



URANTIA® Brotherhood BULLETIN

Winter 1985-86

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INTENSIVE STUDY SESSION REGISTRATION REMINDER

The Education Committee of URANTIA Brotherhood is sponsoring a four-day Intensive Study Session devoted to study of Part II of *The URANTIA Book*, to be held at Lake Forest College, Lake Forest, IL, June 23-26, 1986. This year, the sessions combine the study of the book in daytime groups with a special program of the Fraternal Relations Committee in the evenings, which will center on presentations about various world religions by knowledgeable representatives.

The plan of the Education Committee in sponsoring these meetings is to maximize study of the book, enhance individual participation in study sessions, and provide a variety of presentations and formats in small groups. The purpose of these meetings is to increase the knowledge of individual readers about the book and about novel methods of presenting its content.

If you have not received registration materials for the Intensive Study Session, and would like to attend, please write URANTIA Brotherhood, 533 Diversey Parkway, Chicago, IL 60614 or call (312) 327-0424 as soon as possible.

If you have already received your registration materials, please remember to return them promptly to reserve your space and to help the committees in planning this important meeting.

IMPORTANCE OF PERSONAL OUTREACH

Dear fellow readers of *The URANTIA Book*:

"Those who know God have experienced the fact of his presence; such God-knowing mortals hold in their personal experience the only positive proof of the existence of the living God which one human being can offer to another. The existence of God is utterly beyond all possibility of demonstration except for the contact between the God-consciousness of the human mind and the God-presence of the Thought Adjuster that indwells the mortal intellect and is bestowed upon man as the free gift of the Universal Father." (24:7)

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URANTIA BOOK EXAMINED BY AMERICAN ACADEMY OF RELIGION

On November 25, 1985, *The URANTIA Book* took its first step toward academic acceptance as a serious work for theological study. It was the subject of a "consultation" at the annual meeting of the prestigious American Academy of Religion in Anaheim, California, on the theme "The URANTIA Book in Religious Studies."

New subjects are introduced to the Academy by means of an exploratory consultation to determine their value to the members for further study and research. The consultation then recommends whether to drop the subject, hold seminars on the subject for the next five years, or hold a second (and final) consultation the next year to decide which course to follow. At least twenty AAR members must commit themselves to support seminar activities.

The consultation arose from a proposal made in jest while two AAR officials were discussing future AAR activities in a bar. Much to the surprise of the proposer, the other individual thought it a great idea, and calls were made for participants. One agreed to chair the consultation, the other to present a paper. They persuaded two colleagues, neither of whom were serious readers of the book, to examine it and present papers on it. A call was made through an AAR publication for volunteers to present papers, and Dr. James C. Mills and Dr. Meredith J. Sprunger responded. Each is a long-time student of the book.

The consultation was chaired by Dr. John C. Meagher, St. Michael's College, University of Toronto, a past president of AAR. At the consultation five papers were presented by participants.

Dr. Sprunger's paper, "The URANTIA Book and Religious Studies," presented the book as being "remarkably effective in stimulating creative thinking in philosophy, religion, and culture." He suggested numerous titles suitable for doctoral dissertations derived from the book.

Dr. David L. Miller of Syracuse University, in a paper on "Urantia: Religion as Texture," discussed the role of "text" in the traditions of "Religions of the Book," and examined *The URANTIA Book* against this background. He concluded that any religion which might grow out of it would be iconoclastic as distinguished from cult-forming, and that the book is "a text that is not a 'text,' but a texture detextualizing other texts."

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This quotation, perhaps as much as or more than many others, powerfully underscores the primary way in which our fifth epochal revelation must find its way around our small planet. While our organizational activities are discussed, while decisions are being made, while we fine-tune the tools of our work, each of the God-knowing persons who comprise this community we call URANTIA Brotherhood must push back the borders of planetary consciousness with the personal commitment to living these teachings every moment of every day.

The daily work of URANTIA Brotherhood is not, nor can it ever be, religion. Increasingly our organizational work will be geared to more efficiently support individuals in their outreach efforts. However, because of the personal nature of the religion we are helping to reveal, our primary outreach must always contain elements of personal expression.

This is said not to conjure up discussion of our advertising policy, or to suggest any limits to the type of outreach that may or may not be appropriate at this time, but rather to suggest that this is the time for personal ministry; this is the time for each of us committed to this work to reach out to others and let them see what it means to be an aware child of God; this is the time to work in whatever sphere of activity we find ourselves to increase awareness of the presence on our world of this revelation.

It is wholly correct for those persons interested in organizational activities to forthrightly participate in the ongoing discussion of what is appropriate for URANTIA Brotherhood to do, internationally, nationally, or locally. But, we can never let these ongoing discussions take the place of the work which must in fact be done by the individual—personal and continuing outreach. The Brotherhood cannot do this kind of ministry, because it is not a person; our Father dwells not in our organization, but in each and every member. The organization cannot make the teachings come alive in personal experience as a demonstration to others of the presence within of our common Father; only individuals can do that, and must do that. That is not to say that there will not come a time to broaden our scope of organizational activities on behalf of this revelation. We will surely do that, hopefully at the correct time and based upon the wise recognition of proper evolutionary circumstances and with the encouragement and support of each and every member of our community. But today, and every day, we have the choice to either spend our energies and efforts correcting what we believe is wrong, or slow, or worthless, or we can redouble our personal efforts to make the best of whatever situation we find ourselves in, and work to make our friends, our acquaintances, business associates—everyone we chance to meet—aware of our God and aware of the latest revelation of his being.

In the paper on Social Problems of Religion, we are given some powerful warnings with regard to institutionalization. While we should take heed of all of these, two are especially pertinent to this discussion: "...diversion of religion from the service of God to the service of the church; inclination of the leaders to become administrators instead of ministers..." (1092:4) Although our Brotherhood is not a church, and although our leaders are not ministers, these two warnings should be taken as applicable, in my opinion, to each and every one of us. To the degree that we spend time on administrative matters involving our Brotherhood, we are not spending time on personal outreach. To the degree that we allow our organizations (URANTIA Brotherhood or any other) to come between ourselves and each other, or each of us and any other person, we have begun to serve the organization and not God. Thus, each of us has the continuing choice to be ministers, or administrators!

URANTIA Brotherhood, as an organizational entity, must perforce move more slowly than each person individually. Further, much of the work of the organization necessarily must be of a scaffolding and supporting nature. There are valid discussions, necessary decisions, worthwhile personal and group interactions. And, there is a profound value to the willing and responsible commitment each of us makes to the group process which must guide our organizational activities.

But there are no similar constraints to personal ministry! How each of us acts is between us, our Father within, and another person. Each person in our evolving community has both the ability and responsibility to act positively to bring this revelation into living existence on this planet. It has been suggested that if each one of us made only one more person each month (only 12 this year) aware of *The URANTIA Book*, and each of those did the same, everyone on the planet would soon know about it. While we cannot affect how those we make aware will act, and while it seems inappropriate to measure personal ministry in quantitative terms, is it too much to ask ourselves to act this year in such a way as to bring several more of our fellows into awareness of sonship and awareness of the existence on the planet of a new revelation of our Father's being? As readers committed to these teachings, can we be satisfied with doing less? "...The weak indulge in resolutions, but the strong act. Life is but a day's work—do it well. The act is ours; the consequences God's." (556:13)

Dave Elders

ANNUAL FUND DRIVE CONTINUES

Readers of the *Bulletin* are reminded that it is never too late to respond to the annual funds appeal by URANTIA Brotherhood and URANTIA Foundation. This year, more than in previous years, the Brotherhood must rely on the generosity of its members and friends to support the work of standing committees and the headquarters staff.

If you think activities like library book placement, efficient wholesale and retail book distribution, national conferences and study seminars, improved communications, *Bulletin* publication, and greeting and supporting new readers are important for the expansion of the revelation, you can help keep these programs working by contributing or pledging a contribution to the work of the central organizations today.

PLANNING AND ADVISORY GROUPS FORMED FOR 1987 CONFERENCE

Planning and organization for the 1987 General Conference, to be held August 2-7, 1987 at Bowdoin College, Brunswick, Maine, is proceeding rapidly, according to the Marilyn Kuliecke, Conference Chairman. URANTIA Societies and readers worldwide have been invited to participate in a Conference Advisory Committee, which will meet June 22, 1986, at Lake Forest College.

The ideas and recommendations of the Advisory Committee will be acted on by the Conference Planning Committee, consisting of the Conference Chairman and the Co-Chairmen of working committees on conference program, site arrangements, and special programs. These responsible individuals are—Program: Lucile Faw (Malibu, CA) and Polly Friedman (Calabasas, CA); Site: Alison Gardner (Sherborn, MA) and Jacques Tetrault (Montreal, PQ); Special Program: Cece Forrester (Chicago, IL) and David Kuliecke (Lake Bluff, IL). An initial meeting of the Planning Committee will be held April 17, 1986 in Orlando, Florida.

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Dr. Mills' paper, "The Origin and Proliferation of Reality as Seen from the Perspective of The URANTIA Book," demonstrated, as a practical example, the depth of philosophical insights in the book.

Professor John E. Collins of Wake Forest University, in "The Cosmology of The URANTIA Book and Contemporary Cosmology," compared some scientific statements in the book with both current and former beliefs about them, and concluded that the book disagrees with current scientific beliefs, but is consistent with beliefs held prior to 1954. Although he found the book challenging, he concluded it is in error concerning its scientific pronouncements, and was written by humans, knowledgeable about science, during the first half of this century. At the time of his presentation he appeared to be unaware of the limitations placed upon revelation concerning science mentioned on p. 1109.

Dr. Thomas J. Clarke of Stonehill College, in "The God Concept of The URANTIA Book," gave a scholarly analysis of the God concept of the Book vis-a-vis contemporary Catholic religious thought. He concluded that its "notion of human freedom as the power of will independent of the cosmological order does not allow for an integrated doctrine of human and divine life." He said that the book "rather than escaping from Christianity, is a typical popularized or vulgar (common) interpretation of Christianity that fails to grasp the doctrine of unconditional grace as the expression of the God-concept of Jesus and his disciples." After the presentation, he admitted that he had not re-read Part IV of the Book after a cursory reading.

While the inaccuracies in some of these presentations will be disappointing to serious students of the book, all the presentations were dignified, scholarly, and serious. Criticism was thoughtful and fair from the viewpoint of the speakers. They reflected substantial and serious scholarly work in which concepts in The URANTIA Book were evaluated in terms of contemporary science and theology.

The consultation was attended by over 20 readers from the West Coast not members of AAR. They observed first-hand the typical results of scholarly examination of The URANTIA Book by academicians of various disciplines.

The business session of the consultation determined that it would recommend holding a second, and final, consultation at the next annual meeting of the AAR in Atlanta, Georgia, 22-25 November, 1986. In subsequent planning deliberations the governing body of the AAR rejected this recommendation, with the result that a second consultation will not be held at Atlanta.

The importance of the consultation at Anaheim should not be underestimated. This meeting constituted a recognition and consideration of the content of The URANTIA Book in the academic religious community at a level hitherto unachieved. While the rejection of a second consultation at Atlanta was a disappointment to its organizers, it is likely that the AAR will return to the subject of the book in future years as its spiritual significance becomes better known and more fully appreciated.

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Any person interested in participating in the programs of the AAR is invited to contact Dr. Sprunger for additional information.

CONFERENCE CALENDAR

May 16-18, URANTIA Society of Dallas, Lake Murray, Ardmore, OK.
Contact: John Hyde, 910 Glen Cove Dr., Richardson, TX 75080.
Phone: (214) 235-1724.

June 6-8, Kansas City Study Groups, Park College, Parkville, MO.
Theme: "Spiritual Aerobics—Exercising Our Emerging Being" Contact:
Mrs. Ila L. Hall, 8700 E. 110th St., Kansas City, MO 64143. Phone:
(816) 763-2008.

June 6-8, Ottawa Study Group, Geneva Park Conference Centre.
Theme: "Jesus' Life and His Parables" Contact: Brent St. Dennis, 3189
Olympic Way, Gloucester, ON, CANADA H1T 1Y2. Phone: (613)
731-2785.

June 7-8, Australia Study Groups, in Melbourne. Theme: "Service"
Contact: Mr. Neil Francey, P.O. Box 606, Brighton, Victoria 3186
AUSTRALIA. Phone: 592-6269.

June 13-15, URANTIA Book Students of Inland Northwest, Near Coeur
d'Alene, Idaho. Theme: "Reach Out and Touch Someone" Contact:
Thomas Orjala, 307 S. 19th St., Coeur d'Alene, ID 83814. Phone:
(208) 667-4178.

June 23-26, Intensive Study Seminar, Education Committee of URAN-
TIA Brotherhood, Lake Forest College, Lake Forest, IL. Study: Part II of
The URANTIA Book. Contact: URANTIA Brotherhood, 533 Diversey
Parkway, Chicago, IL 60614. Phone: (312) 327-0424.

July 18-25, (Note: change of date from August 8-15), Boulder School,
Boulder, CO. Theme: "Whole-hearted Living: Integrating the Secular
and Spiritual Lives" Contact: Lou Meyer, Boulder School, 1622 18th
St., Boulder, CO 80302. Phone: (303) 443-8154.

August 3-11, French International Conference, Chateau de Montvil-
larsenne, Gouvieux-Chantilly, near Paris. Contact: Mr. George
Michelson-Dupont, 3 bis Grande Rue, 77940 Blennes, FRANCE, or
Berkeley Elliott, 14 S W 97th St, Oklahoma City, OK 73139. Phone:
(405) 794-2978.

August 8-10, Midwest Conference, Madison, WI. Theme: "The Pre-
sence of God" Contact: Brad Shrake, 9686 Stadt Road, Marshfield, WI
54449. Phone: (715) 384-5922.

August 17-20, Northwest Conference, Warm Beach Camp & Christian
Convention Center near Stanwood, WA. Theme: "Reaching In-
Reaching Out" Contact: Roy Healy, 3506 Corsica Way, Vancouver,
BC, CANADA V5S 4J3.

August 29-31, Nashville Group Conference, Fall Creek Falls State Park,
Pikeville, TN. Contact: Mrs. Melissa Wells, 315 54th Ave. N., Nash-
ville, TN 37209. Phone: (615) 383-7113.

October 24-26, First URANTIA Society of Oklahoma Forum, Lake Mur-
ray, Ardmore, OK. Theme: "The URANTIA Book—International View-
points" Contact: Michael Challis, 206 N W 31st St, Oklahoma City,
OK 73118. Phone: (405) 521-0806.

RELIGIONS OF URANTIA

This is the first in a series of articles sponsored by the Fraternal Relations Committee. Our purpose is to provide a brief glimpse of the broad diversity of religious expression that has been institutionalized in the cultures of this world, and to highlight aspects of these various traditions which might become stepping stones toward a growing sense of spiritual unity among religionists from a variety of backgrounds. To accomplish this purpose, we will be presenting statements taken directly from the literature of organizations devoted to the practice or study of religion. Whenever possible these articles will be reviewed by members of the organizations described to insure that their ideas have been faithfully represented. We hope that you will find this service to be both informative and helpful as you interact with people who represent the points of view illustrated here.

Our initial contribution deals with one of several Buddhist organizations that have taken root within Western culture. The following excerpts are taken from a pamphlet entitled "Introduction to NSA," which describes some of the beliefs and activities of this particular group:

"Nichiren Shoshu Soka Gakkai of America (NSA) is the lay organization of believers in the U.S. 'Nichiren Shoshu' means 'orthodox school of Nichiren.' NSA provides a way to learn and practice Buddhism for thousands of members with diverse social and ethnic backgrounds, ages, races, and professions. It was founded in 1960 by George M. Williams, presently NSA general director. NSA has sister organizations in 117 countries where 17 million believers practice as part of Soka Gakkai International, headed by Daisaku Ikeda.

"NSA's goal is to introduce Buddhism in America, primarily through small informal meetings held in member's homes, where individuals share their experiences and answer the questions of newcomers. Introductory meetings, culture festivals, lectures and seminars of comprise NSA's basic activities to promote peace, culture and education."

From a subsection titled "Future: World Peace a Reality" we read the following:

"Seen from one viewpoint, human history seems nothing but one war after another, with brief, intermittent periods of unstable peace. Inflation, environmental pollution, terrorism, ineffectual leadership and a host of other seemingly insoluble problems create chaos. Add to this the ever-present threat of nuclear war and it is difficult to know where to begin to make the challenge. The real threat is that our attention to the external situation will rob us of the energy and creativity we need to change ourselves. Each of us must realize that only the development of his or her life-condition from the inside out will ultimately solve the problem.

"The establishment of a true respect for life and the dignity of the individual, crucial to a lasting peace, is among the most difficult of all undertakings. The Buddhist movement, consisting of the steadfast efforts of the individual to promote such respect in himself and others, is a gradual but sure process.

"Soka Gakkai International President Daisaku Ikeda has said that 'a great revolution of character in just a single person will help achieve a change in the destiny of a nation and, further, will enable a change in the destiny of all mankind.'"

Compare these statements with those in *The URANTIA Book* which discuss the effect of individual transformation on social evolution. Copies of the original pamphlet may be obtained by writing to NSA at 624 West Wrightwood Avenue, Chicago, IL 60614. NSA centers exist in other localities and can be found in the telephone directory.

The Fraternal Relations Committee would like to invite the submission of articles similar to the above from any interested reader who wants to participate in developing a greater understanding of the world's religions. This is an activity in which we can all share and through which we can help each other to grow in experience and wisdom. Manuscripts should be approximately 500 words in length and should focus on shared concepts of a positive nature, with brief commentary rather than analysis.

"The characteristic difference between evolved and revealed religion is a new quality of divine wisdom which is added to purely experiential human wisdom. But it is experience in and with the human religions that develops the capacity for subsequent reception of increased bestowals of divine wisdom and cosmic insight." (1101:5)

COUNCIL TO CONVENE FOR PLANNING SESSION

The General Council of URANTIA Brotherhood will hold a three day planning seminar in Orlando, Florida, April 18-20, 1986. The seminar will be facilitated by Taylor Corporation, a group of experienced planning meeting facilitators. This meeting is the most recent in a series of activities intended to implement the decision to pursue long-range planning voted by the Council in 1983.

Previous exploratory planning activities have included a review of planning possibilities by the Executive Committee during 1983-84 and the development of a statement of guiding philosophy by an *ad hoc* subcommittee of the Council during 1984-85. These efforts culminated in the program of the General Council retreat, held at Cedar Creek Farm Seminar Center, New Haven, Missouri, November 9-11, 1985.

As a result of this group experience in attacking the early stages of the planning process, the Council decided to continue work in this direction. The Executive Committee felt that, to make the most efficient use of time and resources and to expedite the process, a more structured and formal approach was desirable. A search was begun for a suitable professional meeting facilitator, leading to the selection of Taylor Corp. for the April meeting.