

# Roseville New Church Newsletter

Issued by the Sydney Society of the New Church Established in 1875

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On Facebook – Roseville New Church

## October 2020

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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### **“Trouble on Planet Wait-Your-Turn”**

Popular culture, in particular political culture, seems to have a real fondness for the false dilemma. A false dilemma, or false dichotomy, is a type of informal fallacy in which a statement falsely claims an "either/or" situation, when in fact there is at least one additional logically valid option. One example of this is the popular idea/belief that there is a singular devil, that as the Lord governs heaven s singular devil must govern hell and within each of us is the battlefield on which the two meet. During a recent conversation in the Swedenborg Centre we stumbled on the logical fallacy of this belief when discussing the nature of spirits in hell. Simply put, there can be no single devil who rules over hell because no one in hell would ever be willing to subjugate themselves to another.

This rationality brought to mind the memory of an animated video series our children watched when they were younger. The series was called “Veggie Tales” and it used animation to teach lessons on morality and faith.



One episode explained the above concept of having no ruler in this way. In the episode “Trouble on Planet Wait-Your-Turn” the children (the the hero’s of the series) were enlisted to help a planet that was nearing destruction and no one could understand why. Upon investigation we learn the cause of the troubles; the planet was drawing closer and closer to its sun, “jumping the queue” as one might say. Upon further

investigation it became evident that, while everyone recognised there was a problem, no one could recognise that they themselves were the cause. You see, “jumping the queue” had become the norm on the planet. This was humorously portrayed by the president of the planet introducing himself as “President-No-I’m-The President.” I see the relationship between the inhabitants of the planet and the planet itself as a metaphor for the relationship between our own internal and external self. At first we may have a little selfishness in us, it may even serve us in our natural lives. But, if that selfishness becomes how we operate in every aspect of our lives it takes over and ultimately destroys us.



The planet was being destroyed because no one could fathom not ruling over others which, in New Church terms, is the ultimate expression of selfishness and the state of everyone in hell. There is no single devil who rules hell because hell itself is made up of devils who reject God. And, a spirit who rejects God thinks themselves god.

Swedenborg writes of this subject in his work Heaven and Hell:

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People in the Christian world are totally unaware that heaven and hell come from the human race. They actually believe that angels were created in the beginning and constitute heaven, and that the devil or Satan was an angel of light who became rebellious and was cast out together with his faction, and that this gave rise to hell...[The truth is that in all heaven there is not a single angel who was created as such in the beginning, nor is there in all hell a devil who was created as an angel of light and cast out. Rather, all the people in heaven and in hell are from the human race - in heaven the ones who have lived in heavenly love and faith, and in hell the ones who have lived in hellish love and faith. Hell as a whole is what is called the devil and Satan.

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We can also see that there is no devil to whom the hells are subject from the fact that all the people who are in the hells, like all the people in the heavens, are from the human race, that there are millions there from the beginning of creation to the present day, and that everyone there is the kind of devil he or she became by opposition to the Deity while in the world.

Maybe this simple lesson from a children's animated video can help you the next time you find yourself tempted to jump the queue or simply place your own desires ahead of the desires or needs of others.

Rev. Howard A. Thompson

Here is link, for those interested, to the entire episode:

<https://youtu.be/zVDXmKZsPRI>

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### **Monthly News From The Swedenborg Centre**

What do all the following subjects all have in common? Heaven and hell, the myth of Cupid and Psyche, Rumi's poetry and mysticism, coincidences and providence, correspondences of atmospheres, dreams, the ingredients of good spiritual education, the principles of self-reflection, and cosmic laws? What they have in common is that they all appeared in discussions at the Centre this month. So if you want some lively stimulating conversation on spiritual topics and life matters, fuelled (for some) by a good cup of coffee, then the Swedenborg Centre is the place to come. And we're already working on some exciting new interactive spiritual activities at the Centre for next year, so keep your eye on future newsletters. Details of all our activities are on the website at [www.swedenborg.com.au](http://www.swedenborg.com.au) but for your convenience, below is a list of upcoming meetings. And if you need it, the Zoom meeting IDs are mentioned below, while our Zoom four digit **password** is always the Roseville postcode of **2069**:

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**Read and Reflect** on the work of **Dr Philip Groves**, Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> October, 11am and 2pm and 7pm

Zoom link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/320544045?pwd=QjZtbUxvVk81b2dweUtZZTE3ZE9lZzo9>

Meeting ID: 320 544 045

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**Celebrate and explore Swedenborg's life, ideas and writings**, Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> October, 10am-noon (1st and 3rd Saturday each month). Attend live at the Centre or Zoom using:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/476372484?pwd=WmNpdHRLdotwSmZDMENQRit3aE8zZzo9>

Meeting ID: 476 372 484

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**Bible Study** with Rev Howard Thompson, Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> October, 11am (each fortnight). Attend live at the Centre or Zoom using: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86388119164?pwd=ME9rSmdkdFp5QVFHdohlbDZmNXhRQTo9>

Meeting ID: 863 8811 9164

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**Dr Andrew Heslop** presentation about the **Jesus Prayer** plus a digitally presented **art exhibition** by **Michael Wright**, Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> October 2020, 7pm. Zoom link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89832027177?pwd=L1NDZytIb2MrUopHMkJ4SVJBdG5EQTo9>

Meeting ID: 898 3202 7177

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Swedenborg Centre **Open Discussion** (second Tuesday every month), Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> October 2020, 2pm and 6pm. Attend live or on Zoom: [https://us02web.zoom.us/j/124469612?](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/124469612?pwd=NjlOZ3RpU2NWV1g1a2Zmb29ZL3ZsQTo9)

[pwd=NjlOZ3RpU2NWV1g1a2Zmb29ZL3ZsQTo9](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/124469612?pwd=NjlOZ3RpU2NWV1g1a2Zmb29ZL3ZsQTo9)

Meeting ID: 124 469 612

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**Bible Study** with Rev Howard Thompson, Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> October, 11am (each fortnight). Attend live at the Centre or Zoom using: [https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86388119164?](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86388119164?pwd=ME9rSmdkdFp5QVFHdohIbDZmNXhRQTo9)

[pwd=ME9rSmdkdFp5QVFHdohIbDZmNXhRQTo9](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86388119164?pwd=ME9rSmdkdFp5QVFHdohIbDZmNXhRQTo9)

Meeting ID: 863 8811 9164

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Contact me on (02) 9416 2812 or [joe@swedenborg.com.au](mailto:joe@swedenborg.com.au) if you wish to clarify anything.

Have a great month.

Joe

**LAST CHANCE**  
**Spring Women's Weekend**

Ladies, you are invited to participate in our low-scale and/or virtual women's weekend gathering next month, October 16-18. While details have yet to be hammered out, we hope to have small, regional get-togethers as well as Zoom-facilitated online interactions. Please let Jenn know if you'd like to join in on the fun! ([jenn@beiswenger.net](mailto:jenn@beiswenger.net))

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**Some Life Geology**

Yesterday, Ruth and I went into town to buy something for a neighbour's daughter's 21st. After looking around some shops we went into Utopian Bazaar, well-named because you-name-it is there in that wonderful



back-to-the-90s shop. I counted 23 Buddhas and 11 Ganeshes amidst the long skirts of every hue and the bamboo wind-chimes. Eventually we looked at a cabinet of pendant and earrings and chose a turquoise oval pendant set in silver. We called the man over who was very helpful.

Then he said, “This isn’t a real turquoise ... we have those, but they’re three times the price. This is a ‘howlite’. It’s white and porous, you see, and it can be dyed whatever colour, but usually turquoise. Oh, the silver is real!” (I thought, ‘Yes, I bet it’s called howlite with the howls of rage and disappointment!’) He continued, “The real turquoises are over there and they’re impermeable.” So we bought this false-turquoise and we will need to decide whether to confess it is ‘fake’ (to use a very 2020 word) to our friend.

But there’s more... He went on to say that he had twice been in Tibet where, in many towns, people walk around sporting the most amazing gemstones, big, bold and beautiful. “But,” he said, “they’re actually ... concrete! But it looks so convincing!” We thanked him for his help (and honesty) and left the shop, not feeling at all that we’d been ‘had’. You see, now we know where to go for presents that look three times their cost price!



But I pondered on impermeable and permeable or porous and it seemed to me to illustrate the difference between honesty and deception, even between truth and falsity, so I thought this was extremely spiritual. A real turquoise is what it is and it can’t be made to look like anything else. A howlite can be passed off as whatever you want it to resemble. You can see where I was heading with all this. It’s us, inside, but showing a surface.



I believe entirely that in the spiritual world there are gemstones for us to come across with a bit of spiritual digging. I think I know where the turquoises will be, and I sure know where the howlites (and the concrete!) will be. But don’t forget that we’re ‘gemstones’ too!

As a kind of codicil, I continued on to think about one of our family’s favourite activities, picking up pebbles on the beach and trying to get seven to make a rainbow (very easy in Port Macquarie!). These pebbles are older than old and their only change is to have been bashed by sand, sea and wind. Rock hard...impermeable. All the porous rocks will have disintegrated aeons ago and don’t exist. And



then of course I thought about Jesus' closing parable in the Sermon on the Mount about building on rock and building on sand. Point taken.

Julian Duckworth

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## **Phillip Island Camp**

**\*\* UPDATE \*\***



As announced in a previous issue of the newsletter, we've booked in a camp at Philip Island from 2-8 July 2021. We are now accepting bookings and expressions of interest on the website, [www.newchurch.net.au](http://www.newchurch.net.au). I realise that nobody knows what the travel situation is going to be next year, but at this point we're required to let Philip Island Adventure Resort (PIAR) know by February 1 2021 whether or not we are going to proceed. We need a minimum of 50 in order to make the finances work.

What I am asking for is for people to express interest or book if they would like to attend, under the assumption that we can travel. As we get into 2021 I'll be closely monitoring the situation and see where things stand. I would imagine that PIAR would be more flexible with the booking requirements and such as well, so we may be able to get an extension on the point-of-no-return date, or a reduction in minimum numbers. However I need to know what the level of interest is to see if we've got something to work with. With that in mind, if you're interested, please book or express interest!

Thanks

Todd

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## **Marriage Moats from Lori Odhner** **“Antidote”**

Our second son had a childhood friend who lived in the hills. They spent hours outside doing those things that parents just barely approve of, because they sometimes end badly. Micah had a few close calls there, falling off a wall, or hiking a bit too far and getting lost. Once the pack of boys climbed into a parked car, one of whom knocked the brake off. They went careening down the driveway and narrowly missed crashing over an edge. A picket fence gave its life for them.

But Micah was not actually with his buddy when the rattlesnake bit. His friend ended up perilously close to death before the anti-venom drug pulled him back.

The bill was pretty steep. Yet who can put a price tag on your child? Fortunately for those people who coexist with reptiles, hospitals have vials at the ready.

I have never been in the market for such a drug, though I have been saved many times by an antidote that is free.

Gratitude has within it magical properties that work as antibodies to a number of ills. Resentment. Jealousy. Criticism. Those infections dissolve when I pause just long enough to appreciate what is right in front of me. The other day I was stewing over some stupid negativity involving John that had bitten me. The poisonous thoughts began to swell and throb. Then John handed me a smoothie. I had not asked for one, but he guessed that I would enjoy one on a toasty day. He was right. Instantly the venomous complaints retreated under the rock they came from.



It was convenient that John appeared just then to rescue me from snaky ideas. But it is within my power to access gratitude for things past. There are entire shelves of memories stored up in my mind poised for me to pull them down and enjoy all over again.

Love,

Lori

\*\* “Marriage Moats,” a daily reflection on marriage from someone who could be legitimately called an “expert” on marriage. Lori Odhner is a wife and mother of 9 children who, along with her minister husband John began a marriage ministry in 1988. Together they manage the [www.caringformarriage.org](http://www.caringformarriage.org) website, organise an annual marriage conference and put out a monthly newsletter. Lori writes daily e-mails called Marriage Moats intended to support people who value marriage. Debra and I enjoy reading these daily reflections and hope our Newsletter readers do as well.

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### **The Lord's Constant Presence**

Don't be afraid, for I am with you.  
Don't be discouraged, for I am your God.  
I will strengthen you and help you.  
I will hold you up with my victorious right hand.

*Isaiah 41:10*

Do not be afraid or discouraged,  
For the Lord will personally go ahead of you.  
He will be with you;  
He will never fail you nor abandon you.

*Deuteronomy 31:8*

This is my command—  
Be strong and courageous!  
Do not be afraid or discouraged.  
For the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.  
*Joshua 1:9*

### **Online Giving**

Some people have asked if there is a way to continue to make offerings to the church in the absence of weekly church attendance. For some who may not be effected economically by the current situation we do have a “donor box” online:

<https://donorbox.org/roseville-new-church>





## **Minister's Contact Information and Office Hours**

Rev. Howard A. Thompson  
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Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday  
Email: [revhathompson@gmail.com](mailto:revhathompson@gmail.com)  
Phone: 0432 357 475

## **Pulpit Humour**

**(Fortunately, our experience of awakening to the  
spiritual dimension of our lives is not so shocking)**

