



Teachings from Reverend Mario Schoenmaker

Metaphysics

Metaphysics is a philosophy and also a way of life which tries to understand and practice those laws which operate beyond the physical.

The term actually comes from the Greek language. *Meta* means after or beyond or second and *physics* means matter, material things or the physical. It was actually Aristotle who first coined this word. He wrote a book on physics, but when he had written the book, he discovered that he had to write another book about the origin and cause of the material and physical expression here upon this earth. It was called *Metaphysics* because it was his second book, but also because it looked at the spiritual forces or causes behind the phenomena of matter. Thus metaphysics is a spiritual way of looking at life, a looking beyond the face value of things.

Since that time, metaphysics and the principles discovered by Aristotle have been taught and propounded by many different groups throughout history. The gnostics and those sects who were actually declared heretics by the Church, the original Rosicrucians, the Albigenses, all based their teachings on metaphysical principles.

Today metaphysics is taught and accepted with much more ease than in those days. In Australia our Institute has been the pioneer of teaching metaphysics in an orderly and logical way, but there are plenty of other movements and teachers all over the world teaching a metaphysical view of life.

The principles of metaphysics are based on the perception that we are not simply physical bodies made up of muscle, bone and blood which enter into the world at one point in time and disappear at another. Rather,

metaphysics asserts that there is a spiritual basis and cause to our existence and that we have greater abilities than we at present know and realize.

Aristotle said that thoughts are the creative elements within us that make our life what it is. I mentioned the phrase 'ordinary life' before. Well, in accordance to metaphysics, if someone has an ordinary life then they must have ordinary thoughts as well. One of the first principles of metaphysics states that if we can order and discipline our thoughts then we can bring into manifestation things that the ordinary person would not even think of, and I mean this in terms of profession, job, lifestyle, relationships, health, or anything else you want to achieve.

If you observe the ordinary person, you will see that life tends to manage that person. In metaphysics it is the person who manages life. This is because one of the great principles of metaphysics is to set your thoughts in order, for what a person thinks in their heart, so they are, the Bible teaches.

The metaphysician will always set goals and these goals will be well beyond the limitations that ordinary life dictates. That goal may be to build a three-storey house, or to have a certain amount of money in the bank or enjoy a happy marriage or travel to other countries. Whatever the goal may be on the physical level, and we are not speaking about the spiritual levels yet, the metaphysician can attain this by simply putting his thoughts in order and action will in most cases follow.

One of the principles of metaphysics therefore is to set goals and actually achieve these goals in your mind first, before it actually physically comes about.

The question then arises: Is metaphysics a type of positive thinking?

And the answer to this is both Yes and No. Positive thinking and other popular disciplines all have some basis of metaphysics incorporated within them. Superlearning, for example, intends to assist you to go beyond the limitations of the mind, whether these are set by society, the educational system or yourself. Once you can go beyond these, you find that you can learn quite easily. Positive thinking also uses some metaphysical principles, for the metaphysician does not accept defeat or limitation in his or her thinking or achievements. And in that sense metaphysics has something to do with the disciplines I mentioned.

But if you look at human nature, which is best displayed in children, you will find that, generally speaking, human nature is actually quite destructive. We are born with destruction in our personality, we are generally destructive people, and quite negative in the bargain. We tend to look at the negative side or the darker side of life more easily than we look at the positive or creative side of our existence.

For example, if you set a positive motivation before a person who is depressed, you'll find, usually, that the person will push away the positivity and remain in their negativity. And that tends to be our innate human nature.

What the application of metaphysics does is to change that inner feeling of: I'm not good enough, I'm not worthy. I haven't got the skills, I'm not able, to a realization of your own beingness, of who and what you really are, where you came from and where you are ultimately going to.

In addition to simple positive thinking metaphysics goes to the core of your existence and wants you to know why you are here, why you are in this world, in this body, in this culture, in this environment and what your task is as a spiritual human being. In answering these questions, metaphysics gives a very real solution to many of the problems people load upon themselves unnecessarily.

Metaphysics places a strong emphasis on the mind and thinking as well as solving personality and other problems through spiritual means by trying to come to grips with causes. One must, however, be careful not to confuse metaphysics with modern psychology.

Psychology is based on the functioning and expression of the mind in conjunction with the emotions. Metaphysics, on the other hand, is occupied with the soul. The soul is not the mind, but uses that faculty - that, again, is another basic principle of metaphysics. We have to go beyond the mind until we come to the soul essence of a person.

Let us be honest: the mind has been brain-washed and conditioned by society, religion, education, politics, culture, parental guidance and other philosophical systems. Metaphysics tells us we can be free of all these belief systems and look at situations clearly and objectively.

Metaphysics wants to come to the point of being able to separate self from the things society places upon self. And this is done through re-education.

Education conjures up the picture of a child sitting in a classroom with an instructor pouring information into the child, but the word education comes from the Latin word 'educare' which means to 'bring out'. So, the metaphysician will try to bring out of you the knowledge and wisdom which has been there for aeons of time.

It must be observed, however, that metaphysics is not learned in half an hour. It is a life discipline. By learning and experiencing and applying metaphysical principles, you gradually and gently alter your thinking, emotions and lifestyle, and then, automatically, you become a metaphysician.

It's like becoming a musician. The first time you sit at a piano or have an instrument in your hands, you can hardly play a note, but after ten years of practising, you can play automatically.

However, I must warn you, metaphysics is not a technique: do this and then this will happen. No. On the contrary, it frees people so that their own natural abilities come to the fore in a positive, creative and uplifting way.

One does not just do a few courses in metaphysics and become a metaphysician. I must emphasize again and again that metaphysics is a way of life. You start by accepting certain principles and letting these principles work within your mind first. Once it is digested in the mind it of necessity becomes a response. It's like getting out of bed at a certain time each morning. It is hard work in the beginning, but eventually it becomes natural for the body to wake at that time - even when you are on holidays. Metaphysics is doing precisely that and more.

One starts by accepting the principles, and saying, "Yes, these principles are going to work for me. I am going to set my mind to it and I am going to set everything in my life around these principles so that I can attain what I want to attain." But it is not only a mental process. It includes one's emotions and one's love or passion. Your enthusiasm and dedication must be 100% if you are to succeed. It cannot be half. In that sense, you could say that metaphysics is a kind of a religious expression.

It certainly has a religious emphasis because it looks at the spiritual origin of matter and it deals with the soul rather than the mind, as all religions of this world do, and that would be another way in which metaphysics differs from philosophies like positive thinking. And what is more, this emphasis on the spiritual and the soul does work in modern society.

The so-called rational thinking of our present society tends to hold a person back from what I call full living. Because it negates spiritual principles, it negates God. God has little relevance to modern society, but to the metaphysician God has tremendous relevance.

At this point of evolution we live outside our real self, we actually live only in one portion of our being and that is the mind. We do not live in the heart any more, as our forefathers

did, and therefore God and religion have no great relevance for us at present. And because God has no importance, our own beingness (derived from God) has no relevance either.

It is a basic metaphysical principle that the human being is a threefold being - consisting of body, soul and spirit. To deny God is to deny the third and perhaps most important aspect of ourselves. Metaphysics acknowledges this aspect within us and works towards integrating the spiritual expression with the physical and mental aspects of life.

And so metaphysics is still being assimilated into our present day society. It is still new to most people's thinking, and yet people, whether they are religious or not, are seeking for something deeper and more substantial in their existence. In the words of Dr Carl Jung: 'Modern man is in search of his soul.' Metaphysics is a way of recognizing and expressing the soul or spiritual aspect in everyday life.

A real application of metaphysics could dramatically change the face of our society, but only if it becomes a way of thinking and acting. Very few people 'act'. Most people 'react'. They are defensive and negative - reacting to what comes towards them instead of acting from something that goes out from them. The reason for this defensiveness and negativity is lack of self-realization and self-worth.

Metaphysics asserts your true beingness and worth and therefore gives you a choice. You can either react to people by becoming negative and grumpy yourself, as most people do, or you can change the tone. In metaphysics we say that you must never react to outer circumstances. One who reacts to outer circumstances is one who is negative. One who acts towards outer circumstances is one who is in charge. That's why, for instance, a metaphysician will never believe in bad or low vibrations. He or she is self-contained and uninfluenced by outside forces. He or she sets the tone.

Metaphysics also teaches that if you recognise something in someone else it is actually a guide to what is going on within yourself - a mirror, if you like, which reflects back your own self. If you know this principle, then you are very careful of judging and criticizing others; for in effect you are criticizing yourself. In metaphysics, everything, *everything*, comes back to self. Now if that were true the world over, if people would look around them and see what it is saying about themselves, if people would act instead of react, can you imagine how different our world would be?

In teaching metaphysics in our Institute we are ultimately looking forward to a whole new form of human society. For we believe and know from our inner consciousness that metaphysics can be for everyone.

But, and let me qualify the previous statement, we also know that in metaphysics, the path to perfection - and we use that word carefully - is very, very long and only the determined soul can follow it. It is a long path. It's like planting a seed and waiting months to see the first sign of life.

In metaphysics that seed may be a simple eight week course, or it may be a realization that you must do something to change; whatever it is, it is the seed. That commitment to change and growth is the seed and it must be planted deep within self and then be nurtured by mental discipline and emotional devotion, until it becomes a living thing within you. But it is only the able person, only the person who is willing to look at self and do something about it, who really at this stage of evolution can walk this path.

We also say that God has eternity at his disposal, but because we are so limited by our view of the world, we think that when we die at the end of this lifetime, it is the end of our life. The metaphysician says, "No, you are not only a physical being, you are also a spiritual being. You had no beginning and you will have no end. You are not limited by just sixty, seventy, eighty years of living. And the seed that you plant today, although you may not see the fruits of it this lifetime, will continue to grow."

In that sense everyone can study and try to apply metaphysical principles. In some people it will come to fruition in this life; in others it will not. But effort is never, never wasted.

I know that this sense of developing and empowering our own beingness together with the doctrine of reincarnation seems to be at odds with the basis of most western churches, however it is the basis of our church. The Independent Church of Australia came into existence because of metaphysics. In other words, it originated out of my own realization of beingness and how this related to God and Christ and how this applies to the total world. This realization came to me through different experiences and through much study and thought. It made sense and it was very real, yet there was no church or religion offering or operating on this principle of elevating the divine within the human being. So it was on this premise that our church was built.

Metaphysics is a deeply spiritual concept, and a very biblical concept. During the biblical period the thought processes of the human being were different than they are today. Aristotle, Abraham, Moses, the old prophets and even some of the New Testament characters had a totally different thought process than we have today. They lived closer to the spiritual realities around them. We are encapsulated in our minds, we live in our head, but these people lived in their heart and they thought and acted from their heart. So the Bible has to be understood from that point of view. It deals with the essence of spirit, first and foremost.

One of the problems with theology today, and over the last 400 years, is that the Bible is understood from the intellectual point of view. We have taken an eastern book and interpreted it in terms of western principles which are contradictory to the whole tenor of the Bible. I could take story after story, text after text in order to prove that.

A metaphysical interpretation of the Bible is much more meaningful. We look at the stories of the Bible and see what principle

they are portraying. Let me give you an example. Take the Christmas story. It is a lovely, sentimental story that is used today by the orthodox church to emphasize that Jesus Christ was born. We look at the story and say, "Yes, that is a possibility." We don't say you must believe that Jesus Christ was born 2,000 years ago in Bethlehem in order to be 'saved', even though I personally believe that it was so. We say what is important is the principles the story portrays to us, principles that have relevance for today, not for 2,000 years ago.

There are three symbols or principles in this story: Mary, Joseph and Christ. We say that Christ represents our real inner self, that spiritual aspect which is so often absent in our day to day lives. In metaphysics the end aim is to become the Christ; that real spiritual individual. So, in a sense, the Christmas story speaks of the beginning of the path. It speaks of the conditions necessary for that 'real spiritual self' to make an entrance into our physical life.

Mary is the symbol of love, and Joseph represents wisdom. In the unification of our love and feeling aspect with the mental and thinking qualities we can truly start to "be". In other words your real beingness will be portrayed within you. That's a very simple explanation of the way we look at the symbols portrayed in the Bible. And it is a way of making the Bible alive and relevant for the present time.

We do not deny the historicity of the Bible, but we will say history is history which may give us a moral or a certain guidance for the future but generally history is dead. The living fruits can only be harvested through a metaphysical interpretation.

Metaphysics is certainly not limited to interpreting the Bible however. It is a way of looking at everything. Of living life. Metaphysics sees everything around us and places it inside self. This is another great principle of metaphysics which could be summed up as: "As above, so below" or "As without, so within".

This is a principle that was taught in all the secret mystery schools down the ages. It is a great truth that says that even though we are only a little speck we are also a copy of the entire cosmos, and if the entire cosmos works in accordance to order, to law, to certain principles, then we have that within us as well. By learning these principles, these laws, one can then unify with what I call the cosmos, and in that sense become a co-creator with the Gods.

I use that word "Gods" very sensitively because by the Gods I mean those principles, those forces, those powers that tend to surround us and rule our lives. Once you know these powers, once you know these Gods, you can co-operate with them and that's what metaphysics is all about.

The aim of metaphysics, therefore, is to reach the inner, pure self. But, it must also be stated, that in order to study metaphysics one does not have to believe in Christ as a physical being. One does not need to believe in Christ at all.

I think it was Shakespeare who asked the relevant question: "What's in a name?" I don't think that the cosmos is concerned about what we call a particular thing. If we look at history we find that what we call Christ now has been called by different names in other religions and cultures. What is important in metaphysics is to accept your inner self and the transformation of yourself to such a degree that you become a flowing, mature human being.

From that automatically comes a new realization and that is "What is within is also without." If there is a Christ within me then there must also be a Christ out there in the cosmos somewhere.

It is that "Cosmic Christ" which we worship in our church. We don't narrow it down to a particular historical figure or a particular Christian dogma, even though this within itself is not a bad thing. We say that there is a cosmic Christ, and that that cosmic Christ did, indeed, incarnate in a man called Jesus in the earlier part of the Christian era and even though perhaps from the historic point

of view that has no significance for us any more, the metaphysician automatically and eventually without even becoming quite aware of this will accept the Cosmic Christ because the Cosmic Christ signifies the inner Christ within oneself.

One must always start within oneself, always. Metaphysics teaches that. Most people reflect their inner self in another person in a form of hero-worship perhaps, so that the other person becomes, as it were, the symbol of their inner self. With Christ it is the same thing. In order for me to realize the Christ within, I need a Christ without. I need a cosmic being in which I can reflect myself.

It was for this reason that I founded a church as well as The Institute of Metaphysics to teach and experience metaphysical principles.

In our Institute students may learn the principles and history of metaphysics without any religious overtones whatsoever. In that sense, I see it as an introduction to a new way of thinking. In terms of our Institute you are considered to be a 'metaphysician' in three years - for that's how long it takes to complete all the courses. But in actual fact, it takes a lot longer and the principles learned through the Institute have to progress from the mental level to the heart level. They have to become a natural way of living. And that takes time.

The Independent Church of Australia operates solely on metaphysical principles. Metaphysics is preached, it is used in our symbology and liturgy, in all our day to day activities, of which there are many. In effect, the church becomes the practice ground, where the principles can be put into practice and where also the spiritual aspect of the human being is emphasized and encouraged to come forward.

Once you are acquainted with metaphysics, once you know its principles, then they can be applied in any area of life, and everything else becomes symbolic for the reality of self and how self may progress. This may well include astrology, Tarot, numerology and so on. But one must realize that neither

astrology nor Tarot are in fact metaphysics. They are symbols, like lights on a dark road, that may assist you to find the way. Astrology, with a metaphysical understanding, can become very valuable in that it gives a greater, deeper understanding of self. The Tarot Cards also become more valuable when we can see our own inner nature reflected in the different symbols that the cards may portray.

Take the Fool Card, for instance, where you find a young man with a little pack on his back and a dog yapping at his feet, walking down the road. Obviously, because it is the first card, it indicates the seeker. Here is one who happily goes along with as few possessions as possible to try to find a new way of living. This applies to metaphysics perfectly. We say, as the ancient mystery schools also said: If you want to walk this path throw out that which has no relevance and then explore with us the new road. So the Tarot card in that sense can be very helpful.

However, if you only want to use Tarot, numerology or astrology to look into the future then we, as metaphysicians, are very much against this. Metaphysics is the art by which we set our path and know beforehand what we can reach and what we can't; in other words it tells us precisely the road. In order to know the road, one has to use clear thinking abilities and as long as we understand this all the other things can be a help along the way. If we do not understand this, if we do not accept that we are self-determining human beings, then fortune-telling and the like become hindrances to discovering who we really are and what our true purpose is.

Metaphysics, to begin with, is essentially an intellectual exercise whereby the mind is shaped and disciplined, where correct thinking is encouraged, and through certain exercises, pure spiritual thinking is formed. Through the discipline of metaphysics we not only use our mind and brains, but slowly contact our hearts also. The feeling marries the intellect, the spirit associates with the soul, and such a person will be able to bring

about changes within self as well as changes within his or her environment.

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