



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

A new type of piano has been designed and built in Australia. The fundamental difference between this revolutionary instrument and all previous ones is that the hammer and the strings are vertical not horizontal. The strings then vibrate in a more perfect way than a string that spans between two posts like a bridge. There are technical difficulties in achieving this arrangement of strings and the resultant sound is quite different to the conventional piano. Is the sound better?

Well, the Moonlight Sonata sounded just wonderful but my mind kept comparing it with the piano sound I've always heard and it was difficult to change the imprint on my memory. It was as if my memory was implanted with some 'truth' that was being tested and I wasn't going to let it be changed without a great deal of persuasion and re-education of the mind. I've often wondered what Mozart would have thought of our piano compared to his harpsichord.

As we approach Easter I think of the film just released called *The Passion of Christ*. A film is a very persuasive medium, far more so than a book. When we read a book we bring images to mind that are a reflection of the things we have already experienced in life. A film on the other hand removes the personal image and replaces it with the Director's image. Is it 'truth' or is it a distorted view? Many of us have been brought up believing in one or other of the Creeds, the Apostles' Creed, the Nicene Creed (official creed of Orthodox, Roman and some Protestant Churches) and the Athanasian Creed. Swedenborg says in True Christian Religion:

The Trinity as defined by the Council of Nicaea and by Athanasius caused a faith to arise which has perverted the whole Christian church.

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

'Ltd.' to 'Inc.' ~ the Swedenborg Association Restructures

Yet another important milestone in the quite short life of the Swedenborg Association of Australia has occurred with the membership agreeing to the transfer of our status from a Company Limited by Guarantee to the much simpler structure of an Incorporated Association. The decision was taken at an Extraordinary General Meeting of members on 28th February 2004. Members and friends will notice little difference other than the replacement of the word 'Limited' or 'Ltd' in the name by 'Incorporated' or 'Inc'. There is no longer a Board of Directors but a Committee instead. The Rules are almost identical to those we had previously. So, a very painless change! Being a company, we were viewed by the authorities in the same way as the largest corporations. The much more low-key status makes the paperwork easier for officers, Rules can be readily changed, and an audit by a company registered auditor will no longer be required - a saving of about \$1,500 for the next financial year!

All-in-all, a very positive step forward.

What a relief it was for me to hear what I had felt all along. It was like somebody casting a strong light into the crevices of beliefs I held and showing up the fallacies that had been implanted there. It nevertheless was some time before I could re-programme my memory and in fact the old had to be completely removed before the new could be formed.

I confess to a difficulty with the old images of my faith showing forth at times even though I no longer hold them as true. Such is the strength of the formed mind! The sounds of the old piano kept infiltrating my mind. Christian beliefs are like a smorgasbord spread out on tables. The food of ideas are prepared by many Christian churches and individuals and it is difficult to select a plateful of wholesome food. In my personal life I have adopted Swedenborg's writings on "my plate" because they feel right and make sense from my own experiences. In times of doubt and questioning, which are many, I return to the place where I went astray. These moments of turning back to a path that I have left are profound and often it is the memory of these profound experiences that assists me through difficult times and give me the strength to readjust and redirect my steps. Swedenborg's images of the spiritual world are a great source of food for the errant mind. The image completes the picture of Life after life giving a realistic attainable goal; at whatever level that is for each person.

On behalf of the Association I wish you a happy Easter.

Agape,

John Brogan

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Neville Jarvis

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

The Passion on the Cross was the last temptation, the means by which [Christ] glorified His Human, that is, united it with his Father's Divine; This was not in itself the Redemption.

*The Lord had two purposes in coming into the world, redemption and the glorification of His Human; and by these He saved both men 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 his own part to approach God, and the more nearly he does so, the more closely does God on His side enter into him. The reason why the actual union 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 to himself, but he is not, since God is then most closely present in his inmost, and secretly gives him support. When therefore anyone is victorious over temptation, he is most inwardly linked with God, and in this case the Lord was most inwardly united with God His Father.*

The Lord's being left to Himself, when He suffered on the cross, is evident from His cry then: "O God, why have you abandoned me?" [Matt. 27:46] as well as from these words of the Lord: "No one takes my life from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have the power to lay it down, and I have the power to take it back; this charge I received from my Father." John 10:18.

These passages then can prove that the Lord did not suffer in His Divine, but in His Human, and then a most inward and complete union took place. An illustration of this might be the fact that while a person is suffering physical pain, his soul feels nothing but is merely distressed. But when the victory is won, God takes away that distress, wiping it away as one does tears from the eyes.

Swedenborg: True Christian Religion paragraph 126



What makes me? by Trevor Moffat

Much has been written and presented about rights. Search through the many forms of media for yourself and you'll soon believe this to be correct! Local newspapers, also television programmes, often promote the concept of rights under the banner of current affairs. Usually the common perception of rights, justice, perhaps even responsibilities, depends on the position in which people find themselves. A victim, a bystander, even the perpetrator of a specific action will all see it differently in some way.

Generally, as readers or viewers of news reports, we may also have an opinion about the details of a reported incident. Hence we cannot free ourselves from holding opinions about many of the events which occur in our community or on this planet.

Wars, acts of terrorism, political extremes, and religious fanaticism add to the plethora of information that might cause any of us to form an opinion on worldly issues. Still, I find myself asking, *"Do any of these events 'make me'?" "Do they impact on my humanity in such a manner as to distort my way of thinking?"*

Undoubtedly we ought to change as we progress in years. Every experience we've had to date helps to contribute to what we are right now. Some would claim that we are everything we experience, because those things we see hear, read, and witness have such an impact on our personal view of "reality." One such school of thought is that we are born with a "blank slate" (Locke et al) and all that is experienced is thus 'written upon that slate' giving it form and character. This view claims that we are the sum total of our experiences. We are what we are because external factors have channelled our development. Surely this is only a part of the history of an individual, an appearance of truth.

The works of Emanuel Swedenborg can help us through the appearances of life to the deeper practical issues of spirituality and freedom according to reason.

"People have the faculty of understanding, which is rationality, and the faculty of thinking, willing, speaking and doing that which is understood..."
(Divine Providence 73)

Certainly my growth, and yours, comes about as the result of our ongoing processing of experiences, which include our personal perception of events we have each witnessed. It is not about blindly accepting. Rather it is about the manner in which we witness, feel, interpret, and come to rational conclusions about those events. Therefore, we might claim that the way in which we each rationalise our experiences and learn to grow (often in spite of them) is "What makes me.." the person I am today.

Now I realise that this all sounds rather abstract and places a lot of weight on external events contributing to the individual human character. To a degree this is apparently true. Yet we cannot simply accept this premise without carefully considering its impact.

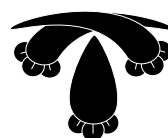
What makes you and me individual also makes each of us truly human. It is the ability to think for ourselves! It is the fact that all human beings have a rational mind, even more deeply we may reason about matters of a spiritual character. Add to this the fact we can change our minds and refocus our reason if we choose to do so. Given sufficient evidence a person may come to accept an approach to life that is diametrically opposed to an earlier position. In terms of scriptural concepts we might say this is like responding to the call of John the Baptist, **"Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!"** (Matthew 3:2) It is a turning back, or looking to one's potential.

The concept of repentance is like saying, *"Now you know, so you ought to act accordingly."* Once we're better informed we have a responsibility to act in fresh ways.

Emanuel Swedenborg spent most of his early life in search of scientific answers to the mysteries of life. In his first fifty plus years Swedenborg's life was focussed on excelling in most of the known fields of knowledge and public service. His treatise on currency, alongside his inventions and service on the Swedish Board of Mines, remains an influential piece of work.

What made Emanuel Swedenborg exceptional was an ability to apply himself across many fields of study, from engineering, science, economics, mining, and invention. After achievements in all these fields Swedenborg responded to a call to work in the dimensions of the soul. In this arena he demonstrated how the human character might become truly free and enter into the realm of change through spiritual growth, and the manner in which enlightenment could itself be presented by the source of life itself.

As long as a person lives in the Natural World that person remains midway between the spiritual extremes (of Heaven and Hell), and is thus kept in a spiritual balance, which sustains the individual's Free Will.
(Read True Christian Religion 475 and following)





Emanuel Swedenborg was certainly an exceptional person, his achievements remain a witness to this fact, but what's more important (as a human being) he was able to use his rational faculty to see where he needed to grow and make adjustments to his lifestyle. His was a call to serve and he chose to accept that call and move forward in a pattern of growth.

What makes you and me, indeed all people, is the common ability to think for ourselves. Yes we do have rights and we have just as many responsibilities. Knowing our rights is great, yet it is our acceptance and subsequent efforts to live up to our responsibilities which cause us to be better citizens, better people, and ideally form a character, which will enable us to stand out as one who made a difference.

The spiritual and philosophical works of Swedenborg contain the key to combining rights and responsibilities. These works help in understanding who we are, why we exist, how we might positively react to every imaginable experience in life and how to formulate a developing personal philosophy addressing the question, "*What makes me?*"

As long as a person does not reject negativity, that person remains negative, but so far as the individual recognises and comes to know what is negative in themselves and admits to those weaknesses, then that person becomes increasingly positive.

Paraphrasing from the work
Charity or Neighborliness
(read numbers 1 -12)

Trevor Moffat is a Swedenborg Association of Australia member and has a Degree in Psychology and Counselling. Currently he ministers to a New Church (Swedenborgian) congregation in Perth.

Pens Ready?

It is very pleasing to have items submitted for publication and it has been a delight to include them. But we do need more to keep this Newsletter of real value to all recipients Surely you have something on your mind which you could express in the form of an article, poem, letter, etc. Don't leave it to others. We all have a gem of an idea, connected with spiritual life, inside us waiting to be shared. So do let this genie 'out of its bottle' and send it to me.

Neville Jarvis, *Candela* Co-ordinator

ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

New Members

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

Peter Bartlett, NSW
William & Joan Bowley, SA
Ian Brock, SA
Richard & Betty Brock, SA
Stella Chapman, WA
Liz Coggins, NSW
Lyn Costello, QLD
Graham Flohr, QLD
Rosemary Greenwood, SA
Ray Guy, QLD
Frank & Shirley Hussey, SA
Terry Mulhall, NSW
Eddie Natt, NSW
Michelle Peake, SA
Mary Ritchi, VIC
Lenore Sandow, NSW
Jenny Tretheway, QLD
Rex Williamson, VIC

Business Items

The most significant happening in the past three months has already been referred to on the front page of this issue. Your Directors (now your Committee) were delighted that the membership accepted the recommendation to proceed down the pathway of Association Incorporation status and remove many hindrances arising from the requirements of the Corporations Act. This Act essentially treats small operations in the same manner as the largest companies. The participation of the membership by attendance at the Extraordinary General Meeting or by submitting favourable proxies was so very encouraging. The whole organisation can look forward to improved circumstances both administratively and financially.

The quarterly Board meeting held in January last at the registered office was preceded by a six hour strategy gathering. Melbourne Board member, Chris Skinner, was able to join those from Sydney for this occasion and contribute directly to the think-tank. Some quite innovative ideas flowed which are currently being worked on by various people. It is premature to be specific about them but it is expected that the membership and others interested will be advised in the not too distant future.

Just another reminder that Committee meetings are open to all Members. Should you wish to attend or to be made aware of what is going to be discussed, please do let the Secretary know at the Registered Office (see page 2) so that an Agenda can be sent. Your suggestions and contributions by letter, email or phone will be tabled for consideration.

Neville Jarvis (Executive Manager)



GROUP'S NEWS

Brisbane:

The 2004 programme is well underway. Meetings continue to be held monthly, usually the third Wednesday at 1.00pm.

Our first meeting in February saw 11 present, with 3 apologies, at which life-long spiritual scholar, **Paul Eldar**, gave us a presentation on "Swedenborg and Divine Providence". In March, Paul's topic was "Uses" and included diagram handouts which were very helpful to see as the talk progressed. The talk was succinct, comprehensive and much appreciated by the 12 present, including two new 'faces'. Four of the 'regulars' were unable to be with us. Obviously not everyone can attend each time so it is great to maintain numbers knowing some are absent.

There is a possibility of meetings commencing on the Sunshine Coast. We will keep members and friends informed of developments.

Ian Arnold



Melbourne:

We were pleased to have **Geoff Forster** speak to the group again in February. Geoff is an experienced speaker, a regular attendee to the group and has a broad knowledge of psycho/spiritual topics. His talk on this occasion was 'Varieties in Religious Experience', the book by William James. Geoff indicated parallels with Swedenborgian thought and indicated William James' link with Swedenborg, if not directly by himself, but through Henry James his father. He covered areas of higher consciousness, visions and the effect of religious faith on a person's life. The attendance at the meeting was very good with 32 in attendance notwithstanding at least 5 of our regular attendees were not present. There were 8 people who came for the first time. Although questions were limited there was good fellowship and discussion afterwards. Altogether a very successful meeting.

Chris Skinner



North Ryde, Sydney:

The Christian Meditation started shortly after 7.00pm with around 5 people in January and 4 people in February participating.

Chris Skinner's talk on January 30th looked at 'What we can expect in the life hereafter?' The presentation was based on Swedenborg's **Heaven and Hell**. Around 26 people attended this very interesting talk where Chris showed that the principles that apply in heaven also apply on earth. For example, Chris looked at the relative sense of time we sometimes experience - such as time going very quickly when we are absorbed in something - and

related this to the sense of time people have in the spiritual realm which is related to one's state. He gave a wonderful coverage of many of the ideas presented in Heaven and Hell and the video of the talk is well worth borrowing for those wishing to get a good overview of the book or for those wishing to be reminded of the key ideas and wanting to digest the material through reflection.

Neville Jarvis' talk "Seeing's Believing: Truth in Action" on February 27th looked at the process of discerning truth. In the past many people accepted the ideas of those in positions of authority. Swedenborg went beyond this approach in his quest for truth and received inner guidance. Various passages from his writings were presented that looked at the process of searching for truth and the nature of truth. One of the passages that appealed to me is the following:

In addition it should be recognized that it is in accordance with the laws of order that no one should become convinced of the truth instantaneously, that is, should instantaneously be made so sure of the truth that he is left in no doubt at all about it. The reason for this is that when truth is impressed on a person in that kind of way, he becomes so fully convinced of it that it cannot be broadened in any way or qualified in any way. Truth like this is represented in the next life as that which is hard, not allowing good into itself to make it pliable. This goes to explain why in the next life as soon as some truth is presented through plain experience to good spirits, some opposing idea giving rise to doubt is presented. In this way they are led to think and ponder over whether it is indeed a truth, gather reasons in support of it, and so introduce that truth into their minds by the use of reason. This enables their spiritual vision in respect of that truth to be broadened, seeing even into the ideas that are opposed to it. They therefore see and perceive with their understanding every characteristic of the truth, and from this are able to let in the influences coming from heaven as the situation demands; for truths take varying forms as dictated by circumstances.

Swedenborg: Arcana Coelestia 7298²

I liked what Swedenborg presented here as there is something practical for us to do. And that is to look at both sides of an argument or proposition or idea, gathering material for the opposing sides and standing above it all, to try and sense the truth.

There was a lot of interaction with the audience who were very appreciative of the material Neville presented. This continued during supper where there seemed to be something special happening amongst us, as most stayed on a lot longer than usual, enjoying good conversation and each other's company.

This talk is also available on video for borrowing.

Michael Chester



The Story of My Life

~ Piecing together Swedenborg's personal Endeavours and Struggles

(continued from the December 2003 Issue)

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

Part 2

For context purposes, it is useful here to reiterate what I said in Part 1 of this series. In taking a look at what Swedenborg might have brought to mind about particular happenings during his 84 years, it is not to provide answers but to raise questions, to place ourselves directly in his shoes for a while. **The selections offered are presented as if Swedenborg himself was speaking to you.** To some degree therefore, their factual accuracy is open to question but much of what is said can be supported from documents and anecdotal material as referred to at the beginning of this series.



At Age 19 ~ Early Education

"I was enrolled at the University of Upsala when I was 11 years old. My dear tutor of three years, who I called "Morfee" for fun, urged my father to let me go into the faculty of medicine because that is what he had studied and practised in Stockholm before coming to teach me. But I wanted to be placed in the faculty of theology so that I could study religion and then follow in my father's footsteps into the Church. I had always loved listening to clergyman talk about God and religion when they visited us. I sometimes said what I thought about the subject, much to their amusement. But they did encourage me and I felt deep down that this was the direction I really wanted to take.

It was really disappointing for me when I was told that I would have to study in the faculty of philosophy and learn about astronomy, anatomy, biology and mathematics. My first main course was to become proficient at Latin, something I had begun to study with "Morfee". That was a lot of hard work and I often wondered why we could not just use our own language.

We all knew, even the youngest of us, about a lot of disagreements going on between faculty members at this time. It led to much disharmony and dissatisfaction. The Faculty of Theology was upset because their authority was being challenged by new thinking coming from learned men in France and Holland. Until now, all questions raised on issues of learning were referred to the Church and decided by the Ecclesiastical authorities.

I thought this to be only right and proper but many in my Faculty were saying no! Everyone had reasoning abilities and the right method of approaching new areas of investigation was to make one's own deductions from observations and draw one's own conclusions. This had all been proposed many years earlier by the French philosopher René Descartes who said that there is only one certainty that we can rely on and that is the fact that we exist - "I think, therefore I am". His followers argued that all investigations should, and must only start from there. Simply accepting the truth of what earlier philosophers such as Aristotle, or what the Church determined to be the case, was not valid. I am very uncertain about this and the upheaval worries me.

This bitter split between religious and scientific understanding in the University seems unnecessary; trying to encompass both viewpoints would surely bring better outcomes. Why leave the Creator out of the investigating of this natural world? Living in the home of my brother-in-law, Erik Benzelius, Anna's husband, who has become like a father and brother to me, has helped me feel more contented at University. He often discusses this conflict with me, being University Librarian, he is very much aware of the debate. He really believes that the future of learning is in the realm of the sciences and that the principles of Descartes are right and honourable. He encourages me to be especially attentive to my study of mathematics as he believes it will underpin all others, even theology."

Quite a conflict for a young, impressionable mind to have to deal with. Can you sense the tension? Can you recall a similarly tensed mind-struggle in your early adulthood and what ongoing effect it has had for you? For Swedenborg, perhaps it laid down some ground rules in his thinking for when he became a spiritual explorer.
What do you think?

At Age 38 ~ Unrequited Love

"When I was 16, my father was appointed as Bishop of Skara in Northern Sweden and had to move there with most of my younger brothers and sisters. I moved in with my older sister Anna and her husband Erik

Benzelius for the last years at university. Both these periods were just so very happy times for me. My father was devoted to my mother and then my step-mother. Anna and Erik were a perfect couple and we all,



including sister Heddy who was 2 years younger than me, had lots of fun. Seeing Anna and Erik so happily married regularly brought thoughts into my mind of the time when I might be also take a wife and raise a large family.

But I had plans to travel throughout Europe after University so whilst I enjoyed socialising with the eligible young ladies in the various circles in which I moved, I avoided any serious attachments. After returning from a five year tour of England and the continent when I was 27, Erik secured a position for me to properly document all the inventions and mining devices of my well regarded countryman, Christopher Polhem. I found many of Polhem's papers in the Board of Mines Library and began recording them for the first issue of my new journal "Daedalus Hyperboreus" which the King had encouraged because it would be the first scientific journal in the Swedish language. Soon after this was issued in 1716, I met Christopher Polhem personally when I visited his home to discuss material for the second issue. I got on well with his 16 year old son and his two charming daughters, Maria who was 17 and Emerentia who had just turned 12. I have to confess that I have always been strongly attracted to the opposite sex (JD 14) and even though she was very young, my heart leapt when I saw Emerentia. I discretely made it known of my interest in the Polhem daughters and it was King Charles 12 himself who recommended to Polhem that I should become engaged.

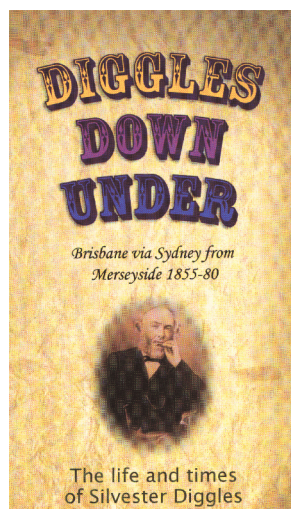
But it was Maria, the oldest, who would have to marry first and rather than become betrothed to her, I quickly made arrangements for the King's Chamberlain to be the suitor instead on the expectation that the prettier Emerentia would become mine. When Emerentia was 15, I told both her and her brother of my strong affections for her but although she would not give her consent to marriage, her father gave me a written claim upon her which gave me immense joy. Not long afterwards, I found out that she did not return my love and was desperately unhappy about the arrangement. So, despite my own desires in the matter, I relinquished the claim but the loss of what I saw to be a perfect fulfilment of my longings hurt me deeply for a long time.

My family kept urging me to pursue marriage and suggestions of suitable matches regularly came my way. Several years ago when I was 35, I did court Stina Maja Steuchius, a Bishop's daughter, for some while. I even proposed marriage but she told me that whilst she greatly enjoyed my company, her affections lay elsewhere. I later found out that her father wished for a different match for her.

The one lady I would like to be with, because she is attractive, intelligent and fervently religious, is Countess Elizabeth Gyllenborg but she is married and propriety requires that I keep my affections a secret to my own heart. I am now beginning to accept that the love and companionship of a wife, and the blessings of a family, will elude me."

Can you sense how he may have felt when, at 38, the possibility of marriage had seemingly passed him by? (Remember, he did not know what the future held for him but in the end there were no more romantic liaisons for him.) How did this affect him deep down? In what other ways may his affections have been expressed through this period? *What do you think?*

For continuation



Silvester Diggles is a name that is probably unfamiliar to the vast majority of Australians. Born at the port of Liverpool (UK) in 1817, Silvester brought family and skills to Sydney in his 30's before moving on to Brisbane. He became a well-known artist, musician, scientist and churchman of Brisbane - a philanthropist, founder of the Queensland Philosophical Society, put Brisbane on the astronomical map and took a particular interest in Aboriginal culture. The history of this man has been the subject of a recently completed massive research project by Dr. Rod Fisher, University of Queensland, on behalf of the Brisbane Historical Society. The Swedenborg Centre has been delighted to be presented with an interactive CD on *The Life and Times of Silvester Diggles*, a remarkable piece of work by Dr. Fisher which was a labour of love over many years. We also now hold the hard copy reference books which make insightful reading. Why is this material of interest to us? Silvester Diggles was instrumental in the formation of the first, but short lived, Swedenborg group in Sydney and of the Swedenborgian New Church Society in Brisbane where he was very active as Leader, President and speaker until he died in 1880.

If you are interested in finding out more of this man who contributed much to early colonial settlement, particularly in Brisbane, and perhaps more specifically about his Swedenborg background, contact the Swedenborg Centre and we can make the material available to you. Alternatively, visit the website of the Brisbane History Group (www.brisbanehistory.asn.au) or contact Dr. Fisher on r.fisher@mailbox.uq.edu.au direct. The CD and Manual cost approx. \$65 for SAA members, including postage.



A Member's Journey

I heard the Lord's call pretty early I think. I can remember when I was 12 years old, prostrating myself before the crucifix in our Church as an Altar server at Easter and telling the priest at Confession that I had a problem with 'humility'. After moving through differing stages from the contemplative to the fanatical, I have now learnt to follow that call with more attention and less haste.

Whenever I think of my more fanatical days, I remember what a certain Priest once said to me, "Patrick, think of yourself as riding a bike. Being fanatical is just like leaning over to one side. If you lean over too far, you'll eventually fall over. But that's OK, you just pick yourself up, get back on the bike and keep riding." He was a wise man that Priest.

It has taken me a while and a lot of books to feel comfortable where I am now. The journey has been pretty lonely thus far. I'm not really one to join church groups and it's been difficult for me to find kindred spirits. I've spoken to Priests and Nuns, but there was a depth of thought and honesty where I didn't feel comfortable going. I did not share a particular Nun's enthusiasm for a future amongst the cloisters! I've since left the Catholic Church.

I was introduced to Swedenborg and his theology through a friend of mine, Robert Willis and his friend Augustin de Aboitiz about 18 months ago. Since then, I've poured over his books, borrowed from the Swedenborg Lending Library here in Melbourne. Chris Skinner (the Minister of the New Church - Swedenborgian), and his wife Margaret, have made me feel really welcome, ducking in after the Sunday service for a chat with Chris and to load up with books. Chris is always happy to chat which is great.

Since about the age of 23 I have immersed myself in the study of philosophy, theology and psychology. I started with Catholic theology and was drawn to the mystical traditions of St John of the Cross (who my Father had read widely), finally to St Benedict. I also read widely in Buddhist, Islamic and Hindu mystic traditions. I have studied works by poets of the European Enlightenment, Jung, Aldous Huxley, Gurdjieff and Oespensky and am currently reading Nicoll's "The New Man". Augustin suggested that I read "Heaven and Hell" as an introduction to Swedenborg and since then I have read a number of his spiritual works. Currently, it is "The True Christian Religion". A number of commentaries on Swedenborg's theology and all of Wilson Van Dusen's books have passed through my hands.

I am very interested in the relationship between reason, theology and psychology and have researched a number of therapy techniques, especially treatments such as Cognitive Behaviour Therapy with the scientific evidence of its ability to create new neurological pathways in the brain. Its relationship to regeneration is a factor too. Mental illness, from a viewpoint of differing states of consciousness and our ability to treat those states, is also an area of fascination.

From a sociological point of view, I'm very keen on Swedenborg's ideas, especially his doctrine of uses and its application to areas of economics and law such as alternative dispute resolution.

At this stage, I don't have any particular goal in mind other than my own spiritual development. I'm now 30 and running my own business so at this stage I am happy to study and work on my own 'regeneration'. My feeling is that as long as I keep an open mind, the Lord will direct me to where he wants me to go. As you would understand, it is difficult to discuss a lot of this with my friends and I have yearned for a long time to get in touch with people with whom I can discuss these matters. My hope would be to get in contact with a few people, perhaps here in Melbourne or in Sydney that are interested in the same areas as I am. I feel as though I have a great deal to learn from those with greater knowledge and understanding of the whole subject area of the *Philosophia Perennis*.

Patrick Morahan

*Are you interested in what Patrick is interested? Send your details to the Swedenborg Centre,
1 Avon Road, North Ryde, NSW 2113 (phone 02 9888 1066; email saa@swedenborg.com.au)*



Digital Delights

G Roland Smith

Isn't technology wonderful? But does the digital revolution bring us any nearer to heaven, I wonder. We point the camera in the right direction. We peer at the little screen to see what we are aiming at. We press the button, and *voila!* - a faithful picture of the event all ready to feed into the computer ('download' is the proper term, I believe). We don't know how lucky we are.

Seventy years ago, if the sun was shining, and we were blessed with a 'Box Brownie' we might have pointed that in the right direction, squinted through the view- finder, pressed the button and hoped for the best. Then, after a week or two of eager anticipation, we would have hurried along to the chemist to collect our 'snaps' - all in black and white, of course. Events then were just as memorable, and the joy of capture just as great.

The same may be said for 'progress' in other directions. Does the 'hi-fi' really make us any happier than did the old wind-up gramophone? It seemed marvellous enough in its time. Did the pioneer in his horseless carriage really suffer for want of air-conditioning and power-steering? I doubt it. And what about those magnificent men in their flying machines: they may have taken longer to get there, but the thrill of arrival was in no way diminished - quite the reverse. The Victorians did not spend their evenings in abject misery for want of a television set.

Now the computer publishing wizard with the latest thing in lap-tops is no more deliriously happy than was Gutenberg when he first perfected movable type. Our global communications are miraculous, but whilst the haystack grows daily ever bigger, I am not convinced that the needle of pure gold is really any easier to find.

Don't get me wrong: I don't want to put the clock back. I am far too comfortable cocooned in my centrally-heated world, and I am much too dependent upon the marvels of medical science. Without them I would feel horribly deprived. No, my point is simply that our forebears didn't necessarily feel deprived then.

There were great compensations - they may well have lived in mortal danger of plague, pestilence and political intrigue, but they were not constantly reminded of the fact as we are today with our world news and ever-present warnings of unseen perils. We may think smugly of our long-dead ancestors living out their short and brutish lives, but, in a sense, they may have lived more fully: their day-to-day existence may have had a dreadful but delightful immediacy which we have lost: they were presumably just as capable of ending up in some sort of heaven - or hell, for that matter. Spiritual well-being, it seems, has nothing to do with technical progress. Despite the push-button efficiency of our advanced civilisation, human beings are evidently no more capable or incapable of love or hatred or wisdom or violence than ever they were, though they may, I suppose, be better informed and able to inflict greater material damage. Evil, however, can never be eradicated by means of machinery - however sophisticated. Cutting-edge technology is powerless when it comes to saving souls.

Swedenborg tells us - and he should know - that the ancients had some knowledge of God: they had their religion and their ideas about the next world (See *True Christian Religion* No. 273). The suggestion is that some such divine information has been available in every age. "The Lord provides that there will be some religion everywhere, and that in every religion there will be the two elements essential to salvation: belief in God, and not doing evil because it is against God." (*Divine Providence* No.328 [8]) - though I do find it hard to believe that the degenerates of gin alley shared in such a holy vision.

If Swedenborg is right, and only a very brave or a very foolish man dares to argue with the almighty, then the mechanical marvels of every age are merely incidental to the purposes of our creation - to be of service to our God, and to our fellow creatures. The fact remains that our spiritual prospects are neither improved nor diminished by the technology of the age in which we live. In order to cut our earthly shackles the latest power-tool from Black & Decker is as blunt an instrument as any stone-age axe-head.

Roland Smith edits **OUTLOOK**, the quarterly Newsletter of The Swedenborg Movement in UK. This article is reprinted with permission for which we are grateful.

Emanuel Swedenborg 1688-1772 ~ THE SCIENTIST WHO DISCOVERED OUR LIFE SOURCE

Swedenborg discovered:

- The cosmic realms
- Consciousness
- Our life process and purpose
- The source of life itself
- The universal meaning hidden in the "Bible"
- Angels and spirits (the existence of)
- Freewill
- The holistic and corresponding nature of our universe
- After-life (existence of)
- The folly and misunderstanding in Christian religions



Emanuel Swedenborg has many facets which draw interest from a wide range of people. He has been described as the most diverse scientist of all time for his collective mastery of so many languages, trades and sciences. In his late fifties his writings took on a whole new direction as he began to discover a new realm of consciousness, the spiritual world. In short by his own admission he had gained access into Heaven and Hell, *states of being which reflect inner natures*.

What Swedenborg would write about for the next 26 years was a scientific account of the observations and discourses that he encountered in those realms. What others might make of those writings would be up to themselves. Some would see a philosophy others a theological doctrine, yet others would find it too far out of their imagination to perceive or believe.

For Emanuel Swedenborg it was the deepest reality of life that he was uncovering and discovering. He devoted the rest of his life to converting those discoveries and experiences into the written language (Latin) for posterity. Those works are immense and today have been translated into many languages.

Many famous people have experienced Swedenborg's writings and have been profoundly inspired, e.g. Carl Jung, Thomas Carlyle, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Norman Vincent Peale, Amelita Galli-Curci (Italian soprano), Johann Wolfgang Van Goethe, William Blake, Colin Wilson, Czeslaw Milosz, Jorge Luis Borges, Daisetsu Suzuki, Johann August Strindberg, Dr. Helen Keller, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Victor Nilsson, General William Booth. Yet, there are others today who see them as science fiction or fantasy. Why is this? - because Swedenborg was from a Christian family (his father being a Lutheran Bishop). He was well versed in the Bible from his childhood. It was natural that he would look at those higher realms through Christian spectacles - it was the foundation of his own mind. He related much of what he encountered through linking it with the truths of the Bible. Simply put, the Bible was the spiritual writings he knew best. No doubt if he had been a Buddhist, Hindu or Muslim, he would have linked it through that perspective and holy writings correspondingly.

A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF WHAT SWEDENBORG DISCOVERED

The Cosmic Realms. Corresponding to the Heaven and Hell of the Christian Bible (also corresponding to Illusion and Reality of Buddhism) Swedenborg discovered that there were distinct bands of consciousness either closer or further from (emanating from) a single source. These bands did not merge but were distinct from one another. From the centre flowed or emanated Life Itself. Looking from within these bands the Source appeared as a Sun giving off a bright light - God. This is the single source of Life. Swedenborg called the nearest realm to the source the Celestial or Divine Heaven, the furthest he called darkest Hell. "*In my Father's house are many rooms*". John was lifted to the third Heaven.

Angels and Spirits inhabited these realms and they had previously lived an earthly life, i.e. were our ancestors just as most 'native peoples' have always known.

Consciousness is our connection to the angels and spirits of other realms. Our ability to think and feel is due to our link with them (our ancestors).

Freewill is our simultaneous connection to both Heaven (angels) and Hell (bad spirits), hence our good and bad thoughts. Having both good and bad thoughts gives us choice which is freewill.

Life Process (regeneration) is all about moving up into higher bands of consciousness, e.g. we can see this in the development of our children as they grow older they become conscious of things they were formerly unaware of e.g. manners, etiquette, innuendo, etc. At the highest end of consciousness, when we have developed compassion, love and mercy to others, i.e. Christ Consciousness, this is really living hence it is called Reality (or 'life made abundant'). This process is supported by our understanding of true reality - how things really are. At the other end, further from the source we are Self-absorbed, unable to have concern or care for others only wishing to extinguish them, our thoughts are delusions and wild fantasies aimed at gaining our evil desires that rule us e.g. the holocaust experience.

In short we are here to learn to conduct ourselves wisely and to be compassionate of others.

The Holistic (corresponding) nature of our universe

Swedenborg also observed that everything in the universe corresponds to something else in the universe. Our human bodies are the pinnacle of this concept, i.e. our physical bodies correspond and mirror our spiritual bodies, which correspond to the universe, and to God (we are made in God's image). Another simple example is that light corresponds to understanding.

Our Life Itself is simply our ability to think and feel (we are a receiver of truth). From our thoughts and feelings we create our life. Physically, our thoughts correspond to our brain and our feelings to our heart. When these organs stop our physical life dies. Spiritually speaking our thoughts correspond to our understanding (what we believe) and our feelings correspond to our main love (what makes us feel good). This is what we wish or want for ourself.

After death we shed our physical body and live a spiritual life distinguished by our beliefs and loves, thoughts and feelings, just as we do on earth.

To summarise, Swedenborg discovered that *there is a supreme Being (God); there is an afterlife; it pays to be good, compassionate, caring; there is a higher purpose in everything; and everything is interconnected (holistic and in unity).*

Kirk Holst, Swedenborg Association Treasurer

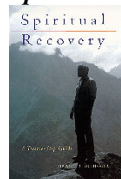


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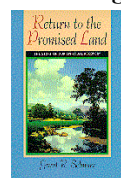


118 pages, paper.

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"The twelve steps of Alcoholics Anonymous applied to the stranded soul"; "[Schnarr's] encouraging insights are illuminated by his own honest struggles . . ."; "Schnarr listens to the heart and discounts irrelevant dogmas". From reviews from non-Swedenborgians on this book by a Swedenborgian scholar who has had considerable involvement with recovery issues, spiritual growth and men's issues. Tasks set at the close of each chapter provide useful guidelines for practices to release destructive inner tendencies and finding new life.

***Returning to the Promised Land: the story of our Spiritual Recovery* by Grant Schnarr**



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RRP \$27.00

For those interested in relating Biblical text to their own person experience of life, this book is a must. The patterns of Spiritual Recovery expressed in his book of that name are here mirrored through the detail of the story of the Israelites journey from slavery in Egypt to freedom in Canaan. Characters, places, events are all related to our inner thoughts, feelings and experiences, the author doing so in an easy style and at times with humour. It is a real eye-opener in terms of the Bible having an inner meaning always relevant for everyone.

***A Psychology of Spiritual Healing* by Eugene Taylor**



213 pages, paper.

RRP \$30.00

The author holds a doctorate in the History and Philosophy of Psychology with the lives and insights of Henry James and son William being of particular interest for him. He thereby encountered Swedenborg. This book integrates Western and Eastern thought on provocative ideas about suffering, death, the unconscious and Divine Love into a holistic prescription for recovery and renewal. Swedenborg's teachings take a prominent place and the practical exercises incorporated into the text are very valuable. A good and helpful read.

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WHAT'S HAPPENING

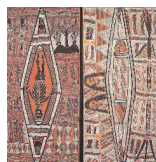
For Group activities, contact your nearest Group Convenor

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



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

- Brisbane:** New Church Hall, 21 Agars Street, Rosalie. 4th Wednesdays commencing at 1 pm (May 3rd Wednesday)
2004 April 28th ~ *God is creation but creation is not God* with **Paul Eldar**
May 19th ~ *The meaning of image and likeness* with **Paul Eldar**
- Melbourne:** The New Church Hall, 426 High Street Road, Mount Waverley. Last Fridays commencing 8pm
2004 26th March ~ *Man, Myth and Mystery* with **James Edgar**
30th April ~ *A Swedenborgian View of Spirituality in Uses* with **James Edgar**
28th May ~ *Taking a look at different Philosophies and Religions* - Panel of Speakers
- Sydney:** Swedenborg Centre, 1 Avon Road, North Ryde commencing at 7.45pm.
2004 26th March ~ *Jacob's Ladder* A talk by **Roy Simmonds**
30th April ~ *Swedenborg's Christ* with **Julian Duckworth**
28th May ~ *Sublime learning: learning beyond Duality of Mind and Soul* with **Vladimir Dimitrov**



Mythology and Reality - Contemporary Aboriginal Art

An exhibition of major works from the western desert art movement with key paintings by some of the legendary Pintupi artists, who were part of Papunya, as well as works from Utopia, Balgo Hills, Haasts Bluff and Yuendumu.

Shervin Gallery, Watson Road, Observatory Hill, The Rocks, Sydney. 8th May to 13th June 2004

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