

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.



“He who overcomes shall inherit all things; and I will be his God and he shall be my son.” (Revelation 21 verse 7)

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Our Friendship Group meets on Wednesday October 7th
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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

DOING YOUR BEST

If I had to choose just one phrase which sums up our experience and purpose in living our life, this one would come close. It isn't a religious phrase but everything that religion tells us is contained in it. If we turned it into a religious phrase we might say, "God wants us to do our best" or "We should always be doing our best for God."

I thought the phrase was so good that I looked up to see if it ever occurs in the Bible. It is never put in the catchy words of the phrase, but 'best' certainly gets mentioned several times, each one worth thinking about. The Prodigal Son's father said to the servants, "Bring quickly the best robe and put it on him." Joseph settled his father and his brothers in the best part of the land of Egypt. And King David at one point said, "I will do what seems best to you."

Good – Better – Best. That might sound like gaining an outstanding achievement but it isn't really what the phrase means. It is about doing your best. The best that you yourself can do. And that for sure is all that any of us can ever do. It takes quite a bit of judgment at times as we try (our best) to do what we think is right. Sometimes the best we can do is to hold our peace to give someone else time to come out of their bad mood. And sometimes it's best not doing that, but saying something which puts things right between us. You see, there aren't any guaranteed methods, and we have to do our best each time.

Doing our best is tied up with appreciating what we are good at and what we are not good at. We can't be good at everything. You might be very good at cheering people up. You might be good at listening to someone's problem and coming up with some help. You might not be good at either of those, but you know you can run an event and it will always go well. All three of those involve you and other people, but they aren't the same.

I came across some things to bear in mind when we're trying to do our best. Here they are and I hope they're helpful. Do your best by challenging the way you did things yesterday. Do your best by allowing your passion to see the light of day. (Passion is what you really love doing). Do your best by being part of the solution rather than growing the problem. Do your best by making time to refill your well. (So important!) And, do your best by keeping whatever you have promised.

Now let's bring God into this. Doing that should immediately help us see that everything is not just up to us. God is there with us and in everything to lighten our load and help us do what we do well, and then, well, basically to trust the rest of it. Obeying God is not about what we *have* to do but about what we *get* to do.

I'd like to offer these passages to help each of us do our best and to know that that is enough. They're from Divine Love and Wisdom...

Angels say that a person's character is known in each single act and is seen as an embodiment of his love. Each act or deed of a spiritual person is like a delicious fruit which gives sweetness, use and delight when it is opened up. Everyone who performs some use from a desire to be useful draws from the life which everyone shares in together. And being useful means doing whatever you do sincerely, ethically, fairly and diligently. When anyone does what they do like that then everything else abides well and continues steadily, because this is to "be in the Lord".

Julian

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FRIENDSHIP GROUP NOTES

Our next meeting will be on Wed 7th October beginning at 10.45 a.m. with coffee and cake. Julian will speak to us about “Walls, good and not good” and a shared lunch will follow. As always, we welcome everyone.

Cynthia Marcroft, our dear friend of many years, has now passed into the spiritual world. Cynthia was loved and admired by us all. She contributed much to church life and was always interested in people. For years she happily wrote and sent out birthday cards to church people, and she was also on the flower roster. She knew the names of all the flowers so I can well imagine where she will be in the spiritual world. We will miss her.

Glen Hart

CHURCH EMAIL GROUP

We have had a request to make an email group for the church so that we can inform you about important news. This will be a private group, so you will not be able to see the other recipients or be able to reply to everyone at once.

You should have received an email from Ruth by now about this. If you have not and would like to be included please email her to get your name added. ruth@duckworth.me It is for all members and friends of the Sydney Society who attend any of our services, classes or who like to be in contact still from a distance.

Ruth Duckworth

STEWARDS AND FLOWERS FOR OCTOBER

Sunday	Steward(s)	Flowers
4 th (Sac.)	Michael Chester	Philip Brodsky
11 th	David Curry	Julie Smith
18 th	Dave Probert	Tracey Glendenning
25 th	John Wilson	Lynne Twemlow

MEMORISING THE BIBLE



Once upon a time children in Sunday School learned portions of the Bible, by heart. A psalm, a parable, a passage that was beautifully put. You may have been one of those children, and yes, the verses still come back to you, even decades on. Perhaps sadly, it isn't done much nowadays, is it?

I came across a small 20 page book which explains how to memorise passages from the Bible. The introduction went through the benefits of doing this: it's good for your brain, there's the satisfaction of achievement, and something Biblical is right there in your head any time you want it, and hopefully it will be working in your heart.

So, how do you do it? You do it accumulatively. It doesn't matter how small a daily bit you take, and it's best to do short rather than long. You run through it several times and then leave it to 'sit' overnight. Then you bring it back. Have you still got it word-perfect? Excellent. Add on the next section to the first one. It can help to use a memory jog, say between the last word and the first word of the next bit. Run through it several times, do the 'leave it time', and come back. Got it?

The writer claimed that he had been able to memorize not only whole chapters but whole books of the Bible using this method. I am sure he did, but you may be very pleased with just ten verses.

Challenged? Give it a go. I guarantee it won't do you any harm!

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SNIPPETS FROM THE SCRAPBOOK

Why not learn to enjoy the little things? There are so many of them.

- Anon

A good neighbour doubles the value of a house. - German saying

When we do the best we can, we never know what miracle is wrought in our life, or the life of another. - Helen Keller

Life's greatest riches have nothing to do with money. - Anon

Our lives are what our thoughts create. - Dr Wayne Dyer

Lord, when I pray for peace, help me not to create dissension.

When I pray for my neighbour, stir me up to help him.

When I pray "Your kingdom come", inspire me to share in its building.

- From a prayer by Eddie Askew for the Leprosy Mission

Stella Green

A NATIONAL NEW CHURCH ASSEMBLY

It has been decided to hold an Assembly next year, which will be at the Greenhills Centre, not far out of Canberra. It will be on Friday and Saturday May 6th and 7th 2016. So far there are 28 people who have decided to take part, and others are welcome to come.

An Assembly is a more informal kind of gathering than a general meeting, and it will allow people to talk, share, discuss and bring up ideas. There will be some presentations, and societies have been asked to put forward topics.

The point of the Assembly is to give people the opportunity to look at the church in the future, and the way it needs to change and develop from now on.

People are already coming from every Society in Australia and New Zealand. It's a significant moment for us all and a timely one.

Swedenborg Centre News

Swedenborg and Life Videos



Last month I introduced the *Swedenborg and Life* videos, which are very popular on the internet, and is the work of some of the staff of the Swedenborg Foundation, especially the host, Curtis Childs (pictured).

In preparation for Todd Beiswenger's talk in August, myself and Joe Vandermeer transcribed the video "*How to Deal with Evil Spirits*" which was the basis of Todd's presentation.

The meeting went very well with Todd focusing on the segment which had a psychiatrist describing his experiences of speaking to patients who were hearing voices. There was a lot of positive feedback afterwards, with people saying such things as they got a lot from it, and it was a fantastic meeting. A few people requested the transcript for further reflection, which was emailed to them. This is one of the big pluses in having the transcript, as it helps people appreciate big ideas – in this particular case, that a person's life involves an interaction with a hierarchy of spirits.

We are developing a partnership with Jon Childs (Curtis's father) who co-ordinates the transcription work. He used our transcript to add it to the video, so that the captions are accurate and in sync with the audio. This adds to the impact and usefulness of this video when people view it. And with language translation being available for the video, non-English people can learn from it as well.

I see this as the beginning of a developing relationship between us and Jon and Curtis Childs, in which we support each other in promoting Swedenborg's ideas.

Michael Chester

THE AUCKLAND SOCIETY JUBILEE



Our church friends in New Zealand very recently celebrated 50 years since the opening of their church building in Ellerslie in Auckland.

50 years is a Jubilee. That's Biblical – $7 \times 7 + 1$.

We have heard that it was a good occasion, over two days, with about 60 adults and 20 children and teens. The first day offered a display and afternoon tea and the second a thanksgiving service and catered lunch.

Our congratulations! And if you look at a copy of the latest Spring issue of *The New Age* you will see from old photos that church members were directly involved in constructing the church.

SOCIETY NEWS

We had a good number with us on the first Sunday in September which was Fathers Day, and welcomed several visitors.

The Angel Services continue each Saturday with their more informal way of devotion, connecting through cards, sharing together on some topic, sending healing to where it is needed, and always closing with a prayer circle and the Lord's Prayer.

It was nice having Lynette Southern, our previous organist, with us one Saturday, along with Katrina Papallo, who plays for us now.

Our fortnightly Tuesday Bible Study has been using one-off passages in the Bible to look at as a group. The latest one was special, as we welcomed back Katy Wild with us, after her two months in England.

Don't forget that the first Sunday in October will need you to put your clock forward one hour. And mercifully, I think the recent 'flu epidemic has lifted.



Swedenborg Association of Australia Inc.

North Ryde Group - Telephone: (02) 9888 1066

website: www.swedenborg.com.au

Correspondences – the Big Picture

Presented by Wayne Kasmar

FRIDAY 23RD OCTOBER 2015 at 7.45pm

Swedenborg Centre, 1 Avon Road, North Ryde

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



In unveiling correspondences, Swedenborg gave the world a truly stupendous idea – that physical existence is underlaid by spiritual reality and there are clearly discernable relationships between physical things and the inner counterparts they have.

Yet they have failed to excite the modern world and seem to have had the same effect on many individuals who have known them.

Do we look at correspondences in the right way? Do we reduce them to a rather dull list of facts and apply them too mechanically to life? In this talk we will be seeking to expand our view of correspondences by seeing the world more wholistically in various important ways and how this can be applied to better understand and appreciate our inner world and its living reality.

Wayne Kasmar is a long-time SAA member and Board member who first became acquainted with Swedenborg's ideas almost forty years ago. A regular contributor of articles to the SAA magazine 'Candela', he is interested, and writing a book, on the development of the human world as revealed in the light of revelations in Swedenborg's Writings.

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BIBLE TRIVIA

Here are some Bible trivia questions with 4 possible answers to choose from.

They begin easily and progressively get harder.

1. Jerusalem was known as the of Zion?
Lion – Daughter – Priest – Gathering

2. What was the sluggard told to observe and learn from?
Grasshopper – Eagle – Bees – Ant

3. Who replaced Judas as one of the Twelve Apostles?
Matthias – Joseph – Ben-oni – Simeon

4. Which of these was not one of the 10 plagues of Egypt?
Darkness – Boils – Leprosy – Flies

5. What did Samson use to kill many Philistines?
A gatepost – a boulder – an ass’s jawbone – his bare hands

6. How long had the paralysed man lain at Bethesda?
35 years – 33 years – 40 years – 38 years

7. What was Abednego called before the Babylonians re-named him?
Achan – Azariah – Abiathar – Abraham

8. Thus says the Lord, “Heaven is my throne and the earth is my...?”
Footstool – Furrow – Face – Fountain of Life

9. Where was the bier with the widow’s dead son on it?
Nazareth – Nineveh – Nain – on the Nile

10. Who was the last of the Kings of Judah before the captivity?
Zerubbabel – Zedekiah – Zephaniah - Zelophehad

THE PILLARS OF NEW CHURCH BELIEFS



Continuing a series about our beliefs in plain English.
We're going to think about Hell.

If there is one religious topic that might cause a big argument, it is probably the idea of Hell. This might be because the very idea of hell seems to go against the idea of a loving and forgiving God. And that's exactly right!

Throw away any idea of people being sent to hell because they aren't. They actually want to go there and in fact they would be terribly unhappy in heaven itself. That might sound very strange – surely everybody would be delighted to be in heaven.

But you see, in the end it depends on what you have set your heart on loving. If you love other people then you will be attracted to where other people are who love other people. If you only love yourself and always think about what you can get out of other people, or imagine that you are always right, then you will be attracted towards the same sort of company, and try to win people to you, or put people down. And in hell there will be people who want to do that to you, and you can't help getting back at them.

It's a shocking way to live, in fear and revenge. Always pay back. And yet those who are there – in hell – appear to be enjoying themselves in a perverted kind of way. And God – who is loving and forgiving – needs to limit the destructiveness as far as that is possible.

We sometimes talk about hell on earth. But we shouldn't confuse this with actual hell. Most people in awful situations want to be out of them and find peace and safekeeping. Not in hell. Those in hell see angels and think they're slaves to God and say, 'We're free; we do what we want!'

God can't force those in hell to go against their chosen life. It would require the spirit himself to turn against his strongest pleasure.

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VISION VALLEY CAMP

The camp is now just about three months away. There are still plenty of places left for booking, if you are thinking about coming to the camp. We have passed our numbers deadline, and we can relax a bit and people can apply when they know.

More importantly, there will be a number of things which need doing for the camp. Quite a few people will be coming by air and they will need transport to camp and back to the airport.

There may be people who would like to stay on for a few days and would appreciate some accommodation.

There will also be several on-site things to organise, such as reception at the start of the camp and perhaps taking things to the centre and back before the camp begins.

If you think that you can offer some help with any of these, and perhaps others that come up, please let Ruth and Julian know that you are willing to help. It may or may not be needed, and your offer is very much appreciated.

FINAL FABLE

A young man came to see the master. The master asked him what he wanted, and the man said he had come to find God.

The master dragged him by the arm to the lake and pushed the young man's head under the water for a long time. The man spluttered and struggled and eventually the master released him, and he came out of the water, gasping.

"What did you want most of all while you were under the water?" demanded the master. "Air!" the young man told him.

"Then go away and only come back to see me when you want God as much as you wanted air."