

Candela



Newsletter of the Swedenborg Association of Australia Inc

Organisational Details are provided on the next page

August 2016

ISSUE 85

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Dear Friends,

Do enjoy this new issue of the Candela journal and don't forget that one part of it is for any of you to write something from a personal angle as part of the Members Column. If you do this, not only will it be interesting and varied but everyone gets a sense of the whole community that is part of the Swedenborg Association of Australia.

In this issue we are highlighting a change that has already taken place at the Swedenborg Centre. The Director, Michael Chester, decided to hand over that position and on July 1st this year, Joe Vandermeer became the Director. Both of these people are completely dedicated to helping the world become aware of both the name of Emanuel Swedenborg and the spiritual teachings in his writings which are so relevant to our own spiritual practices and the daily lives we lead.

It is a pleasure for me to thank Michael for his work over the last six and a half

Next Issue – November 2016

You may like to write something for the next issue about Christmas or any spiritual topic. The deadline is **20th October 2016**

years. He took over from Neville Jarvis at a time when the technological online work at the Centre was rapidly growing. Michael kept well up to speed with this and began to upgrade and develop the website, something which is a continual process. The work of the Centre also continued, with advertising and book sales, the organisation of the monthly meetings which involves seeking out suitable presenters and liaising with them,

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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.

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Email to ruth@duckworth.me or post to the registered office. *Ruth*



SWEDENBORG ASSOCIATION of Australia Inc

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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, call (02) 9888 1066 or browse <http://www.swedenborg.com.au/membership>

* * continued from page 1 * *

outside meetings, dealing with enquirers, cataloguing, stocktaking, and a whole stack of everyday things that only Michael would really know about.



Two things are important to mention even though they don't come into the 'spiritual' category. In Michael's time, the Centre got a wonderful face-lift and this was carried through, over and above the normal work, very efficiently and with the present attractiveness that we see and appreciate. Also, the later subletting of the William Moore room to one of the other site tenants was organised along

with other changes involving storage. These could have been headaches, and at times perhaps they were, but none of that showed or seemed to affect the Centre's work.

Michael is a warm and welcoming person and his face lights up when you call in at the Centre, get a hug, and an invitation to have a hot drink, and Michael always just happens to have something special to eat somewhere around, which he is delighted to share. And to use his phrase, it is really yummy, always.

Michael is also very meticulous and I for one have come to appreciate how if Michael agrees to take on a responsibility, it will be carried out. I may have forgotten about it, but some time later, the book, the photocopy or the phone number would come my way. That is a wonderful gift to have, and the Centre needs that kind of reliability.

So our collective big thank you to Michael for everything he has done in those years of work, which will continue on in a different way as he keeps up his involvement with the Swedenborg Centre and with Joe. It was delightful that Joe organised a lunch for friends to give their thanks to Michael. This was just along Avon Road, a few doors from the Centre in a very smart restaurant that has recently opened up. Around a dozen of us had a delightful time.

With my very best wishes

Julian Duckworth

Membership

We extend a warm welcome to our new members.

George Parfoot, MORISSET, NSW

Harriet Redmond, MATRAVILLE, NSW

(Rejoining)



New Director at the Swedenborg Centre

I wish to introduce you to Joe Vandermeer who has been appointed to the position of Swedenborg Centre Director from 1st July 2016 following on from my retirement of full-time work at the Centre.



Joe has been in contact with the Centre for 30 years following his introduction to Swedenborg's spiritual writings through Dr Philip Groves. He has also been closely involved with the Swedenborg Association of Australia since its inception in 1992, serving on the committee for many years and 5 years as its President. He is a regular presenter at our monthly meetings in Sydney and to various groups around Australia and in recent years has looked after the visual recording of talks given at North Ryde. You may not know Joe personally but you will be familiar with his name through the pages of the Candela as he is a regular contributor. Over the years, Joe has gained a deep understanding of Swedenborg's teachings and it is his desire to make these available and known to as many people as possible, and to help people see their relevance and use in life.

Joe brings a number of other skills to the position he is taking up. He is trained and

experienced in modern technology, accounting and music, and has taught various subjects involving music, art, science and maths; he has a personal interest in and understanding of other spiritual approaches and practices. He and his partner Ellie teach and perform music and run sound healing workshops.

It is Joe's keen wish to assist you in any way he can, whether it be through answering any questions you may have, providing material which the Centre has to offer or searching more widely where this is necessary. I urge you to continue to take full advantage of the facilities which the Swedenborg Centre provides, making yourself known to Joe in the process.

It's been a privilege to be the Director for the past 6 1/2 years carrying on the good work of my predecessors. It's an exciting time in many ways regarding Swedenborg's life-enriching influence, and with Joe's enthusiasm and charisma you will see the good working continuing. My connection with the Swedenborg Centre will continue as I will be available to do casual work when needed.

With best wishes,

Michael Chester

Swedenborg on the Lord's Prayer
From Arcana Coelestia

6476. As often as I have recited the Lord's Prayer I have had the plain feeling of being raised towards the Lord, as though I was being hauled up. At these times my ideas were open and communication with some communities in heaven was consequently established. I have also noticed that the Lord flowed into each detail of the prayer and so into every specific idea in my thought gained from the meaning of the things stated in the prayer. This influx has been indescribably varying, that is to say, it has not been the same on one occasion as on another. This also proved how boundless were the things contained in each detail of the prayer, and that the Lord was present in each of those details.



S.A.A. MEMBER'S PAGE FINLAND IS NOT FAR AWAY

By Carl Sarelius

Some of you will know Carl Sarelius is a member of the SAA committee a regular attendee of meetings in Sydney. You may not know that he is a Finnish war hero, who fought Russians on skis in the winter war of 1939.

This is not an invented story, it is a factual report of my experience. It all took place a few years ago when attending a crystal healing seminar at the Swedenborg Centre in Sydney.

Before I start with the report I would like to explain my sensitivity which may facilitate some understanding of my experience. When I was in the early school years in Finland I noticed that some music created unusual feelings in my stomach, chest, neck or upper arms, something like a ticklish feeling and often becoming painful if the music was too loud.

My parents could not explain it – nor my friends. They could not relate to what I was talking about. So, I learned to avoid some music, or turn down the radio, if my inner disturbance became too strong.

As I became older, this problem manifest less and less, until it again came back with greater strength, frequently this was while I was driving and listening to the car radio. Occasionally I had to stop driving to let the feelings melt away, feelings which gave me an impression of ants crawling up and down my spine, so strongly that I would not dare to let the feelings grow stronger – not knowing what the result would be. The strength of the feelings created an expectation that I would “disintegrate” if letting them grow much stronger.

Now back to the seminar at the Swedenborg Centre. It was to learn about how to use crystals for healing.

We were all given one quartz crystal approx 2 – 4 cm long. There were about 25 people there and at the end of the seminar we formed a large circle, sitting on chairs with the crystal in one hand directed so that the energy would flow from person to person in the circle.

At this stage the leader asked us to keep our crystal directed, close our eyes, relax and listen to the music he put on. The music was a sort of Tibetan low tonal drumming.

The feeling like ants crawling up my spine was triggered. But here in the circle, in the Swedenborg meeting room it was the first time I had this feeling with people close to me – so I decided to let the feeling in the spine grow stronger with the drumming music, knowing that if something serious happened I could get some help.

All of a sudden – there is a brilliant white light around me – no music, only an intense hissing sound, for one second or two – then I am no longer in the meeting room – no more in Australia.

I am standing outside the family home where I grew up, in Finland.

There I am, standing outside, in the garden and looking at the two storey building. Thoughts come to my mind, “What has happened?” The building must be re-painted, because the colours are so vivid, but the same as before – in golden yellow of different shades. Our home was a beautiful



building with a matching name. (Solob in Swedish which means 'sun-nest'.)

I am looking up at the top floor windows. There behind the windows on the left was my study room. Whilst looking at the details I notice that the intense light around me is vibrating. I can see the vibrations. Then my attention goes further left where there is a large veranda as an extension of the first floor, which is nearly one floor above the ground. There is a broad stairway leading up to the veranda and here I get a great shock. My father and mother are standing on the veranda, facing each other in conversation.

The very strange part here is that I arrived in Australia late in 1950, I only had the opportunity to attend my father's funeral in 1969, my mother died suddenly two years earlier. But now, there they are standing and talking to each other. Excited I run up the stairs to the veranda to meet my parents, I also had a strong desire to get close to them, to revive my memory of what they looked like.

Coming close to them, I somehow get the understanding that I should not talk to them, just walk around them and revive my memory. I do just that, I walk around them and feel I now have a clear picture of them. I decide to walk to a door at the other end of the veranda, a door which takes me into the kitchen.

In the kitchen I take a close look at all the furniture, the wood-stove, kitchen utensils etc. - everything was exactly the way I remember them.



I decide to walk through the rooms on the first floor level. From the kitchen, to the main entry, then the living room and dining room before coming back to the kitchen. I identify and admire some of the impressive furniture and wall decorations in each room. Back in the kitchen the thought comes in my mind, that every time I came home on leave from the army, I also visited a boot maker a couple of houses away.

This man had lost both his legs in a train accident and now had two wooden legs instead. Before I ended up in the army, and in the war against Russia, I often visited the boot maker, to help him with shopping and other things difficult for him to do.

In the kitchen I only think of him and I find myself walking past his family home to reach his red painted workshop building.

I take two steps up to reach the door, raise my hand to knock. But just before knocking I hear a voice saying, "That's it - that's the end." And to my surprise and disappointment I was back in my chair at the Swedenborg Centre.

I had a strong desire to go back to Finland. I closed my eyes to see if I could go back, but no use, I remained in the chair and heard the lecturer announcing that the seminar was over.

Since then I have analyzed this experience from many angles, but still can't understand it to my full satisfaction. So if someone could come up with an explanation of how something like this could happen, I would be very grateful.



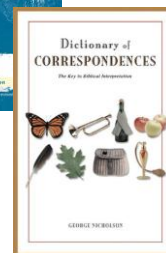
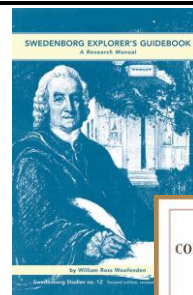


CONTINUATION OF SWEDENBORG RESOURCES ARTICLE

STUDY AND RESEARCH BOOKS

Some significant research and study reference books are:

Swedenborg Explorer's Guidebook, A Research Manual – by William Ross Woofenden, edited by Jonathan S. Rose. A great reference tool for anyone interested in researching Swedenborg. Includes complete bibliography of Swedenborg's writings, published and unpublished; extensive bibliography of books about him or his thought; overview of key concepts; listing of major documentary collections of Swedenborg's works; chronology of Swedenborg's life and works.



Dictionary of Correspondences, The Key to Biblical Interpretation – by George Nicholson. Most comprehensive reference of Swedenborg's system of correspondences (symbolic key to interpreting the inner meaning of the Bible by relating the spiritual and the physical worlds in symbolic terms).

Correspondences of the Bible: The Animals / The Plants / The Human Body – 3 works by John Worcester which discusses the spiritual associations of animals, plants and the human body.

The Natural Basis of Spiritual Reality – by Norman J Berridge. The human body is the natural object which corresponds most closely to heaven, so has the greatest relevance to the truly human form. Therefore human anatomy and physiology facilitate our understanding of the Grand Human.

Bible Study Notes (6 volumes) - by Anita S. Dole, edited by William Ross Woofenden. Contain multiyear courses of Bible study from Swedenborgian viewpoint. Originally written for Sunday school teachers, the course is divided into five age groups: primary (ages 6-8), junior (ages 9-11), intermediate (ages 12-14), senior (ages 15-17) and adult. The lessons from each Bible story are geared toward the life experience and level of understanding of that particular age group, and Dole gives practical advice in each lesson for helping children—and adults!—relate to the Bible.



A Book About Us, The Bible and Stages of Our Lives - by George F. Dole who presents another way of interpreting the Bible: as a narrative about the moral and ethical development of human life.



The Hidden Levels of the Mind, Swedenborg's Theory of Consciousness - by Douglas Taylor, introduced by Reuben P. Bell. Straightforward commentary giving insight into Swedenborg's philosophy of the mind and how it relates to spiritual growth.

The Human Mind – (1969) by Hugo Lj. Odhner.

See www.swedenborgstudy.com/books/H.Lj.Odhner_Human-Mind is a serious study of Swedenborg's psychology, memory and its relation to imagination and rational thought. Odhner concisely examines the human mental constitution, including its state after death. Explaining Swedenborg's concept of the relation between the physical and spiritual realms.

The Swedenborg Concordance (6 volumes) - by John Faulkner Potts.

Complete Work of Reference of the writings of Swedenborg is one of the most comprehensive reference tools ever produced.

The Five Ages, Swedenborg's View of Spiritual History - by Swedenborg and P.L. Johnson. This view of spiritual history presents a compelling spiritual and psychological history of human evolution, plus informative commentary that places the ideas within the context of modern historical and archaeological knowledge.



FREE OR LOW COST TEXTS AND AUDIO

www.swedenborg.com.au/learningresources - SAA list of free resources, including:

Video material

Talking books and audio talks – some excellent works by Dr Wilson van Dusen, Ian Arnold, Thomas King, Ursula Groll

Brochures introducing Swedenborg and a selection of his ideas

Brochures introducing a selection of Swedenborg's spiritual works

Brochures introducing practices and guidance to spiritual growth.

Books, booklets, papers and leaflets

The Swedenborg radio program (transcripts of excellent explanations of Swedenborg ideas presented on radio by Ian Arnold)

www.swedenborgdigitallibrary.org

www.sacred-texts.com/swd

www.newchurchaudio.org

www.swedenborg.com/bookstore/e-books

BOOKS, NEWS, MAGAZINES

Note: 'Swedenborg' here is intended to mean the 'works and teachings of Swedenborg'. The **Swedenborg Association of Australia** (SAA) is located at the *Swedenborg Centre* situated upstairs at 1 Avon Road, North Ryde in New South Wales. Here, the Centre offers:



- A library of printed books and DVDs for loan and sale.
- A library of special rare printed reference books on Swedenborg, his life, his work, his ideas, along with related material. These rare books can be viewed at North Ryde with the assistance of friendly staff – contact the Swedenborg Centre by phone on +61 2 9888 1066 or by email at info@swedenborg.com.au or ring to arrange a visit in person. A list of these rare books can be viewed or downloaded at www.swedenborg.com.au/Websites/saa/images/pdf/reference.pdf
- A telephone, post and email service through which its friendly staff can guide and advise you on any Swedenborg related material or subject you are searching for.
- A website with useful information around Swedenborg, the ideas found in his work and other related material. Below are some of the important resource sections of this website.
- An obligation-free monthly online e-news bulletin with updates on the latest Swedenborg materials and events

www.swedenborg.com.au/newsletter - *Candela* - quarterly magazine of the *Swedenborg Association of Australia* (SAA), in which this article appears.

www.swedenborg.com.au/bookstore - online bookshop. Can either use the Search field at the top right of each screen to find what you are looking for, or you can use the navigation on the left to browse book by some of these categories:

Introductory Books & Booklets
Swedenborg's Spiritual Writings
Swedenborg and Spirituality
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Angels
Bible Study
Biography and Legacy
CDs, DVDs and Audio Books

Dr Philip W Groves
Reference and Study Aids
Spirituality and Science
Spiritual Practice
Spirituality and Psychology
Swedenborg's Scientific and Philosophical Writings
Dr Wilson van Dusen

www.newchurchlife.org – *New Church Life* – monthly magazine since 1881 produced in USA devoted to Swedenborg.



<http://swedenborg-philosophy.org/the-new-philosophy/swedenborg-publishers-international-spi/> - Swedenborg Publishers International (SPI) – newsletter of an informal organization of publishers around the world specializing in Swedenborg, hosted from Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania USA.

<http://swedenborg-philosophy.org/books/> - books from Swedenborg Scientific Association (Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania USA)

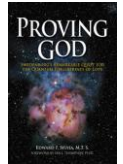
<http://swedenborg-philosophy.org/the-new-philosophy/> - *The New Philosophy* – magazine of articles on philosophical questions and topics relating to Swedenborg and the natural sciences, social sciences, and humanities.

www.swedenborg.org/library/collateralliterature/libraryperiodicals/messenger.aspx - *The Messenger* – periodical of the North American Swedenborgian Church.

<http://www.swedenborg.com/bookstore/chrysalis-readers/> - *The Chrysalis Reader* – contemporary journal of spiritual discovery published in honor of Swedenborg, each issue with a special meaningful theme (final volume published in 2013).

<http://parabola.org/> - magazine on spirituality topics (senior editor is Lee van Laer)

<https://thegodguy.wordpress.com> – practical spirituality ideas blog by philosopher-theologian Edward F. Sylvia, author of *Sermon From the Compost Pile* and *Proving God*.



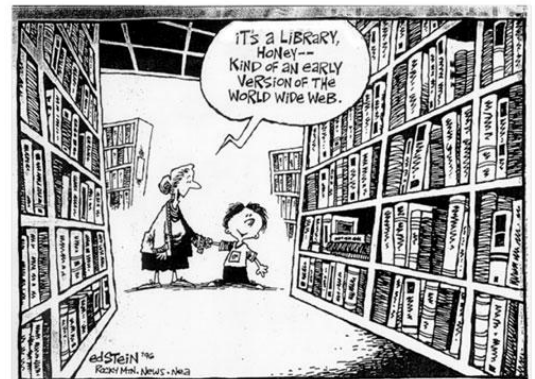
ORGANISATIONS, PUBLISHERS

www.swedenborg.com.au – Swedenborg Association of Australia (SAA) – already mentioned above.

www.swedenborg.org.uk - Swedenborg Society – since 1810, UK based, oldest Swedenborg publisher.

www.swedenborg.com – Swedenborg Foundation – USA based. Excellent site full of resources, free, cheap and downloadable books and information.

<http://swedenborg-philosophy.org> – Swedenborg Scientific Association (SSA) – US organisation that makes scientific and philosophical works of Swedenborg available (including translating).



SOCIAL MEDIA, BLOGS, GROUPS

Facebook:

www.facebook.com/SwedenborgScientificAssociation
www.facebook.com/Swedenborg-Association-of-Australia-104862382911851
www.facebook.com/HeavenAndHellSwedenborg



Blogs:

<http://spiritualquestions.org.uk> – Stephen Russell-Lacy's blog throws light on human happiness and the meaning of life by reflecting on important questions and issues and exploring links between Swedenborg's Writings, psychology and spiritual healing.

<http://zenyogagurdjieff.blogspot.com.au/> - interesting blog on practical spirituality by Lee van Laer (Senior Editor at Parabola Magazine) containing a nice blend of Swedenborg, Gurdjieff and Zen Buddhism practices.

<http://anccollege.org/> - **Australian New Church College** – has a lot of good resource pages, seminars and reference links, including **Logopraxis** – an effective personal spiritual practice based on Swedenborg's writings and the Word, online community coordinated by David Millar, Australia - if interested, contact enquire@logopraxis.com.au – also see <http://spiritandlife.net/church> for more Logopraxis resources, presentations and event info

<https://soundcloud.com/lovelearnserve/> - audio presentations by David Moffat, Canberra, Australia

To locate other Swedenborg groups around the world and their websites, see <http://newchristianbiblestudy.org/new-church-map>



SWEDENBORG'S DHARMA

By Walter Mason

"Far away in the heavenly abode of the great god Indra, there is a wonderful net that stretches out infinitely in all directions...There is a single glittering jewel in each eye of the net, and since the net itself is infinite in all dimensions, the jewels are infinite in number... In its polished surface there are reflected all the other jewels in the net, infinite in number..."

Each of the jewels reflected in this one jewel is also reflecting all the other jewels....

There is an infinite reflecting process occurring..."

This is a famous excerpt from the Avatamsaka, or "Flower Adornment" Sutra, describing the interconnectedness of all things – all beings, all states of mind, and, most importantly for us, all concepts. Nothing arises by itself; nothing exists unconnected to anything else. And there can be no cause without effect.

Each of us is connected, and each thing we do, each action we take, has an unavoidable cause and effect. Each idea, too, is never completely original. Like the jewels in Indra's Net, the shining ideas of the great spiritual masters reflect each other, their brilliance bounces off each other and reflect infinitely the age old spiritual truths that form the basis of each and every philosophical system.

Thich Nhat Hanh alerts us to the marvel of Indra's Net, noticing how "each jewel suspended in the great cosmic net reflects the image of the other jewels, creating infinite reflections of light." This image of Indra's Net alerts us to the fact that never, at any moment, are we alone. That each of us is a jewel, reflecting God's love and the wisdom and beauty of all of humanity, of all creation.

The exercise of comparative religion, of finding common ground in religious expression, has fallen somewhat out of fashion. It has been important to

recognise the particularity and the uniqueness of spiritual traditions, but it has also led to a situation where each person feels the need to protect their own little piece of spiritual turf from any encroaching ideas. The aforementioned Vietnamese Zen Master Thich Nhat Hanh tells the story of attending a conference on religion at which the various attendees were at great pains to explain that, while they saw value in people of different religions sharing their visions, they did not wish to see traditions merged. One of the delegates said that "we are here to admire the individual fruits of spiritual practice, but not to make a fruit salad." Thich Nhat Hanh stood up to address the audience and, after a moment's Zen-like silence he smiled at them all and said "But fruit salad can be absolutely delicious!"

So I'll state my possibly controversial position at the outset. I am someone who seeks to explore the common ground of religion. More than common ground, I believe the way forward in a multi-cultural nation and a globalised world is in shared spiritual practice, in deep and fundamental meetings of spiritual ideas and in the active, living practice of shared – and yes, even combined – traditions. I employ with trepidation a term that has much currency in the contemporary academic world, though it may be used within that most maligned of disciplines, cultural studies.

The term I embrace with enthusiasm is *bricolage*. For the strict Anglophones in the audience I will provide a definition – something made or put together using whatever materials happen to be available. The essence of *bricolage* is in the appropriation of old, possibly too familiar, things and giving them a whole new life by associating them with





something new, or something recently discovered, or something with which they wouldn't normally be associated. So bear with me while I explore a potential *bricolage* and tread lightly across the exciting shared territory between the theology of Emanuel Swedenborg and the teachings of Buddhism.

My own journey to exploring Swedenborg's ideas came via Buddhism, and via an intense involvement in



Buddhist life and culture for the past 15 years. I have sat at the feet of masters, I have chanted sutras and recited the Buddhist Rosary, I have sat through gruelling meditation retreats and helped organise joyous festivals celebrating key moments in the Buddhist

year. And while I have been made conscious of an inevitable amount of superstition and ignorance in the popular Buddhist traditions of all countries, I have always remained impressed by the intellectual freedom and the genuine spiritual open-heartedness of practitioners of all Buddhist traditions, followers at all levels of society and with all different manners of understanding. It has seemed that there is something in Buddhism which encourages this outward thinking, this open mindedness, this great flowering of what Swedenborg would call *free will*. The basis of this is most certainly doctrinal – the Buddha himself, in his famous Kalama Sutta, urged his followers to question and test all philosophical positions – even his own! The essence of the Kalama Sutta is this: The Buddha was questioned by the people of a small village, who had been subject to consecutive visits by a variety of religious teachers, all of them teaching something very different, and all of them laying claim to an exclusive insight into spiritual truth. Each teacher had claimed that theirs was the only way (does this sound familiar?) and had urged the people of the village to accept it. The villagers were understandably confused, and asked the Buddha – himself little more than

another of those spiritual masters travelling through town – how they might genuinely examine these claims to exclusive truth. Now here was a perfect opportunity for the Buddha to hang up his own shingle, to tell the perplexed villagers that HIS was the one true source of wisdom, and that everyone else had been a fraud. Instead he proceeded to instruct them as follows:

"Come, Kalamas. Do not go upon what has been acquired by repeated hearing; nor upon tradition; nor upon rumor; nor upon what is in a scripture; nor upon surmise; nor upon an axiom; nor upon specious reasoning; nor upon a bias towards a notion that has been pondered over; nor upon another's seeming ability; nor upon the consideration, 'The monk is our teacher.' Kalamas, when you yourselves know: 'These things are good; these things are not blamable; these things are praised by the wise; undertaken and observed, these things lead to benefit and happiness,' enter on and abide in them."

(Soma Thera Translation)

It is very difficult indeed to find the same degree of spiritual freedom in any of the Western traditions – indeed I had despaired of ever finding it, much as I wanted to. Until, that is, I began to examine more closely the ideas of Emanuel Swedenborg, and discovered at last a thinker whose commitment to intellectual honesty and the cultivation of a true spiritual wisdom could match Sakyamuni Buddha's.

Faith Alone is not Enough

Like the Buddha, Swedenborg recognised that what one believes is of absolutely no significance while one does not act upon those beliefs. To put one's hand over one's heart and declare oneself to be a deeply spiritual person counts for little when you shout at the bus driver on the way home from church. It is action which is of the essence, not philosophical positions.

Swedenborg and Buddhism

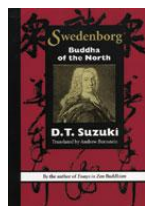
This discovery of connections between Swedenborg and Buddhism is not, of course, my own. That great populariser of Zen Buddhism in the West, D. T. Suzuki was a great admirer of Swedenborg's ..Continues on last page....



Discounted Items for the Quarter

As a reader of **Candela**, if you order the following titles in the Aug to Oct 2016 Quarter, you will receive approx. 20% - 30% off the retail price (*while stocks last*).

(for the **discounted price** and postage see the order form below)

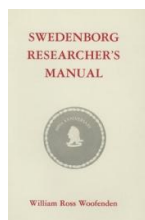


Swedenborg, Buddha of the North by **D. T. Suzuki**

1996, 160 pages, paperback

(RRP \$22.00)

D.T. Suzuki, the Zen practitioner who introduced Buddhism to the west and took Swedenborg's work to Japan, says of his motivation for this book on Swedenborg: "Those who wish to cultivate their spirit, those who bemoan the times, must absolutely know of this person. This is the reason for this book." Included are two works, one on Swedenborg's message that true spirituality demands engagement in the world; the other compares Swedenborg's description of heaven to the paradise of Buddhism.

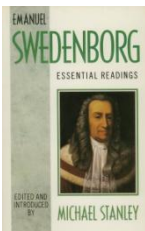


Swedenborg Researcher's Manual by **William Ross Woofenden**

1988 (1st Ed), 366 pages, hardback

(RRP \$33.00)

An excellent reference tool which gives a comprehensive idea of the range and extent of both Swedenborg's own work & of the collateral literature on Swedenborg's thought which has been produced in the past two centuries. Contains excellent summaries of the works and concepts presented in Swedenborg's works. Foreword by Wilson Van Dusen.



Emanuel Swedenborg - Essential Readings edited by **Michael Stanley**

1988, 176 pages, paperback

(RRP \$15.00)

A selection of quotations from Swedenborg's theological writings presenting holistically the physical and spiritual dimensions of life, including the Divine Nature, man's nature, rebirth, sexuality, the spiritual ages of mankind. Very accessible reading. A good way to familiarise yourself with Swedenborg's writings on themes relevant to the modern age.

To order, phone on (02) 9888 1066 and mention the Candela, or

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WHAT'S HAPPENING?

For Group activities, contact your nearest Group Convenor

- **Brisbane:** Ian Arnold on (07) 3841 2552;
- **Melbourne:** Neville Jarvis on (03) 8555 9116; email: anjarvis72@optusnet.com.au;
- **Sydney region:** Joe Vandermeer on (02) 98881066; email: joe@swedenborg.com.au;

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

Our website is updated regularly. Go to <http://www.swedenborg.com.au/meetings> for more details. Please let us know if you would like to be informed via email.

Melbourne: New Church Hall, 426 High Street Road, Mount Waverley.
Occasional meetings – please check website for details.

Sydney: Please check website for details of latest meetings.

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thinking, and translated some of his books into Japanese.

He also wrote a long essay on the Buddhist parallels in Swedenborg's theology called *Swedenborg: Buddha of the North*.

There is no evidence that Swedenborg had any contact with or knowledge of Buddhism, on either the physical or spiritual planes. It would seem that, in the tradition of all the truly great spiritual thinkers, Swedenborg arrived at these universal ideas entirely on his own. Through contemplation he seems to have tapped in to that great Universal source of wisdom that has so deeply, and so similarly, affected all of the great mystics and philosophers. That a man so separated geographically, philosophically and historically from Buddhist ideas should have arrived at some of the incredibly Buddhistic conclusions that he did points to the existence of an eternal and all-wise universal force that is available for all of us to access. The Buddha may have called it nirvana or sunyata or dhammakaya, Swedenborg called it God and Heaven, but the wisdom revealed was essentially the same.

No Fixed Self

The idea that there is no fixed self, that the ego is a delusion is probably one of the most confronting notions in Buddhism.



I have discussed it with devout Christians and staunchly materialist atheists and both have found the idea terrifying. Indeed, I have noticed in recent years that the ego is having something of a comeback. In spiritual circles I have overheard people say "Of course, the idea that we need to overcome our ego is just nonsense – and downright impossible." Not so, said the Buddha. Indeed, the idea that there is nothing that can really be pointed to and called the self is a central one in Buddhist philosophy. The doctrine is called *anatta* – not self – and realising that this is at the very heart of our physical existence is the first step on the road to enlightenment. When materialists argued that the existence of a self was obvious and irrefutable, the Buddha pointed to a nearby stream and said: "There is a stream – it is inarguably so. We can drink from its water, bathe in its shallows – plunge into it and you will certainly get wet. But what is the essence of that stream? Is it not changing, fundamentally and completely from moment to moment? From one second to the next, isn't the state of that stream in constant flux and change? Can you cup your hand and extract some of the water and say this is the essence of the stream? Nonsense – the moment you do this it is not even a stream, we do not even recognise it as such.

To be continued in the next Candela