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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Love is difficult to define in the English language because it is often used loosely. We say love when we may mean affection, like, fondness, attachment, devotion, desire and so on. Love in the highest sense is called agape in Greek.

Love has various grades of meaning which filter down to self-love whereupon it gives birth to other passions like hate, fear, anger and so on.

Saint Thomas Aquinas (1224 - 74) defines Love as 'The satisfaction of Good'. Thus good can exist independently and forever but love is active and is now. Love is a very personal feeling. It cannot be put into words without losing some of its nature.

I sat in a German church at Easter in 1966. The sermon made use of an analogy to describe the love of the Lord. The story went like this. A tribe of Amazons came to the river's edge with a herd of cattle. The river was wide and the deadly piranha fish inhabited the water. The chieftain took a healthy steer upstream and encouraged it into the water, whereupon all the piranha descended on the poor creature. Meanwhile the herd crossed the river downstream- safely.

We have to use analogies to compare like ideas. As we compare the sacrificial steer with Christ we start to feel the intensity of the sacrifice. What if the herd had hesitated and not crossed the river which had been made safe by the sacrifice of the steer? The sacrifice would have been for nothing.

* Christ, who sacrificed himself for mankind, is the same as the One who created the universe. He is one and the same. This is truly Divine Love.

Easter is a lovely time to take stock of the wonderful gift we have been given through the sacrifice of Christ.

Agape
John Brogan

SPIRITUAL PHILOSOPHY OF EMANUEL SWEDENBORG ~ its essentials, relevance and use ~

The spiritual teaching of Emanuel Swedenborg (1688–1772) is contained in the thirty volumes of his theological writings, and taken together, form a unity of ideas. A number of major themes can be seen throughout these writings and this brief statement aims to highlight the most important of these.

1. THE DIVINE

The Divine is the origin of all life, and is present within everything, keeping all things in existence. In itself, the Divine is One, but needs to be perceived as Love and Wisdom working through Use. The Divine Will is to create a heaven of angels from the human race and its whole operation is towards this goal.

2. CREATION

Creation is the Divine activity of forming life outside of Itself, maintaining this life from Itself by perpetual influx, so that the Divine is truly present and active within creation, dwelling in it. Within creation, the Divine is all-present, all-knowing and all-powerful, but operates according to the laws of creation, so that creation appears to exist from itself.

3. MAN

Man is a unique being within creation, capable of conscious thought about Divinity, through freedom and rationality. Man is also endowed with eternal life. Man's nature is initially distorted towards himself due to the appearance that his life is his own, but through regeneration, he can be led into a new understanding and be given a new and angelic will by the Divine in whose image man is potentially created.

4. THE DIVINE HUMAN

The Divine Human is the means by which the infinite Divine manifests Itself and can then be comprehended by finite man. The Divine Human can be seen as the arrangement and function in creation, in the spiritual world, and in man in particular, which forms an integrated order and use. This form expresses the Divine perfectly but also brings it into recognition.

5. SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT

Regeneration, or rebirth, is the purpose of human existence in this world, through which, by conscious reception of Divine life and truth, and by means of spiritual conflicts called temptation, man's natural state of living from and for himself is gradually changed towards the love of others and supremely, the love for the Divine. Man must actively examine himself and turn against his natural loves if regeneration is to proceed.

6. REVELATION

In order for man to understand the Divine at all, there must be a revelation from the Divine. The Divine has always revealed Itself in forms that are accommodated to man's receptivity. Revelation can be direct and immediate into man's mind, but because of man's natural state, there must also be a fixed revelation outside of this. The supreme forms by which the Divine reveals Itself are through Sacred Scripture, or the Word, and through the person of Jesus Christ, Son of God. Within both, when seen spiritually rather than literally, the Divine reveals Itself.

7. DIVINE PROVIDENCE

Divine Providence is the government of creation by the Divine, and of man in particular. The goal of providence is human salvation and everything in man's life can be used by the Divine for that goal. Providence works according to Divine laws of freedom and reason, and seeks unceasingly to bend a person's love and life from self-love towards heavenly loves. The Divine cannot force Itself on man, and permits man to pass through series of self-centred states in order that these can lead him into the work of regeneration.

8. THE SPIRITUAL WORLD

The spiritual world is the dimension of eternal life into which every person comes after death, and remains. This world exists as separate from the physical plane but is within it, as the spirit is within the body. It is formed in distinct parts, called heaven, the world of spirits, and hell. Heaven is where the Divine is acknowledged and the love of others rules; hell is where the denial of the Divine and the love for oneself rules. The world of spirits is midway between these two and is where a person's ruling love or life-wish comes to be seen and expressed as the result of fundamental choices made during this life.

9. INFLUX

Influx is the sequence of the flow of life from the Divine, through the spiritual world, and into man. There is a direct influx from the Divine into man which enables man to

UNFOLDING OF THE CELESTIAL MAN

◆ INTRODUCTION

"I am the Way" is a signpost. Jesus Christ was born from a natural mother and so had human qualities. Gradually over thirty or so years he was regenerated or underwent a number of transformations to become the perfect human being. His transformation gives us a clue as to what this 'way' is.

At his crucifixion He returned to the Father or was 'Glorified'.

As Easter approaches and one reflects on the crucifixion, it is fruitful to ponder the path along the 'way'. After all, the sacrifice was made for our benefit so we need to apply the path to our way. This treatise will speculate on the path taken by Swedenborg which may help one to see what the landscape along our path looks like.

◆ REGENERATION

The unfolding of the regeneration of man is told in Genesis as the creation story. This language is in pure correspondence, each "day" representing a separate state or level of understanding. Day 1 is the beginning of our existence and Day 6 is the end of our transformation. On the seventh day 'it is very good' and one's transformation is complete. The Lord can rest.

We will plot each 'Day' or stage in Swedenborg's life from his diary notes or Dream Diary. Here he writes purely for his own use, that is, not for publication, but to resolve matters which are stirring within him. It is obviously a very private diary and we will not trespass with hobnail boots but will honor that privacy.

◆ THE TITLE

If we were to suggest that Swedenborg was a celestial man, the title would be both provocative and challenging. It would suggest firstly Swedenborg was at a celestial level and secondly that we are in a position to make a judgment about another person.

Regarding the first statement, Swedenborg himself said: 'In Him alone was there a correspondence of all things which belong to the body with the divinity, and such a correspondence as was most perfect, or infinitely perfect.....Thus He is the Perfect Man, and the Only Man.' (AC). So we can say at the outset that nobody else but the Lord can be transformed to a level where 'the Lord can rest'.

Here we have Christ the Divine and at the same time Christ the Human. "When the human is united with the Divine then is the process of regeneration complete." AC 3286

"The work of regeneration is chiefly occupied in making the natural man correspond to the spiritual rational. When it obeys, it corresponds; and in proportion as it corresponds man is regenerated".

Much of the development of the soul is concerned with the ego. In seeking to

understand Swedenborg better we need to get into his head.

◆ SWEDENBORG THE MAN

In order to probe the interior recesses of another, one can study the works they have done. It would be useful also to be able to speak to them face to face or if that is impossible, as in the case of Swedenborg, to read what they have to say. The most precious thing that we have in understanding Swedenborg is the Journal of Dreams which span between 1743 to 1744.

The importance of the dreams is that they are:

1. Private.
2. Subconscious.
3. Unconscious.

Now Swedenborg was born into a religious environment and what is good and true was largely with him from an early stage. We can say that what a man is, is only to the extent of his understanding as distinct from his knowledge.

Just when Swedenborg reached the 'First Day', of course, is difficult to say. He was a man of extraordinary knowledge and abilities which must have added to his feelings of superiority and ego-centred states. A man who has little to be egotistical about may appear to be non-egotistical. This is not the reality. He is simply asleep.

Others may lack a sense of worth (unreasonably) which may be interpreted as an ego-less state. It is however a form of reverse narcissistic behavior. We invite the comment: "Oh no, your not like that at all!"

A visionary and prophet of surpassed brilliance who lived from 1688 to 1772, Emanuel Swedenborg spoke 9 languages, wrote 150 works in seventeen sciences, excelled in seven crafts, was musician and member of Parliament. His accomplishments would have fulfilled 50 lifetimes. But they were not enough for Swedenborg, who pressed his search for the human soul beyond human understanding, into the spiritual world.

One tends to hold in high esteem anyone with a great intellect. We set them apart and feel decidedly inferior. We may be better people in a moral sense but we still place them above ourselves. What then of the man who being 'superior' lays his intellect aside, as Swedenborg did, and develops the nature of his affections.

Having been brought up in a Lutheran household, and his father being a Bishop, he studied the Word and was even encouraged to debate religion with his father's friends. Much of his preparatory life was to lead him to a scientific explanation of the source of the soul. Was it located in the brain? He had a thorough knowledge of the physiology of the human body so he was best placed to show how and where the soul was placed. It was as if he was

live. There is an indirect influx into man through the spiritual world which brings man into both heavenly and hellish influences. This second influx enables man to make his own determined and free choices in this life, for his regeneration. A cardinal law of influx is that as a person lives and acts by what is true and good, so heavenly influx into him increases.

10. CORRESPONDENCE

Correspondence is the relationship between spiritual and natural things. Every natural form exists from the spiritual world and is a complete expression or mirror of a spiritual aspect of life. The correspondence is in the form, characteristic and above all, in the use of a thing. The world of nature is full of correspondence in its three distinct kingdoms. The Word is written by means of correspondences. The physical body is arranged and functions according to exact correspondences.

11. MALE AND FEMALE

The masculine and feminine aspects of human existence have their origin in the Divine, in Love and Wisdom, through the union of which, new life as an offspring or use is created. The complementary nature of man and woman is the source of the deepest human love possible. It is masculine to seek to understand truth from love; it is feminine to seek to apply truth to love and use. While each person has the capacity for love and truth, in each sex one or other drive will predominate and becomes fulfilled in a complementary relationship.

12. SPIRITUAL HISTORY

In keeping with many spiritual philosophies, Swedenborg outlines the sequence of man's spiritual history through the ages of his existence. From its infancy, by Divine creation, man had immediate perception of spiritual things. When man began to believe the appearance that his life was his own, this perception closed and man lived from a conscience of truth and good and has remained so since. This allowed evil to come into being and as man chose evil rather than good, the point in time came when the Divine needed to reveal Itself anew. This is in the person of Jesus Christ in whom was the Divine. This incarnation has provided the means to lead humanity again to the Divine.

The relevance of Swedenborg's spiritual philosophy is primarily towards gaining a full and coherent understanding of human existence in which the place of man within the Divine order is made explicitly clear. The use of the philosophy lies in helping a person to undertake the necessary work of personal regeneration and to understand the process.

SECRETARY'S REPORT

New Members. We welcome Richard Booker (Dubai, United Arab Emirates), Elizabeth Bryce (Allambie Heights) Vicki Childs (Enmore), Elizabeth Greenwell (Lindfield) to the SAA.

In January John Brogan during the Swedenborg at the Fountainhead & Musical Interludes evening highlighted some of the special contributions of Emanuel Swedenborg, who received living waters from the fountainhead of all Love and Truth. One of the great gifts that Swedenborg passed on was a revival in the science of correspondences to help us see in a new way and become more attuned to spiritual reality. Julian concluded the formal part of the Swedenborg birthday celebration with some musical pieces.

In February, Dr John Carr gave a lecture titled 'The Undivided - the quest for wholeness and re-union.' In this lecture he looked at different aspects of being separated from the Source and the need to work towards being re-connected to the Godfield. He stressed the importance of love as a way of being.

In March Tim Hixson gave a presentation on 'Light and Growth', recounting a brief history of photography, and the noble aspirations

of various creative photographers and a selection of their impressive photos.

The Melbourne Group continues to meet monthly (usually every fourth Friday) to hear and discuss a talk from a guest speaker or their Convenor Chris Skinner. In November Ian Arnold gave a very interesting talk on the development of personality, how much we can change it, the variety of personalities and how these fit into the concept of self. He showed how the Myer Briggs model and other similar concepts can be seen to fit in with Swedenborg's principle of the Grand Man.

Concluding quotation from the Secretary.

"The most remarkable thing was this, that I now represented the inner man and was as another person than myself, so that I made salutation to my own thoughts, frightening them; saluted my own stores of memory; accused another person; which shows that the change had come; that I represent one who is against another; that is to say, the inner man, for I have prayed God that I in no wise may be mine but that God may be pleased to let me be his. (Journal of Dreams 133)"

Michael Chester

between knowing and understanding. 'All life is from the Lord alone by means of faith, first existing in the memory then in the understanding.' (AC). This is the fourth day in the regeneration of man.

◆ THE FIFTH DAY

Swedenborg repeats a dream or the dream itself is repeated wherein he is utterly surprised that his self-interest in the works that he does has evaporated. 'How I found after I arrived in the Hague that my interest and self-love in my work had passed away; at which I myself wondered'. This is a reinforcement that all good comes from the Lord alone and all faults are of one's own making. This is the start of the fifth day. The ego or proprium as he calls this self-will, is slipping away.

Swedenborg had first tried to pressure spirit to help him in his scientific work but the dreams at this time told him his scientific work was 'unworthy'. How would it be to be told that the very thing that means everything to you is meaningless? Meaningless to you, meaningless to the world and one might say absolutely meaningless. Swedenborg was trying to pinpoint the soul. Spirit was telling him plainly 'don't bother'! It's not where you are looking and you are forcing a square peg in a round hole. You are using your intelligence to take heaven by storm.

Swedenborg fought against spirit but was shown '....hideous spectres, without life horribly shrouded and moving in their shrouds; together with a beast that attacked me but not the child'. The idea that he can rule and control in this realm creates a monster that looks alive but is dead. If man tries to control others or circumstances he has turned the process inside-out. Life lives through us. We do not create the life in us and therefore we can't control anything. If we try to create something it will be a 'monster'.

Swedenborg started to see he was 'unworthy'. "She spoke slowly; said that she was pure, but that I smelled ill." And later, "It was the uncleanness which ought to be rooted out from me". He then realises 'the danger I am falling into hell if I do not get help.'

We notice there is no threat implied. A 'way' is being indicated and it is up to Swedenborg (or us) if we heed it. Then later again 'She asked me to come in again but I excused myself on the ground of being so shabbily dressed, and having no wig'.

All is not well between Swedenborg and his higher spiritual aspect because he has not been giving his all. However in the dream he receives the 'jewels anyway and a great ruby in the middle of them'.

◆ UNCONDITIONAL LOVE

How do we feel when we know we are unworthy but receive blessings anyway? Our reaction is to redress the balance by striving harder to repay the gift. This is one of the beauties of unconditional giving. It is left entirely in the hands of the recipient as to what they do with it.

This is also the way gifts from the Lord are given. They are given unconditionally and we are free to act, to accept or reject.

Emanuel now has a dream where he... 'takes a key, went in, and was examined by the door-keeper as to what keys I had; showed them all; also as to whether I should have had two.' Swedenborg gains easy entry but he only has one 'key'.

This appears to be the key to his anatomy work but it is the wrong key for the higher purpose to which he is being directed. We must appreciate how difficult it must have been for him to abandon his search for the soul since he had set his life's purpose to it. To another, who has a lesser intellect and a lesser life's purpose, changing direction is no great thing. We call this a mid-life crises.

He now passes to another level. He feels unspiritual when solving problems and experiences a great joy in things to do with beauty. We know that he is about to leave science forever. His standing in the community of Europe is based on his science and he is about to turn his back on it.

The torment he experienced during this time, over some months, speaks volumes of the difficulty in completing the fifth day. The day when one realises deep down that all good comes from the Lord, and that the things we have held as being paramount are self-centred and illusory.

He is then receiving two persons 'in his cabin'. The house is built (Swedenborg) but not yet furnished, that is, he is not ready for his guests. Swedenborg has been asking to see God and when God comes, he is not fully prepared (April 3rd 1744). It is approaching Easter and his dreams are telling him to get his act together. He is still wanting God in his life to satisfy his professional ends.

Swedenborg is generally interpreting his dreams accurately but is not yet able to give himself over to the requests and demands made of him. The sacrifice is too great.

He has sought God and now feels he will lose Him forever.

◆ SWEDENBORG THE MAN

Before we look at the end of the fifth day let us look at the man we have before us. Swedenborg was moderately rich, a nobleman, a famous scientist and here he is sweating over his relationship with God. He could have had a very settled or, at least, an easy life. Not only is he seeking more but he is being asked to forsake everything in the process.

By mid-April he was building the bridge between himself and God and testing the bridge along the way. At this time there is a clear shift from two months before. He has not referred to his book on anatomy and the imminent loss of his social position has faded and the search for God has become paramount.

going to take heaven by storm and knowledge was the ammunition.

◆ SEARCH FOR THE SOUL

As he was preparing for his next large book on the Soul's Kingdom (or Animal Kingdom) in 1744, which would expound his theory of the nature and location of the soul, he underwent a remarkable change which affected the rest of his life until his death in 1772.

The essence of the change was the knowing that the self was not the centre but that the ultimate truth is that only God exists. The ego is actually an illusion and when God is found, the illusion disappears. That is, the ego disappears. So man tends to relate everything to himself. As transformation takes place, man gradually understands that he doesn't stand at the centre at all; he is part of a bigger whole.

Let us take an example. We often affect other people and wars cause great harm to all. We hurt others and they hurt us. But Jesus looked at this relationship from the other viewpoint, when He said: "What you do to the least of these you do to Me" (Matt. 25:40). The centre of gravity ceases to be 'us' and becomes the Divine.

So we start to feel a different view point between our "self" and the "Self". We are the unlit candle. God is the lit candle which can light all candles. With these comments we may better understand where Swedenborg was struggling with his ego. We may also see how it was that suddenly, from one week to the next, he stopped seeking the location of the ego, realising it was an illusion of Man's creation.

◆ SEVEN DAYS OF CREATION

Let us follow his transformation through the 'seven days of creation' using his dreams as our guide. Swedenborg's dream journal begins with dry facts about all those things that interest an engineer and a person who moves in influential circles. He relates meetings with kings and princesses, people in high places who can be of use to him. He relates to bridges and buildings, churches and palaces, water mills and fortifications. He has always mixed in royal circles because of his family's connections. The buildings and people have to do with prestige.

◆ THE FIRST DAY

The first dream recorded refers to being 'in hot water' and 'drowning'. He dreamt of a 'man servant that wished me to go away on my travels'. This is interpreted to mean 'one who helps on the inner journey, when one is in 'deep water'.

This must have shaken Swedenborg because he was always a very self-sufficient man. Why should he be dreaming of being in need of help and why change direction (journey or the 'way')? His immediate interpretation was that he was being instructed by the 'dream-maker' (to use Van Dusen's phrase) to alter his approach to his most recent book on the origin of the soul. He was seeing the light and it was the first day.

◆ THE SECOND DAY

Then the next dream was pivotal. He was in a trance state the whole night. 'I wondered at myself that there remained nothing of the desire to work for my own glory'. The proprium had moved from the self to a new vantage point where he no longer wished to concern himself with status or reputation. He realised at this time the difference between the external man and the internal man. Swedenborg uses the phrase; "...a distinction is made between the things that are the Lord's and those that are man's own." (AC 8). And so it was the second day.

◆ THE INTERNAL MAN

'Until his regeneration starts a person is not aware of even the existence of the internal man, let alone the identity of the internal man. Submerged in bodily and worldly concerns he imagines there is no difference between the two.

'Furthermore he has submerged in those same concerns the things that belong to the internal man and has made one thorough obscurity out of things that are distinct and separate' (Swedenborg). He was not able to see the difference between what is an internal experience and what is external. There is no "separation of the waters".

The trance state that he was allowed to experience next was the same state which he experienced in his later explorations in the spiritual world. The first experience of this state moved him greatly and he was in no doubt as to the source of the state. His first reaction was to use this new-found 'power' to give enlightenment to his work on the book he was writing! How often we try to use this 'power' to fix up something in our life. We go to bed thinking of something, hoping we will then dream of it and wake up with heavenly direction.

Dictating to the 'Dream Maker' one's needs and aspirations is a natural thing to do when one's proprium is still with the self. But it doesn't work for the betterment of the little self. Swedenborg knew he was receiving 'heavenly seeds' and thus he was entering the third day.

◆ THE FOURTH DAY

Next he dreamt 'How I set myself against the spirit; and how I favoured it, but found afterwards that it was madness, devoid of all life and connection. And that thus a quantity of what I had written must be of the same kind; because I had not all resisted the power of the spirit to that degree; inasmuch as the faults are all mine but the truths are not mine'.

This is poetry! Such economy of words to express so much.

He goes on to say '...but I was a long way from finding out my own unworthiness, or being grateful for mercies'.

This tells us a great deal both of Swedenborg's own personal growth and also our own. We may 'see the light' but often have not yet made it our own. Swedenborg is making the distinction

The dreams are now being infused with extraordinary love and the tormented man is experiencing a heavenly bliss. This is Easter 1744. 'I attempted of my own to get love, but this is arrogant.....I was still in temptation until this was done. The Holy Spirit taught me this; but I, with my foolish understanding, left out humility, which is the foundation of all.'

Again, notice the beautiful language: "I with my foolish understanding, left out humility..." Swedenborg is now aware when he 'is in the Spirit'. Many changes are taking place in a short space of time. In October he experiences an improvement in his eyesight. This often goes hand in hand with spiritual growth. (In his last year of life at 82 he experienced new teeth growing!)

He has now started his book *Worship and Love of God* (Oct 1744) but had not given up on *The Animal Kingdom*. The *Worship and Love of God* is a very feminine side of religion and quite different to his masculine *Animal Kingdom*. A reversal has occurred in him whereby what was previously masculine, left brain or logical is now right brain or from his 'love' nature. The swap has been from Swedenborg the scientist to Swedenborg the servant of God.

The fifth day has dawned.

♦ THE SIXTH DAY

The sixth day is the stage when one becomes an image. We are talking here of a regenerated person. The proprium no longer rules the self and all good is from the Lord.

Swedenborg underwent a profound change in state in April 1745. The experience was told to a number of friends of Swedenborg and it was recorded by them rather than from his own pen.

The dreams referred to his possible entrance into heaven. Finally it was decided that he would be admitted while yet a man on earth. (Sept 1744).

The dream he had was when he was in a restaurant in London. After the meal his eyes dimmed and he was aware of the floor covered with snakes, frogs and similar creatures. He was clearly distressed because he was awake and not dreaming. A man sat in the corner of the room who said to him "eat not so much".

He returned home and during the night the man appeared again and said he was the Lord God, the Creator of the world, and the Redeemer; and that he had chosen me to explain to men the spiritual sense of the scripture and that

He Himself would explain to me what I should write down. From that night on he gave up all studies of worldly science, and laboured in spiritual things

The sixth day is when man becomes "an image". The hour of conflict is the hour when the Lord is at work. He does not rest until love is taking a leading part, at which time conflict ceases. When that work has reached the point where faith has been joined to love, it is called "very good", for the Lord then moves him to a likeness of Himself. At the end of the sixth day evil spirits go away and good ones take their place; then the person is led into heavenly paradise. When things of faith make one with those of love there is a marriage. A marriage has accordingly taken place between spiritual and celestial things. The correspondence between The Divine and the man is complete.

♦ THE SABBATH

The seventh day the Lord rests. Can we say Swedenborg was a celestial man? Had he reached the sixth day? We can not make such judgments but he was chosen to mix with spiritual beings at all levels in the spiritual world including Celestials. If one were to be selected for such a task as he, one would certainly need to have the background of Swedenborg. One can imagine Swedenborg participating in similar works in the spiritual world.

♦ CONCLUSION

Why was Swedenborg given this facility or enabled to achieve this transition?

It seems to me that it was high time that the world be given the truths that lay behind the veil. When Christ was incarnated and walked this natural realm that we have come to call our own, He came at a time that was necessary for the salvation of mankind and the spiritual world. People who were versed in the Law of Moses had by and large become imitators of the law not through love but through rote.

The Lord moved through this veil from the spiritual side to the natural side. Swedenborg moved from the natural world to the spiritual, ie. In the opposite direction.

He was enabled to lift the veil and move freely from the natural into the spiritual world. Just as Christ was in the physical body and experienced all that was here to experience including pain, hunger, torture, so too, was Swedenborg able to experience the spiritual world. He was enabled to discourse with spiritual beings in each of the levels from Celestial to infernal.

John Brogan

Extract of a talk of the same title - August 1999



QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

"Questions & Answers", a regular Candela column, is an open forum in which readers can participate by contributing questions, comments and answers. Questions may cover any philosophical or theological topic. Anyone wishing to make a response in writing is invited to do so and depending on space constraints these will also be printed in "Questions & Answers".

Contributions (which may or may not relate to Swedenborg or his ideas) can be sent to "Questions & Answers" C/- Wayne Kasmar, 61 Surfers Parade, Harbord, NSW 2096.

No responses were received since the last edition so we will attempt an answer to one of the questions posed by Michael Chester which were published previously.

QUESTION:

What practical advice does Swedenborg provide on developing inner peace and promoting peace in the world, thereby reducing the likelihood of the sort of events that have happened in Kosovo?

RESPONSE:

If Swedenborg were alive today I suspect that he would be very concerned over the understanding relating to things involved in this question. Whilst he would have been gratified to learn that the result of a poll announced in recent months had an "anthem for peace" as the best song of the 20th century - John Lennon's 1971 hit "Imagine" being the public's favourite from the last 100 years - on hearing its lyrics I think Swedenborg would have been quite amazed.

The notions expressed in this song would be entirely foreign to his ideas of what is required to attain peace, whether it be in the individual or in the world generally. In his song, Lennon expands on his "all you need is love" philosophy. He believes peace would occur naturally if only you could just get rid of certain things. If you get rid of religion, if you get rid of nations, if you get rid of private ownership of material possessions then there would simply nothing to fight over. Lennon identifies all impediments to peace as being outside of people. Swedenborg knew better. He knew that whilst external things are important, it is really internal urges and desires that have to be properly dealt with before we can find peace in our lives and in our world. The thing which occurs naturally with us is not peace but war. Our natural inclinations are selfish in nature. We have powerful basic drives which cause us to look after ourselves at the expense of others. This is the way that God makes us and as such it is no bad

thing. But we are required to rein in these drives. We are to work at allowing our higher, more noble natures to direct the way we live our lives. Only then can we have peace. It doesn't come naturally.

Swedenborg explains that it is anything but a case of "all you need is love". He repeatedly explains that love is useless, indeed dangerous without wisdom accompanying it. And when we talk of wisdom we are talking of discipline. Along with the soft warmth of love, the cold hardness of discipline is necessary for the attainment of happiness in life. God gives us the Commandments for this reason. They aren't easy but this is the only way we are going to be blessed with peace along with joy and satisfaction - the other things that make up happiness in life.

Lennon's ideas were in reality simplistic and confused. And it is a reflection on our world when people seem to look upon him as a profound thinker. I heard someone in the media recently say that Lennon actually sang these lyrics. "Imagine no possessions. I wonder if you can", into his microphone in his recording studio in his mansion. His song is so beautiful in its simplicity and its longing for peace. But it is simply not practical. The only truly practical approach for those who sincerely wish to find peace can be found only in God's Word. This is always Swedenborg's message and advice.

Wayne Kasmar

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- ♦ Establishing, operating and supporting branches around Australia
- ♦ Making available information on topical subjects drawing on Swedenborg's own contribution to stimulate interest and discussion
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BENEFITS OF MEMBERSHIP include:

- ♦ Ready access to pursuing areas of interest in Swedenborg through the availability of books, tapes, videos and films.
- ♦ Participating in lectures, seminars, workshops and specific events.
- ♦ Joining together as a group with other members living in close proximity.
- ♦ A free newsletter.
- ♦ A 20% discount at Australian Swedenborg book distribution centres.
- ♦ 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 9888 1066 or 02 9913 2421 to obtain a membership leaflet.

BOARD MEMBER CONTACT

CURRENT BOARD MEMBERS

- ♦ President John Brogan
- ♦ Secretary Michael Chester
- ♦ Treasurer Louise Brogan
- ♦ Directors Julian Duckworth
- ♦ Neville Jarvis
- ♦ Bronwen Kretz
- ♦ Chris Skinner

- ♦ Chris Skinner
h (03) 9435 8599
skinner@eisa.net.au

1999 BOARD MEETINGS

The next 2 Board meetings in 2000 will be held on Tuesday

- ♦ 18th July
- ♦ 17th October.

Members are welcome to attend these meetings which start at 7.30 pm and are held at the Swedenborg Centre.

MAKING CONTACT

To pass on feedback, or ask questions relating to the SAA, please write c/o The Swedenborg Centre, phone or email -

- ♦ Michael Chester
w (02) 9498 9703
mchester@accsoft.com.au
- ♦ John & Louise Brogan
w (02) 9974 4647
brogans@bigpond.com
- ♦ Neville Jarvis
w (02) 8888 1066
sllandec@swedenborg.com.au
- ♦ Julian Duckworth
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