

THE MESSENGER

Official Organ of the Swedenborgian Church

DECEMBER 1974



W. J. ...

Christmas 1974

By Robert H. Kirven

Again the swirling stars in what's called space,
 Marking by patterns what we have named time,
 Remind us of the Miracle in which
 Light came to darkness and Life awakened death,
 Freeing us from shadows and from fears.

(But all that's been recalled before,
 And still we spend our energy
 To fight corners before we turn
 And flee from life to escape death.)

With reverent words and happy songs,
 We tell how angels from another realm
 Came into ours to promise joy and peace
 To shepherds, while a star that few men knew
 Led wise men from the east to hail the King.

(But Ph.D.s and drop-outs know
 That joy is just a memory,
 And peace a pause between the wars,
 Because too many want too much.)

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Robert H. Kirven, Editor
 Madelyn Johnson, Lay-out Assistant

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*So whom do you believe this Christmastime —
The glorious songs and stories known of old
Of word made flesh eternally in time,
Or all the news from press and tube that all
Has gone to hell and heaven's just a dream?*

*(Remember that the Lord was born
Into the darkest night the world
Had known til then — or ever will
Again, so the great seer says.)*

*I guess, because it's Christmastime again
(Perhaps it's only sentiment — but then,
It may be sacred memories in my soul)
I'll trust the Best I've known; and tho I can't
Deny the worst, I'll Leave it to its place.*

*(My deepest dreads of nights before
Now faded in the new-born days,
And fearful threats impending now
May yield before my new-born King.)*

*So since I cannot run with simple trust
As shepherds did, I labor up this long
And tortuous path the wise men long since showed
To offer love to Love, and praise to God.
Whatever path you take, may we meet there!*

A Blessed Christmas to you!



PRESIDENT'S CORNER

I enter the last year of my presidency with a mixture of feelings. Like Gerald Ford I can say that I enjoy being president. The last 6½ years have been very stimulating and satisfying as I have had opportunities to meet with the departments, boards and committees of Convention, and to visit local churches and associations. The day-to-day administrative work is not as exciting, but it is still working with people and I believe that it is in intimate human relationships that God's love and presence are experienced most intensely.

Although I have experienced disappointments and frustrations in the presidency, it has been one of the "peak experiences" of my life. Life is made up of a number of peaks, however, and I feel the need for variety. I look forward to serving the Lord and this branch of his church in a new capacity next fall. What that particular capacity will be, will unfold, I trust, as the year progresses.

During the fall months I have attended meetings of Convention boards and committees. In connection with my trip to the Wayfarers' Chapel in November, I flew to San Francisco and met with three of our ministers and their families. David Garrett is engaged in a full-time counselling ministry and is working for a Doctor of Ministry degree. Priscilla works four days a week in an adult education program with retired persons. John Billings is the minister of the El Cerrito parish of the San Francisco Society, and his wife Sharon teaches at a cooperative school in El Cerrito. Owen and Cathy Turley live in the San Francisco suburb of Moraga. Owen is a part-time faculty member of the Swedenborg School of Religion and is also working for the Oasis Center, a home and center for the education and treatment of problem juveniles, and a growth center for adults. Kathy has begun work this fall as an educational psychologist in the public school system. My day's travel to the ministers' homes included rides on the miraculous new Bart subway system and John Billings' Honda. (Convention takes out a special insurance policy for its president to cover such hazardous experiences.)

On November 2, at the annual meeting of the Middle Atlantic Association, I had the privilege of

consecrating Milton Honemann as Lay Minister to serve the Baltimore Church. On the preceding Sunday I preached at the New York Church.

In January I plan to fly to Guyana, South America, to conduct the ordination service for Missionary Minister Robert Murray. Mr. Murray has been studying at the Swedenborg School of Religion with his wife, Rose, and they will serve the church in Georgetown, Guyana. The Murrays spent a month in Guyana last spring just prior to convention.

The General Council will meet in Urbana January 23-25. Among items on the agenda will be the budget for the coming year, discussion of a report from the Planning and Development Committee, and the appointment of a Director for Convention's central office.

Urbana College enrolled about 400 students in September. The accreditation procedure continues, and a visitation team from the North Central Association will go to the campus in January. I hope you will give your careful consideration to the appeal for financial support of the college. Our church has a great stake in the future of the college and your support is urgently needed.

On December 18 I will meet with leaders of the member denominations of the National Council of Churches to discuss the Church's unique responsibility in relation to meaning and values in our society. In her letter of invitation, Claire Randall, General Secretary of the Council, wrote: "On all sides, in and out of the Church, the word comes that a change in life styles is in store for our nation. This is a time of crises, of food, energy, resources, and earth survival. It is a time of fundamental adjustment which is required if we are to have justice and full participation of all persons in the life of our society. Such a change raises questions about the meaning of life, our values and moral imperatives. These are the Church's unique business, and we need to begin to talk about how we shall be about this business."

Ernest O. Martin

Statistics

BIRTHS

A son, Scott Herbert, was born to Mr. and Mrs. Bert Howes of N. Battleford, Sask., on July 5th.

A daughter, Sandra Lynn, was born to Mr. and Allen Dyck of Debolt, Atla. on August 7th.

Born on July 17th to Earle and Christian Wentworth of the Fryeburg Church, a son, Broughton Benson.

The following babies were born in Fryeburg this summer: Vicky Lynn, born to Ronald and Mary Holt on May 14th; Meggan Aileen, born to Buddy and Jodine Webster on June 25th; Eric Michael, born to Michael and Phyllis Sparks on August 27th; Jennifer Sue, born to Stephen and Nancy Leach on August 29th.

Anastasia Victoria Alexandra was born on August 10th to Susan and Alex Samsonov of the San Diego Church, and was baptized on August 18th at the Wayfarers' Chapel by Dr. Ivan Franklin.

BAPTISMS

On June 16th Heidi Lynn, daughter of Torry and Elizabeth McAllister of the Fryeburg Church, was baptized by the Rev. Horace Briggs.

Nadine Claudette and Michelle Dawn, daughters of Mr. and Mrs. Douglas Labelle, were baptized by the Rev. John Jeffery on July 7th in Edmonton.

On July 28th the Rev. Leon LeVan baptized Christopher Lee Little, grandchild of the John Little family. On October 20th the reverend baptized Angela Marie Wood, daughter of Gifford and Teresa Wood, now the youngest grandchild in the Little family of Florida.

The Rev. John Jeffery baptized Kirsten Debra Lee Spencer on August 25th. Kirsten's parents are Mr. and Mrs. Jimmy Spencer, Jr. of Vancouver.

Carrie Leanne Hachborn, born May 7th to Charles and Linda Hachborn of Listowel, Ont., was baptized by the Rev. Paul Zacharias on September 8th.

Jonathan David Person, son of Mr. and Mrs. Larry Person, was baptized on September 15th by the Rev. Andre Diaconoff in St. Paul.

Jennifer Sue, daughter of Stephen and Nancy Leach, was baptized in the Fryeburg Church on September 22nd.

In Edmonton the Rev. John Jeffery officiated at the baptism of Eric, son of Eleanor and Don Holton on September 29th.

The Rev. Leon LeVan baptized Angela Marie Wood, daughter of Teresa Wood on October 20th in St. Petersburg.

Scott Herbert, infant son of Mr. and Mrs. Bert Howes of N. Battleford, Sask., was baptized during a worship service at the home of the parents on October 11th. The Rev. Henry Reddekopp officiated.

In Fryeburg on October 27th, Eric Michael, son of Michael and Phyllis Sparks, was baptized by the Rev. Horace Briggs.

On November 10th in the Cleveland Church the Rev. Robert H. Kirven baptized William Wilkerson Nolan, son of Melodie Ann and William Andrew Nolan.

CONFIRMATIONS

Judith Dennis was confirmed in the Cleveland Church on November 10th by the Rev. Robert H. Kirven.

MARRIAGES

The following weddings were performed by the Rev. Galen Unruh: Marsha McFann was married to Dan Holecek on April 6th; Laura Hughes and David Chestnut were united in marriage on June 3rd; Toni Bright and Rickey Steimatze were married on August 21st; and on August 28th Alice Friesen and Ronald Bell were also joined in marriage.

On June 1st there were three marriages in Fryeburg, Maine: Scott Lee Charles and Sally Elizabeth Frost; Carl Edgar Rockwell and Marilyn Barnard Brown; Melvin Alexander Greenaway Jr. and Debra Jean Farris. On June 15th Daniel Andre Charest and Donnette Marie Ela were married; on July 10th Kenneth Ira Briggs and April Marcel Rand; and on August 24th Ronald Charles Smith and Sheila Marie Watson.

Marty Loving and Karen Maneth were married in Great Bend on June 8th by the Rev. Galen Unruh and Father Ted Skalsky.

The Rev. George McCurdy officiated at the marriage of Donald Costello and Gloria Guiu in the Cambridge, Mass. chapel on June 29th.

The Rev. Galen Unruh officiated at the marriage of Jeanine Mull and Brad Haynes at the Presbyterian Church in Larned, Kansas on July 20th.

John Andrew Tafel and Sandra Liecette Magaz were married in Philadelphia on July 20th by the Rev. Richard Tafel.

The Rev. Paul Zacharias performed three marriages in August at the Church of the Good Shepherd in Kitchener, Ontario. On August 2nd William Henry Histel and Ruth Margaret Ahrens were united in marriage; on the 17th Robert J. Blair and Carolyn Dorothy Ruppe; and on the 31st Randy Poll and Kathleen Dietrich.

On August 3rd Donna Winters, Lakewood, Ohio was married to Edward A. Tresko at the Lakewood Congregational Church.

Carol Elaine Robock, formerly of Edmonton, and Donald Edward Schulz were married by the Rev. John Jeffery in Red Deer on August 31st.

Henry Philip Ela and Christine Hatch Wentworth were married in Fryeburg on September 20th.

Gordon Scade and Beverly Nykolyn were married in Edmonton on September 21st.

Michael Dale Glanders and Virginia Kay Baughman exchanged wedding vows in the La Porte New

Church on September 28th. The ceremony was performed by the Rev. Matthew S. P. Glowe.

Craig W. Estes and Christine J. Andrews were united in marriage by the Rev. Horace Briggs on October 19th in North Fryeburg.

On October 19th Edwin Morton and Stephanie Tafel of the Philadelphia Church were married by the Rev. Richard H. Tafel.

On November 23rd, Robert Wooley and Margaret Parris, and Ricky Vonbergen and Jayne Parris were united in marriage in a double wedding, in the Philadelphia Church with the Rev. Richard H. Tafel officiating.

In Fryeburg on November 9th Thomas Hodsdon and Nancy Shaw were joined in marriage; and on November 13th Virgil Kiesman and Nancy Knight were married.

DEATHS

The following deaths were reported from Florida: Mrs. Mattie Mathieu, Gulfport, Miss. on February 15th; Mr. Jesse W. Howe, Holly Hill, Fla. on May 20th; Mrs. Anna T. Edwards of DeBary, Fla. on July 16th.

In Fryeburg, Maine there were resurrection services as follows: May 28th for Ida M. Dunham; June 9th for Warren J. Higgins; July 22nd for Dora E. Handlon and for Bailey Colby; and July 29th for Raymond E. Ballard.

Mrs. Victoria Harvey, 79, passed away recently at her home in Liberty, Mo. She is survived by her husband, P. Caspar Harvey.

Mr. Cornelius Hiebert of Roblin, Manitoba passed into eternal life on June 8th. The resurrection service was held on June 10th.

Mrs. Dorothy Dickenson Diephuis was called into the higher life on June 30th. Services were held in St. Louis, the Rev. Thornton O. Smallwood officiating, on July 2nd. Mrs. Diephuis was wife of the late Rev. Dirk Diephuis, for many years the pastor in St. Louis.

On June 27th Mr. Hoyt Hamilton Scott of LaPorte, Ind. passed into eternal life. Services were conducted from the LaPorte New Church on June 29th with the Rev. Matthew S. P. Glowe officiating.

Mrs. Robert Edwards (Nana Tafel) passed into the higher life in Texas on July 15th. A memorial service will be held in the Philadelphia Church this fall.

Mrs. Lennie P. Vance, a long-time member of the LaPorte New Church, passed away on August 11th. Services were held on August 14th.

Mrs. Nellie Anzer, mother of Jack Brooker of the San Diego Church, passed away on September 5th. Mrs. Anzer was 97 years old.

Resurrection services were held on September 10th for Carole Moulton and on September 13th for Effie Heath, both of the Fryeburg Church.

Resurrection services were held on October 25th for Sumner F. Durgin and on October 29th for Esther M. Smith, both of the Fryeburg Church.

Mr. Owen Parker, beloved husband of Mrs. Patricia Glanders Parker, passed away on November 1st. Funeral services were conducted on November 4th with the Rev. Matthew S. P. Glowe officiating.

On November 17th a Memorial Service was held for Mrs. Anna Tafel Edwards of the Philadelphia Church.

Mrs. Anna Zacharias, 80, died November 27th. Resurrection service was held in Vancouver, B. C. the Rev. Paul Zacharias officiating.

ADDRESS CHANGE

Rev. and Mrs. Brian Kingslake, whose permanent address is 17 Milton Avenue, Bath, BA2-4QZ, England, will be visiting South Africa at the beginning of January for two or three months, probably until mid March. They can be contacted c/o Mrs. Brathwaite, P. O. Box 62, BRABOUW, Cape Province 7160, Republic of South Africa.

LEAGUE RETREAT AT BLAIRHAVEN

October 11-14, 1974

The Bridgewater, Mass. League sponsored an educational retreat at Blairhaven, S. Duxbury, Mass., over the Columbus Day weekend, led by the Rev. Drs. George F. Dole and William R. Woofenden. Attending from Philadelphia were Bob and Chuck Leese, Tine and Kevin Millen, and Wendy Ashbridge; from Fryeburg were Janet and Cindy Charles, Scott and Kevin Antonucci, Tina Thriston, Debbie Rogers and Mary Libby; from Elmwood Loren Weir and Bob Horton; and from Bridgewater Jennifer Paleschi, Ed Schnurr, Trevor, Ian and Lee Woofenden, and League sponsor Wayne Lovell.



Although there were alternating periods of study and recreation/relaxation, the purpose of the retreat and the reason the young people came was to study and reflect on the New Church doctrine of the Lord. Such questions as the following were studied in depth: "Why did the Lord come into the world?" "What did he accomplish by that life?" "What happened to the Lord while on earth (his glorification)?" "What can we learn from the Lord's glorification about our own regeneration?"

Leaguers and staff all arrived late Friday afternoon and reluctantly departed on Monday afternoon, vowing to have a repeat retreat at the earliest possible opportunity. A typical evaluation comment by participants was: "This has been a good day!" Study periods over the weekend totaled 14-15 hours, with individual sessions varying from one to two hours in length. Dr. Dole and Dr. Woofenden took turns in leading the sessions. Leaguers planned and conducted vesper services every evening and assisted in the Sunday morning worship.

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