Candela



Newsletter of the Swedenborg Association of Australia Ltd.

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ISSUE 34

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

A ave you noticed how people want everything finished by Christmas? It seems an arbitrary time to complete work but I think people like to rule a line under the year and start afresh again in the new year. We structure our life in years, months, weeks, days, hours, minutes and even seconds. Time is very important particularly if you're sowing or harvesting a crop. Most festival days are related to harvesting and sowing which celebrate the occasion with prayers for good weather and thanksgiving for a good crop.

Christmas is a celebration and takes place at the winter solstice (northern hemisphere) so it is the heralding of the time when the solar year in the north is completed and the new year is born. The days start becoming longer from Christmas so there is an increasing of daylight hours. Traditionally, the northern Christmas is a time of least activity and anyone who has lived in Europe will recognise the difference between the run up to Christmas there and what we experience here in Australia. I feel this is one of the main problems with this drive to have everything brought to a conclusion before the 24th December. We are already in a state of feverish activity because of our summer solstice season and to quicken our efforts can leave one totally drained. There is, in fact, very little time to 'celebrate' Christmas.

This year has been one of much war and strife. There is much uncertainty in the affairs of mankind throughout

the world and the need to turn to the Divine as a source of stability is increasingly necessary. I have been reminded of the building of that great cathedral at Chartres in France. It was built over a period of thirty years, drawing on the resources of men and materials of the district to an extraordinary degree. Private housing was very basic but the cathedral reflects the finest masonry

and stained glass that one will find anywhere in the world. The people looked to the church (the 'governor') for comfort and inspiration and found a sense of peace in what were otherwise very uncertain times.

We live in uncertain times now but those who hold high office are not always acting in the interest of the common good.

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Two copies of this Newsletter are being sent to members as usual, the second for giving away.

"There are two things which ought to be in order with men, namely, the things which are of heaven and the things which are of the world. Order can not be maintained in the world without governors, (They) are to reward those who live according to order, and punish those who live contrary to order. If this is not done the human race will perish,".

Swedenborg: The New Jerusalem 311

When we look to our governors to administer order it is often not forthcoming. There is a feeling of chaos in the world today. Each one of us can generate a feeling of goodwill towards others and our governors must be shown that they hold responsible positions.

" .. the law is justice, and that all justice ... is Divine. But he who regards himself as above the laws, places the royalty in himself, and either believes himself to be the law, or the law .. to be from himself; he arrogates to himself that which is Divine."

Swedenborg: The New Jerusalem 319

Christmas usually brings out the best in people. It is a time when one can look towards a new and rewarding harvest but the groundwork needs to be done with love and understanding now.

Agape,

John Brogan



Corrections - Candela Issue 33

Regrettably, two errors crept into the last issue which require correcting and the offering of apologies.

The quotation from the Swedenborg Association's Fridge Magnet was shown twice (pages 2 and 12) and in both instances the wording was incorrect. It was perpetrated by the use of word processing "cut and paste" from a report where it had been originally typed incorrectly. Then the proof reading failed to pick up the wayward quote but several readers did! Thanks to those who, in a kind manner, pointed out the mistake.

The second relates to our failure to add the name of **Jeanette Frangoff** to that of Chris Catsanis for the review of the book *Swedenborg The Buddhist* (page 8). Jeanette and Chris worked solidly on the review together and we do apologise sincerely to Jeanette for this oversight on our part.

Looking for an Auditor



The Board is searching for a Company Registered Auditor prepared to carry out an annual audit on the Association's books at a

reasonable fee. As the accounting material is maintained in Sydney, an auditor in the greater Sydney area would be preferable but not necessary. Do you know of someone - perhaps a retired Accountant who services small jobs - who could be approached? If you do, please ring Michele Knight, Hon. Secretary, on 02 9888 1066.

Views on Death . . .

"Do not seek death. Death will find you. But seek the road which makes death a fulfilment"

Dag Hammarskjöld

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Membership of the Swedenborg Association of Australia Ltd. is open to anyone interested in pursuing an interest in Swedenborg, the man, his science and his spiritual teachings. For details on how to join, please refer to page 12.



God put me on Earth to achieve a certain number of tasks in my lifetime. At present, I am so far behind that I may never die. Anon.



Love came down at Christmas by Chris Skinner

And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down and worshipped Him and when they had opened their treasures they presented Him gifts; Gold, Frankincense and Myrrh. Matthew 2: 11

What does Christmas mean to you, to me or to others we meet? Is it time just for holidays, for family gatherings or for something more deep and meaningful? How do you celebrate or do you celebrate at all? For many, the religious perspective does not hold a great deal of importance but they do see something of a spiritual nature to which they can relate.

I was recently talking with a Buddhist acquaintance and she made the comment that there was much that she and her family enjoyed about the Christmas celebrations which she could relate to but not from a Christian perspective.

Over the centuries the celebration of Christmas has accumulated all sorts of traditions and customs some which have other than a Christian origin. Some are from the marketers in the commercial world who will use any ploy to sell their product or services. The sense of love, family values, relationships and giving can be traced back to the essence of the Christmas message in the Bible. There is no doubt that the nativity captures the imagination and is a wonderful way for God to point to some essential truths for our lives today.

Embedded in the story is a myriad of thoughts and feelings that arise from it, some sublime and some very much related to our own spiritual journey. The story of the birth of a baby in Bethlehem and all the emotions that this invokes, the visit of the wise men, the shepherds in the field and the angel messengers, are a wonderful picture that goes to the heart of the way we live our life. It is no co-incidence that the core stories of the Bible capture the imagination, are ideal for painting pictures and are wonderful material even for Hollywood producers.

I have chosen the short passage from Matthew's Gospel above and wish to focus on this aspect of the story and how much it gets to the heart of the Christmas message, the first being the concept of love coming into the world and the second is the custom of giving.



Swedenborg makes a strong point of the fact that the wise men were very much aware of the ancient science of correspondences and the predictions of the birth of Jesus and the gifts they brought had a spiritual more that a natural significance. What would a small baby do with Gold, Frankincense and Myrrh? What was the star that the wise men followed? Surely it was a star seen with their spiritual sight.

In today's world the focus of Christmas is very much a marketing guru's paradise. Advertisements on TV and in newspapers attempt to persuade us to buy the biggest and the best for our loved ones. They try to leave us with a sense of guilt if we do not purchase the most expensive gifts or a sense of being let down if the expectations from the gift does not measure up. This materialistic view is diametrically opposed to the concept of giving that is very vivid in the gifts given by the wise men. Perhaps we should demonstrate our love in a more subtle or more meaningful way and focus on what that friend or loved one means to us. Swedenborg always brings biblical truth back to the thoughts and feelings of the spirit and our relationship with God without taking away from the power of the literal message.

The whole thrust of the Christmas message is about the birth of love into a darkened world and from an individual point of view it is a recognition in our own life that we need something greater than ourselves. Divine Love and Divine Wisdom are the essence of God; the birth in Bethlehem is symbolic of the birth of love in us. What can be more special than the love that envelopes us when we see a new born baby? At that first Christmas, God took on human nature from Mary to ensure that men and women could and can choose to follow a loving pathway or one involving evil and selfishness.

Following the birth in Bethlehem, the wise men came to the house where Jesus was. A house spiritually represents our mind. When wise thoughts enter our mind then we, in a sense, are seeing the



face of God. The wise men fell down and worshipped Him. True worship comes from wanting to see and do what is right in our life. To fall down and worship gives a picture of humility. The thought of being humble these days does not seem to be part of the vocabulary but if our ego is rampant how can we be in a state to receive and act spiritually when all we are concerned about is our own needs and opinions?

Biblical teaching says that "the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us" (John Chpt 1). It also tells us that Jesus is the way, truth and life. For us to act truly we must act out of freedom and love. Freedom is one of the gifts that was given to us as a result of the birth of God in the world. Jesus is God clothed in a human form from Mary.

In a spirit of humility, the wise men came and presented their gifts. These gifts are symbolic of the ones that we need to present. All the treasures that we present should be from a heart of love and the gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh correspond to the various levels of spiritual gifts. Gold is the most precious metal used to embellish all types of material objects but representing celestial good or love. If we were giving gifts to God, surely the first and deepest gift we would give is our love of him. The second gift was frankincense which is the gift of thinking of him or our sense of knowing that God is with us; it is faith in him. The third gift was that of Myrrh which is active obedience to the God we love. We give this outward expression by living an active and useful life by utilising the truth he has given.

In that lovely moment between the wise men and the baby Jesus we have a precious insight into the nature of love. The perception of the wise men led them to Bethlehem which means house of bread, house of sustenance, where they presented their gifts. In the very presentation of the gifts is a wonderful truth that in giving we will receive.

The moment we express our love to God by showing kindness and love we will at the same time receive something special ourselves from God which is worth infinitely more than the material gift. And what will we receive? ~ a feeling of love and being loved which is the real blessing of Christmas.

In a Christian hymn with the same title as this article the final verse reads:-

Love shall be our token love be yours and love be mine, love to God and everyone love for plea and gift and sign It surely must be our hope that the gift of a loving heart be received and displayed by men and women across the globe this Christmas, bringing reconciliation and healing for spiritual transformation.

Chris Skinner is a Swedenborg Association of Australia Ltd Board member and convenor of the Melbourne Group. He also ministers to the New Church (Swedenborgian) congregation in Victoria. He is particularly qualified now to talk about the feelings surrounding a new born baby following the recent birth of a granddaughter, for which we offer many congratulations.

A Reading from Swedenborg

"Wise men from the east came, and they offered gifts to the new-born Lord - gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Matt. 2:1, 11.

'Gold, frankincense, and myrrh' means all forms of the good of love and faith offered to the Lord, 'gold' being forms of the good of love, 'frankincense' forms of the good of faith, and 'myrrh' forms of both in external things. The reason why 'wise men from the east' offered them was that among some in the east there remained from ancient times the knowledge and wisdom of the people of old, which consisted in their understanding and seeing heavenly and Divine realities within things in the world and on earth. For it was well known to the ancients that all things had a correspondence and were representative, and therefore had a spiritual meaning, as is also evident from the gentiles' oldest books and their monuments. This was how they knew that gold, frankincense, and myrrh meant the forms of good that should be offered to God. They knew also from their prophecies, which were those of the Ancient Church and which have been spoken of in 2686, that the Lord would come into the world, at which time a star would appear to them, about which also Balaam, who likewise was one of 'the sons of the east', prophesied, Num. 24:17 - see 3762. 'A star' furthermore means cognitions or knowledge of internal goodness and truth, which come from the Lord."

Arcana Caelestia paragraph 9293



SECRETARY'S REPORT

New Members

We are very pleased to warmly welcome the following new Members to the Association:

Benita Boughen, QLD Henry Flaihan, NSW Ursula Siebert, SA Louise Tanser, SA Niki Vos, WA

Swedenborg Quotation from the Secretary

It may be seen (above) that the Lord's church is distributed over the whole world - it is universal - that it includes all people who live in the good of charity in accord with their own religious persuasion; that the church where the Word is known and the Lord is known through it, is to those outside that church like the heart and lungs in a person, from which all the members of the body live - differently in keeping with their forms, locations, and connections.

Heaven and Hell paragraph 328

Business Matters

As usual, it has been a busy and eventful year for the Association, both administratively and with regard to our growing membership. Our local and interstate monthly meetings and activities have been well received, and we have received quite a lot of interest generated by the distribution of the 10th Anniversary Publication. If you have been surfing the net in recent times, you may also have noticed our revamped website. A lot of time and effort over the past few months has gone into this project, and we are very pleased with the way the site has taken shape. Some minor fine-tuning is currently being carried out.

Our quarterly Board Meetings have been the forum in which a number of initiatives have been conceived and steered toward completion. Our final Board Meeting (conducted 21 October) brought with it the usual matters for consideration including Membership/Renewals and Group News both local and interstate. On that front, Board Meetings are open to all Members and should you wish to attend please do contact me to confirm details and to receive an Agenda.

There are still two positions as Directors to the Board that remain unfilled. If you are interested in joining the Board, please call me on (02) 9888 1066. Our next Board Meeting is scheduled for Thursday 29 January 2004 and as already stated, if you would like to attend please contact me to confirm details and to receive an Agenda.

Finally, during this time of remembrance and reflection, I would like to extend my good wishes to members and their families, and wish you all a blessed Christmas. May I also take this opportunity to thank those members who have contributed in any way to

advance the work of the Association or who shared their thoughts and opinions with the Board throughout the year. Your contributions are always gratefully received, and very much appreciated.

Michele Knight



GROUP'S NEWS

Brisbane:

I am very pleased to report ongoing and growing support for our meetings arranged under the auspices of the Swedenborg Association, and while it is still 'early days' I can say with confidence that in the coming year, our meetings are set to become well and truly established as scheduled items in our yearly events and activities calendar.

To date, life-long spiritual scholar, **Paul Eldar** has been our primary presenter, discoursing on such topics as *Swedenborg's Vision of Life* in October (at which 11 people attended) and *Why Love and Wisdom?* in November, (at which 13 people attended). It is very encouraging to see attendance to our meetings expanding, no doubt due to Paul's interesting and informative topic choice and presentation style.

Meetings will be held monthly (Wednesdays at 1.00pm). We are currently investigating suitable avenues for advertising and promoting the meetings now that it has been decided to establish them on a permanent basis. Ian Arnold



Melbourne:

We were very pleased to have **Kirk Holst** from Sydney as a guest speaker for our October meeting and his talk was entitled '*The Jekyll and Hyde Effect*'. Kirk gave us a very interesting insight into his own personal journey and how his experiences resonated with him after reading Swedenborg. He used a personal image drawn by himself to illustrate his talk and explain Swedenborgian principles. His talk was very much appreciated by those present and we were pleased to have 29 people in attendance. There was a good number of questions following the talk.

November, being the last meeting for the year, was held on Saturday evening at the earlier time of 6.00pm and took the form of a break-up night. Each person was asked to bring some food to share with others. The speaker on this occasion was the Convenor of the group Chris Skinner who provided a talk which encapsulated the major points made in Swedenborg's book *Divine Love and Wisdom*. The talk demonstrated how



Swedenborg brings together the Essence of God and the harmony in creation, being presented with the hope that it would encourage people to delve more deeply than was possible in the talk. As there were a number of people who had only been attending for a short period, and three new people on the night, a very brief background to Swedenborg's journey was provided including the relationship between religion and science, and the context in which a number of his books were written to show the link between the spiritual and natural worlds. Following the talk, an opportunity was provided for questions which provided for some interesting opinions. Then everyone enjoyed the food provided. We had a very successful evening with 35 in attendance and most stayed on afterwards for some musical items and Christmas carols. **Chris Skinner**



North Ryde, Sydney:

The 24th October saw the regular monthly gathering at the North Ryde Centre exploring "Swedenborg's conception of the human mind in terms of will and understanding" with Michael Chester presenting.

One can't help being caught up in Michael's delightful enthusiasm for his subject. Michael's background reading, drawing on a wide range of reference material of Swedenborg and others, together with the interactive activities he offered on the night, provided an holistic approach to his presentation which I found inclusive and inviting. We heard and read about some of Swedenborg's experiences and processes. We followed his growth as he moved from the pursuit of information and knowledge alone (and the recognition he received for that information and knowledge) to a love of the Divine and the Divine truths that lay behind that information and knowledge. Subtle changes and yet a complete change! Not only did Michael draw on Swedenborg's experiences but also on his own process of putting the presentation together. As Michael explained; a few days before the monthly meeting, he "was gathering material (and) felt (he) was between two states. One was uncertainty as to what to focus on and include. The other state" a sense of anticipation, of "....being on the threshold of something....". For me, these two states Michael described, and his preparation process itself, modelled the evening's topic! It communicated a wonderful interplay, within Michael, between the will and the understanding. The understanding - searching for facts and information for the presentation; and the will feelings of excitement and "anticipation", showing his love of the truths to be presented and the joy of discovery and insight that came within the unfolding process. I always enjoy a presenter sharing themselves in this way; it shows a generosity of spirit which adds a uniqueness to the whole evening.

Louise Brogan

The Christian Meditation group has continued, meeting prior to the Friday night meetings. In September, seven people participated with three in October and one in November.

Brian O'Neill's talk on September 26th looked at dreams and their significance with selections from Swedenborg's Journal of Dreams being a central focus. After gauging the particular interests of the audience, he presented his talk and answered many of the questions people had on this topic. He looked at the sleeping process and when dreams occur, the hypnogogic state, what is a dream, the different types of dreams including instructional dreams whereby Higher Wisdom is communicating with the dreamer. We heard that Swedenborg's recording of dreams is related to his quest for the soul. By selecting a few of the dreams from Journal of Dreams we saw how he became more skillful in interpreting his dreams over time. He was able to attune himself better to the symbols of his dreams and respond accordingly to messages from a Higher Source. Brian gave a delightful coverage on dreams and the 18 people who attended would have been inspired to pay more attention to their dreams.

At our talk on November 28th, Deirdre Coleman (an Associate Professor in the School of English at Sydney University) looked at the British colonization of Africa during the period when the anti-slavery movement was gaining momentum with a focus on the influence of Swedenborg's ideas on Africa and Africans. A number of Swedenborgians were influenced by Swedenborg's ideas on Africa and contributed to the anti-slavery movement. They saw the abolition of slavery as part of the purification and regeneration of mankind. Two in particular, C.B. Wadstrom and August Nordenskjold were very influential in the process of colonizing Sierra Leone which was to be a model of a free society within Africa. She also linked this to the Botany Bay settlement, also involving Swedenborgians, one of whom ended up in Sierra Leone. The presentation was based on chapter 2 of Deirdre's book Romantic Colonization and British anti-slavery, 1770-1830 due for publication late next year. Deirdre has a love of literature especially Blake's poetry and the Romantic period in History. This shone in her very interesting presentation that was enjoyed by the 11 people attending.

Michael Chester

A "star" signifies the knowledges of good and truth, and in the highest sense the knowledge respecting the Lord. (That "stars" signify in the Word the knowledges of good and truth, see above, n. 72, 179, 402) And because the Orientals had such knowledges they were called "sons of the east."

From Apocalypse Explained no. 422



MYTHOLOGY

AN ESOTERIC VIEW

PHILIP W. GROVES

BOOK REVIEW



by PHILIP W. GROVES

One of the most profound books to be published in 2003 is Dr Philip Groves latest book Mythology - an esoteric view. It is based on his notes when he gave a series of talks related to Mythology in 1992 and 1997. Liz Coggins has edited the material to become this wonderful gem.

Why would someone want to read this book?

Dr Groves says:

"In exploring the world of mythology we enter a realm of symbolism and representation which touches every aspect of the human psyche. Myths lead us away from the ordinary, dull interpretations of life and provide a startling new perspective on the nature of things. It is this freshness of approach to ourselves and the world which is exciting and stimulating, and helps to reinstate the sense of wonder we had as children. Myths help to cultivate within us a sense that miraculous things are taking place everywhere in the universe: and this is perfectly true." (page 25)

What makes this book special is Dr Groves' wonderful gift in illuminating myths. He is well versed in symbolic and correspondential language that enables him to perceive the deeper meanings of these stories. Those interested in becoming more immersed in the science of correspondences would benefit greatly in digesting the insights provided.

Dr Groves refers to Swedenborg's writings many times throughout the book especially *The Spiritual Diary* and *Arcana Caelestia*. It shows how influential Swedenborg's writings have been to Dr Groves, who brings our attention to many of the profound insights that were revealed to Swedenborg.

This book will be a valuable resource for anyone who wishes to:

- become more proficient in the language of correspondences
- broaden their appreciation of Swedenborg's writings and esoteric Christianity
- participate in the process of regeneration
- appreciate the deeper aspects of Creation myths including the Genesis Creation story and Biblical myths such as Joshua and the fall of Jericho

- appreciate the mythology of a variety of cultures including the Australian Aborigines, the ancient Egyptians, the ancient Greeks, Persians, the Canaanites, Indians, Africans, Chinese, Celts, Scandinavians, North American Indians and Oceania.
- ✤ appreciate the deeper meanings of the Gilgamesh epic
- broaden their appreciation of The Fourth Way and Gurdjieff

 widen their perspective of the Reality we are part of. We are very fortunate that knowledge of what is real, true, wholesome and good is made available with Dr Groves books, and his latest - Mythology - an esoteric view - nourishes our inner lives in a special way through myths and his commentary on their meanings. I highly recommend the book. It is the outcome of a person who has undergone the process of regeneration and encourages others to participate in the process. The material chosen reminds us that the Kingdom of God is within, it is a reality that the myths point towards.

Michael Chester, Narrabeen, NSW

Throughout the 210 pages of this paperback, published by Triam Press, Sydney, are many helpful and inspiring diagrams and drawings. The recommended retail price is \$35.00

During December to March 2004, the Swedenborg Centre is making it available to readers for \$30.00 (plus postage). The SAA membership price will be \$28 during this period. See Order Form on Page 11.



Some interesting thoughts

Birthdays are good for you; the more you have, the longer you live.

Happiness comes through doors you didn't even know you left open.

You may be only one person in the world, but you may also be the world to one person.

Don't cry because it's over; smile because it happened.

A truly happy person is one who can enjoy the scenery on a detour.



The Story of My Life

~ Piecing together Swedenborg's personal Endeavours and Struggles

This series of articles results from a talk given by Neville Jarvis, Executive Manager of the Swedenborg Association of Australia, at its 2003 Annual General Meeting. Part 1

"Gentlemen, permit me, on the present occasion, to direct your thoughts, not to a distant or wearisome subject, but to one which it is both a duty and a pleasure for us to consider, namely, the memory of a noble man, celebrated alike for his virtues and the depth of his knowledge, who was one of the oldest members of this Academy, and whom we all knew and loved".



T

I his quite bold statement begins a long Eulogy to Emanuel Swedenborg composed by Samuel Sandel, Superintend ent of the Mines, Knight Order of the Polar Star, and a member of the Academy of Sciences in Stockholm. It was delivered in the Great Hall of the House on Nobles on 7th October 1772.

By this date, Swedenborg would have been in the spiritual world for over six months and undoubtedly beginning his journey to the springtime of youth. If Swedenborg had been able to sit and listen to this Eulogy, praising his intellectual prowess, his well-regarded nature, his valuable contributions in many different disciplines, his sense of justice and wish to see the good in others, what would he have thought? Would he have simply accepted the honour as being well deserved or would he have been saying to himself, "You may well think and say all these things, mate. (not sure if he would have used that exact word!) Thanks, but what about all the inner struggles I went through at times in dealing with loss, difficult decisions, self-doubt, bizarre experiences and personal problems, and with my own desires, wants; the turmoil and distress which emotions and affections, etc. caused me quite often".

The excellent and detailed biographies we have available to us today tend not to look at such aspects in much detail, probably because the letters and documents on which they are based are mainly very factual and not expressing much in terms of emotion and feelings. People in those days tended to be like that in what they wrote leaving us to presupposition and much conjecture today. Even the one autobiographical letter by Swedenborg, written to a Rev. Thomas Hartley in 1769, is simply a short statement of events occurring in his life without any expression of inner feelings and emotions

Since Swedenborg's death in 1772, a good number of people have exhaustively searched for letters and documents related to his life and work. Many items were published in the very early Swedenborgian journals of the 1790's and early 1800's. A most valuable contribution to assembling the extant material into an indexed collection was made by a Dr. Immanuel Tafel, a German convert to Swedenborg's teachings. Ably assisted by the research of Dr. A Kahl of Lund University in Sweden, Dr. Tafel finalised its publication in Germany in the 1830's and an English translation was made available in 1841.

However, more letters and documents kept coming to light. In 1868, Professor Rudof Tafel of the Washington University of St. Louis, Missouri, was commissioned to undertake a visit to Sweden and other locations with a view to compiling an exhaustive collection of all letters and material related to Emanuel Swedenborg. It took 2 years and, following full translation into English, was finally published in 1875 by The Swedenborg Society in London under the title *Documents Concerning the Life and Character of Emanuel Swedenborg*. It consists of 3 large volumes totalling some 2,100 pages. Yet the story does not end there. Later researchers, especially those spending quite some time living in Sweden, found many more documents and Swedish publications throwing light on Swedenborg's life and work. These have been published in English by the Swedenborg Scientific Association in two volumes - the years 1709 to 1748 and the years 1748 to 1772. So all these published documents, along with family records and personal diaries etc. provide a fairly comprehensive view of Swedenborg's life, qualities and work.

When presenting Swedenborg's background and achievements in biographical form, much of it is shaped by what we know of his last 27 years - his testimony that he received a Divine calling and his own insistence that his life from its earliest beginning was part of a preparation to fulfil that calling. Being shown in such graphic terms the basis of that calling when in his mid 50's, Swedenborg would have been provided with a deep and abiding sense of confidence and conviction about his last 30 years or so.

What, though, of the period before his Divine calling? Being raised in a family with wealth and high connections, he would have been deprived of little and he certainly received the best education, something not available to the common folk of the day. For the most part, he had the means to come and go whenever and wherever he pleased without the daily drudgery of earning a living. He could pursue avenues of enquiry and spend hours upon hours in the presence of craftsmen and learned people without a second thought. Due to connections through the family and ones he made himself, and then with his ennobled position, he socialised with the elite in Sweden in particular and his knowledge in so many subjects - science, the arts, government, economics - ensured he was well respected and liked.



However, even with all these advantages, he was not super-human and this series is based on the expectation that throughout his 84 years, in all his daily living and endeavours, he was, in a similar way to us all, prone to times of self-doubt, fears, and disappointments, perhaps questioning at times whether he should give away his investigative nature and simply go for "the easy life" of leisure pursuits. I have tried to pin-point such times in Swedenborg's life when in some small way we can perhaps have the opportunity to get under Swedenborg's external guard and at the same time, also relate these things to our own life's experiences.

As Swedenborg tells us in quite a number of places in his spiritual writings (e.g. AE 1226⁶), each one of us has a use to perform - both in this life and to eternity. Whether that use is fulfilled is dependent on decisions we make every day of our lives. Like Swedenborg, we can all look back and see something of the hand of providence in bringing us to a particular point in our life. Yet we could have made different choices along the way and we would not now be in the same circumstances that we are in today. Most of us would doubt our abilities at times, feel we have not been blessed with talents like others, wonder whether we would be happier pursuing a different course in life, dealing with disappointments about work, family relationships, not receiving the recognition or wealth we feel we deserve. Again, I ask, was Swedenborg any different?

In taking a look at what Swedenborg might have brought to mind about particular happenings during his 84 years, it is not to provide answers but to raise questions, to place ourselves directly in his shoes for a while. The selections which follow (more in subsequent issues) are presented as if Swedenborg himself was speaking to you. To some degree therefore, their factual accuracy is open to question but much of what is said can be supported from documents and anecdotal material as referred to in this rather lengthy scene-setting exercise.

Age 10 ~ Loss of My Mother and Brother

"I am now 10 and I expect that soon I will no longer need my tutor but go to one of the learning institutions here in Upsala instead. One of my earliest recollections is sitting around our large dining table listening to my father read from a large book, which I now know to be our family Bible, before we could start eating. I must have been nearly three. We had to be very quiet. And after we had eaten, sometimes father would say to us "Thank you, my children, for this meal; for I have dined with you, and not you with me; God gave me food for your sakes". Mother and father would talk to my older brother and sister, Albrecht and Anna, and me about all sorts of subjects. They said very kind things to our servants and they made us all laugh even when something went wrong.

Whenever visitors came, we were included in their entertainment in the drawing room. Albrecht played with me a lot and I can remember we had great fun in the garden finding places to hide. And whenever my mother was too involved with my younger brothers and sisters to do things for me, Anna, who was 2 years older than me, was there. I remember the great joy there was in the household when Hedwig was born when I was three. And the joy increased with the birth of our other brothers and sisters except when Daniel was born, for sadly he was taken into the Lord's bosom very soon afterwards. Father and mother explained to us how God would now look after Daniel and that was a great comfort. I felt God very near to me then. The home was soon bursting with love again. Mother and father would frequently tell us how blessed they felt that the Lord had given them 9 little souls to care for.

Father was just so very devoted to his work, and mother made sure we all said our prayers every day.

Going to Church was a very important time and all the people there, especially the workers and their families, were always attentive and kind to us, asking all sorts of questions about what we were doing. Everything was just so perfect and happy and I can remember thinking to myself that if a life devoted to God brought this amount of happiness, I would always serve God with cheerfulness.

But this sublime happiness was shattered when I was 8. My gentle, sweet-faced, mother died quite suddenly of a fever and a few weeks later, Albrecht, my constant companion, was taken with the same fever. We were all inconsolable although my father seemed to remain calm through it all. Everyone was so sympathetic and kind but I cried until there were no more tears left. How could I ever be happy again? It was not fair. How could God be so cruel to us? How could I still believe in God?

Some normality came back into the household after a while. Anna helped me a lot. But we knew Father was unhappy, not only because of mother and Albrecht dying, but because Bishops in the Church kept visiting our house and talking to him about their displeasure over some things he was saying on what the Church believed. He sometimes told us around the meal table about these exchanges and I am sure father was always right."

Earlier last year, my father went to Stockholm for a time and when he returned, he brought with him a new wife and mother for us. We soon got to know her; she is very capable at running the home and devoted to all us children. We are all glad for father. We again lack for nothing and our step mother is becoming more like a real mother to us as everyday passes. But I do miss my true mother.

What effect could the traumatic loss of a mother and older brother in quick succession have on an 8 year old both at the time and later at important occasions such as graduation from the University? Can the love of a stepmother (Sara Bergia) ever fully compensate for the loss of a natural mother's nurture? *What do you think?*



A Member's Journey

It is in the nature of our life here on this earth that the journeys we make can take many forms as well as be of long duration or be amazingly short. For me there has been the joy and privilege of sharing sixty-four years alongside a woman of extraordinary courage, kindness and fortitude before we reached the time when God found He had greater need for her than I.

That we had all those years together was no accident, for a sad and dreadful price was paid in order to safeguard them for us a price paid in coin that was scattered across so many countries during the war years of 1939-45. This is the story of a journey taken by an empty and torn Players' cigarette packet. Given sanctuary after escaping from my German captors by the four Sisters of Mercy in the Convent named La Maison des Servantes du Coeur de Jesus, in the little township of Beersel in Belgium, I was taken care of by the sister I have always thought of as "my" nun, and to whom I had first appeared whilst she was busy weeding the convent vegetable garden. It was "my" nun who, whilst attending to my injuries, asked if I was married and, upon learning that I was newly so, but that my young wife did not even know I had left England, suggested I write a note identifying myself which she would try to get delivered to Allied forces.

With a pencil she gave to me, and conscious of the stricture not to divulge other than name and number, I scribbled on the inside of an empty Players' cigarette packet .. "6895796 (my Army number) Am O.K. Peter", ... and handed it to "my" nun. I still see her now, lifting her white starched apron to place the piece of torn cardboard in the pocket at the front of her black habit. Sufficient to tell, the Germans learned where I was, and I was recaptured and the four Sisters were all shot in the Convent garden. The last glimpse I had of "my" nun was of her body lying amongst the trampled vegetables at almost the same spot I had first asked her help. Not until five years later did I learn that I had been declared "killed in action", my wife told she was a widow, which she continued to believe to be the case for the ensuing six months, during which she received the pension! So far as the military were concerned no further thought was given to me.

However, that was not to be the end, for towards the end of those six months a small group of French fishermen patriots took the risky decision to cross the English Channel so as to join the Free French forces and with them carried my Players' cigarette packet! Just how it had got to their hands was not known, but after reaching the military authorities, then the International Red Cross who instituted a search, I was at last found alive and kicking, and my wife not only reassured on that score, but sent the piece of cardboard along with the memories that are so much part of it. Given where I was found, and my wife a young and beautiful widow who had hardly even seen me again after our wedding ceremony, the journey completed by that cigarette packet proved to be the journey of a lifetime!

Spiritual awareness comes in a variety of ways - for me, although I did not recognise it at the time, it arrived in the form of an "apport", a gift received from a sister after her death. This highly psychic event occurred at the very moment I also received military orders recalling me to my regiment shortly before declaration of war in 1939, and left me in possession of very personal evidence of all that can be found in the teachings of Emanuel Swedenborg. Throughout the 64 years that have since passed, that talisman has refused to be parted from me - even when all else was taken, and has been a constant reminder of eternal life and our need to have faith.

In ways too complex to explain in this account, that mysterious gift and the knowledge it represents not only sustained me through the trials and tribulations of the war years, but influenced decisions which seem to have saved me and my family from a particularly unpleasant death in Africa ... and brought us to Australia, where we travelled from the port where we landed to go straight to the isolation of Far West of northern Queensland and there take up residence in a 6ft by 12ft timber hut.

How then, with my own life as my lesson, can I doubt the message from Swedenborg?"



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WHAT'S HAPPENING

For Group activities, contact your nearest Group Convenor

- Brisbane (Ian Arnold on (07) 3369 0054);
- Gold Coast (Kevin Attwater on (07) 5545 2401 and Jack Benson on (07) 5545 4115);
- Melbourne (Chris Skinner on (03) 9435 8599);
- Sydney region (Michael Chester on (02) 9913 2421);

It would be good to see additional viable Groups established in new areas. If you can help contact <u>Michael Chester</u>. **Sydney**: *Tuesday 16th December*. **Special Lunchtime Meeting** at the Swedenborg Centre, 1 Avon Road, North

2003 Ryde commencing at 1pm when Paul Eldar from Brisbane will provide an overview of *Swedenborg's life* and revelation, a talk for both newer and longer term readers. Book specials will be available.
Brisbane: New Church Hall, 21 Agars Street, Rosalie. 4th Wednesdays commencing at 1 pm

2004 February 25th ~ *Emanuel Swedenborg and Divine Providence* with Paul Eldar

	March 24^{th} ~ Topic be advised
Melbourne:	The New Church Hall, 426 High Street Road, Mount Waverley. Last Fridays commencing 8pm
2004	27^{th} February and 26^{th} March ~ Topics be advised
Sydney:	Swedenborg Centre, 1 Avon Road, North Ryde commencing at 7.45pm.
2004	30 th January ~ What can we expect in the Life hereafter? with Chris Skinner
	12^{th} March ~ Creation. An evening facilitated by Liz Coggins including a talk by Andrew
	Heslop and an Exhibition of Artwork on the theme

26th March

~ Jacob's Ladder. A talk by Roy Simmonds



With the festive season fast approaching, we especially thank all those who have contributed to our 2003 issues of Candela and made them of great interest to recipients. We trust that everyone will redouble their efforts during next year in sending material. To all our readers, we wish you peace and joy through Christmastide and many blessings during 2004.

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