

# Candela



Newsletter of the **Swedenborg Association of Australia Incorporated**  
Organisational Details are provided on the next page

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ISSUE 50



## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Christmas is almost here again! It seems not long since last Christmas. The older I get, the quicker the end of year celebration seems to recur, like time is becoming more compressed. Is this notion of time going faster to do with my age or is it because of the fast-paced modern era that surrounds me? I decided to investigate.

My subjective experience of time and its elasticity turns out to be a common experience among most people. Particularly the experience of time compressing with advancing age, mainly observed among the over forty (have I given my age away yet?). According to certain studies, one reason we experience time being compressed is that the older we get, the shorter we perceive the period between some heightened event of the past and the present. Significant and impressionable experiences are perceived to be nearer the present than our calendar estimates of the time that has actually passed since (called "telescoping").

We also begin to recall more distant events in favour of similar more recent events (called the "reminiscence effect") e.g. the first time things happened to us, our first kiss, most exciting book, most exciting event, etc. It seems true that first (or at least early) impressions are lasting. Less "first time" events occur in our mid and later life, so early events are more likely to be recalled with repeat events of later times overlooked.

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

The third reason given for the apparent speeding up of time with age is that the rate of our psychological clocks changes as we get older, e.g. our 10<sup>th</sup> year of life was 1/10<sup>th</sup> of our total life experience, while our 40<sup>th</sup> year is 1/40<sup>th</sup> of the whole, so each year is a smaller and smaller portion of our whole lifetime. Add to this that our metabolic processes slow down over time.

Experiencing time speeding up may induce anxiety. So are there any positive aspects to it?

I personally think this variability of the perception of time is associated with the search for meaning, a search more prone to occupy us in later years. Significant experiences are the food of growing wisdom and those memories with a stronger impression (whether the event was good or bad) are what we are likely to ruminate over to make sense of our existence. The derivation of meaning and search for patterns requires a view across the time in which things took place. Climbing a mountain or flying an aircraft provides a perspective (perpendicular to the terrain) to give a wider view of it.

\* \* \* continued page 2 \* \* \*



## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE (contd)

So too, removing oneself from clock- and calendar-time allows viewing events and experiences from a higher plane, from another angle; a sort of perpendicular view on the flow of time. The "perpendicular" to the flow of time is that axis allowing expansion of the present moment, a growth along the spiritual plane in the direction of eternity. From this axis also springs synchronicity (meaningful coincidence). The abstraction from time permits the growth of wisdom and inner growth.

At Christmas time we remind ourselves of the message of peace. But the stresses of all the commercial expectations of this season, and the realisation that one has barely cleaned up from the previous time when the next time is already upon us, might make personal peace seem difficult to achieve. We now live longer than our forebears, we seem to juggle more complex demands on our time and are expected to adapt to more and more rapid changes in the way we live and work. Marketing forces thrust themselves in ever creative ways into our free time and personal space like never before, shouting ever loudly among a cacophony from competitors for the opportunity to pester our free will into bending its love toward their cause. How to find peace?

A conscious search for meaning can do much to offset any anxiety over the rate at which time passes. The annual repetition of the two great feast events of Christmas and Easter also provide an important opportunity to re-acquaint us with the great underlying theme of inner life, namely birth, death (to our old ways and views), and rebirth into wisdom and love (redemption). These are all part of our inner development. Encouraging us to face the "death" (Easter) part of this process, the 13<sup>th</sup> century Persian poet and mystic Jallaludin Rumi said:

*I died a mineral, and became a plant. I died a plant and rose an animal. I died an animal and I was man. Why should I fear? When was I less by dying?*

UNESCO declared 2007 to be the International Year of Rumi.

So may you find time in the midst of your preparations for this very special season to ponder the inner meaning of Christmas, that greatest symbol of our inner birth event.

Wishing you all a wonderful Christmas.

*Joe Vandermeer*

## SWEDENBORG ASSOCIATION of Australia Incorporated

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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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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.

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## GOD . . . . .

The September issue carried a short segment (page 7) under this heading by Ken Cross (QLD).

Readers were urged to consider responding with their thoughts on what Ken had written; he was keen to know these.

Well, one reader has been in touch to say that he has outlined a response and would submit it in time for the first issue in 2008. So it is a case of 'Watch This Space'



## *Spiritual Growth - Tips and Approaches*

*If I am about the business of spiritual growth,  
what practical insights will help me on my journey?*



Principles to work with offered by **David Moffat**, Canberra at his inter-active  
Presentation given at the 2007 AGM. The meeting focussed on the quality of "Kindness".

### 1. Spiritual growth is for everyone

- ▶ "It is not so hard to live a heaven-bound life as people think it is." Swedenborg: *Heaven and Hell (HH)* para (#) 528
- ▶ "Heaven, is granted only to people who know the path to it and follow that path. We can know the path to heaven to some extent simply by considering what the people who make up heaven are like, realising that no one can become an angel or get to heaven unless he or she arrives bringing along some angelic quality from the world. Inherent in that angelic quality is a knowing of the path from having walked it and a walking in the path from the knowing of it." Swedenborg: *Divine Providence (DP)* # 60
- ▶ "For this commandment which I command you today is not too mysterious for you, nor is it far off. It is not in heaven, that you should say, 'Who will ascend into heaven for us and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it?' Nor is it beyond the sea, that you should say, 'Who will go over the sea for us and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it?' But the word is very near you, in your mouth and in your heart, that you may do it." *Deuteronomy 30:11-14*

### 2. Angelic qualities form an interconnected web

- ▶ "... a person who acts deliberately and from conviction against one commandment acts against the rest. . . . On the other hand, those who by repentance have removed some evils which are sins, reach the position of believing in the Lord and loving the neighbour. The Lord keeps them determined to abstain from further sinning; so if through ignorance or some overwhelming longing they sin, this is not counted against them, since they did not intend it nor convince themselves that it was allowable." Swedenborg: *True Christian Religion (TCR)* # 523
- ▶ "Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does and teaches *them*, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven." *Matthew 5:19*

- ▶ "The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD, and He delights in his way. Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down; For the LORD upholds him with His hand." *Psalms 37:23,24*

### 3. I will learn more from the opposite of a quality than from the quality alone

- ▶ "Nobody with even the sharpest mind is able to perceive what good is, and indeed what blessedness and happiness are, unless they have experienced the state of being deprived of good, blessedness, and happiness. It is from this experience that they acquire a sphere of perception; and they acquire it to the same degree that they have experienced the contrary state, for the sphere of perception and how far it extends are determined by their experience of the two contrary states." Swedenborg: *Arcana Caelestia (AC)* # 2694<sup>1</sup>

### 4. I can only move towards any angelic quality as I eliminate its opposite

- ▶ "If we intend and do what is good before we abstain from evils as sins, the good things which we intend and do are not good." Swedenborg: *The Doctrine of Life* # 24, but all paragraphs 18-31 are relevant here
  - ▶ "We do uses for the sake of uses in proportion to our abstaining from evils." Swedenborg: *Divine Love & Wisdom (DLW)* # 426<sup>2</sup>
- THE TASK: To observe how our proprium (our selfhood) lies:*
- speaking or thinking untruths;
  - talking about things we know nothing about as if we do know;
  - justifying, rationalising, or "making a case for our position."
- (Peter Rhodes, *Aim: The Workbook*, page 15)

### 5. I am responsible for my own spiritual growth

- ▶ "... by ourselves we are constantly falling, but the Lord is constantly putting us on our feet again. By ourselves, we fall whenever our mind desires something evil, but the Lord puts us on our feet again whenever we resist evil and therefore do not carry it out." Swedenborg: *AC* # 8391



- ▶ “Being Mercy itself, the Lord is constantly forgiving our sins; but sins cling to us no matter how much we suppose them to have been forgiven. Nor are they removed from us except through a life in keeping with the commandments of faith.” Swedenborg: *AC* # 8393
- 6. I am not responsible for anyone else’s spiritual growth**
- ▶ “Repentance has value if carried out in a state of freedom, but no value if carried out in a state of compulsion.” Swedenborg: *AC* # 8392
- 7. It’s not so much about “Will power” as “Do power”**
- ▶ “. . . unless we do what we intend, there is a lack of real intention . . .” Swedenborg: *DP* # 151
- ▶ “Love and wisdom without use are nothing, but mere ideal entities . . .” Swedenborg: *Apocalypse Revealed*, # 875<sup>6</sup> (*Conjugal Love (CL)* # 183; *TCR* 67)
- 8. Engagement - We cannot run away from our spiritual problems**
- ▶ “I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one.” *John 17:15*
- ▶ “Some people believe . . . to lead the heaven-bound life that is called “spiritual” . . . we need to renounce the world . . . All they understand by this is spurning worldly interests, especially concerns for money and prestige, going around in constant devout meditation about God, salvation, and eternal life, devoting their lives to prayer, and reading the Word and religious literature. They think this is renouncing the world and living for the spirit and not for the flesh. However, the actual case is quite different . . . **I have learned, in fact, people who renounce the world and live for the spirit in this fashion take on a mournful life for themselves, a life that is not open to heavenly joy, since our life does remain with us [after death]. No, if we would accept heaven’s life, we need by all means to live in the world and to participate in its duties and affairs. In this way, we accept a spiritual life by means of our moral and civic life;** and there is no other way a spiritual life can be formed within us, no other way our spirits can be prepared for heaven. This is because living an inner life and not an outer life at the same time is like living in a house that has no foundation, that gradually either settles or develops gaping cracks or totters until it collapses.” Swedenborg: *HH* # 528
- 9. Prayer and Action**
- ▶ “We think that the Lord is absent in temptations because our prayers are not heard as they are when out of them. Nevertheless the Lord is then more present with us (# 840). In temptations we ought to struggle as from ourself, and not hang down our hands expecting immediate help; but nevertheless we ought to believe that help is from the Lord (# 1712, 8179, 8969). We cannot otherwise receive a heavenly proprium or self (# 1937, 1947, 2882, 2883, 2891).” Swedenborg: *The New Jerusalem & its Heavenly Doctrine*, #200 (with references to Swedenborg: *AC*)
- ▶ “Because we live under two orders, we are at once a citizen of Eternity and of Time. Like a pendulum, our consciousness moves perpetually - or should move if it is healthy - between God and our neighbour, between this world and that.” Evelyn Underhill (from *Mysticism: A study in the nature and development of man’s spiritual consciousness*)
- 10. It is helpful to identify how each quality or task will benefit me**
- ▶ “A bruised reed He will not break, and smoking flax He will not quench; He will bring forth justice for truth. He will not fail nor be discouraged, till He has established justice in the earth; and the coastlands shall wait for His law.” *Isaiah 42:3,4*
- ▶ “Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves. Therefore be wise as serpents and harmless as doves.” *Matthew 10:16*
- ▶ “. . . the Lord uses those things that are our own - both our illusions of the senses and our desires - to lead and direct us towards the things that are goods and truths.” Swedenborg: *AC* # 24
- ▶ “We feel a stronger delight in performing uses for the sake of self than we do for the sake of uses; therefore we should know that we are doing uses for the sake of uses in the proportion we are abstaining from evils.” Swedenborg: *DLW* # 426<sup>2</sup> (also *DP* 215<sup>13</sup>; *CL* 266<sup>4,5</sup>)
- ▶ “As long as we remain unregenerate we are governed in an entirely different way from when we are regenerate. As long as we are unregenerate, evil spirits reside with us who have such dominion over us that angels, though present, can accomplish little more



than simply distract us from plunging into utter evil and so divert us towards something good. Indeed they use our own unregenerate desires to divert us towards good, and our illusions of the senses towards truth.” Swedenborg: AC # 50<sup>2</sup> (also AC 904; 1088.2; 2380.1,4; 2890; 5980; 5992; 6205)

**11. Tasks should be SMART**

- ▶ “If we merely acknowledge that we are complete sinners, holding ourselves guilty of every evil, yet do not examine ourselves, that is, see our own evils, we are just making a confession generally. But it is not a confession made because we are penitent since our life afterwards remains the same as it was before.” Swedenborg: AC # 8390

**Specific** (Is it concrete, short and simple?)  
**Measurable** (Can you identify when the task was performed and how well you did it?)  
**Achievable** (Are you capable of completing the task?)  
**Relevant** (Does it have a real connection with the aim of the exercise?), and  
**Timing** (When will it happen? Think of a scenario in which you could perform your task. This acts like a trigger to your memory - “When [scenario] happens, I will [task]”)

**12. Dealings with others?**

Requires assimilation of the principles outlined for qualities being worked on, determination of practical skills in ‘do’s and don’ts’, putting them into practice and reviewing results.

**A DVD of the presentation is available from the North Ryde Swedenborg Centre (see below) for purchase at \$5 plus postage or for free borrowing.**

**Swedenborg Centres Around Australia**

There are a number of Swedenborg Centres in operation around Australia. Some also run regular meetings which may be of interest to you. Their location and contact details are given below. Except where noted, opening hours are irregular so please phone first.

ADELAIDE	287 Oaklands Road, MARION 8277 1891	MELBOURNE	426 High Street Road, MT. WAVERLEY 9432 0322
BALLARAT	318 Fussell Street, BALLARAT 5331 5638	PERTH	281 Albany Highway, VICTORIA PARK 9470 9775
BRISBANE	21 Agars Street, ROSALIE 3369 0054	SYDNEY	1 Avon Road, NORTH RYDE 9888 1066 - Open Tues., Wed. & Thurs. from 10 am to 4 pm
CANBERRA	33 Allchin Circuit, KAMBAH 6296 1053		

**As well as offering books and other items for sale, these locations operate free Lending Libraries both for local visitors and those requiring a postal service. Why not make use of these services.**

*The Lord Himself will give you a sign.*

*Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel, God with us.*

**Isaiah 7:14**



*Jehovah God came down and took on a human manifestation to redeem people and save them.*

**Swedenborg:  
True Christian Religion 82**





## ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

At this year's AGM I took on the role of Secretary of the Swedenborg Association of Australia, accepting the reins from Louise Brogan who did such an excellent job in the role. I would like to thank Louise for all her hard work and service to the Association, and for her continued help and advice. Louise is a wonderful person and a great inspiration, filled as she is with kind and loving energy and constant positivity and good cheer. I am sure we will all miss her smiling face at committee meetings.

The AGM also saw the transition of presidency from John Brogan's very capable and experienced hands to Joe Vandermeer. Joe is a wise soul, and his efficiency and clear thinking are already being made manifest. I certainly look forward to working with him and know that he has much to offer the Association.

### Membership:

A big welcome to our new Member:

Adam Okienko (VIC)

As always, the Committee really hopes you will get much from your membership.

Sadly, though, we bid farewell to David Delany (NSW), a regular attendee at North Ryde meetings in earlier years, who has passed into the spiritual world. And to Chris Catsanis who succumbed to cancer recently after a stoic battle. Whilst his membership had lapsed, Chris will be remembered by many NSW members for his involvement in Celebrations of Easter and Spring. His energy in the improvement of dental hygiene in Nepal will be sorely missed.

### Business Items:

All of us treasure *Candela*, surely one of the most interesting and best-produced newsletters in Australia. Our Executive Manager, Neville Jarvis, has been responsible for its continual high quality over many years, but he has suggested that perhaps in the near future someone else might be interested in rising to the challenge of becoming *Candela's* editor-in-chief! We are always looking for fresh ideas and fresh input, and anyone who would like to become more involved with the production of our quarterly newsletter is most welcome to contact either myself (on 0416276227) or Neville direct.

During August's AGM outgoing president John Brogan was presented with a bound collection of his President's Reports, which have appeared in *Candela* over a great number of years. Now that the document is assembled, it is available to purchase for just \$10 (plus postage) on a print-on-demand basis. Please contact the Swedenborg Centre to obtain your copy. John is a gifted writer and a great scholar of spirituality, and his collected reflections are well worth reading and owning.

Like so many small organisations, we struggle with ideas of how to keep our message current and our membership growing. The wisdom and spiritual legacy of Emanuel Swedenborg is truly inspiring, but his message can be a difficult one to convey, especially in a compact format to casual enquirers. Julian Duckworth is doing some great work in preparing just such an introductory text that speaks to a 21<sup>st</sup> Century audience. If you have any ideas of what shape such a text could take, or any ideas at all about marketing and promoting the wonderful work of Swedenborg, do contact me at:

swedenborgassociation@gmail.com

I would love to hear from you all.



May the holiday season be both restful and invigorating, and blessings and good wishes to you all.

Your Secretary,

Walter Mason



## COMMITTEE CHANGES

On behalf of the newly elected Committee of the SAA, I would like to extend sincere thanks to those hardworking committee members past and present who have been truly dedicated to the aim of making this a more effective and efficient organisation for you, its members. I would especially like to thank the retiring president, John Brogan, who has been President of the SAA since 1998 during a period which saw major organisational changes, Louise Brogan who served so capably and affectionately as SAA Secretary, and Kevin Attwater, the foundation President who wishes to pursue other personal goals.

Congratulations and a warm welcome to our new committee member Ruth Duckworth, whose tells us in her own words of her Swedenborg background and other interests in the following section. Continuing their dedication and commitment on the Committee are Walter Mason, our newly appointed Secretary, Kirk Holst (Treasurer), Neville Jarvis (Executive manager), Julian Duckworth, Wayne Kasmar and Chris Skinner (Melbourne), all of whom make for a vibrant and productive team. I am delighted to have the opportunity to serve as President and am looking forward to a productive SAA period together with the Committee and membership.



Joe Vandermeer, President



## NEW COMMITTEE MEMBER PROFILE

**Ruth Duckworth**, who writes:



Hi, I have rejoined the SAA Committee because I feel it is going places at the moment and I would like to be part of that. I was a founder Director and served for six years but with a busy family life I took a break.

I am married to Julian who is the Minister at the Swedenborg church in Roseville, Sydney. We have four

children; the last has just left school, and also two grandchildren living in Brisbane.

I have been a part of the Swedenborg movement all my life, my father is a Minister, who lives in England. I was born in Mauritius and had a very happy childhood living on a tropical island as part of a large family. When I was six years old, we then moved to the Swedenborg church in Brisbane where my father served for four years. I went to England aged 10 and finished my schooling there. I trained as a physiotherapist specialising with children.

When I married Julian he was training to be a minister and I was the first woman in Britain to enter the New Church College, doing a one-year foundation course in Swedenborg's teachings.

I love working with children and run the Sunday School at Roseville. I write a monthly children's magazine called "Sunday Stars" that is distributed to New Church families throughout Australia. I am also the Church Officer, keeping an eye on the premises as well as doing clerical work for Julian.

My other interests are healing including homoeopathy and Scenar therapy and I have a love of ballet and dance. The teaching on the Grand Man is one of my favorites as a result of these interests.

I have never had the excitement of 'discovering' Swedenborg's writings but have grown up with a secure knowledge of the afterlife and the love of the Lord. As I have become older my beliefs have meant more and more to me. I enjoy helping people to be happier in the way they live their life and develop a trust in the Lord.



## GROUP'S NEWS

**Brisbane:**

Redland Bay meetings continue monthly on each 2nd Wednesday following an Al-Anon session, most attendees staying on for our meeting. Our last three topics have been *The Universal Human*, *Life beyond Death*, and *The sorts of things proprium can lead to*. Most times attendance is around 12 and a wonderful, open, respectful spirit prevails. As Official Convenor I recognise that SAA member, Rolf Zeltins, living locally and always supported by his wife Carmen, is the real motivator of the Group. Wishing all readers a happy and holy Christmas.

**Ian Arnold**

**Melbourne:**

Our September meeting comprised speakers from different spiritual traditions, including a Muslim and Zoroastrian speaking on *their idea of God and how it influenced their life*. It was again interesting to see the same thread even from one of the most ancient religions to the more modern. Their contribution was well received.

In October we were pleased to have our outgoing President **John Brogan** speaking on *The Game of Life*. This was a very practical example of the way God works using golf as a template. It was very much appreciated by all.

We were anticipating listening to a talk on Aboriginal Spirituality by an Aboriginal but unfortunately at the last minute the speaker was unable to attend. We therefore showed two films: *Swedenborg, The Man who had to Know* and *Images of Knowing*. Both were enjoyed, especially by two new attendees, and it was good to have fellowship, tea and coffee in between the films to finalise the year. **Chris Skinner**

**North Ryde, Sydney:**

In October, **Michael Chester** gave a very warm and interesting talk on the poetry of Wilson Van Dusen. The title *Moments of Enlightenment* was very fitting. Michael's reading of several of Van Dusen's poems was beautifully presented and meaningful, bringing out true feeling within each one. The poems were interspersed with the screening of Sacred Geometry by Light Source and part of a radio interview with Van Dusen in 2001 in which he referred to the impact that Swedenborg's spiritual teachings had had for him. It was very special to be treated to an interview with a much loved man who has given so much to us through his writings. The Sacred Geometry moved constantly like a brilliant, ever-changing kaleidoscope and was absorbing viewing. Those who were present were enriched by Michael's presentation

**Elizabeth Bryce**

**John Maitland** posed the question *Illness - Is there a Moral Dimension?* at our November meeting. The 30 present, including new faces and some not seen for a while, listened intently to John examining contemporary views of there being no spiritual or mental dimension to illness. He then turned to the writings of eminent people postulating a non-material meaning in sickness. Swedenborg featured prominently in terms of soul-body interaction and correspondences. He then outlined a number of interesting cases on which he had worked and the meeting came to a conclusion with many comments and questions. John's paper is readily available.

Our September meeting was combined with the SAA AGM. The speaker was **David Moffat**, the outline of his presentation being published on page 3. Everyone present sensed David's enthusiasm for his topic creating a high level of audience participation, which was his aim. We all learned a great deal.

All three sessions are available on DVD.

**Neville Jarvis**



## The Emerging Interfaith Movement

Sydney hosted the *Common Dreams* conference in August 2007, the keynote speaker being Bishop John Shelby Spong of USA. Bishop Spong cut a swathe through the Australian landscape, being his controversial, questioning and utterly charming self. Whilst Spong stirred up the Christian feelings of the nation, many at the conference (myself included) were being stimulated and inspired by discussions about an emerging spiritual movement that promises to be one of the most radical shifts in religious thinking the world has ever witnessed. I am talking about the notion of *Interfaith* spirituality - the idea that people can, and should, combine the religious ideas and practices of all the world's faiths in order to realise a deeper understanding and connect to the truly universal longings for peace, love and justice.

Of course, the idea is not new - the Unitarians were floating such ideas as early as the 18<sup>th</sup> Century, but it is not until now that demographic realities and an increasingly globalised world culture have coalesced in such a way as to lend some urgency to the ideas of creating a formal movement of people committed to establishing a deeply held and sincerely celebrated *Interfaith* spirituality. Noted author and columnist Stephanie Dowrick was ordained as an *Interfaith* minister in New York in 2005, and since then she has hosted a monthly *Interfaith* service at Sydney's Pitt St. Uniting Church. The services regularly attract large crowds, and those who attend experience a meditative and boundary-expanding sharing of spiritual exploration - a truly transformative experience.

At the *Common Dreams* conference Stephanie gave several addresses, the most profound being when she urged those attending to "surrender the borders" of their religious ideas and open themselves to a genuinely shared *Interfaith* vision in which feelings of spiritual superiority (and the possibly unique forms of religious chauvinism that have afflicted the Christian churches for centuries) give way to those of respect, openness and genuine understanding. As people leave the mainstream congregations in droves, many seek out a spiritual life free of the boundaries of traditional religious understanding. So many in post-colonial, post-modern cultures have been exposed to the beauty and wisdom of Eastern spiritual traditions and are seeking to incorporate these spiritual understandings

into their own lives. Old-fashioned and arrogant claims to a unique access to God's love on behalf of the Christian churches are simply repugnant to most people living in multicultural societies, as well as being patently and provably untrue.

Many at the conference were challenged by the startling ideas of the proponents of *Interfaith*. There were accusations of dilettantism, of spiritual consumerism and facile dabbling in the material accoutrements of exotic religions. But, in response, some suggested that the patent failure of traditional Christianity to meet the needs and expectations of a new world of clued-in and culturally savvy spiritual seekers might point towards the fact that, to paraphrase the Rev. Stephanie Dowrick, the narratives of traditional religion have become so bereft of meaning - and so damningly associated with a wicked past of oppression, exclusion and abuse - that the only true profundity left in religious life is to be discovered in its outward forms and rituals.

We can be proud that for so long the followers of Swedenborg have maintained an open spirit of intellectual enquiry and an acceptance of the spiritual truths of other religious paths. In the USA Swedenborgian churches were among the first to open their doors to *Interfaith* activities and dialogues, recognising that Swedenborg himself was convinced that God's providence worked through all religions and in all good people. Now the rest of the world is beginning to catch on to this liberating and exciting idea.

**Walter Mason** (Sydney, NSW), Secretary of the Swedenborg Association of Australia.

*thought from the eye closes the  
understanding but . . .  
thought from the understanding  
opens the eye*

This was the Swedenborg quote used on the fridge magnet we distributed several years ago, which are still freely available on request.

Sydney member, Stella Green, was intrigued to learn more about the German Romantic painter, **Casper David Friedrich** (1774 - 1840) after watching a programme about him on Foxtel. She quickly found on the Web that he had told his students:

*Close your bodily eye, that you may see  
your picture first with the eye of your  
spirit.*





### SO YOU MUSTN'T BE FRIGHTENED

*So you mustn't be frightened . . . if a sadness rises in front of you, larger than any you have ever seen; if an anxiety, like light and cloudshadows, moves over your hands and over everything you do.*

*You must realize that something is happening to you, that life has not forgotten you, that it holds you in its hand and will not let you fall. Why do you want to shut out of your life any uneasiness, any misery, any depression, since after all you don't know what work these conditions are doing inside you? Why do you want to persecute yourself with the question of where all this is coming from and where it is going? Since you know, after all, that you are in the midst of transitions and you wished for nothing so much as to change. If there is anything unhealthy in your reactions, just bear in mind that sickness is the means by which an organism frees itself from what is alien; so one must simply help it to be sick, to have its whole sickness and to break out with it, since that is the way it gets better. In you . . . so much is happening now; you must be patient like someone who is sick, and confident like someone who is recovering; for perhaps you are both. And more: you are also the doctor, who has to watch over himself. But in every sickness there are many days when the doctor can do nothing but wait. And that is what you, insofar as you are your own doctor, must now do, more than anything else.*

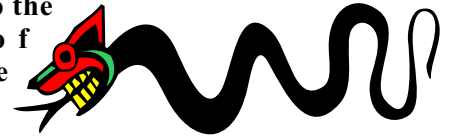
**RAINER MARIA RILKE (1875-1926)**

*Translated by Stephen Mitchell*

Submitted by **Stella Green** (NSW)

### Correspondence Column ~ Part 8

... Looking into the  
M i r r o r o f  
C o r r e s p o n d e n c e  
to see what "The  
SNAKE" could



represent in our inner life (bearing in mind it is central to the first prophecy about the Messiah)

The snake, or serpent, is to be found in virtually all mythologies, as well as the Bible, and clearly represents some universal and potent quality or dynamic in our 'inner world'. But does it symbolise something good and creative in us, or something bad and dangerous? The baby Hercules strangled two huge snakes when they attacked him in his cradle. And we all knew that Eve was tempted to disobey God's command by a snake in the Garden of Eden.

Because this last story is known so much better than all others concerning snakes in sacred literature, the snake has been given a bad image. Yet, few are aware of the healing properties of the bronze snake that God commanded Moses to set on a pole (Numbers Ch.21). And, after all, who designed and fashioned the creature? (Genesis 1:24). And didn't Jesus tell his disciples that they would "pick up snakes with their hands"? (Mark 16:18).

Besides its ability to 'hypnotise', or hold a person's gaze, its distinctive characteristic is its legless form - causing most of its body to slither along the ground. Spiritually, 'ground' level is the lowest or outermost created level of spirit which is the level or faculty of physical sensation - through eyes, ears, touch, nose and mouth. The snake, then, images our fascination with the things of the senses - sounds, colours, forms, texture, odour, etc. How powerful and wonderful is this ability to find pleasure and beauty in what we see and touch! How utterly fascinating this 'world' can often be! The paradox is that, on the one hand this is a wonderful gift of God's love to us and yet, at the same time, its very fascination is a pitfall. It illustrates the universal motif "God supplies: we misapply"!

Yet, that which can draw us away from God and heaven can also heal us. The two intertwined serpents spiralling up the staff of Mercury in the caduceus symbol of the medical profession indicate opposites of healing and poison, health and disease. So, in this New Age particularly, we use music, colour and touch in many ways to soothe and heal the troubled in spirit, mind and body, just as David played his harp to refresh and heal Saul whenever he was troubled by an evil spirit.

We can thank God for the snake . . . BUT beware its powerful fascination that can blind us to all else!

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



## *The Work of Robert Crookall, D.Sc., Ph.D.*

Outline of a Talk to the Swedenborg Association of Australia (Melbourne Group)

by Geoff Forster

Robert Crookall was a professional geologist, who made a major contribution to parapsychology, usually by collecting many reports from various sources, classifying and evaluating them, and then developing comprehensive explanatory theories. He was the author of numerous books (most published in the 1960s), now mostly out of print.

The first part of *Intimations of Immortality* is largely a survey of what are now termed 'out of the body experiences', under a variety of conditions. It also has a short collection of famous cases strongly suggesting an afterlife (e.g. the famous 'Chaffin will' case). A lengthy appendix lists distinguished people, 81% of whom were utterly convinced of survival, followed by 14% more-or-less convinced, leaving a minority of those surveyed as unconvinced. Individuals were classified in terms of professional background and nationality. Impressive as this may be (especially in view of the people cited), the basis of sampling or selection is problematic.

While majoring on the psychical in terms of amount of material, Crookall often stressed the spiritual and in a work on astral projection, he discussed various spiritual lessons, including: individualities (by overcoming limitations); interdependence; the higher self expressing itself through the everyday ego; balance in personal characteristics; moving towards wholeness or integration or salvation. In *The Supreme Adventure*, Crookall presents the following stages in the great transition to discarnate existence:

1. "the call"
2. factual review of the past
3. shedding of the physical body
4. "the sleep" (of several days)
5. the awakening, with the shedding of the vehicle of vitality (or the etheric body)
6. the judgment or the assessment (involving emotional and moral factors)
7. the assignment

Another significant work is *The Interpretation of Cosmic and Mystical Experience*, beginning with an important summary of several previous books. It includes the experiences of "At-one-ment", by different classes of people, i.e. unity with inanimate objects (perhaps a painting); nature (e.g. trees, flowers); other people; the Divine (often in various combinations e.g. nature and people). It also includes a discussion of the significance of the psychical (important *per se* but not as important as the spiritual), and a set of conditions that predispose towards mystical experience ("lesser" experiences such as beauty in art or nature are not to be devalued).

A controversial feature of Crookall's work is citation of "communicators", i.e. presumed communication from the discarnate. Among the problems are: *should such "communications" be considered at all?; the nature and reliability of the published source; are the communications actually from the unconscious of the channeller or sensitive?* Crookall's reply is essentially that such "communicators" often agree and in considerable detail, yet collusion is out of the question; subject matter is often beyond the ordinary knowledge of the channeller; material is often in harmony with the teaching of the great mystics.

Crookall's contribution to parapsychology and spirituality is of great significance, and also to our understanding of the structure of human personality and the ontological nature of reality. His voluminous material dealing with the paranormal is well balanced with his insistence upon, and discussion of, basic spiritual issues. While many of Dr. Crookall's findings resonate with Swedenborg (including his 'warning' to beware of seeking psychic experiences, although if they come naturally and unsought, due regard should be paid to them), he only refers to Swedenborg once in his books (about the time period involved for moving from the physical to the spiritual realm).

To what extent was Dr. Crookall aware of Swedenborg's writings? The answer is to be found in an article entitled *Physical Communications* printed in the Dec. 1962 - Feb. 1963 periodical *The Voice Universal*. Not only does he praise Swedenborg's intellect but he systematically links many of his published findings with copious quotations from Swedenborg - the role of the ruling love developed here, the spiritual body, those in heaven continually advancing towards the springtime of youth, the world of spirits and its initial similar appearance to the physical world, heaven consisting of like-minded communities with the focus on use, and finally the self-judgment process. Whether he had read Swedenborg before undertaking his investigative work is unclear, but Dr. Crookall clearly recognised both the validity of Swedenborg's experiences and, with differences rather than disagreements, something of their underlying teachings.



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