



Issue Theme ~ *"Community"*

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Why did the Creator make so many different humans? It was certainly a different philosophy than the Ford Motor Company's "you can have any colour so long as it is black".

Men and women come in many colours, different sizes, different performance abilities, and different beliefs. We congregate in tribes with like-minded people forming a community. In this way there is symbiotic development, one helping the other to greater consciousness.

An African community for instance will work the fields by hand, reap, store and share the proceeds through a bartering system. They will attend a place of worship together, play similar sports consistent with their climate and disposition and will attend similar schools, being taught those things important to their culture. A great effort has to be made if new ways of farming, new religious doctrines and new school subjects are to be introduced.

In Australia we have the original inhabitants who must be the blackest anywhere in the world. They are adapted to this country and have been the custodians of the land over tens of thousands of years. Then comes a white immigration of Scotsmen from an entirely different climate and wedges its way into the community. Something has to give because these are two entirely different communities.

Within a community are subdivisions. These may be religious, sporting and educational where people who belong to the same church and therefore form a church community, are also members of another community or communities in another field. The Book Club, the Weavers club, the Swimming club, the Bush walkers Club, the Skydiving Club are subdivisions of the overall community.

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

As time goes on we change from one sub-community to another as we change, say, from skydiving to crochet but we still adhere to the rules of the tribe. Antisocial behaviour is anti-tribal behaviour and, as in the aboriginal communities, the maverick must be set free of the tribe like a leper so as not to pollute the core.

So would the Creator's job have been more simple if all humankind were the same? Well yes, and no. Life is more than a walk in the park. We are all set life's tasks and our job is to consciously make choices through our wonderfully conceived free will. The diversity of humankind, the diversity of climate, the mountains that separate us from our neighbours and the seas that isolate human types and experiences are all grist for the mill. There is nothing in our natural world that acts according to a simple rule. The non-circular planets move not in regular circular orbits but complicated ellipses. Weather patterns are continually changing and people all over the world develop all kinds of craftsmanship.



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE (contd)

There are many things I cannot do. I cannot knit, milk a cow, climb Everest, skate on ice or sow a field of corn. If my fellow beings did not feed and dress me I would starve or freeze to death. My small achievements are nothing to crow about or feel superior about. Without my community and the extended community throughout the world we would barely survive.

The heavenly Communities are likewise divided up according to our loves and affections. All are important as they contribute to the whole and to withdraw even one community in the spiritual realm would render the whole imbalanced. This is a good way to understand the need for Christ to have sacrificed Himself, to bring the Heavens back into balance and restore the Great Community.

Agape,

John Brogan

December 2006 Issue Correction

A "prayer" entitled **GOD** appeared on page 7 of our last issue and was attributed to Ken Cross in Queensland. Ken quickly emailed to say that a misconception may have occurred in that the item was not by him but simply submitted by him. Ken tells that he first became aware of the prayer when he attended a service at the "Casa de Dom Inacio de Loyola", a spiritual centre of healing in Abadiania, Brazil. It is run on a non-profit basis by many volunteers, the main person being "Jao de Deus" or "John of God" who receives 'patients' three days per week, seeing upwards of 1,000 a day turning none away. His charge for this ~ "NOTHING"; it is totally free unless herbs costing 10 Rias or A\$5 are prescribed.

Joa makes no claim to heal telling all that it is GOD who heals; he is merely the medium through which "Spiritual Entities" work to achieve Miracle cures. Ken witnessed many (there is not space to refer to specific cases except to tell of his daughter who 13 months after the visit to Abadiania is in remission from terminal cancer from the treatment received - someone to include in our prayers). But to the question 'Does everyone get a cure?' his answer would be NO. But the least that anyone gets from the visit is a great spiritual uplifting such as to be well worth the journey, and feels "the greater the belief the greater the chance of a cure."

This is a wonderful example of selfless work for the world Community.

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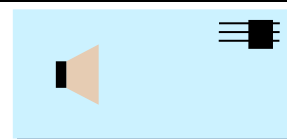
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Please Note: The views expressed in this Newsletter are those of each contributor and do not necessarily reflect any particular position of the Swedenborg Association of Australia or its Committee.

Membership of the Swedenborg Association of Australia Inc. is open to anyone who wishes to pursue an interest in Swedenborg, the man, his science and his spiritual teachings.

For details on how to join, please refer to page 12.

e-News



Congratulations to Walter Mason who, in February 2007, emailed the first Swedenborg Association's

Electronic Newsletter

It included details of our activities, a book review and promotion, and snippets of information about what is happening overseas of interest to the Swedenborg movement. You can be included in this monthly circular by phoning or emailing the Swedenborg Centre (see above).



What's Happened to Our Sense of Community?

by **Wayne Kasmr**

Recently at an SAA Committee meeting when the deadline for articles for this particular issue of Candela was drawing near, the Co-ordinator made mention of a problem. There was a dearth of contributions specifically on the subject of "Community" - its dedicated theme - being forwarded to him for inclusion.

Later, when I had a chance to ponder on it, I found myself not particularly surprised. Firstly, the sense of community in Western societies has not been experienced now for some decades. Whilst we like the idea of a sense of community amongst people, we don't seem to be able and/or willing to do what it takes to generate it amongst us.

But secondly, I had in mind that perhaps what seems a rather concerning state of affairs may not be as bad as we think. In fact it may have a lot to do with a development that Swedenborgians ought to be positively cheering about. For the decline in our sense of community began in the 1960s. A lot of other things happened in the sixties too and one of them was the decline of Christianity, also its power and influence. At that time the traditional religion of the Western World suffered a sudden and dramatic collapse in its ability to control the way people think. Before the sixties it held a central position in Western society. After then it found itself out on the periphery.

This fulfilled the first part of a prophecy that Swedenborg made back in the eighteenth century. In his writings he stated that the truth he was commissioned to communicate to the world would not immediately be introduced into the minds of men and women. Before this could happen the falsehoods that occupied those minds would have to be evicted. For if the truth was introduced before the falsehoods were cast out, minds would be the scene of such monumental conflict that humanity would be destroyed.

According to Swedenborg those falsehoods were the perverted truths that had accumulated in the teachings of the Christian Church over its long history. Whilst the basic Christian way of life had remained a legitimate avenue to regeneration and eternal happiness, the understanding that the Church taught regarding spiritual matters had nothing of truth left in it at all.

The first half of Swedenborg's prophecy I think is now coming to completion. It wasn't enough for Christianity to suddenly lose relevance for people, as it did almost overnight in the sixties. We had to go through a period of these forty years in the spiritual wilderness (doesn't that phrase sound familiar?) whilst those generations who had committed themselves to the old Christian ways of seeing things aged and died out.

To my mind a person becomes set in their beliefs by about the age of thirty. Traditionally it is by then that a person has grown up and been educated, become

established in a career and has started a family. Life is settled in a way that will remain constant. And the person has to make up their mind what they believe because of needing to teach their young children life values.

The age of thirty is an interesting one biblically. It is the age when Jesus starts his ministry, David becomes king of the entire Israelite nation and it was the age when Levite men began their full priesthood in the presence of the Ark of the Covenant in the Tabernacle and Temple. Obviously it is a time of life when a certain maturity is attained.

The people who were at least thirty years old in the mid 1960's are now over seventy. Obviously this means some of those people have died and those that are left are in their twilight years. So now we have the great majority of vital and active people in today's society unconvinced and unmoved by the false notions that the traditional Christian Church has persisted in teaching to this day.

Just exactly how the events and developments of the 1960's meant that a religion that had such enormous power for so many centuries could suddenly and dramatically become marginalised is an extraordinary story. We don't have room here to go into that in detail. That would require a whole book. But generally it can be seen that there was a need for people to be disengaged from other people in order to allow them to be disengaged from a religion which had so strong a grip on people's minds. For religion, especially one with the self-sacrificing, others-centred principles that Christianity preached, was a powerful facilitator of social integration. In these forty years in the wilderness, before truth can be introduced into our mind, this meant that our sense of community, amongst other good and valuable things, had to be temporarily foregone for the sake of a greater good - the eviction of falsity from people's minds.

I think that the time of the second part of Swedenborg's prophecy - the introduction of truth into people's minds - is close at hand. In recent days I've heard that my three teenage nieces are showing curiosity about religion. They have grown up in a family like so many others today - one you could almost describe as a religion-free zone! I must admit that I've felt concern about that. But perhaps there has been a good reason for it. The current younger generation of people have minds that are completely clear and free when it comes to understanding spiritual matters. Let the Truth now be introduced.

Wayne Kasmr (Sydney, NSW) is a founding member of the Swedenborg Association of Australia and a Committee member.



GROUP SHARING ~ Using the '5 Steps' Way

by **Julian Duckworth**

Over the last two years a number of small Swedenborg-based groups round Australia have been using what's called the '5 Steps' method of working together. It is becoming clear that this way of sharing works very well and is liked by those taking part who find it helpful and even transforming. It is also a method that is easy to arrange and to run, so there may well be readers of Candela who might like to form a group and work in this particular way.

Here are the very basic parts of the 5 Steps:-

As a group you choose a 'text' to use which could well be one of Swedenborg's writings. A text provides the group with raw material and the framework from which to begin.

1. Each person in the group reads the same selected part of the text during the previous fortnight
2. Each person chooses part of the passage, say one paragraph, and reflects on this in this same period
3. Each person looks at how what is said in their chosen paragraph can be applied and used
4. Each person, still with their chosen paragraph, creates a personal task and tries it out
5. The group comes together and basically reports on how it has gone for each member

Here is a bit more about each of the steps –

1. It is important to read the whole section through several times and to write down in an exercise book any overall impressions you get from reading, but also from meeting up with it and dealing with it. These may be of all different kinds - sudden insights, personal connections, puzzlement, struggles with understanding it, challenges to what you believe, feelings and emotions as you read, dreams, whatever it is. Finding the text easy, interesting, dull or hard to get into is all part of the process. It's also useful to point out that subsequent readings of the same section are going to find people in different frames of mind or states than previous readings.
2. Choosing the particular part or paragraph to zone in on is up to each person. You may find something intriguing or moving which keeps bringing you back to it. Perhaps it's a good point to suggest that the text finds you rather than you find the text! And again, write things in the 'journal' about what you chose and how it comes across to you. You might like to try to put what it is saying in your own words or you could say why you chose this section. There are really no rules about what is expected or required. It's much more a case of being involved with it. It's also worth saying that the part you choose needs to be read and re-read, turned over, allowed to speak and come into its own. You can study it, analyse it, feel it, listen to it. On a practical note, try to choose your section some time during the first week to give you plenty of time during the fortnight to be with it.
3. The next step involves looking very generally at how it can be used by people. A helpful question to start this process going could be 'What can you or people do with this?' or 'What is it saying and what is it asking?' You don't have to be too personal with this, you can keep it quite broad. It may quickly suggest some applications and use or it might not. If it doesn't, don't worry too much, but perhaps try a bit of lateral thinking with it. Record anything you come up with in the journal.
4. Step four will probably come out of the previous step. It entails creating a specific task or practice from something in the passage or from something that you got from it. This is something which may be a bit tricky to begin with – to create something to try out. It will come more easily down the track. The main thing is to choose a task you can do and one that is fairly simple and personal. Later on, when we look at one or two examples, it may become clearer. When you have got your task, try it out for as many days as you have left before the group meets, and notice how it goes. Don't forget too that you also have a 'life' and are probably quite a busy person in all sorts of ways. But to help you with it, remind yourself of your task several times during the day, whatever you are doing.
5. Finally, the group assembles, comes together and reports. This can be done in different ways but to begin with, it is helpful and fair to go round each person for each step and allow each person some time to report. Other things will come up no doubt as people in the group respond to what's said and shared, but keep the basic framework rather than letting it slide into a free-for-all open conversation. People will share their excitement or their frustration and do it their way. The group is supportive and alongside. It is probably a good thing to ask someone to facilitate, handle, steer, guide it but also be an equal member in the group. You could take turns at each meeting, why not? The last thing before coffee and biscuits is to make sure everyone knows the portion for the next fortnight.

Five Steps is not :-

- ~ A presentation by any person in the group, giving the definitive answer or explanation
- ~ A group counselling session, although some real therapy and healing will happen
- ~ An immediately successful method - the group may take a few sessions to settle down
- ~ An intellectual consideration, debate or argument, yet of course thinking is part of the process
- ~ A conversation about things out there in the world, although this may get mentioned in passing

Five Steps is, or aims to be:-

- ~ An opportunity for people to connect with the spiritual part of their life



- ~ An opportunity to be with other people in sharing this spiritual part of life
- ~ A discovery of just how important and beneficial this spiritual level of life and sharing is
- ~ A way of feeling loving and accepting of other people, even when you are not meeting up
- ~ An experience of personal transformation as an individual and as a group

How many in the group?

Experience and time seems to suggest that the ideal number of people in such a group is between 4 and 6. You would be surprised how much time it often takes for 5 people to report on the 5 Steps including all the extra moments that this creates. 3 people could do it but they may feel too few and not have the variety of more, and 7 would be getting close to many and perhaps allow one or two to hold back a bit.

So now, an example to make it feel more real:-

Say the group decides to use Swedenborg's book **True Christian Religion** and has chosen to begin with chapter 9 which is on Repentance. This chapter is 61 paragraphs or nearly 40 pages and it comes in two parts: the first part is a number of spiritual statements, the second is on experiences of things in the spiritual world that Swedenborg witnessed and described. This is too much for a fortnight, so we will suppose the group decides to read from paragraph 509 to 524 or 10½ pages. That's plenty and seems about right.

Overall impressions:- Step One

Possible reports might include such things as -
I found it quite hard to get started and the things I read didn't connect that much to begin with. I could understand it fairly easily in my head especially if I didn't read too much all at once. I looked for the main points and he seems to be saying that repentance is something very different from just being sorry or regretting what you've been like in the past. That's interesting. He also started out saying that repentance is the first thing that happens when a person starts being spiritual which I think is what he means by the church being in them - I liked that. There was a lot of what I would call strong stuff; he seems very emphatic about some things. Overall it seemed to me to be saying that we need to recognise we're not perfect and we have our own personal problems to deal with or simply know are there. It made me ask quite a few questions about what we're like and whether we can actually change what we're like. I found his illustrations quite funny and they got it across. But I'm not sure I have got that far with it yet. The language is a bit formal.

Chosen section:- Step Two

It might include something like this-
I chose paragraph 521 or the first part of it, which is about heredity. It interested me because I've got three children and they're quite different from each other but I can see things about me and Susan (my wife, their mother) in them. Not always of course. It just

comes up. And I'm not sure whether that's heredity so it's right there in the genes (poor things) or from what they've seen us do and say and picked that up a bit, or both. I guess kids copy quite a lot even though they've got their own personality. But what struck me was the first sentence that hereditary evil comes from no other source than one's parents. Why doesn't he talk about the good side too? Surely parents don't only give the bad side to their offspring. I got more when I read that we don't pass on actual evil but tendencies, so I think that's something that just keeps getting passed down the generations. It seems to mean that every person gets something which is going to be a personal problem or a factor in some way. We all have something like that, like a quick temper or avoiding trouble, or just being lazy. Some people have it extra hard because of what they're given. I appreciated finding out that nobody gets judged for what they start out with but for what they choose to be like.

Applications:- Step Three

Some of these may be -

- Family dynamics and how families get on or meet problems from personality clashes
- How do people move from tendencies to actual evil - what is actual evil really?
- Accepting we all have something to cope with, learning to manage that better - anger management
- Notice just more generally how people are in a more complete way

A personal task:- Step Four

You might come up with this kind of task -

My personal task was to increase how much I complimented people and said positive and true things about them. I wanted to find out two things, maybe three. How easy did I find it to say such a thing openly to their face rather than just feel it in me? Did it change me in any way? And how did they handle being told good things about themselves - were they embarrassed, pleased or what?

Being at the meeting and reporting:- Step Five

This goes without comment because each meeting will be different but it is also helpful to tune into how you are finding it and how the group is going during the meeting. One of the likely outcomes of being part of a group like this over a long period of time is to see how everyone including you is growing by sharing.

The Swedenborg Association of Australia Committee now has available a **Facilitating Kit** for this Group sharing concept. It includes practical steps aimed at forming Groups and conducting the process. Copies are freely available from the Secretary at the Swedenborg Centre (see page 2 for contact details).



ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

Ah, Autumn - my favourite time of the year. It's wonderful to see nature and her creatures slowing down and stocking up for their winter 'retreat'.

It is also the time when I enjoy the shorter days, cool nights in front of our log fire and contemplating (and experiencing) the essence of 'time out'.

And a big welcome to our new Members:

Anne Fitzgerald (NSW)

Raj Jahangira (NSW)

Robin Fletcher (Vic)

We recently received news of the passing of Mrs Margaret Haine (Brisbane) into the spiritual world, where she joins her husband, Hector, who died over 15 years ago. They both had a great interest in Swedenborg's spiritual teachings, Hector having prepared the text of one of the earlier information brochures issued by the Swedenborg Centre. Margaret was a Foundation member of the Association and maintained good support until failing health prevented active involvement.

Business Items:

For those of you who wish to gather and spend time in reading and sharing things spiritual, starting a 5 Step Reading Group may be just the answer for you. John and I attended a group facilitated last year by Julian Duckworth and it really was a joy. Read the article in this issue (page 4) to find out about the method and how you can get going.

We have lots of interesting things planned for this year. Group facilitators are putting together programmes with some great talks in the various locations - have a look at page 12 for further details. The Committee is looking at useful new publications, especially further information leaflets to assist those new to, or relatively new to, Swedenborg's spiritual writings and a way of promoting Swedenborg and Swedenborgian concepts on everyone's PC - watch this space!

... and now, enjoy the March *Candela*. May your Autumn be filled with colour and may you enjoy your 'down time' with this issue.

Light and Laughter.

Your Secretary,

Louise

GROUP'S NEWS

Brisbane:

The Swedenborg Association of Australia Discussion meetings in the Brisbane area are presently being re-negotiated. For one thing, folk from Redlands Bay who previously regularly attended the meetings at suburban Rosalie (about an hours drive away) are now holding their own meetings locally. As well, a number of other participants live on the south side of Brisbane, as far down as the Gold Coast. We are looking into this and have begun to seriously consider a new venue more convenient and accessible.

With these developments taking place we were not all that surprised at such a small attendance at the meeting held at Rosalie on Wednesday, February 21st. There were just three of us but the meeting was videoed and is to be made available to friends who rang through their apologies and others who are interested. My topic was: *Getting the balance right between my management of my life and Divine Providence*. A sub-title, in the form of a question was, "How can I be reasonably sure that the choices and decisions I make accord with the Lord's Divine Providence".

It is easy to allow yourself to be disappointed with small numbers yet there was a very good feeling afterwards about the meeting, thoughts stimulated, new things to think about, etc. Smaller numbers, too, make possible quality one-on-one time and conversation, and that is precious.

Ian Arnold



Melbourne:

Our first meeting for the year was held on 23rd February and our speaker was **Chris Skinner**. The presentation looked at the *Twelve Step Program* known to everyone, and how it has been used and adapted to the areas of Alcoholics Anonymous, Spiritual Growth and Mental Health. Chris explained how the principles used derive from the wisdom of the ancients and how there needs to be an acknowledgement of something higher than ourselves and the preparedness to examine our lives and actions. The meeting was attended by about 22 people and we were pleased to have 5 people who had not attended any meetings previously. As usual question time was lively and we had fellowship over coffee and biscuits.

Future topics for the year include the research of Robert Crockall into Psychic and Near Death Experiences, Greek and Roman Mythology, Iridology and the Harmony of Creation.

Chris Skinner



North Ryde, Sydney:

On Friday 2nd February, we had the launching of ***Our Soul's Awakening*** which is a revision by the Swedenborg Centre of ***Allegories of Genesis*** by Thomas King. It was launched by **Stephen Leeder**. The book launch was preceded by Stephen's talk *Arcana Caelestia – A Blueprint for the Development of the Soul*. His approximately forty minute presentation provided an overview of the message of the ***Arcana Caelestia*** utilising the insights of Swedenborg. The talk had the effect of reminding the audience that people were once in a close connection with the Divine, there was a falling away and that a return pathway has been shown in the life of the Lord. It is a very good summary from a person who has read and reflected on the teachings of the ***Arcana Caelestia*** for many years. It has encouraged people to read ***Our Soul's Awakening*** and the ***Arcana Caelestia***. For those who are familiar with the *Arcana Caelestia* and who think a personal overview would help them appreciate these spiritual writings even more, I would encourage you to borrow the DVD of the evening. Stephen's talk is to be issued in due course by the Swedenborg Centre as a separate booklet.

On Friday 23rd February **Dr Alex Reichel** gave a talk on ***Science and Spirituality***. His presentation was erudite and various words such as positivism (denying the validity of metaphysical speculations and the existence of a personal God) were presumed to be understood. The purpose of the talk was to indicate that there is a radical change in our perceptions of reality taking place that will lead people to move away from the scientific mechanistic view to one that includes a Creator. There was a very good interaction between the speaker and the audience afterwards which added considerably to the interest of the night. This talk is also available on DVD through the Swedenborg Centre.

Michael Chester



Community - Uses and Charity

God's love and wisdom continually express themselves together in what Swedenborg refers to as "uses". The concept of "uses" refers to a deeply spiritual view of useful activity in which there resides a genuine desire to serve - a desire that inspires advances in wisdom in order to be truly effective.

Uses and love come together as people respond with care to what is at hand, with a sensitivity to the connections that extend beyond what is immediately in front of them.

Uses could apply, for example, to a member of a local social-action committee who joins a planning team to mobilize local community leadership around

needs for affordable housing or to another who joins a volunteer construction crew. Each could lovingly and devotedly participate in actions with a care for immediate needs and an awareness of further connections.

Uses are linked with what Swedenborg describes as a life of charity. What does charity mean?

Swedenborg describes charity as a heartfelt affection and desire to do our neighbour good, and the capacity to delight in good without looking for any further reward. How can we relate to this definition if we find we want to hurt someone, or we find we are doing something good because we want approval? Bear in mind that the pure motivation Swedenborg describes is something that develops gradually and not without struggles and conflicts.

Charity is not defined by actions alone, but requires an incarnation or embodiment of a truly charitable spirit.

For Swedenborg, the first step in charity is to look to the Lord and avoid evils because they are sins, and the second is to do good things because they are uses.

Looking to God first gives us a better understanding of what is needed and how to respond more effectively to the needs of the world around us.

Our treatment of each neighbour should depend on the quality of each neighbour's treatment of others. We need to be prudent and discriminating in our practice of charity, guarding against unintentionally contributing to harm, and continually seeking the best way to love and respond to each individual.

Swedenborg notes that every individual participates in various communities, countries, humanity, and the world, and that our practice of charity must extend to collective neighbours as well as to individuals. As with individuals, we are challenged to examine the quality of our collective neighbours. We can love a community which integrates many uses and renders many services to individuals as a good neighbour. Yet a community in which one group oppresses other groups or in which there is widespread violence is a community we should resist and seek to change.

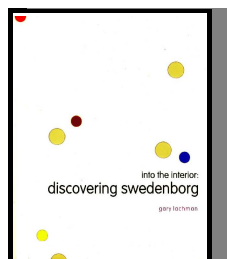
Charity may also call for challenging our country and protesting unjust laws or policies.

Given our shared humanity, all people are neighbours in the widest sense. Swedenborg also describes the Lord's realm which includes all in heaven, all in the universal church on earth, and the Lord as our higher neighbours. A life of charity brings us into greater and greater connection with these higher neighbours. When we fully practice charity, we embody and contain charity.

Extracted from Chapter 3 of the book: ***The Power of Service*** by **J. Theodore Klein**. Issued by J. Appleseed & Co. In 1998, it is a Swedenborgian approach to social issues in the 21st century. Copies are available from the Swedenborg Centre.



BOOK REVIEWS



into the interior: discovering swedenborg

by **Gary Lachman** \$25.00
137 pages, paperback
The Swedenborg Society, UK

Gary Lachman is the author of several books on mystical, occult and esoteric subjects. While not a Swedenborgian, he clearly has a wide-ranging knowledge and deep appreciation of Swedenborg's life, work and thought.

The author's primary interest is in the history of consciousness, and the book is to a large extent related to Swedenborg's contribution to this area.

Perhaps the most remarkable feature of the book is the demonstration of Swedenborg's similarities to, and affinities with, a variety of leading well-known thinkers, including physicist David Bohm (implicate and explicate orders), versatile scientist Rupert Sheldrake (morphogenetic fields), philosopher and psychologist William James, psychologist Carl Jung and authors Aldous Huxley and Arthur Koestler. Similarly there are parallels with esoteric notables such as Rudolf Steiner, P. D. Ouspensky and G. I. Gurdjieff - especially the first-named. Perhaps the most surprising is the similarity between Swedenborg's reports of heaven and hell, and Bernard Shaw's characteristics as given in his play *Man and Superman*.

The relationship of some of Swedenborg's ideas with recent developments regarding holograms and fractals (fascinating patterns based on a recently developed branch of mathematics) is explained. There is also an account of how Swedenborg anticipated the 'anthropic cosmological principle', based on the recognition of the many coincidences that are necessary for intelligent life to appear on earth.

The contrast is presented between Swedenborg's views and those of reductionists such as Francis Crick, co-discoverer of DNA, whose 'astonishing hypothesis' was that "we are nothing but a pack of neurones". (Reductionism, i.e. the idea that consciousness is merely the functioning of the brain, while prevalent, is fortunately, by no means universally accepted.)

Lachman gives an excellent biographical outline of Swedenborg. The development of his scientific achievements is brought out very clearly, especially his outstanding work on the brain. The history of Swedenborg's inner journeyings is of a high standard, especially in relation to his dream explorations. Towards the end of the book there is an intriguing parallel between some characteristics of angels, as reported by Swedenborg, and some features of mystical experience. Lachman also gives an account of several of

Swedenborg's paranormal experiences e.g. the Stockholm fire episode, and makes the interesting comment that, perhaps paranormal experiences occur to us more often than we are aware, whereas we are conditioned to disregard them.

The book also contains an excellent bibliography of most of Swedenborg's main works, with a helpful comment of about 250 words in each case.

While the odd passage may jar with some readers, overall this is a superb treatment of so many aspects of Swedenborg's life and achievements. Incidentally, there is little reference to his theological significance. But the book brings to light so much of Swedenborg, especially the often unfamiliar connections with other streams of thought, to an extent that may surprise even some very experienced Swedenborgians.

Geoff Forster B.A., B.Sc., SAA member living in Melbourne. Former Editor of CSIRO Science Journals, Member of the Existentialist Society, Sea of Faith in Australia and lecturer with U3A.

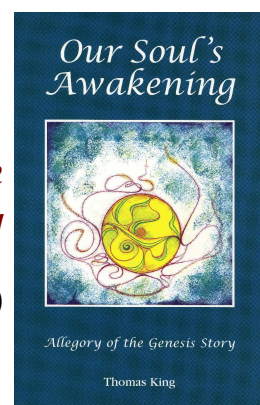


Our Soul's Awakening:

Allegory of the Genesis Story

by **Thomas King** \$20.00

186 pages, paperback
Swedenborg Centre, Sydney



This is a delightful and inspiring read. It is a revised version (with some important extras) of the original text ~ *Allegories of Genesis* ~ by Thomas King. Neville Jarvis, Manager of the Swedenborg Centre in Sydney, to render it more modern and more understandable, has revamped Dr King's book, published first in 1922. The extras are a concluding summary, and, at the end of each chapter, a summary, as well as a personal reflection for the reader.

New readers, both young and old, will now have an opportunity to enter into the amazing works of Emanuel Swedenborg - and this is an exciting prospect. The further good news is that specialist and public libraries all over Australia will have this book available to them.

The new work, following on from the original, is an insightful presentation of the spiritual meaning within the first eleven chapters of the Genesis story, dealt with by Emanuel Swedenborg in his great work *Arcana Caelestia*. Any person interested in the inner workings and the spiritual development of the human being should



be interested in *Arcana Caelestia*. It is very much a blueprint for the development of the soul. *Arcana Caelestia* shows us how the inner life of religion begins, grows and comes to power. Remarkably, it is about the planting and the growth of the kingdom of heaven in the human spirit.

There are three different scales of meaning within it - the spiritual life of our race, the development of the Lord's inner life and the individual's spiritual life. *Our Soul's Awakening* covers the first two periods of humankind - the Adamic and the Noetic. It begins with the seven days of creation when our spirit is stirred from its dark place and its ignorance, and begins to grow and then mature. It shows us the development of Celestial 'Man', takes us through the ego emerging and being caught up with the senses. It takes us into the struggle for ascendancy of love over understanding, through the Noetic period of the Ark and the descendants of that period, and beyond into the confusion and separation of Babel and the Tower.

The compelling and amazing thing about this is that it's beyond a mere intellectual exercise – it is about us now. We can read it and begin to understand how we work, what we may confront and overcome on our journey to completion. We can, at the very heart of it find a very deep river of God – and begin to take a small step into existence with Divine Life. It is, as the new title suggests, about our soul's awakening.

The material, then, is truly remarkable and the new, more modern approach can turn this book into what should be a handbook for personal development. Individuals should study its points one by one, ponder them, and contemplate their meanings. Groups should form to study each new meaning, and lectures and works of art should emerge from this exciting exploration. And the fascinating and delightful illustrations by Liz Coggins which are included at various points in the text help raise the mind to higher levels of experience.

Well done to the creators of this revision - there is much to take from it. Any effort to open up the extraordinary works of Swedenborg should be met with a loud and rousing cheer!

Stephen Leeder M.A. has a long career in Film & TV which continues today. Currently he also teaches English to refugees at The Asylum Seekers Centre in Surrey Hills, Sydney. He has been a student of the spiritual writings of Swedenborg for over 25 years.

The Lord guards men and women with most especial care during their sleep.

Swedenborg: *Arcana Caelestia* paragraph 959

Correspondence Column

~ Part 5

... looking at the images presented in the story of

CREATION

Imagine for a moment, a great unbounded cosmos of dark, fluid expanse. Suddenly, there appears within it, first a dark hole or void, and then a light shines out infilling it and revealing an upper and lower half - the upper lighter and more airy, the lower much more dense and watery. Then, part of the waters condenses to form a solid mass which, though deep, floats on the watery depths. Soon, this land mass becomes covered in a beautiful green mantle and plants and trees begin to rise up gracefully, drawn towards the light and airiness of the upper region. Then, in the roof of this cosmic egg, appears a bright radiating disc of light. And soon there are dynamic denizens arising in the seas, in the air and, later, even on the great land mass itself, carrying much warmth from the radiant disc above in their bloodstreams.

Thus the heavens and the earth were completed in all their vast array.

Genesis 2:1

This imaginary scenario is a myth of the creative development of the human spirit as depicted in the book of Genesis. It is a true mirror of reality, though not a true scientific description of the genesis of the physical world. Correspondences coming down to us from ancient times are based on appearances; that is to say, on how things or forms appear, not on what they really are in themselves. This does not mean that the modern scientific world picture of atoms, electro-magnetic waves, solar systems, galaxies and curved space, is not correspondent with higher spiritual realities also. Far from it - and more of that another time. But it does mean that sacred scriptures, such as the Bible, are written in correspondences rooted in the pre-scientific world picture of ancient times.

All things that are manifest in nature from the least to the greatest are correspondences because the natural world with all things belonging to it comes into manifestation from the spiritual world, and both worlds from the Divine.

Swedenborg - *Heaven and Hell* 106.

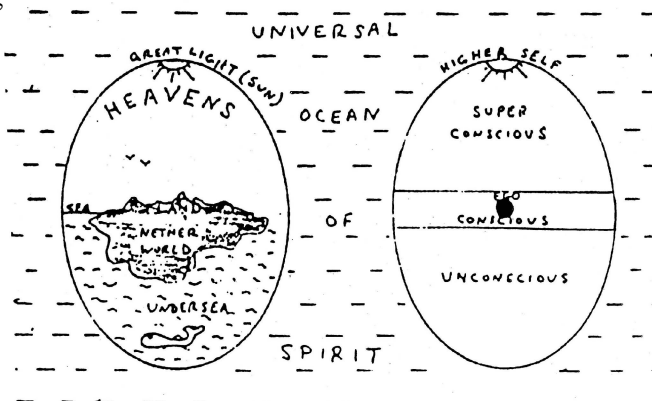
Let us see what the creation myth or image reveals of our inner nature by making a diagram of the process. Here we see that the land and surface of the sea correspond to the conscious areas of our mind, a mixture of relatively unintegrated images and thoughts with firmly grounded opinions and attitudes.

*** Contd. Page 10 ***



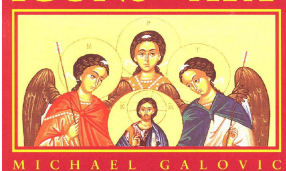
In the centre is me, surrounded by the world that is being created around me from out of the universal ocean of spirit. Below the land surface are dark fiery areas from my past that I would not normally want to know about. In the depths of the sea are vague disturbing monsters I have never yet had to face. But above me, if I am willing to look upwards, is a sky of light, across which spiritual thoughts can often be seen flying. And, breaking through at last, at the limit of my upwards gaze, a great warmly bright centre of radiance - the true centre of my cosmos. For the Christian, that sun is the risen Christ - manifestation in my world of the hidden Creator. That sun appears in my little corner of the world of spirit; yet, really, my true life is from it, revolves around it, and looks to it for light, guidance and the strength of love.

Each of us is a cosmic egg with a bright side and a dark side; with a true Centre and an illusory centre, and each of us emerges out of the ocean of Divine Spirit which is 'above the heavens' and is also the foundation beneath - the 'Everlasting Arms'.



Written by Rev. Dr. **Michael Stanley** for the newsletter of the Swedenborg Movement (UK)

ICONS + ART



A book on icons and artwork by **Michael Galovic**, a master of Traditional Orthodox iconography. He is a longstanding

member of the SAA and has given talks at the Swedenborg Centre on his work and approach.

This lavish book of over 80 images in full colour of Michael's icons and his religious and non-religious artwork was recently issued and launched. Please visit www.geographicsgroup.com/icons+art to find out more about this publication or ring Michael direct on 0243884434.

*Real joy, which comes from
loving to do good things
without wanting to be repaid,
is the reward that lasts forever.
The Lord puts heaven and
unending happiness into this
kind of goodness.*

Swedenborg: *The Heavenly City* paragraph 156

Next Issue June 2007

Theme: ***Fear and Fears***

Sound a negative topic? Well, it can do but we all have fears which we face at different times in our lives.

- *How do we deal with our fears?*
- *Can we turn particular fears into a positive force for good in our lives - physically, emotionally and spiritually?*
- *And what about the benefits of holy fear?*

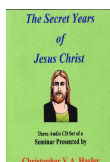
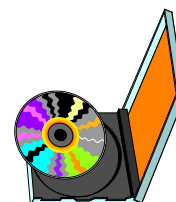
Maybe you have a fear of putting your thoughts on paper and submitting them for publication! Now is your opportunity to address that one by either writing something on this topic or another spiritually based one and sending it to the Newsletter Co-ordinator at the registered office (page 2). It can be an article, letter, poem, etc. Alternatively, submit some relevant piece you have read elsewhere.

**To be a lively Newsletter, your contributions are needed.
Copy deadline will be 4th June.**



Discounted Items for the Quarter

If you order the following titles in the April to June 2007 Quarter, you will receive approx. 25% off the retail price.
(see the discounted price and postage on the form below)
Complete the Order Form (you can copy it) and return it to the Swedenborg Centre or telephone on 02 9888 1066 and mention this notice.



The Secret Years of Jesus Christ by Christopher Hasler
Workshop in three session. Offered in a Boxed set of 3 CDs

RRP \$15.00

Have you wondered about Jesus' life during his first 30 years until he began his public ministry? By using material from Swedenborg's spiritual writings, Christopher Hasler provides a fascinating account of Jesus's developing mind during those formative years. An astounding and humbling story.

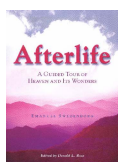


A Promise of Life by Dennis Duckworth

RRP \$2.00

43 pages, paper (pocket size)

A small booklet aimed to show the realities which lie behind life, death and the life beyond. Having the sub-title 'For the Bereaved', it looks at shock and suffering and the usefulness and consolation of mourning, penetrating beneath common experience to show the love and wisdom of a merciful God.



Afterlife by Donald Rose (Newly released title)

RRP \$20.00

142 pages, paper, Swedenborg Foundation

An abridgement of Swedenborg's *Heaven and Hell* containing the essence of what Swedenborg experienced and disclosed on the realities of life after death and the very structure of the realms, which remain invisible to the living.

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<i>Afterlife</i>	\$2.00	\$15.00		\$
<i>into the interior</i> (See Page 8)	\$5.00	(normal) \$25.00		\$
<i>Our Soul's Awakening</i> (See Page 8)	\$ 3.00	(normal) \$20.00		\$
Total Payable by Cheque/Money Order/Credit Card #				\$

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WHAT'S HAPPENING?

For Group activities, contact your nearest Group Convenor

- Brisbane (Ian Arnold on (07) 3369 0054; email: iaarnold@ozemail.com.au)
- Gold Coast (Kevin Attwater on (07) 5545 2401 and Jack Benson on (07) 5545 4115);
- Melbourne (Chris Skinner on (03) 9432 0322; email: cskinner9@optusnet.com.au);
- Perth (Trevor Moffat on (08) 9470 9775; email: trevorm@ic-net.com.au;)
- Sydney region (Michael Chester on (02) 9913 2421; email: mchester@accsoft.com.au);



It would be good to establish Groups in other areas. If you can help, please contact Michael Chester.

Details of programmes will be advised by leaflet as soon as they are known. Our website is updated when new information comes available - www.swedenborg.com.au

Brisbane: New Church Hall, 21 Agars Street, Rosalie. **2007 Programme** being determined

Melbourne: New Church Hall, 426 High Street Road, Mount Waverley. Usually last Fridays commencing 8pm.

Perth: 23rd March ~ *Robert Crockall and Psychic & Near Death Experiences* Speaker: **Geoff Forster**
Petros Lifeskills Bookshop, 281 Albany Highway, Victoria Park. **2007 programme** being
determined

Sydney: Swedenborg Centre, 1 Avon Road, North Ryde. Usually 4th Fridays commencing 7.45pm.

2007 23rd March ~ *The Game of Life*. Speaker: **John Brogan**

20th April ~ *Shamanism and Shamanic Drumming* with **Nevill Drury**

25th May ~ *Buddhism and Swedenborg* Speaker: **Walter Mason**

Meditation Evenings - First Monday of month. 6.30 - 7.30pm

Cabramatta Spiritual Group - 2nd Tuesday of each month. Contact Walter on 0416 276 227

WHY A SWEDENBORG ASSOCIATION?

To promote Emanuel Swedenborg, the man and his message, throughout Australia by personal contact, meetings, etc.

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