

LOGOS

Newsletter about the Swedenborg Foundation's Publications and Programs on the Spiritual Basis of Life

Foundation Welcomes New Executive Editor



Joanna Hill

Joanna Hill, who became the Foundation's executive editor at the beginning of January, is at the beginning of her second life at the Foundation. In the 1990s, she spent three years as the Foundation's marketing manager, developing the Foundation's marketing program and setting up national distribution for its books. That exposure to Swedenborg changed the course of her life: Fascinated by what she had learned, she attended the Academy of the New Church Theological School in Bryn Athyn, where she got a master's degree in religious studies. Even after she left the Swedenborg Foundation to work at Templeton Foundation Press—a nonprofit publisher that explores the connections between science and religion—she remained active in the Swedenborgian community, serving on the boards of Cairnwood Mansion and the Swedenborg Scientific Association.

At Templeton Foundation Press, Joanna, as founding director and publisher, developed the editorial and marketing programs, managed international rights, and expanded the scope of its print offerings to include e-books and audio books. The following is her initial statement to the board about her vision for growing the Swedenborg Foundation Publishers:

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Thank you for the privilege of being the new executive editor of the Swedenborg Foundation. It is a position that will be fueled by love of the work and a thirst for greater understanding and influence. It also provides a unique opportunity to work with people who represent Swedenborgian ideas across a wide spectrum, people who come together with the idea of service and common good. It is a joy to be working in this sphere.

I see much work that needs to be done. We need to increase sales, increase our presence in the bookstores, improve distribution, and build a fuller publishing list. On the other hand, I see what could be considered the crowning jewel in the publishing program—the New Century Edition. I am very impressed with the high academic standards and beautiful books that are being produced.

So, rather than dwell on what needs fixing, we can look toward where we

want to go. Of course, we need to find solutions to our problems, but that will be done as we join together in common purpose to address these issues. I would like to offer a few initial suggestions of what steps we can begin with:

1. Our first step will be to focus on maintaining good academic standards for all of our books. To achieve this goal, we will model ourselves on an academic press by looking for well-written, well-researched manuscripts from established scholars and writers.
2. A second area of growth is to become the source of information for Swedenborgian activity and news—whether from scholarly, church, or seeker sources. This would include posting the news about Swedenborgian publishing worldwide, creating a blog, reporting from trade and scholarly conferences, and posting reviews and press releases. The center of all of this activity will be our Web site, whose new design will be launched in March. We will be able to contact our readers through e-mail updates and also post pamphlets and sample chapters of our materials on the site for download.
3. A third area of growth and improvement is to increase our library presence. We can generate interest by posting sample chapters, as mentioned earlier, online with links directly for purchase. We can approach the libraries with the emerging new interest and references to Swedenborg—from the newly discovered Martin Luther King, Jr., quote to Le Clezio's reference in his Nobel acceptance speech. As this work is recognized for its relevance, more

libraries will realize the need to have the newest, most contemporary scholarship available on the subject.

4. Fourth, we need to make our books more accessible in other countries and in languages other than English. We are beginning to translate some of the titles into Spanish and hope to continue with co-publications with other publishers, translation agreements, and other subsidiary rights opportunities so that more people will have access to this important information.
5. Fifth, we could consider setting up a fund to encourage writing and research by scholars. This support can be in the way of grants or books. We might start a young scholars fund or a contest for best manuscript proposal.

Following some or all of these steps, we will endeavor to become a contemporary manifestation of universal principles revealed by Emanuel Swedenborg. In this process, I see a dynamic, fertile program of at least ten new books a year, an increase in sales, an increased impact on the academic world, a greater international presence, and continued focus on developing timely books that will attract seekers, inform scholars, and be useful for churches as well.

We need to be the first place to which people turn when they seek accurate information about Emanuel Swedenborg, across a wide spectrum of thought—from mind/body/spirit to theology, art, architecture, religion, and literature. Through our books, our board, the support of readers and churches, and high levels of scholarship, we will seek to provide information and insight to those who are searching.

So these are a few ideas of how we can join together in common vision for growth, for positive impact, and for increased prosperity for the foundation. It is indeed an honor and privilege to be able to do this work and, for this, I am very grateful. ♦

*The Swedenborg Foundation
gratefully acknowledges
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in memory of the
following individuals:*

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Nobel Winner Prizes Swedenborg

SWEDENBORG FOUNDATION *Board of Directors*

Jean-Marie Gustave Le Clézio, the winner of the 2008 Nobel Prize for Literature, voiced his admiration for Emanuel Swedenborg in his post-prize press interviews.

Le Clézio, a French writer who has spent his life traveling the world, was born in Nice. He lived in Africa as a young man and studied at universities in England and France. He published his first novel, *Le Procès-verbal* (The Interrogation) in 1963 and has written over forty works since then. While he is acknowledged as one of the greatest living French writers, relatively little of his writing has been translated into English.

Le Clézio gave Swedenborg a nod in his Nobel acceptance speech when he listed Swedenborg's writings as one of the most powerful texts of humankind. In a follow-up interview with the Spanish-language news portal ABC.es, he said the following:*

Interviewer: To all appearances, at times, it might seem that you are more interested in oriental, American, and African cultures than in the cultures of old Europe.

Le Clézio: No! A short while ago, I was in Sweden. That has nothing to do with the Nobel, eh? I was in Sweden, and the first thing I did in Stockholm was inquire about the house of Emanuel Swedenborg.



Photo: Reuters

You know, the Swedish genius scientist, philosopher, and theologian. And they showed me the house where Swedenborg used to talk with the angels. How marvelous! That communication with the spirits of the earth reminded me of another great French poet, Senegalese, [named] Senghor, who also spoke with the spirits, angels, and demons of his African soil.

Interviewer: In Spanish, [Jorge Luis] Borges felt a great passion for Swedenborg.

Le Clézio: Yes. The Spanish cultures have spent centuries in dialog between Spain and the Americas. Tragic dialog, at times.

Le Clézio revealed in a press conference following the presentation of the award that he is working on a play about Swedenborg and Immanuel Kant, although no other details are known at this time. ♦

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*The text excerpted from the interview has been translated from the original Spanish.

Life in the Light

Julie Grocki sees a whole new world of possibility for the visually impaired

Plunged into a world of darkness and silence as a young child, an adult Helen Keller found a renewed expression of her faith in God through the writings of Emanuel Swedenborg. Julie Grocki, one of the Swedenborg Foundation's Regional Associates, hopes that she can help give other visually impaired people the same experience.

"Living in a world that's dark, even dark without sound, can be a very isolating experience," says Grocki, who has been working with those with disabilities for the past fifteen years. Hearing Swedenborg's message, she says, "would give a lot of people a sense of hope and purpose that they can indeed do something with their lives. Yes, there is a Christ, yes, there is a God, and he wants to use us. When people don't feel a sense of purpose, often that's when depression crawls in."

For visually impaired people struggling with their own place in the world, Swedenborg's teachings about usefulness can provide the inspiration to go out, learn, and become more active. Helen Keller is a role model in this community, and Grocki thinks it's important that people with disabilities make the connection between her and Swedenborg. "Swedenborg's concept of usefulness was the inspiration for Helen Keller's humanitarian work," she says. "When I mention that to persons with visual impairment, they want to know more."

Making materials about Swedenborg available via audio books is one of the goals of the newly established Helen Keller Fund, which was created earlier this year through the generous

donation of one of the Foundation's members. Currently, the Foundation does not have Swedenborg's writings on audio recordings, but Grocki says that even shorter works like the biographical *A Scientist Explores Spirit* or Wilson Van Dusen's essay on usefulness would be well received if they were available.

Grocki's own experience with Swedenborg stretches back to her teenage years. A drumming prodigy, she became a professional drummer in her teens and played with a side band that toured with Aerosmith as well as a number of highly regarded jazz artists in New York City. But even in the midst of that very material world, she felt a call to explore the spiritual.

"I was on a deep search for truth, trying to figure out how it all fit together," she recalls. "When I was fifteen, I would go to the high school library and glean materials on different religions." She found a book with a chapter on Swedenborg and "I just knew that what he was saying was true."

Eventually her spiritual quest led her back to the religion she was raised in, Catholicism, and she even spent some time at a convent in preparation for becoming a nun. But when the sisters insisted that she get a college education before taking the plunge, Grocki's life went in a different direction. She got a degree in social work, drawn to both the philanthropic nature of the work and the ability to integrate spirituality and health. It was while she was working on the degree that she rediscovered Swedenborg.

"I was doing research on near-death experiences," she says. "I've been into



Julie Grocki

NDEs since I was a teenager. Someone literally mentioned Swedenborg's name, and I said, 'Oh yeah—I used to read his stuff.'" She began to read Swedenborg's writings again with fresh eyes. "After everything I've read the last thirty years, this is the most spiritually grounded."

She talks to people from all walks of life about Swedenborg, not only her contacts in the visually impaired community, but also people she meets at conferences, ministers in different churches, and academics. "Because he's so intellectually oriented, he speaks a lot to people in academia. Here's a grounded scientist suddenly having out of body experiences. It's something they can relate to."

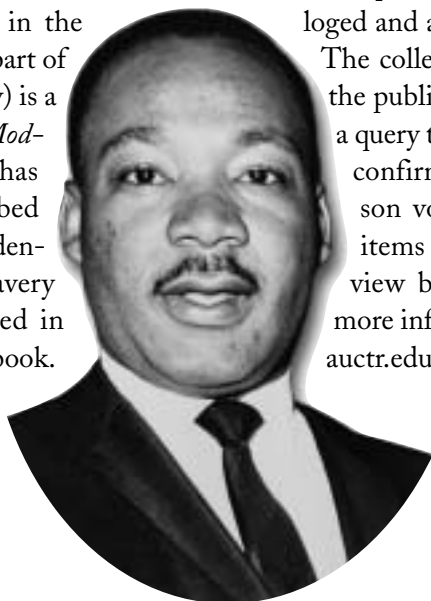
Grocki currently lives in Johnson City, Tennessee, where she's hard at work on her Ph.D. in social work.

You can support the work of our Regional Associates—helping to spread the word about Emanuel Swedenborg by distributing books and short excerpts from the writings—by donating to the Regional Associate Fund. For more information, call 800-355-3222, ext. 10, or see the form in the back of this newsletter. ♦

King Collection Opened to Scholars

The Martin Luther King Jr. Collection, containing more than ten thousand manuscripts and books from the civil rights leader's estate, has been cataloged and is now open for scholarly access at Morehouse College in Atlanta.

Among the books in the collection (originally part of King's personal library) is a copy of *Emerson: A Modern Anthology* that has what has been described as "a full essay on Swedenborg and issues of slavery and freedom" inscribed in the first pages of the book. However, the handwriting has not yet been authenticated as King's.



Originally put up for auction in 2006, the collection was purchased by a group of business and civic leaders in Atlanta. It was then donated in its entirety to Morehouse College, King's alma mater, where it has been kept under wraps while librarians cataloged and archived its contents.

The collection was opened to the public on January 13, and a query to the college's library confirmed that the Emerson volume is among the items that are available to view by appointment. For more information, visit www.auctr.edu/mlkcollection. ♦

New Fund Honors Helen Keller

Thanks to a very generous donation from Mrs. Vloria Nickel, the Foundation is establishing a new fund to help develop materials like audio books for the visually impaired. One of the first goals of the Helen Keller Fund will be to produce recordings that will introduce people to the insights of Emanuel Swedenborg.

All future donations to this fund will be earmarked specifically to help offset the high cost of producing audio books, as well as other projects aimed at making Swedenborg's writings available to the visually impaired. If you would like to donate, please call 800-355-3222, ext. 10, or use the form in the back of this newsletter. ♦

Sketch: Onorio Ruotolo

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Mention this ad when you join the Foundation and you'll receive a free copy of either *Divine Love and Wisdom: The Portable Edition* or *Divine Providence: The Portable Edition*.

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To begin with . . .

Thoughts on the Place of New Jerusalem in Swedenborg's Works

George F. Dole

Swedenborg published two theological overviews, one early in his revelatory career and one at its close: *The New Jerusalem and Its Heavenly Teaching*, issued in 1758, two years after Swedenborg had finished *Secrets of Heaven*; and *True Christianity*, issued in 1771, a year before the author's death. Jonathan Rose's translation of the first volume of the latter was published in 2006, and I have recently finished a first draft of the former. The two works are strikingly consistent in substance and strikingly different in form, but Swedenborgians seem to have paid more attention to the similarity than to the difference.

We can get a quick, though somewhat misleading, overview of the contrast between them simply by looking at the chapter titles of the two works. Eleven of the twenty-four titles in *New Jerusalem* have no direct equivalent in *True Christianity*. I see this as somewhat misleading because the absence of a chapter title on a subject does not mean it has been completely ignored; but that absence does indicate a difference between the two works. It is surely striking that there is no chapter in *True Christianity* on the subject for which Swedenborgian theology is best known, that of heaven and hell. This is particularly remarkable in light of the fact that the preliminary outline of the work (in *Survey* 16) called for three chapters on life after death. Thus the omission from the final version must have been quite deliberate. Another remarkable feature is *True Christianity's* treatment of the

subject of God in three chapters, one on the Father, one on the Son, and one on the Holy Spirit. There is no precedent for this divided treatment in any of the preceding works. Even the preliminary outline in *Survey* called for only a single chapter on "The Lord God the Savior and the Divine Trinity within Him."

In his introduction to the New Century Edition translation of *True Christianity*, R. Guy Erwin very capably documents the thesis that the work is "an attack on Lutheran theology," and these two decisions about content—to downplay the afterlife and expatiate on the Trinity—make sense in light of Erwin's reading. Lutheran theology had no prescribed doctrine of the afterlife, so that could be omitted. Its very core was a highly developed doctrine of the three persons of the Trinity, so that needed to be addressed directly and first. In brief, if you want to argue theology with an orthodox Lutheran, *True Christianity* is your book.

New Jerusalem, in contrast, presents the theology as it emerged directly from Swedenborg's years of total immersion in the deeper meaning of Genesis and Exodus as he penned and published the eight volumes of *Secrets of Heaven* between 1749 and 1756. It begins with a preface concerning the new heaven and the new earth (which comes last in *True Christianity*), and after a brief prologue on the sad state of the church and the need for "a theology of charity," or caring, plunges into the subject in quite extraordinary fashion—by highlighting the words

"good" and "true" and saying that "nothing is more necessary for us than knowing what 'good' means and what 'true' means and how each focuses on the other, as well as how each is united to the other" (§12). In sharp contrast to *True Christianity*, the chapter on the Lord is not first but next to last, followed only by a kind of epilogue on ecclesiastical and civil government.

The work proceeds from its unorthodox beginning by a most thoughtful and thought-provoking examination of our human nature—our affective and cognitive abilities, our inner and outer natures, the different qualities of our various loves, conscience, freedom, our claims to worth, and the process of spiritual growth—fourteen chapters about us before turning to the usual stuff of theology: the sacraments, life after death, the church, Scripture, and, at last, the Lord.

The chapters are very brief, averaging about three pages each, but each chapter is followed by a series of very concise references to *Secrets of Heaven* that develop its theme in greater detail and at considerably greater length. The extreme case is the chapter on Sacred Scripture, where the initial exposition takes little more than a single page and is followed by sixteen pages of references to *Secrets of Heaven*.

The result is a book about living, and one that begins by going right to the heart of the matter—by asking what we mean when we refer to something as "good." I am reminded of a classic exchange in George Bernard Shaw's *Major Barbara*:

Stephen: I know the difference between right and wrong.

Undershaft: [hugely tickled] You don't say so! What! No capacity for business, no knowledge of law, no sympathy with art, no pretension to philosophy; only a simple knowledge of the secret that has puzzled all the philosophers, baffled all the lawyers, muddled all the men of business, and ruined most of the artists: the secret of right and wrong. Why, man, you're a genius, a master of masters, a god! At twenty-four, too!

Asking what is good is indeed quite a question "to begin with." In effect, Swedenborg is warning readers that if they are not willing to look at the way their own feelings about what is good affect their judgments of what is true, and vice versa, they will be able to do no more than skim the surface of what is to come.

It sometimes seems to me that the brevity of the chapters, especially in contrast to the length of the chapters in *True Christianity*, has given the impression that *New Jerusalem* is a kind of "Swedenborg Lite," and that if you really want to get into the theology, you need to go to the final work, the capstone. We need to entertain the possibility, though, that the brevity of the chapters may be balanced by their density and depth. They invite close reading and amply repay it. This is surely suggested by the detail provided in the citations from *Secrets of Heaven*. If all you want is a quick overview, that lies immediately to hand. If at any point your curiosity is piqued, you are given

the ends of a whole series of strings to follow as far as you wish.

New Jerusalem differs from *True Christianity* in another respect as well. Except in the chapter on the Lord, it does not appeal to the authority of Scripture but, implicitly, to the reader's own experience. This reminds me that the late New Church theologian Bob Kirven used to call Swedenborg's theology an "empirical revelation"—a phrase that very accurately reflects the *ex auditis et visis*, "from things heard and seen" of the subtitle of *Heaven and Hell* and the *ex auditis e coelo*, "based on things heard from heaven" of the subtitle of *New Jerusalem*. The issue is most directly and poignantly presented in *Secrets of Heaven* 68: "I have seen, I have heard, I have felt." In other words, *New Jerusalem* is primarily a theology to live by, which means we cannot truly understand it unless we look and listen and feel.

On its way to making this appeal to personal experience, *New Jerusalem* does in a sense start with a focus on the Lord. In §13 it says, "The divine plan calls for the good and the true to be united and not separated, to be one, then, and not two. They are united as they emanate from the Lord and they are united in heaven, so they need to be united in the church"—by which Swedenborg means here among us on earth. It is a remark so rich in meaning that it almost obviates the rest of the book: if we could just get ourselves to the heart of that first chapter, there would be little need to read further. ♦

Current New Century Edition Titles

Divine Love and Wisdom ♦ Divine Providence ♦ Heaven and Hell
Emanuel Swedenborg: Essays for the New Century Edition on His Life, Work, and Impact
Secrets of Heaven, volume 1 ♦ True Christianity, volume 1

All volumes available in paperback and hardcover

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The New Century Edition is a modern-language, scholarly translation of the theological works of one of the world's most extraordinary visionaries. The series' easy-to-read style retains the dignity, variety, clarity, and gender-inclusive language of Swedenborg's original Latin, bringing his thought to life.

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978-0-87785-120-2, 816 pp, \$29.95 pb

Your Turn! Stories of Renewal

is a collection of forty-eight personal journeys that take the reader through questions of identity and self—through the darkest times of the soul—into a renewed sense of purpose and hope. This is the fifteenth installment of the Chrysalis Reader, an annual anthology of poetry, short fiction, and essays that explore Swedenborgian themes.

978-0-87785-239-1, 200 pp, \$15.95 pb

Winner of an honorable mention in the "Wild Card" Category at the 2008 London Book Festival

Afterlife: A Guided Tour of Heaven and Its Wonders

guides the reader through the world after death from the perspective of a new arrival, beginning with the world of spirits and then moving on to heaven and hell. Due to its overwhelming popularity, this abridged and rearranged edition of *Heaven and Hell* has just been released in a second edition.

978-0-87785-325-1, 216 pp, \$12.95 pb

***Secrets of Heaven* volume 1**

was the first of Swedenborg's published theological writings—the beginning of an odyssey into the deepest meaning of Scripture. The New Century Edition of this pivotal work presents Swedenborg's insights as never before. This volume features an introduction by Wouter J. Hanegraaff, professor of History of Hermetic Philosophy and Related Currents at the University of Amsterdam, and a reader's guide by William Ross Woofenden and Jonathan S. Rose.

978-0-87785-486-9, 768 pp, \$49 hc

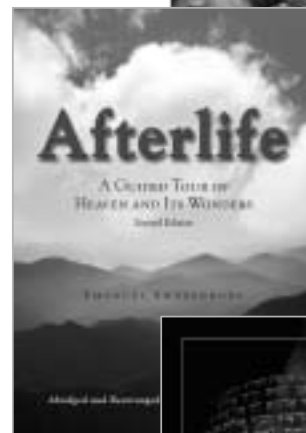
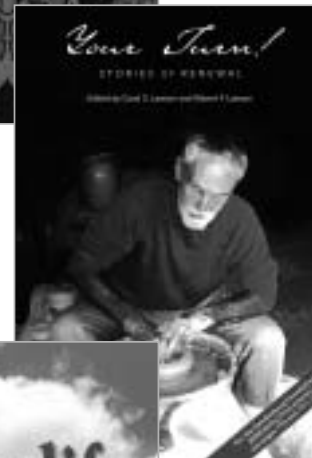
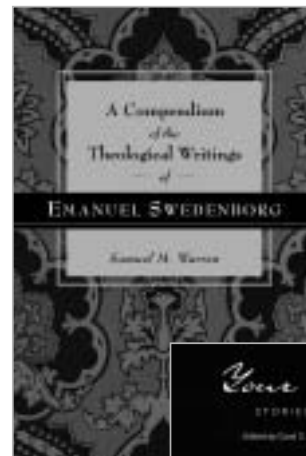
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