

***A BIOGRAPHY OF
The Founders of the Free Church of Antioch***

(As Posted at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Warren_Prall_Watters)

‡**THE MOST REV. WARREN PRALL WATTERS, D.D.**

(November 24, 1890-June 13, 1992)



“Warren Prall Watters was born in Imperial, Nebraska. At the death of his father in 1895 the family moved to Grinnell, Iowa, where Warren received his early education. From his early childhood he found special interest in music, having begun his piano study at the age of seven. He maintained this musical interest throughout his educational career and his life. Warren P. Watters was a **Theosophist** since his late teens, a seeker of truth through many various disciplines. Warren matriculated at Grinnell College in 1908 in the class of 1911. In his second year at Grinnell he went to Drake University for summer school and continued there for the next year. At the end of that year he was given the Theodore Salmon three-year scholarship for the study of music. With this scholarship he journeyed to Chicago, where he studied piano, voice, harmony and counterpoint with the teachers in that community. Later he studied at Northwestern University and the University of California summer schools.

For a period of some twenty-five years, Warren found his chief musical expression as a singer, appearing in concert in many cities in the United States, extending to the West

Coast. He was soloist for several seasons at the music festivals of Stanford University. In the First World War Warren enlisted in the Navy, where he was classified as Musician First Class. He became Assistant to the Chaplain, and was in charge of all musical activities at the Navy base of Yerba Buena in the San Francisco area. Warren carried on his musical activities for a period of several years as music teacher in the public schools. For a short time he was in charge of music in the Fresno High School and later he was Supervisor of Music in the secondary school system of Palo Alto, California. Still later, for a period of twenty years, he was in the public school system of Omaha, Nebraska. Together with his singing career Warren continued his work at the piano and organ. In 1939 he studied for a few months with Lazar Levy of the Conservatoire in Paris, France.

In that same year he was the official organist at the French National Convention of the **Liberal Catholic Church** held in Paris. In his musical career Warren has been minister of music for several Protestant churches in the United States—Methodist, Congregational, Presbyterian, Baptist, Episcopal, Unitarian, Greek Orthodox and a Jewish Synagogue. In later years Warren enjoyed playing his piano repertory with Dr. Reginald Stewart of the Music Academy of the West in Santa Barbara.

In 1924 Warren began his study for the ministry and **was ordained a Liberal Catholic Priest on June 19, 1927, by Bishop Beckwith in Chicago, after which time Warren served in the Liberal Catholic Church in Omaha, Nebraska, under Bishop Eklund for seventeen years.** On December 17, 1967, Warren was appointed **Vicar General of the International Liberal Catholic Church** by Bishop Sheehan. Warren became **Bishop-Elect of the International Liberal Catholic Church** in 1970.

Because of Warren's strong belief in the importance of women being elevated to the priesthood and episcopate, he was directed to the Church of Antioch which accepted him and consecrated him to the Episcopate on April 28, 1973 by the Most Reverend Archbishop Herman Adrian Spruit, assisted by co-consecrators, The Most Reverend Stephen A. Hoeller and The Most Reverend Jay D. Kirby. The ceremony was held in Santa Barbara at the Trinity Episcopal Church. In 1973 Bishop Warren also received his Doctor of Divinity from the American University Foundation College of Seminarians. For four years Warren was head of the Aquarian

Ministry and editor of its monthly magazine. Then for eight years he was Minister-Director of the *Ageless Lighted Way Ministry* and editor of the magazine that they published. In 1986 Warren Watters was elevated to Archbishop and became **Director of Esoteric Studies for the Church of Antioch. He also founded the 'Center For Esoteric Studies, Inc'**, a California religious non-profit corporation. Warren edited and compiled a magazine of his own for many years called, *The Esoteric Review*. He organized esoteric groups, created correspondence links throughout the world, gave a series of radio talks, held many speaking engagements, and conducted Healing Services. Warren was co-pastor at The Holy Spirit Church of Antioch in Santa Barbara.”

THE GIFT OF THE FREE CHURCH OF ANTIOCH

The great Gift bequeathed to us by Warren P. Watters...that of **THE FREE CHURCH OF ANTIOCH** was birthed from the clarifying reorganization of the Church of Antioch. Warren, as he constantly sought spiritual freedom, both for himself and for those whom he ordained and/or consecrated, decided that his work was not complete.

About two months prior to his transition, Warren founded the Free Church of Antioch to embody and manifest his strong belief in the unanimity of intent in love and the diversity of expression in ministry. Here it is that one hears a reverberation of the first Christians of Antioch. **Warren was also intent in his belief to reestablish the balance of the female with the male in Spiritual service** as evidenced in his ordination/consecration of many women.

**‡THE MOST REV. ELLEN MCCONNELL WATTERS, D.D.
APPOINTED ARCHBISHOP—OCTOBER 4, 1992
(May 27, 1907-January 12, 2002)**

“Ellen was born in St. Louis, Missouri with her twin sister Margaret. She worked for the Board of Education in St. Louis; then moved to Wheaton, IL, where **she committed to working at Olcott, The Theosophical Center in Wheaton, Illinois** where she **was executive secretary to the President of the Theosophical Society for five years and editor of the *American Theosophical Magazine***. Ellen was a member of the **Co-Masonic Order**—the third degree as Right Worshipful Master and later was elevated to the 18 th Degree.

When on a private train tour through the west with the Theosophical Society she met her husband Warren Prall Watters which led to a wonderful marriage of 53 years. They had a delightful honeymoon in Paris for six months where Warren studied music at the Sorbonne and Ellen studied French at the Berlitz. They lived in Omaha, NB where Warren was head of the Music Department in the local High School teaching band, orchestra and composition.

While there, Ellen completed her private study of the Harvard Classics. Their dream was to return to California (where they had toured together before their marriage) and settling in Santa Barbara. When Warren and Ellen moved to Santa Barbara in 1943, Archbishop Warren's ministry involved publishing the *Aquarian Age Magazine*, the *Ageless Lighted Way Magazine* and the *Esoteric Review*. Ellen was the editor of all three magazines. Warren gave private piano and voice lessons and Ellen continued her editing work professionally. Warren created correspondence links throughout the world, gave a series of radio talks, held many speaking engagements, taught music and voice, and much more. Ellen's ministry included working at the **Catholic Social Agency** for ten years...The doors of Warren and Ellen's home were always open... [and they] have many spiritual children... Ellen...lives in gracious love and deep dedication to the Masters...[as she] continues serving.... Their common bond and love was their work with the **Theosophical Society in Ojai**.

Warren became an Archbishop and the Founder of The Free Church of Antioch. Upon his transition, Ellen was elected Archbishop and Spiritual Leader of the Church. Ellen's love of life, devotion to her family and friends, her sense of humor, her graciousness and above all her sincere caring for everyone she met endeared her to many. ...At the foundation of the Free Church of Antioch, Archbishop Ellen was guided to step forward to share the power of co-creation. As Archbishop...[she had] the... role [of]... daily inner work of co-creating with us a channel of love and light around this Church. Ellen...led a life of committed service to the Masters. Beginning in 1932 at the age of 25, **Ellen McConnell had a spiritual conversion and...was committed to being a disciple of the Masters**. One of six women, Ellen was called right after her conversion to participate in the work of the **World Mother** through a unique healing prayer technique for those who requested; she continued this prayer work daily.

THE CHURCH ESOTERIC

"Warren identified Christ's Church [as] Esoteric—the Free Church of Antioch as: '...a company of souls who have engineered their personalities into the seeking of the ageless wisdom, as presented by the great sages of all time. These special people come with all characteristic ray qualities and they know inwardly that they come forth from that great Cosmic Ray of Love-Wisdom.... As I ponder on the work that I have been trying to do over the past years, I have come to some conclusions about the purpose of Life. One conclusion deals about the action of the head and another with the action of the heart. The action of the heart, which deals with the great law of love, is the way of life for me. I must follow this path for it unites me with others. I travel not alone. The mind separates. Love unites. Love leads one into the world of adoration. The greater part of my education has been in the world of music. To work in this world is to be blessed by loveliness, aspiration, and yes, adoration... In the remaining few years for us in this life, let's travel along the Love-Way together. This is the Christ-Way, as well you know.'"

‡ARCHBISHOPS WARREN AND ELLEN WATTERS



The Free Church of Antioch is one of several Independent Catholic Churches with valid lines of Apostolic Succession. The Free Church of Antioch received several lines of this succession through its founder, the late Archbishop Warren Prall Watters (1890-1992).

The church's most important Line of Succession is derived from the Old Catholic Church of Ultecht in the Netherlands. This is important for Independent Catholics, as many hundreds of "wandering bishops" or **Episcopi vagantes**, derive their succession from this church. Another line, **Roman Catholic, agrees that the**

Orders of the Old Catholics are valid though "illegitimate" or valid but unlawful.

Archbishop Herman Adrian Spruit, founder of the Catholic Apostolic Church of Antioch-Malabar Rite, consecrated Warren P. Watters to the Episcopate on April 28th, 1973. Assisting Archbishop Spruit, as co-consecrators were The Most Reverend Stephan A. Hoeller of the Ecclesia Gnostica, and The Most Reverend Jay D. Kirby in Santa Barbara at Trinity Episcopal Church. In 1986 Warren Watters was elevated to Archbishop and become Director of Esoteric Studies for the Catholic Apostolic Church of Antioch. He edited and compiled three magazines which culminated in *The Esoteric Review*. He founded The Center for Esoteric Studies, Inc., a California religious non-profit corporation. **Watters, along with Bishops Robert Branch and Torkom Saraydarian, eventually separated from Herman Spruit, believing that they needed a freer confederation to operate their own ministries.** These separations came as a result of certain actions resulting from the reorganization of the mother church, the Catholic Apostolic Church of Antioch. Shortly before his death at the age of 102, Watters founded the Free Church of Antioch. One of his great concerns and motivations in founding the Free Church of Antioch was to re-establish what he believed was a needed balance of female and male in Spiritual service. This concern was reflected in his ordination and consecration of many women priests and bishops. Upon his death in 1992, Watters was succeeded by his wife, Archbishop Ellen Watters. Upon her death at the age of 95 on January 12th, 2002, the members of the Board of Directors of the Center For Esoteric Studies, Inc., and The Free Church of Antioch passed all legalities and responsibilities of The Center For Esoteric Studies, Inc., and The Free Church of Antioch to Bishop Michelina T. Foster, Director of the Desert Light Chapel in Las Vegas, Nevada.

Bibliography:

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