



News from the SWEDENBORG FOUNDATION

Feel the Vibe at SwedenJam Live!

On October 27, 2019, we're hosting a unique musical experience: [SwedenJam Live 2019](#), a gathering of musicians inspired by Swedenborg's message of love for everyone and brought together by our offTheLeftEye YouTube channel.

To be held at [World Cafe Live](#), a musical venue in downtown Philadelphia, SwedenJam will feature three performances:

- [Edwin Herder and Friends](#). Best known for his work with the Beach Boys-inspired Fendertones, Edwin brings a rocking musical vibe to every one of his live performances.
- [Reade McCardell](#). Reade's musical journey has encompassed everything from movie scores to pop covers to his own original singer-songwriter compositions—including, perhaps most importantly, much of the original music for the offTheLeftEye channel.

continued on page 2

IN THIS ISSUE

- *Los Angeles Gathering*
- *OffTheLeftEye Video Goes Viral*
- *Thank You, Boston Society!*
- *NCE: Where We Are*
- *S&L Recap: What Happens after You Die*
- *Blog: When Hell Comes to Earth*



WHY IT MATTERS

Every day we get messages from the people who watch our videos or who have been moved by Swedenborg's writings telling us that they've been inspired to go out and become better people—or even to keep going in the face of tragedy. Your donations help ensure that we can keep putting this life-changing content out into the world for the people who need it most.

Please help keep the love going by giving today at swedenborg.com/donate or calling Gwen Williams at 610-430-3222, ext. 109.

Feel the Vibe *continued from the cover*

- [Jonathan Rose and Curtis Childs](#). Our musically gifted co-hosts will each perform some favorite songs, with a little help from other members of the team.

So come on out on October 27 from 1:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. for an afternoon of music, food, and good company! This is a free event, but space is limited, so please register so that we can be sure to save you a spot. Our registration link is at swedenborg.com/events, or you can call Gwen Williams at 610-430-3222, ext. 109, or gwilliams@swedenborg.com. •

Los Angeles Event Brings Fans Together

We had a crowd of more than fifty wonderful people come out for [An Afternoon with OffTheLeftEye at the Wayfarers Chapel](#), just outside Los Angeles, on July 14, 2019.

The afternoon kicked off with Curtis Childs, director of the [offTheLeftEye YouTube channel](#) and host of our hit webcast [Swedenborg & Life](#),

taking the audience on a journey to imagine how different life would be living in a city of angels. He was joined by Rev. David Brown and Rev. Dan Burchett, two of the pastors at the Wayfarers Chapel, to learn more about this historic location and the spiritual and emotional paths that brought them to work there.

After the talk, guests enjoyed refreshments and a chance to meet new friends in a reception overlooking the Pacific Ocean. Attendees ranged from lifelong Swedenborgians to new fans of offTheLeftEye, all brought together by a life-changing introduction to Swedenborg's teachings. We look forward to hosting more of these events around the country (and maybe even internationally!). •



From left to right: Curtis Childs, Rev. David Brown, and Rev. Dan Burchett with guests at the Wayfarers Chapel.

OffTheLeftEye Video Goes Viral

An episode of our weekly YouTube webcast *Swedenborg & Life* went viral in early July, racking up 70,000 views and close to a million minutes in watch time in less than two weeks.

“[What Happens Immediately after You Die](#)” addresses one of the most popular topics on our offTheLeftEye YouTube channel—the afterlife—in a way that takes advantage of how search engines prioritize the results they give to web browsers. The result is that the episode was still the number-one video on our channel three months after it was first released, with more than 300,000 views and 3.1 million minutes of watch time. That episode alone has been responsible for 4,700 new subscribers to the channel, bringing our total subscriber count past 75,000 in July and up to 82,000 as of September.

NEW SEASON FOCUSES ON SPIRITUAL GROWTH

This year’s third season of *Swedenborg & Life* launched on September 16 with a series of episodes that all center around how to improve your inner landscape:

- **September 16:** [How to Find Lasting Inner Peace](#)—Inner peace is something most of us seek at some point in our lives. In this episode, we explore how we can find enduring peace by looking for hidden clues in one of the Ten Commandments.



- **October 7:** [The Why Is Everything: A Cellular Blueprint for Life](#)—Filmed at the Conference for Conscious and Human Evolution in London, England, Curtis explores how we can examine our motivations to help us untangle mental webs.
- **October 28:** [8 Meditations on Innocence from Emanuel Swedenborg](#)—In this episode, we meditate on what Swedenborg learned about innocence in the afterlife while we view beautiful paintings of angels in action.
- **November 18:** [What Would a City of Angels Be Like?](#)—Filmed during a trip to Los Angeles, Curtis discovers a spiritual community that connects through gardening and gives a talk about how angels can guide us to find more peace and happiness during earthly life. The talk was given at the beautiful Wayfarers





Chapel in Los Angeles during our [recent local gathering](#).

In between these episodes, you can take a deeper dive into the meaning of some famous

biblical stories and passages with *Swedenborg & Life Live*, or get your Swedenborg- and spirituality-related questions answered on our panel show [Good Question!](#) during our Monday night time slot at 8 p.m. Eastern U.S. time. •

Thank You, Boston Society!



We'd like to express our gratitude to the Boston Society of the New Jerusalem for their recent \$10,000 donation in support of our work!

The congregation of the [Church on the Hill](#) became interested in supporting the Foundation after a formal presentation to the group by Director of OffTheLeftEye Curtis Childs and Director of Development Tim Bilger last December; at the time they gave us a first gift of

\$10,000, and they recently made a second

donation of the same amount from their

Mission Fund. The group has been using the videos on offTheLeftEye to learn more about Swedenborg, under the guidance of their presiding minister, [Kevin Baxter](#), who also sits on the board of the Swedenborg Foundation. We're grateful that our mutual support can bear such wonderful fruit! •



New Century Edition: Where We Are and Where We're Going

By Jonathan S. Rose, NCE Series Editor

I often get questions about where the New Century Edition stands in its journey toward publication. For those who might not be familiar with this endeavor, the New Century Edition of the Works of Emanuel Swedenborg is a wholly unique project undertaken to translate the published theological works of Emanuel Swedenborg from Neo-Latin into English.



To explain why it's so unique, I want to take what might seem to be a tangent and talk about fractals. There is a particular fractal known as the Mandelbrot set (pictured above). No matter how much you delve down into the tiniest details of the pattern, you find an intricate pattern that repeats infinitely. The complexity of it is astounding, and yet all that complexity derives from a simple, one-line formula.

So how does that relate to the NCE? One of the most astounding things that I have ever witnessed is the birth and development of the NCE from a tiny mustard seed to a thriving, complex tree. It started with a shared vision and has become incredibly detailed and specific: there are many policies and checklists and documents about our approach and guidelines, and each volume includes no less than sixteen parts, including extensive annotations, indexes, and reference tables. And yet how we got here was through a very simple formula:

The needs of new readers are primary.

That's it. That simple formula explains every single thing in the NCE. For example:

Why don't we use abbreviations for Swedenborg's works when everyone else always has? Oh, well, new readers don't know what they mean.

Why does our translation read differently and use different terminology than the older volumes? Because we can't presume that new readers will





From left to right: Jonathan Rose, series editor; Lisa Hyatt Cooper, translator; and Chara Cooper Daum, Latin consultant.

understand the very specialized ways in which past translators have used certain terms. We need to use English words in their accepted meanings, or annotate them if the usage is a departure from what you can find in a standard dictionary.

We try to comment on problematic material in order to help the new

reader navigate some challenging statements. We want to convey to new readers the tone and style of what is being said, and to let them know when there are counterbalancing statements that might be useful to take into account in understanding the present passage. For instance, Swedenborg says in one place that angels don't fly in the air. Well, you could take that to mean that they don't fly, period. But new readers won't know that there are other passages that say they *do* fly, so the note explains that they don't fly in the physical air. They fly in the spiritual atmosphere where they live.

Like the Mandelbrot set, I too could go on and on and on! But I thought it might be helpful for you to see the simple formula behind all the complexity of the New Century Edition. That right there is how we got to where we are.

A Major Milestone

On Tuesday, September 17, the NCE hit the most major milestone we have ever achieved. Lisa Hyatt Cooper finished translating *Secrets of Heaven!* With her completion of that long task, all of Swedenborg's published theological works have now been translated under NCE guidelines.

Broadly speaking, there are three main tasks involved in creating an NCE volume: translation, editing and annotating, and production. The first of these three is now complete for all volumes! There is much work still to be done to finish the other two processes, but this is the biggest milestone we have reached in the project so far.

As for Lisa’s accomplishment, she started preparatory work in 1997 and started translating *Secrets of Heaven* in earnest in 1998, more than twenty years ago. *Secrets of Heaven* constitutes 62.5 percent of Swedenborg’s published theological works, so she has had far more translating to do than all the rest of us put together. Before translating for the NCE, she was the Latin consultant (and American reader) on the latter half of Joÿ Elliott’s translation of *Arcana Coelestia* (the same work), for the Swedenborg Society in London; Joÿ is the only other person alive today who has done what Lisa has done, and Lisa is the only woman in history to have done so.

I should not let this moment pass without mentioning Chara Cooper Daum, who was the only person on the planet we could persuade to be Lisa’s Latin consultant for any length of time; she began working with Lisa on chapter 2, did parts of chapter 3, and continued to work with her through the end of volume 15. This duo has accomplished amazing things together.

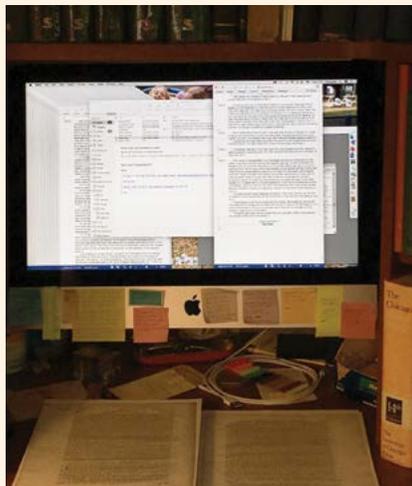
The very last Bible chapter in *Secrets of Heaven* is Exodus 40. It’s about Moses assembling the tabernacle, the “meeting tent.” Lisa was surprised by the emotion that suddenly took hold of her when she translated a particular phrase at the end of verse 33 of that last chapter. It reads, “And Moses finished the work.”

She found herself continuing to feel emotional as she translated the next two verses as well: “And the cloud covered the meeting tent, and the glory of Jehovah filled the dwelling place, and Moses could not go into the meeting tent, because the cloud was staying above it and the glory of Jehovah filled the dwelling place.”

Her hope and prayer is something I’m sure we all share—that the glory of the Lord will come down and fill the text that she has now finished.

Preparing for the Future

As we look into the future, our hope is to create a new engine to carry out the vision of the New Century Edition. The published theological works



Lisa Hyatt Cooper’s desk featuring the final paragraph of *Secrets of Heaven* on her computer screen.

were never intended to be the entirety of the NCE; from the start we envisioned further phases that would include unpublished theological works like the one traditionally titled *Apocalypse Explained (Revelation Explained)* or *Spiritual Experiences* (also published as *Spiritual Diary*). This future NCE will not only include theological writings, but scientific writings and correspondence as well.

At the same time, even as we translate, the world is changing. New electronic formats have arisen, requiring us to detour to adapt our existing text into different media. The remarkable success of the offTheLeftEye YouTube channel has given us an opportunity to introduce Swedenborg's writings to a whole new audience, but it's also made us think differently about the process of translation as we've had to translate text outside of our normal routine in order to adapt to production schedules.

We've come to the realization that translation is not something with a beginning, middle, and end; it's an ongoing process, one that can never be truly finished if we want to keep Swedenborg's words fresh and accessible for a changing society.

With that in mind, we've begun the process of transitioning the NCE from a "project"—a once-and-done endeavor—to a program of the Swedenborg Foundation, staffed with editors and translators who can take the work that's already been done and carry it into the future.

We've already begun the process of training this future generation, thanks to generous grants from the Glencairn Foundation and the Asplundh Foundation. This summer, we hired our first-ever translation intern, Shannah Conroy. Shannah had a lot of Latin background before coming to us, and she immediately started translating passages for offTheLeftEye and for a reprint of Sig Synnestvedt's *The Essential Swedenborg*. She has also shadowed Chara Cooper Daum in her Latin consultation for Lisa Hyatt Cooper's *Secrets of Heaven*. We're planning to continue seeking interns and editors like this, not only to build up our team, but to create a base of future editors and translators who are available to anyone with an interest in publishing Swedenborg.

Over the years ahead, the New Century Edition project will likely be morphing into something new, but we trust its mission—its simple, successful formula—will remain the same. •

Swedenborg & Life Recap: *What Happens Immediately after You Die*

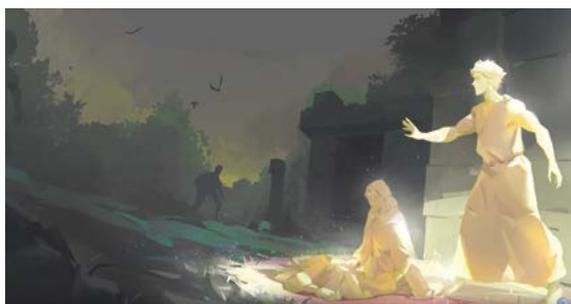
By Josh Cole, Swedenborg.com Contributor

The following is a recap of a recent episode of our weekly webcast *Swedenborg & Life*. To watch this episode (or any other!), go to youtube.com/offthellefteye. You can also read recaps of other recent episodes at www.swedenborg.com.

We're born, we live, we die, and . . . then what? In this episode, hosts Curtis Childs and Jonathan Rose, along with guest co-hosts Karin Childs and Chelsea Odÿer, walk us through what will be the first steps of our life after death.

An Unconditionally Loving Welcome

In many near-death experience stories, [people witness joyful welcome and powerful feelings of love](#). Swedenborg wrote that he was allowed to experience what this process is like so that he could describe it to people still living on



earth. He tells of heavenly angels surrounding him with pure love and protecting him from any negative emotions, and he then goes on to say:

In addition to the heavenly angels occupying the region of my heart, there were two angels sitting at my head. I perceived that this is so for everyone. . . . All the while I remained at one with the heavenly angels, held in a fairly close embrace in the area around my heart, as I perceived and also felt in my pulse. . . . They completely discounted all my misconceptions and falsities. It was not that they ridiculed them; they appeared not to care about them at all. (*Secrets of Heaven* §§ 172, 176, 180)

[These angels are purely positive](#), no matter what you bring to them. Their presence even makes death smell sweet, scaring demons away. These angels protect us from everything that isn't love.

Some people simply stay with the heavenly angels. However, not everyone is ready to be in the presence of that kind of love, and for those people, a

second set of angels comes to help the person process what has happened. [This second group gradually unveils our spiritual senses.](#) When Swedenborg experienced it, he said it was as if a covering was being taken off of his left eye (now you know where the name of our channel comes from!), and after that, he could truly see.

Once we're ready, we're reunited with friends, family, and other loved [ones who have already crossed over.](#)

You Will Still Be You, But the Deeper You

When we wake up on the other side, we'll [still have a body, but this one is made of spiritual substance rather than physical matter.](#)

At first, our spiritual body will look and feel like our earthly body. Everything looks and feels exactly the same as it did when we were living on earth, including ourselves. Even our thoughts and memories come with us when we die. We still want the same things and love the same way. We're still us, in every way that's important.

As time goes on, our deeper beliefs and feelings will start to emerge, and we'll start to become more like our true self. Our spiritual face and body will reflect who we are in our heart.

People who were engaged in good affections had lovely faces, while people who were engaged in evil affections had ugly ones. Seen in its own right, our spirit is nothing but our affections, whose outward form is our face. . . . The reason our faces change is that in the other life no one is allowed to pretend to affections they do not really have, so we cannot put on a face that is contrary to the love we are engaged in. We are all refined down to a state in which we say what we think and manifest in expression and act what we intend. This is why our faces all become forms and images of our affections. (*Heaven and Hell* §457)

This first stage isn't about trying to achieve some kind of perfection, but about finally coming to an understanding of ourselves that might have been unclear on earth. Even if the things we see about ourselves make us uncomfortable, angels will be there with unconditional love and support to help us through.

You Will Be Free to Go Wherever You Want

God wants to bring us into heaven, but he [won't sacrifice our freedom.](#) Once we're introduced to the spiritual world and to ourselves, we'll have

the opportunity to [move toward communities we resonate with](#) based on our interests and what we prioritized in our earthly lives.

For most people, the first step is spending time with good spirits—that is, people who lived good lives, but also aren't quite ready for heaven. We rotate through various communities until we find one that reflects and supports who we truly are. [That's our new beginning.](#)

If we don't resonate with the higher levels of heaven, does that make us bad people? No, Swedenborg says. We just need more time to learn and prepare before we're ready to experience that kind of intense love. He describes people who really want to go to heaven being allowed to visit—but the light and the heat are so intense that it's painful, and the spirits have to withdraw.

Swedenborg also saw people being allowed to test out different ideas of what heaven is like. For example, people who think it's nothing but singing in a heavenly choir can go and sing to their heart's content, and people who think it's nothing but feasting or socializing could experience as much of that as they wished. Spoiler alert: It wasn't long before they got bored and wanted to move on. [True heavenly joy turned out to be something much different.](#)

A Life Review

[Many near-death experiences include a “life review,”](#) and Swedenborg's experience was no different. These life reviews show us how we affected others, but there's no judgment. The goal is just to help us understand what is and isn't loving behavior. In the process, they also show us a path to forgiving ourselves.

This can help us identify the parts of ourselves that don't match up with the person we want to become. We need to know where we are to take steps to get where we want to be. And while a life review can take many forms, Swedenborg describes [the story as being written on our spiritual body:](#)

When we are being faced with our deeds after death, angels who have been given the task of examining look



searchingly into the face and continue their examination through the whole body, beginning with the fingers first of one and then of the other and continuing through the whole. . . . The things that are inscribed on our memory from our intention and consequent thought are inscribed not only on the brain but also on the whole person, where they take form in a pattern of the parts of the body. ([Heaven and Hell](#) §463)

It's not about adding up our good deeds and our bad deeds, because we all have a little of each in our history. Rather, it's a question of what our deeper goals and priorities were, and what that means for our continuing path toward heaven.

Opportunities to Learn and Progress

[God and heaven are inviting you to your highest potential](#) and to a better beginning. But what if a person doesn't want to go to heaven? That may seem like a strange question. Who wouldn't want to go to heaven? We tackled that question in another recent episode, [“What Is Hell Really](#)

[Like?”](#) For more on this, see our blog post on page 13.

But for those who do want to progress, there will always be opportunities to learn and grow in spiritual understanding. [The end result is pure joy.](#) •



VIEWER COMMENTS

I passed through a tunnel and a light so bright but the light did not hurt my eyes. I came to a beautiful white place. A white color I have never seen. I felt so much love. . . . Father God, Lord Jesus, Holy Spirit I love you. Thank you for giving me a second chance of life. Amen. —Janie

I have chills, Goosebumps. LOVE How in Earth did I ever think that I was the only one thinking about stuff like this. You are shining a light; making a way, being a conduit. Thank you for this. Thank you. —Robbie

On Our Blog: [When Hell Comes to Earth](#)

By Morgan Beard

In his writings, especially his classic [Heaven and Hell](#), Emanuel Swedenborg paints a picture of hell that might surprise you. The popular image of hell is of a place where people are condemned by God to suffer for all eternity as punishment for their sins. But Swedenborg says that hell is a choice: evil people go there voluntarily because it's a mindset from which they can be free to do what makes them happy—even if what makes them happy is to hurt other people. The suffering in hell isn't inflicted by a race of supernatural demons whose job is to punish the wicked; instead, it comes from being surrounded by people (now in spirit form) who are the very definition of evil:



Picture a community made up of people [who are] all totally in love with themselves, not caring about others unless they are allies, and you will see that their love is no different from that of thieves for each other. To the extent that they are acting in concert, they embrace each other and call each other friends; but once they stop cooperating, once anyone resists their control, they attack and butcher each other. If their deeper natures—their minds—are probed, it will be clear that they are full of virulent hatred for each other, that at heart they ridicule anything fair and honest and even ridicule the Deity, tossing it aside as worthless. ([Heaven and Hell](#) §560)

Hell is a place where people spend all their time trying to control and manipulate each other in order to gain power and esteem, and they find joy in thinking of ways to torment each other. All of the spirits in hell were once human beings, but they are people who have rejected anything good or loving that might have been in them while they were living on earth.



They've fully and openly embraced the self-love and contempt of others that were their primary motivations while they were alive.

I was reminded of this description a couple of years back when, researching a different topic, I happened across a white supremacist chat forum. I expected that there would be a lot of hateful language and ideas expressed toward women and people of a non-Caucasian background, but what I didn't expect is that they would be equally hateful toward each other. Almost every statement made on the forum was immediately attacked by someone else, even by people who agreed with each other, and they often used their personal knowledge of each other to make the attacks more painful or the threats more immediate. It was an absolutely perfect earthly illustration of Swedenborg's description of hell!

There are other ways that hate groups reflect the behavior Swedenborg describes in evil spirits. For example, in a style guide for a prominent racist website, as described [in an article from the *HuffPost*](#), the author outlines how “lulz”—a term that originated from “LOL,” short for “laughing out loud” and referring to something funny—are used to make their message easier to swallow:

The tone of the site should be light.

Most people are not comfortable with material that comes across as vitriolic, raging, non-ironic hatred.

The unindoctrinated should not be able to tell if we are joking or not. There should also be a conscious awareness of mocking stereotypes of hateful racists. I usually think of this as self-deprecating humor—I am a racist making fun of stereotype of racists [*sic*], because I don't take myself super-seriously.

And later, with regard to the practice of making one's opponents seem less than human:

There should be a conscious agenda to dehumanize the enemy, to the point where people are ready to laugh at their deaths. So it isn't clear that we are doing this—as that would be a turnoff to most normal people—we rely on lulz.

Again, if the article is entirely serious, it should not contain dehumanizing language. Dehumanization is extremely important, but it must be done within the confines of lulz.

Compare this to Swedenborg's description of hellish spirits:

They do not fight by arguing against what is good and true. (That kind of fight is useless, because if they were beaten a thousand times they would continue to stand firm, since there is no end to the supply of arguments undercutting goodness and truth.) Instead, they pervert what is good and true, setting it aflame with the fire of appetite and delusion, so that for all we know we share their appetites and delusions. They also seize on some unrelated pleasure in us and feed the flames with it. In this way they very deviously infect and molest us. So skillfully do they work, as they spread their contagion, that if the Lord did not help us we would inevitably believe them. (*Secrets of Heaven* §1820:3)

It's hardly a revelation to say that these aptly named hate groups are hellish, but this type of behavior—mocking and even dehumanizing people for laughs—goes beyond that limited example. [In an article from *Psychology Today*](#) on the motivation behind negative Facebook comments, researchers found that people who “troll” others online tend to attack people they perceive as socially superior—people who threaten their own sense of superiority. These “trolls” have not only a psychopath’s sense that it’s fine to manipulate people to get what they want, but they also have a high degree of empathetic perception that enables them to figure out what will most disturb others. Sound familiar?

In Swedenborg’s description of hell, we see not a faraway place in another world, but a psycho-spiritual condition that we can encounter right here on earth. And in writing about how evil spirits work in the spiritual world, he gives us a model for how we can deal with that same dynamic in this world. Evil spirits can’t stand to be in heaven—or to spend too much time around angels—because of the intense love that surrounds them. The evil spirits might still attack, but divine love is stronger than they are, and it inevitably drives them away.

The nature of hateful people, whether it’s in this world or the next, is that they never stop attacking. They find it funny to cause pain to others. But if you can create a heavenly “safe space”—where everyone involved agrees to do their best to manifest divine love—it makes it hard for hateful people to thrive. Next time you find yourself confronted with hate, how would focusing on love instead change the dialogue? •

Morgan Beard is the executive director of the Swedenborg Foundation.

SWEDENBORG FOUNDATION

320 North Church Street • West Chester, PA 19380

WWW.SWEDENBORG.COM • 610-430-3222, ext. 109

As a nonprofit, independent educational organization, we use donation funds to inform and inspire the world about Swedenborg's spiritually uplifting perspectives on this life and the life hereafter.

CONNECT WITH US

