

# Candela



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

**MARCH 2006**

**ISSUE 43**

## Issue Theme ~ *"Is God in Control?"*

### **PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**

Like a retold story, the last does not resemble the first.

Is God in control? We may ask: "In what degree is the Grand Architect in control of His creation?" An architect often feels he is in control of his creations. Not so!

He designs as best he can with the tools at his command. He puts his heart and soul, yes, even love, into every detail. He feels a proprietorial ownership in his creation. For a moment in time he thinks he is in control.

But it is an illusion!

The architect sits at his board with a thought, a vague airy dream that develops into forms and forms into spaces. Colours are imagined. The thought is created on paper, lines and curves stopping and starting, with numbers to indicate how long each line is, but it still marks only the flat surface on his drawing board.

The thought grows and soon has the power to energise the forge and kiln to produce steel and brick of specified shape. Trees are felled, cut, sawn and wrought into various shapes. Trucks descend on the vacant site and leave, like bees to and from a hive.

The earth moves as soil and rock are moved in seemingly erratic gestures. Soon an army of workmen gather on the site with plans rolled up under their arms. They are the architect's plans but the transformation from paper to reality has undergone many intrusions of unspecified change. Like a retold story, the last does not resemble the first.

**How does the Meadow-flower its bloom unfold?**

Because the lovely little flower is free  
Down to its roots, and, in that freedom bold;  
And so the grandeur of the Forest-tree  
Comes not from its casting in a formal mould,  
But from its own divine vitality.

William Wordsworth.

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

The final trades sweep into the building perhaps never having met the architect and rend their own magic on the building - painting, planting, decorating and furnishing. The people see the thought has miraculously turned into a living thing but it is not the first thought.

The architect after many years will realise his creations are only going to bear a vague resemblance to his original thought. He would be wise to accept this and somehow build the possibilities of change into his design so that the first thought could maintain the essential elements throughout the manifestation period. The Grand Architect acknowledges the need for a fluid brief when it is said, "In the beginning God created heaven and earth".

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*Continued on page 2*

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## **PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE** (Contd.)

### - *"Is God in Control?"*

Heaven is that which is higher and is the spiritual mind. Earth is lower and is the natural mind. It is a vacuum, a vacant site, ready for the building of a higher mind. The building of a person may not go ahead as planned and indeed it may be only half completed by the time the watch stops. A half-finished "man" is also useful in the next phase in one's spiritual life. The idea of a less-than-perfect being is built into the system. What is beautiful is that each person has free will, a freedom of decision-making so that the final product is truly one's own - for better or worse.

During this building process a person has the opportunity to go back to the Creator for instructions. This is in the form of what we call conscience. Extending our analogy further, it is like firstly knowing that the Architect exists and then asking for a further detail. If one happens to go through building a life without knowing there is an Architect then there is a problem because what is right and what is good cannot be consciously built. It's like a tradesman, say a plumber, installing a bath without reference to the plans; he may get it right but without reference to the overall plan he may also build it in back to front.

*So is God in control?* He has provided a world so finely balanced of space, stars, and building blocks of atoms that seem to be a perpetual motion machine of ever evolving energies. Within this highly specific environment He has allowed free will to reign with beings that are as yet unconscious, in the knowledge that there is a place for all in the spiritual world. This is the sign of an Architect of architects, a Creator with extraordinary love and forgiveness who causes to exist and come into being His own thought or imagination while using unskilled labour like human beings to carry out the Master plan.

Agape,

**John Brogan, President**

## **Our Ideas About God . . . .**

We may gather how important it is to have a right concept of God from the fact that this concept is the very core of the thinking of anyone who has a religion. All the elements of religion and of worship focus on God; and since God is involved in every element of religion and worship, whether in general or particular, unless there is a right concept of God there can be no communication with heaven.

Swedenborg: *Divine Love and Wisdom*, paragraph 13

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**Please Note:** The views expressed in this Newsletter are those of each contributor and do not necessarily reflect any particular position of the Swedenborg Association of Australia or its Committee.

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Membership of the Swedenborg Association of Australia Inc. is open to anyone who wishes to pursue an interest in Swedenborg, the man, his science and his spiritual teachings.

For details on how to join, please refer to page 12.

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## Men & Women ~ The Decision Makers



When we travel fast over a hump bridge, we experience a moment of weightlessness when we are suspended between two opposing forces: gravity and levity or centrifugal force. On the psychic level we also encounter a moment of weightlessness in the split-second before we come to any decision when we are free to choose with ease between two opposing alternatives; one of which is raising us to a higher level and another which is dragging us downwards. Every day, we make hundreds of such decisions without paying due attention to their real importance. Yet each choice commits us to an irreversible action with its unavoidable consequences. Once we jump and so have exercised our freedom, we can only deal with the effects of our decision. Swedenborg, whose spiritual awareness enabled him to make the earliest, psychological analysis of the mind, states that in that freedom of choice lies the key to our humanness and personality. Without that freedom of will and thought we would not be human beings, and would have no imagination or creativity.

How is this precious, finely-balanced moment of inner freedom achieved? It is neither automatic nor mechanical, but is a result of spiritual forces acting upon us. Swedenborg explains:

*“While we are in the world we are in the midst between hell and heaven: beneath is hell and above is heaven; and we are kept in freedom to turn either to hell or to heaven. We have this freedom not from our self but from the Lord.”*

To understand this we need to realise that not only freedom, but life itself is a gift, a precious stream constantly flowing into the soul which has been likened to a golden bowl which receives that unceasing divine flow. But because by nature we are inclined towards selfishness and cruelty and too profane to receive that pure stream directly from its source, we crave to receive life which corresponds to our own character, and so draw our stimulus and inspiration from the realm of darkness and evil which is known as hell. This is the reason for the widespread insanity of the reign of terror and viciousness all round the world; of “man’s inhumanity to man”.

If we were left to our own inclinations we would have destroyed ourselves long ago. We are still capable of doing so. Yet God’s mercy intervenes to balance our selfishness by opening a stream of innocence and peace which flows from angelic spirits, whose love for us, and whose longing for our salvation moderates our hell-bent desires, checks them and often turns our steps in a better direction. What sensitive person has not felt that sweet influence falling on them? Thus between the two opposing forces, of which we are usually unaware, we are free to choose. Swedenborg reveals how all this happens:

*“It is not possible for us to be in freedom unless spirits from hell act on the one side and angels from heaven on the other, and we are in between. Angels are sent to us by the Lord, while we summon evil spirits our self.”*



Thus no feeling or thought we have is entirely private. It is the result of the association which we have with the spiritual world which affects our mind moment by moment. But we choose between those thoughts, and our decision is absolute and real as to which influence we shall adopt and make part of our character.



The spiritually enlightened person has power to do two things both of which help in their healthy development. They can refuse to admit evil and corrupting influences into their mind and life by not identifying with them. They can stand apart from them recognising the great battle for their soul which is going on behind the scenes.

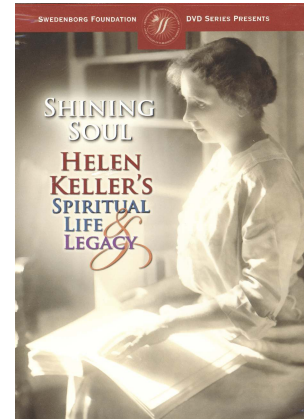
Secondly, when the spirit of God's love fills and moves them to do some good action, they refuse to regard it as their own and so claim no merit for it, nor ask for thanks or reward. They avoid the fault of arrogance and remain humble and thankful at heart because the divine, creative spirit is able to use them in some service which has eternal value - however small it may appear in the eyes of the world. Such a choice between good and evil, heaven and hell is constantly with us, and each one of us is a centre of spiritual forces: those which try to enslave us and those which try to set us free.

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Based on a pamphlet issued by  
the Swedenborg Movement in the UK, written by  
**Rev. Christopher Hasler**

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## SHINING SOUL HELEN KELLER'S SPIRITUAL LIFE & LEGACY



This recently released one hour documentary exploring the spiritual life of Helen Keller, which has remained surprisingly unknown despite its paramount importance in understanding Helen's phenomenal contributions and achievements, is now available in Australia for loan (p&h \$5) or purchase at \$32 each plus p&h (member discount applies). The vital role of Anne Sullivan, Helen's teacher, is also well covered.

Contact the Swedenborg Centre, North Ryde, Sydney to obtain your copy or reserve it on loan. For a more detailed appreciation of the DVD, please see the North Ryde Group Report on Page 5.

### *Candela - 2006*

Our theme for the June issue will be: *"Male and Female He Made Them"*

**We really do need to have your contributions to make OUR Newsletter interesting and lively. Please do not wait to be asked. Just let the under-signed know at the Registered Office that you intend submitting and item or simply send it to us either by letter or electronically before 1<sup>st</sup> June 2006.**

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| ✓ an article of up to 1000 words        | ✓ a poem, etc.                                 |
| ✓ art work in the form of line drawings | ✓ a question to which you would like an answer |

You do not have to stick to the theme. If you want to write something which fits in with the general thrust of the Newsletter, let's have that. In particular, we would like to publish more "Member's Journey" articles so why not write something in that area. I look forward to hearing from you.

**Neville Jarvis.** Newsletter Co-ordinator

**Advance Notice:** September theme will be : *Health & Spirituality*





## ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

Hello Everyone! A big welcome to our New Members:

Ken Barns (Qld)	John Bond (Tas)
Phillip Clark (Tas)	Benjamin Crebert (NSW)
Alice Oppen (Vic)	Fred Welling (SA)
Gypsy Wulff (WA)	Ron & Diane Yates (Qld)

Autumn is here and even though the Sydney winters are mild, already the animals around our home are preparing. The wallabies are growing in their winter coats, the lace monitors (goannas) and snakes are very hungry - building up reserves for their 'big sleep', and the birds bid a final farewell to their young, sending them on their way to claim their own mates and territories.

For us, too, it can be a time for hibernating or 'going inwards' and reflecting on our internal life, our connection with the Divine Life, how we prepare for our internal 'winter' and how this is a necessary and natural part of our spiritual life.

### Business Items:

This year, Swedenborg's Birthday was celebrated in Sydney with the viewing of a new DVD about Helen Keller and her discovery and journey of her spiritual life. As you know, Swedenborg's writings played an integral part in that journey, and this DVD brings it all to life so beautifully. Ask at the Swedenborg Centre about borrowing the DVD, or purchasing it (see notice on page 4).

The Committee has prepared a number of booklets to serve as an introduction to particular works of Swedenborg's - *Heaven & Hell*, *Marriage or Conjugal Love*, *True Christian Religion* and *Divine Providence*. They give an excellent overview and assist the newcomer (and not-so-newcomer!) to appreciate each work, providing helpful references and insights. Copies will be made available to members shortly.

The next Committee meeting is the 20<sup>th</sup> April at 5.30pm, so any ideas or suggestions you want us to consider, please ensure they arrive at the Registered Office (the North Ryde address) in good time. They will be most welcome.

. . . and now, I bid you farewell. Until next issue!

Your Secretary,

Louise

**Louise Brogan**, Hon. Secretary

## GROUP'S NEWS

### Brisbane:

Bi-monthly meetings are planned for 2006, normally on 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday in the early afternoon as usual. It was necessary to postpone the one set down in February. It will now take place on 29<sup>th</sup> March, the subject being "**Many Religions; many pathways; but one goal and objective**". Please see last page for more details. As soon as arrangements for future meetings are put into place, everyone will be advised. Always check the "events" page on the Association's website to check the current situation.

All members of our group were much saddened to hear the news of the passing of Paul Eldar in January last. For a good number of years he was an integral part of the Swedenborg movement scene in Brisbane and we appreciated his excellent presentations at our regular meetings in more recent times until his relocation to Canberra. Our thoughts and prayers go out to his family at their loss of a loving father.

**Ian Arnold**



### North Ryde, Sydney:

In February, Neville Jarvis organised a showing of a recently issued documentary *Shining Soul: Helen Keller's Spiritual Life and Legacy*. The Swedenborg Foundation in USA had commissioned Emmy Award-winner Penny Price to produce and direct it to commemorate the 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Helen Keller's birth on June 27, 1880.

I was interested in seeing the film to deepen my appreciation of such an inspirational person. I was drawn to the following description of her and this became one of my primary reasons in seeing the film:

*Those who have deepened their knowledge of her are invariably astonished by her inner radiance, beautiful disposition, emotional depth and richness, the staggering intellectual accomplishments of her life, and most of all by the courage of character that allowed her to triumph over the limitations of her sight and hearing disabilities.*

The film also looked at the specific ideas that fired Helen Keller's long and productive life. She was very much drawn to Swedenborg's idea of



Uses, serving others, sharing joy, the relationship between the outer and inner world and the spiritual body being within the physical body. One new thing I learnt about her was that she was at the forefront of getting “talking” books published.

There was spontaneous applause at the end of this fine documentary. One person commented afterwards that he was impressed with the timing of various people in Helen’s life to help her along the way. The film is highly recommended. See page 4 for details of how to purchase or borrow it.

**Michael Chester**



### North Ryde Meeting 24<sup>th</sup> March 2006

This is going to be a session for

*Any Questions on Spiritual Topics*

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A separate leaflet is enclosed with this mailing providing information on how the evening will work. You will also read that you don’t have to be present to submit questions for consideration. In fact, we are seeking your question(s) to make it an Australia-wide event. Do join in, entering your questions by completing the section of the leaflet and returning the section of the leaflet to the registered office, phoning the Swedenborg Centre on 02 9888 1066 or emailing [saa@swedenborg.com.au](mailto:saa@swedenborg.com.au)

The evening will be taped. Selected transcripts will be made available.



### *Tribute to Paul Eldar 1926-2006*



Sadly, for us, Paul left this world on January 20<sup>th</sup>. Whilst making good progress towards recovery in a Canberra

hospital following an operation earlier in the week, he unexpectedly slipped into a coma and within a few hours died. Following is a personal testimony by Rev. Ian Arnold, Swedenborgian Minister in Brisbane and Principal of the Australian New Church (Swedenborgian) College to a man who became a well-known and regarded figure in the Australian Swedenborg movement. Thank you Ian.

— — — — —

It was a shock to learn of Paul’s passing though thinking back I recalled recent times when he spoke of death and transition to the spiritual world (indeed, of his own) with great equanimity and calmness. Paul was a quintessentially non-materialistic person. He travelled lightly through this world. His great love, as all who knew him know, was the development of people’s faith and our relationship with God. As I came to know him I was in awe of how widely read he was, how easily he could quote authors and the wonderful breadth of his Christian vision.

News of his death came to me while I was in the Philippines and I shared it with former students of The Australian New Church College there, now ordained, all of whom had come to have a deep affection for Paul and appreciation for what he had given them in lectures and tutorials during intensive Seminars held in Brisbane, 2003 to 2005. Paul had been present at every one of the six Seminars attended by these Filipino students and his input was major.

A most kindly man, Paul was yet of firm opinions and convictions. I recall his exasperation at the lazy use of the words “mystic” and “mysticism” and hearing him convinced me then and there that he would be an ideal tutor for a new College Course on Mysticism. He did it splendidly, his students loved it, and I have kept - *and treasure* - a one-page, just so succinct, Introduction to the Course which he required any student to read beforehand.



“Succinct” is a word that in fact easily captures so much about Paul. When lecturing he chose his words carefully, never wasting any, always succinct, never - *no, never* - verbose. And yet he said so much in, relatively, so few words and sentences.

I will remember times when I explored Brisbane Bookshops with Paul. He was well known at all of them and such a marvellous companion when it came to advice, choosing one over another, etc. pointing me also in the direction of key books which he urged be bought for the College. It was during such outings, he browsing in one section and I, often enough in another, that I came to see more clearly than ever how intense, deeply-rooted and meaningful to him was his very own devotional life, into which - privately and away from the eyes of others - he put so much.

Along with many others, I honour Paul in his passing, for what he gave out to others. Memories tumble in, also, of his masterly handling of questions, his self-effacing answers, his gentle encouragement of students, and the truly universalist Christian - *at the heart of which was his indebtedness to Swedenborg* - that he was.

*The Prayer of the Chalice*

Father, to Thee I raise my whole being.  
- a vessel emptied of self. Accept Lord.  
This my emptiness, and so fill me with  
Thyself - Thy Light, Thy Love, Thy  
Life - that these Thy precious gifts  
may radiate through me and over-  
flow the chalice of my heart into  
the hearts of all with whom I  
come into contact this day  
revealing unto them  
the beauty of  
Thy Joy  
and Wholeness  
and  
the  
serenity  
of Thy Peace  
which nothing can destroy.

## Did U Know?

The capital of the US State of Michigan is not its largest city, Detroit, but the 12<sup>th</sup> in size ~

Lansing with a population of just 120,000.

What interest has this for us?



Photo Ruth Relf

The inscription on the plaque outside the Lansing Capitol Building reads:

“The town of Michigan was platted in 1847 as the state capital. In April the state legislature considered renaming the capital Pewangogowink, Swedenborg or El Dorado, but chose Lansing, after John Lansing, an American Revolution hero. At that time the capital was a wilderness fraught with wolves and a “brain fever” (spinal meningitis). In 1859, Lansing was incorporated as a city. During the 1870’s, Lansing’s lyceums and literary societies hosted author Mark Twain and actor Edwin Booth. The 1847 Capitol, considered “an old rattle trap,” was replaced by the present building in 1879. Primarily an agricultural community, Lansing developed as a manufacturing center in the 1890’s. In 1897, Ransom Eli Olds organized the Olds Motor Vehicle Company, Michigan’s first operating automobile company.”

There were certainly practising Swedenborgians in the district during the 1840’s, perhaps fairly influential in bureaucratic circles. Johnny Appleseed, that great advocate for Swedenborg’s teachings, was travelling throughout the area before Michigan was established. More research is now needed but isn’t it delightful to contemplate that the Swedenborg name might have been part of the American legislature today if the 1847 decision had been different?

**Neville Jarvis**





## Correspondence Column

No, this is not a column for “Letters to the Editor” but the start of a regular feature to consider earthly objects, natural phenomena and bodily expression as gateways into our psychospiritual world within.

To start off the series, below is an extract from an article written by Dr. Michael Stanley of the Swedenborg Movement UK originally published in their Newsletter:

How many children (and adults) have asked “Where is Heaven and Hell?”. Some replies have been “Up in the sky”, or “Down beneath the ground”, “Everywhere” or “Nowhere - in another dimension”. Really, ‘heaven’ and ‘hell’ are not locatable as places ‘somewhere’, but are ways of describing the realm of spirit and its states. That is the spiritual world - your inner world with its heavenly and hellish states and ways of seeing life. And it is to be found within what you see with the eye, or sense through other senses.

What our spirit sees through our senses can be a gateway into the spiritual realm. By this we mean that anything we see corresponds in form to an inner quality or state of the spirit. The light of the sun, for instance, corresponds to the ‘light’ of understanding - being able to ‘see’ or perceive what is meant - what is there on the mental or spiritual levels.

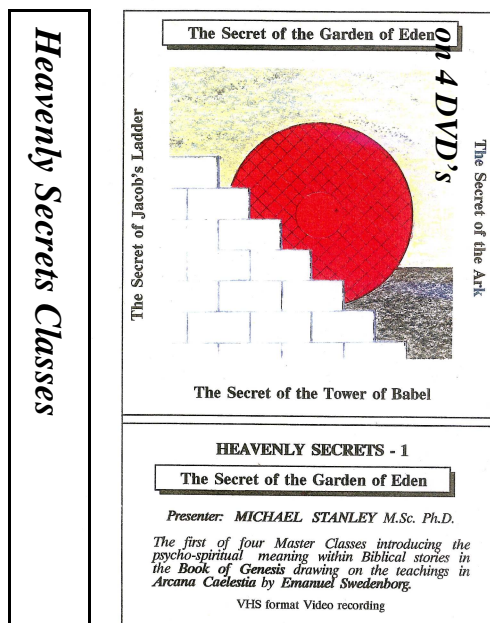
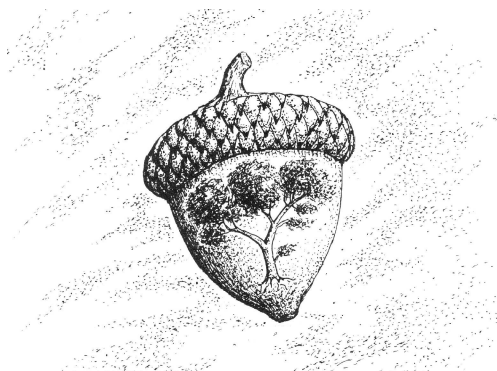
So universal and all-embracing is this phenomenon of correspondences, being the principle behind the myths of all cultures, and many fairy tales, that it is called a law and can be said to have its own ‘science’, or field of study, which provides the materials for a truly spiritual psychology. Particularly in relation to the Bible, Swedenborg has shown how every visual ‘thing’ corresponds to something either psychological or spiritual.

*There is nothing in the world of nature that does not portray something in the world of spirit*

E. Swedenborg

*In future issues, we will take a look at the Sun, the night sky, clouds, creation, doors, rocks . . . and the items can go on and on. We encourage you to think of something in nature, a bodily expression, etc. and submit your own thoughts on its spiritual mirror for publication in a subsequent issue. Such a task is not too difficult if you put your mind to it.*

We  
are  
akin  
to  
all  
that  
is . . . .



During his Australian Lecture and Workshop Tour in 1993, Dr. Michael Stanley presented a series of four Master Classes entitled **Heavenly Secrets** at the Swedenborg Centre, North Ryde, Sydney. The themes, taken from the Book of Genesis with Swedenborg’s “Arcana Coelestia” being the essential source material, were:

1. *The Garden of Eden*
2. *The Ark*
3. *The Tower of Babel*
4. *Jacob’s Ladder*

Thanks to an initiative by Melbourne member, Patrick Morahan, the video recordings of these sessions have been transferred onto DVD. The Swedenborg Centre has a set for free borrowing so make contact should you wish to do so. It is anticipated that sets will be available for sale shortly, the cost being between \$15 and \$20 plus postage and handling. Again, if you are interested in owning your own set, please be in touch with the Swedenborg Centre.





## *Why Does God Permit this World to be as it is?*

Submitted by SAA Member, **Peter Bartlett** who lives in Port Macquarie (2006)

Looking at the world as it is today, any of us could be forgiven for asking this question, even those who have complete faith in the God taught by religious doctrines accepted by so much of the world's population. But as any historian will readily confirm, down through time since first human footprints appeared on it's surface, life for mankind has always been one of agony and ecstasy . . . only the causes of both have changed as circumstances and man himself have changed!

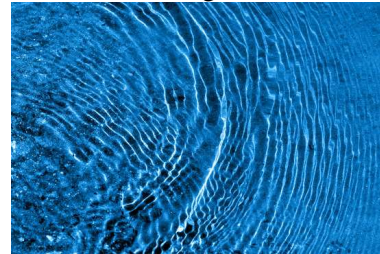
It is probably true that development of atomic energy has added a new dimension in that now it seems we have the means to destroy life to an extent never previously available; but even that is only a matter of degree, for however individual death comes it remains just that! When it has ever been thus with mankind, perhaps the question to which we should more correctly seek an answer is "Why does God permit this world to be as it is?". If so, then does not the answer lie within ourselves - ready to be found there when looked for, rather than in doctrinal explanations more concerned with exerting and maintaining a kind of authority than inspiring individual spirituality?

This seemingly more relevant question is not new - it has been asked and answered by many erudite men of faith in the past, only to be drowned out by louder voices with other interests. Indeed, Emmanuel Swedenborg was one such, for he saw through this material life for what it is so that those who read and properly understand what he tells us will have no difficulty resolving the matter for themselves.

From earliest times mankind on this earth has displayed abilities that distinguish it from all other forms of material life: to think objectively so as to recognise and overcome potential and real threats to existence, an accompanying ability to extrapolate such thought by means of imaginative mental process so as to create ways and means to survive . . . and even to recognise and correct any mistakes made whilst doing all this in thought only! It is a truly astounding gift! That extraordinary process is just as evident in the making of the first stone axe or striking flints together to make fire as it is in the making of the atomic bomb; all are reflections and examples of man's ability to develop the use of

objective thought in pace with his own achievements.

Despite what might have been expected - a parallel move towards reducing human suffering - nothing has changed except an increase keeping pace with world population growth! This being so, the question that has to be answered is why? Once again, history is able to tell us that it is mankind itself that has brought all this trial and tribulation upon itself by individual greed and failure to recognise others of it's own kind as part of a singularity - even sometimes aided and abetted by divisions arising from beliefs in God!



We all live out our time on this earth with the power to choose - indeed, every second of every day we make choices . . . the

words we speak, our actions, etc. Each one of those choices is made according to what influences us at the time and, like a pebble tossed into water, can cause ripples which can extend we know not where, or with what effect.

There once lived a wise man of great faith who was answering a question about angels, when he had this to say to his listeners:

*When we are about to be born an angel rests a finger over our lips and whispers to us "Do not tell what you remember or where you are going".*

He then pointed to the little cleft in his upper lip and told his listeners it is a reminder of what they know and left behind when coming into this world.

Charming though that episode is, it contains a much deeper message, for it encapsulates the purpose of material life and why we are part of that life: we come for a brief time into a restricted existence in which we are given the opportunity to see and experience for ourselves the responsibility that comes with creative power. Spiritually we never cease to forget what we are and where we came from, yet we must deal with the temptations that are so much part of urges of the animal body to survive against all odds.



Having the power to create alternatives whilst also being driven by the urges of an animal body to survive at all costs compels us all to make decisions which determine how well we understand ourselves . . . and relate to our God.

That God does not leave us to face these lessons without help, for the angel whose imprint remains on our lips is always with us, ready to answer our call for guidance - we only ever have to ask and then listen! What we hear may be quiet and seem to some like no more than a thought, but it is God's message relayed to us by that same angel. Prayer when used for what it is intended - spiritual help - never fails. Death in conjunction with the element of time is the imperative that, by its very existence, can impose a powerful influence upon how we each respond to the conflicting pressures of spiritual understanding and material temptation. When death is no longer feared then choices become easy and the way is open!

## A Light to shine in our Darkness

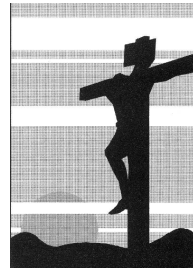
Looking back over the Lord's life from the perspective of Easter we can see that the confrontation of the last week of the Lord's life was the inevitable outcome of the challenge of His ministry to the powers of darkness. The gospel of John speaks of the meeting of light and darkness "*the light shines in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it*". These two cannot exist together and anyone who has lit a candle in a darkened room knows the power of a tiny light to overcome the darkness is amazing; what then the power of "*The light of the world*".

As we follow the story from the manger to the cross, the sick, sinful and sadistic qualities in people that were silently destroying their souls like a terrible terminal sickness is brought out into the light. Those who have too much to lose ~ those who do not want to be seen for who they really are and have the light shine into the dark places of their lives ~ try desperately to extinguish the light. First Herod tries to extinguish the one whose star the wise men followed. Later the Scribes and Pharisees plot to discredit and destroy Him. The people in Nazareth try to throw Him down the cliff outside the town the first time He speaks openly in the synagogue. And so it goes on.

Those who use their power and authority to manipulate others or serve themselves are exposed and their anger fear and determination to stop Jesus steadily increases.

But as we reflect on the road to Calvary, its temptations and trials, that encompasses the whole of the Lord's life and ministry (and not merely the final week when everything comes to a crisis), we can also see another effect of the heavenly light that the Lord shines into the world that is wonderful and uplifting. This is the way the Lord is constantly finding the most unexpected and wonderful heavenly qualities in the most unlikely people that others despise as sinners and outcasts.

It is worthy to reflect, during the time leading up to Easter as we think of the way we live our lives and the motives from which we live them, that in the gospel those who considered themselves successful and expected the praise and admiration of others needed to recognise their smallness and sinfulness and did everything humanly possible to avoid seeing their need to change. Pride can hide all sorts of problems.



Conversely, and encouragingly, those who were prepared to see and admit to their faults, failings and sinfulness, who asked for healing, help and mercy, who believed Jesus had the power to change their lives, had an utterly different experience. These struggling souls cried out to Him, climbed trees to see Him, opened their homes to welcome Him, pleaded for just a word, a touch, some crumb of comfort; these the outwardly unworthy and unloved were accepted, healed and forgiven.

Unless we are prepared to admit to the Lord who we really are and how much we need Him, Easter will have little meaning. But, for those willing to see themselves in His light, humbly admitting how far they still have to travel or how lost they feel, for those ready to seek His help, the gospel is filled with hope and Easter filled with the promise of new life.

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Clifford Curry is the Principal of the New Church (Swedenborgian) College in UK. He also ministers to a congregation in Bournemouth in southern England.  
Originally published in *Lifeline*.

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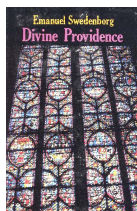
*We wish all our readers a very blessed Eastertide*



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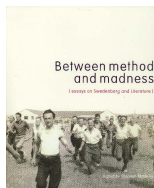


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# WHAT'S HAPPENING

For Group activities, contact your nearest Group Convenor

- Brisbane (Ian Arnold on (07) 3369 0054; email: iaarnold@ozemail.com.au)
- Gold Coast (Kevin Attwater on (07) 5545 2401 and Jack Benson on (07) 5545 4115);
- Melbourne (Chris Skinner on (03) 9432 0322; email: cskinner9@optusnet.com.au);
- Perth (Trevor Moffat on (08) 9470 9775; email: trevorm@ic-net.com.au);
- Sydney region (Michael Chester on (02) 9913 2421; email: mchester@accsoft.com.au);

It would be good to establish Groups in other areas. If you can help contact Michael Chester.



Details of programmes will be advised by leaflet as soon as they are known. Our website is updated when new information comes available - [www.swedenborg.com.au](http://www.swedenborg.com.au)

**Brisbane:** New Church Hall, 21 Agars Street, Rosalie commencing at 1 pm  
**2006** 29<sup>th</sup> March ~ *Many religions; many pathways; but one goal and objective.*  
Speaker: Ian Arnold

**Melbourne:** The New Church Hall, 426 High Street Road, Mount Waverley. Usually last Fridays  
**2006** commencing 8pm  
Programme for 2006 being determined

**Perth:** Petros Lifeskills Bookshop, 281 Albany Highway, Victoria Park usually last Fridays  
**2006** commencing 8pm  
Programme for 2006 being determined

**Sydney:** Swedenborg Centre, 1 Avon Road, North Ryde. Usually 4<sup>th</sup> Fridays commencing 7.45pm.  
**2006** 24<sup>th</sup> March ~ *Any Questions Evening* (see page 6 and leaflet for details)

## Why a Swedenborg Association?

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