



Issue Theme ~ *"Fear - Its Pitfalls and Positives"*

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

I am amazed by the potency of some quotes I read. One such that has preoccupied my mind for many years is from Rumi;

"The answer does not come from repeating the question or travelling to far off places. Until one has remained still for fifty years, one does not begin to cross over from confusion".

How often do we witness ourselves or others spending time and money at seminars and weekend workshops learning all sorts of tools to improve our lives, only to soon forget the lesson and return to our old ways. The quote of Confucius "*I hear and I forget, I see and I remember, I do and I understand*" may explain why workshops seldom work miracles. We have to participate in our life and this means 'remaining still for fifty years'.



Introspection, pondering things and getting to "know thyself" (Plato) is time well spent and time does clarify our situation and direction. The process cannot be rushed; activity should not be confused with achievement. To 'know thyself' is the true mark of

wisdom, and nowadays self-examination is mostly through counselling. The counsellor probes our inner world so as to expose our fears to us. What we tend to do is lie to our soul. Lies are in fact explanations for fears, failures or helplessness. Then the false explanations become truths that then direct us to live a mediocre life. We are very good at lying to ourselves.

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

Fear is an uneasiness caused by possible danger. Publius Syrus (42 BC) said:

"The fear of death is more to be dreaded than death itself".

Fear is obviously a very powerful emotion.

I visualise the "crossing over from confusion" as crossing a bridge over this emotion of fear from one bank to the other. Geoffrey Chaucer said in his 14th century work *The Canterbury Tales* (The Knight's Tale): "*I am so confus, that I may not seye*". Confusion is like blindness and we fear what we do not see or understand.

The other bank is the place where we do not need to 'lie to our soul'. The emotion is that of *Love*. "*There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear*" 1 John 4v18. The bridge crosses over our fears of the unknown to a place that is love. But what is this 'love'?

*** continued page 2 ***



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE (contd)

'Love', said one little kid, 'is that first feeling you have before all the bad stuff gets in the way'. I can't improve on that!

So Fear, terrify, frighten, uneasiness caused by possible danger, trial, risk, danger, the unknown need to be crossed over.

Let the last word come from Swedenborg (*Arcana Caelestia* (Secrets of Heaven) 2826):

Fear of God signifies worship either grounded in fear or in the good of faith, or in the good of love.

Agape,

John Brogan

e-News



Electronic Newsletter

Are you on the Internet? Would you like to receive each month details of activities, book reviews/promotions and snippets of information about what is happening overseas of interest to the Swedenborg movement.

If you are, why not sign up for our Electronic Newsletter now?

Simply email the Swedenborg Centre (see next column) with your request and details.

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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.

Swedenborg Centres Around Australia

There are a number of Swedenborg Centres in operation around Australia offering books and other items for sale and for free borrowing. Some also run regular meetings which may be of interest for 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
(Tel. 8277 1891)
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(Tel. 9470 9775)
SYDNEY 1 Avon Road, NORTH RYDE
(Tel. 9888 1066)
Open Tuesday, Wednesday and
Thursday from 10 am to 4 pm



Dealing with our Fears

by **Walter Mason**

Nothing is more frightening than the dark depths of our own fears. If we sit still and quiet, even just for a moment, our senses are soon bombarded with restlessness, anxiety, boredom, apprehension and even physical pain. Our whole lives are spent in escape from ourselves. This constant search for diversion represents a flight from the Divine. Movement, distraction, noise and busy-ness all represent a thorough immersion in the ways of the world, and as long as we allow these outward forms of activity to dominate our lives, we remain separated from the still, quiet place of peace within. This point of peace is beyond comprehension, its experience beyond words. The Buddhists call it *sunyata*, or emptiness. In the Hindu tradition it is known as the *atman*, the soul. In contemporary times people might call it their consciousness, their spiritual being. Some people might even call it God. Whatever we choose to call it, it is beneficial to recognise that it is beyond words, and lies purely in the realm of experience. We cannot intellectualise it, or even represent it visually (though Zen calligraphers have tried, with their enigmatic brush-stroke circle, attempting to encapsulate the idea of emptiness). To experience true peace and love we need to attempt to touch it, not just talk about it. In the words of the Psalm, *Be still and know that I am God*.

This point of emptiness is a place free from fear and suffering. It is the only place where we can truly be our real, spiritual selves. And once we are in touch with this place, fear means nothing to us. How can we be fearful when we operate purely from a place of deepest love? The practice of meditation is a sure way for each of us to become aware of where that place of belonging lies. How deeply it may be hidden and how many obstacles conceal it differs for each of us - for some, meditation remains a lifelong struggle with boredom, procrastination and sore lower-backs. Others manage to fall into blissful meditative states right from the start. Wherever you fall on the spectrum, it is enough to know that it is the effort that counts. One moment spent sitting with our fears and worries is worth years running from them.

In her wonderful book *Feel the Fear and Do It Anyway*, Susan Jeffers shows us that fear is so universal and so constant that if we give in to it we can succeed only in destroying our lives. Yes, the world is a big, scary place, but it is far smaller and far less scary than we really imagine it to be – the biggest source of fear is in fact our own minds. By concentrating on developing our inner life, we find that ironically we enlarge and extend the experiences of our outer lives. Inner strength gives us the courage to reach out to others. As Jeffers says, *'the more you expand your comfort zone, the more powerful you become.'*

It is so easy, and so tempting, to turn to the outside world and its stimuli in order to find meaning and understanding. But so much of this world is based on building our fears - are we not too fat? Are our borders too unprotected? Aren't we in danger from terrorists and fanatics? Fear sells, anxiety stimulates and terror is sexy, and everywhere we turn we are encouraged to buy into that big, scary material world that is poised to consume us, if we don't consume it first. If we could replace our morning diet of talkback radio and banal breakfast TV with some real spiritual inquiry, our lives are certain to take a turn for the better. If I can spend just a few minutes in the morning connecting to that interior place of peace and love, I can realise that what is most important is connection. *Those people* suddenly cease to become dangerous, scary or infuriating when we realise that *those people* are actually *us*. If we fear *them* then we fear *ourselves*, and how can we possibly grow in the face of such fear. To sit with fear, to embrace it and let it wear itself out - this is a way to liberate ourselves from its hold. To sit with fear until it's exhausted, and we can refresh ourselves with love, compassion and understanding.

Try it . . . Just for a moment.

Walter Mason (Sydney, NSW) has been a practising Buddhist for over 15 years and is a teacher of meditation. He is a Committee member of the Swedenborg Association of Australia.



Tomorrow Never Comes

If I knew it would be the last time
that I'd see you fall asleep,
I would tuck you in more tightly,
and pray the Lord your soul to keep.

If I knew it would be the last time
that I'd see you walk out the door,
I would give you a hug and kiss,
and call you back for just one more

If I knew it would be the last time
I'd hear your voice lifted up in praise,
I would tape each word and action,
and play them back throughout my days

If I knew it would be the last time,
I would spare an extra minute or two,
To stop and say "I love you",
instead of assuming you know I do.

So just in case tomorrow never comes,
and today is all I get,
I'd like to say how much I love you,
and I hope we never will forget.

Tomorrow is not promised to anyone,
young or old alike,
And today may be the last chance you get
to hold your loved one tight.

So if you're waiting for tomorrow,
why not do it today?
For if tomorrow never comes,
you'll surely regret the day.

That you didn't take that extra time
for a smile, a hug, or a kiss,
And you were too busy to grant someone,
what turned out to be their one last wish.

So hold your loved ones close today,
and whisper in their ear,
that you love them very much,
and you'll always hold them dear.

Take time to say "I'm sorry,"
"Please forgive me," "thank you" or "it's okay".
And if tomorrow never comes,
you'll have no regrets about today.

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1940 - 2004
Included with Permission
(submitted by Ken Cross (QLD))

ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

Membership:

It is great to give a big welcome to our New Members:

Emma Hohnen (NSW)
Christine Lainson QLD)
Lorine Newton (QLD)
Grace Yau (NSW)

and to Jenny Ryan (VIC) who has reinstated her membership. The Swedenborg Association Committee really hopes all of you will get much from your membership.

The Committee is aware that others receive and read this Newsletter via the Swedenborg Centre and other means. If you do, why not think about joining up and becoming part of an organisation which has as one of its main aims to be of use to those striving on their spiritual journey through life. The annual cost is very small; take a look at the Application Form on the back page of the Newsletter.

Free Promotional Item:

Every year, a free item is distributed to each member 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 member can take advantage of reading, listening to or watching the particular selected item before passing it on! This year, each financial member will receive with this issue of *Candela* a DVD of the talk *Myths, Symbols, Parables* given by **Dr. Philip Groves** at the Swedenborg Centre, Sydney, in September 1993. The committee considers the subject matter of this presentation to be of quite wide appeal. Dr. Groves' style and approach, demonstrating that all we encounter in this world is an appearance and we need to come to grips with the underlying reality, leads to an appreciation and understanding of the higher dimension which is so important in growing spiritually.

Next Committee Meeting:

Members are reminded that they can attend Committee meetings ~ observing and joining in the discussion if they wish. The next meeting will be on Thursday 23rd August starting at 6pm. It will be held at the Registered Office (see page 2). Just let Louise Brogan, the Secretary, know on 0299745492 if you wish to be present so that you can be sent the various applicable documents. If you live out of Sydney but would still like to see the discussion documents, Louise can also help you with that.



GROUP'S NEWS

Melbourne:

We have had quite a varied program as far as topics are concerned. Our speaker in March was **Geoff Forster**, an SAA member and one of our regular attendees, who looked at the research of Robert Crookall into psychic and near death experiences. Geoff showed how much of it confirmed what Swedenborg demonstrates in his spiritual writings. The talk was very interesting and informative.

We were pleased to have **Marta Balan** as our speaker in April. Marta is a qualified Psychologist specialising in Transpersonal Psychology which is not part of the mainstream of the work done by psychologists. Marta gave a very detailed and interesting talk on the research she has undertaken as part of her work focussing on spiritual as well as other facets of the mind and the success achieved. She reminded us that Carl Jung was recognised as the first Transpersonal Psychologist and very much aware of Swedenborg.

Our Convenor **Chris Skinner** led the meeting in May providing a synopsis of the book *Our Soul's Awakening* and also looking at Dreams Hallucinations and Visions. We used these two topics as an introduction for general discussion on a range of spiritual topics which was enjoyed by those present.

Attendance has fluctuated with good numbers for the first two meetings but only a small number for the last but there is always a good spirit of enquiry and fellowship. We are looking forward to seeing Julian Duckworth from Sydney speaking to us on Greek and Roman Mythology at the end of June.

Chris Skinner



North Ryde, Sydney:

In March, **John Brogan** presented his talk *The Game of Life* using the game of golf as a means of highlighting lessons that are applicable to living life well. Here are some examples which I enjoyed.

- ▶ Just as there are hazards on the golf course to be avoided, so there are hazards in our daily life that should be detected and avoided.
- ▶ To do well in golf you need to be in the present moment and not let any previous poor shot upset you. Likewise in life. You make up for a bad hole with a number of good holes.
- ▶ "It is interesting that the environment of the golfing world is free of drugs, unacceptable

behaviour and colour prejudice. The game is free of flamboyancy as we know it and rests on a fluid repetition of the same stroke using different sticks. Simple. A good life has these same qualities."

I enjoyed the various quotes that interspersed the talk such as *Competitive golf is played mainly on a five-and-a-half inch course the space between your ears* (Bobby Jones); *Thinking instead of acting is the number one golf disease* (Sam Snead); and *I try to work with God as a partner* (Gary Player).

John talked about the experience of being "in the zone" and that one can promote that experience more frequently by various practices.

I appreciated John's talk on the night but much more upon reflection. This is a talk that is worth exploring at one's leisure to appreciate the many gems that went into its construction. If you enjoy the game of golf I'm sure this talk will speak to you in a meaningful way. Highly recommended.

In April, **Nevill Drury** gave a wonderful introduction to *Shamanism and Shamanic drumming*. Some of the things he looked at were:

- What is a Shaman?
- How does one become a Shaman?
- The Shamanic Universe consisting of an Upper, Middle and Lower world.

He brought his drum and led us on a journey within after which people shared their experiences.

For me this was a very special presentation as it conveys the experience of many people journeying into a spiritual realm. Nevill presented it with great clarity and one could see that this area is one close to his heart. This is highly recommended to those with an interest in how some people approached going within so as to bring healing to others, discern the future, and exploring the spiritual realm. Attending this presentation helped me appreciate the mysterious reality we are all part of and grateful for the efforts of the Shaman who attunes him/herself to the spiritual realm so as to be useful at this level of existence.

Swedenborg's Dharma was the title of the May talk by **Walter Mason** He presented parallels between Swedenborg's and Buddhist ideas based largely on the book *Swedenborg: Buddha of the North* by D. T. Suzuki, who was both a great populariser of Zen Buddhism in the West and a great admirer of Swedenborg's thinking. Here are two examples:

- ◆ There is only One Self, in which we all share.
- ◆ Each person is responsible for the state of their own soul.

And here are a few quotes from the presentation to illustrate more parallels:



Like Swedenborg, Buddhists have traditionally taught that heavenly states are merely an extension of the habits and states of mind we have cultivated in this lifetime.

Swedenborg, like the Buddha, saw that goodness and truth were of the utmost importance, and that no-one could lay exclusive claim to the possession of these heavenly qualities.

Swedenborg, saw the folly of religion without action, of ideas without works. He categorised it as the mistake of faith without love, and faith without wisdom. He saw that it was impossible to guarantee a cosy little place in heaven just by mouthing the right platitudes and possessing the right ideas about the nature of the deity. Heaven is not a place divorced from our daily actions. Heaven is now, and the nature of the afterlife is determined by the uses and loves that we cultivate on this very day. D. T. Suzuki saw that this one idea of Swedenborg's coincided with the very essence of Buddhist teaching.

It was a very enjoyable evening with Walter embellishing the presentation with his own experiences of Buddhism. For those interested in the parallels between Swedenborg and Buddhism this is an excellent presentation and highly recommended.

All talks are on DVD which are available through the Swedenborg Centre.

Michael Chester



Meditation Reflections

*It was a Monday evening
When less became more
Stillness became absorbing
When everything became nothing
And filled me within*

*I found a point of consciousness
That incorporated duality
That allowed me to exist
Within the void
That suspended my nature
So I could exist between my breaths*

*I found a strong belonging
To the oneness of the Universe
In the simple act of trust
The kindness of sharing
And the honouring of my being.*

Thank you Walter, for your introduction to a way of meditation that has taken me deeper and further into the stillness of my Self than I have ever been before. I hadn't known that it was possible to go so deeply into a meditation and still be so aware and present. Your gentle knowingness that the process works and that everyone can achieve a level of peace within, is powerful. Your honouring and sharing of your life journey is a real inspiration and I celebrate the day I decided to join your meditation group at the Swedenborg Centre. Thank you.

In April this year, Walter Mason began hourly meditation sessions at the Swedenborg Centre, 1 Avon Road, North Ryde. They are on the first Monday evening of each month starting at 6.30pm. If you live in the Sydney basin and would like to join Walter, it is still an open invitation. It is not a course that you have missed some of the lessons, as every evening is self-contained and Walter encourages everyone to join the meditation at whatever level they are able. He does both sitting meditations as well as a walking meditation during the evening.

The meditations are based on Walter's long held Buddhist beliefs and practises. What he offers is beautiful simplicity and a gentle pathway into a calm and peaceful place in which to regenerate your spirit. He explains how meditation can be incorporated into your everyday life, even when you are waiting on a platform for a train!

With his wealth of wisdom and experience he is able to contextualise the experience for those of us who like to understand things . . . but of course he suggests that we just let go of the mental activity completely! It is a very enjoyable, relaxing and soul nurturing evening . . . so come along if you can.

Laura Riddell (NSW member)

FEAR is

*F*alse

*E*vidence

*A*ppearing

*R*eal



THE LANGUAGE OF FEAR

My greatest fear is the **FEAR OF REJECTION**.

I have been conditioned all my life to:
do, be, say, act, even think

in a manner that is acceptable to others, to fit in, to look good. A phrase I grew up with was "what will the neighbours think".

Many of my feelings were judged unacceptable to express, so had to be repressed. But not acceptable to whom, I now ask myself. By OTHERS? Am I now just a product of OTHERS? Who are these OTHERS? Who sets our standards, fashions and fads? What is society if I am not an equal member?

There is the well-known Bible quote:
The fear of God is the beginning of wisdom.

For many years I have understood and believed in this quote, so whose judgment am I to fear the most? My Heavenly Father's or OTHERS (society)? Who is running my life? Whose standards, ethics, values and precepts do I hold in highest esteem?

I am caught trying to please two very powerful masters! I fear them both but ultimately I know I fear God the most.

Emanuel Swedenborg clearly states the golden path is to follow our conscience for this is the voice of God within. Surely a clear conscience is a prerequisite for a fearless mind.

Slowly but surely I am discovering the less I concern myself with what others think and the more I trust the voice of conscience within, and do what I believe, the more fearless I feel. I now accept that most fears are the products of the distortions of truth that have permeated our language, and hence we have inherited them unknowingly. This is now an accepted fact in neuro-linguistics (N.L.P.). Just those five words- 'what will the neighbours think' - caused me so much inhibition and pain over the years. Thankfully, N.L.P. was able to counter-act and neutralise most of this fear by the same process it had entered my belief system.

In conclusion, I perceive that our fears are embedded in our language and are the fruit of our distorted ego-mind that sprang up after our fall from innocence. We are now conditioned by that language.

Kirk Holst, Social-ecologist and Treasurer of the Swedenborg Association of Australia

*To conquer fear is the
beginning of wisdom ~*

Bertrand Russell

• • • • **THREE Rs** • • • •

In childhood they are:

READING - 'RITING - 'RITHMETIC

**At a spiritual level, and in the spiritual world,
they become:**

REVUE - REPENT - REFORM

REVUE without justifying

REPENT without regret

REFORM without selectivity

**This is what is needed to continue
on our path.**

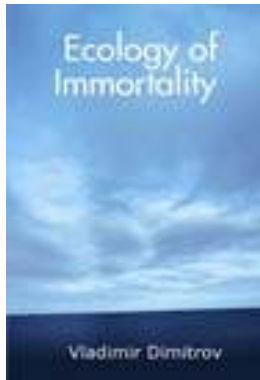
**Conflict and hostility cannot possibly exist
in the heart of loving kindness.**

Submitted by **Ken Cross**, Queensland

A person who is regenerate has a conscience concerning what is good and true, and from conscience does good and thinks truth. . . But with someone who is not regenerate there is no conscience, or if there is any it is not a conscience about doing what is good from charity and thinking truth from faith. It stems from either a self-regarding or a worldly love and is therefore a conscience that is false, so not genuine. . . Most people do not know what conscience is, still less what performing anything according to conscience or contrary to conscience is.
Swedenborg: Arcana Coelestia 977



NEW BOOKS



Ecology of Immortality

by **Vladimir Dimitrov**

Readers attending Swedenborg Association North Ryde meetings regularly over the past few years are likely to have heard our good friend Vladimir speak on a range of topics involving spirit and wisdom. In his latest publication, Dr. Dimitrov, who teaches Complexity, Chaos and Creativity at the University of Western Sydney, focuses his study in the power of the potentiality we have within us, in the ways of its realization for our growth in self-awareness and consciousness. It is ecology of a life that unfolds in potentiality, a life that is endowed with endless possibilities for self-realization - a life that never ends. His research findings are linked with the 'Many-Worlds Interpretation' supported by the leading quantum physicists of our time. The book is a practical guide how to amplify the power of our potentiality so that it could trigger a unique process of transformation of our consciousness at the moment of death, a process that opens infinite space for its further evolution and growth. For researchers in the fields of human dynamics and quantum systems, social ecology, educational practice and psychology, as well as for everyone who wants to know more about the art of living in a healthy and fulfilling way, this book is a catalyst for exciting new insights.

Publisher: Lulu.com 154 pages, paperback
 ISBN: 978-1-4303-2064-7

Copies are available for \$21.00 by visiting the website -www.lulu.com - and searching 'Ecology'.

DER SEHER UND DER SCHREIBKNECHT GOTTES

by **Thomas Noack**

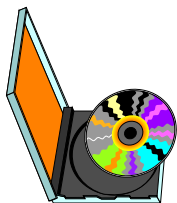


For those who are fortunate enough to be able to read German, this 226 page paperback by theologian, Thomas Noack, would surely make an insightful read. It was published in Zurich in 2004 and a copy has recently been gratefully received by the Swedenborg Centre, Sydney, for its library. The title is loosely translated *The Seer and the Farmhand Writer of God*. It has the subtitle: *Emanuel Swedenborg and Jakob Lorber in Comparison*.

The works of Emanuel Swedenborg and Jakob Lorber (Christian mystic and visionary 1800-1884) are considered to be the two classics for a new revealing of Jesus Christ. Between their teachings are to be found numerous and substantial things in common, something well-recognised for a long time. The author demonstrates that both revelations are completely independent and original, and documents the unusually high measure of the agreement between the two conceptions of the world of the spirit on the basis of carefully selected quotations. The book therefore satisfactorily closes gaps in the way the works of the two writers have been previously seen in presenting the close relationship between them.

Thomas Noack is the leader of the Swedenborg Centre in Berlin.

If you can read German and would like to borrow this book, please contact the Swedenborg Centre - see page 2 for contact details.



MP3 Recordings for Sale

The Swedenborg Centre now has a range of talks and lectures in MP3 format, to add to its range of material on CD and DVD. You are able to play these disks on many CD players (including those in cars) and DVD units attached to Televisions (sound only) or download to MP3 file players via computer..

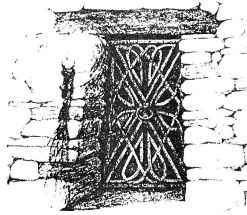
1. *The Heavenly City* (Swedenborg) ~ Talking Book. One Disk \$15.00
2. *My Religion* (Helen Keller) ~ Talking Book. One Disk \$15.00
3. Dr. Philip Groves ~ 8 Lectures on one disk including *Ancient Egyptian Hieroglyphics; Dynamics of Creation; Mote in the Brother's Eye; Phantasy & Reality; What are we Living for?* \$20.00
4. Christopher Hasler ~ Out of Space and Time? lecture & Secret Years of Jesus Christ Seminar . . \$15.00



Correspondence Column ~ Part 6

... this time, using the Mirror of Correspondence to look at an image met in dreams, legends and in the Bible ...

DOORWAYS



The more simple the image in correspondence - the wider and more varied can be its use in conveying spiritual insights. Take a door for example, which is any closable entranceway between two walled off areas - a limited location of access in one's freedom of movement from place to place. In the Bible we read of doors being opened, shut, bolted, locked, marked, beaten, broken, lifted up and knocked at. They are stood at, slept at, laid in wait by, entered in at and fled through.

Because they are limited, localised access points in some barrier, doorways and doors can easily arouse a variety of emotions within us - hope, expectation, frustration, excitement, fear, or curiosity, for example. The state or position of the door can affect our state in some way - an open door is beckoning, a closed door intriguing, a locked or barred door frustrating, a forbidden door (e.g. Bluebeard's) enticing, a hidden or secret door mysterious.

"I am the door for the sheep." John 10:7

What sort of 'door' is Jesus, and what emotion is aroused in us when he declares that he is the Door through which we will be saved? (John 10:9). Is he a 'door' that we feel we want to go through? Are we attracted by or afraid of what we think might lie beyond it?

A Changing State

In the language of correspondence, to pass through a door is to undergo a change of spiritual state or condition from our outer life to an inner life. Such change may be from:

- ▶ looking at the mental aspect of something to feeling its affectional or emotional input;
- ▶ merely knowing about some part of reality to experiencing its reality;
- ▶ regarding our own needs in a situation to becoming concerned for the needs of others, or
- ▶ remaining with what is known about oneself to discovering some new facet of one's character or a formerly unconscious process.

At our physical birth we enter into a whole new world of experience. In adolescence, we go through the door of discovering our ego, often becoming painfully self-conscious at the time. And so it is with spiritual rebirth or awakening - we pass through psychological barriers and begin to see and experience the world in a radically new way. Exciting thought - or fearful?

What then about Jesus as the 'Door'? He says in the Book of Revelation (3:8) *I have set before you an open door.* Jesus is the door of forgiveness and love that opens onto heaven itself - where we enter into the beautiful experience of His Peace and Joy that exist eternally and unchanging at the heart of our being.

"I looked, and there before me was a door standing open in heaven." Revelation 4:1

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

Next Issue ~ September 2007

Theme: **Spiritual Growth & Maturity**

A very wide topic with many angles to it. There is the theory or framework within which we can build our own particular journey. There is the development of practical tools and techniques which provide the stepping stones for the process to evolve. The vision that needs to be constantly before us, and the meaningful relationships with God, others and ourselves which can grow. And it all requires living in the present.

We need your submissions for publishing by either writing something on this topic or another spiritually based one. Send it to the Newsletter Co-ordinator at the registered office (see page 2). It can be an article, letter, poem, etc. Alternatively, submit some relevant piece you have read elsewhere.

To be a lively Newsletter, your contributions are needed.

Copy deadline will be 3rd September.



ARE YOU AFRAID?

It is a strange fact that intelligent, able-bodied adults, perhaps with grown-up children of their own, can be haunted by nameless, irrational fears. My mother was afraid of spiders, and could tell at once when she walked into an empty room that there was a spider in a corner of the ceiling, nor could she remain in the room until we had ejected it. Other people have been afraid of rats, bats, cats. The cause of such fears might be revealed by psychoanalysis, but in practice they could probably be overcome by a direct confrontation. My mother should have kept a tame spider, handled it, fed it and learned its habits. We are afraid of the unknown; if it can be made familiar, the fear disappears.

There are other kinds of fear, equally irrational, which need to be taken more seriously as they interfere with a person's work and life-style: fear of being alone, fear of travelling alone, fear of what others might be thinking, fear of doing the wrong thing when in company. Verbalising or writing such fears down might make them seem so ridiculous that they can be mastered. Alternatively, describing a highly successful journey to the shops, a happy evening spent by oneself, a pleasant meeting with friends, and so on is another method. Emotions are difficult to deal with unless they are intellectualized or attached to thoughts or expressed in words; you can face up to and handle the thoughts, and then hopefully the emotions will be seen for what they are and can be encouraged or rejected in a rational manner.

Take notice of your body as well. Before undertaking anything of which you are afraid, sit quietly and relax for a while. Or stand in front of an open window and breathe deeply. Put on some music with a good rhythm, and move every limb and muscle in time with the music, until all tensions are loosened. Doing this regularly will have a good therapeutic effect, especially if you can be thinking at the same time that the Lord's life is flowing into you, strengthening and healing you. You are under his divine protection, now and always.

Much of our nervousness, fear and insecurity are due to a lack of self-respect. Self-respect is not the same as self-love. Far from it! In fact, a *lack* of self-respect often shows itself as self-love! If you are doubtful about your own worth, you tend to push yourself forward and boast and brag, continually drawing attention to yourself; and this cuts you off from a healthy relationship with other people, and ultimately from God himself. Self-respect puts this right - being comfortable with oneself, well integrated and stable on one's own two feet. God made us so we must be basically good! Think of some of the qualities possessed - we all have such qualities. We will have some bad qualities too (everybody does!) and there are occasions when we should undergo a thorough self-examination of our devils, in order to overcome them; but if we are trying just now to deal with

insecurity and irrational fears, harping too much on the negative aspects of our character won't help. Accentuate the positive!

Many of our fears are due to emotional immaturity. When we are children and cannot control our environment, we have to put up various defences. We build a wall around ourselves for protection. Then we grow older and become adult and no longer need that wall, but many of us still keep it there. We retain our fears, which were justified while we were children, but make no sense at all when we are earning our own living and taking our place in the world. We are eager to be well thought of by our age-group, and to be safe and inconspicuous - which was important when we were children, but not now. So why not stop living in a fantasy world of the past, and face up to reality!

So far I have been speaking of irrational fears. But there are fears - accidents and sickness, poverty, and, in some countries, the secret police - which have substance, because people do suffer accidents and sickness and so on. The risk is always there; it may be our turn next. But if we follow our Lord's advice and take each day as it comes, being not anxious for the morrow but trusting in the protection of his loving Providence, then our fears will disperse like the morning mist when the sun shines on it.

Strangely enough, those of a trustful disposition do tend to be safer than those who are always expecting disaster. There is a spiritual explanation for this. We are all of us exposed to influences from heaven and hell. By harbouring cheerful thoughts and hopeful attitudes of mind, we attract good spirits, and bring ourselves into a safe and healthful sphere. Even if troubles do come, we shall see them as a challenge: tough and rugged exercises for strengthening our fibre, and we get a sense of satisfaction from dealing with them. On the other hand, gloomy and anxious thoughts attract evil spirits who hate us and want to destroy us, bringing upon us the very situations we fear. "That which I greatly feared has come upon me," said Job. Even if we succeed in avoiding physical disasters, we become spiritually sick.

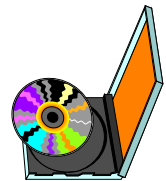
However, and in spite of all that has been said so far there is a kind of fear which we ought to cultivate - the FEAR OF GOD. What? Are we to be afraid of our Father in heaven? Of course not. We can trust him absolutely. But remember: he is the Creator of the Universe as well as our Father. We should regard him with awe, reverence and wonder, not just casually as one would think of an equal. "*The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.*"

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- Brisbane:** New Church Hall, 21 Agars Street, Rosalie. **2007 Programme** being determined
- Melbourne:** New Church Hall, 426 High Street Road, Mount Waverley. Usually last Fridays at 8pm
- 29th June ~ *Greek and Roman Mythology*. Speaker: **Julian Duckworth**, Sydney
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