

“All religion has relation to life and the life of religion is to do good”.

Swedenborg

The New Church In Victoria Newsletter

September, October & November 2018

Locations

Melbourne

426-434 High St Rd
Mount Waverley 3149

POSTAL ADDRESS

PO Box 2224 Mount
Waverley VIC 3149

Ballarat

318 Fussell St 3350

Website

newchurch.net.au

Contacts

Karl Robinson

Chair of The Board

0417 514 960

Helmut Lopaczuk

Secretary

0409 184 643

Abundant Life

There are many ways of viewing life, both as an individual and in the mass. There is a mere existence – the same routine day by day with no hope for the future and little meaning for the life being lived now. I suppose this must be the case for those who are long term prisoners. There is nothing to look forward to. The mere existence now gives them little to be thankful for. That existence just goes on and on. It never changes, it just goes on forever.

Then there is life which is ever changing and maturing. It is discovering meaning to each new day. And because every day sees something new, it may be likened to life abundant. It is this life which is Jesus' promise for all. And it is the life we are all seeking.

What is this life? And where are we to find it? In the parables we see hints of it. The prodigal son does not present us with a life worth having. The thief and the robber do not suggest a stable life either. Taking rest in green pastures hints at security and calmness. And the Lord leads to life abundantly. The Psalmist speaks of green pastures, peace beside still waters, goodness and mercy being present always. That is a strong hint of the abundant life. There appears to be nothing lacking there.



The abundant life shows how we are dependent on truth, and on the presence of him who is truth itself. When the spirit of truth is come he will lead you into all truth. We live on truth and on being loved. We can only know ourselves when we understand ourselves in the light of God. The gift of life gives us intelligence. There is the out-flowing of the Logos, a creative power which makes life exciting, useful and expansive. It is the opposite to that of mere existence of life. It is abundant life, life everlasting.

Living as we do in this world we see how life abundant is something worth having. It is like having the good life. We lack nothing and we can have all that we desire. It is the life of the spirit shining through our life. It is not a life of chaos, or a life without restrictions. We place the impositions. We set the standards by our acceptance of the life example placed by the Lord.

The Lord comes into our life at our invitation. He finds his lodging there. He sets in motion the beginnings of life abundant. He transforms us into a new being. He makes it possible for us to exchange our self-seeking life into one of self-giving.

The abundant life brings with it a newness of life, one that gives us confidence and hope. As our Church teachings express it, love gives life, and the life of religion gives us a guide and direction, so that we can do that which is good [*All religion is of the life, and the life of religion is to do that which is good* ~ Emanuel Swedenborg: Doctrine of Life paragraph 1].

As Jesus puts it: '*I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly*' (John 10:10).

When the spirit is alive then we have the possibility of the Lord's gift, life abundant.

Rev Leslie Chambers, a British New Church Minister who passed into the higher life in May 2018 aged 86.

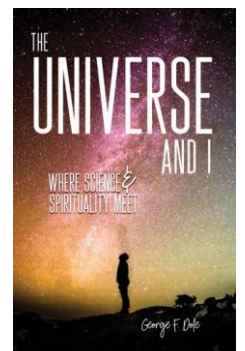
Prayer for Peace by Lao Tse
*If there is to be peace in the world,
There must be peace in the nations.
If there is to be peace in the nations,
There must be peace in the cities.
If there is to be peace in the cities,
There must be peace between neighbours.
If there is to be peace between neighbours,
There must be peace in the home.
If there is to be peace in the home,
There must be peace in the heart.*

The Universe and I: Where Science & Spirituality Meet

George F. Dole

Latest publication from the Swedenborg Foundation
101 pages available in paperback for \$11.95 (e-book version due soon)

The name 'Rev. George Dole' is well known in New Church / Swedenborgian circles as a translator of Emanuel Swedenborg's works from the Latin into a more modern idiom, an author of useful books, pamphlets and articles explaining the essence of ideas found in Swedenborg's spiritual writings and even a writer of scripts for films issued by the Swedenborg Foundation. George Dole lectured at the Swedenborg School of Religion in ancient languages, the Bible and theology for many years. He comes from a long line of committed Swedenborgians and while at Oxford University in 1954, took pole position in the race which saw Roger Bannister achieve the sub-four minute mile for the first time; George fell just short of that distinction.



The Universe and I not only presents George Dole's perceptive understanding of the spiritual teachings in Swedenborg's works but also the considerable grasp he has of modern physical sciences as expounded by many quantum physicists, mostly names this non-scientist reviewer has not heard of before. Much of the scientific terminology and theory went 'over my head' and at times it was difficult to stay with the text (my Oxford dictionary and Google were useful aids). Yet the wonderful nuances when Dole challenges scientists to define the terms they use and his highlighting questions science in itself just cannot answer, clearly demonstrates that dogmatism is just as rife among scientists as it can be within religious circles. He begins by raising the unknowable issue of the universe's beginnings, its origin and the nature of life, and goes on to what we can observe, focussing on the mysterious complexity and adaptability of sea urchins and termites to the formation of snowflakes. Dole reasons all this demonstrates the same dynamic is at work in the evolution of life as it was in the origins of the universe, and it applies at both spiritual and physical levels. As one progresses through the book, it becomes increasingly clear there is an evolving working towards a common ground for science and spirituality. Drawing on Swedenborgian theology and general conclusions of some others in the scientific field, Dole closes by suggesting the clearest idea we can have of the reality process and a continually emerging universe is in the concept of an omnipresent, omniscient and eternally creative personal creator.

There is a useful two and a half page Appendix in which Dole presents the essence of the book wholly in terms contained in Swedenborgian theology.

Neville Jarvis

Note: A copy of the book is in the Lending Library at 426 High Street Road, Mt. Waverley. Should you wish to borrow it, please do take it, recoding your details in the register, or phone Neville Jarvis who will mail it to you. Speak to Neville if you wish to buy your own copy.

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What's happening 'Out There'?

With numbers decreasing in most New Church congregations around the world, something being experienced by the other Christian Churches, there is a struggle, even despair at times, to understand why this is happening and what should be done in an endeavour to continue to be of useful service into the future. The New Church in Victoria is no different.

When undergoing states of individual temptation, seemingly left on our own to deal with them, we often ask 'Where is God and why is He not helping me through this?'; our Church teachings tell us this is the very time when the Lord is closest to us leading to the best eternal outcomes if we are willing to be led. Organisationally, we might ask the same question; the answer is the same. Trusting in the Lord to bring the best outcomes for His eternal purposes from the uncertainty, we must use our God-given gifts of reason and rationality when making decisions.

Today, we can gain much trust and hope for the future when we know what's happening 'out there'.

Swedenborg Foundation (USA):

Its 2017 Annual Report records that at the end of the year, there were 57,000 subscribers to its weekly webcast broadcast (titled *Off the Left Eye*), something which can be viewed around the world via the Internet. These webcasts are also available for viewing at any time; currently there are well over 200 programs covering a large range of spiritually based subjects – refer www.youtube.com/user/offTheLeftEye.

We read that in the same year there were 2.8 million individual video views.

The Foundations **Facebook** page statistics are also outstanding showing a weekly reach going as high as 1.65 million individuals.

Then, through its website, the Swedenborg Foundation also makes many of its publications, including the latest editions of Swedenborg's spiritual writings, available for either free download as an ePublication or for as little as US\$1 for Kindle versions. During 2017, visitors to the site downloaded 38,763 free digital books!

What's happening 'Out There'?

The New Christian Bible Study

This is another website drawing quite phenomenal interest in Swedenborg's spiritual writings. It provides the facility to explore the Bible and its inner meaning, explanations of many spiritual concepts using the teachings in Swedenborg's spiritual writings plus a very useful 'Search' tool – <https://newchristianbiblestudy.org>.

In July last, it was reported that there were 230,000 individual visits to the webpage in the last 30 days, a 15% increase over the previous 30 days.

These are just two of a growing number of websites (for another see below) and social media outlets now in existence to provide information about the revelation given in the spiritual writings of Emanuel Swedenborg, and explanations of the teachings of the Lord's second coming contained therein. The invention of the printing press enabled these writings to be available to those seeking spiritual truths which affirm the love and wisdom of the Divine Creator. Today these truths are being spread in new and exciting ways as shown by the numbers visiting Swedenborg-related web pages. The interest in those teachings, which have been central to the organized New Church in Victoria for the past 165 years, is considerably greater than at any time since they were first proclaimed. We can be optimistic from what is occurring via modern day technology and take heart that in adapting to the changing needs of people today, organisationally we can remain relevant and of use in serving the purposes to which we subscribe.

From an optimist.

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Symbols and Correspondences

(from the Spiritual Wisdom website of the New Church in Great Britain - www.spiritualwisdom.org.uk/)

A Fascinating Insight

One of the fascinating revelations in Emanuel Swedenborg's Writings is the knowledge of correspondences. Using this concept he shows how God creates and maintains creation. He also shows that correspondences are the way God communicates with people.

Correspondences

A correspondence is a living link between one plane of life and another. It is the link between spiritual planes and natural planes, e.g. the feelings and the body. Smiling is a physical expression which corresponds to feelings of delight. Correspondences are so much part of our life we take them for granted. We often use them in speech. We use "seeing" to mean understanding something, or the "heart" when describing feelings, as in, "broken hearted", "hard hearted". The connection is more than words. We can actually feel pain in our hearts or our stomachs, when we are heart broken or fearful. Swedenborg shows how correspondences are the link between the distinct planes through which we receive our life from God. Through them God is in touch with His creation and sustains it.

A Universal Knowledge



According to Swedenborg pre-historical 'Ancient' people were fully aware of such correspondences. As they looked at things in the physical world they were aware of their spiritual significance. We still experience something like this when the awe of sunrises, mountains etc. stirs an awareness of God. Those people used correspondences to describe aspects of God's qualities and activity and created stories which corresponded to his presence and activity in the human mind. As mankind turned from God and became more

self-centred and worldly this knowledge of correspondences was lost. The stories and images of natural events and things remained but with no understanding of their spiritual significance. Thus hierarchies of gods were what remained of aspects of the activity and presence of the one God. The stories remain as myths and legends of ancient religions, and scripts with spiritual meaning in such examples as Egyptian hieroglyphics.

According to Swedenborg correspondences are the origin of many ancient spiritual scriptures also. Through correspondences stories such as Creation, Adam and Eve, and the Flood in their inner sense depict inner spiritual events that take place in the human mind.

When the knowledge of correspondences was lost people became ignorant of the spiritual significance of such stories. However the stories still formed the outermost clothing of the Word of God, so when people read them they are unconsciously linked by correspondence with the angels of heaven and God himself. So in this New Age, with the help of Swedenborg's theological writings, we can begin to appreciate the wonderful spirituality that lies behind and sustains all we see and experience in the natural world.

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July and August 2018 activities at Mt. Waverley

- Our first Sunday of the month family services have continued with the children enjoying their class time together hearing Bible stories and doing various associated activities which they have proudly shown to the adults present afterwards. 'Moses in the bulrushes' and the 'Calling of Samuel' were the focus for these months.
- We were delighted to have Rev. David Millar visit from Adelaide over the first weekend in August. There was an open meeting on the Saturday afternoon when David ran a session on *Logopraxis* which stimulated much interest amongst those present. In the evening, David met with most of the Church Board members over dinner enabling a wide ranging discussion on church related topics and issues.
- Rev. Millar then led our worship on the Sunday morning with 31 present including 7 children. By way of some interesting synchronicity, David chose the Eli and Samuel story for his address on The Emerging New Church without knowing this was the same story which had been programmed for the children earlier in the year.



Ashton, Jake, Harry, Charlie, Emily and Alyssa
with Mums Colleen Woodstock, Sina Carter,
Linda Francis (photographer)
and story teller Alexis Jarvis

News of People

- Vale Adam Okienko. It was with considerable sadness that we heard the news of Adam's passing into the spiritual world in late July after a long battle with cancer. Adam became a member of The New Church in Victoria in March 2006 although it is now not know when and how he first came across the spiritual teachings in Swedenborg's writings and The New Church. In years gone by, Adam would on occasions bring his two grandchildren with him to church so that they could participate in the Sunday School. Our condolences go out to Adam's family at this time.
- Our thoughts and prayers are also with Colin & Davy Batchelor and their sons, James and Jordan, following the passing of Colin's father into the higher life also in July. Thankfully, Colin was able to be with his father in New Zealand at this difficult time for the family, a blessing being that Colin's father and mother are together once again.
- Klaus Drevermann underwent eye surgery during July to remove a cataract. Klaus is continuing to use eye drops to bring about the best result from the operation.
- Eva Teed suffered a nasty fall at her nursing home resulting in a few days in hospital. Thankfully there were no broken bones but facial cuts and bruises resulted along with sore ribs. Eva is now recovering well, sends her best wishes to all her Church friends and hopes to be along on a Sunday morning in the not too distant future. Meanwhile son Peter still struggles with a continuing heart condition and daughter-in-law Dorothy with diabetes and loss of sight creating concerns for the wider family.
- It is pleasing to know that Margaret Parker's mobility is improving despite the occasional setback and looking forward to being able to use her Seat Walker again so that moving around the hostel and getting out will be much easier. Margaret also sends her regards to her Church friends.

The New Church, Roseville, Sydney

Our best wishes go to the members and friends of The New Church in Roseville, as they welcome their new Minister, Rev. Howard Thompson, wife Debra and son Lance into their midst. Howard will be inducted into the pastorate on Sunday 2 September by the President of The New Church in Australia, Rev. David Moffat. It will certainly be a happy day for the Church there. At the same time, we wish Rev. Julian and Ruth Duckworth a well-earned retirement after many years of sterling service to the cause of The New Church worldwide; it will likely continue though!

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Diary of Events in September, October and November 2018

Activities at Mt. Waverley unless otherwise stated

September	
Sunday 2 10.30am	Family service led by Neville Jarvis There will be Bible story time and related activities for the children
Sunday 9	No service at Mt. Waverley
Sunday 16 10.30am	Service of Worship conducted by Rev. John Teed including the administration of the Holy Supper
Sunday 23	No service at Mt. Waverley
Sunday 30 3.30pm	No service at Mt. Waverley <u>Ballarat</u> – 318 Fussell Street. Devotional worship led by Judy Robinson
October	
Sunday 7 10.30am	Family service led by Neville Jarvis There will be Bible story time and related activities for the children
Sunday 14	No service at Mt. Waverley
Sunday 21 10.30am	Service of Worship led by Karl Robinson
Sunday 28 3.30pm	No service at Mt. Waverley <u>Ballarat</u> – 318 Fussell Street. Devotional worship led by Judy Robinson
NOVEMBER	
Sunday 4 10.30am	Family service led by Neville Jarvis There will be Bible story time and related activities for the children
Sunday 11	No service at Mt. Waverley
Sunday 18 10.30am	Service of Worship led by Karl Robinson
Sunday 25 3.30pm	No service at Mt. Waverley <u>Ballarat</u> – 318 Fussell Street. Devotional worship led by Judy Robinson

Duty Roster

<i>September:</i>	Sunday 2	Elke & Klaus Drevermann
	Sunday 16	Neville & Alexis Jarvis
<i>October:</i>	Sunday 7	Norma Whelan / John Cook
	Sunday 21	Marika Sivak
<i>November:</i>	Sunday 5	Elke & Klaus Drevermann
	Sunday 19	Neville & Alexis Jarvis
<i>December:</i>	Sunday 2	Karl & Rose Robinson
	Sunday 16	Norma Whelan / John Cook

Note: If you are unavailable on the Sunday allocated, please contact a member of the Duty Roster to swap.