

Candela



Newsletter of the Swedenborg Association of Australia Inc.

Organisational Details are provided on the next page

March 2022

ISSUE 107

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

PERSONAL PLACE

Here's another issue of our magazine, Candela, and we hope you enjoy what's in it and find things to interest you and help you live your path.

I don't know where you go to read the Candela but I can imagine you finding a favourite place, perhaps outside, somewhere around your place, making a cup of tea or a glass of iced something, getting comfortable and starting to read. Of course, that's me romancing, the reality might be very different!

I heard an interesting item on the radio given by an architect who has explored the important place of the courtyard, in particular the Chinese courtyard, very common in densely populated cities. It's a space outside or even inside the house, quite small, a place to go to, a place just for you.

The Romans had the same idea and had an atrium in their villa. This was open-roofed and basically like a garden room or court, with plants, flowers, even trees and bushes. A place to enjoy, welcome friends, sit and think. The word 'atrium' is the one used for the two top cavities of the heart, receiving unoxygenated blood from the body and receiving oxygenated blood from the pulmonary arteries of the lungs. Same idea, perhaps. ***page 2****



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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 S.A.A. or its committee.

Next Issue – June 2022

Our next issue will be in June, which will be highlighting 30 years of the Swedenborg Association of Australia. I will be away for a month, so the deadline is early, on **1st May 2022**. Any short recollections would be much appreciated.

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

Ruth



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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.

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* * continued from page 1 * *

The speaker went on to talk about the beneficial aspects of the Chinese courtyard. Apparently, it is there in Confucius. It is fairly high-walled so as to curtain yourself off from the closeness and worries of the world beyond. It is usually tiled, so as to visually give you the sense of its extent and size which is your own space. And it is simply furnished in that Zen kind of way, with as few things as possible but just enough to add atmosphere. A trellis, a pot with a plant, a pathway, a reclining seat, each placed where it seems to be perfect, with good feng shui. But no more. Space is vital.

Of course, the courtyard described is the outer picture mirroring and inducing our inner state, creating peace, tranquillity, solitude, openness and ownership. The word 'court' is interesting; it is related to the word horticulture, meaning gardening, and also the word for the heart in Latin 'cor' which gives our cardio and core and even courage. So, you get the idea of the

courtyard as the garden of the heart, the garden for the heart.

We all need it, this space-place, where ideally nothing interrupts the time we spend in it. We are fairly driven beings, and being useful is a great spiritual truth, but not to end up being used up.

But there is another side to all of this. It isn't only that we need it, but that it needs us. There, out there, wherever, there is existence itself with everything of the Divine holding it in place and beckoning. The Divine seeks; The Divine creates in order to enfold and embrace in itself everything that it has made. How easy it can be to not notice and career on to the next 'must-do'.



The courtyard is our RSVP to the Divine to signal that we accept and want to be in just being. Perhaps instead of seeing the courtyard as a ten-minute breather, some respite from being busy, we should see our busyness as what we do and how we serve, and our courtyard time as the time when we are fully ourselves, just being, in communion, us and the Creator.

Enjoy wherever it is you go to

Julian



SWEDENBORG'S HEAVEN AND HELL THROUGH A LOGOPRAXIS LENS

By David Millar

As with all spiritual material, the work Heaven and Hell deals with mental structures and processes that we experience as states of mind i.e., states of thinking and feeling. The term "spirit," when used by Swedenborg in his writing, means the mind. So, by extension the term "spiritual world" refers to the world of the mind, specifically, to the collective world of the human mind. What Swedenborg wrote is a descriptive account of his direct experience of mental realities as he perceived them through his spiritual senses. We find that the content of these descriptions is not too dissimilar to what we experience through our physical senses in the natural world. The difference between a description of the spiritual or mental world and that of the physical world, is that all things in the Spiritual World are spiritual or mental while those of the physical world are material. To the spiritual senses, the spiritual objects display qualities that are as tangible and real as the material qualities of material objects are to the physical senses.

This is such an important concept to grasp to set the frame for working with the Heaven and Hell text using the Logopraxis approach. Our starting point, from a Logopraxis perspective, is that the world being described in Heaven and Hell is the inner world of our mind. The work we do in Logopraxis is a work that looks to affirm the truth of this through experiencing directly what's described in the Text for ourselves.

Swedenborg entered the inner landscape of the collective human mind through having his spiritual eyes opened. His entry was by way of changes in his own states of consciousness affirming the truth that everyone, as to their spirit or mind, is in the spiritual world while, as to the body,



they are in the natural world. In recounting the "things heard and seen" Swedenborg offers us a psycho-spiritual map that can guide us on our own inner journey. Using the Logopraxis approach we can come to appreciate the Heaven and Hell text in a way that opens up profound insights into the evolution of human consciousness and the laws that govern its organisation and development.

Spiritual work, Logopraxis work, is psychological work in the true sense of the word. It invites us to enter the spiritual world, the world of the psyche or soul and to examine the quality of what passes for our mental life. It is reflective work that involves making what is largely unconscious for us, in our normal everyday functioning, conscious. This requires a new way of looking at things. It requires spiritual sight, or in-sight. This kind of sight isn't something mystical but is something highly practical. It is the capacity given to all by the Lord to reflect on the quality of their states of mind with a view to shunning evils as sins against Him.

A key aspect for Swedenborg in having his spiritual eyes opened was that this occurred as he read and studied the Word. When he talks about his spiritual eyes being opened, he's talking about his understanding and its ability to conceptually grasp spiritual realities. The



basis for that kind of in-sight is found in being able to think from spiritual principles offered through the Texts of Divine revelation. When these principles are integrated into the mind, they provide the kind of in-sight that penetrates beyond the natural objects, people and scenes found in a literal reading of the text into what these things represent spiritually within us.

Through the practice of spiritual principles or truths we gain an understanding of spiritual concepts. These re-orientate the mind to seeing natural objects as symbolic representations of spiritual or mental realities. But what do we mean by spiritual or mental realities? These are things like: the structures of our thinking, the beliefs we live from, what we hold to be true and false, what we judge to be good and evil, what we believe 'love' to be, what we love, where our affections direct our attention etc. All this belongs to the will and understanding or states of consciousness that constitutes the spiritual dimension of life. And all of this has a much greater impact on our quality of life than the conditions of our external environment have. It is the quality of this spiritual dimension of life and the degree to which it aligns with reality at any given moment, that determines whether our mental life with its thoughts and affections, draws its quality from what is hellish or heavenly.

What we see through Logopraxis, is that this ability to enter the spiritual world described by Swedenborg, is now open to all who are willing to engage with the Word with a view to practicing its principles or truths as the basis for their life. Through their practice, spiritual truths or principles begin to give greater definition to the inner landscape of the mind. We find that these truths shine a light on our states of mind and so give us the ability to discriminate



“For heavenly peace enters in when the desires that spring from self-interest and love of the world are removed.”

—Emanuel Swedenborg,
Arcana Coelestia §5662

between those thoughts and affections that are beneficial to, and those that are destructive of, our spiritual well-being. This light that truths provide is a conceptual light or a new way of seeing and understanding things that comes from assimilating spiritual concepts through their application to the life of the mind i.e., to states of mind. When this light is active within our minds it provides in-sight into the state or quality of our affections and thoughts. This light is from the Word or Logos and constitutes the spiritual life of all who willingly receive it. The Word or Logos is spiritual light, it is the Lord, it is how He is experienced by human beings. So, when Swedenborg speaks of his spiritual eyes being opened by the Lord, he is speaking of the impact spiritual concepts, principles, truths, and ideas drawn from the Texts of Divine revelation have upon a receptive mind.

Swedenborg describes mental or spiritual realities using the language and imagery that is familiar to what people experience in everyday life in the world. But the imagery with its objects and features is not meant to be taken literally, nor is it meant to be thought of materially. What Swedenborg experienced within his perceptive field



and subsequently described in the work Heaven and Hell, he perceived through shifts in his own states of consciousness as he engaged with the Word. Swedenborg, being motivated by love for the Lord from the Lord and the spiritual well-being of humanity, delved deeply into the Word which led him beyond its literal meaning into what is called its spiritual sense.

Logopraxis invites us to engage with Texts of Divine revelation to experience their power to open our awareness to our own states of consciousness i.e., the spiritual world, here and now. This is the remarkable nature of Divine revelation in the form of Sacred Texts. It has the power to open the mind and direct its course on a journey that leads to our rebirth into a whole new sense of self. The Texts themselves provide the materials into which a new sense of our self can be born if we are willing to engage with them to direct our inner life. Without freely choosing to engage with the Texts to examine the quality of our life in the light of their truths, our minds will remain closed to perceiving their deeper inner contents. But when the Texts are engaged with, with a view to self-examination and the amendment of our life, then they open up more and more to support the processes involved in the regeneration of the human mind.

Through working with the Logopraxis approach we discover that the Texts of Divine revelation are psycho-active. What this means is that the processes described within the Text become active within our own experience and field of perception as we look to apply spiritual principles to the life of our mind. We experience the Text coming alive in us, re-forming our beliefs, and opening new affections through the direct experience of its truths or principles working in our minds. As the structure of our thinking is transformed so too are our values and perspectives.

We find that spiritual realities start to take priority over the things of natural life. This change in priorities marks a change in our affections. These kinds of changes, leading to the transformation of our sense of self and so our life, are what the Gospel of John refers to as, "being born again" or "born from above." (John 3:16) This work of the Text, of the Word within the human mind, is what is meant by the Coming of the Lord - for the Word is the Lord.



This one comes to Him by night, and says to Him, "Rabbi, we have seen and thus know that You are a Teacher having come, and are here, from God, for no one is able to constantly be doing these signs which You are constantly doing, unless God would continue being with him". Jesus considered, and replies to him, saying, "Certainly it is so, I am saying to you, unless anyone may be born back up again to a higher place he continues having no power to see or perceive God's reign, sovereign influence/activity, or kingdom.

John 3: 2-3 (Jonathan Mitchell New Testament)



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laced with a gentle humour. They frequently smile.

I get the feeling that much of this grace and cultural composure comes from the background of their religion. So, let's take a very quick survey of Hinduism, while understanding that other religions are also part of India's spirituality.

Hinduism is almost certainly the oldest of the world's current major religions. It gave rise - or something like that - to Buddhism and possibly other belief systems. It's well-known that there are many thousands of deities and we will be coming back to that later on. It seemed to have come into being around 1000 BC when the Aryan peoples entered the Indian sub-continent and settled. They either brought or created the first of their 'scriptures', the Rig Vedas, and in due course more revelations came into existence over at least the next twelve hundred years. The Upanishads, of which there are many, which express divinity, contemplation, human existence and personal life. And many others.

SMARTISM By Julian Duckworth

A week ago, I suddenly burst out laughing aloud over reading something which did two things to lift my spirits. This article is a thank you for that moment of joy and discovery.

I have always had an interest in India and its main religion, Hinduism. I've never been to India, but we once lived next door to a delightful Gujarati family in Birmingham and our family have been to Mauritius where seventy per cent of the population are Indian and either Hindu or Muslim. I also chatted to a Rajasthani taxi driver in Adelaide who declared that his state was paradise on earth, the best scenery, best meals and best-looking people. I have found Indians to be gracious and good company, with well thought-through observations about life, often



Hindu mythology is rich and shows parallels with other mythologies, because Indians are just one branch of the Indo-European people, and so too are we, much of Europe and also Iran. Thus, Greek mythology, Norse, Celtic and others are related and have similar but different mythological figures.

The last thing to mention is the two vast epics of Hinduism, the Mahabharata and the Ramayana. The Mahabharata is a huge narration of the struggle between two



groups of cousins in the Kurukshetra War and the fates of the Kaurava and the Pandava princes and their successors. But towards the end, the world-famous Bhagavad-gita, the 'Song of God', is given, in which Arjuna weeps over the coming battle between these two related families, and Krishna, the incarnate god, descends and rides in Arjuna's chariot and explains, in the Song of God. The Ramayana epic describes the banishment of Rama from his kingdom, the abduction of his wife Sita by a demon and her rescue, and Rama's eventual restoration to the throne.

Already, I guess, we can see spiritual states and processes being expressed in the goings-on in both these epics, each of which have been turned into movies (not Bollywood, which is another story...) and each movie lasts for about fourteen hours.

Now ... What was it that made me burst out laughing and brought me a great discovery? It is my title at the top, Smartism. I'd googled 'Hindu deities' to check on something and up came several million sites, and the first one began by listing the six major Hindu gods which are: Brahma, Vishnu, Shiva, Shakti (or Deva) and Ganesh. You'll have heard of some of them. Brahma is often seen as the ultimate supreme god, the creator, and with Vishnu the preserver and Shiva the destroyer and reincarnator, they form a trinity.

But each god, apart from Brahma, has come to be revered as being supreme and to be worshipped and followed. So - and forgive me for the long names - Vaishnavism advocates Vishnu, Shaivism upholds Shiva as the greatest god, Shaktism worships Shakti, and Ganapatism goes for Ganesh, the elephant-faced god (and look out for the statue in Woolgoolga). Hinduism, like other religions, has its sects and varieties of belief.

In the google, I carried on reading, and saw this: **The Smartism sect considers all the above five deities as equal.** (Laugh! Oh YES!) ... (and then this)

Smartism is an older tradition (me, "this is getting better all the time!") which invites the worship of more than one god, including Vishnu, Shiva, Shakti, Ganesh and others gods and goddesses. It is not sectarian and it is based on the recognition that Brahma is the highest principle in the universe and pervades all existence.



"Well, it does not get better than that!" I said, swinging from some nearby high chandelier.

Now, you may be forgiven for thinking that "Smartism" is a newly concocted word like quaranteen, air fryer, whatevs and PPE, all now dictionaryed because it looks like a 2022 word for some brilliant new approach or corporate branding. But no!

The Smarta tradition came into being around the beginning of the Christian era (0 AD) and it rejects the sectarian approach and advocates the synthesis approach of having in the one place like the home or temple the five shrines with the five deities all treated as equal.

Over time, this unifying Smarta tradition got rejected as being too hard to follow (sigh!) and the sects for each separate god came to the fore. In our own Western period of medieval times, the smarta tradition got reinstated and today it has a large number of followers.

From Smarta came the Bhakti movement, which promotes devotion and



unity. Its main principles are that God is one, we are to serve humanity, all human beings are equal, devotion is far more important than ritual or pilgrimage, and castes and superstitions are to be given up.

Now, the whole point of this article is to align basic Smartism with basic Swedenborg(ism). One of the constant themes in Swedenborg's spiritual writing is that the many expresses the richness of the one. The Trinity, for example, is not three gods but three aspects of God who creates us, redeems us and works in and through us. There is a place and purpose for people of all faiths and beliefs in heaven because each brings its contribution for the sake of all. Variety brings increasing perfection to the whole of heaven (Heaven and Hell 56) and so on.

In the Arcana, in paragraph 362, Swedenborg writes that "Wherever a church exists, heresies crop up, because when we think about a single article of faith, we make it the chief one. It is a characteristic of human thought that when we turn our attention to one consideration, we make it more important than another, especially if our fantasies claim it as our own personal discovery."

Hinduism is said to have six million gods, but you see, each god's place and person is simply one vital part of the wholeness of the true God, developing it more, enriching our understanding of it and also helping us to link it meaningfully to our own experience of life.

Whatever we want to call that - Smartism, Swedenborg, Truth, Unity - is not really important. What is important is that we aim to live in integrity, and honour what is divine.

A Demon In The Air

By Howard Thompson

If you haven't heard the term, you are at least familiar with the effects of cancel culture. One online dictionary

defines cancel culture as; the practice or tendency of engaging in mass canceling as a way of expressing disapproval and exerting social pressure. In this context canceling someone is the modern-day equivalent of ostracism. Of course, in the interest of maintaining proper order in society, some application of ostracism is useful even when the "offence" does not rise to the level of criminality.

There is, however, an ongoing debate these days about whether or not cancel culture has gone too far. In fact, an internet search of the question "has cancel culture gone too far?" will return enough articles, polls and studies to occupy even the fastest readers for a millennia. I will spare you a millennia of reading and simply note that too far or not, there is little question that the internet and social media have contributed substantially to the explosion of this practice. For all its benefits in communication and contributions to scientific study, the internet does seem to have a unique ability to tap into our more base inclinations. The base inclination I am reflecting on these past weeks is that inclination the Lord so wonderfully pointed to in Matthew (7:1-6):

"Do not judge others, and you will not be judged. For you will be treated as you treat others. The standard you use in judging is the standard by which you will be judged."

"And why worry about a speck in your friend's eye when you have a log in your own? How can you think of saying to your friend, 'Let me help you get rid of that speck in your eye', when you can't see past the log in your own eye? Hypocrite! First get rid of the log in your own eye; then you will see well enough to deal with the speck in your friend's eye."

"Don't waste what is holy on people who are unholy. Don't throw your pearls to pigs! They will trample the pearls, then turn and attack you."



The Lord was pointing to our most human tendency to see as large the smallest faults in others while paying little heed to the glaring faults within ourselves. A tendency that has only increased with the introduction of the internet and seems manifest in the phenomenon of cancel culture. The overuse of cancel culture seems also to be in stark contrast to these words concerning those in whom self-love exists and those with whom charity is present:

As a result they see in the neighbour nothing except his evil. Or if they do see anything good they either perceive it as nothing or else place a bad interpretation on it. It is altogether otherwise with those with whom charity is present. (AC 1079)

Reflecting on the tendency to see evils in others, I was reminded of the opening scene from a favourite movie of mine. The year I graduated from high school (1983) "The Right Stuff" hit theatres. An epic drama, "The Right Stuff" tells the story of the recruitment, training and first space flights of the first American astronauts. The opening scene, in black and white, is a pilot's view from an airplane speeding through the sky twisting and turning to avoid the clouds. Accompanying the visual images, a narrator's voice:

"There was a demon that lived in the air. They said whoever challenged him would die. Their controls would freeze up, their planes would buffet wildly, and they would

disintegrate. The demon lived at Mach 1 on the meter, seven hundred and fifty miles an hour, where the air could no longer move out of the way. He lived behind a barrier through which they said no man could ever pass. They called it the sound barrier." - Levon Helm as Jack Ridley, *The Right Stuff* (1983)

I find this opening, to be a suitable vehicle to carry this important message about the nature of demons and (in the vernacular of the Book of Revelation) the dragon. The sound barrier is the large increase in aerodynamic drag an aircraft encounters when it approaches the speed of sound. Shortly after WWII, and propelled by the aeronautical advances achieved during the war, the race was on to break the sound barrier. This was, however, not without its challenges and more than a few men were killed flying the experimental aircraft designed to take them into uncharted territory. The danger was real, but the challenge of being the



Brigadier General Chuck Yeager
Bell X-1 (1947)

first and defeating the "demon" was intoxicating for the test pilots of the day.

Now, you may be reading this and saying; 'No thank you. Putting my life at risk to push an unproven aeroplane a few kph faster than the last guy? Not for me!' Put this challenge, however, in terms of fighting a demon, one that lives out there,



and now we jump at the chance. That's what cancel culture is fuelled by. Most of us may be unwilling to take risks like a test pilot, but most of us are more than willing to see evil, demons and dragons in the world. More than willing to call them out and want to defeat them. It is actually quite easy to see these demons, all around us if we are to be honest. Just watch the news and you will see sports stars, politicians and celebrities aplenty who seem to believe that the rules the rest of us follow just don't apply to them. And evil is very much alive when we see young children go missing from their homes and pensioners scammed out of their nest eggs. We are all too happy to identify demons like these, demons that "live in the air."



But the question the Lord wants us to ask ourselves is are we willing to identify the demons that live within. You see, Swedenborg also writes of demons and dragons:

...dragons are reasonings that spring from self-love and love of the world, thus from desires for what is evil, which pervert not only truths but forms of good as well. These reasonings are produced by people who in their hearts repudiate the truths and forms of the good of faith, but affirm them with their lips because of their intense desire to obtain dominance and gain... (AC 7293.5)

In the most general terms every evil in the world, every demon or dragon responsible for the evil in the world has one source, selfishness or the love of self. And it is selfishness that embodies

each of us, none of us are immune to its influence. It is the demon within, not the demon in the air, the Lord is calling us to vanquish.

Evils cannot be set aside unless they come to light. This does not mean that we have to act out our evils in order to bring them to light but that we need to look carefully not only at our actions but also at our thoughts, at what we would do if it were not for our fear of the laws and of ill repute. We need to look especially at which evils we see as permissible in our spirit and do not regard as sins, for eventually we do them.

(Divine Providence 278a)

I find this a most powerful passage for the two questions it asks us. First, what would I do if it were not for my fear of the laws and of ill repute? Second, which evils do I see as permissible? It is the demon within, not the demon in the air, the Lord is calling us to vanquish.

But you are not evil, you're not a bad person who seeks to do evil, to commit sins against God. And that is the point, that is the manner in which the demon operates. The demon's greatest trick is get you to do evil all the while thinking that you are doing good or at least thinking that you are justified in the evil you do.

As individuals we will never vanquish the evil operating in another person, "the demon in the air." But we can, with the Lord's help, vanquish the demon within.

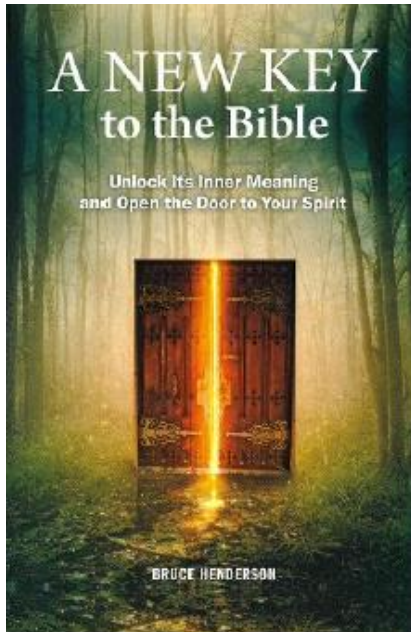
And one concluding observation. I have read enough biographies about test pilots and early astronauts to know that, to a man, they have spent considerable time vanquishing the demons within in their quest to vanquish the demon in the air. The mental aptitude, attention to detail and coolness under pressure required of these pioneers demands a high degree of internal work. While not necessarily spiritual work, it is as close as one can get without calling it such.



Book Offer for This Quarter

Below is this quarter's book offer. **Candela** readers who order the following titles during the next quarter will receive the discount below, **while stocks last**.

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by **bruce Henderson**

146 pages, paperback **now \$20 (included postage if to Australia)**

Most people agree that we have something in us that goes beyond the outer world and body. We act and react in everything we do from our thoughts and feelings, yet nobody ever won a Nobel Prize for seeing a thought or feeling, because it is our inner self that sees them. And if we have such inner parts, wouldn't it be useful to have an owners manual for making the best use of them? Emanuel Swedenborg tells us that we do have such a user manual, namely the Bible. Bruce Henderson, a journalist and author of several popular books, wrote *A New Key to the Bible* to help unlock its inner meaning to spiritual seekers who feel a connection to the bible but are sometimes troubled by its contents. This book is an overview of the Bible's inner meaning using Swedenborg's vision which gives us a new way to experience the beautiful, uplifting

message that goes beyond the literal meaning of its words.

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Also check the website at www.swedenborg.com.au for details of our "hybrid" **group events** (hybrid means they can be attended both online AND live in person).

Follow the "about → contact" menu items on the website for a list of locations and contact info of your nearest group convenor, and see the "events" menu item for Zoom links so you can join online events.

Our website is continually updated with new study material and latest news and information.

Special Sydney Event

If you live near Sydney, you may wish to consider purchasing a ticket to a fabulous musical concert at the **Roseville New Church, 4 Shirley Road, Roseville NSW** which will be held on **Sunday 27th March at 2pm**.

World-renowned Riley Lee is Grand Master of the Japanese shakuhachi bamboo flute and a true virtuoso. He is coming to the Roseville New Church to perform his soothing flute meditations of original and traditional compositions, which create an atmosphere of spacious serenity. Melodic and tranquil, this music is ideal for prayer and meditation and healing.

The shakuhachi flute can be as expressive as the human voice it can evoke the sound of gentle rain, the quiet rustle of a breeze through a bamboo grove, or the soft rush of wings as a heron takes flight.

Riley will be joined by the wonderful Sydney harpist Cliona Molins. They love the Roseville New Church atmosphere and acoustics. They are celebrating having performed together for 10 years.

For booking details, either head to our homepage at www.swedenborg.com.au where you will find details in the news column, or go straight to www.trybooking.com/BWVPY for tickets.

