

Sydney Society Newsletter

Issued by the Sydney Society of the New Church

Established in 1875

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May 2016

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.



*“Every word of God is pure. He is a shield
to those who put their trust in Him.” Proverbs 30.5*

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Mothers Day service and morning tea on Sunday May 8th
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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

“ASLEEP ON A PILLOW”

This, of course, was Jesus in the boat with the disciples when the storm blew up. They were terrified; Jesus was asleep on a pillow. It's a very powerful statement. The disciples woke him up and said, 'Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?' That's a very powerful accusation. Is it true? Sometimes we might feel it is true.

The event of the storm on the sea is one of the most useful stories for us in the whole Bible. We can relate to it without being in a boat in a storm on the sea. It speaks to us in several ways and raises big questions in our mind: Why do difficulties and worries come up in our lives? Why can't everything just be plain sailing? What does God do about it? Does he care that we are perishing? Has the Lord in fact fallen asleep on a pillow?

Let's begin to unravel a few things to see the situation more accurately. We do not see the Lord with our own eyes (like the disciples saw Jesus) because the Lord is on a different level than we are. His invisibility can lead us into thinking that he doesn't do anything for us or isn't concerned about our problems. But in fact it isn't like that at all.

Even God's invisibility is just the way it looks to us. We can even explain it. If God is everywhere all the time (true) and dealing with each person (billions of them) then he's spreading himself so thinly

that in the end we can't see Him (untrue!) No, the truth is that the Lord is **completely** present wherever He is. And right now He is completely present with you and me as if He only ever dealt with each one of us.

This invisibility we create about God isn't a great help, so we need to make God visible. How do we do that? We can picture Jesus as we see him in the gospel stories. What is Jesus doing? He is trying to help people. He's loving them, speaking wisely to them and being involved with them. That's helpful, and visible.

Sometimes we think of Jesus as being just 'back then'. No, that is only partly true. We can take what I just said about Jesus and direct it to ourselves. Jesus is trying to help us, by loving us, speaking wisely and being involved. This makes the Lord much more visible because this is personal. We know about love, helping and being involved.

Let's keep unravelling some more. We meet difficulties in life and these upsetting times are moments when we are far more likely to ask our questions. Sunny days are just lovely sunny days! The Lord allows us to come into anguish (He doesn't like our anguish nor send it) so that we go seeking to understand and to come closer to Him. And God will always give us something if we are prepared to take it. Giving to us is also part of God being more visible to us.

So, let's go back to the storm story. It all fits. The disciples are terrified because the boat is sinking. This makes them go to Jesus and they see he's asleep on a pillow. This makes them feel that Jesus doesn't care about their problem when in fact God knows about it all anyway and so He isn't terrified but 'asleep', at rest. They wake him up and accuse him of not caring that they are perishing. But they went to Him! They didn't start bailing the water over the side and leave Him asleep. They confronted Him with a stark question. And Jesus arose and rebuked the storm and it all stopped. And He said, 'Why are you so fearful? How is it that you have no faith?' And they wondered who this could be, who could even make the storm obey him.

You and I are each with the Lord in a pretty small boat which is our life and what we believe about it. It's meant to carry us safely. **Julian**

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THE ASSEMBLY IN CANBERRA

You will probably know or have read about the Assembly which is on Friday May 6th and Saturday May 7th at Greenhills Centre in Canberra. There will be about 30 people there from all the societies in Australia and New Zealand. An Assembly is a provision in our national constitution for people to meet up and air their views freely. Should recommendations come about, these would be taken on to a General Meeting to be made into items for action. An Assembly, then, is not a Conference.

The preparation for this Assembly has been over the best part of a year, inviting societies to come forward with topics for discussion, inviting people individually to do a paper on something which can be sent out ahead of the Assembly, and they have been. Other things are part of the Assembly too and included in the program. Some of the items look organisational but they should best be dealt with from a spiritual view of them, not only a business one.

One significant point in the Assembly will be a change of President of the New Church in Australia. I have been in this position for many years and I am ready to hand it on. Rev. David Moffat will become the President in a short meaningful induction service after the opening Annual Meeting. We all wish David and the church well in this new situation and we must give our support.

MISS DOROTHY TALBOT / AUNTIE D.



Everybody who knew her thought fondly of her. She was that kind of person, engaging with people in a lovely happy way and likely to offer you a cup of tea.

Auntie D came from Clayton-le-Moors in Lancashire, England and went to Bristol, followed by a year in Auckland, New Zealand, back to England and then out to Brisbane.

Due to an ear infection which led to an unsuccessful operation and loss of hearing, Dorothy took up a position teaching the deaf in Brisbane, and emigrated in 1964. Her brother and family came out to Australia in 1965. Their parents' need led them to all be in Sydney where Dorothy taught at a school for the deaf in North Rocks. Dorothy and her parents lived at 5 McKechnie Street in West Epping.

Auntie D was born into the New Church and retained her strong interest and commitment to it all through her life. She read New Church books daily and attended church and other activities. She could talk about New Church beliefs, and would, readily, but always fairly. She made beautiful flower arrangements for the church and she had an exceptional dress sense. Above all she was loving, thoughtful and very kind.

In the eternal way with us all, Auntie D, who passed into the spiritual world on March 30th this year, being 93 and very happy to move on, will be loving being with the family and people she remembered so well, and trusting that the Lord will be there caring for all those she leaves here, knowing that in the final way with it all, there is no leaving and everyone will be there in the spiritual world eventually.

And Auntie D leaves us with rich, amusing, serious talk, and well-intentioned memories. She is a large part of our church's life and activity, over 50 years, and we acknowledge this with real gratitude. May the Lord bless her and keep her.

Tonal and Sound Healing Event

Led by Joe Vandermeer and his wife Ellie

Thursday 26th May in the church 7 p.m. to 9 p.m.

Suggested donation \$10

Experience an hour-long toning session, with the healing and the calming sounds of Tibetan bowls and the human voice.

Enquires to Joe 0402 202 456 or Ellie 02 9456 7576

SNIPPETS FROM THE SCRAPBOOK

No pessimist ever discovered the secrets of the stars, or sailed to an uncharted land, or opened a new heaven to the human spirit.

- Helen Keller

Seek not outside yourself, heaven is within. - Mary Lou Cook

It is never too late to be what you might have been. - George Eliot

Have nothing in your home that you do not know to be useful and believe to be beautiful. - William Morris

Out of clutter, find simplicity. - Albert Einstein

Ah! There's nothing like staying at home for real comfort.

- Jane Austen

Stella Green

WINTER FOOD APPEAL FOR THE NEEDY



Please can you all try and bring in some food for the Exodus Foundation to help those who are struggling to make ends meet or are homeless.

TINS of soup, casseroles, meat or vegetables

PACKETS of rice, pasta, cereal, cup-a-soups

They prefer that you donate savoury items and not sweets or desserts.

SWEDENBORG CENTRE NEWS

Recently I've been reflecting on the good that the Swedenborg Centre does. As you would know, we provide a very important and unique service to the people in Australia and New Zealand who wish to be introduced to Swedenborg's ideas or to delve more deeply into his Writings. Below is a short summary of the good work being done.

We provide easy access to Swedenborg's ideas and books, as well as to the works of others who expand his ideas in collateral material.

Here are some of the ways we do that:

- Purchasing of Swedenborgian books is generally quicker and cheaper with us than overseas.
- We maintain a lending library of current and rare books.
- We donate books to public libraries and to organizations with a similar interest (e.g. Theosophical Society, Mount St Benedict library).
- We provide free advice to help people choose reading material to match their interest.

We promote a desire to learn more about Swedenborg's teachings

Here are some of the ways we do that:

- We review new material and events from around the world regarding Swedenborg's ideas and make this information available through our contact networks, on our website, in newsletters and on social media as well as at meetings and in personal discussions.
- We publish leaflets, catalogues and books providing an introduction to Swedenborg, his books, adding to the richness of his legacy.

- We continue to add enriching talks and learning resources to the website.
- We organise talks and workshops on Swedenborgian topics and spiritual matters, then record and publish most of these talks.
- We promote Swedenborg at large gatherings that have a spiritual focus such as at Festivals and Conferences, as with the recent Afterlife Conferences in Sydney and Melbourne.
- We assist with the publication and promotion of the Candela Newsletter which nourishes people with articles relating to Swedenborg's ideas and spiritual growth.
- We write articles for various magazines to educate the public on the quality, uses and benefits of Swedenborg's ideas to encourage readers to find out more (this also often serves to generate book sales).
- Follow up on customer's initial contact with us, by a free offering of deeper material and newsletter.
- Liaise with local and national media to assist them in broadcasting interviews on Swedenborg.
- Support the New Church College Seminar when in Sydney.

We promote a sense of community with like-minded people

- This arises mainly by attending meetings and working with others (such as those in the Swedenborg Association of Australia and the Swedenborg Foundation) to discuss, share and promote Swedenborg's ideas.

With best wishes,
Michael Chester

STEWARDS AND FLOWERS FOR MAY

Sunday	Steward(s)	Flowers
1st (Sacr.)	Dave Probert	Philip Brodsky
8th (Mothers Day)	Michael Chester	Ruth Duckworth
15 th	Wayne Kasmar	Volunteer
22nd	David Curry	Julie Smith
29th	Rhonda Hall	Glen Hart

SOCIETY NEWS

Auntie D's thanksgiving service was a fitting occasion. The flower pedestals in church looked wonderful. Her three nephews, John, Peter and Brian (by iPhone!) each took part, giving us an account of her life which their mother wrote, followed by a series of personal memories from each of them.

Down in the hall afterwards we were a happy gathering, continuing the remembering and eating sandwiches and slices over, yes, a cup of tea. Thanks for this to Anne Eldridge and Jane Talbot and possibly one or two others as well.

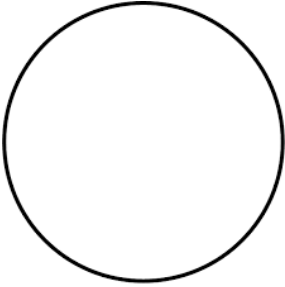
Graham Hall, Wayne Kasmar and Ruth Duckworth will be attending the Assembly for our representation. Graham Hanna and myself will be there nationally as Board members.

Our commemoration of ANZAC Day – the day before – was first to remember the cost of war and our need to mark this 'lest we forget'. Then we explored the theme of peace and our need to "seek peace and pursue it" (Psalm 34.14).

Ruth and I will be away for a few days from Thursday May 19th until Monday May 23rd. Dave Probert has kindly agreed to take the Sunday 22nd service.

We will be marking Mothers Day on Sunday May 8th and having a morning tea after the service. We hope you will be able to join us.

CIRCLES, AND THE CIRCLES OF LIFE



A circle is one of the simplest shapes and also most useful shapes there is. It's a line that is curved round to form the circle which now has no beginning or ending. Practically, it gives us a wheel, a tin of baked beans that can be opened by a tin opener, and dozens of other things. More spiritually it is the sun and the moon and probably all the stars, all of which are to do with the Lord's activity in our lives. It also wedding rings.

Look at it again. Choose one side and let that ascend from bottom to top, and at the top let that descend from top to bottom. Now swap over and start from the top and eventually come back up to the top. Both of these are helpful pictures about the pattern and progress of our spiritual life.

Here are some quotes from our church teachings about the shape of the circle and what it shows us.

“Such is the circle of our experience that whatever comes in through the eye or ear passes into our understanding and through that into our will and from that into our action.”

Arcana 3869

All love returns as by a circle to that from which it came.

Divine Love 10

If something true is what we love, it comes into our will and then into what we say and do. The circle passes from the world into our spirit and from there out into the world again. Yet the circle is started off by our will – our intention – which is the inmost core of our life, beginning there and inspired by it to run its full course. Arcana 10057

The radiant circle is the divine which proceeds from the Lord.

Arcana 4658

THE PILLARS OF NEW CHURCH BELIEFS



Continuing a series about our beliefs in plain English.

This time we're looking at **SPACE IN HEAVEN**

How many times have you reluctantly said goodbye to someone and watched them go off out of sight? And sometimes we are standing close to someone and yet we feel that we are miles apart, with almost nothing to share.

These and other situations are how we deal with what we call space. Physically it's fixed and measurable. Spiritually, it's something we feel. We feel close to or we feel far from.

That's the thing to keep in mind when we think about space in heaven. We are going to gravitate quite a bit more than we usually do here. We will 'go' towards what attracts us, whatever that is, and 'go' away from whatever or whoever seems tedious or wrong to us.

And we will feel that we've moved but we won't think about it as travelling a certain distance. We will just do it because it feels normal and find ourselves there. Imagine, no traffic jams or missed trains.

There is another things which is to do with space in heaven. Bringing people to mind, which we can easily do here, becomes a reality in heaven. They will appear. The phrase is that "thought bring presence". And there's no need at all to worry about two people bringing the same person to mind at exactly the same time. You'll be a group of three; nobody will be dragged off somewhere else.

And those who love each other will meet each other. And those who sorely missed someone who passed on years ago will find them with no difficulty. And should someone not be able to understand the truth about something and wish they could sort it out, then a wise spirit or angel will come along and help.

Space is far more of a problem for us in this world than it will be in the spiritual world.

CONNECT UP

Draw a line from the Bible verses to which book in the Bible you think they are from.

For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. MATTHEW

Who are these arrayed in white robes, and Where did they come from? JOSHUA

You have been weighed in the balances, and found wanting. ISAIAH

For your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask him. LUKE

Oh that men would give thanks to the Lord for his goodness. DANIEL

Were there not ten cleansed? But where are the nine? REVELATION

Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good courage. Do not be afraid nor dismayed. PSALMS

FINAL FABLE

Two men were watching people going to the pond to cut reeds. One man said, 'See that man; he won't come back. He will die.' The other man said, 'We shall see.' And the man came back, and they stopped him and asked how he went. "Well," he said, "when we stop cutting reeds to have lunch we all share our food, but today there was a man with nothing, so I pretended to take some of his food so that he wouldn't be embarrassed." 'Indeed!' the two men said. 'And how did you go with cutting reeds?' The man emptied his sack and among the reeds were two halves of a snake cut clean in two.