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## Introduction

This article is about a historical survey of publications of Swedenborg's works in German. For obvious reasons, I will refer to the past only to the extent to which this is still of relevance for the present. This covers, firstly, translations of Swedenborg's theological writings produced over several generations, and, secondly, the development of publishing structures up to the present-day Swedenborg Publishing House. Finally I highlight current projects and plans.

## 100 years up to the complete edition

Swedenborg initiated the translation of his works into German himself. This was when he sent some of these to Friedrich Christoph Oetinger (1702-1782), Prelate of Württemberg. Oetinger tells us about this in his autobiography: »He (= Swedenborg) then sent me his books ›de telluribus planetarum‹, ›de amore conjugali‹ and ›de vera religione Christiana«.<sup>1</sup>

The seed fell on fertile ground. Although he did by no means become a supporter of Swedenborg, he still advocated unreserved »scrutiny«<sup>2</sup> of the Swedish scientist turned by now theologian. In a letter dated 7<sup>th</sup> October 1766, Oetinger indicates to Swedenborg that he has read in the meantime the book about the terrestrial bodies: »As far as we are concerned, the planets may well be nurseries of the spirits; the Scriptures remain silent about it.«<sup>3</sup> It was published in 1770 under the title »Von den Erdkörpern der Planeten und des gestirnten Himmels Einwohnern« [About the terrestrial bodies of the planets and the inhabitants of the starred Heaven]; this was the first work of Swedenborg to be translated into German completely. Oetinger had the translation produced by his fourteen-year-old grandnephew Christoph Friedrich Dertinger.<sup>4</sup> A few years earlier, in 1765, Oetinger had already published abstracts of »Arcana coelestia« [Heavenly Secrets] in »Swedenborgs und anderer Irrdische und Himmlische Philosophie« [Swedenborg's and Others' Earthly and Heavenly Philosophy]. Followed in 1772 the »Tractat von der Verbindung der Seele mit dem Körper« [Interaction of the Soul and the Body] and »Vom Neuen Jerusalem und dessen himmlische Lehre« [The New Jerusalem and its Heavenly Doctrine]. Oetinger is further mentioned as the translator of the book »Vom Himmel und von den wunderbaren Dingen desselben ...« [About heaven and the wonderful things of the same], first published in 1774.<sup>5</sup> Some wordings in the preliminary note of the translator, however, cast some doubt on such attribution.<sup>6</sup> Through to this pioneering work, Oetinger became the pathfinder for Swedenborg in Germany.

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<sup>1</sup> Julius Hamberger (Ed.), »Des Württembergischen Prälaten Friedrich Christoph Oetinger Selbstbiographie« [Autobiography of Friedrich Christoph Oetinger, Prelate of Württemberg], Stuttgart 1845, p. 97.

<sup>2</sup> »Scrutiny« is already mentioned in Oetinger's »Preface« to »Swedenborgs und anderer Irrdische und Himmlische Philosophie« [Swedenborg's and Others' Earthly and Heavenly Philosophy] (1765): »Herewith I commit to the reader something rare to scrutinise, which God has announced to the present time.« »Scrutiny« is also mentioned several times in Oetinger's »Reflexiones« [Reflections] about »Von den Erdkörpern der Planeten ...« [About the terrestrial bodies of the planets...] (edition of 1771).

<sup>3</sup> Karl Christian Eberhard Ehmann, »Friedrich Christoph Oetingers Leben und Briefe, als urkundlicher Commentar zu dessen Schriften« [The life and letters of Friedrich Christoph Oetinger, documentary comments on his writings], Stuttgart 1859, no. 567 p. 690.

<sup>4</sup> See J. F. I. Tafel, »Sammlung von Urkunden betreffend das Leben und den Charakter Emanuel Swedenborg's« [Collection of Documents concerning the Life and Character of Emanuel Swedenborg], Tübingen 1839, p. 361.

<sup>5</sup> See Hyde: »Translated by Prelate F. C. Oetinger ... This version has been erroneously attributed to Dean J. C. Lenz, and to M. Cude.« (James Hyde, *A Bibliography of the Works of Emanuel Swedenborg, Original and Translated*, London 1906, No. 1116).

<sup>6</sup> In his preliminary note, the translator comments on the German title of »De Telluribus in Mundo nostro Solari« which was »Von den Erdkörpern der Planeten ...« [About the terrestrial bodies of the planets ...], as follows: »Who would not

After him, still during the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the first Swedenborgians took over the task of translating Swedenborg. Swedenborg had predicted the spreading of his teachings in the late 1780s, a prediction that were to be fulfilled.<sup>7</sup> It is against this background that the first translations to be effected by supporters of Swedenborg have to be viewed.<sup>8</sup> Are to be named: Firstly, »Die Wahre christliche Religion« [True Christian Religion] which appeared in three parts between 1784 and 1786 in Altenburg. Secondly, »Revision der bisherigen Theologie sowol der Protestanten als Römischkatholischen« [Revision of hitherto existing theology, both of the Protestants and of the Roman Catholics] which was published in Breslau in 1786. This unusual title conceals Swedenborg's »Summaria Expositio« [Brief Exposition]. The translator mentioned is I. F. Korn.<sup>9</sup> This book was picked to pieces by Johann Salomo Semler (1725-1791), a founder of the historico-critical Biblical scholarship, partly in a critical, partly in a derisive manner.<sup>10</sup> If we add to this the slightly earlier reaction by Johann August Ernesti (1707-1781)<sup>11</sup> who, as a pioneer of the historico-philological exegesis of the Bible, wanted to limit himself to the natural sense of the Scriptures, we may already forebode that Swedenborg, the master of the spiritual sense, was unable, in spite of the promising blossoming of the 1780s, to discover any fertile ground within the scholarly landscape of Germany in the long run, given the increasing dominance of the historical interpretation of the Bible. Another, third translation is still to be mentioned: »Die ganze Theologie der Neuen Kirche« [The entire theology of the New Church], again a rendering of »Vera Christiana Religio« [True Christian Religion], this time by Carl August Donat; it appeared in two parts in Basle in 1795 and probably provides evidence of an early spreading of Swedenborgian teachings in Switzerland.<sup>12</sup>

During the 19<sup>th</sup> century, several Swedenborgians emphatically attended to the task of creating a German-language complete edition of Swedenborg's theological works. The starting signal for this huge undertaking was given on 17<sup>th</sup> December 1821. On that day, the young and hardly 25-year-old Johann Friedrich Immanuel Tafel (1796-1863) publicly announced that he would publish Swedenborg's theological works in German and that, on request, he would also reprint the Latin originals. Tafel named eight titles: the nowadays combined works covering the Four Leading Doctrines, the Apocalypse Revealed, the two works on the Last Judgement and the one on Divine

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see that this title is completely wrong? It is actually as confused as are the notes and the appended reflections of this translator.« This clearly dissociating statement speaks rather against Oetinger or Dertinger, respectively, as the translator of the edition of 1774 of »Vom Himmel und von den wunderbaren Dingen desselben ...« [About heaven and the wonderful things of the same].

<sup>7</sup> See »Anekdoten von Swedenborg, welche Dr. William Spence aus dem Munde des Herrn Springer und des Dr. Messiter hatte« [Anecdotes by Swedenborg, which Dr William Spence learnt from the mouths of Mr Springer and Dr Messiter], in: »Zwölf unumstößliche Erfahrungsbeweise für die Unsterblichkeit der Seele ...« [Twelve incontrovertible experiences evidencing the immortality of the soul], Stuttgart: publishing house Becher & Müller, 1845, pp. 293-305. Friedemann Stengel, too, states the spreading of Swedenborgianism in the late 1780s (F. Stengel (Ed.), *Kant und Swedenborg: Zugänge zu einem umstrittenen Verhältnis* [Kant and Swedenborg: Ways of approach to a contended relationship], Tübingen 2008, p. 60 et seq.).

<sup>8</sup> An analysis of the preliminary notes to these editions shows sufficiently clearly that Swedenborgians were behind these translations. They are all determined by the perspective of supporters of Swedenborg's teachings.

<sup>9</sup> James Hyde, *A Bibliography of the Works of Emanuel Swedenborg, Original and Translated*, London 1906, No. 2504.

<sup>10</sup> See »D. Joh. Sal. Semlers Unterhaltungen mit Herrn Lavater, über die freie practische Religion; auch über die Revision der bisherigen Theologie« [Semler's conversations with Mr Lavater on free and practical religion; also on the revision of the hitherto existing theology], Leipzig [publishing house] Weidmanns Erben und Reich, 1787.

<sup>11</sup> In 1760, J. A. Ernesti reviewed Swedenborg's »Arcana coelestia« [Heavenly Secrets] in »Neue Theologische Bibliothek« [New theological library], published by him. In this review, Ernesti dismisses the interpretation of the spiritual meaning.

<sup>12</sup> I am grateful to Eberhard Zwink who provided me with the following information: »Carl August Donat (born in 1758) was a priest in Wendisch Ossig / Upper Lusatia. Basle seems to have been a centre, although modest in scope, of Swedenborgian activities, as some German as well as French translations of Swedenborg's works were published there around the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.« (id., *Die Neue Kirche im deutschsprachigen Südwesten des 19. Jahrhunderts* [The New Church in the German-speaking South-West of the 19th century], 1993, p. 2).

Love and Wisdom. These translations were produced, with considerable difficulties and resistance from the Church, in seven volumes between 1823 and 1833 under the common title »Göttliche Offenbarungen, bekanntgemacht durch Immanuel von Swedenborg« [Divine revelations, publicised by Immanuel von Swedenborg].

Other translators joined Tafel still in his lifetime. Are to be named: Wilhelm Pfirsch (1803-1891)<sup>13</sup>, Johann Jakob Wurster (1811-1875)<sup>14</sup> and Julie Conring (1827-1876)<sup>15</sup>. This quartet was granted the pleasure of accomplishing the complete edition.

Wilhelm Pfirsch was director of studies and teacher of Hebrew at the secondary school in Schweinfurt. In 1832, he was introduced to Swedenborg's teachings through Tafel. At the request of the latter, he translated Swedenborg's work about the Divine Providence, which appeared in 1836, after Tafel had reviewed it, as the eighth volume of »Göttliche Offenbarungen« [Divine revelations]. Pfirsch further completed the translation started by Johann Jakob Wurster about the Apocalypse Explained. He also translated the Spiritual Diary of which, however, only the first volume has been published until now.

Johann Jakob Wurster was a Protestant priest.<sup>16</sup> He translated the second part of the Conjugal Love, published for the first time in 1845; the first part had been translated by Immanuel Tafel.<sup>17</sup> After the death of the latter, in 1863, he brought to a close, together with Julie Conring, the translation of the Heavenly Secrets, and afterwards, until his death in 1875, he dedicated himself to the Apocalypse Explained<sup>18</sup>.

Julie Conring was born in Denmark and moved to Sweden later on. Soon after her acquaintance with the teachings of Swedenborg, an exchange of letters with Immanuel Tafel ensued and eventually she met him in person. The two met for the first time at the station of Stuttgart on 14<sup>th</sup> August 1863. From there, they continued their travel to Bad Ragaz together, where Tafel wanted to get spa treatment and the »damsel« arrived from the far north intended to ask him numerous questions. But things happened in a different way, when Tafel died on 29<sup>th</sup> August 1863, only a few days after his arrival at Bad Ragaz, and »Miss« Conring suddenly became the only human support on his deathbed. After Tafel's death, she became substantially involved in completing the translation of the Heavenly Secrets, as Tafel himself had only reached volume 4 (or No. 2605) of the 16-volume edition. Julie Conring translated »partly volume 5, as well as the entire volumes 7, 10, 12, 13 and 15. The remaining parts of the work, starting from volume 5, were translated by the late Reverend Wurster, and the revision prior to printing was done by Professor W. Pfirsch.«<sup>19</sup>

Volume 16 of this first complete edition of the Heavenly Secrets was published in 1869. In this sense one could say that it took about 100 years, beginning with Oetinger, for the first German-language complete edition of Swedenborg's theological writings to become available. The Swedenborg Publishing House is still benefitting to this day from this immense achievement by the pioneers.

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<sup>13</sup> A biography of Wilhelm Pfirsch can be found in MNK, June 1891, pp. 93-98.

<sup>14</sup> Some biographical notes on Johann Jakob Wurster can be found in *Neukirchenblätter* [New Church papers], No. 14, 1875, p. 224.

<sup>15</sup> Some biographical details on Julie Conring can be extracted from *Neukirchenblätter*, No. 8, 1876, pp. 114-118 and No. 12, 1876, pp. 191-192.

<sup>16</sup> J. J. Wurster had been a priest in Hohenstaufen bei Göppingen (1844-1865) for 21 years, in Hohenmemmingen for 9 years, and in Kirchentellinsfurt for the last months of his life (from October 1874).

<sup>17</sup> MNK, June 1891, No. 6, p. 97.

<sup>18</sup> According to MNK, June 1891, No. 6, p. 93, the Reverend Wurster had reached up to no. 711 in his translation of the Apocalypse Explained. See also *Neukirchenblätter*, No. 14, 1875, p. 224.

<sup>19</sup> *Neukirchenblätter*, No. 12, 1876, p. 192.

## Development of publishing structures

The individuals, whilst undertaking the task of publishing the works of Swedenborg and of New Church literature in Germany and Switzerland, always created at the same time certain sets of publishing structures, although these were mostly entirely dependent on these individuals or tailored to their specific needs and which, for this reason, disintegrated in most cases more or less entirely after their death. Let us have a closer look at these structures up to the present-day Swedenborg Publishing House.

After Immanuel Tafel announced in 1821, as mentioned above, the publication of some of Swedenborg's theological writings, this was immediately met with »a lot of resistance« on the part of the clergy, of pietism and of rationalism, which finally forced to set up in 1828 his own private publishing house, the so-called »Verlags-Expedition« [publishing expedition].<sup>20</sup>

After Tafel's death, his friends felt obliged to continue the work initiated by him; this is how a small »printing society« was founded at his grave in Bad Ragaz, which was to be active for about seven years.<sup>21</sup>

Theodor Müllensiefen (1802-1879), a Westphalian industrialist whose father, Peter Eberhard Müllensiefen (1766-1847), had already read Swedenborg, soon reached the top of this »printing society committee«, after withdrawing from industrial life on 31<sup>st</sup> December 1865. Later on, he took charge of the entire publishing house and organised, at his own expense, the publication of several of the last volumes of the »Heavenly Secrets«, as well as of other works by Swedenborg and works written after him. Furthermore, he had purchased a book estate from the widow of his brother-in-law, Immanuel Tafel. In 1872, Müllensiefen sold his book stock to »Verlag Neukirchlicher Schriften« [Publishing house of New Church writings] of Mittnacht.<sup>22</sup>

Johann Gottlieb Mittnacht (1831-1892), born in Flacht in Württemberg and already acquainted with Swedenborg in his younger days, emigrated to United States of America at the age of about 18. There, he gained prestige and prosperity as the owner of a wool spinning mill. In 1870, he returned to Germany and made his home in Stuttgart. In 1872, he founded »Neukirchliche Buchhandlung« [New Church bookshop] in Stuttgart. Initially, he procured the books from Theodor Müllensiefen, but soon entered into negotiations with the same to purchase his entire stock, which eventually became the property of Mittnacht on 19<sup>th</sup> June 1872. He immediately reduced significantly the prices of books which until then had been kept fairly high, and initiated an upsurge of the entire book sale. In 1874, at a meeting held in Stuttgart on 27<sup>th</sup> September, at which there was also Rudolph Leonhard Tafel (1831-1883) from London, Mittnacht suggested the foundation of the »Deutsche Neukirchliche Gesellschaft« [German New Church Society]. This was then indeed constituted on 31<sup>st</sup> October 1875. The aged Theodor Müllensiefen was elected president, and Mittnacht himself was made vice-president. Following Müllensiefen's death in 1879, he took over the latter's position.

Shortly before his death, the Society was transformed, at his suggestion, into the »Deutscher Swedenborg-Verein« [German Swedenborg Association] which set the publishing and the sales and distribution of New Church writings as its exclusive task. This Association, constituted on 17<sup>th</sup> April 1891, took over Mittnacht's book stock in March 1892. It published works by Swedenborg until World War I. When after that the association's funds went lost due to the inflation and at the same time, on top of that, the long-time book administrator Gottlieb Maisch

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<sup>20</sup> The private publishing house is mentioned in Tafel's biography, published by Theodor Müllensiefen: A bookseller had agreed to »take over the expedition of the private publishing house founded by Immanuel Tafel in 1828«. (Theodor Müllensiefen, *Leben und Wirken von Dr. Joh. Fr. Immanuel Tafel* [The life and work of Dr. Joh. Fr. Immanuel Tafel], Basle 1868, p. 28). Cf. also J. G. Mittnacht (Ed.), *Briefe von Dr. J. F. Immanuel Tafel an Fräulein Julie Conring* [Letters by Dr. J. F. Immanuel Tafel to Miss Julie Conring], Frankfurt am Main 1881, p. 1.

<sup>21</sup> MNK, No. 10, October 1891, p. 155.

<sup>22</sup> See: *Neukirchenblätter*, No. 19, 1879, p. 304.

died on 29<sup>th</sup> November 1920, the Association gave up this activity and, instead, Heinrich Joh started running a small »Swedenborg-Verlag« [Swedenborg Publishing House] in Constance (Mangoldstraße 5).<sup>23</sup> This, of course, was only a temporary solution, as Joh died only a few years later, on 5<sup>th</sup> January 1927<sup>24</sup>.

### Zurich as a centre of New Church publishing activity

The Swedenborg Publishing House is nowadays the leading publisher of Swedenborgian literature in German. I will therefore focus more in detail on its history and, following the review, I will draw up some future-oriented perspectives. There have, of course, always been publications of works by or about Swedenborg outside the Swedenborg Publishing House as well. I will not go into detail of these here but would still like to provide four brief examples:

1.) The Swedenborg Institute of Basle, founded in 1952, but which ceased to exist long ago, published some facsimile editions of the scientific and theological works of Swedenborg.<sup>25</sup> 2.) On the occasion of the 300<sup>th</sup> birthday of Swedenborg in 1988, an »Accompanying book on the occasion of an exhibition and a series of lectures at the Regional Library of Württemberg in Stuttgart, 29<sup>th</sup> January - 25<sup>th</sup> March 1988« appeared, entitled »Emanuel Swedenborg 1688-1772 Naturforscher und Kundiger der Überwelt« [Emanuel Swedenborg, 1688-1772, naturalist and expert of the supernatural world], edited by Horst Bergmann and Eberhard Zwink. 3.) If ever there is one of Swedenborg's works that would have a chance of being published by a profit-oriented publishing house outside the Swedenborg Publishing House, this is »Heaven and Hell«. In 2005, the time had come again, when it was published by Marixverlag, with comments by Hans-Jürgen Hube.<sup>26</sup> 4.) Among the scientific publications, I select »Kant und Swedenborg: Zugänge zu einem umstrittenen Verhältnis« [Kant and Swedenborg: Ways of approach to a contended relationship], edited by Friedemann Stengel. This volume, published in 2008 by Max Niemeyer Verlag in Tübingen, is to be seen in connection with a research project at the Interdisciplinary Centre for Research into the European Enlightenment (IZEA) in Halle.

The publishing activity unfolded on the basis of a New Church association. Such association was founded in St. Gallen on 20<sup>th</sup> September 1874. It changed name several times: Until 1928 it was called »Schweizerischer Verein der Neuen Kirche« [Swiss New Church Association]; after that, until 1969, it was »Schweizerischer Bund der Neuen Kirche« [Swiss New Church Federation]; and since 1969 it has been called »Neue Kirche der deutschen Schweiz« [New Church of German-speaking Switzerland]. Although this Association was founded in St. Gallen, with domicile first in Herisau, Zurich soon emerged as the active centre, with local house »Zum Frieden« [House of Peace] being the place of residence of its leading brains, Salomon Baumann (1838-1882), Fedor and Adolf Ludwig Görwitz.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> »Mr Gottlieb Maisch, the long-time man of confidence of the German Swedenborg Association, who had carried out almost the entire work of the Association as its treasurer, secretary and storekeeper, died in Stuttgart on 29<sup>th</sup> November 1920.« (MNK, January 1921, p. 16). Since 1891, the Swedenborg Association of Stuttgart had been taking care of the publication of the writings. »When [, however,] the Association's funds went lost due to the inflation and at the same time, on top of that, the long-time book administrator Gottlieb Maisch died, the Association gave up this activity, and Hr. [Heinrich] Joh started running a small »Swedenborg Publishing House« in Constance mainly for the publication of his »Neue Wege« [New Paths].« (NKM April/May 1930, p. 81).

<sup>24</sup> »On 5<sup>th</sup> January [1927], Heinrich Georg Joh, retired senior telegraph secretary, died in Constance at the age of 71; he had been a well-known figure within the German-speaking New Church in his capacity of a long-time publisher of the New Church monthly paper »Neuer Weg« [New Path] of which he was in charge until he had to give it up owing to a serious heart condition.« (MNK, January 1927, p. 15).

<sup>25</sup> Regarding its foundation on 24<sup>th</sup> April 1952, see NKM 1952, p. 83 et seq.

<sup>26</sup> In 1924, »Heaven and Hell« had already been published outside the New Church Publishing House, at the time by publisher R[ichard] Halbeck in Berlin. The book had a preface by F. A. Brecht.

<sup>27</sup> In 1875, J. G. Mittnacht had purchased house »Zum Frieden«, situated in Zurich-Oberstraß. This was where he transferred his residence to, including the bookshop, from Stuttgart in 1877, but only until 1879 (MNK, October 1892, p. 154). In 1875 already, Salomon Baumann moved into this house and lived there until his death in 1882 (NKM, June 1933, p. 98). On 18<sup>th</sup> April 1883, Fedor Goerwitz moved into the »Peace« into what used to be Mittnacht's former flat, and lived there also until his death in 1908 (NKM June 1933, p. 98 and NKM March 1935, p. 39). And, finally, this also became the place of residence of Adolph Ludwig Goerwitz, until the house of today at Apollostrasse 2

The Publishing House had emerged from a book stock. Already in the »Articles of Association of the Swiss New Church Association«, »procurement and distribution of respective books and magazines« is mentioned, among other things, as a means of implementation of the purpose of the Association.<sup>28</sup> Reference to a »book stock« is made for the first time in connection with a directors' meeting on 14<sup>th</sup> October 1877. The meeting was about the appointment of Salomon Baumann as a preacher. In this context, a proposal by Johann Gottlieb Mittnacht had been submitted to contribute a portion to the agreed salary »on condition that Baumann ... keeps a small book stock in his house and that he makes an effort to promote the distribution of New Church writings.«<sup>29</sup> The preacher Baumann might then have taken over the »stock of New Church writings« on 1<sup>st</sup> January 1879 with the commencement of his appointment with the Swiss Association.

A change in circumstances occurred when Johann Gottlieb Mittnacht was forced in autumn 1890, for health reasons, to give up his publishing house. This was why he offered part of his book inventory to the Swiss Association. By means of this large acquisition, the small book stock administered by the widow of Salomon Baumann could be expanded in 1891 into a superb »New Church book stock«.<sup>30</sup> Mittnacht survived the surrender of his book stock by only a few months, as he died on 20<sup>th</sup> August 1892.

The publishing activity carried on in Stuttgart even after Mittnacht's death, of course, as this was the place where the German Swedenborg Association, still initiated by Mittnacht, remained active. After this Association had, however, lost its funds due to the great inflation after World War I and had to discontinue its activities, the Swiss Association took over the orphaned undertaking, by renaming the book stock in 1922 into »Buchverlag der Neuen Kirche« [New Church Publishing House].<sup>31</sup> And when Heinrich Joh died and, together with him, the »Swedenborg Publishing House« in Constance, this »Publishing House« eventually became the »Swedenborg Publishing House« in Zurich on 1<sup>st</sup> July 1930.<sup>32</sup> Switzerland thus took over leadership when the publishing structures of the Swedenborgians collapsed due to the disastrous inflation during the first years of the Weimar Republic.

But even in Zurich, however, conditions for publishing activities were by no means favourable. The moment when the publishing house emerged from the book stock, was also the period of activity of the Reverend Adolf Ludwig Goerwitz (1885-1956) who had taken over official functions in 1908, following the death of his father Fedor Goerwitz (born in 1835). At the beginning, the publishing house had actually more debts than cash. This is why Adolf Ludwig Goerwitz, on the occasion of the renaming of the publishing house into »Swedenborg Publishing House«, tried to improve its starting conditions by issuing a zero bond to the total amount of CHF 25000, composed of bonds of CHF 100 each. Repayment of minimum five bonds each time was to commence seven years after issue. Through this measure, the debts which in turn bore interest,

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was purchased in 1933. House »Zum Frieden« was soon sold by Mittnacht to Salomon and Elisabeth Baumann, and, in 1903, following the death of the widow Baumann, it was transferred to their son Paul Baumann, who in turn sold it to the State in 1933 (NKM June 1933, p. 98).

<sup>28</sup> *Neukirchenblätter* 1875, p. 534. The adjective »respective« refers to books and magazines relating to the purpose of the Association.

<sup>29</sup> *Neukirchenblätter* 1877, p. 511. MNK January 1892, p. 15 mentions a »stock of New Church writings«, taken care of by the widow Baumann.

<sup>30</sup> In MNK February 1891, p. 31, an »invitation for participation in the acquisition of a New Church book stock for Switzerland« is mentioned. The respective resolutions were passed at the following general assembly on 13<sup>th</sup> September 1891. The first »report on the book stock« appears in the documents of the general assembly of 1892.

<sup>31</sup> MNK March until May 1923, p. 58.

<sup>32</sup> »Now, [after the death of Heinrich Joh], the New Church Publishing House, which has become the sole centre for New Church writings in German-speaking Europe, is best suited to adopt the name of Swedenborg Publishing House and to introduce this name into the world of bookseller.« (NKM April / May 1930, p. 81). The adoption of the name of »Swedenborg-Verlag« [Swedenborg Publishing House] on 1<sup>st</sup> July 1930 is mentioned on p. 82.

could be cleared; furthermore, the publishing house benefitted from the interest on the invested bonds, in which, however, the interest rate fell soon after issue of the bonds. On balance, it can be said that the financial scope remained very limited over the entire period of activity of Adolf Ludwig Goerwitz, for which reason it was never possible to offer the entire theological work in a continuous manner. Important works were constantly out of print over several years. New editions of existing translations were possible only with the aid of American Swedenborg organisations, such as »Deutscher Missionsverein« [the German Missionary Association] of Philadelphia and the Swedenborg Foundation, sponsors, such as Fritz Pochon from Berne, who allowed for an edition of »Heaven and Hell«, donations, legacies or renewed borrowings. Goerwitz also made use of the option of indirect subsidies, by placing certain texts first in the »Monatblätter« [Monthly Papers], the New Church magazine, due to which the latter had to bear the typesetting costs. Subsequently, this then appeared through the publishing house. Technical progress also raised some hopes; the report of 1925, for instance, mentioned a »Manul-Verfahren« [manul process], a photographic reproduction instead of a new edition, which in turn yielded hopes for a lowering of production costs.

Goerwitz shaped the history of the publishing house during the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. His activity was, however, overshadowed by National Socialism, World War II and the first heavy years after the war. When circumstances started to slowly improve, a new and ambitious person entered the stage: Friedemann Horn (1921-1999).

He moved to Zurich in 1951 and was active there until his death in 1999. The second part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was thus shaped by him. A particularity of his publishing activity was that he wanted to achieve the goal of publishing works by and about Swedenborg, by using a print shop which was to be owned by the publishing house. Following the death of his predecessor Adolf Ludwig Goerwitz in 1956, Horn's idea soon materialised. In 1961, the first set of machines had been procured.

The in-house print shop was something tangible, something which was able to concretely show the usefulness of the New Church, the useful function of spreading Swedenborgian ideas. That's why this in-house print shop was able to mobilize honorary staff members from one's own ranks, or at least those who agreed to put their labour at the disposal of the common goal against a very low remuneration. Furthermore, this encouraged donations, something which always showed its full beneficial impact in an impressive manner each time new machinery had, yet again, to be acquired. In this way the in-house print shop was apparently able to work more cost-efficiently than external print shops.

In retrospect, of course, the disadvantages of the concept of having an in-house print shop also showed very clearly. Firstly, the constant necessity of renewing the machines has to be mentioned. Every 5 years, the photosetting or printing machine had to be replaced, also due to the rapid technological progress. And, in between, more machine types had to be purchased, such as a boom chain, a guillotine, a gathering machine, a tying machine, and a copier. Costly maintenance and modernisation of the extensive set of machines would actually have destroyed the financial advantage of having an in-house print shop, without the donations and subsidies. Secondly, there was the issue of capacity utilisation of the machines. This is how externally processed orders had to be accepted. Finally, there was even a search for co-users of the machines; but none was found. Thirdly, against a dwindling membership base, it was becoming increasingly difficult to find staff with the required level of idealism, who would have been willing to work in an honorary capacity or for a very small remuneration. And, fourthly, it should not be ignored that Horn, at times, had become so much of a typesetter, printer and distributor that he was hardly able to look after all the other tasks as well. Whilst the printing business flourished, the theological business was stagnating.



The positive overall result, however, was the decisive point that finally counted. I will summarise it in three points: Firstly, on the basis of the translations produced in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Friedemann Horn gradually revised in a thorough manner nearly all of Swedenborg's relevant works.<sup>33</sup> Although a »New Century Edition«, a new translation from scratch, as currently being produced by the Swedenborg Foundation, was not possible under specifically German circumstances, the German-speaking New Church is now in possession of a good textual basis, thanks to Friedemann Horn's lifelong accomplishment, so that there is actually no real need to take urgent action in terms of new translations. Secondly, whether it be revisions or reprints of old translations from the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the entire theological work of Swedenborg, as published by himself, is now available in German. An impressive example of the actual achievement hiding behind this sober statement, is the reprint of the monumental work »Himmlische Geheimnisse« [Heavenly Secrets] between 1966 and 1974. At the time of Goerwitz, this still remained an unaccomplishable wish, whereas with the appearance of the in-house print shop, the seemingly impossible was finally achieved. Additionally, in 1994, twenty years after this huge exertion, an Austrian couple caused a surprise at the Swedenborg Publishing House when it presented them with a digital copy of the Heavenly Secrets on floppy discs. In this way it became possible to publish the work, which initially could only appear in the old Gothic print and which was hardly legible for young people, in a character style that is in common use today. Thirdly, the book programme was enlarged by some titles in the field of secondary literature that were deemed particularly precious. Without claiming to be complete, I will just mention the book »Licht in mein Dunkel« [Light in my Darkness] by Helen Keller, published in 1955, which has been the Publishing House's bestseller for many years; and, also, publications by Ernst Benz, Gerhard Gollwitzer and Friedemann Horn. And, finally, magazine »Offene Tore« [Open doors], founded in 1957, should be mentioned, which includes many a jewel.

### Perspectives for the nearer future

Whilst book production experienced an upsurge at the time of Horn, the New Church was dying out almost imperceptibly, yet inexorably. By and by, its priests disappeared. Since 1975, after the death of Werner Schmidt (1919-1975) and of Alfred Regamey, Friedemann Horn had been the last surviving priest of the old generation. Simultaneously, most of the communities in Germany, Austria and Switzerland were disappearing. At the present time, there are only two communities left with a chance of survival: one in Berlin, which secured its survival by including the New Revelation movement, founded by Jakob Lorber (1800-1864); and another one in Zurich, which would like to remain a church exclusively founded on Swedenborg's theology, and is hoping, on that basis, to find a way into the future. In view of such situation, focus must again be shifted onto Church activity. The New Church needs new members and must think of how to best regulate education of their theological specialists in the future. Furthermore, some theological reconsidering will well be required, too. Why does the New Church look so old? The book

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<sup>33</sup> In 1957, Swedenborg's interpretation of the first two chapters of the Genesis, entitled »Und es war Abend und es war Morgen« [And it was evening and it was morning], was published in a »thoroughly revised form« (OT 1957, p. 112). At that time, F. Horn still added: »A mere reprint would ... hardly attract a sufficient number of readers.« (OT 1957, p. 112). Thus, Horn published »Wahre Christliche Religion« [True Christian Religion] in four volumes between 1960 and 1966, »Himmel und Hölle« [Heaven and Hell] in 1977, »Die göttliche Liebe und Weisheit« [Divine Love and Wisdom] in 1990, »Religiöse Grundlagen des neuen Zeitalters: das neue Jerusalem und seine himmlische Lehre« [Religious foundations of the new era: The New Jerusalem and its Heavenly Doctrine] in 1993, »Die eheliche Liebe« [Conjugal Love] in 1995, and »Die göttliche Vorsehung« [Divine Providence] in 1997. When characterising his own work, F. Horn hesitated between calling it revision or translation. For instance, the reports of the general assembly of the Swiss New Church Federation of 1958 indicate that Horn announced the project of »Wahre Christliche Religion« with the words: »Furthermore, I was pleased to be able to start with a thorough revision of the German translation of »Wahre Christliche Religion« in September 1958«.

programme and thus publishing activities will need to be reviewed against those other concerns which are paramount at the moment.

We are currently dealing with a restructuring of our publishing business. This is, concretely speaking, a matter of finding an external distributor. In the foreseeable future, we will also part with our existing in-house print shop, which anyway has survived merely in the form of a copier. We have now been printing the most important works of Swedenborg externally over a number of years. In contrast to the time of Horn, digital printing and the Internet these days are very welcome resources. Thus, it has become possible to produce small and even minuscule editions in a cost-effective way, so that the main argument at the time in favour of an in-house print shop no longer applies. Furthermore, it is no longer necessary to produce everything in a printed version; we are in a position to distribute much of the literature over the Internet in the form of e-books only. This is why on our homepage, [swedenborg.ch](http://swedenborg.ch), along with the online shop of the Swedenborg Publishing House, one can also find a pdf-library which offers texts by and about Swedenborg for free downloading.

Which are nowadays the tasks of the Swedenborg Publishing House with regards to content? The historical survey presented above shows that new translations of Swedenborg's theological writings on a scale similar to the »New Century Edition« is definitely not part of the agenda at the moment. Friedemann Horn's revisions which at times are fairly close to new translations, are perfectly sufficient under current circumstances.

There is, however, an urgent need for action in the field of secondary literature. Although the Publishing House has some good titles in its programme, there still remains the essential task of a theological debate about the present. The New Church in Germany and Switzerland, from a theological point of view, remains fixed in the time of its foundation, or has chosen the path of a pseudo-reformation via the New Revelation movement founded by Jakob Lorber. Swedenborg has become an immobile monument; his theological ideas are summarised and repeated, but they no longer evolve along a debate with the present-day environment. Sometimes I wonder how the highly erudite Swedenborg would have confronted the issues of the present time. The stony monument should again become a living personality. Swedenborg would have to climb down from the base of the monument and become a human being of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Living organisms are characterised by interaction with their environment without losing their identities. Instead, the successors of the visionary have turned into monument conservators and estate administrators. They have lived with the awareness of being in possession of a superior theology for far too long. For a certain period, the deadlock caused by this was not really apparent but now, the New Church is looking old. Here, theological work in the spirit of Swedenborg is to be done; theological work which is then also to be reflected in the respective secondary literature.

There are no training schools for new generations of theologians in the German-speaking areas, and they are bitterly needed. Our only resource is our readiness for autodidactic studies. For this reason, secondary literature tailored to this market must therefore be not only written in a popular or mass-market style, but should also possess some of the characteristics of introductory manuals that encourage further or advanced studies. At the same time, such undertaking should not be left on its own in isolation but should be integrated within a number of conferences and seminar series.

The English-speaking countries have produced a number of essays and books which would be very precious and useful from the perspective of the programme that has just been outlined. The New Church of German-speaking Switzerland is prepared to financially encourage translations within the scope of its possibilities. At the same time, however, it would be of great help to us if we could receive, in addition, some financial allowances from organisations in the United Kingdom or the USA. It is well possible that both sides would benefit from such joint projects.

## List of literature and of abbreviations

»Alte deutsche Uebersetzungen der Schriften Swedenborgs« [Old German translations of Swedenborg's writings], in: MNK October 1887, pp. 153-155.

The accompanying report enclosed with the annual accounts of the Swedenborg Publishing House, NKM 1949, pp. 120-122, includes a short review of the history of the Swedenborg Publishing House, written by Adolf Ludwig Goerwitz.

Friedemann Horn, »Herausgabe und Druck der Werke Swedenborgs in deutscher Sprache« [Edition and print of Swedenborg's works in German], in: Offene Tore [Open Doors] 1993, pp. 58-75.

Reports on the general assembly of the Swiss New Church Federation (1950-1968) and on the parish assembly of the New Church of German-speaking Switzerland (from 1969).

»Monatblätter für die Neue Kirche« [Monthly papers for the New Church] (= MNK)

»Die Neue Kirche: Monatblätter für fortschrittliches religiöses Denken und Leben« [The New Church: Monthly papers for progressive religious thinking and living] (= NKM)

»Neukirchenblatt« [New Church Paper], Berlin, Zurich, Vienna, from 1963 (= NKB)

»Offene Tore: Beiträge zu einem neuen christlichen Zeitalter« [Open Doors: Contributions towards a new Christian Era] (= OT)

This article is about a historical survey of publications of Swedenborg's works in German. For obvious reasons, I will refer to the past only to the extent to which this is still of relevance for the present. This covers, firstly, translations of Swedenborg's theological writings produced over several generations, and, secondly, the development of publishing structures up to the presentday Swedenborg Publishing House. Finally I highlight current projects and plans.

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