



URANTIA® Brotherhood BULLETIN

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Christy's smile has inspired many a seeker of truth in her many years of service. Christy, E. L. Christensen, is pictured here in her office at URANTIA headquarters in Chicago.

Photo by John Hales

The URANTIA Movement Today

Twenty-three years ago, on January 2, 1955, URANTIA Brotherhood was founded. Five years before, on January 11, 1950, URANTIA Foundation had been created. On October 12, 1955, *The URANTIA Book* was printed.

At that time there were a few hundred hopeful and dedicated students of the URANTIA teachings. Now there are several thousand readers, and the fellowship of readers has begun. URANTIA societies and study groups have begun to appear, and there will be many, many more.

This summer, the 1978 URANTIA Brotherhood General Conference will be held—an opportunity for students of *The URANTIA Book* from all over the world to gather for study and fellowship.

Details about the 1978 Conference, to be held August 13-18, are in the mail now. You should be receiving your announcement soon, if you have not already.

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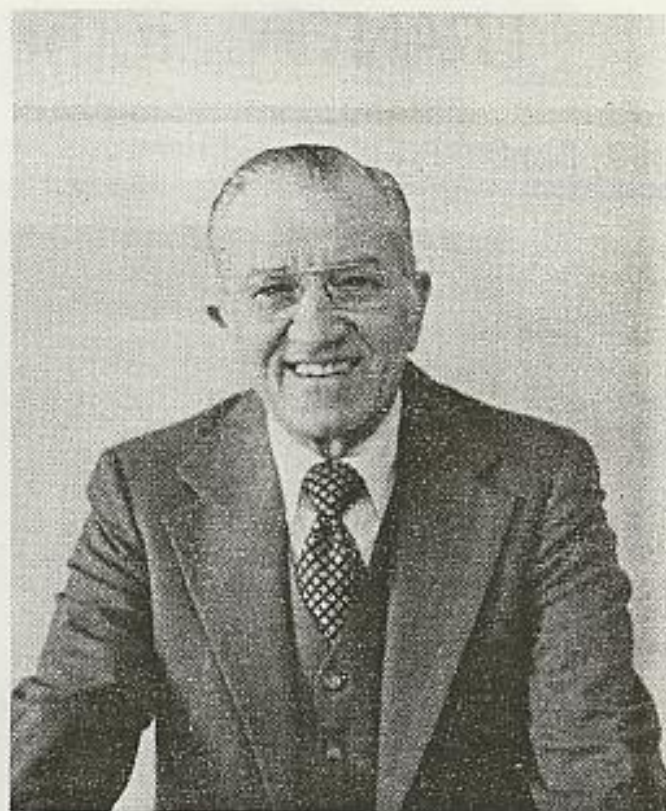
Leavening Our Spiritual Heritage

Enclosed with this issue of the *Bulletin* is a new publication of URANTIA Brotherhood, a pamphlet entitled "Leavening Our Spiritual Heritage" by Dr. Meredith J. Sprunger. The following introduction to the pamphlet is also by Dr. Sprunger.

Authentic revelation in our evolutionary universe is always designed to build upon and improve existing religions. Just as Machiventa Melchizedek attempted to work in the framework of existing religious groups and Jesus taught in the synagogue until its doors were closed to him, I believe the URANTIA Brotherhood should strive to relate to religious institutions in our society.

Because of my personal and professional commitment to the church, I have acquired a firsthand understanding of its institutional practices, its emotional limitations and power, and its theological frames of reference. With these factors in mind, I have written the enclosed pamphlet designed to introduce educated people with a Christian background to *The URANTIA Book*.

Many in the church are not ready for *The URANTIA Book* but if we can quietly develop a knowledge of URANTIA Book teachings in the grass roots leadership of the church, we will have taken an important step in the evolutionary process of bringing about a spiritual renaissance in the church and Western society. Others who have an educational-cultural background in other religions will appear to design approaches to introduce *The URANTIA Book* to their people.



Meredith Sprunger, President of URANTIA Brotherhood
Photo by Barbara Kulieke

Experience has demonstrated that it is usually wise to communicate with peers. Laymen in the church are normally more effective introducing *The URANTIA Book* to other laymen. Ministers are more likely to communicate effectively with other ministers. Realize, however, that these people must first have a fundamental readiness for these teachings. Among the signs of this readiness are full acceptance of scientific knowledge—including evolutionary development and the probability of a populated universe, a Jesusonian spiritual attitude, and a searching, fearless mind. If an individual has these qualities, he may be ready to read *The URANTIA Book*. The final criterion in this ministry of sharing, of course, is your own inner guidance.

Dr. Sprunger is an ordained minister in the United Church of Christ.

Extra copies of the pamphlet may be obtained upon request.

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Barbara Newsom Kulieke, Editor
Virginia Bowman, Mark Kulieke, Lisa Carr Renn
Mike Painter, and Lillian Wallin, Staff

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Conferences a Time of Fellowship and Enlightenment

Local and regional conferences of *URANTIA Book* readers have become a characteristic of the URANTIA movement in the past several years. Ranging in size from 30 to 300, from simple to grand, and from coast to coast, these conferences, sponsored by local study groups and URANTIA societies, are very popular.

Since 1973, there have been many such conferences. A quick look at some of the 1977 conferences would be representative of the trend which so many *URANTIA Book* readers now enjoy.

Study groups on the east coast of the United States have evolved a plan of rotating as hosts of two regional conferences a year—one in the spring and one in the fall. The most recent conference was hosted by the Clinton, Connecticut, study group November 5. Topics covered various aspects of urantia life and spiritual survival. From 80-100 people usually attend.

Oregon readers have hosted three conferences, their most recent being May 20-22 at Indian Mary Park, north of Grants Pass. Oregon conferences combine informality, outdoor settings, talks, music, art displays, and multi-media presentations.

On July 23-24, 50 people met in Victoria, British Columbia, Canada. The weekend included discussion with Alice and Lew Clark, Field Representative of URANTIA Brotherhood, a day of sports and fellowship at Kinsman Gorge Park, and on Sunday, worship, a question and answer session, and formal presentations on spiritual topics. This was a first for Canada.

The First URANTIA Society of Oklahoma and the First URANTIA Society of Los Angeles (FUSLA) have been true pioneers in conferences, and many of us are familiar with their fine conferences. Oklahoma, with the aid of other southwest groups, hosted a Southwest Regional Forum July 12-14. A program similar to the 1976 Forum, the theme was "Jesus: God and Man," and was attended by 300 people, again on the shores of Lake Eufala. FUSLA, always ably assisted by the

northern California groups, hosted a Third Western Conference with the theme of "Brotherhood: From Concept to Action," which was packed with innovative programs. 200 attended the September 3-5 meeting at the University of California, Irvine campus.

On October 1-2, approximately 100 attended a Northwest Get-Together sponsored by the First URANTIA Society of Wenatchee (Washington). Their conferences, too, are a spiritually inspiring combination of activities. Also on October 1, 40 readers met at the home of Loren and Ila Hall in Kansas City, Missouri. Field Representative Berkeley Elliott provided the program. On October 9, 30-40 readers met at a resort camp near Montreal, Canada.



A familiar sight for conference-goers. Here, Meredith Sprunger and David Gray, President of the San Francisco Bay Area URANTIA Society, join others going to lunch after a morning session of the Third Western Conference for *URANTIA Book* Readers.

Photo by John Hales

In the midwest, 35 attended the November 11-12 Ohio Valley Conference organized by Ted Blaney on "personal growth." Plans are being made for regular conferences for the many midwest groups. The four URANTIA societies in the Chicago area had a summer picnic.

Florida readers did not have a 1977 conference, but did host '75 and '76 conferences, and are planning one for spring, 1978.



John Hales, Resident Director of URANTIA Brotherhood, visits with Henry Begemann, URANTIA Brotherhood Field Representative in Europe.

Photo by Barbara Kulieke

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The 1978 General Conference promises to be a great time of meeting new friends and seeing old friends again. In anticipation of this time of fellowship, the next two issues of the *Bulletin* will feature URANTIA societies and study groups to focus on these aspects of the URANTIA movement today and to help us become better acquainted with people we may meet at the Conference or at some other time.

Photographs are requested for these upcoming issues. If you have pictures of your society and study group activities, please send 5"x7" black and white glossy prints to the Publications Committee, URANTIA Brotherhood, 533 Diversey Parkway, Chicago, Illinois 60614. Black and white negatives can be made from color negatives and slides—ask your photofinisher. Photo deadlines are March 1 for the feature on URANTIA societies

and May 1 for the feature on study groups. Unless otherwise requested, prints received will be put in the permanent photographic files we are developing.

URANTIA Books continue to be distributed at the rate of an average of 600 books per month and URANTIA Brotherhood answers mail at the rate of 1500 letters per year. At the close of 1977, the approximate number of study groups stood at 250.

Visitors come regularly to the offices of URANTIA Brotherhood and URANTIA Foundation. In the past several months visitors from Canada and many U.S. states have stopped by. In November, Henry and Bauk Begemann from Wassenaar, The Netherlands, were in Chicago, visiting as guests of URANTIA Brotherhood and URANTIA Foundation.

*"Your spirit unity implies two things, which always will be found to harmonize in the lives of individual believers: First, you are possessed with a common motive for life service; you all desire above everything to do the will of the Father in heaven. Second, you all have a common goal of existence; you all purpose to find the Father in heaven, thereby proving to the universe that you have become like him." (p.1592)**

*Quotation from *The URANTIA Book*, Copyright © 1955, URANTIA Foundation. Used by permission.