now that's what I call a fine job. That's great. Right on!

You're really improving. You're doing beautifully! Superb! Good

remembering. You've got that sorted. You certainly did that well.

Keep it up! Congratulations. You got it right! You did a lot of work

today. Well, look at you go. That's it! I'm very proud of you.

Marvellous! I like that. Way to go! Now you have the hang of it.

You're doing great guns! Good thinking. You are really learning a lot.

Good going. I've never seen anyone do it better. Keep it up! You

outdid yourself today! Good for you! I think you've got it now. That's

a good (boy/girl). Good job, (person's name). The Best, Ever!



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***Transforming Your Life***  
***Film and Discussion***

**Facilitated by Walter Mason**

**FRIDAY 22ND MAY 2015 at 7.45pm**

**Swedenborg Centre,**

**1 Avon Road, North Ryde**

**Cost: \$7; concession \$5** (including refreshments)

Join us as we take a stimulating journey with the help and wisdom of lifestyle expert and paradigm changer Bob Proctor. Walter Mason will facilitate an energy-filled evening when we view a short film about the unassuming and avuncular Proctor, a man who shot to fame after being featured in the legendary self-transformation film "The Secret." His own journey has been a fascinating one, and together we will look at some of the history and origins of his ideas and explore, as a group, how these concepts might assist us in our own lives. Get ready to be inspired!

**Walter Mason** is a writer and teacher whose doctoral thesis is on the history of self-help writing. He is the author of two travel books, and leads cultural tours through Asia. Walter has spoken across the world on Buddhism, creativity and personal transformation.

## THE PILLARS OF NEW CHURCH BELIEFS



Continuing a series on our beliefs in plain English.

This time we'll take a look at what's called INFLUX.

This teaching called influx is one of the really big ones and it runs through all the beliefs of the New Church.

Don't be put off by the word influx. Think of it as something FLOWING IN, a bit like water through pipes into your tap. Every time you turn your tap on, you draw on a bit more water that's coming through pipes all the way from the reservoir.

It's all about being on the receiving end of things. But for us, it's about receiving life from God, all the time. We're not self-perpetuating – God's life is keeping us being in existence every nanosecond. In fact that's happening with everything. God flows in and keeps it all there.

Of course we don't feel that. We feel we are in charge of ourselves and free to do what we like! That's how God want it to feel to us so that we seem to be free agents rather than puppets on a string.

God's inflowing life means that he – God – is always in control and managing the way things go. It brings God very close to us, so close that he is in everything in us. So, if we make bad choices, God knows that and adapts accordingly. We can't say what God does, but, through influx, he might close off something in our mind and open something else so that it's safer for us in the long run.

God's long-term aim is to help us choose the things that make heaven, and choose them because we want that kind of life. So, God's influx into everything creates a lot of things to help us do just that – a beautiful world, sex and attraction, love, family life, sleep and dreams, friendships, abilities, everybody's different, sudden rushes of inspiration, and so much more. We think so much of it is our doing, we need to get it that it's God and we're on the receiving end of it all.

**THINK YOU CAN PLACE IT?**

This will test your Bible knowledge a bit. Below are 12 phrases each from a different book of the Bible. After each one is a line – you write in which book it comes from in the Bible. See how you go.

1. The Lord is my shepherd

\_\_\_\_\_

2. All flesh is grass

\_\_\_\_\_

3. I am the door of the sheep

\_\_\_\_\_

4. I have set my bow in the clouds

\_\_\_\_\_

5. Here I am, for you called me.

\_\_\_\_\_

6. Pick me up and hurl me into the sea.

\_\_\_\_\_

7. You are the salt of the earth

\_\_\_\_\_

8. And he made a golden calf

\_\_\_\_\_

9. Glory to God in the highest

\_\_\_\_\_

10. The valley was full of bones

\_\_\_\_\_

11. And the walls fell down flat

\_\_\_\_\_

12 Behold, I make all things new

\_\_\_\_\_

**FINAL FABLE**

There was once a mighty king who ruled with a rod of iron. He came from a long line of great and proud kings. He once travelled through his kingdom and came across a man digging in a graveyard. "What are you doing?" asked the king. "I am searching for your father's bones, for they are surely here." "And have you found them?" asked the king. "Well, no," he replied, "because all the bones I come across look exactly the same whether they are a king, a slave, a beggar or a leper."