

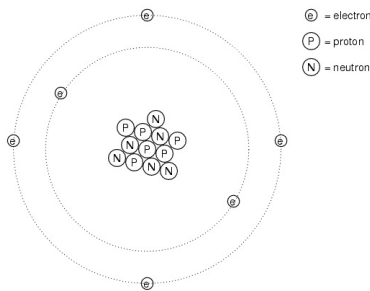


Issue Theme ~ *"Sacred Space"*

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Space is sometimes defined as emptiness, an absence of objects. "Advertising potential" as the marketers among us would have it! A receptacle in which unlimited potential exists, where there is room for creation. Empty space separates objects like artworks in a gallery, or words on the page to prevent contamination or confusion between them. When studying German, I used to observe the language having awfully long words. They often string many words together, like Donaudampfschiffahrtsgesellschaftskapitän (Danube steamship company captain). Someone once explained the root cause of this phenomenon as not being due to a German's love for long words but rather that German literature suffered from a lack of space!

Contrary to appearance and sensory experience, material objects in our world are more space than solid. If the nucleus of an atom were the size of a baseball, the diameter of that atom would be about 4km and the electrons surrounding it would each be smaller than a full stop (.) and move around at random in the area between the nucleus and the edge of the atomic diameter. It's a wonder when we run into a wall we don't pass through it . . . Also colliding galaxies rarely experience crashes between stars due to galaxies consisting far more of space than matter. Space space is abundant!



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

Space and time are inseparable twins of our world, so much that they are usually referred to as 'space-time'. Curiously, space-time is not as constant a thing as we might assume. Einstein showed from his General Theory of Relativity that space-time is geometrically distorted - curved - near gravitationally significant masses. He was proven correct experimentally when it was confirmed that time runs slower for astronauts in orbit than for observers on the ground (so if you want to live longer, become an astronaut). Highly accurate atomic clocks were sent on the space shuttle. When the clocks came back less time had passed for them than had passed on an equivalent clock which remained on earth (although the time difference is very small - less than a second - because the shuttle is travelling slowly compared to the speed of light).

Psychologically, we may speak of "needing space" by which we might mean that we need time, or that we wish to be free from outside influence on our decisions and actions.



SPACE
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 SPACE AND NON SPACE
 SPACE TO CREATE
 LIMITS OF SPACE
 N A T U R A L
 SPACING SPACING SPACING SPACING SPACING

Concrete Poetry by Joe Vandermeer

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

1st August 2008 at Swedenborg Centre
 1 Avon Road, North Ryde, 2113 at 7.45pm
 The short business meeting will be preceded
 by a talk from David Millar, Minister of the
 Swedenborgian congregation in Adelaide and
 Director of the Australian New Church
 College. His subject will be:

*Navigating Our Spiritual Development:
 Swedenborg's Writings as Compass & Map*

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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.

A Grey Old Time by James Baillie, SAA member, Victoria

*Time speeds up when you're having fun,
 or slows right down if your having none,
 especially in your teens.
 But time that crawls when you're just a kid,
 when you're old goes quicker than it ever did.
 What could it possibly mean?*

*I try to go slow and enjoy my age.
 When good times slow, the bad times fade,
 and life can get serene.
 But time will never let me alone:
 there's always something that's left undone.
 What could it possibly mean?*

*I prepare myself at the dawn of day
 for another act in the life-long play,
 and another series of scenes.
 But when the sun sets, I look askance:
 it all seems a dreamy circular dance.
 What could it possibly mean?*

*A year, a month, a day, or a minute,
 I just let it roll, put my energy in it,
 short of bursting a spleen.
 But today by chance, I stopped for a second,
 stunned by the stupendous question
 of what it could possibly mean.*



A Holy Land by Julian Duckworth

A revision of a talk given to the Sydney Theosophical Society in May 2008

At 4.37pm exactly 60 years ago today, 14th May 1948, David Ben-Gurion, stood up in the Tel Aviv Museum in what had been Palestine and read out the following declaration - "The holy land of Israel is the birthplace of the Jewish people. Here, their spiritual, religious, cultural and political identity was shaped. Here, they first attained to statehood and gave to the world the eternal Book of Books. Exiled from their land, the people kept faith with it and never ceased to pray and hope for their return to it and for the restoration in it of their own freedom. Accordingly we members of the people's council, assembled on the day of the ending of the British Mandate, and on the resolution of the United Nations General Assembly hereby declare the establishment of a Jewish state in Israel to be known as the State of Israel."

One hour later the United States, Russia (Soviet Union), Britain and France recognised the new state. Six hours later Arab planes from Egypt, Syria, Jordan began a bombardment of Jewish sites in Israel and Israeli planes hit back. But Israel's land, right or wrong, this holy land, went back to the Jews.

A Holy Land.

~ *Sacred Space.*

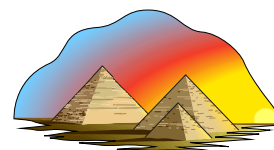
~ *Sacred Place.*

The ancient Greeks called this idea *Temenos*. The concept that a particular location in some way holds an energy which is sacred, or at least feels sacred to certain human beings who are there. It is a very intriguing idea.

- ▶ Is a site sacred in its own right by its existence?
- ▶ Is it sacred because of a particular feature of the landscape which becomes 'energetic' in some way?
- ▶ Is somewhere sacred because people have practised rituals, ceremonies and sacrifices there?
- ▶ Is somewhere sacred because it sits at the intersection of certain energy lines?
- ▶ Or is a sacred place or site seen as sacred only in the minds of people who go there and they project this onto the surroundings, but the place itself is no more than what it is?

My understanding is that there is always an inner and an outer working together creating meaning. The 'inner' is our own human subjectivity (although I would prefer to say our own spirituality), the 'outer' - the place - is something which expresses this in some way. The two correspond. We feel that a place is special because it mirrors something in us. We can also create such a place, like a cathedral. This is very real. The energy is very real. We actually feel it when we are there, yet the question still remains: is it out there or in me?

There are a good number of examples of sacred sites from different traditions and regions around the world, often shrouded in deep mysteries. Sometimes the very layout is based either on a complex geometry which seems to accentuate the sense of sacred place, or on an alignment to the stars, or rather, to a particular constellation. A fairly well-known example of this is the layout of the Pyramids which appears to match the Orion constellation, and, rather interestingly, the River Nile alongside matching the Milky Way. If this were done today, a group of architects would discuss such a project in detail. Back then, it seems that it was probably the result of a deep spiritual consciousness, perhaps without any full understanding of the design and what it was mirroring.



So far this has been introductory but I hope it has stirred something up and resonated. Resonance is a really good word for what I'm talking about in terms of sacred space. We resonate with something that feels true. It's a kind of sympathetic vibration and we catch it. It happens when we find ourselves in the place just right and we are in agreement or accord with it.

Let's take this idea a bit further and suggest that truth is already fully and perfectly present in us, in every one of us. This is because God is continually creating us and maintaining us in existence. God didn't make us at some given point in time past but is continually making us and if that ever stopped we'd simply go out of existence. We are actually like holograms and even our own sense of being separate individuals is a bit of a poor misinterpretation of true ultimate reality.



But of course that's how it looks and feels, for good reason. The reason as I see it is that by giving us the sense of our own individuality, when in fact everything is one, gives much joy to both God, the giver of life, and us, the partakers of life. We can live, love, make children, quarrel and make up, come and go here and there, all of which is certainly very nice for us but it is conceivably even nicer for God who sees the networking and outcomes of it all.

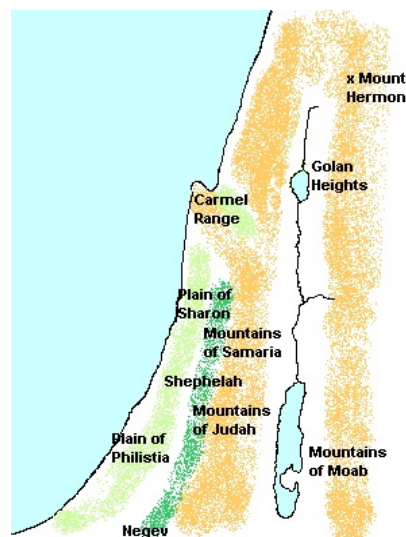
So truth is all there already because of Divine presence in us. We do not get truth from 'out there'. We do not get truth from books or speakers as if it is an information transfusion. What books can do is to trigger a realisation and start the resonance going of what is already there. It can touch a sacred space somewhere deep inside us that may have been searching for a long time or we might not even know that it is there yet.

Everybody has this resonance in some way. All it needs is the right conditions or language. A word I like to use is 'hardwired' - we are all 'hardwired' with a sense of the Divine. In my own tradition of Swedenborg, this is put in terms of the soul being the innermost part of our human existence, where the Divine takes up residence so to speak, where it is in us. If that wasn't in place we couldn't be maintained in existence, and because it is in place we have the capacity to consider such things as God, truth, eternity, and our own place in existence. This soul level, though, is not ours to use; it doesn't even belong to us, and so we cannot interfere with it. We are hardwired with it.

I would like to come back to the idea of a holy land and sacred place. Whatever that might be 'out there' in some special locality for us, the ultimate sacred place is inside ourselves. In personal terms, sacred place is being OK in being you (which is a journey all of its own), sacred space is belonging in some shared community with certain other people and being at ease with them; it is being of some use in some good way to at least one other person, if you can do that, and it is in finding some way or method that is right for you, to express your gratitude for being all these. When we do such things we are creating the opportunity to come into contact with God and life's truth through forms of good and use. I do not believe there is any other way than this.

Today, 14th May 2008, marks exactly sixty years since the founding of the state of Israel after more than two thousand years of diaspora and non-statehood. I feel the need to honour this birthday anniversary, not politically but sacredly. This ancient land, this actual territory here where it is in the world is a place with a deep sacredness inscribed in it. It is the land of 'milk and honey', the homeland, the Promised Land. Abraham walked the length and breadth of it and was promised it for innumerable descendants. Moses gazed upon it as a whole as he stood on the mountain to be shown the land by God that the children of Israel would enter and possess as their inheritance.

Even its geography suggests a place of meaning and sacredness. The coastal strip from north to south is marked halfway by a high promontory called Mount Carmel, which overlooks the Mediterranean Sea. The first sight of land as you sail in from the sea. A point of recognition, a



place of commitment where, in the Biblical story, Elijah the prophet recommitted the people back to their God with a miracle of fire.

On the other side, inland, runs the river Jordan from north to south in such a steep ravine that it rushes; hence its name Jordan or 'descender'. The river demarcated entry or leaving the land. It had to be crossed. John the Baptist baptised people and brought them to repentance or life-change by immersing them in the river to wash them. This is an act of introduction into spiritual commitment and life. Crossing the Jordan is to come into contact with first principles of spirituality. But once crossed, the river forms the boundary and we must not cross back, because now we belong.

The two seas, the Sea of Galilee in the north and the Dead Sea in the south, make a powerful comparison. The Sea of Galilee is abundant with life, both in its waters and around its shores. The Dead Sea in contrast is sterile and salt-crusted, its shores are the lowest point on dry land on the surface of the earth. Galilee receives and passes on the waters of Jordan, the Dead Sea only receives and gives nothing out.

The city of Jerusalem, 'foundation of peace' but a fought over, disputed city through its history down to today, stands on the highest point in the land, and the temple site is the highest part of the city. Nothing higher in the whole land than the building dedicated to God, nothing higher in our existence than our own dedication to truth and sacred life.

These are touches of sacred space, mysteriously wrought in the landscape of a holy region. We may not be able to adequately explain why any place or space is special or sacred to us or even what our inner need of holiness means. But we know what it is, and we recognise it when we are there, as home.

Julian Duckworth is on the Committee of the Swedenborg Association and ministers to a New Church (Swedenborgian) congregation in Sydney. He is a regular speaker at the Theosophical Society.



ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

It is with much delight that we welcome into membership:

Lubi Brikcius (ACT) & Wendy Bryan (VIC)

We really hope you will get much from your membership. A few members have still to advise whether or not they wish to renew their membership for the current year. Time is running out but rejoining at a later date is always an option.

We hear frequently these days that we are moving into tougher times, and that many people are finding themselves with an ever-shrinking disposable income, not to mention the ever-increasing demands on time that take such a toll on all of us. In such a climate it humbles us to know that so many people are still prepared to devote time and money to belonging to an organisation such as ours that helps propagate a more spiritual vision for society. We send a prayer out to all members who continue to support the Association, and thank them for their kindness and commitment. We also pray for those we hear from occasionally who, because of advancing age, financial hardship or other reasons are no longer able to continue their membership. We bless them for all their years of support.

Some months ago I had the privilege of reading a proof copy of the Swedenborg Centre's new publication **Spiritual Unity of East & West**, and am thrilled to see it at last in print. This is a truly remarkable book, and its message is timely. In a globalised world where the importance of deep and meaningful interfaith relationships has become paramount, it is fascinating to read how the philosophy of Swedenborg is particularly suited to such conversations. It is an erudite and enlightening study of the place of Swedenborg in the religious traditions of the world, and I can't recommend it highly enough (see page 9 for details).

At our last committee meeting we realised that the AGM was scheduled on the evening of the opening ceremony of the Beijing Olympic Games, so we voted to shift the date to the 1st August.

We are always conscious that the Swedenborg Association is an Australia-wide organisation, and we are always interested to hear of ways in which we can keep our focus realistically and effectively on the whole country, and not just in one or two main centres. If you have any ideas or wishes about how we can achieve this, please don't hesitate to contact me to share them.

Best Wishes,

Walter Mason Hon. Secretary

GROUP'S NEWS

Melbourne:

Our speaker at the March meeting was **Patrick Morahan**, a member of our Association, who outlined his work in *Drug & Alcohol Re-Habilitation* and how he applied Swedenborgian principles to his work. He invited questions throughout the presentation on the ideas offered and the background to his work. The evening was thoroughly enjoyed.

In April, **Geoff Forster**, also a member of our Association, spoke on the subject of *Science & Religion* primarily using the research undertaken by Donald Carr, the astrophysicist, into psycho-spiritual phenomena but broadening it out to bring in other researchers. During his talk, he highlighted where the research confirmed Swedenborg's writing. Geoff's talks are always well received.

The Convenor of the Melbourne Group, **Chris Skinner** was the speaker at the May meeting and his subject was *Creation and/or Evolution*. In his presentation, Chris looked at the concepts of Creation and the Big Bang, the comparisons between discrete and continuous degrees when comparing the Darwinian theory of evolution and the development of humankind. The talk stimulated discussion.

In conjunction with another organisation, the Swedenborg Association/New Church will be present at the Festival of Mind Body Spirit in Melbourne for four days in early June

Chris Skinner



North Ryde, Sydney:

On Friday the 8th February, **Julian Duckworth** presented his talk *Across the Universe - What is all this?*. He covered it in three parts. The first related to his own musings as they arose when reflecting on the Universe. The second was a very brief overview of some of the main areas of investigation in Astronomy over the past few decades. These included Relativity, Big Bang, Black Holes, Dark Matter and Multi-Universes. And the final part was on the Divine purpose and cause of creating the Universe. Here are two points I took away with me from the talk. Swedenborg said that creation, the universe and everything that goes on in it, happens by influx, flowing in rather than being set going. He also says that everything from the big to the little to the least has the universal in it which is universally present, no matter on what level you're looking at it. The talk was complemented with wonderful images of the Universe which helped us appreciate its



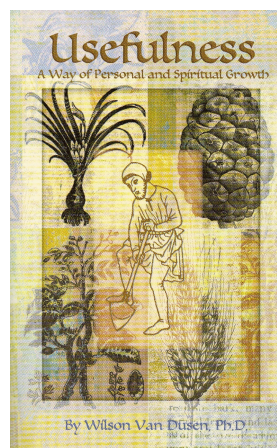
wonders. Julian used a script because of the complexity of the topic he had chosen which is available either by email or post. Roy Simmonds gave high praise at the end of the talk as he appreciated Julian's ability to summarise within three minutes various findings by scientists and the overall approach taken.

Dubbed by Jesuit missionaries the "Goddess of Mercy", the *Buddhist Kwan Yin* remains one of the most popular objects of devotion among East Asian Buddhists. The talk in April given by **Walter Mason** examined the folk worship of Kwan Yin - Bodhisattva of Compassion - and her importance in the spiritual lives of millions of people. It also looked at some of the fascinating history of this figure and its gradual slide from male Bodhisattva to mystical Goddess. Lastly, we learnt about some of the deeper spiritual significance of Kwan Yin, and how we might incorporate this figure into our own spiritual practice. The talk was accompanied by a lavish slide-show of images of Kwan Yin from all over the world, as well as some fascinating and revealing pictures of the presence of Kwan Yin in contemporary urban Australia. A very interesting, enjoyable and informative evening.

DVDs of both these highly recommended sessions are available for borrowing or purchase from the Swedenborg Centre.

And the hour-long *Meditation sessions*, in a delightfully serene atmosphere through the sympathetic leadership of Walter Mason, continue at 6.30pm on the first Monday of each month. If you can, do come along.

Michael Chester



Free Promotional Item

Each year, Swedenborg Association members receive a free item for the express purpose of being passed on to a friend, contact or organisation that the member considers might benefit from its receipt. Of course, the item can be read, listened to or watched before passing it on!

This year, a copy of the small paperback **Usefulness: A Way of Personal and Spiritual Growth** by Wilson Van Dusen is being provided to financial members along with this issue of *Candela*. While first published in 1978 under the title *Uses*, the committee considers it to still be one of the most directly helpful publications we can offer to the outside world. So we trust that Swedenborg Association members will make very good use (no pun intended) of this publication to further a knowledge of Swedenborg's teachings in whatever way they can.

Copies may be obtained at \$2 each (plus postage) for keeping or for giving as additional gifts. You can place your order on the Form on page 11.

Forthcoming Issues

September 2008

Theme: *Living for the Sake of Others*

covering the whole topic of **Being Useful**; the **Huge Significance of Doing**

There are many angles such as the outer and inner joy which comes with helping family, friends, acquaintances, the needy, etc. when the circumstances arise. We can also have a part to play when we have to be on the receiving end. Then there is the big question: *What are we here for?*

Please reflect on this topic and make a contribution for the benefit of everyone who reads this newsletter. The Newsletter Co-ordinator will gratefully receive submissions you wish to make, either your own or something you have seen that strikes a chord with you. However, contributions don't have to be on the theme; anything which is spiritually-based will be welcomed. The deadline for the issue is 2nd September. Please direct material by mail or email to the registered office (page 2).

And why not start thinking now about the final, December, issue for 2008 which will have as its theme:

Going Within



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE (contd from Page 1)

To find our true self can only be done in freedom, that space in which we can explore, discover, and express our aims and our delights. In this world of compulsion it is important to have inner space, room in which to freely explore without being compelled by the demand of others - siblings, advertisers, parents, teachers, or even God. Discovering and exploring what we give our attention to is a very important pursuit because ultimately we become what we love most, and what we love most reveals itself by what we give our attention to (especially in our most private moments). A desire for psychological space also manifests itself in other ways, e.g. I suspect the popularity of houses with expansive (and expensive!) views are an expression of this yearning for inner space, because space is synonymous with freedom and we all desire freedom from shame, guilt and other negative feelings. Ultimately the only freedom from them is to find and live your true self. Another sure way to progress our inner growth is to try to create a space in us for consciousness to enter, starting with the creation of a space between impressions arriving from the world through our senses and our response to them. If there is no space there in which we ponder the impressions and ponder our reactions, then our reactions remain purely mechanical. To create room for growth and change we need to pause and ponder our reactions to all impressions lest that world of potential for change in our psyche remains uncultivated.

Ever since the pace of daily life increased and the attraction of outer world held the greater part of humankind's attention, there has been a need for reminders to attend to the higher self and higher life, of the inner journey. These reminders take the form of sacred writings, music, dance and ritual, or may have been carved out of space as a work of architecture, be they temple complexes, burial mounds, pyramids, stone circles or the like. Sites were often segmented into concentric areas, or courtyards representing increasing sanctity. Many temple complexes had an outer wall, a temenos (Greek meaning "to cut") which cut or divided the ordinary daily space of the outer world from the sacred and significant things represented inside the enclosure (often the innermost symbols were raised on a platform or mound). The earliest stone pyramid was built by King Zoser (Djoser) and his architect Imhotep at Saqqara, Egypt in 2750 BC. At 62m it was the world's highest structure and was surrounded by a walled enclosure covering about 15 hectares. The 10m high stone wall had 13 false entrances carved in it at various locations plus one real entrance in the east wall. This arrangement of the space informs the visitors that they must know on which side the real entrance is (east is associated with the sunrise, symbol of rebirth and

rejuvenation). Without this right knowledge the person cannot be admitted. In a way, the architecture must be 'read' along with a certain knowledge and experience of what truths it represented. The false doors speak of the falsity and futility of many ways of paths that appear to lead into the heavenly space but result in disappointment and frustration. Incorrect attitude and higher life are incompatible. We must work to understand (and then practice) the vast spiritual processes in order to reach beyond the barrier to higher life. One cannot force a way into higher life and higher help must definitely be relied upon. Zoser's walls also indicate that higher heavenly life is protected from corruption and adulteration and therefore only the appropriate preparation, knowledge and action and grace of the Divine will provide entry. In some cultures fearsome dragons guard the entrances to such complexes with a similar purpose.

A study of Emanuel Swedenborg's spiritual writings indicates the importance of thinking and seeing correspondences. He mentions that we are bound by our thinking within space and time. The spiritual world, he indicates, has no actual space and time but has the appearance of space and time, so that we continue to feel these as present (see *True Christianity* para 29, *Divine Love and Wisdom* paras 7 & 285). This gives the outer and spiritual world a finite existence. Yet God is infinite and is beyond space and time, not limited to space and time. When we can appreciate this reality we can become free from the tyranny of thinking and feeling that because we are small and live briefly we are insignificant.

Let me leave you with a few relevant correspondences from Swedenborg's writings to start you pondering further about sacred space:

Time and space (from *Secrets of Heaven* or *Arcana Caelestia* para 4814):

"... it should be realised that in general there are two kinds of state - one involving good and the other truth. The former is called a state of being (esse), but the latter a state of manifestation (existere), for being is the essential characteristic of good and the manifestation of this, truth. Space corresponds to a state of being, time to a state of manifestation. From this it may be seen that when we read the statement 'and it happened at that time', the angels present with us cannot perceive these words at all in the way we do. Similarly with every other statement, for whatever has been written in the Word is such that among angels it is converted into a corresponding meaning which cannot at all be seen in the literal wording; for that which is worldly belonging to the literal wording is converted into that which is spiritual belonging to the internal sense."



What is sacred (from *The Heavenly City* or *Heavenly Doctrine* para 125):

“Outward holiness is similar to religious devotion. It especially means believing that divine worship is just being holy when we are in church. However, this worship is not holy for us unless our deeper self is holy too. Whatever we are like inwardly, that is what we are like outwardly as well, since our outward self comes from our inward self just as our actions come from our spirit. So outward holiness without inward holiness is materialistic, not spiritual. Harmful people can be just as outwardly holy as good people. When we think that is all there is to worship, we are usually empty - that is, we have no concept of what is good and true. Yet, goodness and truth are actually the holy things we should know, believe, and love, because they are from the Divine, and so the Divine is in them. Being inwardly holy is loving goodness and truth because they are good and true, and loving fairness and honesty because they are honest and fair. The more we love these qualities, the more we are spiritual and our worship holy, since we want to know and act on them. But the less we love these qualities, the more both we and our worship are materialistic, and the less we want to know and act on them.”

God's relationship to time (from *True Christianity* para 31):

“Once . . . I thought and thought about what God did from eternity, what he did before the world was constructed. I wondered whether he debated the act of creation and worked out a sequence he would follow. I pondered whether mental debate was possible in a pure vacuum, and other useless questions. To prevent these considerations from driving me insane, the Lord lifted me into the atmosphere and light of inner angels. As factors related to space and time in my former thinking were somewhat removed there, I became able to understand that God's eternity is not an eternity of time. Since there was no time before the world came about, I realised that it was completely pointless to ponder such questions about God. Furthermore, since the Divine ‘from eternity,’ that is, the Divine independent of time, did not involve days, years, and centuries - they were all an instant for God - I concluded that God did not create the world in a pre-existing context of time; time was first introduced by God as part of creation.”

Many more quotes could be added but I'll leave it there for you to explore in your own time. Happy travelling!

Joe Vandermeer

Correspondences Column ~ Part 10

... reflecting on

THE HOLY CITY

~ its, Walls, Gates &
Foundations



In the last Newsletter we looked in a general way at the Holy City as described in the **Book of Revelation** (Chapter 21), evoking “an Ideal of perfect purity and brightness” which lies at the centre of every created soul. Let's now consider the main features of its construction as it appears from the outside: *It had a great high wall with twelve gates, and with twelve angels at the gates . . . The wall of the city had twelve foundations . . . (which) were decorated with every kind of precious stone.*

Clearly, this celestial city is presented as a most solidly-based construction indeed - no mere ethereal, shimmering ‘castle in the air’. Yet, the foundations are translucent, being made of twelve precious stones. According to Swedenborg, the only firm foundations for the truly spiritual life are the principles of truth concerning LOVE - love directed towards others as our neighbours, and towards the Source of Love - God Himself. The light of wisdom from within the City shines beautifully, with varied colours, through each of the twelve fundamental principles of love that support the regenerate heavenly life.

Not only are the foundations translucent but the walls of jasper themselves are ‘clear as crystal’. So, whilst they are capable of protecting, they do not hide what is within. The same complementary images of ‘openness’ and ‘protection’ can be seen in the twelve gates, three on each side, which are all open - yet each one is guarded by an angel: *On no day will its gates ever be shut.* So it is with the pure angelic love that is ever endeavouring to emerge within us. It would protect us from all those evils or obstructions of life which would destroy heavenly peace and joy; and yet, that love itself has nothing to hide (see Swedenborg *Heaven and Hell* 131).

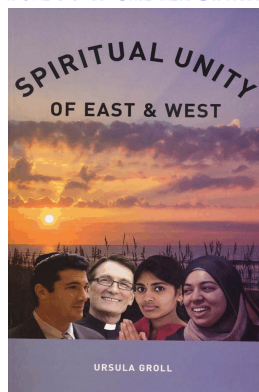
Now, each gate is made of a single pearl. So, though there are twelve entrances to the City, which face all quarters, each way in is through One Pearl. It brings to mind the ‘Pearl of Great Price’ for which the merchant in Jesus’ parable was willing to sell all that he possessed (Matt. 13:45,46). In fact, Jesus, speaking as the Christ, points to Himself as the Entrance to Life: *“I am the Gate; whoever enters through me will be saved.”* John 10:9.

Next issue, we will look at some of the spiritual wonders to be found within the Holy City - within the very depths of our being.

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



NEW PUBLICATION



Spiritual Unity of East & West

by Ursula Groll

128 pages, paperback \$15.00

Swedenborg Association of Australia/Swedenborg Centre
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Just off the press, we draw readers attention to this English edition of a German book self-published by Ursula Groll in 2003. Its genesis is through an initial translation undertaken by Swedenborg Association member, Rosemarie Lorenz. Ursula Groll's other valuable Swedenborg-related work, *Swedenborg & New Paradigm Science*, was published by the Swedenborg Foundation a number of years ago. This current book takes a completely different direction by focussing on the universality of Swedenborg's teachings. In nine main chapters, Ursula Groll weaves a broad ranging discourse making firm links between Swedenborg's biblical approach, understood from its internal sense, with spiritual pathways of the East and the esoteric elements within the monotheistic religions of Islam and Judaism. For Swedenborgian literature, it is a unique approach. The attractive, peaceful cover, aimed at evoking a sense of the Divine source of life encompassing people from diverse spiritual backgrounds, sets the tone for the book's contents. Prominent Australian author, writer & Interfaith Minister, Rev Stephanie Dowrick, commends the book as recorded on the back cover:

This short, thoughtful book will be of great interest to readers seeking to understand what religion most truly is and how variously it has been interpreted and expressed in human history.

The book is unashamedly Swedenborgian, Ursula Groll supporting her contentions with a large number of quotations from the spiritual writings, at times quite lengthy ones. Where available, New Century Edition translations have been used (with permission) with the remainder presented in a similar style.

A helpful Foreword is followed by a chapter introducing the first two World Parliament of Religions (1893 and 1993) in Chicago and the vision of Charles Carroll Bonney, a Swedenborgian layman, in initiating the whole concept. With the

approaching World Parliament of Religions being held in Australia (Melbourne) in December 2009, this makes the book a timely publication for us to have available. The book concludes with a bibliography of Swedenborg's works.

Copies are due to be sent to approximately 650 major public and institutional libraries around Australia by way of donation.

Neville Jarvis



A REVIEW

In **Spiritual Unity of East & West** Ursula Groll presents a remarkable spiritual premise: A single primordial religion, practiced by people of internal spiritual perception, spread from its Indo-European origins into the East. Diverging over time into "Eastern" and "Western" varieties, and slowly divested of internal light, the one religion has devolved into the many forms of this day. And gone from human experience is the internal state that perceives true reality. But all is not lost: In the mystical writings of Emanuel Swedenborg, Groll explains, spiritual enlightenment has been restored, by the exposition of the internal sense of the *Bible* - a sacred text no longer for Jews and Christians alone, but for universal application in all religions.

Swedenborg's writings are presented here as the universalizing principles they were meant to be. Freed from the limitations of strictly Christian interpretation, Groll shows Swedenborg's universalizing vision of the New Jerusalem to be a latter-day pathway back to the enlightenment lost by all religions over time. The internal sense of the *Bible* is a link to the spiritual causes of natural things, and a roadmap to highest consciousness, Creation's seventh day. It is the common thread in which the Judeo-Christian *Scriptures*, the *Vedas*, the *Koran*, and the wisdom of the *Kabbalah* are intertwined.

The message of this timely book is simple: There is still one religion. The "Universal Church" is practiced by people who believe in a Divine Being and aspire to lives of kindness. Swedenborg has restored the internal sense to the *Scriptures* that tell us how best to do these things, in the East and in the West. As Hillel the Elder said "... the rest is commentary; go and learn." (Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Shabbat, 31a).

by **Rev. Dr. Reuben P. Bell**, physician & Director of the Samara Center for Practical Spirituality, Saco, Maine, USA.



Suburban Nirvana

The Landscapes of Buddhism in Urban Australia by **Walter Mason**

Population shifts in the 20th century saw for the first time large populations of Buddhists moving to the West. Suburban Australian landscapes that once hosted nothing more radical than Methodist chapels or Christadelphian meeting halls suddenly became host to Buddhist monasteries, creating an interesting cultural tension that is still being worked out.

In Sydney the largest Buddhist population was (and is) among the Vietnamese who came here as refugees in large numbers in the 1980s. The Vietnamese Australian population is pretty evenly divided between Catholics and Buddhists, with small numbers of Protestants and practitioners of indigenous religious sects such as Cao Dai. The Catholic Vietnamese had a ready-made social and religious structure in which to find a place (though in many areas these structures would be changed forever by the presence of large numbers of Vietnamese parishioners). For Buddhist Vietnamese it was different, and the process of establishing their religion in a new country was a difficult and drawn-out one. For a time Vietnamese Buddhist monastics were housed in the pre-existing temples of other nationalities, most notably the Thai temple in Petersham. They soon branched out on their own, however, establishing small house temples in the suburbs where Vietnamese people were settling.



So these days, travelling through the outlying suburbs of most capital cities you will encounter a spiritual landscape fundamentally different from that of most of our childhoods. Mosques, Gurudwaras, Temples and Mandirs are all jostling for space, many of them housed in the classic fibro or brick-veneer cottages which previously hosted post-war families of European migrants. And while the sleepy suburban Uniting or Anglican church might just manage an attendance of a dozen or so on a Sunday morning, these new houses of worship are vibrant, busy and always open, providing an everyday space in which to enjoy spiritual sustenance, cultural renewal and community connection.

In Cabramatta, where I live, several Buddhist monastics have branched out on their own, establishing house temples close to the train station where the elderly can easily reach them, either for personal religious observance or communal worship. These new sacred spaces can sometimes be a point of contention to neighbours more used to a standard Christian church with its limited hours of opening, or to councils hostile to - or ignorant of - these new religious traditions and the uses to which their sites are subjected. Buddhist monks in the Vietnamese Mahayana tradition are always at work, and their living space doubles as a site of communal worship - in effect, their houses are “always open” to the public. Such house temples operate as de-facto drop-in centres for those members of the community not employed full-time - usually the elderly, but in some cases young unemployed and, frequently, the mentally and physically ill. So one or two monastics are employed full-time in caring for an ever-present community of worshippers - a situation that is both exhausting and, ironically, at times socially isolating. It is almost impossible for the Monks to leave for any length of time, knowing how much their followers rely on the available space and spiritual counsel.

Such house temples are colourful places, frequently characterised by a burst of elaborate statuary slid in to a small front yard, or an ornate gate spanning a run-of-the-mill concrete driveway culminating in a two-car garage renovated for use as a prayer hall or main shrine. The religious space provided by them is a revelation to Western protestants used to the model of the lonely church shut up for most of the week and utilised (briefly) on a weekend morning. It's possible that these suburban Buddhist spaces might provide us with a new model for revitalising ideas of church and community in the 21st century. They manage to blend a need for the sacred amongst lay-people with more prosaic needs for conversation, say, or a hearty vegetarian lunch. Certainly, in spite of some of the problems I have outlined, they always strike me as joyful places where religion is truly being lived out. The Buddhist monastics, with their lives of renunciation, prayer and contemplation, have been able to clearly identify a need in the community, and have managed to provide spaces that, as well as satisfying communal expectations, also convey more sacred and transcendent messages.

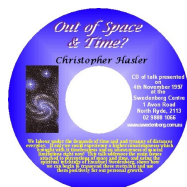
Walter Mason (Sydney, NSW) has been a practising Buddhist for more than 16 years and is a teacher of meditation. He is Secretary of the Swedenborg Association of Australia. He has a BA in English, Text and Writing, from the University of Western Sydney and is currently undertaking an honours year.



Discounted Items for the Quarter

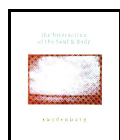
As a reader of **Candela**, if you order the following titles in the July to September 2008 Quarter, you will receive approx. 25% off the retail price.
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Complete the Order Form (you can copy it) and return it to the Swedenborg Centre or phone on 02 9888 1066 and mention this notice.



Out of Space & Time? by Christopher Hasler (60 min. CD) **RRP \$9.00**

We labour under the demands of time and tyranny of distances everyday. If only we could experience a higher consciousness which brought with it timelessness and an unawareness of spatial limitations right now! This talk addresses the main issues attached to perceptions of space and time and, using Swedenborg's spiritual teachings, how we can begin to transcend these restraints.



the Interaction of the Soul & Body by Emanuel Swedenborg (50 pages, paper) **RRP \$16.00**

Humankind has always sought to understand how ideas can be gained by the mind through bodily experience, and how the soul - our most sacred place - enters the mind. This little work was written by Swedenborg late in his life, showing his thoughts on these matters and commenting on philosophical ideas of his day.



Spirituality that makes Sense by Douglas Taylor (190 pages, paper) **RRP \$24.00**

An accessible overview of Swedenborgian thought - a theology that "makes sense" - this book explains the concepts of Creator as the Redeemer, the spiritual world, redemption, and the Trinity. Taylor looks at personal morality in Swedenborgian terms, addressing such concerns as what is "saving" faith, what is the nature of evil, how to escape from evil feelings, and why we must take responsibility for our actions.

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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) 9944 0497; 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. **2008 Programme** being determined

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

27th June ~ To be announced

25th July ~ *Across the Universe: What Exactly is it?* Speaker: **Julian Duckworth**

29th August ~ To be announced

Sydney: Swedenborg Centre, 1 Avon Road, North Ryde commencing 7.45pm.

13th June ~ *Energetics of Healing* Speaker: **Martine Negro**

July ~ No meeting

1st August ~ Navigating our Spiritual Development Speaker: **David Millar**

5th September ~ *Celebration of Spring* - details to be announced

First Monday of month. 6.30 - 7.30pm ~ *Meditation* session

WHY A SWEDENBORG ASSOCIATION?

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

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