



URANTIA® Brotherhood BULLETIN

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CONFERENCE REGISTRATION MAILED

Information and registration materials for the 1987 General Conference were mailed in late January to everyone who had returned the reply card enclosed in the Summer 1986 issue of *URANTIA Brotherhood Bulletin*. Every reader of *The URANTIA Book* who plans to attend this important conference should return the registration form as soon as possible to register for the conference and to reserve meals or campus housing. If you think you might like to attend, take time now to read the enclosed sheet and to fill out and mail the reply card. The conference information and registration packet will be sent to you immediately. If you previously returned a conference reply card and have not yet received your registration packet, return another reply card now, and write a note on it explaining that you haven't got your packet yet.

REFLECTIONS ON THE PARIS CONFERENCE

The meeting of students of *The URANTIA Book* in Montvillargenne, France, this past summer was not an exceptional event in the history of the Urantia movement, but was rather a logical step in the development of the fifth epochal revelation that will spread itself little by little, following the translations. Let's underline the importance, for the spiritual progress of the planet and the diffusion of the restated message of Jesus among the people of the whole world, of establishing a lively, motivating process of translation using "the good will of volunteers and anonymous persons."

Having lived through this event, from its birth in the mind of a few until the final realization of the experience itself, we can be sure that its development is not a hazard, but that it has been, if not controlled, at least perfectly directed by the invisible Brotherhood working through each individual participant. If the opinions of those present judge the meeting a success, it was due mainly to all this invisible work done without our knowledge. We are most grateful for this.

Reflecting on the experience, it is interesting to think about its effect on the group and the development of the revelation on our planet. The immediate benefit of such meetings is to be able to live with our brothers and sisters, conscious of their ties with the divine forever. "Spiritual growth is mutually stimulated by intimate association with other religionists. Love supplies the soil for religious growth." (1094:2; 1094/7-8; Paper 100.02) Then the participants have the feeling of building, on earth, a network of goodwill that is

SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING IN CHICAGO

A special meeting of the General Council of URANTIA Brotherhood was held in Chicago on 24-25 January to continue the work of the design teams established last spring and to elect a new Vice President of the organization.

Bill Hazen was elected to this position, filling a vacancy created by the resignation of Frank Sgaraglino, who was appointed a Trustee of URANTIA Foundation last Summer. Long active in study group and Society affairs in the Dallas, Texas area, Bill recently relocated to Chicago, and lives in Hinsdale, IL. A complete report on the General Council meeting will be presented in the Spring *Bulletin*.

The principal focus of the General Council meeting is to report the results of initial work by six design teams in the areas of:

1. Study group development
2. Programs, services, and resources
3. Book sales, marketing, and distribution
4. The personal and spiritual component in our work
5. Communications from printed to electronic
6. Internationalization of URANTIA Brotherhood

Most of the design teams have held several face-to-face meetings during the past six months. Those teams which could not meet face-to-face have communicated extensively by mail and telephone conference calls. On the morning of 24 January, following the election of the Vice President, each of the design teams meet to prepare their presentations to the General Council. Presentations by the six teams, and discussion by the General Council will occupy the remainder of the two days.

It is expected that definite plans will be presented and, possibly, approved for immediate action in a few areas, such as test marketing *The URANTIA Book* and new initiatives in Brotherhood fundraising. For most of the teams, however, this meeting will be an opportunity to report progress to and to receive guidance from the General Council as a whole.

The most important benefit of the year-long design team process has been the opportunity it has afforded the General Council and many other Brotherhood members to become involved in consideration of movement-wide needs and opportunities. Prior to this initiative the Council traditionally met to discuss such policy issues once a year, leaving the ongoing consideration of these matters to the Executive Committee and the departmental committees. This made it difficult for Councilors not involved in committee activities to stay informed about ongoing deliberations and to have personal input to the deliberative process. Through the design team process it has become possible to tap a broader base of expertise in the organization and to involve the official policy makers of URANTIA Brotherhood more closely in shaping the implementation and understanding the consequences of policy decisions.

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more or less the spiritual brotherhood which is ruled by the law of the Father—love.

In watching the life of a group of more than 100 persons, coming from eleven countries, speaking seven different languages, we had the feeling that the participants wanted very much to understand, communicate, exchange, and share, with all their differences, their unity with and in the Father. In an ordinary group, people speaking the same language usually group themselves together and we could have had small groups of Finns, French, or Americans. On the contrary, it was an incredible mix of people, during the meals as much as during the workshops, and it showed a sincere desire to understand and love, helped by the meditation—adoration morning and night.

There was an atmosphere of brotherhood and goodness in this assembly. Sometimes we stayed in groups where no word was said, but the eyes expressed so many brotherly thoughts that it was not necessary to translate to understand. Is this the language of the spirit? We have simply lived in anticipating the Urantia era. Are we a privileged group to be able to live this way, among ourselves on the earth? Of course not, and all of us in our hearts and minds know the way that leads to the kingdom.

Looking into the future, a process of international meetings has been born which will be pursued in Maine next summer and will be followed by many more. The value of these meetings is not so much in their intellectual content as what the participants get from meeting other people, transforming their intellectual concepts of truth, beauty, and goodness into a spiritual experience of love, compassion, and apostolate.

But this is only one aspect of being and acting like children conscious of their affiliation with the loving Father. It is easy to feel love for those who love us and tolerance for those who give us understanding. As for the apostolate, it is not difficult with friends. But, "You are destined to live a narrow and mean life if you learn to love only those who love you. . . . The less of love in any creature's nature, the greater the love need, and the more does divine love seek to satisfy such need." (1739:6; 1739/37-41; Paper 156.5.11) Our attention and our efforts must lead us mostly toward our daily environment. What we have succeeded in doing among ourselves, why can't we do with others? There is the real challenge, the school of self control, of patience, of tolerance, of forgiveness, and of apostolate; it is the best field to put into action the concepts of the Gospel given by Jesus, and so marvelously described in our book. "The true believer does not grow weary in well-doing just because he is thwarted. Difficulty whets the ardor of the truth lover, while obstacles only challenge the exertions of the undaunted kingdom builder." (1740:8; 1740/43-45; Paper 156.5.21)

By dint of being and acting in accordance with our highest ideal of truth, beauty, and goodness, we finally win the heart of those who surround us, they become our friends. "As the days pass, every true believer becomes more skillful in alluring his fellows into the love of eternal truth." (1740:2; 1740/10-11; Paper 156.6.15)

Finally, the interest in such manifestations is mainly in the fact that "spiritual growth is mutually stimulated." The participants share their religious experiences of using the concepts of *The URANTIA Book* in their daily life, finding solutions to personal problems during workshops, and especially, it is a time to surround ourselves with love and brotherhood which bring the growth of ideals and the desire to do good to others and the burning desire to be more and more like the divine Father.

"Love is infectious, and when human devotion is intelligent and wise, love is more catching than hate. But only genuine and unselfish love is truly contagious. If each mortal could only become a focus of dynamic affection, this benign virus of love would soon pervade the sentimental emotion-stream of humanity to such an extent that all civilization would be encompassed by love, and that would be the realization of the brotherhood of man." (1098:3; 1098/33-39; Paper 100.4.6)

—George Michelson-Dupont, France

EUROPEAN SUMMER SPARKS FELLOWSHIP

Berkeley Elliott, Chairman of the International Fellowship Committee, supplied the following thoughts on the Paris conference and her subsequent visit with readers of The URANTIA Book in Finland.

Paris Conference

The first International Meeting for Readers of *The URANTIA Book* in Paris in August of last year was a tremendous success. There was much love and fellowship and an opportunity to get to know our brothers and sisters from all over the planet. In addition, the learning experience—both spiritual and intellectual—was shared and enjoyed by all.

Cross-fertilization of concepts appears so necessary to me for our better understanding of *The URANTIA Book*. Personal contact rapidly enlarges our spiritual family and as we share our Father's love with each of you—nothing I have yet encountered in my lifetime can come close to this experience. Thanks to each of you and thanks to our father-brother Michael and our Universal Father!

Finland Visit

From the terrific Paris Conference, eight of us flew to Helsinki, Finland. We arrived Sunday evening (before the people who had attended the Paris meeting were home) and after a bus and boat tour of the city on Monday, we were picked up and taken to Joel Rehnstrom's "country" home. After walking around their beautiful acreage, we had snacks and a good visit with 6 or 8 people. Tuesday we were picked up and all taken on a two-hour trip to a special place for lunch, sauna, and then a visit in the two hundred year old home of Kirsti Ketonen.

That evening many of us gathered at the apartment of Marja Svensson for a great dinner and fellowship. On Wednesday several of the group helped us with shopping and were so warm and loving, it was as though we had always been the greatest of friends. They all went out of their way to be extra "caring" and, when many came to the airport both before we left for Russia and upon our midnight return, we were overjoyed.

The hospitality and love we experienced with this group of approximately 40 readers was overwhelming! How very fortunate we are! I trust we will soon have an opportunity to reciprocate.

READERS MEET IN ENGLAND

A meeting of readers of *The URANTIA Book* from the United Kingdom was held in North Harrow, near London, on the weekend of 26 July 1986. Ten British readers traveled from as far as Ayr, Scotland and Whitbourne, England to attend the sessions. Five Americans traveling in England attended the meetings also.

The gathering was held at the home of Pamela and Gez Lamb. The study was led by Henry Begemann of Wassenaar, Netherlands. The topic was Paper 112, Personality Survival. Discussion centered on questions and comments about the paper proposed by Henry to group members through correspondence.

The British readers have met infrequently because of traveling distance between them, but before the meeting ended they resolved to meet regularly, alternating between the north and south of England.

There was great camaraderie and sharing during breaks for tea and meals. The opportunity to share thoughts, feelings, and spiritual yearnings with transatlantic brothers and sisters was a privilege and a joy.

FINNS VISITED BY AMERICAN READERS

Marja Svensson and Satu Sihvo of Finland provided the Bulletin with this report on the visit to Finland by a group of American readers of The URANTIA Book.

Berkeley Elliott of Oklahoma and seven other readers from the United States—Tom Allen, Colleen Holden-Mullins and Susan Wright of Oklahoma; John Hales, Paul and Mary Snider of Illinois; and Deborah Foster of Alaska—visited Finland after the international meeting in France. Our visitors were brothers and sisters eager to know how this part of the family was doing.

They had arranged the obligatory sightseeing part of the tour themselves but the rest of the time they were more or less occupied with Finnish readers of *The URANTIA Book*. During the visit they met the Finnish translator, Seppo Kanerva, as well as many of us who support the Finnish translation work of *The URANTIA Book*.

We shared those days in many ways. We shared sauna and swimming, singing and shopping—and washing dishes. One night we had a party and tried to record on tape Tom singing and playing "Surely the presence of the Lord is in this place," and we got a tape of a living family that had a party. That's the point. We lived those days together where we were and as we were. As brothers and sisters.

Everyone of us has a story of one's own. But we are gathering the world together as it is said in Susan's and Tom's song. We'll gather the world with love. There are many of us; we are not alone. And we have the presence of our heavenly Father within each of us. We have his love to share. Forever.

NOTES FROM THE FIELD

From time to time the editors of URANTIA Brotherhood Bulletin learn of important accomplishments by individual readers or URANTIA Societies which are of potential interest to all readers of The URANTIA Book. It is our intent to begin to recognize these accomplishments. This article reports a few of these events for the past six months. We apologize for the omission of items which you may consider noteworthy. Generally, the editors have no way to know of these events unless someone informs us. In the future, we will select items for publication based on our assessment of their general interest.

Duane Faw (Malibu, CA), a long-time reader of *The URANTIA Book* and a knowledgeable student of the Bible, has spent many years identifying the similarities and differences between the two texts. This past Fall Duane's work culminated in the publication of the *Paramony*, a 400 page tabulation of over 25,000 cross references.

Helena Sprague (Farmington, CT) is an experienced reader of *The URANTIA Book*, long concerned with how some central ideas might be attractively presented to teenagers and young adults through a work of fiction. Helena's project was completed with the recent publication of *David Zebedee and Ruth*, a novel built on the characters and situations of Jesus' ministry as described in the book.

Last Summer Jeff Wattles (Boulder, CO) accepted the position of Director of The Boulder School for Students of *The URANTIA Book*. Jeff is a knowledgeable reader who has taught philosophy and religion at the college level for many years. Among other activities, he has sought to enhance the understanding which readers of *The URANTIA Book* have of the concepts of the book and their relationship to the belief systems of world philosophies and religions.

IDEAS SOUGHT FOR FUTURE CONFERENCES

It is at this time we start making plans for the next General Conference, actually the next two, in 1990 and either 1993 or possibly 1994, since that year will be the 2000th birthday of Jesus. We would very much like your thoughts on the following:

1. A site for either or both of the next two Conferences
 - a. Location
 - b. Approximate size of facility (number of people it would accommodate)
 - c. As much detailed information as possible (estimate of cost, number of conference and workshop rooms, etc.)
2. The same information as above for either the year of 1993 or 1994—and your preference.
3. Do you think we should continue to hold General Conferences every 3 years? Should they be held outside the United States—at least every other time? Would a longer period of time between be more desirable?

Please send this information to me and our Committee will go to work on it. Kindly address your letters to:

Berkeley Elliott, Chairman
Ad hoc Committee on Site Selection
14 Southwest 97th Street
Oklahoma City, OK 73139

Thanks for your ideas.

CONFERENCE CALENDAR

April 24-26, Southwest Regional Forum, Lake Murray Lodge, Ardmore, OK. Theme: "As We Pass By." Contact: John Hyde, 910 Glen Cove, Richardson, TX 75080. Phone: (214) 235-1724.

June 12-14, Geneva Park, Orillia, Ontario, Canada. Contact: Robert Pope, 1068 Belle Isle View, Windsor, Ontario N8S-3G5. Phone: (519) 948-3738.

June 19-21, Midwest Conference, Davenport, IA. Theme: "The URANTIA Book and You: A Spiritual Fellowship Conference." Contact: Timothy Young, 507 Woodlawn, Muscatine, IA 52761. Phone: (319) 263-8018. Or contact: Patrick Kopp, 1325 15th St. A, Moline, IL 61265. Phone: (309) 797-1565.

August 2-8, 1987 General Conference, Bowdoin College, Brunswick, Maine. Theme: "Our Relationship with God: Personal Transformation and Its Power to Transform the World." Contact: URANTIA Brotherhood, 533 Diversey Parkway, Chicago, IL 60614. Phone: (312) 327-0424.

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RELIGIONS OF OUR WORLD

This article is presented by the Fraternal Relations Committee as a part of our continuing effort to bring to students of The URANTIA Book a flavor of the religious diversity and spiritual unity that currently exists among the peoples of our world. Our presentation in this issue concerns the Unity churches.

Unity was established by Charles and Myrtle Fillmore in the 1890's. Today there are about 400 Unity churches in the United States and about 40 abroad. There are many other groups of students of Unity in areas that have no churches. Ministers are trained and accredited by Unity School of Christianity at Unity Village, Missouri.

One of the books that best presents Unity thought is *Alternatives*, written by William L. Fischer and published by Unity School of Christianity in 1980. The following topics are taken from this book and the descriptions summarize the author's original material.

God: is seen as a universal spiritual presence but is also present as a specially focalized spiritual presence within each person. This presence is often called the Christ Spirit. The search for God, then, is seen primarily as a personal inward journey.

Jesus: is called our Wayshower. Unity sees Jesus as one who came to show us the way to the Father rather than as one who desired to be worshiped as God. Unity attempts to teach the religion of Jesus rather than the religion about him.

Prayer: may consist in part of affirmations. We affirm the desirable spiritual and nonspiritual good that we know the Father would want his children to have. It is also a sincere dialogue with our Father.

Meditation: Students of Unity are urged to practice "the silence," a time of going inward to contact the indwelling spirit of God. Meditation can be a time of listening for answers after a time of prayer; this is the listening part of the prayer dialogue.

Heaven and Hell: are seen primarily as states of consciousness rather than physical locations. Heaven is aligning ourselves with God's will or finding the kingdom of God within. Hell is the illusion of separation from God which might also be used as the definition of sin.

Baptism and Communion: Unity recognizes symbolic forms of both but generally without the material symbols such as bread, wine, and water.

Life After Death: Reincarnation is seen as a desirable alternative to the concept of instant perfection or eternal damnation. Many feel that after our evolution through many lifetimes, we ascend permanently to some higher and more spiritual level of existence.

People may belong to Unity and have considerably different views from those just listed and feel quite comfortable in the church. As Fischer states, "Perhaps you have found it easy to accept some of these ideas but not the others. If this is the case, fine. Accept those you can and set aside those you cannot." Compare this with the statement that "There is great hope for any church that dares to remove all creedal pressure from its members." (1135:3) Copies of *Alternatives* and additional information about Unity may be obtained by contacting your local Unity church or from Unity School of Christianity, Unity Village, Missouri 64065.

Your response to our call for the submission of articles has been gratifying. We welcome additional contributions that follow the format which we've established in previous issues, and that help to enlarge our understanding of the varieties of religious expression on Urantia.

"While your religion is a matter of personal experience, it is most important that you should be exposed to the knowledge of a vast number of other religious experiences (the diverse interpretations of other and diverse mortals) to the end that you may prevent your religious life from becoming egocentric—circumscribed, selfish, and unsocial." (1130:2; 1130/9-13; Paper 103.13)

LETTER FROM ALASKA

Last year URANTIA Brotherhood Bulletin published an invitation from the Northern Light URANTIA Society of Alaska for readers worldwide to participate in a synchronous reading of The URANTIA Book during 1986. The following letter reports the results of that effort and suggests some new directions.

The Northern Light URANTIA Society of Alaska is pleased to announce that our sponsored project "Reading The URANTIA Book Together" in 1986 has drawn to its successful conclusion. We'd like to express our grateful appreciation to all the dedicated participants.

What a formidable task in today's busy world! Joined together, progressing in synchrony, over 120 students from 22 different states, 4 Canadian provinces, and 2 other countries, have read together *The URANTIA Book* in its entirety in one year. What an accomplishment! What better way to get to know our Father, than through a complete study of the revelatory knowledge sent to us by our Creator Brother, Michael of Nebadon.

We have decided to make this an ongoing annual project and look forward with joyful anticipation to a new "Reading Together" project for 1987. Let us begin together, the first week of January, reading 4 papers weekly and every week thereafter until its completion.

A monthly letter will go out to all participants and we encourage communication. We invite each of you to send our way any comments, suggestions, insights, questions or study aids you may wish to share with other readers.

Let us pray together. Let us read together. Let us join in this effort to make 1987 a "Year of Devoted Study." On page 2077 *The URANTIA Book* tells us "One of the great troubles with modern life is that man thinks he is too busy to find time for spiritual meditation and religious devotion." (2077:3; 2077/15-16; Paper 195.6.7)

The Reading Project is one of many ways we can heighten our spiritual awareness and express our dedication.

God's blessing to you, a beautiful child of our Eternal Father.

Reading Group
c/o Northern Light URANTIA Society of Alaska
3605 Arctic Blvd., #972
Anchorage, Alaska 99503

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