



## News from the SWEDENBORG FOUNDATION

### OffTheLeftEye Hits 100,000-Subscriber Milestone

On September 20, the offTheLeftEye YouTube channel reached 100,000 subscribers! With this milestone we've achieved the coveted silver status on YouTube, a feat accomplished by only half a percent of all channels.

Launched in 2010 by Curtis Childs, the off-TheLeftEye YouTube channel (OTLE) came under the umbrella of the Swedenborg Foundation in 2013, when it had fewer than 1,000 subscribers. Since then, thanks to the creativity and passion of a growing team of writers and artists—helmed consistently throughout by Curtis, who serves not only as host of its many shows but the director of its content—the channel has established itself as a benchmark among spirituality shows.

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### GIVING FOR THE FUTURE

If you love the videos and books that we're giving to the world, you now have two ways to support those efforts for the long term: endowments. The Foundation has endowments supporting two of its programs: OffTheLeftEye (The OTLE Endowment Fund) and the ongoing translation efforts of the New Century Edition (The Dr. Jonathan S. Rose Translation Endowment Fund). You can give to either of these funds through [Swedenborg.com/donate](https://swedenborg.com/donate), or contact Director of Development Tim Bilger at 610-430-3222 ext. 101 or [tbilger@swedenborg.com](mailto:tbilger@swedenborg.com) for more information.

Far and away the most popular series on the channel is *Swedenborg & Life*. It was launched in 2014 as an exploration of Swedenborg’s writings on the spiritual world, evolved into an interview show, and then, as the show increased in popularity, a more highly produced series on a wide variety of spiritual topics. Though the main show has produced a variety of spinoffs, it remains a staple for loyal subscribers.

In 2020, the channel continued expanding its audience through targeted marketing techniques, reaching more than a million unique viewers in the first three months of 2020 and then repeating the feat again in the second quarter!

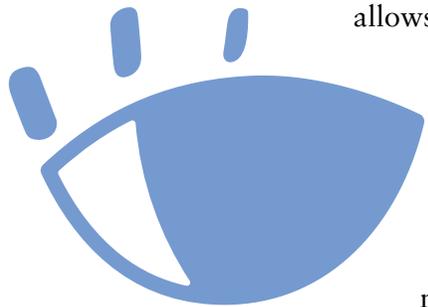
### **2020 EXPANSION: A NEW WEBSITE AND A NEW LOOK**

One of our major new initiatives for 2020 was to launch a new website dedicated to offTheLeftEye. The site features our most popular videos organized by topic so that they form a sequential exploration of a subject, with the ability to create custom playlists or add videos to a “watch later” tab. Visitors can also sign up for our OTLE-exclusive e-mail list for the latest news and special perks.

By taking advantage of a grant from Google that allows for \$10,000 per month in free advertising to qualifying nonprofits, both the new OTLE site and the existing Swedenborg.com will be able to reach people who are looking for topics that Swedenborg addresses in his writings—for example, information about the afterlife—or for more about Swedenborg himself.

Coinciding with the debut of the website on July 13, we launched a new content schedule for OTLE. Each week content is organized around a single theme that not only includes the

webcasts on YouTube, but extends to discussion on the OTLE Facebook page, the community section of the OTLE YouTube page, and a brand-new podcast called *Inside OffTheLeftEye*. Each day of the week, a new episode,



**Off The Left Eye**  
Open Your Spiritual Sight



question, or piece of downloadable art is available through one of our online platforms.

The *Inside OffTheLeftEye* podcast features interviews with *Swedenborg & Life* producer and host Curtis Childs as well as New Century Edition Series Editor and *Swedenborg & Life* co-host Jonathan S. Rose, offering extra insights into what the cast and crew are working on that week and tidbits from Swedenborg’s writings. *Inside OffTheLeftEye* host Chelsea Odhner is a writer and production manager for *Swedenborg & Life* and also content director for [offthelefteye.com](http://offthelefteye.com). The podcast is available through all podcast streaming services, including the iTunes store.

Part of the new content strategy is to establish a visual identity for off-TheLeftEye that is distinct from the Swedenborg Foundation, represented by a brand-new logo that appears across all of OTLE’s online platforms. The logo was the result of an eight-week creative process with input from six different designers, put together with the needs of web seekers in mind.

### **THE OFFTHELEFTEYE EXPERIENCE IS BACK ON!**

One of our goals for 2020 was to launch a type of event we’d never done before: a weekend-long, intensive experience for fans of OTLE that would not only give them an inside look into how the shows of OTLE are made, but also a chance to take a deep dive into the content. While the pandemic put that plan on hold, we’re pleased to announce that the OffTheLeftEye Experience is rescheduled for 2021!

More information will be coming soon, but for now, save the date for the weekend of July 23–26. We are hoping to have this event in person on the campus of Bryn Athyn College as originally envisioned, but if we are unable to meet in person, we will plan on taking the event virtual. •

## New Book Release: *The Shorter Works of 1763*

The latest translation in the New Century Edition of the Works of Emanuel Swedenborg is now available for purchase!

*The Shorter Works of 1763*, translated by George F. Dole, includes four short works that have often been published together as the “Four Doctrines”: *The Lord*, *Sacred Scripture*, *Life*, and *Faith*. Each of these works lays out an important principle of Swedenborg’s theology:

- *The Lord* explores the nature of Jesus’s divinity by drawing on passages from across the Old and New Testaments, arguing that the entire Bible is really about his life and glorification.
- *Sacred Scripture* presents the inner meaning of the Bible as a response to people who question its rationality and consistency, asserting that the Word within represents timeless truths.
- In *Life*, Swedenborg lays out the process of spiritual growth, including a commentary on each of the Ten Commandments and how they relate to not only our day-to-day lives but also our relationship with God.
- *Faith* challenges a common misconception of what faith is all about by asserting that faith is not a matter of blindly accepting what you’re told, but a matter of acknowledging what you know to be true in your heart.

In addition to these four core works, this volume contains two even shorter works that were written as supplements to Swedenborg’s earlier writings on heaven and the Last Judgment. These two short works have traditionally

### Watch and Listen Online

If you want to learn more about *The Shorter Works of 1763*, we have two free resources available online:

- On the offTheLeftEye YouTube channel ([youtube.com/offthelefteye](https://youtube.com/offthelefteye)), Curtis Childs interviews Dr. Jonathan Rose about Swedenborg’s publishing pause in the special episode “[Why Swedenborg Went Public](#).”
- On the Swedenborg Foundation YouTube channel ([youtube.com/swedenborgfoundation](https://youtube.com/swedenborgfoundation)), you can listen to an audio version of the introduction to the volume.

been published together under the title *Continuation on the Last Judgment*.

The introduction to the volume, written by Series Editor Rev. Dr. Jonathan S. Rose, is an in-depth exploration of Swedenborg’s pause in publishing between 1758 and 1763, including an analysis of how Swedenborg’s publishing and marketing strategies changed during those five years, and the ways in which he began changing his writing style depending on the audience he was hoping to reach. The introduction, which is nearly one hundred pages long in its own right, represents months of original research and information that has never before been published. To help make this research more available to the world, Dr. Rose has put together an audio version of the introduction, which is available to listen to for free on the Swedenborg Foundation YouTube page (see box).

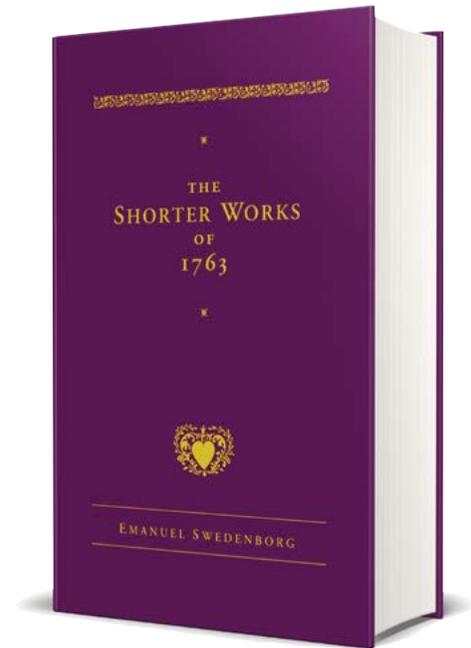
In addition to extensive annotations the volume contains an index of scripture passages throughout the work, a table of parallel passages, and indexes to the works themselves as well as the supplemental materials.

*The Shorter Works of 1763* is now available for sale in our online bookstore for \$29.95, as well as wherever fine books are sold. You can also buy the individual works in paperback: *Life* and *Faith* are published together in the same volume, while *Sacred Scripture* is bound together with the short work *White Horse*, and *The Lord* is a standalone volume. The two supplemental works are available only in the Deluxe hardcover volume.

### NEW ENDOWMENT FUND ESTABLISHED

The Swedenborg Foundation is proud to honor New Century Edition Series Editor Rev. Dr. Jonathan S. Rose with [an endowment](#) created in his name to help support ongoing research into and translation of the works of Emanuel Swedenborg.

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# NCE Minute: More on Swedenborg's "Goods" and "Truths"

By Stuart Shotwell, NCE Managing Editor

In the [last NCE Minute](#), we talked about how Swedenborg insists that *bona*, “good things,” and *vera*, “true things,” are not abstractions. They have to *occur* in reality somehow.

All well and good. But if they are not abstractions, what exactly are they? How do they occur?

One thing that is suggested by a reading of Swedenborg's statements about goodness is that the term has a strong practical element. “In general,” he says, “it means willing and doing good to others not for any selfish reason but because we like to and want to” ([Secrets of Heaven](#) §4538:4). This is connected to what Jesus says in John 14:21: “The people who love me are those who have my commandments and do them.” (See [Sacred Scripture](#) §57.) The truths that God sets up as commandments were not given to us to be considered in the abstract; they are to be acted on. This sets up a dynamic between goodness and truth: to think of doing something good is itself a truth, and likewise a truth *becomes* a good thing when we will it and do it ([Soul-Body Interaction](#) §7:1).

So we might say that truth is something that *will* be a good occurrence when it is carried out in action. Likewise we might also say that a good act is an *occurrence*, or real manifestation, of truth. For example, the good belief that we should be kind to our neighbor is something true. We can see that it's true because when we put that law into action and *do* some kind act, a good thing occurs. Good cannot be good without having truth in it (see [Secrets of Heaven](#) §4301:1). But then again, “truth does not contain life,” it only receives its life from good (see [Secrets of Heaven](#) §2189:3; [New Jerusalem](#) §23). If you take goodness away from truth, says Swedenborg, “nothing remains but mere words” ([Secrets of Heaven](#) §725). So not only is goodness critical to the existence of truth, but, as Swedenborg suggests in one passage ([Revelation Explained](#) §136), when truth appears in our minds, it is simply goodness manifesting itself in a form we can apprehend.

To give an example: If we truly understand someone, by definition our knowledge of them is true. Our loving actions toward that person, since they are based on truth, will be good. Such an understanding of another

individual is one example of the kind of thing Swedenborg means by a *verum*, “a true thing”; it results in a *bonum*, “a good thing.” Neither that truth nor that good action is abstract; they occur in us and through us in the



real world. Furthermore, in most cases, in order to do good to others, we have to understand them—to know some truth about them. Otherwise, we might do harm to them inadvertently.

But let's use an example Swedenborg himself gives, honesty (which is a personal, inner form of truth) and honorable conduct (in which our honesty takes the form of good actions):

To be an honest person is sincerely to intend good to another person in matters of public life, while honorable conduct is testifying in one's speech and actions to that wish to do good to someone. So honorable conduct is, in itself, nothing other than the form in which honesty makes itself visible. This is how honesty is the source of honorable conduct. ([Secrets of Heaven](#) §4574:3; my translation)

An understanding of this dynamic between truth and goodness can help explain some of the many specific kinds of goodness Swedenborg mentions. For example, he writes about *bonum charitatis* (literally, “good of caring”), which we might call “goodness that arises out of caring about others,” as contrasted with *bonum fidei* (literally, “good of faith”), which we might call “goodness that is based on our faith.” People who have the goodness that arises out of their inner caring and kindness know what religious truth is because they naturally put its goodness into action. They do good first and know truth as a result. On the other hand, people who have the goodness that is based on their faith do what is good only because their faith commands them to. They know truth first and do good as a result. (See [Secrets of Heaven](#) §7474:2.) By the way, Swedenborg makes no secret of which sort of goodness is better.

This dynamic between good and truth partially explains how Swedenborg can say that God *is* goodness and truth: because God engages constantly in an infinite number of good actions, each of which arises from something that is true *because* it gives rise to good. And thus God is also love and wisdom: because the Divine in its wisdom knows truths that when carried out manifest themselves as good and loving acts.

The previous NCE Minute concluded by saying that goodness and truth occur in an infinite quantity in the universe. This is obviously true on the divine level, where truth is known without striving and the good action that results from it is simply part of God's nature. On the human level, though, we are constantly striving to know the truth and act it out in goodness. Or at least we ought to be! •

*The writer wishes to acknowledge his debt to the insights of George F. Dole and other members of the New Century Edition team. For Swedenborg's view of how we should do good in our lives, see his work Life in the latest NCE Deluxe volume, [The Shorter Works of 1763](#).*

**New Endowment Fund continued from page 5**

Holder of a PhD in Latin, Dr. Rose has been making crucial contributions to the study of Swedenborg's writings for decades. He has been the driving force behind the New Century Edition project since its inception, personally editing every volume and contributing his own translation of the key theological work *True Christianity*. But his scholarly contributions extend far beyond that: he was previously an associate professor of religion and sacred languages at Bryn Athyn College and curator of the Swedenborgiana collection at its Swedenborg Library; he also worked with the late legendary translator John Chadwick to produce *A Lexicon to the Latin Text of the Theological Writings of Emanuel Swedenborg (1688–1772)*, thought to be among the first lexicons of Neo-Latin ever published.

The Dr. Jonathan S. Rose Translation Endowment Fund will enable ongoing work in translating Swedenborg's writings into modern, accessible English, supported by the latest research into the nuances of Swedenborg's Latin and the context of his times. You can help support this vital work with a dedicated gift through the mail to the Swedenborg Foundation, 320 N. Church Street, West Chester, PA 19380 or on the [donation page](#) of Swedenborg.com. •

## Revamped Swedenborg.com Launched in September



We're proud to announce that in mid-September, we launched a revamped version of [Swedenborg.com](#) after months of research, writing, programming, and design work!

On the site you'll find a new look and user-friendly site structure, featuring a visually stunning quick guided tour through [Emanuel Swedenborg's theology](#); an expanded section dedicated to the [New Century Edition](#), including a brief history of the project and key members of the team, and an easily accessible [bookstore landing page](#) that categorizes our titles by topic, making it a breeze to find the books that interest you most.

We also still host an abundance of relevant information about Swedenborg's life and writings, as well as our popular blogs from New Century team, diverse Spirituality in Practice contributors, and expert Scholars on Swedenborg authors.

Integral to the work on our new website were [team members](#) Alexia Cole (Online Media Manager), Morgan Beard (Executive Director), Karen Connor (Design & Production Manager), and Amy Acquarola (Marketing Manager). Congrats, team! •

## SF Annual Meeting Brings New Slate of Board Members and Officers

Our 2020 annual meeting was later than usual after coronavirus-induced delays, but life and annual members gathered virtually on September 19 to hear about our activities in 2019. A small group of board and staff broadcast the meeting from the Swedenborg Foundation offices in West Chester, Pennsylvania, the minimum required to be able to hold the meeting per our bylaws.



In addition to reports on progress with off-TheLeftEye, the New Century Edition, and new events, books, and website activity, members elected a slate of directors that included two new board members, Ruth Clauser and

Wendy Closterman, and two returning ones, Jonathan Rose and Kaye Lermite. Our two outgoing board members were Dr. Jim Lawrence, who has served the Foundation as an advisor to our publishing program for the past twelve years, and Chris Lynch, who brought his business and investment expertise to the organization. Dr. Lawrence will be continuing to advise the Foundation as an associate board member.

At the board meeting the next day, in accordance with our bylaws, the board convened to elect new officers. As a result, several positions changed hands: Dr. Soni Werner is taking over the presidency from Larry Conant; the vice-president's seat is being filled by Bergen Junge; and Cory Bradford-Watts is the new treasurer, filling the seat left by Karen Feil, who is rolling off the board in 2021. Pete Toot remains the association's secretary.

Over the coming months the board will continue to consider questions of long-term strategy and how to best structure the board and the organization to face the future.

If you missed the annual meeting and want to get caught up on what's new with the Foundation, you can watch it on the Swedenborg Foundation YouTube channel at [youtube.com/swedenborgfoundation](https://youtube.com/swedenborgfoundation).

## In Memory and In Honor

Often our supporters give donations either in memory of (for those who have passed) or in honor of (for those still living) particular individuals, groups, or entities. In this section, we list all the people who have inspired gifts in the summer and early fall of 2020. Please note that the dedications are listed exactly as they were given to us, and duplicate entries have been combined. Names are listed in alphabetical order by last name where a last name is given. •

Melissa Adams	Evelyn Johnson	Maureen Richards
James & Hedy Barry	Karin	Rev. Donald K. Rogers
Phyllis & James Barry	Eduard Kazanchan	Rev. Donald L. Rose
Richard Bilger	Paul Kihui	Doug Rose
Black Lives	LaDonna J. Kondler	Frank Rowe
Anthony Chapa	Terry Kwapich	Roxana
Lillian Chasten	Linda Ann	Ken & Barbara Smith
Annica Heather Childs	The Lord	Squeaky the cat
Curtis Childs	Aletha Loving	Martha Stanley
Lindy Clark	Marcie	Mike Stratton
Stan Collins	Marie	Those who've already made the journey
Marguerite Dastoor	Mark	Paul Tindilia
Avi Davi	Mike McCleary	Too many family members dying of cancer & heart disease
Walter and Nora Dawson	John Drew McLean & Elaine Hendry	Trish
Aunt Diane	Memorial - General	Kurt & Beverly VanHelms;
Clark & Hulda Dristy	My Mother, Father, 3 Brothers-in-law,	Donald McKenna;
Daisy Gaither	Father-in-law, & Sister-in-law	Martin & Evelyn Pedi
Albert C. Geis	Diana Muqattash	James Vargo
God/Jesus	OffTheLeftEye	Victor
Joel Goski	Sandro Pellegrini	Uncle Vince
Jack Hanson	Lawson & Marcia	Naomi Joy Wilcher
Heaven	Pendleton	Jamanda Williams
Ms. Hill	Poppy & Meme	Yeye
Ralph Horner	Mrs. Erwin D. Reddekopp	
Humanity		
Humanity finding its way!		
Jesus Christ		

## Swedenborg & Life Recap: Spirits Cause Anxiety

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](https://youtube.com/offthellefteye).



What if someone told you that the anxieties you're feeling are caused by spirits? If you'd never heard of Emanuel Swedenborg, it might sound a little strange, but stick with us—his experiences can help shed some light on the spiritual “weather” that affects our moods.

Swedenborg observed spirits causing anxiety on many occasions:

I have been enabled to learn where we get the anxiety, distress of mind, and inward sadness called depression. There are spirits who . . . love half-digested and noxious substances like the foods that are becoming excrement in the stomach, so they attach themselves to the same sort of matter in us, because they find delight in it; and they talk with each other there out of their evil affection. . . . A great deal of experience has convinced me that they are the source of our anxiety of spirit. I have seen them, heard them, felt the anxieties that well up from them. I have talked with them, they have been driven off and the anxiety has ceased, they have come back and the anxiety has returned, I have observed its increase and decrease as they drew near and moved away. It has become clear to me, then, where that anxiety originates that is blamed

on a stomachache by people who do not know what conscience is because they do not have any. (*Heaven and Hell* §299)

The association of these particular spirits with the stomach and digestion may not be a coincidence. Medical research has found that our gastrointestinal system is closely connected with our mood and our psychological state; ingesting the wrong kind of food or other substances can have a profound effect on how you feel. Here, Swedenborg observes that the kind of spirits that cause anxious states in us have that same kind of effect on our spiritual body.

Of course, there are certainly physical factors contributing to anxiety or depression, and you need to consider those when thinking about your psychological state. But your spiritual surroundings might just be having an impact as well.

Consider a group of friends hanging out with each other, enjoying each other's company, happy and relaxed. Then someone comes into the room who's hostile, or in a bad mood, and suddenly the whole atmosphere changes. Now everyone's on edge, and being careful about what they say and do, and, well, anxious. When someone has an atmosphere or aura that clashes with yours, it can stir up all kinds of negative feelings.

Swedenborg says the same thing happens in the spiritual world. Evil spirits can create a bad atmosphere just by being close to good spirits. Sometimes even a clash of spiritual worldviews can be enough to create tension and unease. Sometimes they can't even coexist in the same space.

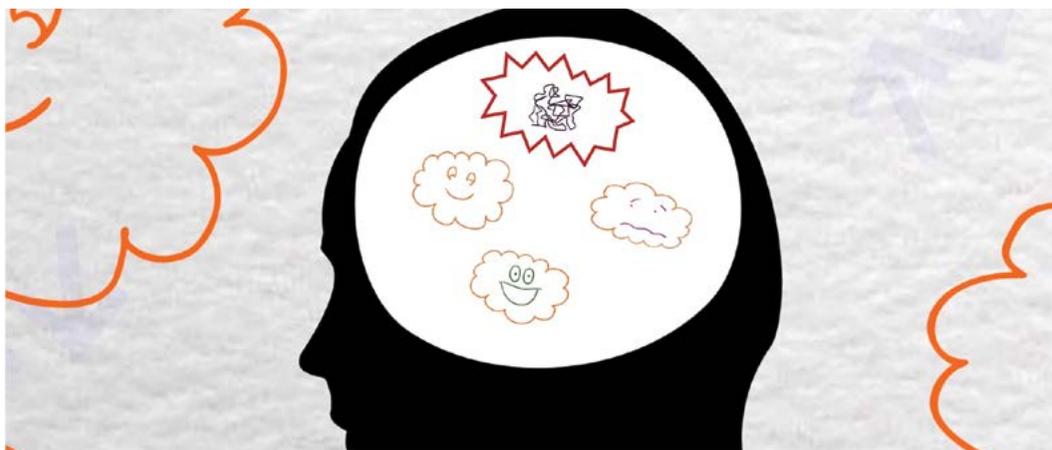
Clearly, anxiety-causing spirits are no fun. But could they help us on our spiritual path? Could there be good types of anxiety that lead us to see things that we need to change?

Only people who are being regenerated experience spiritual crises, because spiritual crises are times of mental anguish for people whose lives are devoted to goodness and truth. These crises are brought about by evil spirits. When they stir up the evils in us, an anxiety wells up inside that is a symptom of our spiritual crisis. We are not aware, however, of where the anxiety is coming from because we do not realize that a spiritual crisis is the source. There are evil spirits and

good spirits with each of us. The evil spirits are in our evil tendencies and the good spirits are in our good tendencies. When the evil spirits come closer they stir up our evil tendencies, and the good spirits respond by stirring up our good ones. This leads to a collision and a battle that causes us the inner anxiety that is a crisis of spirit. (*New Jerusalem* §187)

Spiritual crises can help us to learn and grow, even if they're incredibly stressful at the time. They help to highlight what's good and what's bad about our lives, and give us the opportunity to choose our path forward.

To sum up: The more we know about the body, the better we can treat the problems that crop up. In the same way, understanding how the spiritual world functions can help us understand how to deal with the spiritual aspects of anxiety. What do we do when we're experiencing bad physical weather? We bundle up. In the same way, when we're going through some bad spiritual weather, understanding the dynamics behind it can help us to prepare ourselves better. •



This episode was part of the offTheLeftEye's new content strategy, where each week all of our series revolve around a single theme. If you're interested in this topic, you can check out the related episodes: In the *News from Heaven* episode "[Spirits Make You Feel Guilty about Things that Don't Matter](#)," Curtis Childs offers commentary on *Secrets of Heaven* §§5724-25; in a "Short Clip" from a previous episode, "[Building Protection against Anxiety and Negativity in the Mind](#)," you can find a technique for guarding against attacks of negativity; and our Q&A show *Swedenborg & Life Live!* tackles questions related to "[Spirits and Anxiety](#)."

## On Our Blog: Racism and Leadership

By Rev. Christopher A. Barber

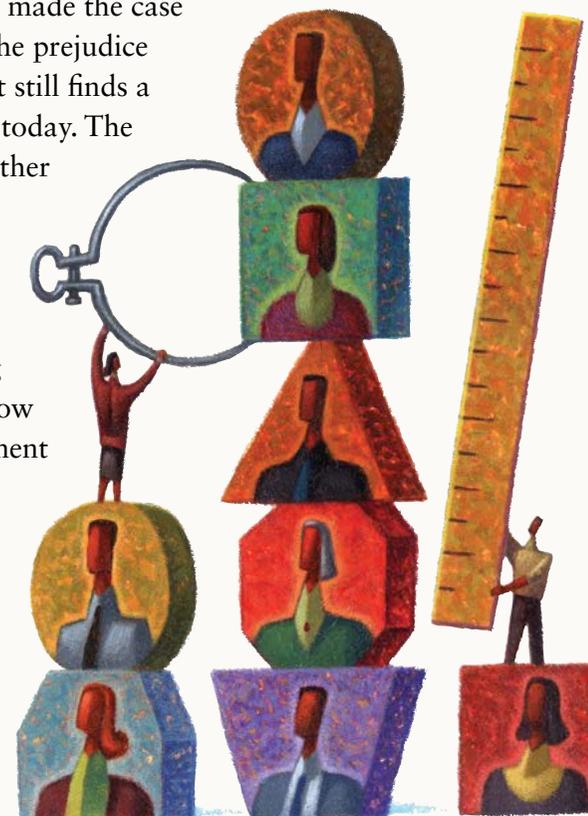
The following is an abridged version of a blog post that originally appeared on [Swedenborg.com](#) and [ourdailybread.com](#).

I write the following primarily from my perspective as a Swedenborgian scholar and priest, a perspective that cannot help being colored by my experience of being Black in an America still in recovery from the sickness of African slavery.

### Lack of Leadership Sows Division

Growing up, I gathered the simple narrative that the civil rights movement was won on the martyrdom of Martin Luther King, Jr., and that White nationalism was a thing of the past. However, recurrent events tell me time and time again that the story ain't that simple. The civil rights movement certainly made the case for important legislation, but the prejudice that necessitated the movement still finds a home in the hearts of so many today. The murder of George Floyd is another reminder of this deadly reality in American society. It's bad enough to have regular everyday individuals with prejudiced perspectives leading to harmful actions; but right now at the highest levels of government in America (from the Oval Office, even), we have, at the very least, inaction and, at the very worst, encouragement of division among its people. This is cause for alarm.

Jesus calls us to love one another as he has loved us (John 15:12). This invitation



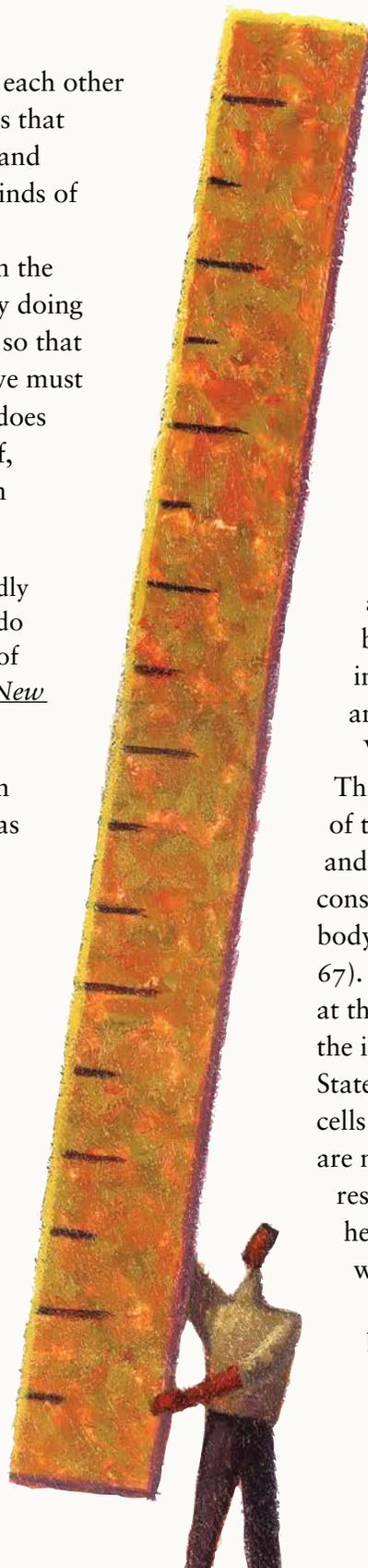
is higher than the Golden Rule, which says that we should treat each other as we would like to be treated (Matthew 7:12). Swedenborg says that loving the neighbor consists of loving the good in the neighbor, and therefore of loving the Lord in the neighbor, “because the two kinds of love are essentially one” (*Divine Providence* §94).

This is why Swedenborg talks about the need to banish evils in the outer self, the part of us that is involved with the world. Only by doing so can we make space for the Lord to instill goodness within us so that we may go on to be truly loving to others. In order to do that, we must use the Lord as our metric and reference point. Racist thinking does not do this—it looks to the self and compares all else to that self, treating anything different or in discordant variety (*diversitas*, in Swedenborg’s lexicon) as an enemy.

The evils characteristic of people devoted to self-love are, broadly speaking, contempt for others, envy, ill will toward those who do not agree with them, a consequent hostility, and various kinds of hatred, vengefulness, guile, trickery, ruthlessness, and cruelty. (*New Jerusalem* §75)

While deep and abiding systemic racism is the current problem on our national consciousness, Swedenborg does not address it as a primary evil. Rather, the primary evils are love of the self and love of the world, and all else that is wicked and harmful stems from those two evils (*Secrets of Heaven* §1691, et al.). Right now, we’re seeing very real and potentially fatal troubles that are racist in presentation and that are selfish in essence.

When institutions work to cover up their abuses rather than to fix the systemic problems that led to them, it often is out of pride, fear, and ego that are connected with the love of the self. So when, for example, a police force covers for their buddy because of the “fraternal order” (brotherhood), but they forget the more important “brotherhood of man” (old-fashioned language, sorry), their behavior reminds us of what Swedenborg describes as a problem in the form of parents loving their children only because they see



themselves in their children. This is not true love of another but is instead love of oneself as found in another:

When we love ourselves we also love those we see as our own, in particular our children and grandchildren, and in general everyone with whom we identify, whom we call “ours.” Loving them is loving ourselves. This is because we see them as virtually part of us and see ourselves in them. Also included in those we call “ours” is everyone who praises, honors, and reveres us. (*New Jerusalem* §67)

### Identification and Change

As noted, Swedenborg does not highlight racism as a primary problem of humanity, and he neglects to address human chattel slavery—both of which were active issues during his lifetime. Both were also simply accepted. The reason racism stands out today is because the light has been repeatedly shone on it. This is also how evil gets rooted out of an individual—you first have to highlight it, acknowledging that it’s an evil, and then you get to work (*New Jerusalem* §§159–69).

When a society identifies a problem, it then takes work to change it. This means that some people will inevitably be upset. It makes me think of the Universal Human: the New Church concept that heaven is one body and that all people in it are constituent members of that body (*Heaven and Hell* §§59–67). Despite a lack of attention at the highest levels of politics, the immune system of the United States is active; the white blood cells of activism and agitation are not only stirring, they are responding. They are making demands for the sake of social and racial health in the face of individual and institutional villainy. Hearts burn within protesters and the national fever rises.

The protests and riots can be compared to that funny feeling you get before you make the mental connection that you have caught a cold.

**“WHEN A SOCIETY IDENTIFIES A PROBLEM, IT THEN TAKES WORK TO CHANGE IT.”**

Your body starts fighting off the sickness before your intellectual mind has realized what is happening. But this is where it gets tricky—your rational mind can sometimes sabotage your immune system and make bad decisions that run counter to what your body is trying to do. You can go for a run when really what you need is to rest. You can convince yourself that you don't need your antibiotics anymore when really you are just on the cusp of getting better and so abandoning them now would be your undoing. So much of the tension that we are experiencing in the United States is in part the result of a moral disconnect between the priorities of the national leadership and the priorities of many people on the ground.

### Where Is the Lord?

Swedenborg tells us clearly that the Lord looks beyond the moment, as his “goal concerns what lasts to eternity” (*New Jerusalem* §269). The Lord cannot change us as individuals in an instant (*Arcana Coelestia* §9587), so he cannot change our collective society in an instant either. The loves of self and of the world aren't evil in and of themselves—we have to take care of ourselves and engage in the things of the world (*New Jerusalem* §97). But these loves become problematic when they become our leading priorities. This is how it is for all people from birth, so we must grow out of it. We must as individuals learn to share, to be kind, and not to stare at people just because they are different. We must learn to make sacrifices and to be okay with waiting. We must learn how to accept responsibility and to acknowledge when we are wrong.

Our limited nature is why the Lord offers us revelation—so that we can learn (*Arcana Coelestia* §10318). And this explains why education isn't something that happens in a moment, with schooling taking up so much of people's lives. Speaking from my own experience in the classroom, if I ever try to rush a lesson, I become the embodiment of haste making

waste. Although the Lord looks beyond the moment, he works with us now, and he nudges and inspires us now. Even though we might get frustrated with the time it takes for meaningful change to occur, the Lord doesn't get bogged down in the day-to-day inequalities.

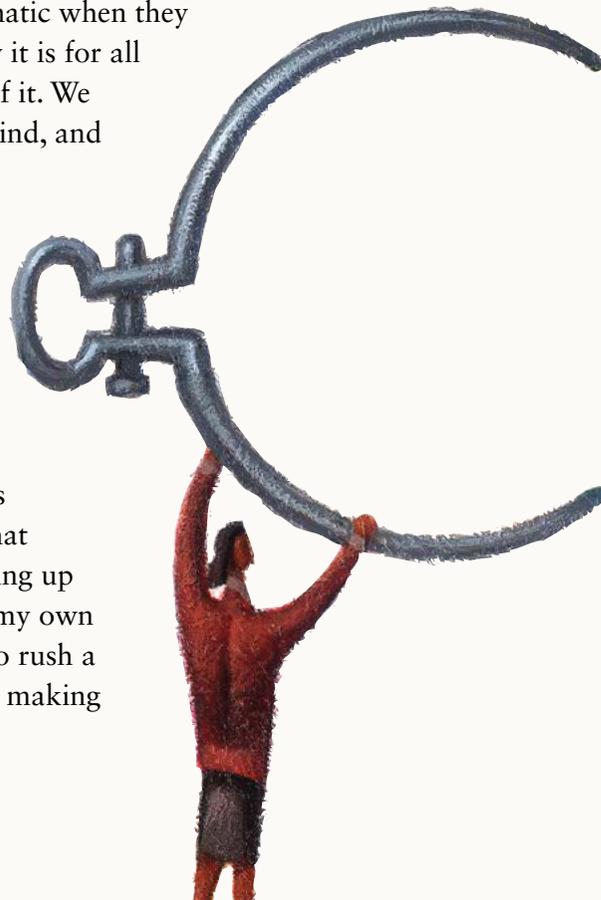
This means that doing the work of governance—rewarding what is good and punishing what is bad—is left to us:

When they see evil people raised to high rank, making more money than good people, and skillfully and successfully accomplishing evil things, they say in their hearts that none of this would be happening if divine providence were operative in all the details. They fail to take into account, though, that the goal of divine providence does not concern what is momentary and transient, what comes to an end when our lives in this world cease. Rather, its goal concerns what lasts to eternity, what therefore does not have an end. Whatever has no end is real, while what comes to an end is relatively unreal. Consider, if you will, whether a hundred thousand years are anything next to eternity, and you will see that they are not. What then are the few years of our lives in this world? (*New Jerusalem* §269)

If I am perfectly honest, I feel a wretched despair in the face of our current problems. I feel lost in the question of why racism and prejudice still have such a hold on so many people. I feel helpless. Even with everything that I know about the Lord and about how he works with us, I feel like a useless member of a failing human society. Yet, I am encouraged by the protesters who have taken to the streets; the writers who have picked up the pen; the legislators who are casting a vision of a better world; and the citizens who are searching themselves to find out if there is a better way. It is at these times of personal and social temptation and trial that the Lord is able to be closest to us (§1947). I just wish I could feel it and always believe it to be so.

I believe; help my unbelief! (Mark 9:24) •

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