

Breaking Bread

Newsletter –

The Brisbane Society of The New Church,
Brisbane and South-East Queensland

Feb, Mar, Apr 2017



Art Work By Lenore Sandow

...the acknowledgment of the Lord is the first of all things of spiritual life, and the most essential thing of the church, and because without it no one can receive from heaven anything of the truth of faith and the good of love, therefore the Lord often says that he who "believeth in Him hath eternal life," that he who "doth not believe hath not life" - Secrets of Heaven n.10083 – Emanuel Swedenborg

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Are You Drinking Poison?

O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?

1 Corinthians 15:55

Do you experience bouts of frustration or anger? Are you bored with your life? Do you lack lustre and drive when it comes to 'going out there and conquering the world'? Do you find yourself driven to pursue the wrong things, which turn out to be harmful for you and your family? Are you finding the simplest of things 'getting to you' and making you want to quit? Are you at your wits end?

It may just be that you are suffering the symptoms of bad drinking water combined with long term dehydration. You might be surprised to find that your daily intake of refreshment is toxic and poisoning your life. Well good news, we have an all-round solution for you; a one fix system that will guarantee you a clean safe source of hydration that will not only satisfy your unquenchable thirst but remove those aches from your bones while rejuvenating your skin, hair and blood all at the same time.

I know this sounds an awful lot like an advertisement for a new water filter, but what I am really selling is a spiritual solution to your spiritual problems (and some of your natural ones too).

We all know the importance of having access to free clean drinking water. We have all heard of the different programs out there designed to provide a drinking well or a source of flowing sanitised water to an impoverished village in Africa or India etc. Think about how important fresh daily water is. The average human can only go three days without water before they die.

WHAT ABOUT OUR SPIRIT? IT NEEDS TO DRINK TOO.

We come across this exact same problem in the book of Exodus in chapter 15.

Three days after the parting of the Red Sea, Moses and all the people (numbering in the millions) have been walking into a desert. Perhaps all their water reserves are gone and they are seeing the first signs of dehydration. To their delight and relief, they come across a large body of water; the first they have seen since the Red Sea. They go to drink the water and then spit it out in horror.

'This water is terribly bitter,' someone cries out. Like any rational, sane human being, they begin to complain and blame Moses (and God) who led them to this place of disappointment and bitterness. Note – from that time on this area was called Marah which translates as bitterness.

Let us remember that this entire event was recorded for our benefit. In other words, 'What is the spiritual message here for us'?

How often have we been working hard in life towards a goal that we are utterly convinced will make us happy, only to find that we are miserable when we arrive at our goal. Misery takes many forms – a desire to blame someone else, resentment, anger, frustration, perhaps even boredom or a loss of all motivation to continue. It is in times like this that we have arrived at – MARAH – a place of bitterness.

If we go even deeper into this story, we may be disturbed to find that our arrival at Marah was a direct result of us following God's calling for our life. We have made great efforts to obey the Lord and yet we find ourselves bitter and miserable. *'Oh no, what can we do? Where is the hope?'*

If you are Moses, you call out to God for Help. You do not want to find yourself at Marah without Moses!

Moses here represents those parts of the Word that we have taken the time to read, learn and practice. Thus, we find ourselves crying out to the LORD for help.

Exodus goes on to tell us that God showed Moses a special tree and then instructed him to place wood from the tree into the water and then the waters would turn sweet and everyone could drink.

It is important that we find out what this tree is...

We need to know how (through the Lord's power) to turn the bitter waters sweet. Firstly, the Lord calls Moses over to show him something. He wants to draw Moses attention away from the bitter waters to the tree that will heal the waters. This occurs inside of us every time a part of our life moves away from seeing the Lord as a 'hard taskmaster' to a loving God full of mercy who always provides what we need. Secondly, we need to act upon the Lord's wisdom and counsel if we are going to discover the true nature of this tree. We must act. We need to add the tree to the bitter waters.

Here is where we discover the power of the Good News; now we can see the tree for what it really is – the Lord's loving, merciful provision. The cleansing goodness found in the tree is the Lord's own very Goodness provided for us. However, it is important that we understand this tree of the Lord as not just 'a good solution' to the bitter waters. It is 'the one and only solution'. This occurs when we view this tree and the whole story in the light of the Lord's Divine Human/His Incarnation. The Lord made the most incredible move towards us through the incarnation and at the same time turned all of life's bitterness into sweetness and now we also have a way to turn our own bitter waters sweet. Here

is the answer on a practical level – the Lord in His incarnation – THE WORD contains the power to turn our bitter experiences into sweetness - *Thou hast turned for me my mourning into dancing: thou hast put off my sackcloth, and girded me with gladness (Ps 30:11)*. The key to this transformation is for us to 'look to the Lord' as Moses did, in our difficult/bitter moments and acknowledge Him in His Divine Human. Acknowledge Him as the God who knows what it is to be a human here on earth and what it is to suffer. You will find, like the water being turned to wine (John 2)... your suffering will be turned to joy.

Acknowledge Him as the *only* solution to the suffering. Humble yourself and wait for His answer. His reply is never long and when He lifts you up, you will find freedom and heavenly joy –

*True adoration, or humiliation of heart, carries with it prostration to the earth upon the face before the Lord, as a gesture naturally flowing from it. For in humiliation of heart there is the **acknowledgment of self as being nothing but filthiness**, and at the same time the **acknowledgment of the Lord's infinite mercy toward that which is such**; and when the mind is kept in these **two acknowledgments**, the very mind droops in lowliness toward hell, and prostrates the body; nor does it uplift itself until it is uplifted by the Lord. This takes place in all true humiliation, with a perception of being **uplifted** by the Lord's mercy. AC 1999.*

It is the tree that uplifts us from the ground.

On the lowest level, that is the earthliest level, while we wait on the Lord we should also make efforts to act upon truth even though there is a taste of bitterness. We need to *'place the wood into the water'* or stated in another way, bring some goodness into whatever truth we are endeavouring to practice. Into these acts of humility, the Lord's power of transformation can flow.

When you find yourself bitter, dissatisfied and suffering, look to the Lord and then find a way to do some good for others and yourself. All the while, wait upon the Lord and your strength will be renewed (Isa 40:31).

One last thought, 'What would the Word of God, particularly the Old testament, be like without the Four Gospels. The Word would be LAW, CONDEMNATION AND DEATH. Through the Gospels we have the Lord manifested in His incarnation. Through the Inner Sense (His second coming), the Word transforms from water into wine. It is at this moment that the Word become more than just a revelation of our brokenness and His love towards us. It transforms into the very 'Words of Life' abundantly freeing our souls from suffering -

*Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.
Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye
shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.*

Matthew 11:28-30

The Months Ahead Unpacked

An explanation of the upcoming events from February to April and a little beyond

The Ten Promises

Beginning in February we will start a series on the Ten Commandments. Our focus, as always, will be to go deeper into the inner sense of the Commandments where we find that these ancient commands contain within them promises of great spiritual victory which flow into the heart and life of a practicing believer. Through the Incarnation and the Open Word, we have access to power and life. The Lord's commandments are no longer unachievable heavy burdens that speak of death and condemnation but pathways to delight and heavenly freedom. Rev Ian Arnold will open this series with an introduction and overview. It is expected that this series will run into 2018.

North-side Swedenborg Reading Group

February - Thursday 16th

March - Thursday 16th

April - Thursday 20th

On the third Thursday evening of the month from 6pm to 7:30pm at Bracken Ridge Library, the North-side Swedenborg Reading Group meets together to discuss '*Divine Providence*'. To all our north-side community (or our south-siders if you don't mind the travel), if you would like an additional spiritual boost to the month come join the stimulating discussion.

South-side Swedenborg Spiritual Support Group

February - Thursday 9th

March - Thursday 9th

April - Thursday 13th

Once a month, on an alternating Thursday evening from 6pm to 7:15pm at Capalaba Library, the South-side Swedenborg Spiritual Support Group meets together to discuss principles for spiritual stability and growth. To all our south-side community (or our north-siders if you don't mind the travel), if you would like spiritual support come join the stimulating discussion.

Visit to Canberra

Rev Darren Brunne and family will be in Canberra for the first week of February. They will be transporting their eldest son, Josiah Brunne to the University of Canberra where he will be studying for the next three years. This will be a transitional period for Josiah as he says 'goodbye' to our local fellowship and joins in with the New Church in Canberra. Rev Brunne will also be holding the first service of the year at the Canberra Society on February 5th, 2017.

Awash with hope

One of the really warming and uplifting features of the past few weeks is that they have been ***awash with hope***. Every Christmas greeting, posted or spoken, is an expression of hope. Then, as the Calendar turned over into 2017, our hopes were focussed on those around us, that they will have a happy new year.

And it continues! The stores that deal with these things are now featuring school requirements - uniforms, exercises books, pencils, pens and all the rest. Reflecting on all this as I passed one such shop recently I thought about the parents of young children, starting school, hoping that all goes well and that their child quickly settles. I listen to my

grandchildren already at school and moving up a grade, hoping that they like the new teacher and have the same friends. We have amongst us one of our church young people leaving home to go to University inter-state and we hope all goes exceptionally well for him. I love this teaching in the Writings of our Church that such hope, if it is truly from the heart and whilst it is not framed as such, is in fact a prayer.

I belong to an internet campaigning organisation (Avaaz) which, at the turn of the year, just days ago, put out a list of 10 reasons for having hope about the world. Graphs are given and figures quoted which, admittedly, I haven't verified but which come from an organisation of integrity.

. Those reasons given are: -

- *Soon every child will be at School
- *the power of women is rising
- *(Worldwide) we're healthier than we have ever been
- *Global prosperity is rising
- *Democracy is on the march
- *We're more connected than ever (internet)
- *Notwithstanding Syria, there is less war than ever
- *Worldwide poverty is on the decline
- *Solar is skyrocketing (a claimed 20,000 panels being added each hour)
- *Amazon deforestation is falling; humpback whales are no longer endangered and ocean conservation is exploding (last year an area the size of Europe protected)

Hope, in fact, enters every corner of our lives. "I hope it rains", "I hope it doesn't rain", "I hope the interview goes well", "I hope the train (or the bus) is on time". As friends depart after calling by we hope they will travel home safely, and so on.

But what about within ourselves? We hear the call to regeneration ("*You must be born again*") and we hope to become more of a receptacle of the Lord's life working in us and through us. And so, we work on it and though there are times when we stumble and fail we hope to do better in the future.

And that's precisely as the Lord would have us be. The thing is, if we lose hope we enter critically dangerous territory, spiritually. And what is significant and in its way, scary, is that this is what evil spirits are continually endeavouring to do with us, to have us give up hope, to make us feel hopeless, about ourselves, or about the world, about a situation or about the future. (See Heavenly Secrets, 2338, for a good read about this).

Good spirits and angels, we read, are forever working to keep us in hope. And I see in this teaching implications for *us*, in *our* inter-actions with others in *this* world. We, too, need to focus on keeping others in hope. So then, and for example, let's forget about repeating news stories of ugly and criminal behaviour and instead highlight what is positive and uplifting in life. Be encouraging, commend achievement, spell out your confidence in a child and seek out honest ways to help others feel good about themselves.

All of which leads me to urge on you a New Year resolution, ***to hold to hope about yourself, to spread hope and, importantly, to fan the embers of hope where it shows signs of dying.***

Ian

Hot Food & Birthday Cake Roster for First Sunday Lunches

Feb	Anna
March	Fran
April	Vivian
May	Renee
June	Ruth
July	Bev
Aug	Gaye
Sept	Anna
Oct	Fran
Nov	Bev
Dec	We all pitch in for Christmas luncheon

Birthdays

To all our friends celebrating birthdays throughout these months we wish you birthday greetings and blessings.

February

5th Eddie Duff, 6th Ken Barns, 8th Bev Sheppard, 22nd Livvy Fitzgerald,
23rd Paul Evans.

March

5th Mark Pitts, 21st Sarah MacFarlane, 23rd Matthew Arnold, 30th Ruth Evans, 31st Russell Eyles.

April

8th Lachlan Duff, 15th Gaye Heldon, 16th Alex Duff, 20th Peter Larsen, 27th Lachlan Glenn, 28th Kyan Heldon,
Jordan Brunne.

CHURCH CONTACT DETAILS

Our services are currently being held at the chapel in Trinity Uniting Church Theological College, entrance via 47 Cadell Street, Auchenflower. Always check the last page in the Calendar for services.

Pastor: Rev. Darren Brunne, contactable on 0421 319 252

Treasurer: Mr Matt Heldon, contactable on 0403 384 438

Secretary: Mrs Frances Fitzgerald, contactable on 07-3356 7119 or markfitz@optusnet.com.au
Address: 49 Vale St, Wilston, Qld 4051

For activities on the Gold Coast and Mt Tamborine meetings contact Mrs Gaye Heldon on 07-5577 8772

Sunday School Co-ordinators:

Darren & Renee Brunne, contactable on 07-33 1414 85 or reneebrunne@gmail.com

CALENDARS

Feb 2017

Sun 5th

1st SUNDAY FAMILY SERVICE including **HOLY SUPPER**
led by Rev. Arnold at 10.30 a.m. *'Introduction - The Ten Promises'*

Fri 10th

Mt Tamborine Discussion Group at
John and Lenore Sandow's at 1 p.m.

Sun 12th

Worship Circle, 10.30 a.m.

Sun 19th

Abiding in the Vine led by Rev. Brunne at 10:30 a.m.

Sun 26th

Free for Home Church Visitation

March

Sun 5th

1st SUNDAY FAMILY SERVICE including **HOLY SUPPER** led by
Rev. Brunne at 10:30am *'The Ten Promises – The First Promise'*

Sun 12th

Worship Circle, 10.30 a.m.

Fri 17th

Mt Tamborine Discussion Group at
Brian and Gaye Heldon's at 1 pm.

Sun 19th

Abiding in the Vine led by Rev. Brunne at 10:30 a.m.

Sun 26th

Free for Home Church Visitation

April

Sun 2nd

1st SUNDAY FAMILY SERVICE including **HOLY SUPPER** led by
Rev. Brunne at 10:30am *'The Ten Promises – The Second Promise'*

Sun 9th

Worship Circle, 10.30 a.m.

Sun 16th

Easter Service led by Rev. Brunne at 10:30 a.m.

Fri 21st

Mt Tamborine Discussion Group at
John and Lenore Sandow's at 1 pm.

Sun 23rd

Free for Home Church Visitation