

SWEDENBORG'S INFLUENCE



Honoré de Balzac (1799-1850), French author, wrote 91 novels in a series called La Comédie Humaine, describing French society in the aftermath of Napoleon. He also wrote about 60 other novels separately.

He says, of Swedenborg, "Do you know, I have come back to Swedenborg after vast studies of all religions, and after reading all the works published within the last sixty years? Swedenborg undoubtedly epitomizes all the religions - or rather the one religion - of humanity."

Two of his novels are specifically and openly based on Swedenborg's ideas, "Séraphita" (I have an available copy) and "Louis Lambert".

'Séraphita' is a special child born to parents who through their Swedenborg beliefs have transcended normal humanity!

'Louis Lambert' is about a boy genius at a school in Vendôme who is simply fascinated by Swedenborg, and the novel dwells on the boy's life and his theories.

Balzac is one of the foremost French writers but he had his problems. As he grew older he became a veritable scrap-merchant, collecting bric-a-brac from everywhere. A writer in the New York Times cruelly commented that his novels are pretty much the same!

FINAL FABLE

One day the master of the monastery declared that one of his best students had become enlightened. The news spread around the monastery very quickly. "Enlightened now!" one said, "He will reveal the deepest secrets of existence." The students could not wait to go and see this most fortunate young monk.

They found him sitting under a large tree in contemplation. "Are you indeed now enlightened? they asked him excitedly. "I am." he replied. "So, tell us how do you feel?" "As miserable as ever."

Sydney Society Newsletter

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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.



"Ho! Everyone who thirsts, come to the waters!

Isaiah 55 verse 1

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Sermons can be sent out to you by email or by post. Just ask.
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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

THE ARTS

I regularly thank the Lord that there are the arts in our lives as well as everything else like science, technology, politics and finance. Art traces a different path than other things; it expresses feelings, beauty, particular moments, human relationships and so many other things that can't be quantified.

Art has similarities to religion and we'll look at that later. Neither of them fill shop shelves or put money into the economy but without art and religion, human life would be impoverished. Talking of poverty, I was recently asked if our ministers take what's called a vow of poverty and I decided to answer this particularly carefully.

Artists have often lived on the breadline making ends meet with difficulty. Mozart did towards the end of his short life. Think about Puccini's 'La Bohème'. And in one way, that is hard, but in another way, the struggle to live may heighten the artistic sense.

Ruth and I went up the coast recently and we went past the house and studio of Sir William Dobell at Wangi Wangi and later round the house with all its exhibits, mostly framed prints because the originals are in galleries and rich people's houses. It was a wonderful experience, yet we met the controversies Dobell went through, the frustrations he felt, and the underlying feeling that here is someone who would not easily fit into the normal landscape of society. A true artist with an outstanding gift to depict.

THE PILLARS OF NEW CHURCH BELIEFS



We are going to think about the idea of **GLORY** "For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory..." I think it's right that 'glory' gets mentioned last because it has a feeling of infinite greatness about it, beyond our ability to fully know it.

We use 'glorious' quite readily to say that something is splendid, wonderful and magnificent. "It's a glorious day!" And, while that works well for us, it gives us the sense of divine glory in terms of God – being perfect, full, bright, universal, and every superlative you can come up with.

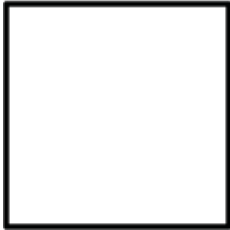
The Bible saying that God dwells in light unapproachable tends to make us think that God is way beyond us, which is true. God as he is is beyond our comprehension and we should recognize that. But it isn't the whole picture because the glory of God shone around the shepherds when the birth of Jesus was told to them. They saw the glory.

This brings us to the importance of Jesus Christ, God and man at the same time. John's gospel says "We beheld his glory as of the only-begotten of the Father." His miracles were done to show his glory. So we get the idea that the glory of God which we can't completely see is still visible to us.

Then we get the word 'glorified' coming towards the end of each gospel, showing us that Jesus' life (as a man) was spent in making that human life a divine life. So Jesus glorified himself totally, dying physically, rising victoriously. And we will keep on seeing something of that, but never fully getting it once and for all, which is gloriously good for us.

Perhaps then it's the idea of light that best describes glory, because light travels far (think of stars) and light is seen when it touches something even if that is the back of our eyes. So glory describes God and our response to God in our life. Without it, something would be missing.

THE SQUARE



Squares have a regularity to them which is helpful but can be a bit unexciting. Everything is straight – everything is equal. We talk about something being foursquare as something which is more dependable – like a table or a car with four wheels.

Perhaps this ordinariness created the 1960s phrase “Be there or be square”. And more meaningfully we use the idea of square to mean getting an agreement, “Now we’re all square”... rather than getting involved in a circular argument.

We also talk about the way in which something squares with something else, meaning it matches up. Here is a passage from our church teachings where it uses this idea very well. “The Lord does not openly teach truths directly to anyone but leads them by means of good to think what the truth is, and also gives the person – although he is not aware of it – a discernment and taking on of something being true because the Word declares it to be so, **and because it squares with the Word.**”

Spiritually, square seems to be to do with being just, or perhaps we could say ‘right’ or ‘righteous’. The Biblical altar of burnt offering was to be made as a square, because the point of someone giving a burnt offering of a lamb or two doves when they had committed a sin would be to make an atonement to the Lord, to now be right with God, squared off with God.



Here’s an interesting point from our church teachings about the difference between this life and the next: In this life we think in terms of time and space. In the afterlife these things pass away and we think from what we have gained from the world and made our own. Spirits and angels actually talk from the affections and resulting thoughts of their minds, so much so that they cannot utter anything that does not square with these. (Heaven and Hell 464)

What a difference that will make!

A word that is often used about art is “impressionist” and what a tremendous word it is. It comes in both music (Debussy etc.) and painting (Monet, Renoir...) It emphasises what the artist himself or herself sees and experiences rather than the exactness of the thing or scene. This helps us see that we are all fairly impressionistic, with people, situations and encounters.

One thing I would recommend is that in some way or other, we all need to be involved in something artistic. Painting, poetry, just writing something, sculpture, embroidery, singing, flower arranging, whatever. I guess most people are, but quite a few hold back because they feel they’re not good enough. But art is not about being good enough, it’s about letting it come forth.

I came across two art-related passages in our church teachings and I would like to share them. One talks about the palaces in heaven whose architecture is simply magnificent and the art that is used can be said to be the very art of heaven itself. Art in some way depicts what is divine.

The other is particularly good because it is about art being done by a group not an individual. Here it is, “All joy in heaven comes from the Lord alone. I saw angelic spirits absorbed in making a lampstand to the honour of the Lord. While they were doing it they thought they were doing it themselves. After several hours they said they had made a representative lampstand which delighted them from the depths of their being. I told them that they hadn’t, but the Lord had, on their behalf. They were indignant but being angelic they said that this was true.”

Thinking about God who creates and sustains the physical universe in which we find ourselves, a universe which mirrors all spiritual truth, is like the artist and the canvas. The artist paints and the picture appears. The picture will inevitably say something, contain something, which is there in the artist. And finally there it is, expressed, and outside. As with us in our art, so it is with God who always reveals himself to us.

Julian

FRIENDSHIP GROUP

Our next get-together is on Wednesday August 2nd starting with coffee and cake at 10.45 a.m. Julian will be talking with us about “Some of the questions we often ask”, which should give us plenty to talk about. We will have our shared lunch after this.

Everybody is welcome to come and join us for Friendship Group and we look forward to seeing you.

Glen Hart

**ALEXANDRA PARK FAMILY CAMP 2018****Monday January 1st to Sunday January 7th 2018**

The 2018 family camp will be held at the Alexandra Park Conference Centre at their Banksia and Acacia Sites.

Alexandra Park Conference Centre is located on Queensland's Sunshine Coast in the heart of picturesque Alexandra Headland, about 300 metres from the beach. Alexandra Headland is about one and a half hour's drive north of Brisbane, the closest airport being the Sunshine Coast airport (otherwise known as Maroochydore airport). More information on the location can be found at: alexpark.com.au

SOCIETY NEWS

Thanks to Wayne Kasmar and also David Duckworth for leading the service on Sunday July 16th when Ruth and I were away for a week up at Lake Macquarie which did up a lot of restful good. David played violin and guitar and operated the CD of hymns, and it all went really well.

The Sunday before there was the Japanese flute and the harp concert which was delightful, with a crowd of appreciative visitors. The harpist remarked how marvellous the acoustics are in our church for concerts.

The day before that several of us went to Eryldene in Gordon and then to Ravenswood School hall for the NSW Camellia Society Festival. There must have been 250 different 'types' of Camellias on show and one of our number was also awarded twice for her entries.

We are carefully going through the visa process for Rev Howard Thompson, and in the way of visas this is not a simple thing. We are also starting to look at the needs and small repairs in the manse. The Committee is attending to this.

The Angel Service continues as does the fortnightly Bible Study tutorial which is always bringing up quite exciting connections in the Bible passages.

It has been good to see David Curry in church and also at committee after his first surgery, and we wish him well with the way this will proceed. And our condolences to his wife Kathryn Baker whose mother passed on in mid-July. I led a family cremation and there will be a memorial service and “tea” in the church on Sunday August 13th.

While it doesn't directly concern us in Roseville, we extend our congratulations and best wishes to Norman Heldon (Hurstville) who will attain 100 on August 1st and have a “high tea” on the 5th. It is only a few years since Norman recited “The Man from Snowy River” at Camp, with no book and hardly a pause.

But not wanting something as simple as a survey to end in a farce, I decided to enquire how the 'independent' reviewer justified its existence. Surprisingly, it had little to do with my freedom of expression. The review company was set up because apparently there are numerous fake reviews which plague lots of consumer websites and their companies (presumably posted by allies of the company or even its employees), so that consumer confidence in the company and their services and products actually plummets. Therefore a company's attempt to ensure a flow of consumers by controlling the reports about its services (it's uses or goodness) actually backfire by taking that goodness (customers) away from them when the selfish motives become public.

Swedenborg says evil is not punished by God, but rather that evil simply has within it the seed of its own destruction. The review company boasts of having millions of "authentic reviews from actual customers" in order to help shoppers buy online with confidence. We'll have to take their word for it! This is the way of this world. Companies might lull customers with false representations, while some customers no doubt swindle companies for gain (I'm thinking especially of the Tax Department and Insurance companies). Although bad stuff happens far less often than good things, processes nevertheless have to be established to protect the good of all involved.

It would of course be much easier if everyone just told the truth and took care of each other's welfare, which may be the case in heaven, but not here yet. Here we are perpetually faced with situations which help us make choices between our self-interest and usefulness. For that we need all manner of situations to remain present. The dominant pattern which emerges from our freely made choices here will help to find our home community in the next world when we pass on. Feel free to visit the Centre where there's always plenty of reflection going on of all forms of goodness and truth, not limited to the products advertised on supermarket shelves which contain 'real goodness' and 'goodness you can taste' (I would suggest checking those claims with the independent reviewer). Have a wonderful month! Joe

BOOKINGS

The cost of camp includes the full week accommodation and full catering. Rooms are either en-suite rooms or shared facilities and will be allocated dependent upon bookings. The Twin Room price below is for a guaranteed twin share room with en-suite:

Adult (18+)	\$615
Twin Room (with Ensuite) ...	\$740 (per person)
Student (14-17)	\$540
Young People (9-13)	\$460
Children (3-8)	\$307.50
Pre-School (0-2)	Free

Note that the camp doesn't provide pillows or blankets except as part of a hired linen set.

Linen Hire (includes sheets, a towel, a blanket and a pillow) .. \$29.40

The deposit required to secure a booking for the Camp is:

\$100 per person \$300 for a family group

Each camper with a specific dietary requirement will need to complete a Dietary Requirements Form.

To confirm your booking a deposit should be sent either by cheque made payable to THE NEW CHURCH IN AUSTRALIA and sent to – Chris Kendrick – address at the bottom of this page. or by Bank Transfer to:

ANZ Bank, Chifley Square, Sydney

BSB: 012-019 Account no: 2264 17589

Please note our branch and BSB number have changed.

****** If electronically sending the deposit you need to fill in SURNAME and CAMP DEPOSIT in the reference. ******

Deposit and final numbers are required by 1st September 2017.

Final payment will be required by 1st December 2017 and can be paid by the same method as the deposit.

If you have any booking queries please contact Chris Kendrick at:

Chris Kendrick PO Box 3074 Alice Springs NT 0871

Email: kendrickau@hotmail.com Phone: 0427 397 701

SNIPPETS FROM THE SCRAPBOOK

Aim at heaven and you will get earth thrown in. Aim at earth and you will get neither.
- C S Lewis

Tell me and I forget. Teach me and I remember. Involve me and I learn.
- Benjamin Franklin

Doubt is a pain that is too lonely to know that faith is its twin brother.
- Khalil Gibran

Good, better, best. Never let it rest. Till your good is better and your better is best.
St Jerome

If this is coffee, then bring me some tea. But if this is tea, then bring me some coffee.
- Abraham Lincoln

Hope is patience with the lamp lit. - Tertullian (early Christian)

STEWARDS AND FLOWERS FOR AUGUST

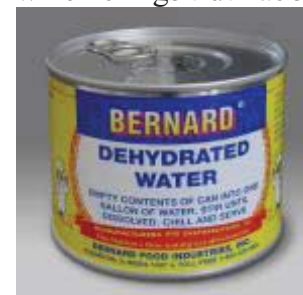
Sunday	Steward	Flowers
6 th (Sac.)	Michael Chester	Ruth Duckworth
13 th	John Wilson	Jan Primrose
20 th	Wayne Kasmar	Lynne Twemlow
27 th	Rhonda Hall	Ruth Duckworth

SWEDENBORG CENTRE

The most exciting news I received recently is that the Swedenborg Association in Melbourne is recommencing group meetings starting with a look at *‘Goodness and Truth’* at Mt Waverley on July 28th. For those in Sydney that is the same night as the next SAA event in Roseville. See our website at www.swedenborg.com.au/meetings for details of all these and more events and info. Melbourne has chosen a very meaty topic, but we hope some vegetarians will also get involved.

We wish them all the very best for a decent attendance and a joyful and interesting meeting.

In everyday life it’s very important to become familiar with truth and to find examples we can relate to. Often things are not what they seem (see example below). Once we grow in our understanding of truth, its forms, its laws, order and harmony, we will then more easily see the good which brings truth about and sustains it, as well as seeing the goodness and usefulness that stems from the way in which things are designed to operate. Truth serves as a signpost to goodness, while truth is also the means of facilitating goodness by structuring useful applications.



Speaking of things not being as they seemed, recently I received some boxes from Brisbane via a courier. The delivery had gone smoothly. The courier sought my feedback on how the transaction went, so they arranged an independent ‘review company’ to survey me by email about the delivery. I completed the email survey, thinking the independent company must have been appointed to give me freedom to air any grievances without fear of a backlash from the courier.

But soon after, I received a second survey email. This time it was from the independent review company themselves. Would I please provide a review for them also to let them know how THEY were doing. What was I to answer to the reviewer’s survey? I planned to ask why they had not employed an independent review company to ask for my opinion just as the couriers had done. Then I had a brief comical vision of a cascade of enquiring bodies, starting with independent reviewer appealing to the ombudsman’s watch-dog who calls an independent tribunal to conduct a royal commission. Ultimately they receive consent from the court of appeal to settle their opinions in the Supreme Court. It’s really a question of who can ultimately be trusted and who is accountable, or on who’s authority we accept a final ruling (truth).