

# Candelata



Newsletter of the  
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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

The writings of Emanuel Swedenborg embrace a universal philosophy which I believe is a great strength and attraction of the writings and hence of the Swedenborg Association of Australia. Swedenborg made it clear that regardless of our religious background or belief system, regeneration to a more spiritual and heavenly state is open to all.

So long as evil actions are not done because we know them to be wrong and good actions are done because we know, intuitively or otherwise, that this is what we must do, we can move forward into a more heavenly sphere of life. This opens us within the SAA, to seriously consider other philosophies and belief systems; how the Swedenborg writings can enlighten the strengths and weaknesses of those systems; and how we can develop a better understanding between ourselves and all people around us. This should immeasurably strengthen our own beliefs and help us to guide others along their spiritual pathways. We are all part of the growing spiritual awareness of the new Age of Aquarius and so we must each play our part in uplifting the spiritual quality of the whole brotherhood of mankind.

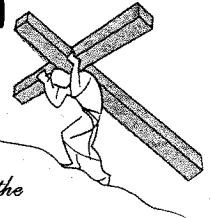
Be on the lookout for how you can apply your love and knowledge of the Swedenborg writings to better understand the spiritual needs of yourself and others around you.

And so develop a better understanding of your own Swedenborgian philosophy and allow yourself to pull others along the spiritual pathway together with your own spiritual regeneration and growth.

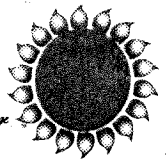
With Love and Light,

Kevin B. Attwater

## THE EASTER CULMINATION



*"The Lord had two purposes in coming into the world, redemption and the glorification of His Human; and by these He saved both people and angels. These two purposes are quite distinct, but still they are combined in effecting salvation. The nature of redemption was shown in the preceding paragraphs to be a battle against the hells, their subjugation and afterwards the ordering of the heavens. Glorification, however, is the uniting of the Lord's Human with His Father's Divine. This took place by stages and was completed by His passion on the cross. For every person ought for their own part to approach God, and the more nearly they do so, the more closely does God on His side enter into them . . . ."*



(continued on page 6)

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# THE POWER OF THOUGHT

*A paper by Peter Bartlett of Port Macquarie, NSW, entered in the  
1996 Swedenborg Literary Award*

Faith - belief in God - is the most precious gift bestowed upon mankind and, like the keystone in an arch, it holds together the fabric of human body, soul and mind so as to give real purpose and direction to life on this earth.

Without faith man would be no more than a thoughtless product of evolution destined to live each day with no greater ambition than to survive to the next sunrise. That this is not so is nowhere better epitomised than in the glorious heights to which human endeavour and self-sacrifice have risen over the hundreds of years of recorded history and the literature, art and other achievements left to inspire those who follow.

It is something of a contradiction, therefore, that many of those who study so assiduously to gain knowledge in the field of science, and in the course of doing so are constantly faced with the need to discard previously accepted theories, should reject out-of-hand the possibility that there is a Supreme Power.

To many laymen listening to scientific discourse it must seem odd to hear positive denial of the existence of any kind of spiritual existence whilst hearing, almost in the same breath, claims that science demands proven evidence before anything can be accepted as fact. Over the last few years therefore it is not merely refreshing but surprising to observe a growing willingness - at least among some - to recognise the incredibly beautiful and complex construction of the Universe as the work of an instrumental power. More will be said about that change of attitude later in this paper.

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## *Faith Comes Slowly*

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For most believers in God, faith comes slowly, usually from contemplation of one or other religious teaching or, sometimes, following a special, personal experience. Since we are generally born into a family already - notionally at least - of a particular belief, we tend to grow-up with preconceived impressions that may not always seem believable.

By its very nature, religious thought is subjective so that what we each find acceptable and convincing becomes a matter of personal intuition. For me, the belief that this earthly life is secondary - but nevertheless essential - to a primary spiritual existence became established firmly enough quite early - in my 'teen years in fact - although as might be expected serious thought only came later after the war years of 1939 to 1945. Perhaps because of those years, some doubts arose - in particular the existence of so much pain and suffering in this world that led me to wonder about much that I had previously accepted. It seemed impossible to reconcile a loving and compassionate God with the evils that had affected so many who had lived blameless lives, and to be assured it was "God's will" or that such things should be accepted without question, was not enough! If I was to regain belief the need to find the answer became vital.

Searching ultimately led me to the monumental works of Emanuel Swedenborg, of whom I had no previous knowledge, and in due course to his insistence that true understanding of the Holy Bible comes by recognising it as the Word of God...and finding its meaning beyond the written words. Looking back after so many years have passed, it is clear that direction was responsible for leading me to answers and resolution of those earlier doubts.

For mankind generally, acceptance of Deity in some form has been a significant - some will say fundamental - part of development since emergence as a distinct species from all other forms of life. Worship of natural forces, such as lightning, thunder and the seasonal changes that dictated day-to-day survival, are known to have influenced how primitive man lived, and also to have been the foundation around which social behaviour developed. That such forms of worship should have become replaced by subjective gods is a reflection of increasing human understanding but at the same time is evidence of mankind's enduring belief: it is true to say that belief has been a major contributor to life patterns wherever the human race is found, regardless of all other varying factors such as race, colour, climate and creed.

It has largely been from what was believed acceptable to gods that codes of behaviour and today's laws have developed, firstly applying to families, then tribes, countries and nations. Despite aberrations, human progress from a fragmented and chaotic state towards an ordered way of life has been remarkably consistent and has come about through an innate acceptance of an influence outside human understanding. In a sense even more significant than acceptance of something not physically felt and not properly understood, is the dominance of man over all else around him on this earth - including the other forms of life now known to be composed of the same biological "building blocks" as man himself! That is combinations of acid and proteins.

*What is it that sets man apart to the extent that he is capable of so controlling the world in which he lives?*

Of course, the answer to that is no mystery, for it has long been acknowledged that human capacity to think has been the feature instrumental in all man has achieved - and the fact that he can think subjectively that sets him so apart.

If lessons learned from Swedenborg are heeded, it is to the Bible then we should turn for understanding of ourselves and our destiny, so it seemed to follow that in the Book of Genesis - The Beginning - my search for answers ought to begin. That what it tells us is an allegorical account of the soul's progress need not exclude from it's message guidance on other matters concerned with behaviour in material life. Chapter 1, verse 26 will be well known, and reads:-

*"And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness, and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth."*

As is now known, all that was promised with those words has come to pass, to such an extent, indeed, that man can now design and change genetically forms of life itself. *Is it not time more consideration be given to those immensely powerful words of Genesis and to the implications that flow from them? Should we not recognise, and heed, the fearful responsibility that surely accompanies dominance over all else?*

As is the case with the Bible generally, the Book of Genesis has been subjected to much

interpretation over the centuries and, besides what was revealed to Swedenborg, two particular comments from other sources are worthy of note here. The first has been extracted from the 1971 "Interpreters' Commentary on the Bible" and says:- " ... values to be derived from reading Genesis are not scientific or primarily historic, they are religious."

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### *Live, Think, Create*

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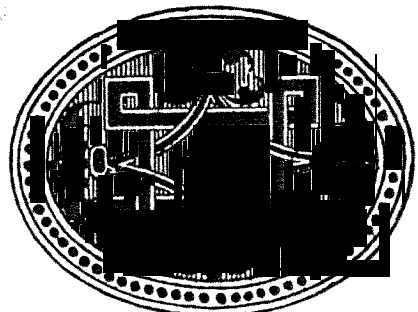
Found elsewhere is the following description of what might have been God's purpose when creating the earth and man:- "...to live, to think, to create, and to grow in glory".

To me both are significant contributions to understanding, but the last quoted excerpt is an inspired interpretation of our purpose for being where we are. Adding to the meaning of both is a further comment from the "Interpreters' Commentary" expressing the view that earth and man were created to introduce order into primeval chaos - to which end He created light, and consequently the measure of the passage of time so essential to progress.

**MAN DOES LIVE ...DOES THINK ...AND BY HIS THOUGHTS MAN DOES CREATE THIS WORLD IN MATERIAL TERMS ...AND, HOPEFULLY, BY BRINGING ORDER IS GROWING IN GLORY!**

We may not have yet attained the level of glory for which we have been created, but both the promise and the reality are ever there within our reach, and just as Swedenborg emphasises.

In the juxta positioning of the words "live", "think" and "create", when laid alongside Genesis, can be found the explanation for all that had bothered me...and the answers I sought were discovered!



Stated simply: when God created the earth and all things it, He bestowed upon man the means by which promised dominance might be achieved - He gave man the power of creative thought and, by it's application, an ability to change material things as man, by unfettered reason, elected to do. In the context of the events it describes, the words of Genesis offer understanding of mankind's collective and individual responsibility whilst here on earth. We have been given a godlike power within the limited scope of our material existence ...and, so far, have shown all too convincingly how easily that power can sometimes be misdirected.

To take what has already been written a stage further, it is timely to now consider the Divine Laws of Providence made known by Swedenborg, for they are particularly pertinent to views so far expressed. The first five of the six Laws are so clear as to permit no misunderstanding:-

- 1 *It is a law of the Divine Providence that man should act from freedom according to reason.*
- 2 *It is a law of the Divine Providence that man should as from himself remove evils as sins in the external man; and thus and not otherwise can the Lord remove evils in the internal man, and then at the same time in the external.*
- 3 *It is a law of the Divine Providence that man should not be compelled by external means to think and will and thus to believe and love, the things of religion, but should persuade and at times compel himself to do so.*
- 4 *It is a law of the Divine Providence that man should be led and taught by the Lord from heaven by means of the Word, and doctrine and preaching from the Word, and this to all appearance as of himself.*
- 5 *It is a law of the Divine Providence that man should not perceive and feel anything of the operation of the Divine Providence, but still that he should know and acknowledge it.*

These five Laws require us to live the earthly life free from compulsion to think or act in any particular way, promising salvation when we learn to live according to God's Word.

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### *Love and Compassion*

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We are here to learn - on our own so to speak - how to love and know compassion, and thus be ready to move on into the world of spirit.

Only here, in this material world, can "evil" occur so that we, by seeing and causing pain and suffering, may reason out how to end it!

The sixth Law of the Divine Providence reads:-

*"Evils are permitted for the sake of an end which is salvation",* and demands separate examination because of its different form and very different intent. Omission of the leading words *"It is a law of the Divine Providence."* is, in itself, sufficient indication that this Law should be read and interpreted as a kind of 'disclaimer' - that is a recognition "evil" (pain and suffering) is NOT within God's Laws, nor within His contemplation...but is permitted in the world of man and material governed by the preceding five Laws.

Such interpretation in no way conflicts with what is learned from Swedenborg, it is a reasoned extension of the Divine Laws he identified.

Those Laws may then be related to the earlier quoted words from Genesis, and at the same time to the quoted definition of the purpose for which man was created (page 3) when it will become evident that each conveys the same message: "...in our image" means, among other things, that man shares a godlike, albeit limited, power to create the world in which he lives. "...to live, to think, to create" etc. combine in a single earthly activity man's ability to transform this material world and, by so doing, to advance human understanding and acceptance of God. Freedom to choose without Divine intervention as expressed in the Divine Laws is positive and tangible evidence of God's love for, and trust in, mankind.

Conflicting views expressed by science and by believers of religious faiths are often advanced as ground for rejecting spiritual values and existence of the Almighty; it is pleasing therefore, to find support for the thoughts explained in this paper in a current scientific project as well as in theories expounded by one of the world's foremost authorities on physics and cosmology.

Only in the last few months have we witnessed evidence of progress achieved by a team of respected scientists who have been investigating long-held suspicions that human mental processes may be capable of much more than hitherto acknowledged. The project has already demonstrated that human thought is, in fact, a positive force and energy that is capable of being directed so as to cause controls to be switched on and off at a distance.

In strictly physical terms, the human brain is fairly well understood, but just how it functions, along with its relationship to the mind, remain a mystery. Discovery that thought is an energy and a material force takes our understanding over a new threshold and along a path which may well prove linked to human spiritual progress. That how we think and what we think is not just a vague and formless exercise directed to stimulating muscles and nerves but can have an effect upon health and physical performance is already widely accepted by the medical profession and sporting coaches. So in those areas also better understanding could be just around the corner.

Along somewhat similar lines but from a different direction, are comments made by **Stephen Hawking**, certainly the most remarkable, and considered by many to be the most brilliant, living physicist today.

On the subject of Creation, Hawking has this to say:- *"The idea that space and time may form a closed surface without boundary also has profound implications for the role of God in the affairs of the Universe. With the success of scientific theories in describing events, most people have come to believe that God allows the Universe to evolve according to a set of laws and does not intervene in the Universe to break those laws. However, the laws do not tell us what the Universe should have looked like when it started - it would still be up to God to wind-up the clockwork and choose how to start it off."*

It may appear remarkable that two hundred and twenty-five years after the death of Swedenborg, an eminent world scientist is echoing the Divine laws when commenting on God's role, but that Hawking has done so is both notable and supportive of what is now being written.

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### **Chaos to Order**

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However, Hawking's support does not end there - he also has something to add about God's intentions for man:- *"Suppose, however, that God decided that the Universe should finish up in a state of high order but that it didn't matter what state it started in. At early times the Universe would probably be in a disordered state. This would mean that disorder would decrease with time....the progress of the human race in understanding the Universe has established a small corner of order in an increasingly disordered Universe."*

The picture this presents of a Universe that has its beginning with a chaotic mass of nebular chemical particles into which a semblance of order is created in one small part, and in that part human life is created as the reasoning catalyst for progress towards order and understanding, is indeed convincing.

Whether or not it is considered compatible with how we believe in God and man's spirituality is something each of us must decide. These are matters that have been the subject of more study and meditation than any other aspect of human life, so it is unlikely hitherto unrecognised aspects will now be brought to light. Seldom does individual understanding come as a flash of revelation, but rather from finding truth and reason in thoughts and beliefs of others. This does not, however, prevent the moment of understanding seeming like revelation!

That the true significance of thought was revealed to Swedenborg is evident in much that he wrote, but perhaps the discovery that souls in the spirit world create surroundings in which they live with their thoughts is most relevant to what is suggested in this paper. It is entirely reasonable to expect a similar creative power is to be found in this "natural" world in accordance with the law of correspondence he also identified.

In the Almighty's scales, perhaps what we choose to believe will be outweighed by acceptance that He is there and the way in which we live our life here on earth.

Including, as it does, comments made by Professor Hawking, perhaps it is fitting to bring this essay to its finish with a final quotation of his:- *"However, if we do discover a complete theory, it should in time be understandable in broad principle by everyone, not just a few scientists. Then we shall all, philosophers, scientists and just ordinary people, be able to take part in the discussion of the question of why it is that we and the Universe exist. If we find the answer to that, it would be the ultimate triumph of human reason ... for then we would know the Mind of God."*

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**"The mind is like iron;  
it rusts when not used."**

**Socrates**

## MEMBERSHIP

We welcome the following new members:

Thekla Ewald (Bilgola Plateau, NSW)  
Jan Goldsmith (Chatswood, NSW)  
John Wallace (Rupanyup, Vic)

### January 1997 Board meeting actions.

An action arising from the **January Board meeting** is that members will receive a reformatted membership card. They will be sent out to those joining the SAA or renewing their membership.

### Board Meeting dates.

The next three meetings in 1997 are scheduled for:

Tuesday 15th April (to be confirmed);  
Tuesday 15th July; and  
Tuesday 21st October.

Venue is the The Swedenborg Centre, 1 Avon Road, NORTH RYDE. Time: 7.30 pm.

### **Concluding quotation and message from the Secretary.**

*"Since the interiors of the mind make one with the interiors of the body, it follows that when the interiors of the mind turn themselves to the Lord as a sun, those of the body turn themselves in like manner; and because the exteriors of mind and body depend upon their interiors, they also do the same. For what the external does, it does from internals, the general deriving all it has from the particulars from which it is. From this it is evident that as an angel turns his face and body to the Lord as a sun, all the interiors of his mind and body are turned in the same direction. It is the same with man, if he has the Lord constantly before his eyes, which is the case if he is in love and wisdom. He then looks to the Lord not only with eyes and face, but also with all the mind and all the heart, that is, with all things of the will and understanding, together with all things of the body."*

**Swedenborg: Divine Love and Wisdom 137**

In Dr Groves 1997 Swedenborg's birthday talk, *'Swedenborg's View of the Individual'*, he indicated that re-birth is a very big process. If we apply self-analysis and self-correction and co-operate with the Lord a tremendous and pleasing destiny lies before us. This is indeed Good News. Wishing you an exciting time in the coming months and looking forward to your support and feedback.

Michael Chester, Hon Secretary.  
Ph. (02) 99132421

## THE EASTER CULMINATION (cont. From Page 1)

*... The reason why the actual union (the Lord's Human with His Father's Divine, being glorification) was fully achieved by the passion on the cross is that it was the last temptation which the Lord underwent in the world, and temptations create a link. In temptation it looks as if a person is left alone, but this is not so, since God is then most closely present in the person's inmost, and secretly gives support. When therefore anyone is victorious over temptation, they are most inwardly linked with God, and in this case the Lord was most inwardly united with God His Father.*


*... It is a fundamental error on the part of the church to believe that the passion on the cross was the real act of redemption. That error, together with the erroneous belief in three divine persons existing from eternity, has so perverted the whole church that there is no remainder of spirituality left in it.*

*... Redemption could only be effected by an Incarnate God.*

*... The passion on the cross was the last temptation which the Lord underwent as the Greatest Prophet; this was the means by which he glorified His human, that is, united it with His Father's Divine; so this was not in itself the redemption. (Emphasis added)*

Excerpts from Swedenborg's  
True Christian Religion,  
from paragraphs 124, 126 & 132

## A PROMISE OF LIFE



Subtitled **"a booklet for the bereaved"**, a special limited reprint of this short work by Rev. Dennis Duckworth (UK) has been completed by The Swedenborg Lending Library and Enquiry Centre, Sydney. Supplies are freely available for those wishing to give a copy to anyone they believe could be helped from reading it. The edition is to especially commemorate the life of the late **Harry Woods** (1913 - 1994) of Punchbowl, NSW, who introduced many to the teachings of Emanuel Swedenborg. This booklet was undoubtedly Harry's favourite piece of outreach material. **If you would like copies, please contact The Swedenborg Centre.**



## GROUPS NEWS

### Sydney

The North Ryde Committee has continued organizing monthly meetings with a guest speaker on the fourth Friday evening of the month. About 50 people came along to the January meeting when we celebrated Swedenborg's 309th Birthday anniversary. The people listened to '*Swedenborg's View of the Individual*' a lecture prepared by Dr Philip Groves and read by Joe Vandermeer. Regrettably, Dr Groves was not well at the time to give the lecture. The audience appreciated Joe's reading of the lecture and his responses to questions at the end. This was followed by a screening of the film '*Swedenborg: the man who had to know*'. A special supper was provided to complete the evening. A report of this meeting will appear in the next issue of *Candela*. Unfortunately, Diana James had to cancel her February lecture 'Circles in the Desert: experiences with the Pitjantjatjara people'. We were very fortunate that Michael Galovic accepted the invitation to give a presentation on *Icons*, a report of the evening appearing later in this issue.

The *Celebration of Easter '97* on Easter Saturday has been organized by Julian Duckworth. Again, a full report will appear in the next issue and a video presentation will be available for free borrowing by SAA members. Details of forthcoming activities/meetings are listed on the back page.

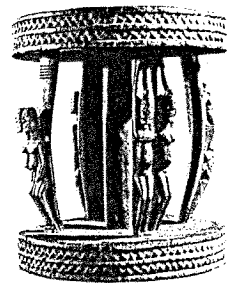
### Melbourne

The year's programme began in February with a talk entitled *The Bible: the story of my life* given by John Teed, a recently retired Minister of the Swedenborgian Church now living in country Victoria. Those present were given some useful insights into how the internal sense of the Word, which lies within the literal text by means of correspondences, presents us with the patterns underpinning our spiritual life. March saw a very different approach through a talk on *Near-Death Experiences* given by Sylvia Erickson from IANDS (the International Association for Near-Death Studies). Sylvia outlined a number of the aspects involved in the near-death experience and this was followed by a brief presentation from Geoff Forster, a good friend of the Swedenborg Movement in Victoria, on the Swedenborgian understanding of the spiritual world and the process of moving from this level of life to the higher level. With twelve at the first meeting and 18 at the subsequent one, the year has started well for the Group. Meetings continue

to be held monthly (usually every fourth Friday), and the topic for April will be *Forgiveness*, which should be both meaningful and challenging.

### Perth

Meetings have also been held in February and March and will continue through the remainder of the year on the evening of the third Sunday of every month. The series of talks introducing the main concepts in Swedenborg's writings, prepared by The Swedenborg Lending Library and Enquiry Centre, Sydney, are still forming the basis of discussion each meeting. The reasons for *learning about God* and the concept of understanding and *knowing God as a person* rather than as a nebulous and ethereal energy force have taken the attention of those attending (usually 6) so far this year. The April meeting will move onto the concept of *bringing one's life into harmony with God by replacing areas of disorder with order* - that is the regeneration process; *the spiritual pathway* we need to tread to become in tune with Divine Life.



## CELEBRATION OF SPRING '97

*Yes, it's time to start thinking about Spring!*

Enclosed with this Newsletter is a notice inviting your participation in the fifth Swedenborg Prize for Religious Art:-

**Theme: SPRING with an emphasis on Sacred Symbols of the African Religious Traditions**

So now is the time to not only start thinking about what unique piece of artwork (drawing, painting, photography, calligraphy, sculpture, stained glass and print-making) you could enter **but to begin it without delay.**

It is open to everyone (think about suggesting participation to a friend or work colleague) and remember it is the entering that is important - sharing with others your particular expression of inner affection - and not the winning. Amateurs can do this just as well as professionals!

There will also be a **Swedenborg Literary Award** this year. Details will follow shortly.

# ICONS:

## THE STORY AND SYMBOLISM OF TRADITIONAL BYZANTINE ICONS

It is most refreshing and rewarding to be able to sit and listen to someone who is an obvious expert in their chosen field and whose love for their work just radiates to everyone around. The 25 or so present at The Swedenborg Centre, North Ryde on the evening of Friday 28th February were certainly treated to this rather rare experience and held almost "spell-bound" for over two hours. Most of us knew nothing about Icons, let alone traditional Byzantine ones. But what an absorbingly interesting time (2 hours passing as a jif) it was thanks to **Michael Galovic**.

Michael, a member of the Swedenborg Association of Australia Ltd., is one of Australia's leading Iconographers. He was born in Belgrade into an artistic family and began absorbing the ancient platform of iconography in early childhood while watching his father restoring frescoes and icons in Serbian churches and monasteries. He commenced painting them himself in his late teens. He is a graduate of the Belgrade Academy of Arts.

In a very unassuming but engaging manner, Michael explained how the origin of Icons lies in the religious instruction and devotional life of the early Eastern Slavonic Christians, in their homes as well as their churches. He told us in some detail how they were made originally and how they are made today. Naturally this involves quite intricate and technically difficult gilding and colouring processes which take much practice to perfect. Michael concluded by saying something about the symbolism within the Biblical scenes and sacred persons depicted in the Icon. Perhaps for the majority, this was the most inspiring aspect to icons. Michael emphasised that those using icons in their religious life do/should not regard the individual icon as something special but regard it as the divine presence it represents. We were able to view several of Michael's beautiful icons as he explained something of their representations; it was quite easy to link much of this to Swedenborg's doctrine of correspondences.

Michael's work is displayed in many Churches and private collections around the world. As well as holding a number of solo exhibitions in this country, he has also held one man shows of icons in Peru and recently in the USA. He teaches at a number of Centres around Sydney and regularly gives lectures in Australia and overseas on the technical and spiritual aspects of icons. So it was a real privilege to have Michael present his subject to us.

**Announcing** .....  
..... for those living in the greater Sydney area, for those with access to the Internet (ring 02 9888 1066 for details) and for those wishing to listen to an audio tape.

# Beloved Visitors

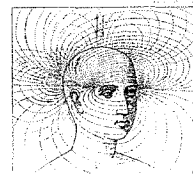
After-death visits from Children  
An Evening with  
**Dr. Cherie Sutherland**

**FRIDAY, 18<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 1997 AT 7.45 P.M.**

The Swedenborg Centre, North Ryde.

We are delighted to once again have Dr. Sutherland come and talk to us, more especially as the topic is the subject of her latest book which has only just been released. Those who attended her talk last October have first-hand experience of what a delightful person and speaker she is. Dr. Sutherland is a visiting research fellow on near-death experiences in the School of Sociology at the University of New South Wales and author of several books. Her talk will centre around extraordinary experiences of parents at the time of the death of their child, and even months later, plus others involving premonitions and death-bed visions, of parents physically sharing their child's moment of death.

## *The Human Face of Nature* by Walter Orthwein



*"Thought from the eye closes the understanding, but thought from the understanding opens the eye."*

**Swedenborg: Divine Love and Wisdom 46**

Almost everyone loves the great outdoors, or at least many of the things found there. People often remark that they feel close to God in nature - working in the garden, fishing on a quiet lake, hiking in the mountains, or listening to a whip bird as the moon rises above the trees around a campsite.

The very fact that human beings are able to appreciate nature as they do might be seen as evidence that we are spiritual beings. Clearly, there is a component of our being that is outside of nature, and thus we are able to reflect upon it. Otherwise, if we were totally natural creatures, what would there be in us to love nature, or even be conscious of it? Only a creature able to stand apart from nature can consider it from reason, draw meaning from it, and delight in its beauty.



There are two sides to our human love of nature. We love it because we are part of it and identify deeply with it. Second, we are *able* to love it and analyse it because there is also something in us that lives in a realm outside of nature.

To see behind, or beyond, the veil of natural creation is not to take anything away from nature, but to increase our understanding of it and, thus, our appreciation of it. The world of nature is then seen to be the covering and representative of something higher and more perfect, something spiritual it is, in fact, *divine* and amazingly, *human*.

Of all the investigators of the world of nature, no one has looked more deeply into it than Emanuel Swedenborg, who examined it as a scientist and philosopher and, finally, from a mind opened to the light of heaven. After many years of mastering sciences ranging from geology to human anatomy, Swedenborg was given to perceive the spiritual and divine reality behind nature.

Beyond the sense of order, peace, beauty, power, and wonder anyone may feel when reflecting on the world of nature, Swedenborg opens our eyes to see in nature a *Divine Humanity* that is both transcendent and Immanent - above and beyond nature, while at the same time *within* all nature.

There is an ordering spirit operating within all natural things, forming them for some particular use, and appearing in them, more or less perfectly, as a person's soul appears in the body. It is a human spirit; and within the forms it weaves from natural matter, we may discern the face of God.

The materialistic notion is that "*mind*" is nothing more than the activity of the brain, that love is nothing more than a sensation produced by chemicals that our genes use to trick us into providing for their perpetuation, and so on. But Swedenborg shows that love is something real and substantial; it is our very life, and love together with wisdom is what makes us human.

Our physical bodies thus *re-present* the soul, the spiritual essence of the person, on the plane of physical substance. And because the human will and understanding are formed by God to be a dwelling place for himself in us, the human body also presents an image and likeness of God - finite and imperfect though that image may be.

The human body exists to serve the mind or spirit. Apart from the mind, the body is useless. It is "*dead*" in itself; it only lives from the mind or spirit that flows into it and formed it in the first place. "*The body is the mind's external,*" Swedenborg says (DLW 369). It is the same with the whole universe,

and all things in it. They are but forms of "*use*"; that is, they are formations on the material plane of existence of the divine love and wisdom flowing from God. They exist for a purpose, namely, that there might be a joining together of the Creator with creation through the conscious human life supported by the world of nature.

Swedenborg tells us that this union is "*the universal end of creation*" (DLW 170). Creation enters into all things, and they all serve it in various ways. And since this divine purpose is realised through human beings - creatures who can know, love, understand, respond to God - the definition of use is whatever serves the perfection of human life physically, mentally, and spiritually. Food, clothing, shelter, medicine, and so on are useful for the body; knowledge is useful for the mind; worship, prayer, studying the Scriptures, and charitable acts are useful for the spirit.

As the physical body, especially the face, reveals the spirit's affections and thoughts (representing them in a physical form), so all nature may be said to reveal the infinite love and wisdom of God, and thus his humanity. This is not a mere metaphor or symbolism, but an actual, organic relationship between God and nature.



The whole created universe reflects its Creator. The word "*reflect*" is very apt because an image in a mirror shows how something on one plane of reality can come from and reflect something that is on a totally distinct plane. The image in the mirror exactly corresponds to or represents the person; as long as the person is there, the image is there; when the person moves, it moves. Yet there is nothing of the person's own being in the mirror. Break the mirror and it harms the person not at all. The two are utterly distinct.

This illustrates how God can be in nature and yet apart from it, so that nature itself is not divine. Pantheism is an error that comes from perceiving God in nature but failing to perceive the absolute distinction between the two. Nature is not divine, but it is derived entirely from God and is sustained by the presence of the divine in it every moment.

Not only do we see God reflected in nature, but we see God there as *human*. And because we are made in God's image, we can also see images of ourselves or humanity generally in nature. We see God as human in nature because nature is a kingdom of uses (all its forms are forms of use), and use is the embodiment of the divine love and wisdom that come from God and are the essence of humanity.

Many have perceived that there is intelligence in the universe. Einstein, for instance, was awed by it. But what he failed to perceive was that there is no such thing as intelligence apart from human life. If you see intelligence, you are looking at humanity. Intelligence can no more exist alone than love, or beauty, or bravery, or forgiveness. Therefore, to see intelligence in nature is to see God there as human.

Ours is a culture built around science and technology; but, powerful as these tools are, they do not address the most compelling issues of human life. We have been taught to look to science for the answer to all problems, and it is widely assumed that science is the only source of progress.

But scientific technology cannot alleviate the anxiety and suffering of the spirit that is so much a part of our time. It cannot bring peace or joy.

People sense the vacuum; they sense that the god of human reason is powerless to give them what they most need and want. Instinctively, perhaps they turn to nature. At least nature is not the product of mankind, whose every scheme seems doomed to turn to dust. Nature shows so clearly a lesson we need to learn: **there is an order in the universe that human ingenuity cannot improve and disregards only at great peril.**

*We live in a time when there is great concern for the environment and reverence for nature. Unfortunately, though, some would make nature itself into an idol. Swedenborg on the other hand, offers a genuinely spiritual ecology. He does revere the earth, not for its own sake, but for the sake of the God who made it, and is represented in it, and for the sake of the human life for which it was created.*

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**QUOTATION  
TO CONTEMPLATE**



*How often do we stop to observe the wonder of the Lord's creation. What difference might it make if we did it more often?* Swedenborg in *Divine Providence* 3 gives us some important pointers.

**"A person can see the Lord's hand in all of creation if wished**

*... That the universe, with all things in general and in particular in it, was created from the Divine Love by means of the Divine Wisdom can be confirmed from all things in the world that may be examined by the eye. Take any object in particular and examine it with some degree of intelligence, and you will be convinced. Take a tree, or its seed, its fruit, its flower or its leaf, and, summoning what wisdom you have, view it with a powerful microscope, and you will see wonderful things; yet there are more interior things, which you do not see, still more wonderful. Observe the order, step by step, in which the tree grows from the seed till it produces new seed; and consider whether there is not in every step a continuous endeavour to propagate itself further; for the goal to which it tends is seed, in which its prolific principle exists anew.*

*Em. Swedenborg.*

*Then if you will but reflect upon this spiritually also, and this you can do if you please, will you not see wisdom displayed? Moreover, if you will reflect deeply enough from the spiritual point of view, you will see that this prolific principle is not from the seed, nor from the sun of this world which is pure fire, but that it is in the seed from God the Creator, to whom belongs infinite Wisdom. You will see that it is present not only at creation but also continuously afterwards; for maintenance is perpetual creation, as subsistence is perpetual existence. . . . Examine also any other object on the earth, as a silk-worm, a bee, or any other tiny creature, and view it first naturally, afterwards rationally, and finally spiritually. Then if you can raise your thoughts to a high level, you will be astonished at all you perceive; and if you permit wisdom to speak in you, you will say in astonishment, "Who does not see the Divine in these things? They are all the work of Divine Wisdom." Still more will this be the case if you observe the uses of all the things which have been created, noting how they proceed in their own order right up to human beings, and from them to the Creator from whom they are; and that from the conjunction of the Creator with human beings the connection of all things depends, and, if you will acknowledge it, the preservation of all things."*

## PUBLICATIONS REVIEW

One of the benefits of SAA membership is a 20% discount on the regular price of nearly all books (excepting large sets), cassettes and tapes purchased through the various Swedenborg Book Centres around Australia. All you have to do when ordering in person, by phone or mail is to refer to your SAA membership. If you have not got a book catalogue and price list, you can get one from The Swedenborg Centre, North Ryde. Below are titles which should be of interest.

### *Aim: The Workbook*

by Peter Rhodes

Published by the Swedenborg Foundation.

165 pages, paperback.

Normal price \$15.00.

**Offered to SAA Members at the Extra  
Special Price of just \$9.00**

#### **Do You Want to Improve Your Love Life?**

If you wish to really become more loving and improve your relationship with others, this book is for you.

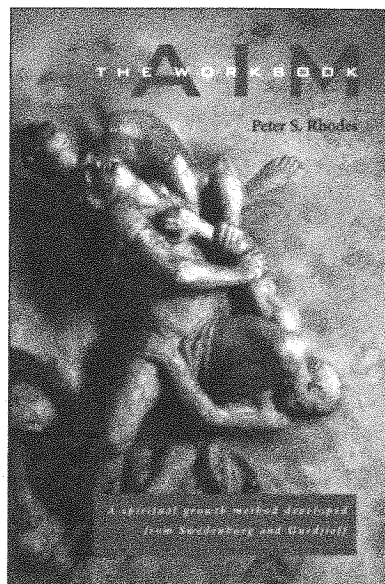
Rather than being a workbook you write in, as may be implied by the title, **AIM: The Workbook** follows a similar format to Rhodes' previous book **AIM**, the difference is that this "Workbook" is arranged in a more logical sequence than the series of lectures provided in the first book.

Key definitions of the central concepts of the book can be found in the helpful two-part glossary section, "FROM THE WORK" (Nicoll) and "FROM THE WRITINGS" (Swedenborg). The 'Work' is "one's inner spiritual work; spiritual growth; the work of regeneration". Regeneration is further defined in the Swedenborg section as the "lifelong process of spiritual rebirth."

Obviously, this book has its own terminology, but it is not difficult. Some of the terms and ideas are drawn from the writings of Maurice Nicoll (particularly his commentary on Gurdjieff and Ouspensky), and others from Emanuel Swedenborg.

At the end of each chapter is a "task" which is suitable for an individual or group. Some of the comments from one group using these tasks are: "The most practical book on spiritual growth which I have read," and "This book brings Swedenborg's ideas down to a detailed practical level and is suited for the state of people in this time."

One important concept given is that of not identifying with the things that are in us or believing that they originate from ourselves. As Swedenborg says in **Apocalypse Revealed**, paragraph 1147: "I can testify that for fifteen years I have clearly perceived that I have thought nothing and willed nothing of myself, . . .



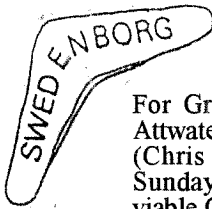
. . . . also that every evil and falsity has flowed in from infernal societies and every good and truth has flowed in from the Lord."

Chapter 9 describes in summary the "Whole Nine Steps" of Rhodes' spiritual growth system. The first step, as described in the Writings of Swedenborg is acknowledgment of the Lord Jesus Christ as our God (see **True Christian Religion**, paragraph 5). The first step in Alcoholics Anonymous is acknowledgment of a Higher Power - our own vision of God as we understand it. However, the first step described in this chapter is to "know about evils." This knowledge we gain from "revelation, from studying the Word, from parents and teachers, and from other sources. Knowledge is the first step." This implies that the reader is more advanced - that he already acknowledges his God, and has begun to change his life.

The remaining eight steps follow in a connected series from the first. I highly recommend **AIM: The Workbook**

A Review by Alan Ferr of  
Swedenborg Information, Canada.

To obtain these publications, simply contact The Swedenborg Centre, 1 Avon Road, NORTH RYDE, 2113 (Tel. 02 98881066; Fax. 02 98881166; E-mail [sllandec@swedenborg.com.au](mailto:sllandec@swedenborg.com.au)) with your request referring to your SAA membership. Do not send any money; an invoice will accompany the book(s) including surface mail postage. You can pay by Bankcard, Mastercard or Visacard by quoting your card number, its expiry date and the exact name on the card. However, a surcharge of 5% (i.e. a reduction in discount) will have to be added to cover fees charged by the credit card organisations.



## WHAT'S HAPPENING

For Group activities, contact your nearest Group facilitator - Sydney region (Kevin Attwater on 9634 7808); Melbourne which meets monthly on the fourth Friday evening (Chris Skinner on 9435 8599); and Perth which meets in the evening on the third Sunday of every month (Allan Uren on 271 0226). It would be good to see additional viable Groups established in new areas. If you can help, contact Kevin Attwater.

### FORTHCOMING SAA PUBLIC MEETINGS

DIARISE NOW

MELBOURNE Normally Fourth Friday Evening of each month at New Church Hall, 426 High Street Road, Mt. Waverley, 8pm.  
Friday 25th April 1997. *Forgiveness* with Terry Schnarr of Sydney.

PERTH Third Sunday Evening of each month at 74 Wyatt Road, Bayswater, 7.30pm.  
Next meeting Sunday 20th April 1997. Subject: *The Spiritual Pathway*.  
Details by ringing Allan Uren on 271 0226.

SYDNEY Normally Fourth Friday Evening of each month at The Swedenborg Centre, North Ryde, 7.45 pm.  
April 12th (Saturday). *Overcoming Your Fears* workshop with Andrew St. John  
April 18th (3rd Friday). Dr. Cherie Sutherland on *Beloved Visitors* (see Page 8)  
May 23rd. *Sacred Architecture* with John Brogan  
June 27th. *Salamanders in Venus* with Neville Jarvis  
July 25th. Dr. Al Gabay of LaTrobe University (Victoria) on *Swedenborg, Alfred Deakin and Messmer*

*Why two copies?* Members receive a second copy of *Candela* as an avenue for letting others know of the existence of this Association. *Please do hand it on or make it widely available.*

*Art Displays at The Swedenborg Centre. APRIL 1997. "Third Eye Revelations" by Sophia Sourlas. Meet the artist evening - Tuesday 15th at 7.30 pm with free cheese and wine.*

*May 1997. Healing Symbols by Michael Wright. Opening at 2pm Saturday 3rd including a talk The Spiritual Aspects of Homoeopathy by Lachlan Hinds. \$10.00.*

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