

Roseville New Church Newsletter

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The Faith of the New Church is summarised 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.

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“Let’s Start at the Very Beginning”

As I am writing this we are preparing to return to our regular schedule of services (Sundays at 10:00am). I knew the lock-down wouldn’t last for ever and just a few weeks in my thoughts turned to the question of what message should we reopen with. When contemplating this question over the past few weeks one sentence kept announcing itself in my head; “Let’s start at the very beginning.”



Most of you will probably recognise that line and the tune that goes with it as the “Do-Re-Mi” song from “The Sound of Music.” For anyone who knows me and is aware of my own lack of musical talent it may come as a surprise to know that it is my all-time favourite movie. And, as I continued to reflect on what tone I wanted to strike as we returned to regular services I could not escape that song. I took it as a sign.

Let's start at the very beginning

A very good place to start

When you read you begin with A-be-see

When you sing you begin with do-re-mi

For me the message I received was one of let’s start with the basics. I thought of a reset. When your favourite sports teams return to practice after their off-season they begin with the basics, they begin by reestablishing their foundation of fitness and skills. They do this because the basics are essential to everything else they wish to do. And, while Genesis is the very beginning of the bible, the basics of faith, the starting

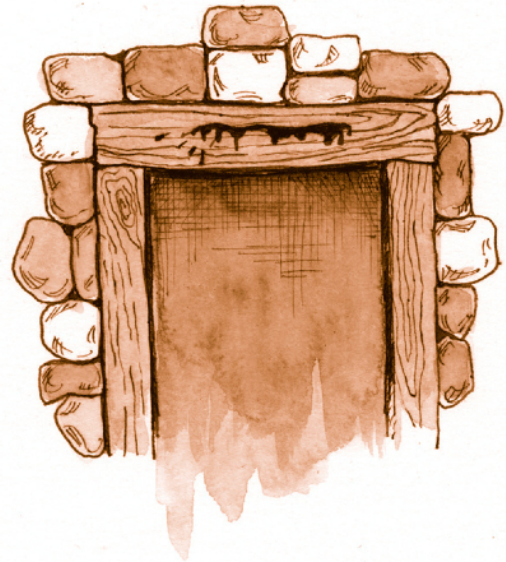
point of any real spiritual journey, rebirth or reestablishment is the truths expressed in the Ten Commandments.

So, when you read you begin with A-B-C, when you sing you begin with do-re-mi, and when you praise God you begin with 1-2-3. Let's begin.

We began our Ten Commandments series on the 24th with a look first at what Jehovah said with respect to all of the Commandments, what He said about how we are to "hold" them.

Carefully obey the commands I am giving you today...love the Lord your God and serve him with all your heart and soul...write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

Deuteronomy 11:13-20 (portions)



These words were given to teach us that love to the Lord is to be written upon every thought and intention. Every natural motive must be imbued with it; every natural truth must become an outward form of it. It must be written upon all forms of human society, on all human employments, on all our sorrows and joys. It must be written in our hearts and minds. Our life must speak the thought and our hands must do it. Then His will will be done as in heaven so upon the earth.

Join us if you can over these next 10 weeks. If you are unable to join us in person I will be producing a Spiritual Shorts video each week on the same topic.

Concluding this piece it seems only apt that I return to "Do-Re-Mi" and remind you of the closing lines.

When you know the notes to sing
You can sing most anything

Howard Thompson

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"Between Sleeping and Waking"

Twice each day we go through a short period of semi-conscious drowsiness between sleeping and waking, and between waking and sleeping. One is called our "hypnagogic" state and the other is called our "hypnapompic" state ... not names to remember! During these states we are drowsy or 'floating' around in our relaxed mind, getting a flow of gentle thoughts or pictures or



both, and being in a very peaceful state which is receiving and accepting everything which comes into it. Even though it is short, perhaps around three minutes, it seems to be a beneficial, healing, pleasant period, which kind of suggests it is important for us.

It isn't being asleep, it isn't being awake; it's being in-between the two. Sleep brings dreams or oblivion, this state doesn't. Wakefulness brings clear thought, planning, concern for the coming day, none of which is around in being "between sleeping and waking".

The two times each day that these happen are quite different for obvious reasons; one is coming around from sleep to being awake, the other is from being awake to falling asleep. In that last one, which I often describe as a 'daily surrendering', we hand ourselves over to whatever we hand it to; for some it's to fatigue, for some it's to thankfulness for the day, for some it is to the Lord, after a prayer, and ... away you go, over the edge, falling, tumbling, and being asleep.

The 'morning' one is not really the opposite of that. I think of it a bit like someone is doing a personal jigsaw inside us, where we start with nothing joined and bits get added until we're all joined up and "ready for breakfast". If I thought about colours coming in, they'd be pink, purple and various blues. But yours might be different.

The more interesting thing, though, especially with the morning one, is that it seems to be a short period of calm peaceful spiritual heavenly flowing-in – we might well say, influx. Things come in moving forms, with colours and perhaps swirls, maybe tingling sounds, and there is this feeling of bliss and enjoyment and going with everything which is arriving.

It seems that this is an important time for us in being connected with heaven and angels, and behind them, with the Lord's love and blessing on us. If we made words during times like these, it might be, "I am here; all is well; it is good; soothing safety" ... or the wonderful biblical words from Deuteronomy, "Underneath are the everlasting arms" (Dt 33:27)

Here are things that our church teachings say about these interesting periods. Swedenborg wrote, "One morning, very sweet singing, which was heard at some height above me, roused me, and during the first wakefulness, which is more inward, peaceful and sweet than the rest of the day, I could be kept for some time in the spirit, as it were, out of the body." (Conjugal Love 155a)

"When, on being awakened, I thought about that kind of wakefulness, I wanted to get into that state of wakefulness, for it is in this state that the

interior person is being ruled by the Lord.” (Spiritual Diary 4251, and also look at the longer 4250).

It is, for sure, a good thing that we get blessed by being out-of-control and being given divine grace, twice a day. Enjoy!

Julian Duckworth

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Spiritual Shorts

When we were rather abruptly forced to close our doors and no longer permitted to hold public services I was asked to come up with an alternative method for delivering services and spiritual content to our congregation. This I have accomplished, though maybe not as other churches and ministers have done. The vehicle I am using to deliver this content is a YouTube channel called Spiritual Shorts. The feedback I have received about the channel has been favourable and several people have asked if I will be continuing to produce content for the channel after we return to regular services in Roseville.

I assure you that I will. It is my plan to continue with Spiritual Shorts at least as far as producing a weekly summary of my Sunday service that people can use as support for their home-worship. Roseville has a good number of people who, simply for reasons of distance, only attend infrequently.

You can find Spiritual Shorts on YouTube at this address:

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCsrICJGeGmrnXVawn_Y7UQA

And, in case you did not read my piece in last month's newsletter and before you head on over to YouTube, a note about the "tone" of the channel. I wear Hawaiian shirts, always have, even before moving to Australia where they are a bit more the norm. I also wear shorts, most days of the year since I moved to Australia. So the name is a pun; "short" videos by a guy who lives in Australia and usually wears "shorts." The tone and branding of the channel is specifically designed to capture both my own natural and spiritual sides.

They may say you can't teach an old dog new tricks but I truly believe that the way to avoid becoming an old dog is to continue to learn new tricks. WOOF-WOOF!

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Words of rest, and renewal

Create in me a clean heart, O God. Renew a loyal spirit within me.
Do not banish me from your presence, and don't take your Holy Spirit
from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation,
and make me willing to obey you.

~ Psalm 51:10-12 ~

Even youths will become weak and tired, and young men will fall in
exhaustion. But those who trust in the Lord will find new strength. They
will soar high on wings like eagles. They will run and not grow weary.
They will walk and not faint.

~ Isaiah 40:30-31 ~

Take my yoke upon you. Let me teach you, because I am humble and
gentle at heart, and you will find rest for your souls.

~ Matthew 11:29 ~

For I have given rest to the weary and joy to the sorrowing.

~ Jeremiah 31:25 ~



Now repent of your sins and turn to God,
so that your sins may be wiped away.

~ Acts 3:19 ~

That is why we never give up.
Though our bodies are dying, our spirits are being renewed every day.

~ 2 Corinthians 4:16 ~

A heavenly person is identified as Sabbath rest because spiritual
struggles ends when a person becomes heavenly.

~ Secrets of Heaven 87 ~

The process of being regenerated is also represented in a general way by
the constant renewal of all things in the body...Blood is constantly being
purified of worn-out elements and renewed and in a sense regenerated.

~ True Christianity 687 ~

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A New Church Day Reflection

In the Easter story I have always been drawn to the manner in which the Lord did not meet the expectations of His followers. Even His disciples seemed to often be quite “thick” in the way they received, or didn’t receive, His teachings. Several times the Word includes scenes like this one between the Lord and Philip: “Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and yet you still don’t know who I am? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father! So why are you asking me to show him to you?” (John 14:9)

It strikes me that it is this human tendency to steadfastly stick to one’s expectations, even when ample evidence has piled up to show otherwise, that keeps people holding on to that idea/expectation of a literal and natural Second Coming of the Lord.

Most people have heard of "Judgment Day" but few know that it actually took place in the spiritual world during the year 1757, two hundred and sixty-three years ago. The expectation is that this judgment will bring about a cataclysmic end of the world as we know it and herald the promised Second Coming of the Lord.

But it did not happen as expected. What took place instead was a spiritual judgment with tremendous spiritual consequences, but with little noticeable effect in this world.

Sixty-three years ago, on the 200th anniversary of this event, Bishop George de Charms of the General Church of the New Jerusalem noted in this journal: "No man living, except Emanuel Swedenborg, was aware at the time of the tremendous changes taking place in the spiritual world....In the Spiritual Diary and in The Last Judgment and Babylon Destroyed [published in 1758] Swedenborg gives an eyewitness account of this momentous event.

He tells of storms and eruptions and earthquakes that left great cities in ruins. He describes how the good among the inhabitants were protected...and organized into a new heaven; while the evil, fleeing in terror, cast themselves into hell. All this took place within the short period of a single year." He continues: "[These spiritual events] produced no sudden upheaval of human society on earth. Life here went on as before.... Even now, after the lapse of two hundred years, the fact that such a spiritual judgment has taken place is known only to those few who belong to the New Church..." (New Church Life 1957, p.1).

The Heavenly Doctrine confirms that little changed outwardly in the natural world as a result of the spiritual upheavals brought about by the Last Judgment. Civil affairs and even various religious sects continue as before. But henceforth, we are told, "the man of the church will be in a more free state of thinking on matters of faith...because spiritual freedom has been restored to him" (Last Judgment 73).

And yet, I am left to wonder about this dynamic of expectations of the Lord's Second Coming for people today. Sometimes I look around at the difficulty we have in spreading the word about the truth of the Second Coming and I wonder; is our message rejected because it does not meet expectations? Is the message itself, "crucified" like the Lord because it does not meet with deeply imbedded and natural expectations?

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Winter news from the Swedenborg Centre

Wow, what a month it has been. I'm so delighted with everyone who decided to participate in some of our online activities. It seems that holding our bodies in lock down was a good chance to let our spirits soar online. It gives me so much joy to see not only our local visitors participate, but also contacts from the other end of Australia, and some from Germany, Canada, USA and the UK with ages ranging from 20s to 80s.

No, it's not too late to participate. We have hung our 'open' shingle out again, yet we're also keeping the new routine of online activities going too. To see what events are happening, check on the website at www.swedenborg.com.au and give us a call on 02 9816 2812 or email to joe@swedenborg.com.au so that we send you details for joining in. Social isolation does not need to lead to spiritual isolation. And all our activities are free at this time.

So, here are a few teasers for the month:

Saturday 30th May 2020, 10am-noon, join us to **Celebrate and Explore Swedenborg**, the man, his efforts, and his writings. On every fortnight.

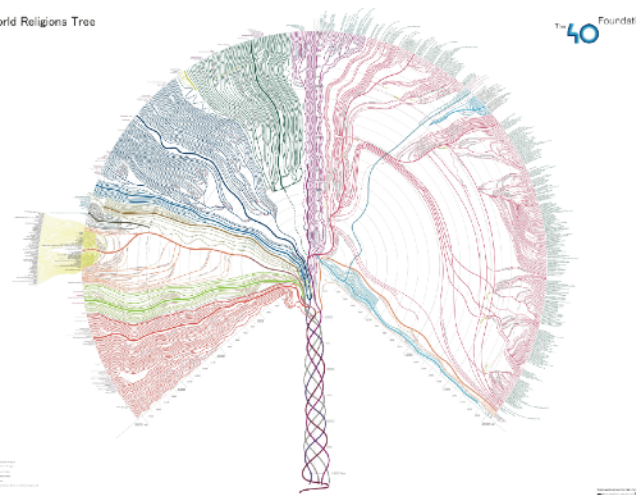
Tuesday 9th June 2020, starting 2pm and 6pm, is the **Swedenborg Open Discussion**, at which we discuss any number of spiritual and life topics. Repeats monthly.

Friday 5th June 2020, starting 2pm and 7pm, read, hear, discuss insights from **Dr Philip Groves work** – at present we are discussing our Journey Through The World of Symbol. Repeats fortnightly.

You'll notice soon that the website is getting a make-over. More news on that to come in future bulletins.

Quiz: why is there a very large poster of a brain on the wall in the Swedenborg Centre? See answer further below. Hint, it's our current exhibition, or rather, our current conversation starter, which replaced the previous display of an equally large and detailed tree of all the world's religions and their history (for a more detailed look head to www.swedenborg.com.au for further info and links). The religions tree presented one big question, "why was Swedenborg not on that map?"

The World Religions Tree



The **40** Foundation

[illegible]

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grounds. When we make decisions too rapidly or when we have too much information and need to filter or to summarise. When we don't have access to all the data, we still prefer to make a decision, to have a viewpoint, an opinion. And we often don't know how we make decisions, even though we think we do. And consequently we are also affected by impressions about ourselves which are skewed in our favour rather than exact and true. If you survey everyone driving on a particular road in one afternoon if they are a better driver than the average driver on the road, you will find that much more than half answers 'yes'. But that is statistically not possible, because half of the driver would perform worse than the average while half performs better. But that's not the collective self-reported answer of all the drivers.

To me it's a spiritual chart. I believe that honest self-reflection is the beginning of the spiritual process, and that we should study where we are prone to make mistakes. What's the point of a general confession that I've missed the mark, yet I don't care to go into detail and correct it. I feel that I must go into detail in order to see if it needs correction, and then get on with correcting it. The whole process is worth studying, which hopefully leads to having the results implemented and activated in our life. Now that sounds like a hearty winter process to pursue. For a full-size version of these charts visit www.swedenborg.com.au.

Have a wonderful month of inner warmth and growth.

Smiles

Joe



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