



## TWO SCIENTIST SEERS; SWEDENBORG and STEINER

By Geoff Forster

By seer I refer to a person who, either reactively or proactively, is able to encounter realms of experience and reality, which transcend the limits usually confining the range of experience of most human beings. The two persons discussed here, were, each in his own way, strongly Christocentric, yet are generally ignored in mainstream Christianity.

### **SWEDENBORG** – Biographical

Emanuel Swedenborg (1688 – 1772), a Swede, son of a Lutheran bishop, graduated from Uppsala University, and subsequently travelled widely. Probably no one in human history has made original contributions to more branches of human knowledge.

His scientific and technical achievements included the following: the first to propound the nebular hypothesis in astronomy; a pioneer in crystallography; the discovery of the function of the ductless glands; discovery of the circulation and uses of the cerebrospinal fluid;

publisher of the first significant work on algebra in Sweden.

*I admire Swedenborg as a great scientist and as a great mystic at the same time. Carl Jung*

He was appointed Assessor of Mines in Sweden, and made important contributions to geology and metallurgy.

He was skilled in various crafts such as bookbinding, engraving and clock making. He was an outstanding linguist, at home in the three classical languages, as well as fluent in six European languages.

Swedenborg was also a prior exponent of the modern philosophy of Existentialism – not in the negative sense of nihilism or so-called French café chatter, but in the positive sense of stressing authentic existence, personal responsibility and freedom. He was also a pioneer in the interpretation of dreams. In his mid fifties he began to have a series of visionary or

mystical experiences. These included claims involving conversations with angels, encounters with the spirits of the deceased and indeed, to be the agent of a new revelation.

*To my mind the only light that has been cast on the other life is found in Swedenborg's philosophy.  
Elizabeth Barrett Browning*

### **STEINER** – Biographical

Rudolf Steiner (1861-1925) was the son of an Austrian railway employee. He possessed a paranormal faculty from an early age, and took some time to realize that he was unusual in this regard. He was educated in the atmosphere and tradition of western science and obtained his doctorate at Rostock University. Soon after he was invited to edit Goethe's scientific works.

He began a movement known as anthroposophy or spiritual science. Etymologically, anthroposophy denotes wisdom related to mankind. However, it is not being implied that man is ultimate; on the contrary Steiner's cosmology contains a bewildering complexity of angels and archangels and super-terrestrial entities. Rather, it involves the idea that man is the locus and focus of all sorts of energies and forces so that man constitutes the microcosm of the macrocosm. *"Man thou art the concentrated image of the world; world, thou are the being of man poured out into space."* Steiner.

With the term 'spiritual science', Steiner expressed his intention of establishing a knowledge of the supersensible /transcendental world with the same rigour and reliability found in the natural sciences. The term spiritual here refers to that which is opposite to the material rather than the realm of values in the area of religion. Further, while natural sciences arise essentially as a collective enterprise,