

[REDACTED]  
December 16, 1972

E.L. Christensen  
Vice President  
Urantia Brotherhood  
533 Diversey Parkway  
Chicago, Illinois 60614

CONFIDENTIAL

Dear Christy (and Alvin):

These past six months have been among the busiest of my life, with hardly a moment to pause and reflect, or to get to this much overdue report to you. But the holidays will soon be past and the snows upon us; there will be time again to cast the mind forward, to think about the longer range.

The needs of the family have been particularly pressing this season, and Urantia activities here have been much increased.

The work of Urantia Brotherhood continues to be the most exhilarating part of our lives. Mary has been an enthusiastic partner in all of the planning and doing, and we have worked very closely with John Hales in all Urantia efforts. It is an unending source of stimulation to meet with those who are sincerely seeking truth, and to study with Urantians whose perception of reality is sufficient to enable them to grasp the supernal truths of the Urantia teachings.

Over the past several months the stack of notes has grown thick with things to tell you, or ask you about, so perhaps it is best simply to proceed.

#### Vincent Myers

John must have mentioned to you our disappointment with the way things turned out in Worcester.

If I had been more alert to the relationship between time and teaching objectives, I could have helped Vincent toward a more effective course outline. John and I drove up to see Vincent and Cynthia before he began his teaching, and at that time suggested to him that the whole project was too ambitious for the time available, and proposed an alternative outline for the 10 study sessions. The alternative outline focused on the five epochal revelations and placed The Urantia Book in perspective without attempting to outline it or make a summary of certain highlights.

**CONFIDENTIAL**

With a little more than a week to go, Vincent decided that it was now too close to the beginning of the course to change plans, and also that he wanted to give more exposure of the revelation to his students, in the hope of enticing them to read it in its entirety.

John and I were successful, we believe, in persuading him not to mix Scientology and Urantia in the same teaching plan. At first, Vincent wanted to begin his sessions with certain "eye exercises"--ask people to stare at each other for awhile--as a way of introducing his students to Urantia concepts of reality. Vincent seemed to agree with us that Scientology and Urantia don't mix, that the Urantia teachings should not be cluttered with other philosophical systems.

John and I drove up again, at Vincent's request, to audit the second of his ten classes. I can't locate my notes from this session, but I recall that there were about 10 people in the class, mostly relatives and friends of Vincent and Cynthia, but a few who were simply curious. With Cynthia at his side, Vincent conducted the class as a lecture from notes, with a small amount of oral reading, for a little less than two hours. He does not seem to have a natural talent for lecturing, and I found his presentation thoroughly disorganized. He skipped about from one idea to another in the attempt, it seemed, to cover too much ground.

But so that this portrayal does not appear too dark, there were saving qualities that offset some of the more unfortunate elements of the presentation.

The first is that Vincent and Cynthia both are completely sincere and dedicated Urantians, and this shows. That they have dedicated their lives to seeking and doing the Father's will is evident in all that they say and do. The second quality is their obvious soundness of mind and personality presence. Vincent is a particularly calm person and conveys the impression that his search for the Father's will is based on something deep and solid within himself, and in no way is a fleeting or temporal thing. Cynthia, on the other hand, is a very enthusiastic person. These complementary qualities, in addition to their sincerity, carried into the class effectively, and somewhat offset the disorganization. The third thing that helped to rescue the situation was that almost all of the people attending had some prior knowledge of the Urantia Book; many had their own books, and had already gained some insight into what was at hand.

Cynthia was married previously and has retained custody of her three children. I don't think Vincent was married before. He has worked in a variety of jobs, and is now working as a physician's helper in a local hospital. Vincent and Cynthia were married on November 11.

**CONFIDENTIAL**

I learned three lessons from these events:

- (1) Take more time to think, even when people come to me for help and say that I must act immediately. Take enough time to think, to consult, to act wisely.
- (2) Give encouragement to teach only to those who have mastered the Urantia Book and seem to show the personal qualifications for teaching. Enthusiasm and idealism must be disciplined by patient study and training that leads to skill.
- (3) Any teaching from or about The Urantia Book should in no way attempt to substitute for individual reading of the entire work, and should not attempt to summarize or highlight the revelation for this purpose.

#### Scalzo and Shrode Membership Applications

Nick Scalzo and his family came to the second of our three fall study groups, and the Shrodes came to the first and third. I quietly inquired about the status of their applications. Although Marion Shrode has finished the book, Ray has not yet completed his cover-to-cover reading, and wants to finish this before he continues his request for membership; he is now most of the way through. The Shrodes are very solid, mature, well-balanced people, and will make worthy additions to the Brotherhood family, which should be soon.

Nick Scalzo has been through a rugged six months of pressures from all sides--principally job and family--and hasn't had much time to think about other things. If I recall correctly, he mentioned that he had not yet read the Constitution. Nick is a very warm and sincere young man (an architect) with great idealism, and will make a loyal member of the Brotherhood. He has drafted the concept of a service corporation that would be founded on the teachings of The Urantia Book, in which he would try to organize a vast array of talents and skills for the service to others at cost, in such areas as designing and building homes, engineering services, purchasing or building materials, aid to needy families, and other things. His dream is to supplant the profit motivation with the service motivation in this company, to show that it can work.

He has asked me to advise him in the managerial and administrative aspects of this undertaking. As I looked at his preliminary plans, I concluded that he was trying to move too swiftly and to attempt too much at once. The nature of my advice was to suggest a series of questions he should answer for himself before going further. I don't know if he has done this; but he is not in any way connecting the Urantia Book to his Service Company. And I continue in my recommendation that he be accepted for membership when he completes his application.

### Fall Study Groups

**CONFIDENTIAL**

John and I organized and sponsored three all-day study sessions during the Fall. The sessions were held here in our home in Englishtown. The first meeting on October 14 drew 18 adults to study The Urantia Journey, with people coming from as far as Massachusetts, western Pennsylvania, and Washington, D.C. Including our seven, there were 10 children at the meeting.

The second meeting, on October 28, centered on The Faith and Religion of Jesus, and was attended by 12 adults and 8 or 9 children.

The third meeting, on November 11, was to study Marriage and Family Life, and was attended by 22 adults and 15 children.

Some people came to more than one meeting, but the three study sessions brought in most of the Urantians with whom we have had some contact in this general region, some 33 different people.

We deliberately established a family atmosphere in the study sessions, so that children felt free to come and go as they pleased, or to sit in on various parts of the sessions. This they did; not only our own children, but children of other families as well. And the whole thing worked well. Some parents had been wondering how to introduce their own children to the teachings. The study groups accomplished this for several. Two of our children asked for (and were given) Urantia Books. One of the children prepared a paper for the third meeting, but was too shy to give it to the group.

For the Snider family personally, the study sessions were a heartwarming success, more than we had hoped for. For us, it seemed to get the ball rolling at last in Englishtown. There has been considerable discussion among teen-agers and some adults since the meetings, all focused around the book and the Urantia teachings. We expect before too long to have some people in from our own neighborhood as a result, and perhaps begin the Englishtown study group.

Based on comments from those attending, and from observations and impressions of the meetings, I believe these activities were beneficial to almost all of the others who came, perhaps all. Our comprehension increased through the insights of others and the free-flowing discussions based on the papers.

I believe John will share this view. It was particularly joyful for us to see Suzie Hales begin to take active part in the discussions, to read the assigned papers, to ask questions.

**CONFIDENTIAL**

### Newsletter

You have copies of the newsletter John and I sent out on September 22. The newsletter went to 67 addresses, including the Field Representatives and a few other Urantia friends not in this region. Altogether, I estimate that about 67 Urantians were reached in the East (the number 67 is a coincidence). Since September I have mailed copies to additional people whose interest in The Urantia Book became known after that time.

John and I hoped to use the newsletter to reach out across the distances that still separate so many of us, to let others know they are not alone in their studies, to bring news of things of interest, and to encourage the gradual growth of Urantia Societies.

The reaction to the newsletter so far is quite positive, although there has not been much feedback.

We are planning a second newsletter to be mailed by early Spring.

### Philadelphia Group

As a result of our Fall meetings, Margery Yougel and Terry and Alison Montgomery decided to get together in Philadelphia. Being the senior Urantian in the group, and a dedicated and stable personality, Margery Yougel took the initiative in asking the others to her home. I gave her the names, addresses, and phone numbers of Joe Pope and Keith and Susan Robb, with whom she has since been in touch. Margery and the Montgomerys met for an afternoon on November 25, and have scheduled a larger meeting on January 14. We have been asked to come to the January session, and plan to if the weather allows.

But just as it began to look like a constructive start in Philadelphia, we have received news from the Montgomerys that they may soon have to move to Maine, where they think they have found new jobs; apparently, the Methodist Home for Children, where they now work, is not the right situation for them.

### Mid-Winter Study Session in Englishtown

Speaking of January meetings, we are planning another session in Englishtown the weekend of January 20, and have been in touch with a number of Urantians who wish to come. Tentatively, we are planning the session so that all driving can be done in the daytime, by asking people to bring sleeping bags. We will ask each person to prepare a presentation, and plan to let the meeting run late into Saturday night, with everyone sleeping over.

**CONFIDENTIAL**

Spring Meeting--Darien

Helena Wall wants to hold another study session in the Spring in Darien. We can probably save her a lot of work by announcing it in the next newsletter. She is pleased that we might do this.

Results of Contacts With New People

Since July I have received eight names of new readers of the book, and have made contact in one way or another with all of these people. Here are the results.

Joe Pope, Upper Darby (Philadelphia), Pennsylvania (July). Marian suggested that I use caution in my contact with Pope. He had talked with Anne Rawson sometime earlier and had appeared very aggressive. I called him and had a long talk with him. He is a television producer and had recently had his own show on Channel 3 in the Philadelphia area, but is now preparing a television series dealing with psychic phenomena. In discussing this with him I was pleased to hear him volunteer the thought that his new series would not include the Urantia Book because "this book is outside of the realm of psychic phenomena"(approximate quote). He said this quite sincerely, and suggested in other statements that he truly understands the significance of this book and would not seek to draw upon it for commercial ends.

Pope is highly intelligent and has a personality style that is intellectually aggressive; his style of speech is also quite aggressive. It seemed to me that his aggressiveness emanates from a highly charged personality and is generally sincere and friendly (in his own way) rather than hostile. He may be a member of MENSA. He said that he wants to make a presentation about the Urantia Book to the Philadelphia chapter of the MENSA Society. He seems to lead a busy and active life. He said he would like to visit us and we told him we would look forward to it, but we haven't set a date yet. Margery Yougel has not yet been able to reach him by phone to inform him of the prospective Philadelphia study session in January.

One thing that particularly impressed me in my discussion with him was his seeming grasp of the book. His description of the book and his thoughts about it were rich in intellectual concept and grasp. I will continue to deal with him with caution until I have a better sense of him, but it could be that he may do much to bring others to the teachings. We'll see.

CONFIDENTIAL

Robert Donato, New Brunswick, New Jersey (August). Since Donato lives only a half-hour away from us, I called him to invite him for a visit. He dropped in one evening shortly afterward, and we found his visit a bit un-nerving. He is 26, single, hippie in appearance, and said his girl friend "turned him on to the book." He said that in a recent trip around the world he saw a copy of the book in an Afghanistan restaurant. He also told us that he has read the book completely once and is now (last August) halfway through with his second reading. He lives with his parents, but seems to do a lot of traveling.

The aspect of his visit that was un-nerving was that he announced soon after he arrived that he is "a marijuana merchant." He makes his living buying marijuana and LSD in quantity and selling these drugs to individual users. He prides himself in the fact that he sells "good quality" drugs, and does not adulterate them.

He described a background in which many of his family are afflicted with drugs, alcohol, or other excessive habits and character dispositions. He began to use drugs when he was 16, by drinking cough syrup laced with codeine. After a while he tried stronger and stronger drugs and finally became a heroin addict. After three years as an addict, he claims to have "kicked the habit," and is now "clean."

His whole life seems to be wrapped up in the drug subculture; he told us we were the first "straight people" (aside from his mother and father) that he had met in years.

I tried to find a level at which we could relate our common understanding of the Urantia Book, and so ventured upon a discussion of the necessity to seek the Father's will as the basis for all decisions. Donato told us that he always sought to understand the Father's will. He deeply believes (he said) that it is the Father's will for him to sell drugs and "turn people on." His ambition is to find a way to manufacture LSD so cheaply he can give it away to everybody; his consuming desire is to see the legalization of marijuana.

It seemed to us that he is simply rationalizing his own behavior patterns. And I confess that I did not find it easy for him to tell me that it is the Father's will for him to sell drugs. The visit left me a bit unsettled for a day or two. I tried not to pass judgment on this unfortunate young man, but I nevertheless found myself (as did Mary) repulsed by his lifestyle and his associating the Father's will with behavior patterns that seem clearly to be error.

We haven't seen him since that visit. I feel that somehow we should have been able to help him, but could not.

**CONFIDENTIAL**

David Terry, Laurel, Maryland (August). I called him one evening and had quite a chat with him. He is a systems engineer who works for Control Data Corporation. Before he was transferred here, a fellow employee in Minneapolis introduced him to the book.

He has a Pentacostal fundamentalist background. Before the age of 12 he had read the Bible  $3\frac{1}{2}$  times. He says he is a political type person, conservative in character and a believer in the Constitution. He got out of the Navy a year ago.

He has read the History and Thought Adjuster sections and thinks it makes a lot of sense. But he has many questions. He says he has not accepted the book yet, and is not really sure that he accepts the idea of God.

He seems simultaneously to be genuinely searching and at the same time quite fearful that somebody will swindle him spiritually. He wanted to talk to somebody at greater length, but could not get up this far conveniently at the time. I suggested that if he continued to read the book he would find more and more of his questions resolved. He still wanted to talk with somebody. I called the Shrodes (who live less than a half-hour from him) and explained what he was like and his need to discuss the book. They said they would call him and invite him over. This was in early September, and I haven't heard any more about this, and forgot to ask the Shrodes the two times when they were here.

George Johnson, Hampton, Virginia (September). I sent him a copy of the newsletter and received a delightful reply by mail. As you say, his letters are very interesting. He is a Staff Sergeant in the Air Force, a career man with 11 years to go to retirement. He is twenty five, married three years, no children. I will make it a point to visit him when I can get down that way.

Marion Dehler, Utica, New York (October). I phoned her but got no answer, then wrote her a letter, which she has not yet answered. Utica is not far from where I must go on occasional business trips, and could see her without much difficulty if she wants contact.

William Hazzard. This fellow is a retired Navy officer living in San Diego. Since he apparently was inquiring for a friend about study groups in the New York City area, and since you already sent him addresses for John and me, I have done nothing further. Haven't heard from his friend either.



CONFIDENTIAL

Jon Wittgenfeld, Rochester, New York (November). This name came from Meredith Sprunger. Wittgenfeld is the son of a woman who was a member of his group in Fort Wayne for a time, and he has now become interested, has got a book, and has inquired about others in the area. I phoned him one evening, spoke to his daughter (he was out), then wrote him a letter. Like Utica, Rochester is one of the places my plane lands when I go to Hamilton, New York on business for AMA. If he likes, a visit could easily be arranged. Haven't heard from him yet.

P.C. Trubiano, Sommerville, New Jersey (November). He has an unlisted phone, so I wrote him a letter, but haven't heard from him yet.

Alice Picking, Oxford, New Jersey (December). She is not listed as having a phone, so I wrote her a letter, which she promptly responded to by telephone, and we had a good chat. She lives on a 25-acre farm with an old farmhouse, 6 horses, a pond, etc. She has three sons, from 14 through 8, I think. Her husband "is not a reader," and does not seem to be much interested in the book.

Not long ago her cousin asked her to come to California to take a course in "Mind Dynamics." She went, was enchanted with Mind Dynamics, and during the trip found ("was drawn to") the Urantia Book in a bookstore. She resisted it briefly, but then bought a book and has now read about 800 pages of it. The Urantia teachings are gradually crowding out Mind Dynamics as the most exciting thing that has ever happened to her. She says at the moment her interest in the two is about equal, but that Urantia seems to be moving ahead. She returned from California and began a series of courses in Mind Dynamics in Oxford, and has attracted a number of students. However, she finds the fascination of the Urantia Book so compelling that her courses are beginning to include discussion about the book, and some of her students are now interested.

She seems like a delightful person. Mary and I spoke with her at length. It was easy to come away from the conversation feeling that she will soon be a loyal Urantian. Anyway, we invited her and her family to visit us after the holidays, and we'll be able to get a better picture then.

#### Fellowship Notes

We have been spending quite a bit of time being visited by, or visiting, other Urantians whom we had got to know earlier. For example, last July on our way to Chicago, we stopped in to visit overnight with Margaret Succop in Butler, Pa. Since we were sleeping over, we talked far into the night with her, one of her daughters, and a friend of her daughter who is a professor of physics somewhere. Margaret also came here to our first meeting. She is trying to gather material to write books for children based on the Urantia Book.

**CONFIDENTIAL**

I was also able to schedule a business trip that brought me close to Waverly, New York, and arranged a visit with the Zehrs. Spent an afternoon and evening with the family. The Zehrs are Mennonites, come from a large family, and have always been deeply religious. Both Ralph and Betty Zehr are students of the book, and are now trying to think of ways to introduce it to others. Zehr is a physician, and with his wife and children (2), went on a missionary trip to Africa. It was on this trip that they were introduced to the book-- by Rick Beak (whom, if I am not mistaken, was at the last Summer Study Session and now is living in Wisconsin). The Zehrs are a very close, rather private, warm and intelligent family. I did not talk much with Betty, but was quite impressed with Ralph's comprehension of the book. He said he would like to meet with other students, but finds his life hard pressed for time since he only became a full-fledged doctor in June.

We have also had as houseguests Dard Aller, Merritt Horn, and the Montgomerys, and have exchanged visits with the Dreiers. The Varnums visited recently, and the Oliveas were supposed to come for the weekend not long ago, but got iced-in and had to postpone it. We were scheduled to visit the Flemings this weekend and were invited to attend the Long Island study group meeting, but winds up to 45 mph made it hazardous for our VW bus, and we had to postpone the trip.

#### Book Sales Locally

Walden Bookstore here sold a copy of The Urantia Book I had left on consignment. A young girl bought it on August 23. But the bookstore manager was extremely reluctant to pay me the \$12.00 due, and proceeded to stall and hesitate and set up a very elaborate system of requisitions, signatures, and approvals before I would get the money due. As a result, I withdrew the book from this local Walden store and succeeded in collecting the money owed from the parent company in Conn. I then placed a copy (actually two copies, one for browsing) in the local health food store in Freehold, where a copy was promptly purchased. Then I gave away the browsing copy, and at the moment have no books in the stores.

#### A Question for You

Merritt Horn, son of Marion Shrode, is now studying religion at Princeton University. He has asked me how the Urantia Brotherhood School is organized, how it operates, what is the curriculum, etc. And I could not answer him very well. Would you send me some information about this, so that I can help Merritt, and also be able to answer future questions of this kind. My present knowledge seems too skimpy.

CONFIDENTIAL

\*

I think it's about time to wrap up this report; it's getting too long. I have a number of other notes, but I'll wait a bit with them.

Please accept my thanks for the set of papers from the Summer Study Session. I can see that much hard work went into preparing them for distribution.

I hope this finds all of you in good health and joyful spirit.

Merry Christmas.

With my warmest regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Paul".

Paul Snider