

Roseville New Church Newsletter

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

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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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“Earth's Crammed with Heaven”

“Earth's crammed with heaven,
And every common bush afire with God:
But only he who sees, takes off his shoes,”
~ Elizabeth Barrett Browning ~

Elizabeth Barrett Browning is not the only poet to see that Divine good flows from the Lord, through the heavens and terminates in the everyday objects and occurrences of the natural world (*Heaven and Hell* 107). It is this process that forms a correspondence between things of the celestial world and things of the natural world. As many poets see this, so are many people able to see this. To further help us see this both the manner by which this occurs and the reason for it are explained in the work *Heaven and Hell*.



Emanuel Swedenborg also addresses this subject many times in *Arcana Coelestia* (Secrets of Heaven). All good and truth are from the Lord and flow from the Lord, through the heavens and give existence to all things in the natural world (*Arcana Coelestia* 3940.2). This is not to be over simplified by imagining that the Lord is operating a perfectly functioning mechanistic world, for if this were the

case, humans would not function in freedom. However, it is the case that everything in the natural world has a connection to the good and truth from the Lord (*Arcana Coelestia* 5232).

But what is the nature of this connection and how does this connection become a correspondence? We read that all things in the natural world come from and are sustained by good and truth from the Divine by light and heat (*Arcana Coelestia* 5232). But like all things in the spiritual and natural world, truth can be turned to falsity and good can be turned to evil. However, when things that are created remain in order then a correspondence exists between the thing in the natural world and what it represents from the celestial and spiritual worlds. But if order is the key to the establishment of a correspondence, what determines order or in other words, what makes things work?

The key to the determination of whether or not something is in order is whether or not it is serving a use. In general “those things which by creation in order are from the Lord are called uses” (*Divine Love and Wisdom* 298). With respect to people, use means serving others and ministering to them (*Divine Providence* 215). To the extent that this use, served in the natural world, is reflective of its correspondential use in the celestial world then a correspondence is secured.

Understanding how a correspondence is established is one thing but how does the understanding of this help us to live our lives? While there is much that can be taken from the doctrine of correspondence the relationship to order and use can be brought powerfully to bear in our lives. There is a way that a person is wired (created) to function best. And when he is troubled, suffering spiritual temptations in his life, he would do well to look at where his life is not in order. Going back to the opening thoughts on nature; nature exists in order. Bees pollinate flowers to make honey. Honey helps to nourish more bees which, in turn, pollinate more flowers. Remove any element from this properly ordered system and it will all cease to exist. To conclude let us look again to the words of a poet:

“The mind, in proportion as it is cut off from free communication with
nature, with revelation,
with God, with itself, loses its life,
just as the body droops when debarred from the air
and the cheering light from heaven.”
~ William Ellery Channing ~

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Change is the New Normal **(Swedenborg Centre News)**



What do you do when a whole country needs to change? Well, that's a difficult challenge. But not impossible. At 5am on Sunday 3rd September 1967 Sweden switched from driving on the left side of the road to driving on the right, without a fuss. On the 14th of February 1966 Australians traded in their pennies for decimal currency. In 1967 the second was redefined although no one lived any longer, and in 1970 Australian passed the Metric

Conversion Act yet nobody suddenly got taller. We put our clocks back by an hour for Daylight Saving, but did you know that world clocks are twice a year susceptible to being put back by one second? So when someone says "have you got a second?" rather than telling them "wait a minute" you can say "wait until June 30th or December 31st and - if you're lucky - you might get one". This practice was decided in 1972, but we only get six months warning of the change for that manoeuvre, because it adjusts for observed irregularities in the earth's rotation over the past half year. True, not everything is perfect (yet). Then in 1983 the Aussie dollar was floated. Did anyone experience the shift? Does anyone care? It was a big deal, as it's the equivalent of asking your currency to walk on water while not knowing if it can swim! Another big change was that the Netherlands introduced a simplified form of spelling in 1996 (something English could do with), so out the window with all that Dutch spelling I learnt by rote. And last January that same tiny country of 17 million people decided to ditch the popular name "Holland" in favour of "The Netherlands" (Holland officially only referred to two of its twelve provinces – luckily, I can boast that I was born in The Netherlands as well as in Holland). Meanwhile, in 2019 the International System of Units (SI) team implemented their decision to change the world's definition of the kilogram, the ampere, the kelvin and the mole. And yet nobody in the world noticed that they had instantly lost weight or that the white balance of their photographs suddenly got "warmer". Old habits and standards sometimes run up against a brick wall and reach a use-by date. Change is inevitable... We may prefer that which is familiar, but the Divine hopes that we choose change, at least on the inside.



Pictured; Patrick Abbott
"keeper of the kilogram"

One of the limits I have run up against is that the Swedenborg Centre has become such a popular place for conversation and almost daily events (yay!!!), that various tasks and projects have been taking the slow lane. Mind you, I'm not complaining, but merely reflecting. The old website runs out of steam at the end of October and the new one is going to be different and also will initially most likely only have the basics until we can gradually build up the features that you (and I) have got used to on the old site. We thank you for patiently bearing with us whilst Joel and I work on the transition. Contact the Centre if you are looking for things you cannot find (or to make a purchase) and we can manually provide solutions and answers until the new site is fully functioning.

It's worth noting that the Swedenborg Foundation (USA) and Swedenborg Society (UK) also offer online events and activities. E.g. Sundays at 6am on 8th, 15th, 22nd of November (Sydney times!) they are offering three live talks by John Haller, an excellent researcher and author whose books I have thoroughly enjoyed about the influences of Swedenborg on history, particularly on homeopathy, on the healing arts, and on the New Thought movement. He has recently completed a book on "Usefulness". If you're interested in attending those 3 free Zoom talks, details and bookings at <https://www.swedenborg.org.uk/events/haller-talks/>

Our events both live and on Zoom beamed from the Swedenborg Centre in Roseville (passcode if you need it is always 2069) are scheduled for November as follows:

Dr Groves Reading, Fridays 6th & 20th November, 11am and 2pm and 7pm. Zoom link (Meeting ID 320 544 045): <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/320544045?pwd=QjZtbUxvVk81b2dweUtZZTE3ZE9lZz09>

Bible Study with Rev Howard Thompson, Tuesdays 10th & 24th November, 11am. Zoom link (Meeting ID 863 8811 9164): <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86388119164?pwd=ME9rSmdkdFp5QVFHdohIbDZmNXhRQT09>

Swedenborg Saturdays, 7th & 21st November, 10am. Zoom link (Meeting ID 476 372 484): <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/476372484?pwd=WmNpdHRLdotwSmZDMENQRit3aE8zZz09>

Second Tuesday Open Discussion on Tuesday 10th November, 2pm and 6pm. Zoom link (Meeting ID 124 469 612): <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/124469612?pwd=NjlOZ3RpU2NWV1g1a2Zmb29ZL3ZsQT09>

Contact me on (02) 9416 2812 or joe@swedenborg.com.au if you wish to know any more.

Enjoy changing in the month ahead.

Joe

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“Are you decent?”

This question was one which was (or still is) asked outside theatre changing rooms before whoever asked it would go in. Even the question is a sign of considerable decency.

I grew up with the ringing axiom, “Do the decent thing” but I can’t remember if it was a family saying or from school or just how the culture was back then, but I am glad I inherited it. It describes the idea of the common good, consideration for others’ feelings, moderation perhaps, and that where there is human society there is the need for certain standards and values to be advocated and upheld.

Being a word person, I checked up the origin of ‘decent’. It comes from a really old word ‘dek-’ which had the meaning of taking and of accepting. That doesn’t tell us much but we could talk about taking responsibility and taking thought and of accepting people as they are or accepting that nobody’s perfect. So it seems to carry a lot of wisdom in it and I sense there is a big connection with spiritual beliefs and principles in it. Do the decent thing...

I also found out that that there are a lot of words we use which definitely come from this really old word. Here are just some of them and take good note of their familiarity to us!

Dignity – Decorate – Docile – Doctrine – Doctor – Disciple – Doxology – Deign – Document – and wonderfully, Dainty!



The basic idea of decency is summed up in the Golden Rule, “Do to others as you would have them do to you.” It’s in Matthew 7 verse 12 and it is very important to keep it linked with Jesus saying that this is the Law and the



Prophets, in other words, the very heart of all religion and living. The worrying thing about the idea of doing things decently is that if I were to ask everyone I know if they felt this principle is extremely important, every hand would go up and we would all nod in total agreement. Of course, decency matters! So why am I then saying that this is worrying?

Because, you see, we can love the ideal of something and recognise its universal truth but perhaps never quite get around to checking if we are up to what it asks of us. We'd all say that spreading gossip is really bad but we can still prick our ears up if there's a bit of it in the wind. So, with the awareness of the importance of decency comes our need to check ourselves out, both inwardly in our private thoughts and emotions and outwardly in our behaviour, comments and dealings, and almost daily (no, take out almost!) make sure we are being true to what we say we believe matters.

And another very important point about all this is that we don't arrive at decency say on March 17th 2022 and coast after that! This is ongoing stuff for us and let's not kid ourselves it isn't or ease up.

I'm no saint! But then, I don't believe I'm diabolical either. I'm human, needful, touchy at times, with a helpful sense of intentions and goals which derive from my beliefs and my love of the Word and the Lord. That is the blessing. And I believe I'd be describing the great majority of people, not only those who will be reading this. I see decency as the cornerstone of our being. I also see that it asks real decisions from us. That's the challenge.

Julian

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October 2020 Women's Weekend **(Virtual)**

This spring's women's weekend was a special one: whereas women relatively local to Sydney had gathered in person for insights & fellowship in August 2019 and March 2020, our October 16-18th Virtual Women's Weekend was attended by women not only from Sydney and Canberra as before, but also Adelaide, Melbourne and Perth. We were sad not to be able to be physically together for this event, but so glad to have



women from across the country joining us, this time! A total of ten ladies gathered via Zoom on Friday evening, Saturday and Sunday afternoon for a variety of activities ranging from ice breakers and sharing of personal charitable project experience to examination and discussion of 'Rachel' from the Bible and the topic of 'Use' and instruction in JennTangles (Zentangle), with casual conversations and catch-ups mixed in throughout. We didn't get to experience the full range of interactions we would have, sharing quarters for 36 hours, however we made the most of what we had and were thankful to have access to the technology which enabled this to happen at all. If our pattern continues, we'll look forward to getting together again – hopefully in person, presuming all goes well!! – in autumn 2021, however only time will tell. In the meantime, we wish everyone good health and much joy, and that we may all be a blessing to those around us!

Jennifer Beiswenger

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Marriage Moats: **What Moats Say About Themselves**

“My son Benjamin’s latest recurring question is about moats. He asks “What is a moat?” eager to hear again what he already knows.

“A moat is water that surrounds a castle and keeps it safe from enemies.” He smiles, and asks what enemies are.

“They are people who want to hurt you.”

He wanders off into a memory about moats in movies he has seen, and laughs about bad guys who fell into them.

People sometimes say that a person’s home is his or her castle. Marriage can be a castle, but that does not mean it is never under attack.

I am intrigued by the idea of a moat, as a deterrent for flame flinging masked marauders.

This daily message is called Marriage Moats, because it is a modest obstacle to those influences that undermine marriage. It will offer a puddle of protection in the form of a quote, or anecdote, or book blurb. Some mornings it will slip into your inbox, and you will hurriedly delete it sight unseen. Other days you will open it, as you invite in those few sentences that may surround your mental fortress with a waterway that keeps you safer. Water is like truth, in that it keeps you clean and quenched, and paired with a boat, gets you to places you would be hard

pressed to find otherwise. Truth can transport you to resorts as well, places of refuge, and beauty.

Marriage Moats is one wet barrier you can create to stave off the armies of negativity and apathy that incessantly bash on your door.

You may even find it funny to watch the critical thoughts splashing and thrashing, unable to reach you, while you watch from a turret in the clouds.

Lori

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Opportunities to Help

With Christmas approaching frighteningly quickly (the last Sunday in November is the first Sunday of Advent) we wanted to remind you of our ongoing and modest opportunities to help those in need.

Exodus Foundation

In the church vestibule are bins for collection of non-perishable food stuffs; tinned soups, beans and veg. as well as tinned meats and fish.

These items are regularly collected by The Exodus Foundation and distributed to individuals and families in need. We collect these items throughout the year but the holidays always place an extra demand on the Exodus Foundation's resources.

Final collection: 13 December

Salvation Army Christmas Toy Collection

Each year we collect new and unwrapped toys for donation to the Salvation Army. The Army then distributes them to needy families in their network in order to spread a little Christmas cheer for these families. The economic impact of COVID-19 is having a disproportionate impact on those on the lower end of the economic spectrum. We anticipate that The Salvation Army will feel the impact of this with higher than usual requests for assistance. In order to facilitate timely distribution, toy donations will need to be dropped off at church no later than the first Sunday of December.

Final collection: 6 December



Minister's Contact Information and Office Hours

Rev. Howard A. Thompson
Office Hours: 11:00 am - 4.00 pm
Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday
Email: revhathompson@gmail.com
Phone: 0432 357 475

Final Thought

“Constantly Being Lifted Up”

Those who lead the life of faith repent daily. They pay attention to the evils present with them, acknowledge them, are on their guard against them, and implore the Lord for help. For **by himself a person is constantly falling, but the Lord is constantly putting him on his feet again.** By himself he falls whenever his mind desires something evil, but the Lord puts him on his feet again whenever he resists evil and therefore does not carry it out. This is the condition of all who are governed by good. Those however who are ruled by evil are constantly falling, and they are also being raised constantly by the Lord. But He does this so that they will fall not into the most oppressive hell of all, to which if left to themselves all their efforts take them, only into a milder one.

Arcana Coelestia 8391