

The Messenger

OFFICIAL ORGAN OF THE SWEDENBORGIAN CHURCH
DECEMBER 1981



THROUGH THE EYES OF A CHILD

Many years ago Christmas came with a great splash of wonder. The season began in late fall with the arrival of the winter catalogues. Endless hours were spent pouring over those incredibly wonder-filled wish-books. But the Christmas season really began on a cold evening in mid-December when some of the church women come to the minister's home carrying enormous bags of teeth-rotting candy, peanuts, apples and oranges, which were efficiently sorted into red and green mesh bags. (The orange and apple tissue wrappers were a bonus not to be sneezed at.) At the memorable children's program on the Sunday before Christmas these bags of Christmas "goodies" were distributed to all the youngsters. I rather doubt that it is possible to recapture the sheer wonder and excitement of that little gift in today's world when we have fruit and candy twelve months of the year.

At the program each child had a "piece" to say or a song to sing. Every Sunday afternoon during December was spent in rehearsal. For a few brave souls it was a grand moment; for others, a holy terror. Looking out over that endless sea of expectant faces one's memory promptly ground to a choking halt and the teacher's prompting whisper wasn't always heard the first time.

The high point, of course, was the Christmas Eve Candlelight service, with real candles on a real tree. Today the Fire Marshall would have a proper fit. In those days a bucket of water was precaution enough. For a child, looking up at that splendid tree with "double vision" provided memories that grow brighter with the passing years. And when Aunt Marie sang "Stille Nacht" in the hushed, darkened sanctuary, the Star and the angels and the birth of Christ were more real than anything else in this world. There were no doubters on Christmas Eve.

How Silently, how silently
The wondrous gift is given!

Several years ago, Joseph Sittler put it this way: "How blended, in Christian faith, are the simple and the sublime; how strangely is the profound transmitted by the ordinary; how quickly crumples the pompous pretense of our lives before the primal pure; how powerful is the clear, bright blade of amazing grace as it flashes again amid all forgettings, denials, sheer clutterings."

May the eternal miracle of Christmas bring the abiding love and peace for which the whole earth longs.

P. Z.

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CHRISTMAS AND THE SWEDENBORGIAN CONNECTION

Galen Unruh
Hutchinson, Kansas

A friend asks: Could you contribute something for the Christmas number of the *Messenger*? He asks it in October. And I ask myself: Do I feel "Christmasy" in October? Should I? Or more importantly: Can I? Thoughts, which to the writer are often more real than things we often call real, come into play in the inner man. Where do they come from? Here, there, everywhere; Messengers from the higher world, hopefully, come to visit for a while. What higher world, you may ask! Where is it? How does it affect us in the material world? But then, we know that the Kingdom is within. Heaven is not far away—only if we make it so. I am there—part of the time; you are there, everyone is there—part of the time. And if thoughts are real, and if they are projected, especially when they are desperately needed, perhaps there is such a thing as a "Swedenborgian Connection."

There is a bond of Universal Love, a Commonality which binds us into the One. How wonderful it is when we finally come to know that each of our many friends is a member of that Higher Order, seeking to serve, to be of aid in projecting that commonality of Universal Love, which theologians know as the Lord of the Universe. But each of us is a theologian—that gift is not restricted to the clergy, although the purpose of the Church on earth is to "keep the Divine among men." And the clergy is specifically ordained for that purpose above all. However, if theology in simple terms is nothing more than what we think we know about God, then most certainly each of us is a theologian.

How diligently do we search for the richer, deeper, more fulfilling meanings of the serious questions which sometimes merely flit fitfully across the screen of our mental activities?

Is that not our special challenge—not only in the season of Christmas, but every day of our ongoing preparatory lives? We can hardly imagine the Magi being concerned with the celebration of Christmas, or to think of it as "seasonal." No, if it should require patient years of the study and contemplation of the heavens, long hours of deep meditation, days on end of traversing the hot desert sands continuing on into years of searching, then they would come to know the Source of the

Power which drew them to the Babe of Bethlehem. They too, had a "connection." Ancient sages, the lore and the wisdom of the ages drew them on in a relentless search to know, to feel, to experience that which ordinary men pass over, caring only for material and worldly gain. Perhaps there would be great risk in the search; perhaps there would be those who would suspect them of being subversive, undercutting the aims and goals of worldly powers; perhaps even their very lives would be endangered—but something within drove them on to find the focal point from which flowed the great inspiration for Life Itself.

What do men and women today think about God? Where is the connection that will bring more peace to our troubled world? Two days ago a woman was riding in the back seat of a car idling at a stop sign. The large semi-truck coming up from the rear failed to see the passenger car in the dark. Perhaps the driver's attention was directed elsewhere momentarily. There was a terrible crash. The two people in the front seat escaped with minor injuries, but the woman was killed. The driver of the passenger car had stopped at another woman's home only minutes before to pick her up. She was not at home. Three minutes later she was at home. She would have also been in the rear seat of that car. So people ask: Why was one taken and one left?

One might reply that if each of us were living in harmony with even the *physical* laws of our universe nothing of this nature would ever happen. But, obviously we are not. In today's world men are in control of tremendous forces of power. It may be a many horse-powered large truck, or it may be a nuclear plant designed for the production of electricity. One little slip of attention may result in terrible tragedy. To pass lightly over the question by saying something this writer thinks is stupid such as: "It is the will of God", indicates the need for greater spiritual perception.

Part of the question can be answered with the idea involved here—that we are not living in harmony with the *physical* laws of our universe. The other part, which is not so easy to "fix," is that question: "Why me?" That is a *spiritual* matter of concern. You may not know the

answer to that—nor I. But the Lord knows; the higher angels surely know, and some day perhaps you and I *may* know—when we have reached the higher, more evolved regenerative stages of life toward which all are oriented. But then we will have a true compassion, an understanding about life; we will be true participators in that great art and work of Universal Love.

Consider that when the Father of all came to us as a Babe in Bethlehem he had one primary concern—even while men were stealing, hating, killing. *To bring Peace on earth.* And though he suffered while loving even those who would not return that love, he allowed all the freedom to violate those precious laws underlying the One Universal Law of Love.

With the passing of time we are coming to know experientially that we are interdependent on a global, nay, on a universal scale of life. No man is an island. If only one of us violates either a physical or a spiritual law of life, then all suffer by that much. The whole body of Christ suffers. “Love one another as I have loved you” the beloved Master said. He would have us integrate the material and the spiritual forces of life, certainly not on a seasonal basis, but every day. Even so, when the high moment of the Christmas season reaches climax, we pray that all the world may be lifted up and truly sing with the deepest sincerity: “Glory to God in the Highest, peace on earth, to men of good will.”

“ON THE PROPRIETY OF OBSERVING THE DAY CALLED CHRISTMAS”

*William Ross Woofenden
Sharon, MA*

At the twenty-eighth meeting of the General Convention in July, 1846, minute 56 reads as follows:

Resolved, That a Committee of three persons be appointed to take into consideration the propriety of observing, in the New Church, the day called Christmas, and to report thereon to the next Convention: also, to suggest some proper and profitable mode of observing the day, if, in their judgment, it should be thought desirable and best to keep it as a religious festival.

This resolution was introduced by the Rev. Benjamin F. Barrett, a former Unitarian minister who had joined the New Church in 1840. He was to become identified as one of the leaders of liberalism in the Convention. Not surprisingly, Barrett was named chairman of the committee.

At the next annual Convention a 3000-word report was submitted (filling 4½ pages in the *Journal*). The report concluded with a statement that the work was “imperfect and unfinished” and requested that the committee be continued and that one or two more persons be added to their number. This request was acceded to, and the then president of Convention, Rev. Thomas Worcester, added himself and one other minister to the committee. We’ll get to their report shortly, but first let us look briefly at Barrett’s report:

He first noted that it had long been a mooted question as to whether Dec. 25 is the actual

anniversary of the Lord’s birth. (This date, by the way, was set in the 4th Century.) But he continued that he had felt it quite unnecessary for his committee to discuss this point. The real question, he noted, should be “whether the New Church will keep as a religious festival *any* day in the year, commemorative of an event at once the most glorious and stupendous of which mankind have any knowledge; an event, in whose blessings we are all partakers, and whose beneficent consequences will never cease to flow in rich and fertilizing streams over the face of the moral world.”

After such a rhetorical wording of the question, it comes as no surprise that the report generally tended to favor some sort of observance of Christmas by Convention’s member churches. What did surprise me, however, was Barrett’s statement that at that time Christmas day was not being observed by our churches. “There is no time except the Sabbath, when any considerable number of our brethren throughout the length and breadth of our land, are drawn together either for purposes of worship, or for the interchange of social, friendly feelings. . . . There is no day in the year to which we all can look forward with joyful anticipations, as to a *great* day; no one which we can look back upon with pleasing reflections.”

The report goes on to observe that in quite a number of communities in which our churches were located they did at that time observe Christmas day as a religious festival, and it then

noted that “our children see and know all this.” It is then urged that far more good would likely result from our churches generally participating in such observations than for a considerable portion of our brethren to pass it by unobserved.

Next a time-honored device is resorted to: a suitable quote from Swedenborg is inserted in the report. The passage chosen is *Arcana Coelestia* n. 1175, which, among other things, encourages “observing the festivals.” Barrett draws this inference: “We must suppose, therefore, that *Christmas*, the greatest of all religious festivals observed by the Christian Church, was among those which Swedenborg refers to.”

I hope my readers will indulge me if I interrupt this account at this point in order to introduce what I found to be a charming bit of irony. In order to catch the force of the irony, one needs to keep in mind the last statement of Barrett’s quoted above, in which the presumption is made that Swedenborg must have had Christmas in mind when he encouraged the observing of religious festivals.

When I first began to think about writing this article, the first question that ran through my head was: What in the world can I write concerning Christmas that hasn’t already been said? This led me to a search through Swedenborg’s writings to see what he might have said on the subject. And—here’s my conundrum—after a good bit of searching with the aid of a wide variety of reference resources, to date I have failed to come up with a single instance of Swedenborg’s ever taking note in writing of the existence of a day called Christmas! I even checked so far as I was able the Swedish words that refer to Christmas but to no avail. The closest thing I have been able to uncover thus far is one direct reference to Christmas in a letter written by Swedenborg’s father in which he tells his correspondent that he is expecting his son Emanuel home for Christmas, this in 1720. Other records state that Swedenborg spent the next Christmas in Liege, Belgium, with his cousin Johan Hesselius. Swedenborg would be in his early 30’s at this time.

By the time he published the volume of the *Arcana* cited above in regard to observing festivals he would be turned 60. Yet, as I say, nowhere in the intervening 30 years (or before it or after it for that matter) have I been able to find that Swedenborg ever wrote anything in which he himself directly referred to Christmas day or how he spent it.

How then, one might ask, could Barrett have felt so certain that Christmas must have been among the festivals Swedenborg had in mind in AC1175? I don’t have any intention of trying to answer that question, but instead will return to Barrett’s report. Having made the earlier point, he then admits that there were some communities in our country, including ones with New Church societies, that were *not* then celebrating Christmas—where, in fact, no more attention was paid to it than any other day, so he claims.

He then goes on to observe that if Convention were to recommend the religious celebration of Christmas day, societies in communities such as these would stand out as odd or peculiar. On the other hand, if they were to ignore Convention’s recommendation they would still be placed in an unpleasant situation. Therefore, the committee report decides, it would seem unwise for Convention to offer any recommendation at that time.

Now, as I noted above, having delivered this inconclusive report in 1846, the committee asked to be enlarged and continued. Thus, we do find a further report on this topic in the minutes of the next Convention. Before I make fun of one of the opening remarks in this latter report (since it is the sort of remark one is likely to come across in any number of committee reports today—or at least one which *ought* to appear in many committee reports) I must first admit that I have no idea of the geographical separation of the five members of the enlarged committee, nor of the possibility of their being able to convene the committee between conventions. At any rate, one year later, early in the report, we read: “At a meeting of the Committee, *on the evening previous to the meeting of Convention* [my emphasis], one of its members offered a draft of a Report; the other members had but a short time to consider it, and do not wish to be understood to assent it; but they wish to have it presented to the Convention.” I find myself bemused by the conjecture that possibly *most* “committee” reports become a matter of public record in this way!

This one-man report (and I can only assume that that one man was Thomas Worcester, since his name is signed to it) goes on to concede that on this question we have no direct instruction in either the Sacred Scriptures or the Doctrines of the Church. Therefore, the option (not recommendation, note) is offered that the best time to celebrate the event under consideration would be on the Sabbath, rather than upon any other day of the week. This opinion is then

followed by three full pages of "reasons" for the opinion—which I won't trouble you with.

Oh, I'll share one of them with you, but I'll have to admit that it hardly qualifies as the most important one. Or maybe it is. It says: "Another reason by which some people seem to be influenced in favor of celebrating the advent

of the Lord on Christmas day, rather than on the Sabbath, is, that they then enjoy a greater degree of freedom, and can indulge themselves in states of mind, and in practices, which would not be suitable on the Sabbath."

And I'll leave it there without further comment.

OUR NEW CHURCH HERITAGE

JOHN WESTALL

*Arthur James
New York, N.Y.*

John Westall was a New Church minister who lived in the 1800's. He was also a poet, and you are probably familiar with at least one of his poems, because he wrote the words to the Christmas carol, "How Shall I Keep My Christmas?" (The music was composed by another New Church minister, John Worcester.)

John Westall was born in Manchester, England in 1816 and came to America with his father in 1830 when he was 14. They lived in Lowell, Mass. for seven years, and he moved to Fall River, Mass. in 1838. He was employed as a designer at the American Print Works, which was a cloth printing company.

In Fall River he found a small circle of Swedenborgians holding religious services each week and in a short time he became their leader. The society grew over the years largely because of his leadership and his financial support. He remained at his job as a designer and served the church as lay leader. On several occasions he was asked to become an ordained minister, but he felt he could be more useful remaining as he was.

His energy was remarkable. He didn't allow a minute to go to waste. His thirst for knowledge was such that as he walked the three-quarters of a mile between his home and his office, he always had a book, a paper or a magazine in his hands, eagerly drinking in the contents. He was deeply interested in all questions of public development. For several years he was the editor of a weekly newspaper, and he served as a member of the Fall River School Board. He was urged to accept public office many times, but he always declined.

In 1865 he wrote a 50-stanza poem in memory of Abraham Lincoln which was read at

the memorial service held in Fall River. Although he was not a college graduate, Brown University granted him an honorary Master of Arts degree in 1866.

After coming back from an extensive journey to Egypt and the Holy Land with his wife in 1874, the Society again requested him to become their pastor, and this time he accepted. He took a special course of study in Boston and was ordained on October 11, 1877 at the age of 61. 1877 is also the year that a church was built in Fall River.

In 1889 a small existing elementary school was renamed for John Westall. In 1908 a new three-story school was built to replace the smaller school. It retained the name, the Westall School, and is still being used today.

John Worcester said of him, "He loved children and everything that was childlike and pure and beautiful. Every flower in the field, and every bright cloud in the sky, told him some lesson of virtue or wisdom which he delighted to interpret in language of simple poetry to children's hearts."

At the age of 68 he became ill with a kind of paralysis, which continued to the end of his earthly life. One day he said, "I wish I had written more songs for the children to sing." It was answered, "Now we know one of the things you will do in the other life; you will make songs for the heavenly children to sing." The thought was pleasant for him and he replied, "Perhaps so."

An article in the *New Church Messenger* summed up his life with these words: "Possessed of a peculiarly reverent spirit, with the soul of an artist, with a mind which loved to express itself in poetry and song, because it is that form which best bespeaks the fragrance of

human thought and feeling, he saw beauty in all God's creation. He saw the good, the pure and the lovely in every human relation, and with the intensity of a strong nature consecrated to the right, he strove to make the love of God and the beauty of holiness plain to his brother man."

Adapted by Arthur L. James of the New York Society from articles published in The New Church Messenger and The New Jerusalem Magazine, 1890, and The Providence (RI) Journal, 1964; and from the Preface to "Wayside Poems," 1891. The assistance of Ms. Bonnie D. Mendes of the Fall River Public Library is gratefully acknowledged.

How Shall I Keep My Christmas?

"O, how shall I keep my Christmas?"
 My heart whispered softly to me,
 For I had been reading the story
 Of the Lord's Nativity;
 And slowly and clearly before me
 The words like pictures rise,
 And the scenes appear in the beauty
 Of the starry Syrian skies.
 O cradled He was in a manger!
 For lowly and poor was He.
 Whose throne is the splendors of Heaven,
 Whose power is infinity.
 And He bore His Cross to save us,
 To save us from Death and Sin;
 And He trod all alone the wine-press,
 To make us pure and clean.
 In glory the hosts of the angels
 Came singing His song of praise,
 And filling the heavens with their music
 In those wonderful old days:
 Singing, "Glory to God in the highest!"
 And "Peace upon Earth," and then
 The mighty chorus of voices
 Pealed forth their "Good-will to Men!"
 "O, how shall I keep my Christmas?"
 As they kept it in Heaven above;
 Keep it with peace and thanksgiving,
 And kindest deeds of Love;
 And share with the poor and needy
 The joys which the Lord gives thee;
 And thy heart shall keep with the angels
 The Lord's Nativity.

John Westall

What Is The Meaning Of Christmas?

What is the meaning of Christmas Day?
 It means in Bethlehem, far away,
 Our Saviour, Christ, was born one day;
 And angels sang, and shepherds heard
 The music of the Heavenly Word:
 And in a manger He was laid,
 As His bright, shining angel said:
 This is the meaning of Christmas Day!
 What is the meaning of Christmas Day?
 It means, my child, that we must be
 Gentle and true to all we see, —
 And be the children whom Christ shall lead,
 In faithful word, and loving deed:
 That in all things we do and say,
 We may live the life for which we pray:
 This is the meaning of Christmas Day!
 What is the meaning of Christmas Day?
 It means, my child, the reign of Peace;
 It means that Sorrow now may cease;
 And Love shall banish Hate, and fill
 The hearts of all men with Good-will;
 And Faith and Hope again shall be
 Made one in heavenly Charity:
 This is the meaning of Christmas Day!
 What is the meaning of Christmas Day?
 Not Christmas bells, nor presents rare,
 Nor Carols sweet, nor midnight prayer,
 Nor Trees all laden with delight
 Can make true Christmas here to-night,
 Unless we keep Christ's words of Love,
 And seek His Spirit from above:
 This is the meaning of Christmas Day.

John Westall

Wholistic Thinking Within, Peacemaking Without

by Mary Cosby
Washington, D.C.

(Increasingly the Church of the Saviour as a whole is voicing a call for its members to be counted among the resisters of the arms race.

Below are excerpts of a sermon which Mary Cosby, one of the founders of The Church of the Saviour, preached here this summer.)

Wholistic thinking and feeling is expansive, not contracting. It is taking in more, not less.

In the past, the idolotry was at the point of the tribe. Now the tribe is the state. Growth in the Spirit means an increased sense of destiny with the whole, less caring for what happens in one's own individual future; more and more concern for what is good for the Total, the common good.

There is a detachment from self. An attachment to the whole organism. The Global Family becomes all important. There is a new identification with its future, its destiny . . .

Now, if this is happening within, there are connections that must be made, having to do with our world.

The assumption is that the more terrified a people is, the more rational it will be: The Russian rulers will not be willing to attack us if they know they will be wiped out in retaliation. The assumption is that this can go on indefinitely, that this is the rational course. If the Russians can't be trusted by us, and we can't be trusted by them, there is no other course. The fact that the world is now spending over one billion dollars a day in armaments is neither here nor there. *We* can be trusted, we say, and we have no alternative.

I see this now as sheer insanity. Any nation willing to pursue this course has sickness at its core. Russia is sick. The United States is sick; and sick, fearful nations will do anything they think they have to do. The more fearful we all become, the more irrational we become.

In such a course we deny justice to our own people, indeed to all people. Billions spent on an MX system are *not* spent creatively on the crying needs of people. To rid the entire world of small pox, that dread disease, it took only \$83,000,000—less than a tenth of one day's military budget.

In Washington, we have 70,000 families in sub-standard, inadequate housing. One day's military budget would house every family in Washington, well.

Two of the missions of our church are health centers created in response to the desperate need of our city's poor. For one day's military budget, 10,000 health centers could be opened, with doctor, nurse, counsellor and social worker on staff.

Do we not need to ask ourselves very basic questions? If we have been redeemed by Christ, and if we have known the compassion of the crucified Lord, is it possible at the same time to participate in the conventional, military-industrial "wisdom" of this age? Isn't it Caesar or God? And now, it's God, or annihilation of the human family and this green planet.

One final perspective. God has been fashioning the human family for millions of years. My earthly lifespan will be less than a hundred, as will yours—infinitesimal within the Global Community's history . . . I do not want to have any part in the rape of the created order that God has fashioned over the centuries. And I totally and irrevocably eschew the response of fear—the threat to kill—the balance of terror.

If the Church attempt at love and trust and faith does not bring us into a new day; if I and my nation suffer the madness of others, that suffering can be redemptive. The people of God have survived before. If I do not see the moral, spiritual, and political situation in the stark form in which it is now raised—so exaggerated that simple, unsophisticated souls can understand it—surely I'll be in no position to lead our broken, pitiful world.

I do not want to be a victim of remorse and disbelief, but rather like the Prophet when Jerusalem fell about him. Amid cries of hunger, thirst, pain, and fear, Jeremiah went out and "bought a field", proclaiming in confidence, " . . . For houses and fields will again be bought in this land." (Jer. 32).

And they were.

from: World Peacemakers
Fall Newsletter 1981

A BIBLE STUDY *by Marilyn McDonald*

Here at World Peacemakers we continue to look for ways to deepen our faith roots—to make the personal connections from the scriptures to every level of our beings, to do the inner work of transformation.

We are learning a method of Bible study which promises to help us in this inner work. We understand this method better through the work and writing of Walter Wink (*Transforming Bible Study*, Abingdon Press 1980, \$6.50). With Wink's help, scriptures become not proof-texts but the objective reality by which we look into our own lives, and ask questions of ourselves.

We have worked with John 5: 1 - 9 in this way and share the following for your group or individual study:

Centering: Take several minutes of silence to move inward.

Read together: Everyone needs a copy of the passage; the use of several translations makes comparison of word meanings possible. We asked persons to volunteer to read the parts of the narrator, the man, and Jesus.

Ask questions: All responses to questions are acceptable. There are no right answers.

1. Describe the setting—the people and the social setting. What would it be like to live in this setting? Living in this setting in this society, would you be able to respond to an opportunity for healing?
2. What is thirty eight years—think of your own last thirty eight years. What has been your position/posture for these years? What has happened in the world in thirty eight years?
3. Confronted with a new possibility for himself, how did the man respond to Jesus? What is the meaning of evasive answers?
4. Is there a role for the mat/bed? What is involved in the man's taking up his bed and walking? What does the mat symbolize for you?

You may want to compose your own questions.

Role playing: Divide the group into dyads for role playing. One person will play Jesus and the other the man, and then reverse the roles. We encourage you to assume the position of the role you are playing: the person playing the man sits or lies down as if on the mat, and the

person playing Jesus stands. Try to be aware of feelings and insights which come to you in the role playing. Five minutes will be enough time for this.

De-rolling: In each dyad share the feelings or insights which surfaced. The purpose of the sharing is not only to express the feelings, but also to release the role you have played.

Guided Journaling: The leader may want to give guidance for others in such words as: "Take a few minutes to think back to what the mat was for you." Then ask persons to write about these questions: "What keeps me on my mat?" "What would it take for me to 'get up and walk?'" (Allow time for writing.) "What empowering word does Jesus speak to you?" For use in a group, ask: "What is the mat for our group?" "What empowering word does Jesus speak to the group?" (Or substitute 'nation' for group.)

Sharing in the group: You may want to share with each other from your writing. There needs to be an openness that allows anyone to share or not to share with the others.

from: World Peacemakers
Fall Newsletter, 1981

I Still Have A Dream

*I still have a dream today
that one day every valley shall be exalted
and every mountain and hill will be made low,
and rough places will be made smooth
and the crooked places straight,
and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed,
and all flesh shall see it together.
I still have a dream that with this faith
we will be able to adjourn the councils of
despair
and bring new light into the dark chambers of
pessimism.
With this faith we will be able to speed up the
day
when there will be peace on earth and goodwill
towards men.
It will be a glorious day,
the morning stars we'll sing together,
and the sons of God will shout for joy.*

Martin Luther King

Once Again—Christmas

*Star sparkling
Diamond Clear
Hovering near
Where He lay*

*December ending
Shepherds bending
On their knees
Before the Babe*

*Angels singing
Above the sound
Of camels padding
Through the dark*

*Single snowflake
Melting
Like a tear
Of longing
If only
He were here
Once more
Sweet and soft
Upon the hay*

*Feel with reverent ecstasy
The mystic loveliness
The radiant purity
Of that Holy Night
Love it
Fold it
In your heart
Live joyfully
This precious year.*

*Thoughts of Christmas
by
Margaret Ball*

As Little Children

*That "Christmas is for children,"
Is true—at least in part—
For they who keep His birthday,
Must needs be young at heart.
With joy in simple pleasures—
Enthusiasm strong—
And faith that they'll be granted
The gifts for which they long.
If only they are worthy:
A love like children's too—
Outgoing, free affection,
That's honest through and through.
"Except ye be as children,"
How much we need today
The Savior's admonition!
Help us, we humbly pray
Amid the world's confusion,
To do our little part
Toward harmony, by keeping
A trustful, child-like heart.*

It's Christmas

*May you have a jolly Christmas:
Holly wreaths and lighted trees,
Little gifts and hearty greetings—
Song and laughter—all of these.*

*May you have a happy Christmas,
Where sweet memories of the past
Blend with hopes for those still coming—
Each one brighter than the last.*

*Merry, joyous, hallowed Christmas:
May it prove all three, we pray,
And with love and faith prevailing
Be a perfect Christmas day.*

Susan Priscilla Holmes

CONVENTION CALENDAR

January 12 - 13
January 14 - 16
January 21 - 23
February 18 - 20
March 24 - 27
March 25 - 26
(tentative)
April 15 - 17
April 22 - 24

East Coast Peer Sup., Newton, MA
Aims and Goals for the 80s, Waltham, MA
General Council, Loretto Retreat House, Essex, MA
College Trustees, Urbana, Ohio
S.S.R. Bd. of Managers, Newton, MA
Comm. on Adm. Ministry, Newton, MA

Dept. of Publications, Kitchener, Ont.
Chapel Board, Palos Verdes, CA

THE LIGHT

*by Gordon Clarke
Garden Grove, California*

On November 9, 1965, thirty million people on the eastern seaboard of the United States were plunged into darkness by a mysterious and massive power failure. In New York City 48,000 passengers were in over 600 subway trains. Hundreds of elevators stalled between floors. Traffic lights failed, and streets were blocked with traffic. Motorists running out of gas could not get any—the pumps didn't work without electricity. Airplanes were rerouted, not being able to land without lights to guide them. Delicate operations were performed with emergency generators. But piercing the darkness were a few pinpoints of light—automobile headlights on the street and candle-

light from the windows of the great skyscrapers.

It is ever so. No matter how deep the darkness, the light still shines and the darkness is powerless to overcome it. In one of the creeds, we find the line: "We believe in the final triumph of righteousness." Christians do not deny evil; we do deny that evil is the final triumphant. God's day of mercy and love will drive back the darkness of the night.

Advent-Christmas is a season of light. Our small candles that we raise high at church candle-lighting services and light our advent wreaths are symbols of the light that comes in Jesus Christ. Ours is a day of Atom bombs, but it is also a day of tannenbaums. It is a day of barbed wire, but also of Bethlehem. It is a day of death, but also of birth. Don't give up the struggle. Walk in the light. Hopefully, accept life as good.

Quaker Life

On Making Christmas More Meaningful *by Eric Mueller Seattle, Wash.*

There are several holidays that Christians don't celebrate very well. Take New Year's Day for example, that yearly commencement dedicated to recuperating from the previous night's binge by submitting to a numbing sequence of football games. Many of us have by Jan. 1 trained so well through the past dozen Sundays for this event, that we are able to pull it off with practiced ease. Thoughtful Christians, on the other hand, due to poor training and a vague sense that there must be a better way to invest their leisure time, are very often uncomfortable spending their New Year's Day in this way.

But there are other holidays to which Christians are naturally drawn. Certainly Easter and Thanksgiving should fit this category. And of course Christmas should too, especially Christmas. But all too often and in spite of good intentions, the spiritual meaning of Christmas is lucky if it gets a back seat in the midst of the commercial hype of the season.

Years ago, I remember that there was a great stir when the abbreviation Xmas began appearing in the store front windows of my home town, Whittier. "Let's keep Christ in Christmas" was the slogan people began chanting as they campaigned to have the signs changed. Though the method of protest may have been a bit misdirected (attacking the symptom rather than the root of the problem), there is a definite need to keep the Christ of the

Gospels in Christmas in the midst of this commercialized holiday.

I would like to suggest two things for you to seriously consider this Christmas. First, make all of your gift giving as simple as you can. Resist the conditioned reflex that has been programmed in you by advertising to buy, buy, buy. America is consuming more and more and the message it broadcasts to itself and the rest of the world is material convenience and pleasures are what life is all about! It is estimated that 6% of the world's population lives in the U.S., yet we consume 33% of the world's minerals and energy. Base this simple gift giving practice in Jesus Christ. Make it known to family and friends just why you are giving simple gifts this year and this may help you to avoid unnecessary misunderstandings and give you another chance to make your witness for Christ known.

Second, make Christmas day a day to remember the wonderful gift of God's love, the birth of Jesus Christ. I wonder how many of us on Christmas morning as we open gifts, really think about God's gift to us in the birth of Jesus. Why not begin to make Christmas morning more meaningful by attending a Candle Light Service. Then on Christmas Day re-read the Christmas story, talk with your family and friends about the love of God and how your gifts to them are symbols of God's gift to all of us.

Quaker Life

URBANA COLLEGE UPDATE

Figures for the Fall Quarter enrollment at Urbana College have been tabulated and both the main campus and the off-campus enrollment figures have met the budgeted projections for the 1981 Fall period.

Approximately 330 students (Full Time Equivalent of 310) are enrolled in the main campus program; this figure includes students taking courses under the new Evening School Program. Off campus, approximately 368 students (FTE of 300) have registered for Fall classes; this number includes students enrolled in the three correctional institutions served by the College, for a total of 610 FTE.

Kathy Mason, Urbana College's Registrar, states: "The 'drop-add' period has now been completed, so our figures are reasonably accurate. Of course, it is still possible that the number of students may fluctuate up or down during the quarter, but we do not anticipate any significant departure from the figures already recorded, which means we enter the Fall Quarter on target, a positive indicator for the current year."

"Our Evening School Program is now functioning on the main campus, adds Dr. Harold Dickerscheid, Dean of the College, who notes that "the main campus Evening School Program is unique this Fall because for the first time we are offering students an opportunity to obtain a two or four year degree entirely through evening courses."

Robert I. Headley, Director of Off Campus Programs, is equally optimistic about the Fall Quarter figures. "We're on target for the projected total enrollment of our off campus programs, he states, "and our three correctional institutions . . . Marysville, London, and Lima . . . are above budgeted projections. While it's too early to say how these figures will develop over the entire year, we are off to a strong start at the beginning of the 1981 - 82 academic year, and this should help us during the remaining three quarters in our off campus program."

Dr. A. Perry Whitmore, President of Urbana College, concluded by stating that "The opening enrollment of the academic year is a strong indicator of how successful a college will be in meeting its objectives and financial obligations; we are encouraged by our Fall

enrollment, but must now direct our attention and efforts to the remainder of the year, because the complete story will be told only after we know what our total yearly enrollment figures are. While we are concentrating on maintaining our opening enrollment level throughout the rest of the year, we will also be busily engaged in producing strong annual fund programs and working with a totally controlled budget that will accurately reflect the financial condition of the College at any given point in time. We are off to a good start this year, but must keep constant vigil over our revenues and carefully control our expenses during the year before we can consider the 1981 - 82 year a success."

Swedenborgians Concerned for Urbana College *A STATEMENT OF INTENT*

On March 7th, 1850 the Legislature of the State of Ohio approved the Charter of Urbana University. With this act several years of earlier work became a reality. A tradition of New Church involvement began with the clear statement that the school was to be under "the management and direction of persons known and recognized as belonging to the New Church, or attached to the principles thereof."

Through the years many New Church people have actively supported and been involved with Urbana College as students, faculty, administrators, alumni and members of the Board of Trustees. These are relationships which should continue, but more than that, they should be strengthened. To do this, the members of the Urbana Society of the New Church propose the formation of a group of Swedenborgians concerned for Urbana College with the primary purpose of fostering a positive Swedenborgian influence on campus.

Exact plans have not yet been formulated but it is the intent to invite New Church people everywhere to lend support to the primary purpose and to assist with the strengthening of the ties between the Church and the College for the mutual benefit of each.

We request that the Committee on Church Relations and the Board of Trustees approve in principle the formation of this group. With their permission we wish to be represented at open meetings of the Committee or the Board with the privilege of addressing either when mutual concerns arise.

BOARD OF MISSIONS REPORT

*by Eric Zacharias,
Executive Secretary*

Our Board of Home and Foreign Missions has a long history of supporting New Church Centers in many parts of the world. Our efforts, though modest in scope and limited by available resources, have continued to assist the promotion of our message in such countries as Japan, Korea, India, France, Germany, Argentina and Guyana. In most cases the work is carried forward in these distant regions by a few, very loyal and dedicated people.

The Western Canada field is no longer under the direct auspices and supervision of the Board of Missions. We wish our friends in Western Canada well as they assume responsibility for the financing and programming of the work in that vast area. The Board stands prepared to offer supportive assistance in the future.

The world is changing. This is a good time for the Board to re-think the focus and thrust of its efforts. We are in the process of evaluating our priorities. All of our Centers in both the foreign and home field are coming under scrutiny. A number of fundamental questions are being asked. "How can we best meet the needs of our time?" "How deep is our commitment to the foreign field?" "To the home field?"

On October 15 — 17th, the members of the Board, consisting of Rev. Wm. R. Woofenden, Mrs. Jean Gilchrist, Mrs. Dorothy Farnham, Rev. Galen W. Unruh, Capt. Gus Ebel and Rev. Eric Zacharias met in Newton, Mass. Our Chairperson, Mrs. Esther Capon, was not able to be with us.

During the course of these sessions, we conferred with each of our international students: Christian Mania from Germany, Patrick Duvivier from France and Kei Torita from Japan. It is anticipated that Mr. Mania will serve the Church in Germany and Switzerland following his graduation from the Swedenborg School of Religion and ordination. Mr. Duvivier is looking forward to a ministry in Southern France and Miss Torita is planning her ministry in the Tokyo area.

We are working toward the establishment of a stronger reporting procedure with the hope that open channels of accountability will be increasingly helpful to both those who are

serving abroad and to the Board. At its June meeting, the General Council agreed to grant certain limited legal powers to Mr. E. Llewellyn Fraser in Guyana as the official representative of the General Convention in that developing nation. It was a decision of the Board to further support our work there by voting a modest stipend for Mr. Fraser.

The Board is now turning with increasing interest to growing opportunities for usefulness here at home. After careful consideration, it voted to support the Rev. Susan Turley-Moore in her proposal for ministry in the Portland, Maine area. Working closely with the Rev. Michael Salvetti and other members of her congregation a program of renewal and expansion is being initiated.

The Board has accepted as its mandate a commitment to reach out with the Swedenborgian message in ways that will have significant influence upon the lives of people. To this end, we have set aside an amount of \$15,000.00 in our 1981 - 82 budget proposal for a traveling ministry. This is an effort to bring the church and its concepts for Spiritual growth to small groups, to isolated families and to those newly introduced to the Church.

The Board of Missions is proposing the following budget for the 1981 - 82 fiscal year.

Reaching-out Ministry	\$31,215.00	49%
Maintenance of On-going Min.	13,190.00	20.7%
Training of Ministers	2,600.00	4.1%
Unspecified Items Incl. emergencies, special projects	5,500.00	8.6%
Administration	8,450.00	7.3%
Pensions	2,772.00	4.3%

The Board of Missions is anxious to be of greater use to the Church in service to our local congregations, to our people abroad, and working in close cooperation with other Boards in the Convention. We solicit your suggestions and comments. These may be directed to Mrs. Esther Capon, 862 DeSoto Court, Walnut Creek, CA 94598 or to Rev. Eric J. Zacharias, Pretty Prairie, Kansas 67570.

S.N.A.P. REPORT

*Margaret Schnitzer,
St. Paul, Minnesota*

The Swedenborgian New Age Pioneers held a Holistic Health and Healing Workshop this August in the Santa Cruz Mountains, near Holy City, California. Fourteen people came together from the East Coast, the Midwest, Canada, and of course, California, to explore the spiritual, psychological and physical aspects of health and well-being.

The workshop was preceded by a work week led by Chuck Duffey who was joined by six of us with a single-minded focus on constructing a redwood tank on Convention's Holy City property. The tank, which is fed by a mountain spring, will provide a much-needed constant supply of water for cooking and bathing.

After many difficulties, including carrying 900 pounds of cement up the mountain and making repeated trips back down to have holes drilled, boards re-cut and bolts replaced, the tank was almost completed when the rest of the S.N.A.P. participants arrived. By mid-week the tank was filled to the rim and the newly constructed shower had already been put to use. Perhaps the best part of work week, for poison oak sufferers, was learning from a visitor that a bush which grows right on the property offers some relief from the miserable rash.

This year's workshop was led by Rachel Martin, Paul Martin, Ruth Crowell, and Rev. Eric Allison. The schedule was set up to allow time for both large and small group experiences, as well as unstructured time for individual pursuits. Each person was a part of a small intensive group, which met each day, with a focus on a particular aspect of spiritual/psychological growth. The small size of these groups encouraged deep personal sharing by each one of us.

Large group activities included presentation/discussions on Swedenborg and Buddhism and on Jung and Swedenborg, as well as workshops on spiritual hypnosis, polarity, macrobiotic diet and philosophy, and The Holy City Within us. Worship services were led by Rev. Eric Allison and Rev. Horand Gutfeldt, including a sunset Communion service on the last night when Mike Gutfeldt was confirmed into the New Church.

Somehow, there was still enough time for Tai Chi in the early mornings, volleyball in the afternoons, singing after dinner and two trips to the beach in Santa Cruz.

S.N.A.P. this year was a time for physical revitalization, psychological exploration and spiritual deepening. It was a time to strengthen relationships with God, with each other and with ourselves in a setting where the peace and beauty surrounding us inspired us to get in touch with the peace within.

Next year's Holy City S.N.A.P. Workshop is planned for the week before Convention and will be preceded by a work week. Look for further information in coming issues of the *Messenger*.

A SMILE OR TWO

The optimist is a person who thinks the preacher is nearly through when he says "Finally."

A minister left his visiting card at the unanswered front door and wrote on it "Revelation 3:20." The following Sunday a woman handed him her own card on which she had written "Genesis 3:10."

A naive six-year-old boy and a sophisticated eight-year-old girl were discussing Christmas. "If you stop believing in Santa Claus," he asked anxiously, "do you stop getting presents?" "As long as your mother and father still believe," the girl assured him, "you've got nothing to worry about."

A clergyman was in the habit of going to his little girl's bedside each evening and telling her a story before she went to sleep. One evening he told her such a thrilling tale that the youngster sat up in bed, looked at her father, and asked, "Daddy, is that a true story or are you preaching?"

The new minister's family was presented with a pie baked by one of the congregation who was a rather poor cook. The pie was inedible, so the minister's wife reluctantly threw it into the garbage. The preacher was faced with the problem of thanking the lady and at the same time being truthful. After much thought, he sent the following note: "Thank you for being so kind and thoughtful. I can assure you that pie like yours never lasts long at our house."

Pulpit Digest.

MAINE ASSOCIATION PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS 1981

Greetings and welcome to the 143rd Annual Meeting of the Maine Association of the Church of the New Jerusalem.

As President of the Association I would like to thank the Portland Society for hosting this year's Annual Meeting. I would also like to welcome the Reverend Susan Turley-Moore and her family to our Association, as she has assumed the leadership of the Portland Society.

The state of progress of the Maine Association will be indicated shortly when we hear the individual reports of the societies. These reports are an integral part of our meeting, for it is the individual societies that make up this Association; and it is as each is working to fulfill the uses of the New Church that our progress is seen.

As an Association we do have a common goal, or end, which is to become servants in the hands of our Heavenly Father, using the means He has provided for us to increase and make more complete His New Church on Earth. Thus it is through our very special and unique Doctrines that lead into the life and faith of the New Church.

It was to this end that scattered receivers of the Heavenly Doctrines of the New Church first came together. It was to this end that they formed into Societies, and it was to this end that the Societies of the Church of the New Jerusalem in Maine came together to form our Association. This end has not changed.

As a Church we still have a great challenge before us. It is not too difficult to see that the Truths of the New Church have taken hold in our world. But at the same time, with the Second Coming of the Lord in Spirit and Truth, the world has been given a greater freedom not known before. The freedom spoken of here is not so much external freedom, but freedom of the mind. This freedom has, in a sense, broken the shackles of hypocrisy—people are no longer afraid to openly express and live by their inner dictates. This freedom is good, but it has unleashed at the same time a rash of evils. This is good also, for it is true that before evils can be eradicated from the life they must be seen and recognized.

It is not that evils were not present in earlier times, but today there is less fear of expressing openly the evils of the sensuous nature. An

attitude of "if it feels so right it can't be wrong" is very dominant in today's thinking. This is especially true of many of the moral laws which have their foundation in spiritual law.

This is where the New Church has its greatest challenge and opportunity. We should never forget that with the Second Coming, and the newer freedom we have, we also have a greater responsibility. With the Second Coming of our Lord and Savior, and the spiritual freedom this brought about, it did not modify or blot out the Laws of Divine Order. However, with this freedom of the mind we cannot put the burden of responsibility on God, the Church, or on another person, for the choices we have made to govern our faith and life.

The Heavenly Doctrines of the New Church were given expressly for the purpose of re-establishing communication between Heaven and Earth, for the purpose that the mind could delve deeply into the understanding of the internals of the Written Word. And it is through this that we have now the opportunity to teach and lead the world into the truths of faith and the goods of true heavenly life.

This is a great challenge and opportunity before us. May our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ be with each one of us as we endeavor to become His willing servants in establishing more fully His Church on Earth.

Reverend David L. Rienstra
Fryeburg, Maine

GLEANINGS FROM CHURCH BULLETINS

The Church of the Holy City in Royal Oak, Michigan at a recent meeting decided to have a "Bible and Human Transformation" series on Thursday evenings at the pastor's apartment; have a membership re-affirmation on Sunday, January 24, 1982, which also includes Homecoming features for out-of-town members; have at least one public meeting next spring with an outside presenter on a theme of special interest.

The *Plaines Banner* from Kansas publicized the Camp Mennoscah Retreat which was held on Oct. 23 - 25. The study material this year

was based on "The Beatitudes—How relevant are they in today's world?" The group also explored several chapters from *Conjugal Love* The officers of the Pawnee Rock Youth League this year are: Kim Welch, President; Tina Bright, Vice President; Konni Welch, Secretary-Treasurer. The League is using Helen Keller's *My Religion* as a study guide Recently a Family Night was held at the Methodist Church in Pretty Prairie, where the Swedenborgians and the Methodists shared their respective beliefs with one another.

From the Bellevue, Washington Newsletter we note that Elizabeth Johnson is meeting regularly with a Retirement Discussion Group, where a variety of issues relating to retirement are explored And Lorraine Sando, known to many of us through her involvement with the Post Convention Conferences, is offering a six session course on "Healing the Whole Person" in which she shares material from her recent workshop with Jean Houston. Techniques of visualization, imagery, art, sensory integration, etc., will be used to integrate left and right brain activities.

The big event for the Women's Service Club in DeLand, Florida was the annual yard sale held in early October. The total amount raised for church purposes was \$740.00 Every Labor Day the church season in DeLand begins with a special service and outdoor barbecue with master chef Herb Young doing the honors. This year it rained heavily over the noon hour but with the help of two large umbrellas the chicken was barbecued to perfection.

In Kitchener Eric Allison has started a "Roaring Twenties" group for young adults between twenty and early thirties. They meet twice monthly for Bible study, meditation and social activities. Eric also meets regularly with the High School group on Monday evenings. There is a Holistic Health group meeting every two or three weeks, where a variety of physical and spiritual approaches toward Wholeness are examined and demonstrated. Our next session is on Reflexology or foot massage which can result in reduced tension and overall physical relief.

A very useful concept is described in the Philadelphia New Church bulletin. A Pastoral Evaluation Committee has been established which serves as a liaison between the Rev. Jay Lee and the congregation. The Committee, chaired by Fred Heldring, helps the pastor do his work more effectively by bringing to his attention the congregation's feelings, reactions, and needs, and in turn communicates the

pastor's concerns and views to the Church members. The Philadelphia Church also has an active Program Committee, chaired by Dorothy Zang, which works with the minister in the area of programs and activities. In recent weeks a revitalized Church School and Nursery program was launched.

P. Z.

Author Makes Sense of World's Chaos

OTTAWA (CP)—If the chaos that seems rampant around the world is upsetting, try to accept it because you are living through a great turning point in history, author Alvin Toffler said Thursday.

Toffler, author of two books on future trends in society, says the chaos is happening as the world industrial system breaks up after dominating events for 300 years.

"We are in the opening stages of the reconstruction of our society."

However the future is anything but gloomy thanks to the revolution in electronic communications, he told several hundred participants at an international symposium on small business.

The new society will be based on diversification in energy sources, economic activities and lifestyles and that will be a boon to small businessmen, Toffler said.

Whether a country bills itself as capitalist, socialist or communist, it is undergoing similar pressures caused by energy shortages and price increases, unemployment, high interest rates and falling productivity, Toffler said.

No country has a strategy for making the transition to the new order and "governmental structures are the biggest bottleneck to change," Toffler said.

"They keep trying to apply yesterday's medicines" to cure the ills of society.

They keep trying to treat economies as national in scope when most countries have several regional economies as strong as the national economy of 30 years ago.

He calls his new society the third wave with the agricultural and industrial societies being the first and second waves.

Industrial societies have worked on the basis that biggest is best but that won't last in the new society, he said.

Developing countries must rethink their industrialization plans to take into account the patterns of the new society.

In it, people will be able to work more from home using new communications technology.

K-W Record,
Oct. 30, 1981

We Get Letters

CALL FOR RENEWAL

Dear members of the Church of the
New Jerusalem:

Have we proved ourselves good New Churchmen? Have we studied what our church should mean to us? Do we read directly from Swedenborg's writings so we can know all the wonderful things there are to know? How many of Swedenborg's thirty volumes have we really read?

We believe our New Church is special. Do we teach our children, our mates, our neighbours, all these wonderful things? Am I doing my part?

When our church was new, there was much opposition. We had to separate from other churches. We had to study to meet the opposition. We were enthusiastic and studied hard. We met in groups to tell others what we had found, and to learn what others had discovered.

Now, if there was no New Church near, would we read by ourselves? Would we join a small group and write our discoveries, or answer questions by mail? Round Robins do this. Would we prefer to teach, or join a group who live fairly nearby? Which ones of us can teach children, either in small groups or by mail?

We need a new dedication to help us to renew ourselves, and do what is best now.

If we read in the Word at night, we will help the Lord be closer to us as we sleep. If we read Swedenborg in the morning, we will arouse spiritual motivation in ourselves.

Best wishes to the future of our Church,
Velma Bates Ramirez,
Puerto Rico.

FREEDOM IS ESSENTIAL

Dear Mr. Zacharias:

The two or three issues of the *Messenger* covering the June Convention at Urbana were very good in my estimation, and it is with

appreciation that I send you this check for \$25.00. There have been other issues that stand out and demonstrate the work you put into the *Messenger*.

You may have read the *Spiritual Diary 2406* before you wrote the article "It's Not a Black and White World" in the June issue. Here Swedenborg explains how people separate themselves after death. There are societies which they can choose. Remarkably, Swedenborg says, "In the life of the body, people are much more left to themselves than after life in the other world, and thus during natural life are in a more spacious field of liberty, but they are led by the Lord." I have read in other places in the New Church literature where people tried to dictate the language of doctrines of charity, truth and other teachings of the Church. People must leave each other in liberty, no matter how small the group. Perhaps this is why the New Church is so small.

Allen T. Cook (88)
Wetmore, Colo.

NEUTRON BOMBS: ANOTHER VIEW

To the Editor:

I feel compelled to respond to the letter, and quoted article in that letter, concerning the neutron bomb in the October 1981 *Messenger*. The writer of the quoted article, Rex Warren, has the misconception that the neutron bomb is a totally new and untried concept, with unknown effects to be expected from testing. He predicts side-effects from testing on a mass scale (producing monsters etc.). As a mechanical engineer who has been involved in nuclear weapon design and testing for 21 years (among other things), I hope that I can ease the anxiety of some *Messenger* readers with the following unclassified facts.

All thermonuclear weapons produce free neutrons. A standard thermonuclear weapon emits about 10^{23} (i.e.: 10 to the 23rd power) neutrons per kiloton of total weapon yield. For many years, neutron effects tests have been done employing neutron bursts from thermonuclear explosions. Materials exposed to the high intensity neutrons are recovered and analyzed. Some of these effects studies are unclassified.

The amount of neutron yield in relation to the explosive yield in *test thermonuclear explosive devices* can be, and have been, tailored upward and downward within limits.

Stockpile weapons with the neutron yield tailored downward now exist. The decision to produce *stockpile weapons* with the neutron yield tailored upward is new, but the effects of high intensity neutrons on matter have been studied for a long time, and the studies continue. Nothing as alarming as that predicted by Rex Warren has occurred.

Al Bateman
Los Alamos, New Mexico

FROM CHURCH RECORDS

BAPTISMS

SCHELLENBERG—Tracey Ann, daughter of Kenneth and Laureen Schellenberg, of Winnipeg, Manitoba, was baptized into the Christian faith, according to the forms of the New Church, on Tuesday, October 6, 1981, at the home of her grandparents, John and Helen Schellenberg, in Winnipeg. Rev. Erwin D. Reddekopp officiated.

SWAN—Jaclyn Emerson, daughter of Sharon (Lemee) and Richard Swan, was baptized into the Christian faith in the Bridgewater New Church on October 11, 1981, the Rev. William Woofenden officiating.

CONFIRMATIONS

CARLSON—Barbara, Carolyn, and Glenda Carlson were confirmed into the faith of the New Church on Sunday, October 4, 1981, in Meadow Lake, Saskatchewan, Rev. Gertrude Tremblay officiating. The Society's President, H. C. Froese, then welcomed them into membership, presenting each an Alliance pin and a Certificate of Membership on behalf of the Society.

MARRIAGES

BRACHMAN—LOEWEN—Reginald G. Brachman was united in marriage with Lori Jeanne Loewen, on Saturday, October 3, 1981, at Ascension Lutheran Church in Calgary, Alberta. The Rev. Erwin D. Reddekopp, great uncle of the bride, officiated.

WALKER—OLK—Michael Edward Olk and Teresa Jean Walker were united in marriage in the Fryeburg, Maine New Church on October 24, 1981, the Rev. David Rienstra officiating.

DEATHS

GALE—Mrs. Marjorie Edith (Nichols) Gale, a lifelong member of the Boston New Church, died on October 17, 1981. The resurrection service was conducted by the Rev. George McCurdy and the Rev. Harold Cranch. Mrs. Gale, 59, daughter of the late Boston Mayor Malcolm E. Nichols, is survived by her husband Melvin; a daughter, Marion, and a son, Malcolm.

HALEY—Leonora Haley passed into the spiritual life on October 10, 1981, in Fryeburg, Maine. The Rev. David L. Rienstra officiated at the resurrection service.

SAWATZKY—George H. Sawatzky, of Meadow Lake, Saskatchewan passed into the spiritual world on September 17, 1981, as the result of a heart attack. George was 66 years of age. The resurrection service was conducted at the Pentecostal Church in Meadow Lake on Tuesday, September 22, with the Rev. Erwin D. Reddekopp officiating. George is survived by his loving wife, Ione, and two daughters, Violet and Ruth, four sons, Gordon, Larry, Ray and Arthur, and four grandchildren.

JOY TO THE WORLD

Dream Or Reality

A three day Retreat for Youth ages 13 - 18 at "Beside the Point", Kemper Road Center's Retreat Center. Sponsored by ANCL, Kemper Road Center, and the Mid-Eastern Swedenborgian Churches.

December 27, 8 p.m. to December 30, 1 p.m. Cost: \$15.00

NAME _____ Phone _____

ADDRESS _____ State _____ Zip _____

Bring: Medical release and medical insurance certificate #,
Musical instruments, Bible, sleeping bag, pillow, towels.

Send to: Kemper Road Center, 9035 E. Kemper Rd., Montgomery, Ohio 45242
Phone (513) 489-9KRC or Ron Brugler (412) 321-3124.

THE STAR IN THE EAST

*Leon C. LeVan
St. Petersburg, Fla.*



The Wise Men knew from the Ancient Word that the Lord would some day come into the world. They studied the Ancient Scriptures. They pondered the ancient prophecies. They knew He was to be born in the land of Israel. They knew He was to be a king. They knew He was to be heralded by a Star. For that reason they watched the heavens and studied the stars—patiently waiting and watching for that strange “New Star” which would be the sign of the Divine Incarnation.

At last the Star appeared. Greater and more beautiful it was than any star of the natural sky. For this was no star of the material heavens. It was a spiritual Star, a star such as is seen by Angels in the Heavenly world. If you were to look at the evening sky in Heaven, you would see stars there. But each “star” would be a Society of Angels. Such are the Angels of the Gabriel Society, the Michael Society, and others. The “Star” which the Wise Men saw was that same Gabriel Society. None others (so far as we know) except the Wise Men saw that “star.” Only they who love the Lord—who long for His coming—and who are willing to harken to His Word could see that Star, because they alone were granted by the Lord to have their spiritual eyes opened.

Bible scholarship is unable to determine the exact time at which the Star appeared to the devout Magi. The Magi may have lived a thousand miles from Bethlehem. Travel must take weeks or months. It is permissible to believe the Star appeared to the Magi long before the Lord’s birth and enabled them to be in Jerusalem (and even in Bethlehem) on the very night the Babe was born. That is conjecture. We cannot know for certain exactly when the Wise Men arrived. But it is not contrary to the spirit of the Word to place the coming of the Wise Men very soon after the Holy Birth. They had seen His star in the east and were come to worship Him. It was a Divine work. And we know the Divine Love revealed the “Star” in accordance with Divine Wisdom.

In the Gospel story of the Wise Men, the

Magi brought gifts to the Lord, but in the sacrament of the Holy Supper the Lord gives gifts to men. Because the birth of Jesus on the one hand, and the Holy Supper on the other, took place at opposite extremes of the Lord’s earthly life, they may at first seem unrelated. The Wise Men came just after the Lord was born. The Holy Supper was instituted just before the Lord’s death on the Cross. Both events were among the first and last things—the alpha and omega of the Lord’s human life. Yet the Divine Love and Wisdom were equally (and fully) in both. “Gold, frankincense, and myrrh” were the gifts of the Wise Men. “Bread and wine” (and the power to receive them) are the gifts of the Lord. The same love, the same wisdom, the same faith and obedience are in the visit of the Wise Men as in the sacrament of the Holy Supper.

At the Birth of Jesus men presented their gifts and themselves. In the sacrament of the Holy Supper, the Lord presents Himself and His gifts. The circle of Life is completed.

As we contemplate these sublime events, let us undertake to emulate the Wise Men approaching the end of their great quest, there to kneel and find the Incarnate God. We bring to the Lord our hearts, our minds, our obedient lives. The Lord gives us love and wisdom and the power of life eternal. None are wise but the lowly. None see the Star except they who look for light in His Word. None make the journey from the east to Bethlehem save they who are of the church. And none receive the “bread and wine” of the Holy Supper worthily except they who have journeyed from the spiritual “east” to the spiritual “Bethlehem” to offer their hearts and their worship to the Holy Child.

Let that be our mission as we are led by the “star” of Divine truth in the world today. You are asked to be nothing less than a humble, spiritual Wise Man or, indeed, a lowly shepherd. It has been given you to see the “star in the east.” Long ago you set out on your journey to find and worship the Heavenly King. Your thoughtful participation in the Holy Communion at or near the Christmas season is like the end of the Magi’s journey to Bethlehem. There they found the Christ. But when they went back to their homes they did not return through the country of the wicked king Herod. They went by “another way.”

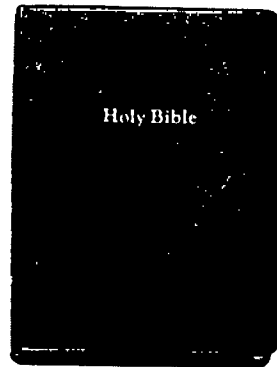
That “other way” images the new life which does not return to its former evils. We leave our evils behind never to return to them. We abhor them, renounce them, and shun them as sins against God—and go forward to our true spiritual “home in the east” by the Lord’s “other way.”

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