

# Sydney Society Newsletter

Issued by the Sydney Society of the New Church

Established in 1875

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## *July 2015*

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.



*“O clap your hands, all you people;  
shout to God with the voice of triumph!”*

Psalm 47 v 1

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*Piano Recital after the service on Sunday July 19th*  
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page 2

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**

### **WRITING IT DOWN**

Some of us are of an age where most things just need writing down so that, having thought of them, they do not disappear into the ether irretrievably thirty seconds later. You scribble it somewhere – it's there for keeps. Phew!

This same idea comes up a few times in the Bible. When Moses' hands were held up by Aaron and Hur in order to defeat the Amalekites, the Lord told Moses to "write it down as a memorial in a book, that I will blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven". (The Amalekites were particularly deadly people!) In other words, now you can always remember the victory but also the danger.

And, so it tells us, Moses wrote down all the words of the Lord. In the book of Revelation, John is told to write down the vision he has just seen, and in the vision of the Holy City descending out of heaven from God, it says, "Behold I make all things new. Write this down, for these words are faithful and true."

You get the idea. Don't let this vision or these words be a passing fancy. Catch them for ever, so that you can keep coming back to read and re-read them. I believe this is why divine revelation for us ended up being a book – the Bible – something that is there as it is whether we're in a good mood or a bad mood, and we can come back to it as it is from wherever we have got to. It would not have been very safe to have it as something only in our mind because our mind plays funny

tricks on us, and our feelings come and go, and of course, we simply forget.

Nobody knows how writing first started, though I suspect Providence had a hand in it. Maybe it was like tying a knot in your handkerchief. Some inspired ancient person took a burnt stick and marked his cave wall with a black slash reminder, which to him meant, 'Get meat!' The next day it was 'Get water' but another slash would be confusing, so he drew a wavy line... and the rest is history.

One of the things we know for sure is that the Gospels were written so that people would not gradually forget about the life of Jesus as time passed, or worse, start changing bits of remembered words and events until nobody was sure of anything. So easy. Someone must have said, "Stop right there! Someone needs to write the accurate record because it's getting on for 50 years – and four hands went up. And you and I are the beneficiaries of that. There are the gospels to come back to, exactly like the black slash, except that, being what they are, we are taught, moved, warned, lifted up and feel spoken to by the narrative.

One of our church teachings says that the base, container, support and power of God's personal contact with us is right there in the words of the Bible. How wonderful is that! We could start dreamily going on about higher consciousness and inner awareness, but God says we're to read about and relate to a seed growing, a battle fought, a pregnant woman and a soaring eagle, because it's best like that and it's all there always.

Each year, on the last Sunday in July, people celebrate the place of the Bible in their life on Bible Sunday. I think it is international. So we shall join in doing that too, in our service on Sunday July 26<sup>th</sup>. But more than that, we will include a number of Bible-related things in this particular Newsletter and I invite you to look at them and if you will, use them.

*Julian*

page 4

## **SNIPPETS FROM THE SCRAPBOOK**

*Old friends cannot be created out of hand. Nothing can match the treasure of common memories, of trials endured together, of quarrels and reconciliations and generous emotions.*

- Antoine de Saint-Exupery

All too often we say the cruel thing because it is easier to be clever than to be kind.

- Ingrid Bergman

*What do we live for, if not to make the world less difficult for each other.*

- George Eliot

If you have two loaves, sell one and buy a lily.

- Chinese proverb

*When everyone travels, it will be very nice to stay at home.*

- Dame Freya Stark

*International sport is war without the shooting.*

- George Orwell

Stella Green

## **SWEDENBORG CENTRE NEWS**

### **Sydney New Church College Seminar (13<sup>th</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup> June).**

It was a very worthwhile and enjoyable experience. Twenty people participated on Saturday and thirteen on Sunday. There was a good balance of spiritual nourishment for our Understanding and Spiritual Practice, and time to connect with each other.

Here's the feedback of one person regarding the Seminar. "Thank you very much to all my new soul mates for my beautiful weekend. I feel so good now and enlightened with God's Word. God Blessings to all."

And here's feedback on the Sydney Seminars in general. "I consider these seminars a very important part of discovering how Swedenborg's writings can be applied and related to our modern daily living."

For those wishing to review any presentation and for those who didn't attend and wish to read the handouts and listen to the talks the place to go to is <http://anccollege.org/page5.html> where some ANCC Seminar files can be downloaded. The Sydney 2015 Seminar files are yet to be loaded up. Hopefully by the time you go there, they will be available.

Michael Chester

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### STEWARDS AND FLOWERS FOR JULY

Sunday	Steward(s)	Flowers
5 <sup>th</sup> (Sacr.)	Tracey Glendenning	Jan Primrose
12 <sup>th</sup>	Wayne Kasmar	Philip Brodsky
19 <sup>th</sup>	Graham Hanna	Elizabeth Kemmis
26 <sup>th</sup>	David Curry	Glen Hart

### PIANO RECITAL



As we mentioned in June's Newsletter, Lillian King will be giving us another delightful piano recital after the service on **Sunday July 19<sup>th</sup>** with a range of pieces she has specially chosen for playing.

Lillian will tell us about each of the pieces before she plays them for us.

The recital will begin some time soon after 11.30 a.m. and you are welcome to stay on after church or come especially for the music, and even bring a friend, and if you want, your lunch.

Someone, elsewhere in the New Church, recently told me how much music plays an important part in our services – we are blessed.

page 6

## **BIBLE FOCUS 1**

This is from an article by Wilson Van Dusen, who was an American clinical psychiatrist, Swedenborg appreciator and writer of books. He writes about a little known work by Swedenborg called *The Messiah About to Come*. Here is an extract –

“The implications of this little known book are important because they provide a clear method that anyone else could follow.

Swedenborg’s purpose is relatively clear. The Lord had appeared to him; he was to master the Bible and become a revelator. He would search the Word of God and set down everything that really spoke to him about the Messiah coming. He wrote down a number of headings and then went through the Bible copying down verses and passages under each heading.



“Why did Swedenborg choose certain passages and not others? His method isn’t immediately apparent. My guess is that he chose passages and verses that spoke most clearly and intimately to him. This seems to fit with him underlining certain things and

adding his own comments. His approach seems to have been intimate and spiritual rather than academic.

I believe, Van Dusen says, that the book illustrates a major step in Swedenborg’s development as a revelator **and a method that can be followed by others**. Each could collect under headings the Biblical passages that speak most directly to him and dwell on these as a real living word of God for him. Doing this tends to lessen the human experience of a distance between the Divine and the human as it did for Swedenborg.

Near the end of this book, he wrote: November 17<sup>th</sup> 1745. I began to write. Lord Jesus Christ, lead me to and on the way on which thou wilt that I shall walk.”

## **SOCIETY NEWS**

One of the main events in June was the College Seminar which was held at the Swedenborg Centre over a weekend (13-14) – see the Swedenborg Centre report for more information about it.

It went extremely well, and much of the reason for that is that the background requirements for it were all in place. Thank you from those who attended and also from the national New Church to Michael Chester for undertaking this, with such a good outcome and enjoyment.

Our New Church Day service on June 21<sup>st</sup> was well-attended and concentrated on the Foundation Stones supporting the Holy City above them and the need for both. A larger than usual morning tea (thankyou!) was enjoyed afterwards.

Thank you also to Wayne Kasmar for leading the service on Sunday June 28<sup>th</sup> while I was away being busy in Victoria. And Ruth for giving the children's talk and taking the Angel Service the day before.

Several church friends are or have been in hospital and we send our love and good wishes to them.

The Angel Service had a Winter Solstice 'warming' Dinner after the service on Saturday June 20<sup>th</sup>. There were thirteen of us there with warm casseroles etc in a warm dining area while things chilled down outside.

One, two or more of us will soon be going over to take a look at the Vision Valley centre to get an idea of its layout and accommodation etc. for the camp we're hosting there in January. The fact that it's in a place called Arcadia seems to be a good start.

When I was down (up?) in Melbourne very recently, I was formally asked to pass on peoples' love and greetings from everybody who was there on the Sunday, and from all Melbourne members and friends, to you in Sydney. The newsletter seems a good place to do that.

## Swedenborg Association of Australia Inc.

North Ryde Group - Telephone: (02) 9888 1066

website: [www.swedenborg.com.au](http://www.swedenborg.com.au)



### ***Loving Intuition Foundations***

**By Alexandra Browne-Hill**

**FRIDAY 24TH JULY 2015 at 7.45pm**

**Swedenborg Centre,**

**1 Avon Road, North Ryde**

**Cost: \$7; concession \$5**

(including refreshments)



How will we decipher our own truths? Sad and challenging events happen to us everyday. Is there a purpose to these events? Can we accept these facts more in our guts and less in our intellect?

If we took time to listen to our own Higher Wisdom and knew quick effective methods to receive answers to our questions, can we travel our life paths with less trauma and more comfort from a Higher source?

#### **We will take a look at:**

The definition of Intuition; Our connection to something Greater;  
The Purpose of Intuition; Benefits of Intuition; Validating our intuition;  
Tools for guidance of Intuition; Meeting our challenges;  
Uses of Intuition; Following our heart and intuition.

**Alexandra Browne-Hill** has been a nurse of 33 years specializing in a variety of areas from ICU, Midwifery and Community Care and Palliative Care. Following the loss of several family members including a teenage son, Alex began a more thorough journey of exploration into the Spiritual aspects of life.

Over the years this led to studies in energy/spiritual healing, medical intuitive studies, holistic counseling, mediumship and cultural diversity in death and dying. Now a Reiki master/Teacher and Holistic Counselor, Alex owns Naturally Vibrant Healing Centre and School of Reiki in Melbourne.

It is her mission to bring the balance of body, mind and spirit into the medical system with a program of teaching Reiki therapists how to provide professional care as an adjunct to the western model of Palliative Care.

Alex is the Author of *The Flowering Gum*. She is available for public speaking on the subjects of grief, loss, connection and faith.



## **BIBLE FOCUS 2**

### **What is it saying? – and what is it asking?**

Several years ago I found myself coming up with this double way of working with virtually anything in the Bible, and you can try it for yourself and see how you go.

Choose one verse – keep the passage short – ask yourself what you think it is really saying and also saying to you – stay with that for a while, thinking about it – then go on and see if it asking you to do anything as a result – a change, an activity, feeling something like gratitude or more trust. Let's use a verse to give you a kind of example (and what you get from it may well be quite different from my discoveries).

We're using 1 Samuel chapter 13 verse 6 – Here it is:



*When the men of Israel saw that they were in trouble – for they were hard pressed – the people hid themselves, in caves, in thickets, in rocks and in tombs and in cisterns.*

So, what is it saying?

That some enemy was coming to attack the people of Israel, and when they saw the danger of this, they took off. They didn't stay and fight but went and hid anywhere they could find, so that they wouldn't be found. Hopefully they would stay alive and be safe after the danger passed.

It seems to be saying that getting out of harm's way might look like running away but it's telling us sometimes we need to disappear.

Now, what is it asking?

That when we aren't right in ourselves, like we're sad or angry, we need to take ourselves out of that, find a different place inside us, be

page 10

hidden away in it, and do that so that what we believe in and know is true doesn't get harmed.

That list of hiding places seems to give us helpful ideas about where we can go to for this – somewhere inside us – somewhere in us that feels alive and growing – somewhere strong and sure – somewhere where we can remember how things have been for us in the past – and somewhere where we can drink in new ideas and better feelings of life's goodness.



### **VISION VALLEY BOOKING**

While you can book online at [newchurch.net.au](http://newchurch.net.au) you can also book by getting this 'camp pack' – we have them at Roseville – and sending your booking in by post.

The top (white) form is an expression of interest. You send this to tell the organizers you're thinking of going.

The left (yellow) form is the leaflet that tells you all about camp.

The right (green) form is your booking slip which you send off with your deposit. More details are in the leaflet.

### **REMINDERS**

Keep saving your stamps which we send off Margaret Skinner every so often for the Leprosy Mission.

Keep bringing food items for the Exodus Foundation basket in the church entrance.

Keep dropping small change – or more if you're able – into the blue jar for our sponsored young person Kasun in Sri Lanka.

Give me names only to go on our (usually) fortnightly Prayer Circle. Sometimes people ask me for a copy of the sermon. That's fine by me. I can give you a print copy or I can email you a copy.

## THE PILLARS OF NEW CHURCH BELIEFS



Continuing a series about our beliefs in plain English.

This time we'll think about PEOPLE'S SPHERES

This is a fascinating thing, about the way each of us gives off a sphere which other people can sometimes sense or pick up. You could call it a 'vibe' and some people might call it your 'aura' but actually that's a bit different.

You know that dogs can often sense whether someone is scared of dogs or likes dogs. They don't see it on someone's face, they just 'smell' it or know it. They're picking up on something you are feeling, overall.

Our sphere is a bit like that. It's the part of us that extends beyond our body into the space around us, a bit like Earth having an atmosphere around it, going up higher into space. With us, it's coming from our spirit, the person we are and the state we are in at various times. It's not physical, it's beyond it. It may extend further than we know.

One of our teachings, about the angels in heaven, tells us that angels know the whole quality of a spirit simply by the way in which he or she approaches. As, say, newly-arrived spirits come into the afterlife, they become known by these angels who detect in all kinds of ways what the spirit is really like.

It's almost like the reverse of what's normal for us here with our bodies. We focused on male and female, we see height and features, looks and hair, and somewhere in all that we begin to see there's a person inside too. In the next life, we will see the person on the inside more strongly and the way they look is all part of that sphere from them.

When you 'tune in' to peoples' spheres here, you become more aware of them. Instead of saying to someone 'Boy, you look tired!' you might find yourself thinking, 'I can tell you are completely exhausted' because you've picked up their sphere.

## ON THE EIGHTH DAY...



God, as we know, created the earth in 6 days and rested on the 7<sup>th</sup> day and blessed it and called it holy. There is no 8<sup>th</sup> day of creation ... or is there?

When you look at the shape of the 8 it's so obviously a pattern, an endless intertwining of the lower half with the upper half. Put it on its side and it becomes the symbol for infinity.

We must leave infinity with God and stand our 8 back up again, for us. It is the picture of a balanced life (with the lower just ever so slightly larger than the upper). It's the picture of a life that keeps moving up and then moving back down. "As in heaven, so upon the earth."

Numbers have meanings. The number 8 has the meaning of 'a new beginning' perhaps because it follows on from the 6 days and the 7<sup>th</sup> day of rest. But a new beginning can also be in the movement we've been describing, of keeping the balance and never staying in the one place. Wherever you start on an 8 it soon takes you somewhere else, to another new beginning of the cycle.

On the 8<sup>th</sup> day, God works with us and we work with God, and for that togetherness we are created.

### FINAL FABLE

A wise man travelled through a desert and came across a tree with luscious fruit, plenty of shade and a spring of water by its roots. He ate, rested and drank, and then he wished to bless this tree. 'I would bless you to have fruit, but you have them; I would bless you to give shade, but you give it; I would bless you to offer water but you supply it. How then may I bless you?'

The tree spoke to him and said, 'O traveller, bless me with the wish that my seeds may produce children who in their turn will bear fruit, give shade and offer water.'