

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.



“The Lord is righteous; He has cut the cords of the wicked.”
Psalm 129 verse 4

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Friendship Group is on Wednesday August 5th from 10.45 a.m.
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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

FALSE FRIENDS

Years ago, an elderly Minister showed me a greeting card he had once received from the church. It ran "With very good wishes from all your fiends at Church." He chuckled!

'False Friends' is not aimed at making you alarmed about why you have the friends that you have, nor about hidden ulterior motives. It's looking at some of the things inside ourselves, things we do, things we want or enjoy or feel we should be doing because everyone else is.

False Friends is a curious phrase that is sometimes used in talking about people learning a foreign language. So if you are planning a trip to Spain and start learning Spanish, be careful, for 'ropa' means 'clothes' while our 'rope' is 'cuerda', and you may blush that 'nudo' means 'knot' and our 'nude' is 'desnudo'. These confusions are therefore called 'false friends'.

In the Bible, there is a strong warning about one false friend, which was Egypt. The land of Israel, at one point, was under threat from the Assyrians, and Israel turned for help to Egypt. And a prophet said this: "Do not trust in Egypt, that bruised reed, but trust in the Lord your God!" Can you see the idea? The reed looks straight and strong but it's bruised, yet you can't see that, that it will break up.

We can add to that the Biblical warnings against false prophets who advocate a false peace or tell people that everything is doomed to destruction. Jesus spoke out against false prophets and said, 'Beware

of false prophets who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves. You will recognise them by their fruits.' (Matthew 7.15)

True friendship between people is a wonderful thing and the last thing we should do is to question it or have suspicions. One of the best things I have ever heard is that a married couple should also be very good friends. That close friendship will help both of them in their working through of married life and its demands.

Now let's turn towards some 'friends' we can have inside ourselves which may actually not be as good for us as we might think. Some of these can be things we do or things we enjoy. You love reading – great, so do I, but too much reading can shut you off from other people, strain your eyes, change your personal values and so on. Coffee – especially the best coffee – is that morning kick-start, but caffeine can shoot up your blood pressure.

Subtler things than those are found in our beliefs, views and outlooks. Fundamentalism of any kind (including radicalisation) is the idea that one truth is the whole truth. It can look like the final answer to all your searching for the meaning of life but, unchecked, it can also lead on to the wrongness of any belief which is different from the one that you hold.

There is this helpful passage from our church teachings: "*Heresies come about when people base their thinking on one particular aspect of faith to which they attach supreme importance. For the mind is such that when a person focuses his whole attention on any one matter he makes that more important than any other, especially when delusion claims it as his own discovery.*" (Arcana 362) By comparison, where there is charity, there is an okay-ing that different people will have different opinions, and that's just fine.

So, at times, let's just check out some of those 'friends' we have.

Julian

OUR SPONSORED CHILD



People have regularly been very generous at church, dropping small change – and some times more than small – to give support to our sponsor children over several years. There was Vijitha, then Kasun, who has now gone to get a job.

The organisers have changed our sponsorship to a girl in NE India, in Patna, in Bihar, close to Nepal. She goes to high school and her name is Pinki Kumari and is 13. Pinki is Hindu, speaks Hindi, and her house has an earth floor. She has a mum

and dad and two younger brothers.

The PLAN organisation takes care of 56,000,000 children in the developing world, promoting and protecting their rights, doing this since 1937. At the grass roots level, they depend on people like us. They give us their thanks and invite us to help Pinki. I pass the same sentiments on to you.

FRIENDSHIP GROUP

Our next meeting is on Wednesday August 5th starting with coffee and cake at 10.45. Julian will be talking with us about “God is like the Sun” as we warm up towards spring. After this we will have our shared lunch and we look forward to seeing you if you can join us.

Our President, Ruth, will be away in the UK and we wish her well at a difficult time for her own family, with her parents, Rev. Christopher and Joy Hasler. We do look forward to having her back with us again in mid-August.

Glen Hart

STEWARDS AND FLOWERS FOR AUGUST

Sunday	Steward(s)	Flowers
2 nd (Sacr.)	John Wilson	Lydia Chua
9 th	Graham Hanna	Elizabeth Kemmis
16 th	Wayne Kasmar	Glen Hart
23 rd	Michael Chester	Jan Primrose
30 th	David Curry	Tracey Glendenning

The new rosters have been distributed and most people got them online, but printed copies are available. Thanks to Ruth for doing this and thanks to all of you for helping the church in this way.

SOCIETY NEWS

Thank you to Wayne Kasmar for taking the Sunday service on June 28th which everyone appreciated. I was down in Victoria and the people in Melbourne specifically asked me to send you their greetings.

Congratulations to Alan Attwater and Marijana Manilov who will be getting married on Saturday August 8th at Rose's Vineyard near Port Macquarie. I will be taking the ceremony. Marijana is from Serbia, and several of her family will be over in Australia for some time either side of the wedding.

Congratulations too to Roy Simmonds who will have turned 90 before the end of July (on 31st), but will be having a birthday celebration after church on Sunday August 2nd.

Another fantastic piano recital was given by Lillian King, with a good number there to enjoy her music, after the service on Sunday July 19th. Thank you for that, Lillian and for the unseen unheard practice time that put in beforehand.

All the church and manse gutters have been cleaned out of debris, one terracotta drain still blocked, needing to be checked by a plumber.

VISION VALLEY CAMP

August becomes 'crunch' time for letting the church know that you will be booking in for the camp, or, helpfully, letting the church know that you won't.

The management have given us September 4th as our crossing line, after which we stand payment in January for any shortfall on our minimum number of 68. If that date passes and people book in October and November, that's fine, but we really do need to know definite intentions by the very end of August.

SNIPPETS FROM THE SCRAPBOOK

Wherever you live is your temple if you treat it like one. – Buddha

The wise bamboo bends before the storm. A Japanese proverb

A smile is a curve that can set a lot of things straight. - anon

*Courage isn't feeling free from fear; courage is facing fears you feel.
Dr. Robert Schuller*

*A classic is something that everyone wants to have read, and nobody wants to read.
- Mark Twain*

*Happiness is best attained by learning to live each day by itself.
Worries are mostly about yesterday and tomorrow. - Michael Nolan*

Stella Green

THE KANGAROO



In a book called Animal Correspondences by Kip I came across some ideas about the spiritual things that kangaroos show us. I'm not saying they are right, just fairly interesting.

Fore limbs correspond to expressing the mind in activity. Being weaker in kangaroos suggests a

lack of mental thought leading to action.

Hind limbs, which are unusually well-developed in kangaroos, correspond to a desire for frequent changes of feelings, and when adapted for leaping, it shows a love for excitement and stirring feelings.

The uncommonly large tail, used for support is evidently the knowledge of past outward pleasures. An animal's young correspond to new developments while skin, being a coating, means some kind of insensitivity to others, used protectively.

So the pouch in which kangaroos carry their young represent older feelings within which new loves for fresh pleasures take refuge when repulsed by the coldness of others, until they find a more cordial reception.

SWEDENBORG CENTRE NEWS

Audio books (MP3 format) of Swedenborg's Writings

The Swedenborg Foundation have been producing audio books of Swedenborg's major theological works for some time. This article will be of interest to those who listen to mp3 files, which is a standard format for audio files downloaded from the internet. At the moment, the only format available for purchase is the mp3 format. The audio books currently available are *Heaven and Hell*, *Divine Love and Wisdom*, *Divine Providence* and *True Christianity (True Christian Religion)* Vol 1. The reading of the books is excellent, and based on the New Century Edition translations.

To see what is available go to the Audio Book section of the Swedenborg Foundation online bookstore. This link will take you there - <http://www.swedenborg.com/bookstore/cds-dvds-audiobooks/>.

When you go to the individual audio book page you can listen to a sample, to help you decide if you want to purchase it.

If you do purchase an audio book, you will be given guidance in how to download it afterwards. There are 2 options. Option 1 is the **iTunes audiobook** which consists of one large mp3 file. Option 2 is **MP3s + Windows Media Player playlist**.

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My preference is Option 2, as I can play particular parts of the book when I want to, as the book has been divided into many segments. The individual mp3 files can be viewed in your mp3 player. For me it's iTunes. I was able to download both options, and found Option 2 best suited me.



You can listen to the audio book using your audio applications on PC or Mac and on most portable media players. I like to listen to the audio book using iTunes on my PC, as I can have the text as well in front of me and make notes. I'm currently enjoying *Divine Providence* this way.

When I first explored these audiobooks I listened to a sample of *Heaven and Hell* on my iPod driving home. I had the enjoyable experience of feeling Emanuel Swedenborg was talking to me, sharing his insights. One thing I found a bit annoying was the reading out of the paragraph numbers of the sections in the book. Also I found that I was not digesting the material well, listening to it this way. So I decided to devote time in my week to listen to the audio book on the computer, with the written version alongside. In this way, the reading of the numbers didn't bother me, and I was able to pause and reflect on significant sentences.

The cost of the audio books is \$US 14.99 each. I found the download time to be long (2 to 3 hours) with a reasonably fast Optus cable connection to the internet.

There is a growing trend to listening to audio books and I'm pleased the people working at the Swedenborg Foundation are attuned to this trend and making Swedenborg's Writings available in this format. So for those familiar with mp3 technology, encountering Swedenborg's Writings this way is worth exploring.

Michael Chester



**SWEDENBORG ASSOCIATION
OF AUSTRALIA Inc.**

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How do we deal with our inner dialogue?



Presented by Todd Beiswenger

FRIDAY 28TH AUGUST 2015 at 7.45pm
Swedenborg Centre,
1 Avon Road, North Ryde
Cost: \$7; concession \$5
(including refreshments)

What is the reality behind those voices in our head? We all have that inner dialogue, but what is it? This talk will look at some evidence that suggests that these voices are in fact quite real and that they are voices of spirits communicating with us disguised as our own thoughts. The evidence comes by way of an American psychiatrist who has worked for years with patients who are schizophrenics, and his exploration into their illness. Many have thought that the voices these people are hearing is because they've lost their mind, but perhaps that is not the case, and that in reality the voices are quite real.

To better understand all of this we'll be listening to audio clips from an interview that this psychiatrist recently gave, covering the topics of how he came to see things this way, his experience in communicating directly to his patients voices, and how we can all make these voices in our head leave.

Todd Beiswenger is a minister for Hurstville New Church, who moved with his family from the USA 3 years ago to serve here in Sydney. He worked in the automotive aftermarket for 10 years after finishing his university degree, and earned an MBA along the way. However, several years ago he reconnected with the Bible and did a great deal of research into near death experiences that have helped him see that our priorities are often out of balance, so nowadays he works on helping people grow spiritually through church and community programs.

EL – THE ANCIENT NAME OF GOD



Take a close look at this picture. It is about 4,500 years old. It is a fragment of pottery. It was found somewhere in Israel.

On it you can see two main pictures: at the top left, fairly clearly, you can see an animal head with horns. At the bottom left you can see – less clearly – what looks like a shepherd's crook, which is what it is. The other things are not important.

What you have been looking at is an ancient inscription giving the name of God. How come? Well, each of those two pictures is an early writing form of a single letter – that's how people wrote back then, in pictures. These pictures eventually became alphabet letters.

The ox head became our A which, if you turn it upside down isn't that different from the picture you saw. The shepherd's crook became our L which is a fairly similar shape for us in 2015. Together – like they are drawn together in this ancient picture – they read EL, or you could read it AL – as in Allah.

In the Bible, the word for God is ELOHIM but even in the Bible it is sometimes just given as EL. Add to that names like Isra-El, El-ijah, Dani-El, Micha-El and Jo-El and we're still saying that ancient word for God.

But why is this the name of God? Well apparently it is because of those two letters. The top one is the head of an ox, a strong animal, and the lower one is something that holds, brings back, keeps safe or even at times, prods into moving. Put those two ideas together and you have quite a comprehensive description of God, who has strength, authority and safekeeping over his creation and over every one of us.

How amazing that this piece of pot has lasted 4,500 years, got found, got studied, and shows us that way back, God was celebrated.

THE PILLARS OF NEW CHURCH BELIEFS



Continuing a series about our beliefs in plain English.

This time we are going to look at REINCARNATION

The first and big point is that in the New Church we don't believe in reincarnation which is generally an Eastern religion belief that has come into modern spirituality. Like mainstream Christianity, we believe that you live your life here and when you die, you move into the spiritual world and stay there for ever.

Reincarnation takes the view that people come back many times into a physical life until they have reached the point of not needing to come back any more. People who believe that say that people come back so that they can deal with their 'karma' which is the effect of their previous life.

Of course, reincarnation has some attractive ideas to it. It seems to explain human suffering (it's karma); it seems to level everything out fairly by living many lives. And it seems to explain peoples' feelings that they can remember or be taken back into a previous 'past life'.

But it also brings up some questions. If two people love each other here, then after they each die, one comes back like this and the other like that. What happens to their love for each other? Well, it was nice while it lasted!

In the New Church we believe that reincarnation is an exaggeration of a true spiritual principle, that in eternity, we can and surely will keep growing in love, faith in God, and in more understanding. And this doesn't need us to return to a physical life and start all over again, and again. We can do that in being who we are, beginning that to some extent while we are here, and extending than on indefinitely in the spiritual world, always building on what we have made ours, adding to it, but still being the same person who has been created by God.

Those who believe in reincarnation find help and comfort in it.

ON A VERY COLD SUNDAY



What better on a particularly cold Sunday morning than to do Sunday School about The Fiery Furnace with Meshach, Shadrach and Abednego, and make one in the fire pit outside, get it roaring, let it settle, and then toast marshmallows in the glowing embers! That's the life!

Thank you to Elizabeth Kemmis for supplying the photos.

FINAL FABLE

A young student of life came to a city and went up to a magnificent building and knocked at the door. A richly-robed man wearing a crown opened the door and asked him what he wanted. "I want to stay in this inn," the student said. "But this is not an inn – it is my palace!" "Tell me," the student continued, "who was king here before you?" "My father, but he is dead!" "And who was king before him?" "My grandfather, but he too is dead!"

The student looked at the king and said, "So, this place where people stay for a short while and then move on...are you telling me that this is **not** an inn?"