

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, while believing that they are from the Lord working in him and through him.



Thus says the Lord, "Heaven is my throne and the earth is my footstool. What is the house you would build for me, and what is the place of my rest?" Isaiah 66 verse 1

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Angel Services are each Saturday, 5 p.m. for an hour
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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

LEARNING SOMETHING NEW

Recently, for reasons I needn't bother you with, I have been studying something I didn't know anything about before I started. It's absolutely fascinating to find things out and do the research. It takes us into a whole new world. There are no age limits; 60, 70, 80 and keep going. I've heard of a ninety something year old who took up learning Spanish and became fluent before her hundredth birthday. One elderly person got into upholstery and found he was a dab hand at it.

Of course, we live in a world where information, courses, video tutorials from absolute beginner to advanced level are simply there at our finger tips. Give a person sitting down all day an iPad and they can have a virtual tour of the Vatican or the Pyramids and probably see more than if they went in person.

Learning something new does a lot of things. It pushes our personal boundaries. We tend to see ourselves being interested in – or good at – certain things we've been involved in for years and never looked further than that. And then as we begin ageing, we let go of even these because... well, because we've done those and it's getting harder now.

Another winner with learning something new is our mind. All those unused brain-cells lying around, probably 90% of the total, suddenly get a push, Wake up! You're needed for this. I had a leaflet about how to learn Bible passages by heart. But surely that's for kids! No, anyone can achieve it. You learn the first verse until you know it, and then add

the second verse to it. And say both of them, and go on from there. No special trick. No herbal infusion. You just apply yourself and tell yourself you will get this completed. If you did this and stuck at it, the dividend could well be that when you are in the supermarket you'll remember the items you need.

But all this apart, we should anyway be learning something new each and every day, about ourselves, about other people, about us with other people, and about things that matter. Sometimes it's enough just to note them, rather than to stop doing them or stop being like this. A good word is 'observation'. We observe what is going on. Sometimes it can be quite amusing.

A well-known example is with a 'bright idea'. You take this to the next meeting and nobody thinks much of it. So you mention it to one or two of the people when you're talking with them sometime, just dropping it in the conversation, and lo and behold, a few meetings down the track, someone else than you puts forward your bright idea as if it were their own!

Learning something new about yourself and life is probably a good sign that you are making progress or to use our church's word, 'regenerating'. Regenerating isn't like learning the 101 uses of some new kitchen gadget; it goes in a completely different and subtler direction. It's about become aware and realizing when we fall back into our old patterns. We now see things much more than we used to, and when we can, or will, we choose well.

Jesus gave the sermon on the mountain. He spoke about many things, all of which are eternal truths. And those who were there were no doubt listening hard. But as they heard, they were also witnessing the wonderful view they were getting, being up on high. Subliminally, but deeply. And the words said and the view seen would fuse into learning something new, something completely new. "You have heard that it was said to those of old but I say unto you that..."

Life and truth are offering us new things all the time.

Julian

OUR CHURCH CHRISTMAS DATES

Make a note of these in your diary or calendar...

Sunday December 4 th	Nativity and Gifts Service 10 a.m. Church Lunch following
Wednesday December 7 th	Friendship Group Christmas
Sunday December 11 th	Morning Service 10 a.m. Carols by Candlelight 7.30 p.m.
Friday December 16 th	Ashley House Carols and Gifts
Sunday December 18 th	Service of Lessons and Carols 10 a.m.
Sunday December 25 th	Christmas Day Service 10 a.m.

HERE'S A CURIOUS THING

There are 66 books in the Bible. Take the age you reached or you will reach this year from that number – note: if you are older than 66 it will be a minus something. So if you turned 70 this year it will be -4.

Add 50 to this number – 50 added to -4 = 46. You were born in 1946.

If you turned 37 this year then it goes like this –

$$66 - 37 = 29 \quad 29 + 50 = 79 \quad \text{You were born in 1979.}$$

It really doesn't have that much to do with the Bible but at least it will help you to remember that there are 66 books in the Bible.



PRAYER CIRCLE

Each month the prayer list goes out to about 14 people who hold the people on the list in prayer. Only names are given.

You are welcome to nominate people for this list.

You are also welcome to receive and use the list.

SNIPPETS FROM THE SCRAPBOOK

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

- Buddha

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

- Anon.

Life isn't about finding yourself. Life is about creating yourself.

- George Bernard Shaw

We do not remember days; we remember moments.

- Cesare Povare

Art is not what you see, but what you make others see. – Edgar Degas

Pray as though everything depended upon God. Work as though everything depended upon you.

- Saint Augustine

Stella Green

STEWARDS AND FLOWERS FOR NOVEMBER

Sunday	Steward(s)	Flowers
6 th (Sac.)	Wayne Kasmar	Lynne Twemlow
13 th	Rhonda Hall	Glen Hart
20 th	Dave Probert	Ruth Duckworth
27 th (Sac.)	Wayne Kasmar	Jan Primrose

NOVEMBER'S NEW CHURCH IN AUSTRALIA MEETING

This is on Friday and Saturday, November 18th and 19th.

If you would like to call in and meet the people who have come to this meeting – Ministers, lay NCIA Board members and hopefully others, you are very welcome. The best times would be around the lunch period, say 12.30 p.m. or during the morning tea break around 10.30 a.m. or later in the afternoon around 4 p.m.

It might be an idea to let Ruth or Julian know if you intend to call in.

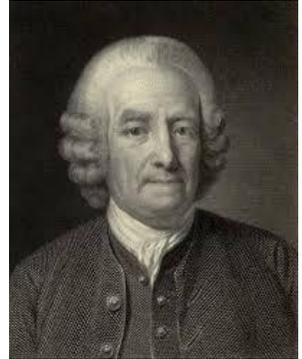


Swedenborg Association of Australia
FRIDAY NOVEMBER 25th at 7.45pm
(after the Reading Group which starts at **6.30pm**)
Cost: \$7 non-members; \$5 members/concession
**AT THE NEW CHURCH,
4 SHIRLEY ROAD, ROSEVILLE**

SWEDENBORG AND THE BRAIN

An evening of neuro-
science, and more...

presented by
Julian Duckworth



Your brain is an amazing thing – the most sophisticated information transfer system there is. As you read these squiggles on paper, your brain sends jolts of electricity crackling through hundreds of kilometres of brain cells so small that thousands of them could fit into the following full stop → . Yet most of us have little or no idea how our brain works.

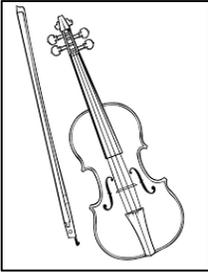
Swedenborg studied the brain extensively and uniquely, using the studies of anatomists and taking this further. His underlying goal was to demonstrate structure and form originating from God and manifest in all creation. He put forward views about the brain and its motions and processes that have since been found to be true.

We'll cover a fair amount of this fascinating world, using images on screen, and enjoying one or two brain games as well.

Julian is a contented user of Swedenborg, particularly his spiritual and Biblical teachings. He also enjoys chasing up new areas of Swedenborg's work, of which the brain is a rich and fertile one.

More SAA events info at www.swedenborg.com.au/meetings

MUSIC DUET IN CHURCH



Last month we said that our organist, Katrina Papallo and Julian would play a duet for violin and piano, following the sermon.

This will be on Sunday November 6th.

The piece we are playing is one by Jean Sibelius and it is called “Romance”. We are looking forward enormously to playing it for those there, and we are sure that you will really enjoy listening to it.

FROM THE SWEDENBORG CENTRE

The online bulletin boards and forums of the computer’s early days lost their lustre, as all things eventually do, ‘Blogs’ surfaced as a new way to share a conversation (rather, a slow monologue) using a webpage. ‘Blog’ is a contraction of ‘web log,’ although for a while I interpreted it as ‘we blog.’

Bulletin board evolved into sophisticated social network and marketing platforms. But blogs survived relatively unchanged until today. A few days ago Julian Duckworth kindly alerted me to such a blog. On it, the author Edward Sylvia compares John Lennon to Emanuel Swedenborg. See the following link <https://thegodguy.wordpress.com/2012/07/18/the-difference-between-john-lennon-and-emanuel-swedenborg/>

Sylvia refers to himself as The God Guy and is interested in Swedenborg, as well as in George Gurdjieff, an Armenian teacher of psycho-spiritual work called the ‘Fourth Way.’ Sylvia is author of “Swedenborg and Gurdjieff, the missing link” and “Proving God.”

The blog about John Lennon takes a look at Lennon’s belief that “all you need is love” compared to Swedenborg more thorough ‘work’ of learning from and working against obstacles, so involving more than faith alone. As Sylvia says:

“Swedenborg not only discussed these obstacles throughout his many theological writings, he made an impassioned effort to find and dig up his own personal inner dirt and clean the

'inside of the cup.' He discovered that the more effectively we participate in this process of unflattering self-examination and removal of ignoble traits, the more we attract love into our life and the more our actions can then become genuinely good.

The reason why 'the path to hell is paved with good intentions' is that we fail (or fear) looking into our dark side and dealing with it. Love and good actions then become merely a way to hide our faults and dark side from the world, and even from ourselves.

True personal transformation requires that we deal with our dark side—not just cover over it with a warm smile, lots of hugs or civility.”

I felt this was actually a fairly good synopsis of Swedenborg in comparison to many approaches labelled 'new age' that tend to focus on affirmations and having you focus on the good, while being encouraged to forget and negate as quickly as possible the bad.

Unfortunately that positive-only approach provides excellent camouflage to the lurking selfish aspects of the ego, which perpetually seeks to fortify itself like Jericho's walls against annihilation and therefore prefers an arm-chair, low-effort version of apparent inner growth. I say apparent because it would seem like pseudo-growth which could even lead to stunting real growth. The trouble with such a short-cut to achieving personal inner well-being is that the cornerstone of our selfishness remains out of view and continues to white-ant our true growth opportunities. The negative keeps surfacing if we remain unaware of it. This is not to say we should dwell on the negative, but rather that we can't shun what we can't see or name. Hence the importance of the material collected in the "Regeneration" book which is presently the basis for a thriving monthly reading group in Roseville.

The blog reflects the fairly consistent approach Edward Sylvia has taken to point out the important step of 'digging our personal dirt' in order to access real growth. He frequently refers to notions such as the 'compost pile,' 'muck,' etc.

Sylvia's style is similar to that of retired US probations officer Peter Rhodes, author of "Aim," "Aim: The Workbook" and "Observing Spirit." Edward Sylvia sees and shows clearly the importance of the practical methods inherent in bringing to life Swedenborg's writings and which form the cornerstone of the Gurdjieff work. Sound practical methods are essential tools with which to dig the dirt of your own being and to make sense of what you discover in the process.

For any of the books mentioned above, feel free to contact the Swedenborg Centre on (02) 9888 1066.

Joe Vandermeer

SOCIETY NEWS

We had a very happy birthday celebration recently when William Gibb turned 14. Ruth made a big chocolate cake and we all gathered around and sang. It was also the Sunday when we had a visitor, Paula, a longstanding friend of Dave Probert.

We had a visitor at one of our Angel Services who had read and appreciated the 'statement' about the New Church in the hall. He attends the AA meetings and came to Roseville's meeting for the first time, read it, and took it from there on.

Our best wishes to Roy Simmonds and to David Curry, both of whom have spent time in hospital recently. We wish them good health and the best outcomes.

Our best wishes too to Myriam Albert who has been 'back home' in Mauritius for several weeks. She has found a wonderful unit there and she will be moving back to Mauritius before the end of the year. As well as coming right across the city to come to church, Myriam is also a regular at our Tuesday Bible Study group.

Several people are 'out and about' either having been overseas or up or down the coast. It's the time of the year for such things and we look forward to seeing them on their return.

THINGS ABOUT THE SOIL



We know how the Parable of the Sower ends, with the seeds that fell into the good ground and brought forth abundantly... and we get the meaning for ourselves.

Soil, for me, is one of the great evidences for God. The fact that the majority of our planet is covered to a good depth with this amazing substance called soil. The west of Russia has its *chernozem* or 'black earth'. One place somewhere else is so fertile that the people say a man with a wooden leg shouldn't stand still for too long!

Soil is the perfect balance of rotted-down organic previous growth, all the mineral salts, along with sand, clay, silt, and aeration. Plus the falling rain, making perfect conditions for any seed to begin its life. The spiritual lessons start flowing and there are very many.

...and from Swedenborg

"When the ground in a person has been prepared with a knowledge of what is good and what is evil, so that he holds himself back from doing and thinking wrong, then faith's truths can be sown in him. But these sown truths must be planted in what is good because they cannot take root anywhere else." (Arcana 9294)

Optional reading...

There is a fascinating online website called the online etymology dictionary. One of the things it does is bring words together with linked meanings. I put the word "soil" in and it came up with these...

Soil...miry, muddy place; →sole...bottom of foot; →boot, botanical.

Soil...to sully (to soil) →pigsty →suculus 'little pig' (Latin)

Soil...humus (decaying vegetation) →exhume →human →humour

Soil...ash →azalea 'lover of dry ashen soil

Soil...glebe 'a clod, a lump of earth' or 'a parson's garden' →globe

Soil...exile →ex- 'from' solum (Latin) 'soil' = sent from one's land.

THE PILLARS OF NEW CHURCH BELIEFS



Continuing a series about our beliefs in plain English. This month it is about the idea of **FORGIVENESS**

Jesus gave us the Lord's Prayer in which the centre of it is to ask to be forgiven as we forgive others. After giving it, Jesus picked up on forgiveness and said, "If you forgive others their wrongs, then your Father in heaven will forgive you, but if you do not forgive, neither will your Father forgive you."

This is helpful. It sounds like setting a condition. If you don't, then I won't! Try and see forgiveness as a clearing-out. Even the word suggests it, 'forgive' is to give way for something else to come in. If we will do that, we will feel forgiven inside ourselves.

We tend to narrow down 'forgiving' to specific moments and situations. "I'll never forgive you for that!" and then of course we suffer. It's surely better – and easier – to be a generally forgiving person, about everything. This does not mean we don't care what goes on. It means that we let go of holding on to things.

In the Bible it says somewhere, 'Vengeance is mine,' says the Lord.' That takes it away from us. Let go and let God. But God doesn't take revenge! He's not saying those words to imply, "You just wait, I'll show them!" God's way is always and must always be to lead people to heaven. But God will allow people their own good time to come round and work it through, if they will.

And so should we. Nobody's going to get life perfect. We all have our shortcomings, and life gets full of misunderstandings. So be it. Let the moment pass and forgive it.

When Jesus was crucified, one of his sayings was, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." We feel for Jesus' situation. He could see the cause. We can take his words and make them ours.

HYMN WORDS TO A FAMOUS AUSTRALIAN SONG

We recently sung these words of a hymn to the tune of “I still call Australia home” (words and music of that are by Peter Allen). These words given here were used at Rev. Darren Brunne’s ordination in 2014 in Brisbane.

“We still call you, Father, Lord”

1. Be with us, Father, in all that we do, and teach us, and reach us, restore and renew,
And inspire us to live life entirely for you, we still call you Father, Lord.

2. Be with us, Lord God, be there with us all, and wake us, and shake us, so we heed your call,
And uphold us if ever a time we might fall, we still call you Father, Lord.

3. Be there with others, in this life you give, and take them, and make them, and help them to live,
And equip us to love them and learn to forgive, we still call you Father, Lord.

4. Praise and devotion and majesty be, and glory, thanksgiving, and all we can see;
From whatever restricts us, set us all free, we still call you Father, Lord.

FINAL FABLE

The huge gleaming yacht moored up at the island’s harbour and a man came on to the quay and saw the fisherman’s basket of fish. “Nice fish there, but you could do much better.” “It’s plenty,” the fisherman said, “I fish a bit, get up late, lie around, have siesta, dance with my girl, you know.”

“If you let me show you how much you could produce from fishing, you’d become a very rich and important person,” said the foreigner. “Really?” said the fisherman. “What would that do for me?” “Well now,” said the man, “you’d have so much money you could get up late, lie around, take a siesta, and go dancing.”