

Candle

Newsletter of the
Swedenborg Association of Australia Ltd.

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Issue 16

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

The seventh Annual General Meeting of our Swedenborg Association of Australia is coming up on 15th August, and hence it is appropriate that we all reflect on the continued operation of our Association.

After six years it is time for three of our inaugural Board Members, Ruth Duckworth, Jack Benson and myself, to stand down from the Board in accordance with our Memorandum and Articles of Association. This is therefore an opportune time for other members to come forward to support the ongoing Directors and to inject new enthusiasm and even new directions into our Association.

I have enjoyed my participation on the Board and so it is with mixed feelings that I will be standing down at the AGM. Although I will no longer be a formal office bearer of the Association, after a period of reflection on my own changing directions, I will continue to support our Association in other ways.



Our membership has been fairly static over the past couple of years and so we do need some new enthusiasm and innovative programs in order to attract new membership. I still truly believe that we have an extremely useful organisation based on a wonderful universal philosophy and the writings of Emanuel Swedenborg. We should continue to put our Association to good use in influencing the spiritual directions of ourselves and of those around us.

I look forward to meeting with as many members and friends as possible at the AGM and other Association functions.

With Love and Light,

Kevin B. Attwater

**Spiritual Psychology
and the Ability
to Increase One's Efficiency**

I was very pleased to have been given the opportunity recently to present a speech at the Swedenborg Centre with the above title.

For the benefit of those who were unable to attend, the basis of my talk was in fact to increase one's own bodily energy vibration. This means that an individual takes in more energy, and thus will want to expend that energy in some worthwhile creative activity subsequently increasing efficiency. So how then does an individual take in more energy? Does he have a bigger bowl of porridge in the morning for breakfast? Or does he have cold showers and consume strong coffee?



It is mentioned in the Bible that, "man cannot live by bread alone". Does this mean that man can live if he has a steak with his bread? Or could it be that he cannot live on bread without the Light from the God force!

At this stage of evolution we are not yet accustomed to thinking of personality in terms of energy, yet the two cannot be dissociated. How much energy an individual has and how he uses it must determine and be reflected in his personality. Some people have more energy than others.

The relation of energy to personality is most clearly manifested in a depressed individual. Although the depressed reaction and the depressive tendency result from the interplay of complicated psychological, emotional and physical factors, one thing is abundantly clear, the depressed individual makes only half the spontaneous movements usual in the non-depressed person. In some cases the individual is so apathetic that they don't have the energy to move actively or to develop an interest. So what we find is that it takes energy to move the machine of life. In fact energy is involved in the movement of all things, both living and non-living.

We can all accept the fundamental proposition that energy is involved in all the processes of life - in moving, feeling and thinking and that these processes would come to a halt if the supply of energy to the organism were seriously interrupted; for example the lack of food would deplete an organisms energy so severely that death could occur, or if our oxygen supply was suddenly cut off we wouldn't be able to breathe.

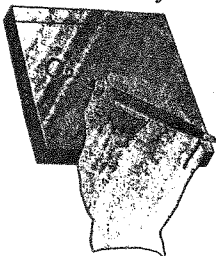
It is commonly accepted that the energy of an animal organism comes from the combustion of food. Plants on the other hand have the capacity to capture and harness the energy of the sun for their life processes, transforming it into the tissues of the plant, thus making it available as food for herbivorous animals.

Changing the food back into free energy that the animal can use for its own life's needs is a complex chemical procedure which ultimately involves the use of oxygen.

The combustion of food is not unlike the combustion that occurs in a wood fire, which also requires oxygen to maintain the process. In both cases the rate of combustion is related to the amount of available oxygen.

This simple analogy does not explain the complicated phenomenon of life. A simple fire burns itself out when the fuel supply is exhausted. It also burns indiscriminately with no regard for the energy liberated by the combustion. In contrast the living organism is a self-contained, self-regulating and self-perpetuating fire.

How it is able to perform this miracle - that is to burn without burning up, or burning out - is still a great mystery. Although we don't have an answer yet, it is important to try to understand some of the factors involved, for all of us, I hope, want to keep the flame of life burning brightly and continuously within.



So the common trait amongst all living organisms residing on this blue star is they all require oxygen to survive.

I am reminded of the wise words of Oscar Wilde when he stated that, "Mankind will only evolve when he realises that water cleanses, fire purifies and air enlivens.

What did he mean that Air Enlivens?

Well this is where I must urge you to become a scientist. A scientist experiments does he not?

The experiment is to take 20 deep full connected breaths once per day for 7 days. Connected breathing means to breathe without pause, so it's no pause on the inhale or on the exhale, sort of like the way a dog breathes when running in the park, only not as fast - no panting!

The idea is to intake 30-40% more air than the normal breath.

Sounds simple, even silly, but sometimes the best kept secrets are the simple things. All I can say is that if you consciously decided to incorporate 20 connected breaths as a daily discipline, which would only take 30 seconds or so, you would experience such an increase of physical, mental, emotional and even spiritual well being that you will wish that you had discovered this years ago.

If anyone having experienced the 7 day trial would like further information about the phenomena of the breath, please feel free to contact me via the Swedenborg Centre.

Iain Smith

(Iain Smith presented his talk to the April meeting of the North Ryde Group)

ANSWERS AND QUESTIONS

No correspondence was received at "Answers and Questions" since the last column appeared, so we'll take the opportunity ourselves to make a response to one of the things put forward by Waldis Jirgens in the last edition of Candela.

One of his questions read: *"If humans require continual spiritual influence from Heaven and from Hell to exist at all (HH 592 and 597 inter alia), and Heaven and Hell are made up of humans, how did it all start? It's a bit like the chicken and egg problem."*

In the "Heaven and Hell" paragraphs mentioned by Waldis, Swedenborg's main interest is the equilibrium which exists between the influences that humans receive from heaven, on one hand, and hell on the other. This equilibrium ensures our continuing safety because the presence of the heavens stops the destructive power of the hells overwhelming us. But nowhere in these passages does Swedenborg say that this has always been the case. At one point he suggests that equilibrium is necessary for the existence of all things, but he is speaking generally and at this point not specifically about the equilibrium between heaven and hell.

All this allows the possibility that heaven and hell formed only after the first physical death of humans in the world. But if you accept Swedenborg's assertion that some sort of equilibrium is essential for all things to exist, another question now arises. We may find the answer when we look at the very first words of the Bible.

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth."

Swedenborg explains that we are to understand this to mean that God created man from the beginning with both a higher nature and a lower one. Through the higher nature man receives impulses to love others unconditionally, and through his lower nature he receives impulses to satisfy his natural desires and appetites. Both are good and essential for human life. But the lower nature was meant to serve the higher one, even though God created them equally powerful as a way of endowing man with free will. With this free will man was then able to choose to invert God's intended order and thereby spoil the goodness and usefulness of the Divinely created lower nature.

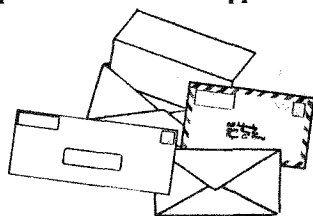
Now later, once the spiritual world began humans also started to experience urgings that came from the spirits that were now with them. They were now being urged towards choosing the impulses that were in tune with the loves of these spirits. Once again, for the sake of maintaining man's free will and continued existence, God ensured that these urgings were kept in equilibrium. This is the particular equilibrium that Swedenborg writes at length on.

Perhaps at the heart of Waldis' comments may be a puzzle that others have wrestled with, and it is this. If the first humans were not subjected to influences from hell, how did evil have its start? Our explanation offers a solution to this question by describing evil not as a thing of real substance, but one existing by means of the inversion of the proper order of God's good creation.

Wayne Kasmar

Please accept a standing invitation to send any questions, comments or answers to questions that have appeared in Answers and Questions to:

"Answers and Questions"
61 Surfers Parade,
Harbord. 2096



Thank you.
(Next deadline for publication - 15th October)

Quotation to Contemplate

..... courtesy of Jack Benson

What is True Wisdom?

Who else can give a better description of True Wisdom than Swedenborg? Following are a few paragraphs taken from the *Arcana Caelestia* 1555.2.3.

"Few if any people know how a person is led to true wisdom. Intelligence is not wisdom but it leads to wisdom, for having an understanding of what truth and good are is not the same as being a true and good person; but being wise is. Wisdom can be used only in reference to a person's life, to what kind of a person he is. To wisdom, or life, he is introduced through coming to know and being aware, that is, through knowledge and cognitions.

With every person there are two parts of the mind - the will and the understanding - the will being the primary part and the understanding the secondary; and the nature of his life after death is as the nature of the will part, not the understanding part, of his mind.

A person's will is being formed by the Lord from infancy on into childhood, and this is achieved through innocence that has been instilled into him, and through the exercise of charity towards parents, nursemaids, and other young children of his own age, and through further things that he is quite unaware of and which are celestial. Unless those celestial things were first instilled in a person while an infant and child he could not possibly become truly human. *In this way the first degree is formed.*

But because a person is not human unless he is provided with understanding as well, will alone does not make a human being but understanding and will together. And understanding cannot be acquired except by means of knowledge and cognitions, and therefore he has to be endowed with these step by step from childhood onwards. *In this way the second degree is formed.*

Once the understanding part of the mind has been furnished with knowledge and cognitions, especially cognitions of truth and good, he is for the first time able to undergo regeneration. And when he is being regenerated, truths and goods are implanted by the Lord by means of cognitions within the celestial things he has been granted by the Lord since infancy. The result is that the ideas now in his understanding make one with those celestial things. And once the Lord has joined them together so, he is endowed with charity from which he starts to act and which constitutes conscience. This is how he comes to receive new life for the first time, something that is achieved step by step. The light of this life is called wisdom, which then plays the leading role and is set above intelligence. *In this way the third degree is formed.*

If this has happened to a person during his lifetime he goes on being perfected in the next life."



SECRETARY'S REPORT

1998 Annual General Meeting

This will be held on Saturday, 15th August at 2 p.m. at the Swedenborg Centre, 1 Avon Road, North Ryde.

Board Meeting dates

The next two meetings in 1998 are scheduled for
Tuesday 21st July
Tuesday 20th October.

Venue is the Swedenborg Centre. Time: 7.30pm. Members welcome to attend.

New Members

We welcome Mr Leigh Bottrell (Rosebery NSW) to the SAA.

Group News

North Ryde:

About 12 people turned up to the April meeting when Iain Smith gave a presentation on spiritual psychology and the ability to increase one's efficiency (see leading article). His practical insights and humour was enjoyed by the audience. Tania Patterson gave the May talk titled *Landscape and Dreaming*. About 20 people attended this wonderful presentation which generated a lot of questions and discussions. The June meeting was a forum of four speakers, Jack Benson, Michael Chester, Wayne Kasmar and Louise Brogan. Each gave their own view on the effect that Swedenborg's philosophy had had on them. On Friday 24th July Julian Duckworth will be giving a talk titled *Picking up the Scent*.

The 1998 *Celebration of Spring* will focus on *Renewal in Nature* this year. A warm invitation is sent to all those wishing to express the Spirit of Spring through Art. The Art Exhibition is open to all levels of skill and experience. The purpose of the Art Exhibition is to encourage individuals to artistically express the experiences that come when the Spirit of Spring enters people's lives. Two of the artists performing on opening night are the singer Trude Aspeling and Colleen DeWinton who will be our storyteller.

Melbourne:

The Group continues to meet monthly (usually every fourth Friday) to hear and discuss a talk from a guest speaker or their Convenor Chris Skinner. Julian Duckworth spoke in February on the topic *Picking up the Scent*. The meeting was well attended with 23 present. In March John Teed spoke on the subject of *The Nature of God and the Question of Evil*. The meeting was well attended with 19 present. In April Ian Arnold spoke on the topic of *The History of Angels*. The talk generated a lot of discussion amongst the 22 people attending.

Concluding quotations and message from the Secretary.

"In every person there is an inmost or highest something into which the Divine of the Lord first flows and from which everything else is arranged in their degrees of order. This may be called the entrance of the Lord and His own dwelling place. Through this, a person is a person, and has life;

through it he can be raised up by the Lord, believe in the Lord, be moved with love to the Lord, know the Lord, and also live for ever. Yet this does not flow openly into perception because it is above thought and beyond wisdom."

Heaven and Hell 39.

"Reflecting on the above passage recently aroused affection for the depth of insight displayed by Emanuel Swedenborg and appreciation of his efforts to be open to Divine Influx. When I was connecting what stands behind Biblical passages of the Lord seeking a dwelling place to examples with people like Swedenborg the reality of the Kingdom of God within gained further emotional impact. This experience will hopefully bear fruit through seeking the House of the Lord with greater sincerity."

Michael Chester,
Hon Secretary.

WHAT'S HAPPENING

For Group activities, contact your nearest Group Convenor

- Sydney region (Kevin Attwater on 9634 7808);
- Melbourne which meets monthly on the fourth Friday evening (Chris Skinner on 9435 8599);
- Perth - new Convenor is required for this Group.

It would be good to see additional viable Groups established in new areas. If you can help contact Kevin Attwater.

FORTHCOMING SAA PUBLIC MEETINGS

MELBOURNE Normally Fourth Friday Evening of each month at New Church Hall, 426 High Street Road, Mt. Waverley at 8 p.m.

SYDNEY Normally Fourth Friday Evening of each month at The Swedenborg Centre, 1 Avon Road North Ryde at 7.45 p.m.

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|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Saturday, 15th August | Annual General Meeting at 2.30 p.m. |
| Saturday, 22nd August | <i>Developing your Spiritual Skills</i>
A one day workshop with Julian & Ruth Duckworth (\$20) |
| Saturday, 5th September | <i>Celebration of Spring</i> at 7 p.m. (\$12) |
| 25th September | Poetry and Art Evening |
| 23rd October | <i>Sacred Architecture</i> with John Brogan
(a continuation from last year's talk) |
| 27th November | <i>The Grand Man - Our Health</i> with Kevin Attwater |

OBJECTS OF THE SWEDENBORG ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA

a non-profit autonomous company:

- Promoting Emanuel Swedenborg as a scientist, philosopher and religious visionary, by means of his inspired writings, through meetings, lectures, and other functions
- Making available information on topical subjects drawing on Swedenborg's own contribution to stimulate interest and discussion
- Establishing, operating and supporting branches around Australia
- Providing material for the purpose of maintaining local libraries

Everyone wishing to subscribe to these objects can take up membership. There is a once off joining fee of \$10.00 and an annual subscription of \$25.00 (concession rate of \$15.00).

BENEFITS OF MEMBERSHIP include:

- + Ready access to pursuing areas of interest in Swedenborg through the availability of books, tapes, videos and films.
- + A free newsletter.
- + Participating in lectures, seminars, workshops and specific events.
- + A 20% discount at Australian Swedenborg book distribution centres.
- + Joining together as a group with other members living in close proximity.
- + A Swedenborgian based book, tape or video is sent to each financial member each year.

If you are interested in joining the Swedenborg Association of Australia Ltd., contact the Secretary at the Registered Office: The Swedenborg Centre, 1 Avon Road, North Ryde, 2113 (telephone 02 98881066 or 02 99132421) to obtain a membership leaflet.