

SWEDENBORG PUBLISHERS INTERNATIONAL

SPI Newsletter

Volume XXIV, Spring 2014

EDITORIAL REMARKS

In this issue

We open this issue with a report on further developments in the spread of the New Church in Cuba. We are grateful for Douglas Calvo Gaínza's account that gives such a clear and heart-warming sense of special conferences there, covering those of both 2013 and 2014.

In addition to our customary Publisher Reports, a financial statement for 2013 is included.

Funding 2014 projects

We are very grateful for the generous gifts to SPI in response to the annual appeal. However, we are a bit short of funds for the 2014 projects: Zulu translation of *Arcana Coelestia* Volume I; printing of Pavel Heger's translation into Czech of Doug Taylor's *Spirituality that Makes Sense*; providing support to the Pittsburgh Society for the online "The New Christian Bible Study Project"; and funds to upgrade the Czech Swedenborg Society's hardware and software for ongoing work of translation, printing, marketing, and distribution of the Writings and collateral literature in the Czech Republic. If you are able to help us meet the c. \$3,000 shortfall we would be most appreciative. Checks payable to the Swedenborg Scientific Association can be sent to Dr. Erland Brock, P.O. Box 717, Bryn Athyn, PA 19009, or in the United Kingdom and Europe, payable to the Swedenborg Society and sent to Mr. Richard Lines, Swedenborg House, 20-21 Bloomsbury Way, London WC1A 2TH, England.

A HISTORY OF THE NEW CHURCH IN CUBA

By Douglas Calvo Gaínza
Member of the New Jerusalem Church



Some baptized members of the New Jerusalem Church, talk uninterruptedly during five hours with Reverend Göran Appelgren (2014).

INTRODUCTION

During the "Seven Year War", in the year 1762 the British Army attacked and seized the city of Havana.

At that time, the Assessor Emanuel Swedenborg was playing a part in the Diet of Sweden (one of the countries of the anti-British Coalition) and writing "On the Word of the Lord, from experience." Maybe some news about the triumphant English campaign in the biggest Island of the Antilles arrived to his ears, and perhaps he interpreted this event as a correspondence to some conflict in the Spiritual World. This, we will never know it for sure.

But one thing is undoubtedly certain: at least in what is concerning to the Divine Message

transmitted through his person, the Swedish aristocrat and Revelator Emanuel Swedenborg has finally decided to pay some visit to the Caribbean Island of Cuba. And since a year ago he (or better, the Message he wrote by God's dictation) is a growing presence in the same city that contemplated the attack of the British legions at the precise time the "Servant of the Lord" was writing about the Spiritual Sense of the Divine Word.

THE FORERUNNERS

The interest of Cubans in Swedenborg dates from the time of the Independence War against Spain, when José Martí, the National Hero of Cuba, mentioned Swedenborg twice in his voluminous legacy, showing some acquaintance with his person and work (perhaps acquired through his obvious and passionate admiration for Emerson).

Throughout part of the first half of the XX century, the monthly newspaper *Heraldo de la Nueva Iglesia* (1915–1936)—published in Spain by the Norwegian consul in Valencia Jorgen Andersen—was distributed in Cuba, and one native Swedenborgian theologian named José de Armas collaborated with the magazine. Some decades later, during the fifties, the interest in Swedenborg grew in the Island. Significant individuals arose in this initial Cuban Swedenborgian movement, like Luis Alejandro Baralt (son of Blanche Zacharie of Baralt, a close personal friend of José Martí and the first woman graduated in Philosophy and Letters in Havana University), who translated the "Introduction" of Spalding and wrote its Introduction. Another famous contemporary Cuban student of Swedenborg was Dionisio de Lara Mínguez, a philosopher who translated *The Brief Exposition* and also the biography of Curtis Ager. Besides, a Cuban lady was also the translator of Hellen Keller's *Light in my darkness*.

With the triumph of the Cuban Revolution in 1959, the development of Swedenborgianism in the Island was abruptly checked. Nevertheless, either Cuban-Americans like Ray Guiu (who directed a Swedenborgian bookstore and a reading room in Boston for decades) or resident intellectuals like the famous writer José Lezama Lima (whose novel *Paradiso* is considered by many critics as one of the main masterpieces of the XX century narrative) were either adepts or students of the works of the Swedish seer.

THE NEW AWAKENING

Today Cuba is an impoverished country, but in transition to new socio-economic models. Amid the changes, the promotion of new ideas, and especially of the Doctrines of the New Dispensation, can find a fertile land for its development.

The father of Cuban modern Swedenborgianism is undoubtedly the brother David Simpson from Canada. Together with other interested people, he created a Web site that publishes on-line many New Church materials in Spanish. It was through this channel that a providential contact was made, which would unchain an unexpected sequence of events.



David Simpson talking with students of Religious Sciences (2013).

Around March 2012, a letter was received by David Simpson, sent by a Cuban professor of History, Greek and Latin in the Higher Ecumenical Institute of Religious Sciences (ISECRE), named Douglas Calvo Gaínza, who wanted to share his new faith in the New Church Doctrines with other Spanish-speaking persons.

Gradually, the contact between the two men increased, and the deficiency of enough New Church information in the language of Cervantes was grasped, until a team was organized in Havana for the translation into Spanish of Swedenborg's works.

THE TRANSLATION TEAM

Mister Douglas Calvo has organized a team of two persons. He translates from Latin, and starting in July 2012, in February 2013 he completed the first known version of "Divine Providence" in Spanish (curiously, this was probably the first time when some Swedenborg's work was translated into this tongue directly from its original language).

In one year and seven months, Douglas has translated "Divine Providence" into a very standard Spanish, as well as "Invitation to the New Church" and "Conversations with Angels". Presently he is working in a second, more Latinized version of "Divine Providence", and has been translating simultaneously "Arcana Caelestia", "Apocalypse Revealed", "Apocalypse Explained", "Conjugal Love" and "Spiritual Experiences", together with minor works as "Canons", "De Verbo", "Justification", "Five Memorabilia", "God the Savior", "Nine Questions", "Specimen and Sketch", and also the "Letters".

In coordination with him Miss Yutnelis Benítez Márquez works, a polyglot Historian, who is transcribing, editing (and even translating when needed, if some part is missed) the old Spanish translations made by the Mexican Doctor Leopoldo E. Calleja around 1920. She has finished "Brief Exposition", "Doctrine of the Sacred Scripture" and "Doctrine of Charity". Besides she has done extra work with the revision of the, already published, Calleja's version of "Heaven and Hell", and undertook the transcription and revision of "The Gist of Swedenborg" as well. Douglas helps her in the process of comparing Calleja's translations (made from English) with the original Latin, and is working on "Earths in the Universe".

Both persons were the first baptized members of the New Jerusalem in Cuba, during this new awakening.

A wonderful multilingual theologian, Josué Vasconcelos, is working as an independent translator of Swedenborg's work for the Heavenly Doctrines Publishing Foundation, the organization which, under the auspices of Reverend Andy Heilman, graciously funds the translation work in Cuba.

A new important contribution is the translation of New Church materials from English into Spanish. Douglas had done some work with the papers of Reverend Appelgren for the 2013 Swedenborg Conference in Cuba, as well as for the



First New Church baptisms in Havana, on January 11, 2013.

text of the Baptismal Liturgy in Spanish. Besides, together with Yutnelis, they both translated the "Compendium of the True Christian Religion" of Reverend Arthur Wilde. Now, understanding that a biography of Swedenborg is still a missing link in the Hispanic world, and taking profit of a generous donation brought by Reverend Göran Appelgren in 2014, he entrusted to the long experienced translator and professor of English Mrs. Alina Naranjo Moreno, the task of completing his unfinished version of "The Swedenborg Epics", and simultaneously doing other important tasks like the subtitling of a documentary movie on Swedenborg done by the Swedenborg Society of London, translating papers done by New Church ministers, letters from Cuba, and do simultaneous translation when some pastoral visit is performed, etc.

With all this input to break the linguistic barrier, hopefully not only the Island of Cuba, but also the whole Hispanic world (and even Anglo-speaker countries like USA and Canada, with their important ethnical minorities which have Spanish as their native tongue) will be benefited in a great measure, up to the point that someday the Heavenly Doctrines will be easily available in all Latin America and Spain.

THE TWO SWEDENBORG CONFERENCES

Doctor Adolfo Ham is one of the most relevant personalities on Cuban spirituality. Having been in the past a colleague of the famous Swedenborgian intellectual Dionisio de Lara, he

has been more than willing to offer his help to the diffusion of Swedenborg's studies in the country.

Under his auspices, two international Conferences were held in 2013 and 2014, where papers were publicly read for students of Theology and Religious Science, and general audience.

In both events, several papers have been read by Swedenborgian presenters, as:

- "Martí, Emerson, Whitman and Swedenborg: a transcendental inquiry" (Dr. Anders Hallengren, Sweden).
- "The Swedenborgianism in the Caribbean: a social force in the XIX century West Indies" (Dr. Anders Hallengren, Sweden).
- "What was Emanuel Swedenborg looking for?" (Rev. David Lindrooth, USA).
- "The Swedenborg's concept of Divine Love" (Rev. David Lindrooth, USA).
- "The Swedenborgian concept of Salvation" (Rev. David Lindrooth, USA).
- "The emergence of the New Church and the arising of different denominations within the New Church" (Rev. Göran Appelgren, Sweden).
- "The science of correspondences: a key to enlightenment" (Rev. Göran Appelgren, Sweden).
- "The Last Judgment in the Spiritual World" (Rev. Göran Appelgren, Sweden).
- "Times, they are a-Changing. - Faith Conversations in 2013" (Rev. Göran Appelgren, Sweden).
- "The Three Essentials of the New Church - and of All Faiths" (Rev. Göran Appelgren, Sweden).
- "Swedenborg as a Revelator" (Rev. Bradley Heinrichs, Canada)
- "The mystic dreams of Swedenborg" (Rev. Kurt Nemitz, USA)
- "Swedenborg's explanation of marriage's Divine origin and Eternal beauty" (Rev. Kurt Nemitz, USA).
- "Brief approach to Swedenborg's numerology" (MSc. Douglas Calvo, Cuba).
- Panel discussion: "Current importance of Emanuel Swedenborg for the Study of the Religions and the Interreligious Dialogue."

The interest stirred up by both events was great. In the last one, the participation of the public was very active all the time, and many are already motivated to study more, in a warm atmosphere of human harmony and openness to learning. The



People attending to Dr. Anders Hallengren of Stockholm while lecturing on Swedenborg in Saint Geronimo University, the oldest institution of higher education in Cuba 92013).

Reverends coming did a great work in answering all kinds of challenging and keen questions, showing not only their proficient personal training, but also the deep rational and spiritual force of the Heavenly Doctrine. Besides, a good bulk of Swedenborgian literature was distributed to an avid public.

On the other hand, the Swedenborgian visitors have been undoubtedly welcomed all along, meeting on their dealings and activities some of the most important religious and civil personalities in the country.



Dr. Adolfo Ham, *Professor Emeritus*, reads *Heaven and Hell* from the pulpit, for the first time in Cuban history (2014).



The Reverend Göran Appelgren and the Swedish Ambassador in Cuba (2014).

No doubts, these symposiums in an officially permitted and respected institution, are starting to attract the attention of Cubans from various religious origins, and hence several persons are increasingly interested in the Teachings of the New Church.

It is desirable that a third Conference takes place in a future, where the Cuban people can continue to have this wonderful chance to know more about this venerable spiritual Tradition, which emphasizes freedom and rationality as the two fundamental bases of human regeneration. Surely, at the present moment when new mentalities and ways of thinking are flourishing more and more in the Cuban society, the message of the Heavenly Doctrine can be a catalyst, not only for a deeper understanding of the nature of transcendence, but also for inducing in people's minds a libertarian spirit of dialogue in matters of religion, so typical of the Swedenborgian belief, which will be useful for the process of renovation and change that is taking place daily in almost every aspect of the Cuban reality.

THE EMERGING CHURCH

Some years ago an ex-Moravian pastor named Esteban Valdés and his wife Ela Maritza discovered the Writings of Swedenborg and started contacts with some ministers from the organized New Church. They announced they had gathered 13 followers, and held their meetings at a house-church, basing their doctrines on the Writings.



Reverend Kurt Nemitz, from the Pittsburgh Society, talks with students of Religious Sciences about *Conjugal Love* (2014).

In this last Conference, the two spiritual leaders attended all the lectures, and finally announced their decision of receiving the baptismal waters in the New Jerusalem Church, together with all their congregation members, after receiving more doctrinal information at a community level.



Pastor Esteban Valdés Sánchez and his wife Ela Maritza Céspedes (2014).

Nevertheless, the Church activity is not limited to Mr. Sanchez's congregation. After the first three baptisms in January 2013 the city of Havana welcomed Reverend Bradley Heinrichs from Canada who performed nine baptisms on March 24th. Subsequently, in the last Conference of February 2014, four more baptisms were performed.



Reverend Göran Appelgren and Reverend Kurt Nemitz performing the Baptismal Liturgy (2014).

With those new members the small congregation has been growing continuously at a rhythm of one baptism per month, and in case that in the near future some association with the group of Esteban is done, it could quickly become a small Society of more than 30 members, with an expansible advance in an until now virgin land for the New Jerusalem Church. It is noteworthy that the ministers have been allowed to preach freely in several churches, and that the Doctrines have found appreciation among a number of Christians, Buddhists, or Afro-Cuban believers.

THE ARISING SOLIDARITY

For obvious reasons, Cuba is a country in need. It is very difficult either to publish a religious book, or to have enough as to build a self-sustainable community.

This has moved the hearts of charitable newchurch men and women, and therefore generous donations of clothing for disadvantaged persons, laptops for the translators, books for the community, and even cash for buying a printer consecrated to the dissemination of New Church materials in Spanish (counting already the nascent congregation with a growing stock of texts in this language, and even with their own Bulletin financed by the supportive David Simpson), as well as for having the chance of renting a Presbyterian temple with its transport for starting monthly meetings.



LA NUEVA IGLESIA EN CUBA

Logo of the Cuban New Church, used in all their printed materials.

All this bighearted help has come chiefly from Stockholm, Canada, and USA where there is a sound Theological supervisor for the formation of a future local priesthood in the person of the Reverend Andy Heilman.

Maybe the most promising and striking example of this generosity, is the donation of 10.000 Canadian dollars by Mr. David Deaton from Canada, for the publishing of "Heaven and Hell" in Cuba. The first procedures, undertaken by Reverend Göran Appelgren with the Swedish Embassy in Havana, seem to be promising. Perhaps someday all the Cuban people will have access to this wonderful work of genius of spiritual Literature, hitherto unknown in this Caribbean nation.

All the help received in the month of February, make us, the Cuban Swedenborgians, feel a healthy optimism about the prospects of the New Church in the Island of Cuba.

CONCLUSIONS

242 years have already lapsed since the physical death of Emanuel Swedenborg. Nevertheless, his spiritual presence remains alive and increasing through his titanic work as a Revelator of God's Message.

In Cuba, many things are changing. And yearly many tourists come to see the development of the affairs in this peculiar society, where the immobility is being succeeded by an energetic general transformation (either in the socio-economic or in the spiritual levels).

It would be a nice fantasy to daydream with finding accidentally among the foreign visitors an old Swedish gentleman dressed in an archaic XVIII century fashion, with a French coat, adjusted breeches to the knee, antiquated ties and a lordly wig, who walks delighted by the contemplation of



Some of the baptized members of the emerging community (2014).

Old Havana, while simultaneously undertaking theological debates with spirits and angels.

This chance meeting, of course, is only a charming fairy tale. But what is real and undeniable is that Swedenborg is visiting Cuba through his works and influence, to help this country to open its heart to the Influx of the Divine.

Let us hope that this visitation will redound to a better acquaintance of the Hispanic-speaking nations with the Revelation that the Lord of the Universe gave to mankind three centuries ago, through a man who is already being welcomed as a pleasant guest in several Cuban houses and hearts.

PUBLISHER REPORTS

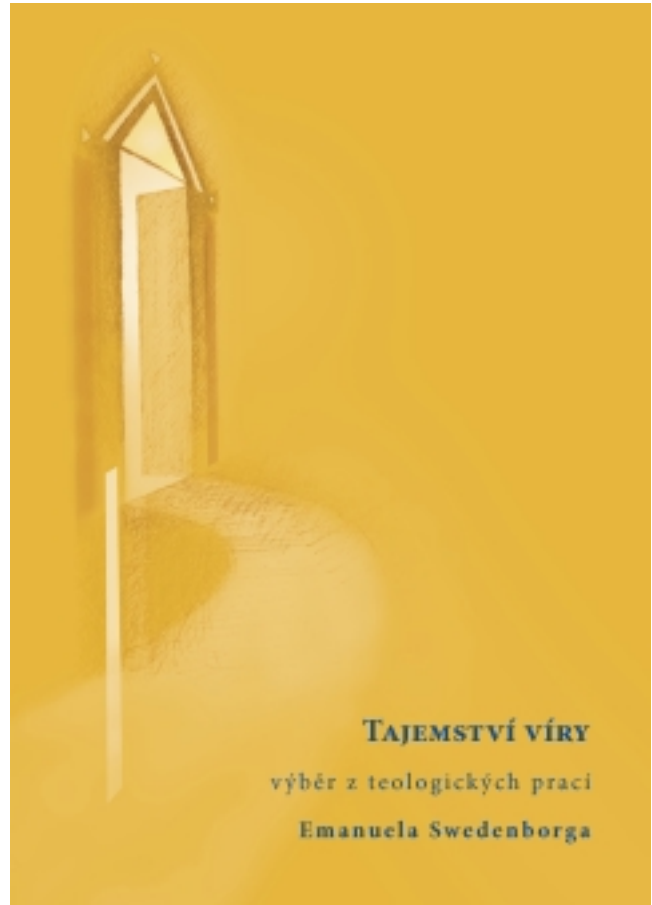
Czech Swedenborg Society

By Lenka Machova

Secrets of Faith

Selections from the Writings of Emanuel Swedenborg

A new book called *Secrets of Faith* is being prepared for printing now. This is a book of selected quotations from six major works by Swedenborg: *True Christian Religion*, *Arcana Coelestia*, *Divine Love and Wisdom*, *Divine Providence*, *Conjugal Love*, and *Heaven and Hell*. A model for this book is one with the same title prepared by me for the General Church in 1999 and printed in the Czech Republic. In this new work, all selections are my Czech translations, and while some are in the 1999 work,



there are many new ones and the book is extended—provided with a new foreword, introductory texts for each section, and new comments. As the previous book has been sold out, it may indicate the interest of Czech public in such a compendium of interesting and inspiring passages from the Writings. Print-On-Demand in a print run of about 100 copies will be used, with subsequent reprints according to demand. The book will be advertised on web pages <http://www.swedenborg.cz/>, offered directly to people in the database, advertised in magazines, and offered to cooperating bookshops.

Address: lenka@cztranslation.com
Kamenec 591
73911 Fr_dlant nad Ostravicí
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Fountain Publishing
By Karin Childs

We have four books in the works, to be published later in 2014:

The Message of Love Behind the Ten Commandments by Rev. Jonathan S. Rose, PhD.

The Biblical Ten Commandments have usually been perceived as a stern set of rules. But is there another way to understand their messages? Calling upon explanations from the works of Emanuel Swedenborg, Dr. Jonathan S. Rose delves deeper to find tender promises to each one of us from a loving God.

Wing of Earth, Wing of Fire, by Amanda Leigh Rogers. A poignant collection of poems exploring the experience of having a human heart, with its mixture of spiritual and worldly yearnings, wonderings, pleasures and pain.

The Christmas Tree Garden by Laura Barger, illustrated by Sarah Berto. A whimsical story about a royal family and a little pine tree who becomes the beginning of a new Christmas custom.

Matthew 24 Reveals the Other Side of Make Believe, written and illustrated by Kathlyn Schnarr. A colorful and fanciful combination of Bible and fairy-tale imagery, conveying the fact that there are deeper messages hidden inside the stories told by Jesus.

Address: ftnpublish@aol.com

SPI STATEMENT 2013 USA

Balance December 31, 2012	6,401.93
Income received:	
Contributions (members)	12,251.92
Dues	915.00
Contributions (publishers)	<u>2,000.00</u>
Total	15,166.92
Expenses:	
Grants:	
Czech Republic	2,105.00
Zulu translation (DLW)	2,480.00
Georgian trans. (DLW, DP)	3,750.04
India translation (NJHD)	<u>1,600.00</u>
	9,935.04
Operations:	
Newsletter & printing	2,396.54
Wages & benefits (Korean transl.)	2,664.78
Postage	18.40
Computer	320.53
Banking fees	58.00
Office supplies	<u>5.30</u>
	5,463.55
Total	15,398.59
Balance December 31, 2013	6,170.26
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