

## Swedenborg Association of Australia President's Report for 2024-2025

It would be remarkably easy to condense this report into a single sentence, "Everything has carried on the same as it was this time last year." While you might appreciate my brevity, I can think of half a dozen words you could well sling at me in protest. The truth is of course that, living in a world full of appearances, non-realities, things have *not* carried on the same as last year! It looks like it – my house looks the same – but real things aren't, especially on each of our own individual levels of change, growth, newness, loss, and moments of joy and horror.

We moved house mid-February, up to our son's central activity in his wife's family's horse farm.

On February 20<sup>th</sup> (the day before we left) I knew virtually nothing about horses except their shape, their diet and the Melbourne Cup. Period. Now, six months later I could write a book! The newness of all this seems very much like the effect of a completely new spiritual idea you never had before. "...God is actually inside us and I wasn't looking there." Or whatever. And your world changes when you get such epiphanies.

Moving closer towards Swedenborg, which is our basic focus in the SAA, I would say I have found myself using two words which mean everything to me, far more this year than previously.

Universal... Inclusive... Both of them shout out against 'us and them' in any shape or form, race, age, gender, colour, appearance, and for me the most, in religion. This year, I've met or come across quite a range of religious exclusiveness or over-emphasis on one something. Christian Nationalism was one, note the capital letters! Swedenborg points us urgently away from it all and signposts us towards our collective humanity through focusing primarily on the nature of our inner life ... our heart and will, our mind and understanding, and in outward caring, empathy and being useful and involved. I am coming to feel that the real answer to 'Where is God?' is in all of what is good, all of what is true (aka real) and all of sincere loving relationships.

Not one human being is outside of that fusion where God visibly is, but everyone but me may, no, will be outside my prejudice, dislike, negativity, where God cannot be seen in the broken glass. So, let's run with unity in all its wonderful variety.

I say thank you, on your behalf, to everyone who is in the Swedenborg Association of Australia, and it is lovely to know that over this year, we have had some people taking up statistical membership, and in some cases, in coming across our stuff, choosing to make contact and become part of us. Thank you so much to Joe Vandermeer for being the hub of activity of which we only see a slice, and to Joe's rapport with everybody, including complete strangers, walking in at Shirley Road while Joe may be up to his neck, but no, a smile, greeting and oodles of time.

Thank you now to the bunch of people who are on the committee who have responsibilities in various ways, with finance, with administration, with producing the quarterly Candela, with digitisation of worthy manuscripts and articles, ensuring their preservation, with ideas and innovation of being what we can be and doing what we can do, well.

One growing area of course is our online activity or rather, activities. There is a range of presentations coming out from the SAA at regular intervals, on most of today's familiar online platforms. Thank you to those who ensure this carries on and who report back on the statistics of people making some contact. If you haven't explored this 'visible' alternative world, go to the SAA website and open menus for direction. Or contact somebody. It's well worth it.

And, for sure, if some question, novel idea, or exciting passage in Swedenborg comes up for you, feel totally okay and able about sharing it. You, each of us, any of us, all of us, is/are one among equals.

Go well,

Julian Duckworth, President