



Eternal Life: Reflections by Presidents John Adams and Thomas Jefferson

BY ERNEST O. MARTIN

The first month of the new year has been most auspicious. The words “history-making” have been uttered again and again. The celebration of Martin Luther King, Jr.’s birthday took on new significance. In the 1960s King had expressed hope that a black man would be elected president of the United States within the next 25 years. Days before his inauguration, Barack Obama called for “a new Declaration of Independence.”

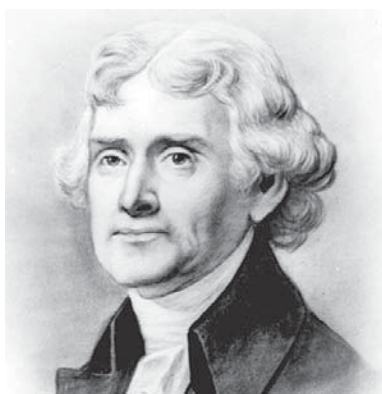
As a student of history and religion, I am moved in these momentous days to reflect on the lives and philosophy of two of our earliest presidents, John Adams and Thomas Jefferson, and focus particularly on their religious views and their belief in immortality and life eternal. It is timely in that John and Abigail Adams were the first couple to occupy the White House, and Jefferson was the first president to be inaugurated at the Capitol in Washington, D.C. And we are reminded now that both the Capitol and the White House were built primarily by slave labor.

John Adams and Thomas Jefferson, during the last fifteen years of their lives, engaged in one of the most intimate and profound correspondences of American history. Jefferson had drafted the Declaration of Independence, and Adams was instrumental in its adoption by the Continental Congress. Jefferson was vice president under Adams and



President John Adams

four years later succeeded him as President. Adams, bitter at his loss of the election, left Washington at 4 A.M. in a horse-drawn carriage rather than attend Jefferson’s inauguration. Through the mediation of a mutual friend, Dr.



President Thomas Jefferson

Benjamin Rush, Adams and Jefferson were later reconciled, and their friendship and correspondence continued

until their deaths.

In 1812 Jefferson wrote to Adams:

I have given up newspapers in exchange for Tacitus and Thucydides, for Newton and Euclid, and I find myself much happier. Sometimes, indeed, I look back to former occurrences and remembrance of our old friends and fellow-laborers, who have fallen before us. Of the signers of the Declaration of Independence, I see now living no more than half a dozen on your side of the Potomac, and on this side, myself alone.

And a year later, “Another of our friends of seventy-six is gone. We too must go, and that ere long.”

Adams confided: “Whenever I set down to write to you, I am precisely in the situation of the woodcutter on Mt. Ida. I cannot see wood for trees. So many subjects crowd upon me, that I know not with which to begin.” Jefferson likewise expressed his impatience with friendship by correspondence: “I regret the distance that separates us so widely. An hour of conversation would be worth a volume of letters. But we must take things as they come.”

Religion was the subject of much of their correspondence. Although Jefferson was vilified as an atheist and unbeliever, Adams admired and respected him. He wrote to his friend:

How much more I believe than

continues on page 42

The Editor's Desk



A New Era

Erni Martin's cover article on Presidents Adams and Jefferson is an enlightening look at the spiritual foundation that guided two of our most remarkable founding fathers.

Two hundred years after the end of Jefferson's term, Barack Obama assumed the presidency of the United States of America. This was a remarkable event.

A nation that announced its independence by declaring "that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness . . ." and then proceeded to create a constitutional democracy that excluded a race of residents from citizenship and participation, relegating those people to the degraded status of chattel property, failed in the most egregious way to fulfill its promise to humanity.

The United States exacerbated its error by institutionalizing slavery within the political, economic, and social culture to such an extent that it could not find a way to evolve into a better nation but rather had to rend itself asunder before beginning the long journey to fulfill its promise.

One hundred forty-four years after President Lincoln emancipated the slaves; 141 years after the nation ratified the Fourteenth Amendment, guaranteeing citizenship and the full protection of the law to former slaves; 112 years after the Supreme Court legalized discrimination in *Plessy vs. Ferguson*; after decades of Jim Crow laws, legalized denial of political, economic, and civil rights and decades of oppression capped by lynchings; after the grandsons of former slaves served with distinction and dedication and died for the freedom of their nation in World War II; after black men, women, and children were subjected to abuse, degradation, and jail for attempting to non-violently assert their rights to an education or a seat on a bus; 46 years after the Reverend Martin Luther King revealed his dream of a racism-free America on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial in Washington; 41 years after King was assassinated for leading the nation towards integration; 36 years after Representative Shirley Chisholm became the first African-American to run for President as a Democrat or Republican—finally the nation took a giant step toward fulfilling the promise of the founding fathers by electing an African-American as President.

Racism hasn't ended, nor have the devastating effects of centuries of oppression on the descendants of slaves been eradicated, but a sea change has nevertheless occurred. Much of the world was stunned or, at least, amazed that the United States could elect an African-American President—more

continues on page 40

Church Calendar

April 4: General Council Web-conference meeting

April 11: SHS Board of Trustees Web-conference meeting

April 18: Earth Day Youth Retreat • Kitchener (Ontario) Church of the Good Shepherd

May 9: Wayfarers Board of Managers conference call meeting

June 24–28: Annual Convention Seattle, Washington

Correction

The email address of the Central Office of General Convention is centralo@swedenborg.org. The manager's email address is manager@swedenborg.org.

Contents

Eternal Life: Reflections by Presidents John Adams and Thomas Jefferson.....	33
The Editor's Desk.....	34
Church Calendar.....	34
Book Review: Exploring the Fundamental Mind.....	35
Toward Externals: The Old Testament Testimony.....	36
Swedenborg the Traveller.....	38
Fryeburg Camp Lecture Series..	41
Renée Helenbrecht Appointed Operations Manager.....	41
2009 Convention Registration....	42
2009 UU Swedenborg Lecture ...	44
Bridgewater Pastoral Search	46
Passages	47
SHS Online Courses	47
2009 Annual Convention in Seattle.....	48

the Messenger

© The Swedenborgian Church of North America
Published monthly except July and August by The Communications Support Unit of The Swedenborgian Church of North America (founded 1817, incorporated 1861 as the General Convention of the New Jerusalem in the United States of America).

March 2009

Volume 231, No. 3, Whole Number 5338

Editor: Herb Ziegler

Design and production: Herb Ziegler

Editorial assistance: Robert Leith

Printing: Town and Country Press

Editorial Address:

Herb Ziegler, *The Messenger*
2 Hancock Place
Cambridge, MA 02139

Tel: 617.491.5181

Email: hziegler@springmail.com

Business and Subscription Address:

The Messenger, Central Office
11 Highland Avenue
Newtonville, MA 02460

Email: manager@swedenborg.org

Subscription free to members of the Swedenborgian Church; nonmembers: \$12/year; foreign: \$15/year; gift subscription from a member: \$5/year; single copies: \$1.00.

Deadline for submissions is six weeks before the first day of the month of issue.

The opinions expressed do not necessarily reflect the views of the editor or the Communications Support Unit, or represent the position of the Church.

Book Review

Exploring the Fundamentalist Mind

REVIEW BY JIM LAWRENCE

The Fundamentalist Mind: How Polarized Thinking Imperils Us All

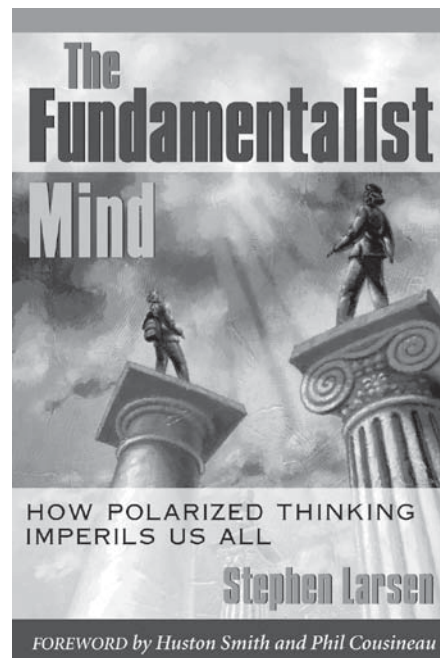
By Stephen Larsen
Quest Books, 2009
\$24.95

Steve Larsen, emeritus professor of psychology at the State University of New York at Ulster, is a longtime writer in Swedenborgian literature who has now authored an important book on the dangers of the fundamentalist mindset, not only in Christianity but in other faith traditions and in secularism as well. Steve grew up as the son of Harold Larsen, the energetic lay minister of the Swedenborgian church in Orange, New Jersey. Steve has already produced several important books, including his first one, which was a highly regarded study of shamanism, his notable authorized biography of Joseph Campbell published by Doubleday, his rich and masterly work on marriage co-authored with his wife, Robin, and published by the Swedenborg Foundation, and his recent work on neurofeedback as a potent mechanism for contemporary psychotherapy. Steve has written several articles on Swedenborg, most notably the lengthy introduction to the Paulist Press book on Swedenborg in its celebrated Classics of Western Spirituality series.

In *The Fundamentalist Mind*, Steve delves into the interdisciplinary arena of sociology, psychology, and religion in his desire to address what he believes is central to some of the world's most challenging issues: the fundamentalist mindset. A life-long New Yorker, Steve relates that the book began germinating in the period after 9/11. He noticed how the world at large seems

schizophrenic with respect to belief structures: so many do not know what to believe and are committed to non-belief in a sense, while so many others are passionately committed to belief systems and organize all their energies around the propagation of their beliefs. In some obvious ways, the latter group poses the greatest danger to the commonweal.

Steve decided to devote time and care to thinking through the perils



of fundamentalist thinking, but also avoiding the pitfalls of much of post-modern deconstructionist criticism of any and all religion as outmoded. Steve, in addition to many decades of teaching psychology at the college level and practicing as a clinical psychotherapist, is a celebrated student of cultural mythologies who possesses tremendous gifts for “diagnosing” trends and patterns in society.

After a brief introduction, the book unfolds in nine chapters, which tackle some cultural questions about religious

belief, including a fascinating chapter on the neurobiology of belief. Mastering an overview of current brain research and its relationship to cognitive science, Steve constructs a perspective on the bicameral mind that narrates how fundamentalist thinking can take over a person's style of relating to the world, as well as noting some aspects of the brain's life generally in all religious experience.

Two core chapters are in the middle of the book: “Authority, Ritual, and Dissociation” and “Fragments of the Gods.” In the former, Steve analyzes both neurologically and psychodynamically how belief journeys can become rigid and inflexible. In the latter he makes a compelling case for humility in the realm of ultimate questions, both advocating for an adventurous approach to spirituality and also a humility born of an awareness of the limitations of any one person for reconnoitering ultimate questions. The next two chapters take a hard look at two major faith traditions with well-known large divisions of fundamentalist followers (Christianity and Islam); he then moves to a consideration of problems associated with secular fundamentalism. In other places in the book, Steve addresses how fundamentalism can strike all kinds of metaphysical groups, especially those who posit answers to all questions.

The volume concludes with two delightful chapters. “The Five-Minute Fundamentalist” offers a self-help approach relying on dreamwork, journal writing, biofeedback and self-regulation as one approach to maintaining balance and adventure in the spiritual quest. “Natural Religion” is Steve's exposition on what is involved in a healthy religious perspective, and it is here that Swedenborg makes a strong appearance. Get the book to see how he does it!

continues on page 45

Toward External: The Old Testament Testimony

BY DAVID FEKETE



I would like to contribute to the discussion following Steve Sanchez's article about the development of Israelite religion. According to Swedenborg,

over time the Jewish religion tended towards increasingly external forms of worship. There is much evidence from the Old Testament to substantiate Swedenborg's claim that over time the Jewish religion became progressively external. Approaching the subject from the testimony of the Old Testament provides a critique that is "internal"—that is, from the Jewish scriptures themselves—rather than external—that is from a Christian viewpoint.

I would like to briefly sketch the development of Jewish religion from the tradition itself using "historical-critical" methods, which are used by most academic religious studies departments. These methods may prove challenging to Swedenborgians, as the way academic theologians see the Bible is very different from the way Swedenborg sees it. Yet the result may be interesting to Swedenborgians. Indeed, the result suggests a confirmation of Swedenborg's claim from an entirely different perspective, an objective perspective, and an entirely independent confirmation of Swedenborg's claim.

The Heart of the Law

The heart of the religion of Israel is compassion for the unfortunate and the marginalized, as well as justice. These teachings were to be practiced by

all Israelites, not only the leaders, judges, and priests. "You shall be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation" (Exodus 19:6). The oldest articulation of community in the Hebrew Scriptures is called the Book of the Covenant. It is found in Exodus 20:21–23:19. There we find exhortations to compassion and love for the neighbor. Laws of compassion are particularly directed to those who are marginalized and could easily have been exploited. Consider the following examples:

Do not take advantage of a widow or an orphan. If you do and they cry out to me, I will certainly hear their cry (Exodus 22:22).

If you lend money to one of my people among you who is needy, do not be like a moneylender; charge him no interest. If you take your neighbor's cloak as a pledge, return it to him by sunset, because his cloak is the only covering he has for his body. What else will he sleep in? When he cries out to me, I will hear, for I am compassionate (Exodus 22:25–27).

We find in this ancient legal code love, even for enemies:

If you come across your enemy's ox or ass wandering off, be sure to take it back to him. If you see the ass of someone who hates you fallen down under its load, do not leave it there; be sure to help him with it (Exodus 23:4–5).

These laws of love, compassion, and justice apply to everyone in the community, not only to the Jews themselves:

Do not oppress an alien; you yourselves know how it feels to be aliens, because you were aliens in Egypt (Exodus 23:9).

Although these progressive laws did not prohibit slavery, they were remark-

ably compassionate on the issue. All slaves were to be freed after six years.

When you buy a Hebrew slave, he shall be your slave for six years, but in the seventh year he shall go free and pay nothing (Exodus 21:2).

These laws of compassion, love, and justice formed the heart of the Law, and everyone was bound by them. These were the same laws that Jesus reminded the Jews of in his ministry. He attempted to remind the Jews of the heart of their tradition—a tradition that had become covered over with regulations of purity and pollution and sacrificial rituals.

The Coming of the King

When Israel decided to have a king like the other nations, it was seen as a rejection of God. The prophet Samuel brings his disappointment to God. "Listen to all that the people are saying to you; it is not you they have rejected as their king, but me" (1 Samuel 8:7).

With the king, a huge upheaval in the way Israel worshipped occurred. The Jews modeled their king after the other nations around them. This meant that the king himself was the religious center of the nation. He was seen as the intermediary between God and the people. No longer was each individual a carrier of national holiness—it was all focused on the king.

With the king came a new form of worship. The king had to perform proper rituals to ensure the fertility of the land, peace from enemies, and the prosperity of the people. This meant, essentially, performing the correct sacrifices in the correct ways and celebrating the holy feasts and celebrations according to the sacred calendar.

A sharp critique of sacrifice as a means for salvation runs throughout the prophets. They continually cry out for justice and, at the same time, denounce trusting in sacrifice:

Go to Bethel and sin;
 go to Gilgal and sin yet more.
 Bring your sacrifices every
 morning,
 your tithes every three years.
 Burn leavened bread as a thank of-
 fering
 and brag about your freewill offer-
 ings—
 boast about them, you Israelites,
 for this is what you love to do, . . .
 (Amos 4:4-5)

Amos and the other prophets call
 for a return to justice and compassion
 for the marginalized Israelites:

Seek me and live;
 do not seek Bethel,
 do not go to Gilgal,
 do not journey to Beersheba. . . .
 Seek the LORD and live, . . .
 You who turn justice into bitterness
 and cast righteousness to the
 ground . . .
 You hate the one who reproves you
 in court
 and despise him who tells the
 truth.
 You trample on the poor
 and force him to give you grain
 . . .
 You oppress the righteous and take
 bribes
 and you deprive the poor of jus-
 tice in the courts . . .
 Hate evil, love good;
 maintain justice in the courts
 (Amos 5:4, 5, 7, 10, 11, 12, 14, 15).

Jeremiah is particularly vocal about
 the newfound trust in sacrifice. He re-
 minds Israel that in their early days,
 when they were first delivered from
 Egypt, sacrifice had no part in their
 worship:

But when I brought your fore-
 fathers out of Egypt, I gave them
 no commands about whole-offer-
 ing and sacrifice; I said not a word
 about them. What I did command
 them was this: if you obey me, I
 will be your God and you shall be
 my people. You must conform to

all my commands, if you would
 prosper (Jeremiah 21:22-23).
 Within this context we can under-
 stand those famous words of Micah:
 With what shall I come before the
 LORD
 and bow down before the exalted
 God?
 shall I come before him with
 burnt offerings.
 with calves a year old?
 Will the LORD be pleased with
 thousands of rams,
 with ten thousand rivers of oil?
 . . .
 “He has shown you, O man, what is
 good.
 And what does the LORD require
 of you?
 To act justly and to love mercy
 and to walk humbly with your
 God (Micah 6:7, 8).

So with the coming of the king, the
 early laws about love, compassion, and
 justice were displaced. The king became
 the center of religious observance. No
 longer was Israel “a kingdom of priests
 and a holy people.” Sacrifice and the
 sacred calendar became principal forms
 of religious observance. The “internals”
 of worship, namely love and compas-
 sion, were being replaced by the rela-
 tively “external” sacrificial rituals.

Exile and Reconstruction

Another upheaval in Israelite wor-
 ship came with the Babylonian captiv-
 ity. Babylon conquered the Southern
 Kingdom of Judah in 587 BCE. A tre-
 mendous challenge was now posed to
 Israel. How could they remain Israel-
 ites when they were no longer in the
 holy land, had no king, and were in a
 country dominated by gods other than
 Yahweh? During this period, all those
 tedious dietary regulations and rules
 about ritual purity and pollution be-
 came the dominant religion; by follow-
 ing the rules of purity and pollution,
 along with the dietary regulations, the
 Jews could still maintain a sense of eth-

nic identity in a foreign land.

The Babylonian empire was over-
 thrown by Cyrus of Persia in 538 BCE.
 Cyrus allowed the Israelites to return
 home and to rebuild the temple in Je-
 rusalem. However, Cyrus was king,
 and Israel was not allowed a king of
 their own—Cyrus still owned Israel.
 Cyrus did allow the temple to be re-
 built and for the priests of the temple
 to rule Israel. (n the period of kingship,
 when the temple was the religious cen-
 ter, the priests did not rule.) Now the
 priests exercised the authority of the
 king. Everything in Israel surrounded
 the temple. Land was apportioned with
 the temple as the center. Each tribe was
 arranged hierarchically according to its
 proximity to the temple.

If the religious calendar and proper
 sacrificial rituals were prominent dur-
 ing the period of kingship, now these
 dynamics were intensified. Everyone in
 Israel was required to perform sacrifices
 according to the religious calendar and
 to atone for any wrongdoing they may
 have committed.

The priests who ruled Israel and ad-
 ministered the temple sacrifices were
 called Zadokites. They were descen-
 dants of Zadok, whom Solomon put
 in charge of his temple. The tradition-
 al priests, the Levites, were demot-
 ed to temple servants. Now the ambi-
 tion of the Zadokites to rule exclusive-
 ly was mixed with temple priestcraft.
 The Zadokites needed to suppress dis-
 sidents in order to seize control, and
 the primary targets of their oppression
 were the very Levites who saw their
 historical role as Israel's priests denied
 them.

To know how the Zadokites ruled
 over the reconstituted temple state of
 Israel, one needs only read the book of
 Leviticus. The tedious rules of sacrifice
 and diet were the primary concern of
 Jewish religion in this time. Notice-
 ably absent are those beautiful laws

continues on page 40

Swedenborg the Traveller: (Denmark, Holland, France, & Italy)

BY DENNIS DUCKWORTH

[This article first appeared in the January 1965 *New Church Messenger*.]

Emmanuel Swedenborg was a great traveller. There were periods of his life when he was a great “stop-at-home,” for deep and productive scholarship demands long hours of quietness, seated at the desk. But it is the hallmark of genius to be able to do many things greatly and to be able to do some great things simultaneously. Swedenborg could travel greatly, could endure the tedium and discomfort of prolonged travel, could enjoy the diversity of the ever-changing scene, and *at the same time* could absorb information of the deepest and most intricate kind, and produce written work of profoundest scholarship.

It is amazing to realize that as he was sight-seeing in what was soon to be Madame de Pompadour’s Paris, or wending his way by gondola through the waterways of Venice, or reviving his schoolboy memories of Cicero in the Forum in Rome, he was all the time excogitating the details of that great anatomical and physiological work, *The Economy of the Animal Kingdom*, or as it is better named, *The Economy of the Kingdom of the Soul*.

Swedenborg the traveller was Swedenborg the scholar; and the whole purpose of his four-year tour through Europe between 1736 and 1740 was scholarship, research, study, and practice in the great schools of anatomy.

His Diary

He carried with him a bulky volume which became the diary of his journey. Written in Swedish and known as the *Resebeskrifning*, it is Codex 88 of the Swedenborg mss. in the Library of the

health. He was not the pale and frail scholar of tradition and popular opinion. He was strong and energetic, mentally and bodily robust, and—to use the modern expression—tough. No weakening could have travelled, as he did, often through the night, in the public stagecoach, along rough and dangerous roads, through winter’s snow and summer’s heat. He was able to take the discomforts of travel in his stride.

No Eye for Beauty?

It has been said that Swedenborg had no eye for scenic beauty. The criticism is fair up to a point, for he rarely speaks of the beauty of nature around him. He could cross the Apennines between Bologna and Florence through some of the finest of Mediterranean scenery with nothing but the curt comment, “The road consists of mountains.” The allegation is that Swedenborg, a highly skilled mineralogist, could only look upon his surroundings with a mineralogist’s eye. That he had such an eye is an undoubted fact; and his journal abounds with comments upon marble columns, Italian mosaic work, Dutch bricks and tiles, the paved road to Mons, and the rock formations in the new dock at Copenhagen.

It should be realised, however, that in all this, Swedenborg was but the child of his age. The eighteenth century as a whole had very little regard for scenic splendour, for the Romantic Era had not yet dawned; Wordsworth, Shelley, and Byron, and the German Romanticists, Goethe, Schiller, and Herder, with their passionate devotion to natural beauty, were yet to be. The simple point is that scenic beauty was not an eighteenth-century idea; and in his



The cover of the January 1965 *New Church Messenger*, depicting Swedenborg’s travels through Europe.

Royal Academy of Sciences, Stockholm. This was translated into Latin by Dr. Achatius Kahi of Sweden as the *Itinerarium*. It is the basic authority for this article, but tribute should be paid also to the fine historical study of the life of Swedenborg by the late Dr. Alfred Acton, published in four mimeographed volumes, used for this article.

In middle life at the time of this journey, Swedenborg was in excellent

seeming lack of interest in the “appearances” of nature, Swedenborg was typical of his period. He was alive to beauty but never thought to comment upon it.

He travelled quite often on a Sunday. His movements were not inhibited by pietistic and sabbatarian scruples. But throughout his travels he was fairly assiduous in church attendance, as the journal records.

His rate of travel, checked against our modern timetables, was painfully slow; an average of between twenty and thirty miles a day. Thus Lyon to Turin, two hundred forty miles in nine days (twenty-six miles per day) or Milan to Venice, one hundred and seventy miles in six and a half days (twenty-six miles per day).

He travelled by two means, public stagecoach and, what must have been delightful, canal boat. A considerable part of the journey, especially through Holland, Belgium, and Northern France, was by *treckschuyt* (horse-drawn canal barge).

Passing through Customs

One may be sure that Swedenborg travelled *light*; all great travellers do. The lighter the baggage, the less trouble with customs! Swedenborg left a list of the contents of his travelling trunk—change of clothing, books, six or seven bottles of medicine in a case, a little copper kettle, teapot and teacup, and a small pocket pistol. Whether he used the pistol on his travels, he does not say.

The Europe of 1740 was much more sub-divided than the Europe of today. Germany was a mass of dukedoms, and Italy consisted of a number of kingdoms, principalities, and republics. No official passport or visa was required for passing from one state to another, but the traveller was subjected to a thorough customs search with its accompanying irritations, suspicions, and malpractices. Books especially were suspect, and no doubt Swedenborg would have had to use his powers of persuasion at many a

frontier post. The effective entree into a country was the bribery of the *douanier*, but as to whether Swedenborg used that kind of persuasion, the *Itinerarium* is silent.

On this long, four-year journey from Stockholm to Rome and back, there were four great halting places. The first was Paris, where he stayed eighteen months; the second, Venice, where he stayed four months; the third, Rome, where he stayed five months; and the fourth, Amsterdam, on the return journey, where he stayed for over a year. So, although his total time was about four years, his actual travelling time was not much more than nine months. For the rest of the time he was safely and comfortably housed in four of the largest and most beautiful cities of the European continent.

His Route

Swedenborg travelled:

- From Stockholm by stage coach through Nyköping and Linköping and along the shores of Lake Vatter to the seaport of Hålsingborg;
- Across the sound to the Danish island of Zealand, to Helsingor (the Elsinore of *Hamlet*), a cosmopolitan port, then a five-hour ride to Copenhagen and after a week, ninety miles across the flat, cultivated fields of the island;
- Across the Great Belt and the Little Belt to the mainland, and south to Hamburg;
- After five days by boat down the Elbe to Harburg, and by coach across Luneburg Heath to Hanover;
- Westwards across the Dutch border, through Deventer and Naarden and over the Zuyder Zee, to Amsterdam and then by *treckschuyt* and coach to Rotterdam, Antwerp, and Brussels, where for the first time Swedenborg enters “Roman Catholic country”;
- South across the Flanders battlefields of the First World War to Paris;

- After 18 months, by *diligence* through the wine-producing regions of Champagne and Burgundy, to Lyon;
- Eastwards into the hilly country of mulberry trees to the Kingdom of Savoy and then up into the wild Mountainous scenery of the High Alps, then by *traineau* (mule-drawn sledge) over the Mt. Cenis pass.
- Down to the sunny plain of Northern Italy, through Turin and Milan to Venice—“the gayest and most immoral city of Europe”;
- After four months, south through Mantua, Bologna, Florence, and the hot Roman hinterland to the Eternal City itself.

During the five months of his stay in Rome, Swedenborg visited the Vatican, St. Peter’s, the Forum, the Colosseum, the Capitol, the ghetto, and the Church of S. Giovanni Lateran (reputedly the oldest Christian church in the world).

The return was roughly the reverse of the outward journey, but Swedenborg stayed a year in Amsterdam.

Why He Travelled

The four cities—Paris, Venice, Rome, and Amsterdam—were exceedingly productive spots en route, as they were intended to be. The whole purpose of the itinerary was intellectual, in a thorough-going eighteenth-century fashion. Swedenborg was travelling to learn; sight-seeing was a diversion, a relaxation. The Alps and the Apennines were but obstacles in the way, to be overcome as expeditiously as possible. Work came first.

What was the work he was doing in Paris, Venice, Rome, and Amsterdam? It can be summarised briefly. In Paris he was studying anatomy and practising dissection; in Venice he was writing, producing brilliant original speculative work; in Rome again he was writing; and in Amsterdam, on the return journey, he was both writing and

continues on page 45

Toward External

continued from page 37

about compassion, love, and justice we saw earlier in the Book of the Covenant. Religion was seen as performing certain acts of purity and bringing the proper sacrifices to the temple for the sin one had committed. These regulations of purity and sacrifice are contained in a segment of the Old Testament called the Priestly Writer. It was a collection of laws and regulations written by priests who were striving for exclusive control of Israelite worship. During the period of restoration, it was this Priestly Writer's work that was the principal religious text for Israel.

Yet a strong voice of dissent is preserved in the Hebrew scriptures. There were still Israelites who remembered the early ethical teachings of Israel's very beginning. The voice of the dissident movement criticized the temple as the center of worship:

This is what the LORD says:

"Heaven is my throne
and the earth is my footstool.
Where is the house you will
build for me?" (Isaiah 66:1)

This voice emphasized spiritual qualities among all people. "This is the one I esteem: he who is humble and contrite in spirit, and trembles at my word" (Isaiah 66:2). Even in this time of priestly power and domination from the temple, a voice can be found that echoes the teachings of early Israel, "The path of the righteous is level; O upright One, you make the way of the righteous smooth" (Isaiah 26:7). And God's salvation is for all peoples, not just the Zadokites and those who obey them:

On this mountain the LORD Almighty will prepare
a feast of rich food for all peoples,
a banquet of aged wine—
the best of meats and the finest of wines.

On this mountain he will destroy

The Editor's Desk

continued from page 34

amazed that he is the son of a Muslim with the middle name Hussein.

It does not matter for the significance of this moment whether President Obama is a Democrat or a Republican, liberal or conservative, or whether he will achieve the greatness as a leader his supporters expect or end his administration with a whimper as his detractors predict. The fact of his election is chiseled in the stone tablets of history.

Barack Obama is, after all, but a man, and his work is in the arena of politics, defined and circumscribed by

the shroud that enfolds all peoples,
the sheet that covers all nations;
he will swallow up death forever.
The Sovereign LORD will wipe
away the tears from all faces; . . .
(Isaiah 25:6-8)

The scriptures preserve the development of Hebrew worship over a period of millennia. It is a faith tradition that has been forced to adapt to tumultuous political and historical events. These scriptures contain evidence that can be said to support Swedenborg's claim of progressively external worship. The beautiful ethics of the Book of the Covenant gradually was displaced by sacrifice, ritual, and dietary laws. The heart of the Old Testament, which was love, compassion, and justice turned into priestly factions and the power dynamics of the Zadokite temple rulers.

But within this general development, there are voices that preserve the early teachings of the Book of the Covenant. There are voices that offer God's salvation to the whole world. While the testimony of the Old Testament may be said to confirm Swedenborg's appraisal of the Jewish religion *in general*, we need to be careful about attributing

compromise and accommodation. Life will go on as usual, but something has changed in our national life, our identity as a people, and in the progress of humanity. Civilization does not always progress, but in this moment we have taken a leap forward.

Emanuel Swedenborg wrote about the evolving spiritual self in the life-long process of spiritual regeneration, being reborn. He draws parallels to the evolving Lord's Church on earth, detailing epochs on the road to the New Christian Church and the evolving human being, from the self-centered child through gradual love of truth and

continues on page 47

this doctrine to all Jews. The dissenting voice we found in Isaiah and the other prophets is also testimony to a remnant of the internal worship with which the Jewish religion began. We don't know what lies behind the face of the people we meet. We can't judge an individual by Swedenborg's claim about a people. William Blake said it best,

And all must love the human form
In heathen, Turk and Jew.
Where Mercy, Love and Pity dwell,
There God is dwelling too. ☩

The Rev. Dr. David Fekete is pastor of the Church of the Holy City in Edmonton, Alberta.

Sources:

- Anderson, Bernard W. *Understanding the Old Testament*. New Jersey, Prentice-Hall, 1986.
- Bright, John. *A History of Israel*. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1981.
- Hanson, Paul D. *The People Called: The Growth of Community in the Bible*. San Francisco, Harper and Row, 1986.

While I drew on the above sources for this article, I am not asserting that the authors would concur with the Swedenborgian claim I am using their texts to support.

Fryeburg Camp Announces Summer Lecture Series

Fryeburg New Church Assembly announces its summer camp lecture series for August 1–8 and 9–16, 2009.

Week 1:

40 Days and 40 Years: What's the Significance of "40" in the Word?

During the church year, we are mindful of special periods of 40 days; Advent, Lent and the 40 days after Easter until Pentecost. What is the origin of these periods of religious observation in the Christian calendar? What does Swedenborg offer as explanation of the significance of the number 40? The 40 days of rain in Noah's time and the 40 days Moses spent on Mt. Sinai are two notable examples. Throughout the biblical narrative, the Israelites experience numerous 40 year periods wandering in the wilderness, periods of peace, and periods of domination. And, of course, we know that Jesus' period of temptation in the desert was of 40 days duration. This week's lecture topics will explore some of these significant biblical times, how they enhance our church year observances and what they offer us in our individual and collective spiritual journeys.

Week 2:

Practice, Practice, Practice—the Path of Spiritual Growth through Daily Life!

The process of regeneration that Swedenborg outlines begins with repentance of things we want to change and then a period of reformation, where, with the Lord's help, we pray to and work with the Lord to make those changes a reality. This is the daily walk with God that each of us takes as we grow spiritually. What are some of the spiritual practices, tasks, methods and devotions that are useful in stay-

Renée Helenbrecht Appointed Operations Manager

The General Convention has announced the appointment of Renée Hellenbrecht as operations manager.

At its strategic planning meeting in February, 2008, the General Council began a process of redefining the position of Central Office manager. It created an operations manager position that would replace the office manager position upon Martha Bauer's retirement. Martha, who was part of the planning process, is Renée's primary trainer and mentor.

In November, the Council created a job description for the operations manager, and President Chris Laitner appointed a search committee that would select the best two or three applicants replying to advertisements on Monster.com and in *The Messenger*.

The committee, comprised of Jim Erickson, Lori Steinhiser, Susannah Currie, Susan Wood-Ashton, and Chris Laitner, received 32 applications. After matching skills and backgrounds to the job description, conducting phone interviews, and two in-person interviews, the committee narrowed the field to two candidates whose names and resumes they presented to the General Council. The Council, after careful

review, voted to hire Renée Hellenbrecht for the position of operations manager.

Renée already has a working relationship with the denomination at the Central Office in Newtonville, Massachusetts. For the past eighteen months, a graduate of Emerson College with a major in radio/audio, and minors in history and political communication, Renée has been the Central Office assistant, working with Martha Bauer, Central Office

manager, on daily and organizational tasks as well as creating and organizing material for the Annual Convention and producing the annual *Journal*.

Renée Hellenbrecht has begun her training period with Martha Bauer. In the fall, she will assume the full responsibilities of the position. The search committee and the General Council are very pleased that Renée has accepted this new position, and is confident that she will bring excellent skills and creativity to it. ☞



Mite Box 2009

The National Alliance of New Church Women invites you to contribute to the Mite Box for 2009. The contributions will support the Swedenborgian Church of the Southwest Desert, a new church founded by Rev. Sky Paradise in New Mexico. Please make checks out to "The North American Alliance of Swedenborgian Women," and mail to:

Jeannette Hille
4240 Larch Place N.
Plymouth, MN 55442

ing mindful of our spiritual growth in the material world? What can we learn from our theology to help us to creatively engage in useful tasks that help our development as well as serve others? This week's lectures will be offering tools and ideas to spark enthusiasm and renewed commitment in your spiritual journey.. ☞

185th Session of the General Convention of the New Jerusalem

June 24-28, 2009 • Council of Ministers: June 21-23

Convention 2009 will be held in Seattle, Washington on the campus of The University of Washington. To learn more about UW, visit www.washington.edu. **To learn more about the 2009 Convention and view a list of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)**, please visit www.swedenborg.org or call the Central Office at 617.969.4240.

- **Lodging:** We will be housed in two dorms in close proximity: McMahon and Haggett. McMahon's typical layout has four double rooms clustered around a shared lounge, bathroom and balcony. The dining hall is in McMahon. Haggett Hall's rooms are arranged corridor-style with one bathroom per floor. Every two floors share a lounge with a fireplace and TV.
- **Childcare:** The childcare program will run during meetings and receptions for children ages 3–12. If you will be bringing children to Convention, please read the Convention FAQ or contact the Central Office for details, deadlines, and to obtain the necessary forms. Dorm rooms will not have extra cots or cribs, so please plan accordingly.
- **Teen Program:** The youth program runs from Wednesday, June 24

through Sunday, June 28, and is supervised by the youth director, Kurt Fekete. If you want your teen age 13–17 to attend without a parent, please see the FAQ or contact the Central Office for details.

- **Meals:** All guests staying off campus will have to pay for meals when entering the dining hall. Please read the FAQ for details.
- **Parking:** Permits are available for those staying on campus. Please contact the Central Office **before the end of the registration period** for rates and to secure a permit. Commuters must pay for parking each day when entering the campus.
- **Please note that if you wish to stay on campus, you must check in no later than June 24 and check out on June 28.**
- **Cancellations:** If you do not cancel on or before Wednesday, May 27, you will forfeit your registration fee. If you cancel less than 24 hours before your check-in, you will forfeit your registration fee, as well as the cost of one day of room and board (plus tax) or ten percent of the package rate, whichever is greater. If you fail to show up, you will forfeit your full prepayment.

Registration Form

Name		Attending Women's Alliance luncheon?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Name			Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
(on campus guests only; average cost \$12/day; contact Central Office for total cost and more details)		Will you need a parking permit?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Street		Apt. #		
City	State (Province)	Zip		
Home Church	Email	Day Phone		
Names, ages, and genders of children accompanying you				
Requests (dietary, mobility, roommate)				

Please print any additional names or information on the back or on a separate sheet

Registration	Amt	#	Total
Adult	\$105		
Teen (13-17)	\$90		
Child (3-12)	\$55		
Under 3 years old	Free		
*Family maximum	\$300		
One Day Registration	\$40		
Local Volunteer	\$55		
Women's Alliance Lunch (on campus)	\$15		
Women's Alliance Lunch (off campus)	\$25		

Room & Board	# Nights	#	Total
Single (\$86 per person)			
Double (\$65.50 per person)			
Grand Total (from both Registration and Room)			

*Family maximum price applies to immediate family members only.

Payment Information

All prices are in US currency. **If you pay with Canadian funds, please add \$5 for handling of each Canadian check. All bills must be paid in full before May 27.** No registration refunds after May 27. Bills may be paid by Visa or by MasterCard. You may call the Central Office to make a secure credit card payment at 617.969.4240.

Visa ☐ MasterCard ☐ Expiration Date: _____

Card Number: _____

Cardholder's Name: _____

Signature: _____

Send checks payable to The Swedenborgian Church to:

Central Office, The Swedenborgian Church
11 Highland Ave., Newtonville, MA 02460

Adams and Jefferson

continued from page 33

you, I may explain in a future letter. This much I will say at present, I have found so many difficulties in my religious studies that I am not astonished where you are; and so far from sentencing you to perdition, hope soon to meet you in another country.

In regard to his religion, Jefferson wrote: "It is known to my God and myself alone. Its evidence before the world is to be sought in my life; if that has been honest and dutiful to society, the religion which has regulated it cannot be a bad one."

As the two men grew older, they shared more and more of their belief in immortality. At the age of 80, Adams stated:

Without the supposition of a future state, mankind and this globe appear to me the most sublime and beautiful bubble, and bauble, and trust that Ruler with his skies, I do; and earnestly wish for his commands, which to the utmost of my power shall be implicitly and piously obeyed.

At the close of the letter, Adams declared: "I prophesy that you and I shall soon meet, and be better friends than ever."

In November 1818, Jefferson learned of the death of John Adams' wife, Abigail. He wrote to his dear friend immediately:

Tried myself in the school of affliction, by the loss of every form of connection which can rive the human heart, I know well and feel what you have lost, what you have suffered, are suffering, and have yet to endure. The same trials have taught me that for ills so immeasurable, time and silence are the only medicine. I will not, therefore by useless condolences, open afresh the sluices of your grief, nor, although mingling sin-

cerely my tears with yours, will I say a word more where words are vain, but that it is of some comfort to us both, that the term is not very distant, at which we are to deposit in the same casket, our sorrows and suffering bodies, and to ascend in essence to an ecstatic meeting with the friends we have loved and lost, and whom we shall still love and never lose again. God bless you and support you in your heavy affliction.

John Adams was greatly consoled, and he replied:

Your letter gave me great delight not only by the divine consolation it afforded me under my great affliction; but as it gave me full proof of your restoration to health. While you live, I seem to have a Bank at Monticello on which I can draw for a Letter of Friendship and entertainment when I please.

Adams then went on to reflect on his own faith in life beyond death:

I know not how to prove physically that we shall meet and know each other in a future state; nor does revelation, as I can find give us any positive assurance of such a felicity. My reasons for believing it, as I do, most undoubtingly, are all moral and divine. I believe in God and in his wisdom and benevolence; and I cannot conceive that such a Being could make such a species as the human merely to live and die on this earth. If I did not believe in a future state, I should believe in no God. This universe; this all; this totality would appear with all its swelling pomp; a boyish Fire Work. And if there be a future state, why should the Almighty dissolve forever all the tender ties which unite us so delightfully in this world and forbid us to see each other in the next?

Jefferson faced death with serenity, and in 1823 wrote to Adams: "I await God's time and will, with more read-

iness than reluctance. May we meet there again, in Congress, with our ancient colleagues, and receive them with the seal of approbation, 'well done, good and faithful servants.'"

As the end of his life drew near, John Adams described his innermost feelings to his beloved friend:

You say that you would like to go over life again. In this I could not agree; I had rather go forward and meet whatever is to come. I have met in this life with great trials. I have had a Father, and lost him. I have had a Mother and lost her. I have had a Wife and lost her. I have had children and lost them. I have had honorable and worthy friends and lost them—and instead of suffering these griefs again, I had rather go forward and meet my destiny.

Adams continued,

I am certainly very near the end of my life. I am far from trifling with the idea of death, which is a great and solemn event. But I contemplate it without terror or dismay; either it is a transformation, or it is the end. If the end, which I cannot believe, and do not believe, there is then an end of all, but I shall never know it, and why should I dread it, which I do not; if a transformation I shall ever be under the same constitution in the universe, and I am not afraid to trust and confide in it.

On July 4, 1826, President John Quincy Adams was listening in the Capitol to patriotic speeches commemorating the 50th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. Unknown to the President, his father lay dying in Quincy, Massachusetts, while Jefferson was near death at Monticello.

John Adams, 91 years old, knew it was the Fourth. "It is a good day" he said. He had already sent a toast

continues on next page

Adams and Jefferson

continued from preceding page

to the townspeople of Quincy: "Independence forever." Resting quietly, he spoke to members of his family, and in the afternoon, about one o'clock, his granddaughter saw his lips moving and heard him say: "Jefferson still survives." At six o'clock he slipped quietly into death.

Only five hours earlier—at one o'clock, just as Adams spoke his last words Thomas Jefferson, the author of the Declaration of Independence, died at Monticello in his 83rd year.

The death of the two old men who had been patriots and colleagues in Philadelphia that hot July of 1776, then political rivals, Presidents, and finally friends again, seemed beyond mere coincidence. When John Quincy Adams learned of the events and circumstances, he wrote: "The time, the manner, the coincidence . . . are visible and palpable marks of Divine favor." He had the following words inscribed on a marble tablet placed next to his father's tomb:

On the Fourth of July, 1826,
He was summoned
To the Independence of Immortality
and to the judgment of his God.

The focus of the complex life of Thomas Jefferson can be summed up in the single word, freedom. "I have sworn," he said, "upon the altar of God, eternal hostility against every form of tyranny over the mind of man." For his tomb he chose the epitaph:

Here was buried Thomas Jefferson, author of the Declaration of American Independence, of the statute of Virginia for religious freedom, and father of the University of Virginia.

(Note that he said nothing about his being President of the United States.)

Adams and Jefferson were great and noble men. The American Revolution

would never have succeeded without John Adams. President Kennedy once hosted a luncheon for Nobel Prize winners and said there had never been a gathering at the White House of such brilliant minds since President Jefferson dined alone.

I have focused on Adams and Jefferson's faith in immortality, and found it very compatible with Emanuel Swedenborg's teachings: life beyond is dynamic and built on the past. We awakened from death the same person we were in this world, retaining our memories and deep friendships. The frailty of our physical bodies is removed, and in full consciousness of the spiritual world, we are free to continue our growth into angelhood. Life here on earth is a seminary for heaven.

There is evidence that both men were familiar with Swedenborg, and we know that Jefferson twice invited the Swedenborgian minister in Baltimore to preach at the United States Capitol. Adams and Jefferson believed that the essence of religion is the quality of our lives. Swedenborg had written that "in the spiritual world, into which everyone comes after death, the question is not asked what your belief has been or your doctrine, but what your life has been."

As we enter into a new era, and a new chapter in our lives, I pray that we may dedicate ourselves to this principle, that we may move steadfastly in our journey toward eternal life. ☩

The Reverend Ernest O. Martin is a retired Swedenborgian minister living in Duvall, Washington.

References:

The Founding Fathers, John Adams, A Biography in His Own Words, edited by James Bishop Peabody, Published by Newsweek, New York, 1973.

In God We Trust, The Religious Beliefs and Ideas of the American Founding Fathers, Selected, Edited and with Commentary by Norman Cousins, Harper & Brothers, New York, 1958.

2009 Swedenborg Lecture at UU

On March 24 Dr. Kim Nielsen, professor of history and women's studies at the University of Wisconsin, Green Bay, will present the Annual Swedenborg Lecture at Urbana University in Urbana, Ohio: "We Please God Better with Useful Deeds: Swedenborgianism and Helen Keller's Social Activism."

According to Nielsen, Helen Keller embraced the Swedenborgian faith tradition as a teenager in 1896, often referring to it as the source of her social activism. Nielsen will discuss Keller's life-long involvement in radical and progressive politics and the connections Keller made between her political and her religious beliefs.

Dr. Nielsen will be on campus from March 23 through March 26. The University is encouraging students and the local community to attend the lecture and interact with Dr. Nielsen in other available venues during her residency.

Stephen B. Jones, president of Urbana, said, "We are blessed in hosting such scholarly lectures, which aid us in the pursuit of understanding the university's rich heritage and appreciating our place in a complex world dealing with critical issues of the day. Helen Keller's life and activism offer timeless lessons for living, learning, and serving."

The annual Swedenborg Lecture and Scholar in Residence Program at Urbana University is funded by a grant from the General Convention. ☩

The Adams Chronicles, Four Generations of Greatness, by Jack Shepherd, Little Brown & Co., Boston, 1975.

HBO FILMS, DVD, JOHN ADAMS SERIES (Public Television)

Heaven and Its Wonders and Hell, The New Century Edition, by Emanuel Swedenborg, Swedenborg Foundation, West Chester, Pa., 2000.

Swedenborg's Travels

continued from page 39

publishing—i.e. editing, proofreading, and generally seeing through the press that great work, the fruit of his travels, *Oeconomia Regni Animalis* —*The Economy of the Kingdom of the Soul*. This work is an ornament of human thought and is all the more impressive when it is realised that it was born in transit.

There is no doubt that Swedenborg undertook the long and tedious journey from Stockholm to Paris in 1736 so that he might be a practising student at the famous school of surgery in the French capital. Soon after his arrival he found permanent lodgings in the *Rue de l'Observatoire*, on the Left Bank near the Luxemburg and the Sorbonne, a stone's throw from the anatomy school. Here he not only mixed with the finest experimental anatomists and physiologists of the day but also used the scalpel himself. He speaks of "my instruments." He says, "When I was following the direction of the muscles of the heart I found small ducts which led to the coronary vessels." Again he writes, "When I was exploring this nerve I followed it into many regions, etc."—proof positive of the practical nature of his studies.

Of course, he saw the sights of the city too. It was a place that had retained much of its medieval character, with narrow streets, unpaved lanes, and much squalor surrounding much opulence. It was the Paris of the youth-king, Louis XV, of the dissipated regent, the Duke of Orleans, and of Madame de Pompadour-to-be. (For the flavor of "Swedenborg's Paris," read the excellent biography of Madame de Pompadour, by Nancy Mitford or Sterne's *Sentimental Journey*)

Other Experiences

Quite apart from the anatomical studies, there was something significant in Swedenborg's visit to Paris at

this time. It was a part of the pattern of that Providential education for his Divinely-appointed mission. Paris was, then as now, the shop window of the world; and it is possible that Swedenborg would never have been able to write his work on *Conjugal Love* (*Marriage Love*) without a pretty thorough knowledge of the world in both its noble and seamy aspects. Again, he could hardly have written, say, *The Apocalypse Explained* or *The Apocalypse Revealed*, without a firsthand knowledge of Roman Catholicism—which Paris, and to a greater extent Venice and Rome, supplied. Swedenborg's anatomical tour of Europe between 1736 and 1740 taught him far more than anatomy; it taught him much that was essential for his later revelatory work.

In Venice, the city of gaiety and gondolas, he brought forth the first fruits of his Parisian pursuits. Here he wrote that which he styled, "my first project on the brain"—1180 pages of brilliant deduction under three general headings: "The Cortical and Medullary Substances of the Brain"; "The Coverings and Blood Vessels of the Brain"; and "The Parts of the Cerebrum." He put forward—here in Venice—the hypothesis of what the medical world now calls the *cerebro-spinal fluid*. From the city of the Grand Canal, the Rialto, the Bridge of Sighs, St. Mark's Square, and many other glorious monuments came a very distinctive monument—Swedenborg's amazing exploratory work on the brain.

And the story repeats itself in Rome. He continued his writing on the brain. In twenty weeks of a little sightseeing and much deep thought and literary application, he produced the following opuscula: "The Cerebellum"; "The Medulla Oblongata"; "The Medulla Spinalis"; "The Nervous System"; "The Muscular System"; and with two works of a different character—"The Way to a Knowledge of the Soul"; and "Faith and Good Works." Obviously, Swe-

denborg's was a Roman Holiday of a rather unusual kind!

He returned roughly by the way he had come—through Milan, over the Alps, through the vineyards of France, via Paris, Brussels, Antwerp, and Amsterdam. In Amsterdam, another city of waterways and bridges, he remained for a year to re-assess and rearrange his written work, and to publish it as *The Economy of the Kingdom of the Soul*. *The Economy* is a great philosophical work grounded in the study of anatomy and physiology, and it represents the fusion of Swedenborg the scientist with Swedenborg the philosopher. He was to return to Amsterdam many times in the future, to publish many of his theological writings; so here we now leave him, our eighteenth-century traveller and scholar, knowing that he can find his way home and that his journey has not been in vain. ☒

The Reverend Dennis Duckworth (1911–2003) was a minister in the British Conference, an author, and a painter. His biblically-themed art can be viewed at dennisduckworth@telinco.co.uk.

Fundamentalist Mind

continued from page 35

In sum, this book offers its readers a sophisticated and nuanced approach to interpreting the fundamentalist phenomenon in the world today. Especially valuable is the state-of-the-art applications of brain-mind research to the questions of how we hold our beliefs and what we are doing with them. But equally rich is the psychological insight that comes through a very experienced religious adventurer—one who was shaped in the Swedenborgian tradition and who incorporates it thoroughly into his current interpretations. ☒

Rev. Dr. James Lawrence is dean of the Swedenborgian House of Studies and instructor in History of Christianity at Pacific School of Religion in Berkeley, California.

Bridgewater New Jerusalem Church Pastoral Search

About The Bridgewater New Jerusalem Church

The Bridgewater New Jerusalem Church is a well-established, long-standing society committed to Swedenborgian doctrine. Worship services and Sunday School are held weekly and are beautifully enhanced by our talented and innovative music director, a professional musician. Bible study is held weekly, and a book discussion group has begun. We have a devoted and friendly church community who enjoy fellowship activities, potluck suppers, and entertainment nights. We have presented well-attended lectures, open to the public, on Helen Keller, death and dying, angels, and world religions. Under the leadership of our Sunday School director, we have joined with outreach programs, including May baskets for the elderly and shut-ins, Valentines for Vets, Heifer International, supply sacks for foster children, and Warm-up America. We hope to expand our community outreach and to reinstate our wedding ministry with the energy and commitment of our new pastor.



The Bridgewater Society was established in the early nineteenth century, and has conducted services in our building for over 160 years. The building, a unique wooden structure of Victorian Gothic architecture, lies within the Central Square Historic District and is a prominent landmark on the town green. Our central location lends itself to maximum exposure. Recent upgrades include central air conditioning, a new roof, new paint, and installation of audio-visual equipment for the amplification and recording of worship services. The building committee is working on a town grant to make the building handicap accessible.

Fifteen years ago our building was ravaged by fire, and accounts of the tragedy were covered by local and national news. As a result, our once obscure denomination received a lot of attention. After our decision to rebuild, we received overwhelming support from the Bridgewater community and beyond.

About Our Town and Community

They say "it takes a village to raise a child"; if that is true, then Bridgewater, Massachusetts is really a family-oriented village. Offering a diversity of activities, Bridgewater maintains a caring, friendly, small-town atmosphere. Bridgewater is a charming, residential, suburban community with a real town center and easy accessibility to Boston by highway, rail, and bus.

For personal enrichment and family-oriented activities close by, there are hiking, skiing, water sports, museums, and historic sites. The ocean or mountains are an hour away. The Blairhaven retreat center is a thirty-minute drive, and the Fryeburg New Church Assembly is three hours away, providing easy access to New Church gatherings.

Massachusetts' second largest public institution of higher learning—Bridgewater State College—is located less than a block away from our church, convenient for access by inquisitive students.

The Position

With plans to activate our wedding ministry, expand our outreach efforts, and increase community awareness, we require a minister with the vision to facilitate these activities. At this time, we offer a half-time position, progressing to full time as the congregation grows. Our compensation package includes a housing allowance. We encourage candidates who are interested in the following:

- Wedding ministry
- Youth ministry
- Community and neighborhood outreach
- Special outreach programs

About the Application Process

Please submit:

- A resume and a cover letter explaining your interest in the position
- Three letters of reference from: 1) a ministerial colleague; 2) a person in the community familiar with your work; 3) a character reference
- A brief statement of your approach to growing the church

- Two samples of sermons (written acceptable, but tape or DVD preferred).

Please send your application to the attention of:

Sharon Swan, Chairman
Search Committee
Bridgewater New Jerusalem Church
2 Bedford Street
Bridgewater, MA 02324

Passages

Birth

Blake David Joseph Sonmor and **Finn Mitchell Lee Sonmor** were born to Elaine Marie Sonmor of North Battleford, Saskatchewan, on January 6, 2009. The Reverend David Sonmor is a proud grandparent.

New Member

Robbin Ferriman was welcomed with great joy into the life and membership of the Urbana, Ohio Swedenborgian Church on February 15, 2009.

Deaths

We received notice at press time that the Reverend **Edwin Gould Capon** (1924-2009) passed away quietly in his home on February 3, 2009, with his wife, Esther, as his side. Ordained

in 1949, Edwin Capon served as president of the Swedenborgian School of Religion (1953-1977), president of the denomination (1992-1998), and pastor at the Bridgewater, Elmwood, Detroit, San Francisco, and St. Paul churches. A memorial article will appear in the next issue of *The Messenger*.

Susan L. Zion, a long time member of the Urbana Swedenborgian Church, passed away peacefully after a long illness on December 2, 2008. Susan served for many years as coordinator of the church's wedding outreach ministry, was a church board member, and led a spiritual meditation group for many years. She was an ordained minister with the group, Movement of Spiritual Inner Awareness, in which she was very active. Susan had a wonderful sense of humor and practical, yet spiritual approach to life. She volunteered for numerous organizations

in her community and ministered to many with great love. Most of all, she had a wonderful joy of life. She is survived by her beloved husband, Clarence E. Zion, daughters Julie Baldwin and Lisa A. McNiff, two grandchildren, two great-grandchildren, and her sister, Sally. A memorial service, officiated by lay leader, Betsy Coffman was held on December 7, 2008, at the Urbana Church. Susan will be missed by all who knew and loved her. ☩

The Editor's Desk

continued from page 40

understanding of faith in young adulthood and adulthood, opening ever more to the influx of the Lord's leading. Likewise, Barack Obama's election is a marker in the perilous march from childhood to the maturity of a nation. ☩

—Herb Ziegler

Spring Online Courses from SHS

Making Sense of It All: ***Swedenborg's True Christian Religion***

Rev. Dr. Inese Radzins

April 13–June 1, 2009

What is Swedenborgian theology? If you have long wished you had a succinct answer to that question, or if you are exploring Swedenborg for the first time, this online class will give you a clear and systematic understanding of his thought, using his book *True Christian Religion* as a resource. The class will be divided into two sections. The first, called "Who is God?" will deal with the following topics: Creator, Redeemer, Holy Spirit and the Word. The second section, entitled "Who are we?" will discuss faith, charity, free will, reformation, and regeneration. The goal of the course will be to provide you with a theological overview that can enhance your spiritual life.

Fostering a Personal Relationship With God

Rev. Dr. David Fekete

April 13–June 1, 2009

How do we find God in the midst of our busy 21st century lives? This online course will explore ways to let God into our lives and to bring our lives into God. We will consider Eastern and Western approaches to this issue in both active and contemplative lifestyles. Topics will include mystical union with God and its consequences for identity; visualizing God and icons; spiritual community, sacred space, and mandalas; prayer, chants, and mantras; sacred literature; the body, Tai Chi, and Yoga; and finding God in the ordinary activities of daily living.

For more information, please go to www.shs.psr.edu.

PUGET SOUND, NEXT GENERATION CONTINUES IT'S SEARCH

CAPTAINS LOG:
March 2009: Still accepting contact from interested minister candidates. The church board also looks forward to meeting prospective candidates at Convention '09.

Please contact LisaGraceAllison@comcast.net for more details and to have your email questionnaire beamed up.

About the Swedenborgian Church

Emanuel Swedenborg was born January 29, 1688 in Stockholm, Sweden. Although he never intended a church denomination to be founded or named after him, a society was formed in London 15 years after his death.

American groups eventually founded the General Convention of Swedenborgian Churches. As a result of Swedenborg's spiritual questionings and insights, we as a church exist to encourage that same spirit of inquiry and personal growth, to respect differences in views, and to accept others who may have different traditions.

Swedenborg shared in his theological writings a view of God as infinitely loving and at the very center of our beings, a view of life as a spiritual birthing as we participate in our own creation, and a view of scripture as a story of inner life stages as we learn and grow. Swedenborg said, "All religion relates to life, and the life of religion is to do good." He also felt that the sincerest form of worship is a useful life.

SUNNY DAYZ and MOONLIT NIGHTS COME SAIL AWAY TO SEATTLE CONVENTION '09 June 24 - 28



The Swedenborgian Church of Puget Sound is hosting the 2009 Annual Convention of the Swedenborgian Church from June 24-28.

Accommodations and events are

located on the University of Washington campus in Seattle.

To register, see page 42. To see a preview of what the planning committee has in store, visit this website:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=fgp2SGbwXTM

The Swedenborgian Church of
North America
The Messenger
11 Highland Avenue
Newtonville, MA 02460

Address Service Requested

Non-profit
Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Plymouth, IN
Permit No. 105