

## **PRESIDENT'S REPORT TO THE GENERAL COUNCIL OF URANTIA BROTHERHOOD**

Meredith Sprunger

August 19, 1979

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The past three years, serving as president of URANTIA Brotherhood, have been good years filled with valuable experience. I accepted this position with considerable reservation because I have never felt a calling for presidential responsibilities. Nevertheless, I can now see that these years have broadened and deepened my experience so that I am better prepared to initiate the ministry to which I have felt a calling for over twenty years - the task of evolving an interface between the Christian Church and the URANTIA movement.

I am optimistic about the long term growth and mission of URANTIA Brotherhood; however, I am concerned about some of the present attitudes and actions within the Brotherhood. I worry about certain tendencies toward tacit secrecy and the subtle use of power which is common in manipulative cults. I fear that we are unconsciously developing institutionalism more than spiritual growth and ministry. I grieve over unresolved antagonisms and the drift toward political-legal expediency in the place of brotherly love and spiritual statesmanship.

I am confident, however, that the Brotherhood will transcend these human foibles if we are vigilant and earnestly seek spiritual guidance and spiritual goals. May we learn to be more trusting and accepting of our brethren. Let us be forbearing of one another in love and maintain the unity of the Spirit in the fellowship of good will and the bond of peace.

My greatest satisfaction during the past three years is that we have established a greater openness and honesty in headquarters activities. Communications have improved and as a result there is new hope for growth and change and along with it, I believe, a deeper and more pluralistic unity in the Brotherhood. This stimulus toward a full participatory democracy will bear fruits in the decades ahead; we will eventually broaden our base of decision-making. As I bring my tenure as president to a close, I should like to thank all of you for your wonderful support and love.

The most important priority of URANTIA Brotherhood is spiritual ministry. This is best accomplished by developing strong, indigenous, self-reliant, creative study groups and societies. History has demonstrated that organizations which encourage a large degree of

local autonomy, as does the constitution of URANTIA Brotherhood, develop the strongest resistance to evil and error and stimulate the highest levels of creativity and service.

Over the years my conviction has intensified that the most important things which are happening in the URANTIA movement are taking place in the lives of individuals and among study groups and societies at the grass roots of the world. When we realize that the focus of activity and growth in URANTIA Brotherhood should be in local study groups and societies, many of the concerns which some of us have had regarding headquarters' attitudes and decisions fade into insignificance.

Let us, therefore, place our emphasis on organizing and developing thousands of study groups. This is the real foundation of diversity and strength in the URANTIA movement. The Brotherhood constitution is a marvelous document which allows societies the freedom to develop almost any service or ministry which headquarters might provide. Instead of depending on headquarters, local groups should initiate their own services and programs wherever possible. Encourage the creative expression of abilities which people have in your group. As able, dedicated people retire, you may wish to appoint or elect them to various types of full time service. When local groups grow in size and financial resources they may wish to hire their own full time people. When one visualizes the possibilities and potentialities of the URANTIA movement across our land and throughout the world, the future is indeed bright.

There has been much frustration concerning limitations of publication imposed by the copyright law. Instead of pressuring the Foundation for permission to quote or publish material, use the many freedoms which are open to you. The new copyright law has fair use and photocopying provisions ( see Circular R 21 "Reproduction of Copyrighted Works by Educators and Librarians" published by the Copyright Office, Library of Congress, Washington, D. C. 20559). Currently study aids could be published by using standard nomenclature (page, paragraph, line) references without violating the copyright law. Other literature can be written using the creative expression of the author without quoting or paraphrasing The URANTIA Book. Where there is an honest difference of opinion as to the legality of any study group practice or any piece of literature, we should welcome court rulings to help us establish the true freedoms and limitations of the new copyright law.

We should realize that 2030 (the approximate date of the expiration of The URANTIA Book copyright) is, historically speaking, only day after tomorrow.

Creative people could be encouraged to privately produce works of literature and art. Local study groups and societies can create archives where these works may be stored. In this way when 2030 arrives there will be a substantial body of literature and art ready for publication.

I continue to believe that it would be wise and good for URANTIA Foundation to grant URANTIA Societies the same discount policy allowed bookstores in purchasing URANTIA Books. This would foster a co-worker relationship with societies in the place of the present authoritarian-legalistic relationship.

Finally, I should like to charge the General Council to fully assume its constitutional responsibility as the highest policy making body of the Brotherhood. During most of the past-twenty years the General Council has tended to rubber stamp the decisions and policies recommended by the Chicago Executive Committee. It is time for the General Council to actively assume its leadership in the determination of policies and guidelines and direct the Executive Committee to carry out these policies. This will assure a broader base for decision-making in the Brotherhood.

We are just beginning the grass roots flowering of the URANTIA movement. May we cease all preoccupation with matters of secondary importance about The URANTIA Book or about URANTIA Brotherhood which tend to be divisive and joyfully concentrate on sharing the great spiritual truths of The URANTIA Book with our fellowmen in those areas where we have a sense of calling and where the freedom of the spirit can produce fruits with enrich and fulfill.

As we learn to depend more and more on the Father's inner guidance and less and less on external coercions, great and wonderful things happen. The greatest danger of being diverted from the divine way for most of us comes not from the "forces of evil" but from the powerful shaping influence of our friends and in-group, the fear of censure or persecution, the desire for power, and the enticement of popular acclaim. The path directed by the spirit is often difficult but it is deeply satisfying and effective. It is literally true, we must learn "to feast upon uncertainty, to fatten upon disappointment, to enthuse over apparent defeat, to invigorate in the presence of difficulties, to exhibit indomitable courage in the face of immensity, and to exercise unconquerable faith when confronted with the challenge of the inexplicable." Truly, "in liaison with God nothing - absolutely nothing - is impossible." (p. 291)

May God bless each of you and lead you into fruitful activity in the years ahead.

Cordially, with love,

Meredith J. Sprunger  
President, URANTIA Brotherhood

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**1979 REPORT OF THE VICE PRESIDENT TO  
THE GENERAL COUNCIL OF  
THE URANTIA BROTHERHOOD**

E. L. Christensen

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My work as Vice President of the URANTIA Brotherhood continues to be a busy although easy task from a duty standpoint, as I have had very few heavy duties assigned to me this past year. However, I've kept busy with the daily mail, as one of my duties requires that I read all incoming and outgoing mail. Of course, John and Marian answer the Brotherhood's mail. I keep busy enough taking care of the Foundation mail even with some very excellent office assistance.

Many miscellaneous items of interest to all the staff are discussed monthly with our President, Dr. Meredith J. Sprunger. We all enjoy these get-togethers where we can freely express our opinions, ask advice and receive our President's counsel.

Life at headquarters of the URANTIA Brotherhood always remains of great interest as we have many incoming telephone calls from far-off places in the U.S.A., as well as from foreign countries. It is a great place to be.

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# **1979 REPORT OF THE CHARTER COMMITTEE TO THE TRIENNIAL MEETING OF THE GENERAL COUNCIL**

Mary Lou Hales

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Since June, 1976, the last Triennial meeting, we have installed two new societies, always happy occasions for us and, we hope, for them.

May 12, 1979, members of the Charter Committee traveled to Farmington, Connecticut, to install the 19 founders and charter members of Helena Sprague's study group. This 13th society is known as the URANTIA Society of Central Connecticut. Charles Arcieri is their president.

June 16, 1979, four members of the Charter Committee again traveled, west this time, to Dallas, Texas, to conduct the installation ceremony for 12 founders and 7 charter members. Gene Joyce is president of this 14th group known as the URANTIA Society of Dallas.

We were sorry that the installations of the last two societies were delayed due to the need for a new Licensing Agreement applying to all new societies, but now we warmly welcome our two new societies and look forward to many years of happy association with all of these sincerely enthusiastic, loyal members of URANTIA Brotherhood.

I'm happy to announce that the Boulder/Denver study group has applied for a charter and are now in the process of meeting the requirements. We look forward to installing this fine group in the near future.

Other business coming before our Committee included:

1. A motion was made, seconded, and carried that the name of the Ft. Wayne society be changed from "First URANTIA Society of Ft. Wayne, Indiana" to "Fort Wayne URANTIA Society." This was the wish of the society.
2. The formal chartering date of a society shall be the same as the date of installation of a society, and will be the date on the charter.
3. A new Standards of Admission of URANTIA Societies is now before the Executive Committee for approval after an opinion by the Judicial Committee. After adoption, each group applying for a charter must meet these requirements.

Respectfully submitted, Mary Lou Hales, Chairman Charter Committee MLH:jm

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## **1979 Report of the Committee on Education The General Council of Urantia Brotherhood**

Lynne B. Kulieke

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The Committee on Education has been active this year in a variety of areas, from the very practical to the highly philosophical.

After nearly two years preparation, the Committee on Education realized the fruits of its labor, sponsoring a two day series of workshops at the 1978 General Conference held at Lake Geneva, Wisconsin last August. This series was repeated on the last two days of the conference with different leaders in order to provide maximum opportunity for experience and to allow more URANTIA Book students to participate in the program. A questionnaire soliciting feedback on these workshops was subsequently mailed to all participants in preparation for the 1979 workshops. Response indicated a desire for a continuing program (with some changes); thus the Committee has devoted a great deal of time and energy in the last months to bringing about another study session which may fulfill this desire.

To carry out this project, the Committee on Education invited the help and contribution of the Special Projects Committee and, furthermore, sought the cooperation of the Fraternal Relations Committee, already engaged in tentative plans of its own, in preparation for a more complete program for the leadership of URANTIA Brotherhood.

The Committee on Education, after much thought and discussion, also proposed two constitutional amendments regarding its name and part of its function to the Executive Committee for review and eventual presentation to the General Council, at this meeting or the next. The members of the Committee also prepared a small packet offering guidelines for study groups, to be available upon solicitation to URANTIA Brotherhood.

Finally, the Committee has maintained a steady dialogue among its members and with others as to the evolving nature of its role in the movement. At all times we welcome input from interested individuals and groups of individuals. We are ever hopeful of coming to know personally more and more readers of The URANTIA Book, through the workshops we sponsor, and through increased travel to other parts of the United States and the world.

I wish to extend my personal thanks to the members, Helen Carlson, John Hales, Marjorie Reed, Charles Burton, and David Schlundt, for their dedicated efforts and wonderful inspiration.

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## **1979 Report of URANTIA Brotherhood Publications Committee Barbara Kulieke**

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This has been a year in which we received reaction and feedback to the projects we identified and began to carry out in 1978. Projects appear viable and the task that confronts us now is to continue the projects by increasingly delegating authority and involving URANTIA Book readers who wish to work with us.

Highlights of 1979 in the areas in which in the Publications Committee functions are as follows:

**URANTIA Brotherhood Bulletin.** The Bulletin continues to evolve. We have begun to receive regular contributions of conference and study group news, including pictures, and articles are now being contributed. The format remains the same, but the Winter and Spring 1979 issue was the first in which professional typesetting was used. The keyline paste-up is now coordinated by the printer. Becky Marshall did this work free of charge from 1977-1979. The mailing list is over 2400.; the headquarters staff still uses several hundred additional copies in letters to readers.

**Translations.** URANTIA Brotherhood Bulletin and The URANTIAN Journal of URANTIA Brotherhood were translated into French for the first time. The translating was done free of charge by members of a Paris, France, study group; the project is coordinated by Carol Kostic. We are now working on ways to distribute the translated material and to add French-speaking readers to the headquarters mailing list. Consequent activities such as the ability to read and write letters in French at headquarters are being considered. Using volunteer URANTIA Book readers to translate URANTIA Brotherhood material is in the experimental stages--there is much work ahead.

**Coordination and Cooperation among URANTIA Movement Publications.** This is a theme which was discussed thoroughly at the 1979 Publications Workshops at Lake Geneva. This year we helped a new French newsletter get started-- several new local newsletters and journals are starting and we endeavor to keep in touch with the editors. Many have told us that the great need is for some help in knowing and understanding policies and procedures about using quotations from the book, and about references to the trademarks. We have begun work on this, and completion of the first stage, at least, of this project is a goal for the coming year. The Publications Committee has been working on material for a presentation which the chairman will make at the 1979 Fraternal Relations Committee Workshops this summer. The subject is "Publications of a Religious Organization."

The Publications Committee--Lisa Carr-Renn . Nancy Grimsley, Barbara Kulieke, Mark Kulieke, Mike Painter, and Lillian Wallin --continue to invite your comments and suggestions. Our greatest help comes from our fellows who are interested in publications as a means of disseminating the URANTIA teachings.

Submitted by, Barbara Kulieke, Chairman Publications Committee

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**INTERNATIONAL FELLOWSHIP COMMITTEE**  
**Annual Report to the General Council of**  
**Urantia Brotherhood**

Martin Myers  
August, 1979

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The spread of the Urantia teachings to the world at large continues inexorably, quietly and effectively. Books are more and more finding their way to many parts of the world, increasingly through the able assistance of traveling readers of The Urantia Book who have made a serious attempt to locate libraries who would be willing to accept donation copies.

Too, others are, through correspondence, interesting others on a person-to-person basis, and at the right time are introducing their international brethren to The Urantia Book.

The importance of this work was pointed up at the last meeting of the International Fellowship Committee by Urantia Brotherhood Field Representative, Julia K. Fenderson, who recounted some of her impressions and experiences in a recent trip to the Mid-East. Perhaps her most vivid experience was the realization while looking out over Amman, Jordan, the Philadelphia of old, during prayer time, that the Father loves the entire world and it was important that the teachings of The Urantia Book were to be made available--eventually--to all mankind. One of the best ways to accomplish this task and yet avoid the stamp "made in U.S.A." is to see that the Book is placed in appropriate libraries.

To accomplish this, Julia has developed a simple but productive approach. First, an attempt is made to determine through either natives or others familiar with a particular location which libraries would be thought to be popular with people seeking religious truth and which might be willing to accept a gift of a Urantia Book. Secondly, either through a personal introduction by a mutual friend or by a letter to the person who it is determined is actually in charge of acquisitions, a personal meeting is arranged with the acquisition librarian. At that time a brief discussion of the nature of the Book, perhaps with the use of the pamphlet "Leavening Our Religious Heritage" is usually enough to determine if the library will accept the Book and make sure it is available to the reading public. If so, Julia then makes a request to headquarters to place a free gift book with the library. Once the gift is completed, Julia then believes it is important to follow up with a letter to the librarian from time to time. This is a rather simple procedure and to date has proved to be an effective one.

The International Fellowship Committee believes this is the most promising way to help

set the stage for the discovery of the Urantia teachings in many countries by many people free from its overt association with American culture.

For those who have already discovered The Urantia Book, important things are happening. A major event has been the inauguration of a newsletter in French, published by the Parisian study group which itself exemplifies the international thrust of Urantia Brotherhood with participating members from France, Yugoslavia, Canada, Holland, The United Kingdom and the U.S. This is a signal event especially in view of the problems with the French translation and a number of differing national and individual viewpoints.

From our South American friends comes an invitation for a visit by Urantia Brotherhood Field Representative, Dr. Dick Prince, and Executive Committee Representative, Ms. Lynne Kulieke, to Bogota, Colombia where a study group has been carrying on the study of the Book for at least several years.

In addition to these highlights, there is much more going on than can be recounted here. One event, however, which promises to have been most worthwhile and which should be mentioned was the around the world trip recently taken by Mr. and Mrs. William M. Hales. This gave them a unique opportunity to visit with readers of The Urantia Book in such places as Fiji, Australia, New Zealand and Malaysia.

Finally, at this writing, my valued associate and now longtime friend, Tom Kendall, and I are preparing for a trip to Finland and France to visit with readers there. Although the trip is primarily on Foundation business, we look forward to renewing friendships with many acquaintances in those countries.

The foregoing report indicates both positive results and some promising ways to achieve them, or at least to set the stage so that they will be achieved. It is heartening in many respects. However, I would be remiss were we not to recognize that we are a long, long way from realizing a world-wide brotherhood grounded in the teachings of The Urantia Book. There are very real--though not unsurmountable problems--confronting us. We are a very human organization and the problems we deal with are inescapably very human ones. Our idealism has and will continue to be tempered by the disappointing if not sometimes hard realities of human shortcomings, shortcomings vividly portrayed in stark relief against the backdrop of our highest hopes so often so incompletely unattained--at least in this life--if not this age. Yet we are indeed the torch bearers of an epochal message for all peoples and all lands, and if we are patient, as our planetary Father and Mother should have been, and if we follow those exhortations of a wise, careful, unostentatious person-to-person spreading of the unadulterated teachings of The Urantia Book, our efforts will be counted as successful. Those later arrivals who follow after us may then stand on our shoulders as it were, and do their solid part in contributing to the eventual establishment of the living organismal brotherhood of man in the hearts of all mankind.

And so it is with uplifted faces that we look into the shining sun of a new era and behold those many opportunities for demanding yet significant planetary service. Yea, Father, thy Will be done--and we're going to help you do it.

Martin W. Myers

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