



URANTIA® Brotherhood BULLETIN

Spring 1987

Vol. 5, No. 1

GENERAL CONFERENCE PREPARATIONS MATURE

The 1987 General Conference of URANTIA Brotherhood will be held at Bowdoin College, Brunswick, Maine, August 2-7. If you would like to attend and have not already registered, please call Brotherhood headquarters, (312) 327-0424, to give an estimate of your plans. Over 700 readers of *The URANTIA Book* are expected to begin arriving at the college as early as 31 July. Several hundred early arrivals will participate in a two-day spiritual retreat which precedes the conference, and many other readers will be on-site during this period to enjoy the regional atmosphere with other students or to assist new arrivals with ground transportation, registration, lodging, meals, entertainment, and local amenities.

Many groups attending the conference will remain at the college through Sunday, August 9, to share the continuing fellowship. The members of the General Council and many of their families will be among those staying over, since the annual meeting of the Council will be held immediately after the conference.

The daytime program for the General Conference includes plenary sessions with conceptual, inspirational, and personal presentations by long-time students of *The URANTIA Book* as well as small group sessions covering a broad range of approaches to the Conference Theme: "Our Relationship with God: Personal Transformation and Its Power to Transform the World." Successive days of Conference activity focus on the personal, the group, and the global aspects of the theme. Simultaneous English/French translation will be provided during the plenary sessions. Small group sessions are being offered in English and in French, as well as bi-lingually.

The core daytime program will be supplemented by special daytime and evening activities. The evening program includes a number of social receptions and group entertainments planned and sponsored by reader groups from locations around the world. The special daytime program includes such activities as an exhibit of artistic works inspired by *The URANTIA Book*, a display of newsletters and related publications produced by readers, showings of the newly revised slide-tape program *A History of the URANTIA Movement*, and demonstrations of a computer-based reference aid for *The URANTIA Book*.

Although the program offered is rich and varied, ample free time has been planned to allow for enjoying informal fellowship, spontaneous worship, and the beautiful scenery of the Maine seacoast.

General Conferences attempt to offer food for the spirit; however, on this occasion, the conference organizers expect to offer an unusually fine meals program as well. The Bowdoin College food service is famed among American colleges for the rare quality of its cuisine.

The innumerable students of *The URANTIA Book* who have worked for over three years to make this conference enjoyable for all hope that you will decide to come to Maine this August to share a unique experience with your fellow readers.

COUNCIL MEETS AS DESIGN TEAMS

The General Council of URANTIA Brotherhood met in Chicago on January 24-25 to continue the design team process. Individual design teams met at 533 Diversey Parkway on Saturday morning to finalize and plan the presentation of their recommendations to the group as a whole. On Saturday afternoon and evening the entire Council assembled at a nearby conference facility to hear individual team reports. The meeting concluded Sunday after discussion and recommendations for formal action.

Most recommendations were approved as submitted, or with some modification. However, action on two proposals which called for major, intensive, long-term fund raising efforts directed towards the general readership was deferred. One of these efforts would have had the objective of creating a \$15 million endowment to fund Brotherhood operations, while the other would have created a \$1 million fund dedicated to support translation of *The URANTIA Book*. Rather than approving such initiatives, the Council charged the Executive Committee to develop a unified approach to broad and far-reaching discussion of these and other major fund raising initiatives at a future Council meeting. For more details of these actions, refer to the accompanying articles.

Spiritual Attitude Should Pervade All

The design team on the Spiritual Component in Our Work presented an innovative report calling for each element of URANTIA Brotherhood to concern itself with the *spiritual method* of its work as an end comparable in value to the work itself. While some among those present felt this idea was inappropriate to their continuing agendas, the Council as a whole voted to recommend that the chair of each departmental committee take specific suggestions of the report up with the committee affected.

Test Marketing Plan Advances

The team studying Book Sales, Marketing and Distribution presented a plan for test marketing *The URANTIA Book* to determine the effect of such external factors as dust jacket design, price, promotional displays, trade advertising, and other innovations on bookstore sales volume. Although the Council was divided in its expectations, it generally agreed that such a test should be made. Whatever the outcome of the test, the results would support more informed discussion of these controversial matters than was hitherto possible.

Additional debate centered on the most appropriate method for funding the study, which will be conducted by a professional market research firm. Since both URANTIA Brotherhood and URANTIA Foundation have significant interest in the outcomes of the study, most Councilors thought URANTIA Foundation should be offered

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IKHNATON CONSIDERED

"The teachings of Amenemope were slowly losing their hold on the Egyptian mind when, through the influence of an Egyptian Silemite physician, a woman of the royal family espoused the Melchizedek teachings. This woman prevailed upon her son, Ikhnaton, Pharaoh of Egypt, to accept these doctrines of One God."

"Since the disappearance of Melchizedek in the flesh, no human being up to that time had possessed such an amazingly clear concept of the revealed religion of Salem as Ikhnaton. In some respects this young Egyptian king is one of the most remarkable persons in human history. During this time of increasing spiritual depression in Mesopotamia, he kept alive the doctrine of El Elyon, the One God, in Egypt, thus maintaining the philosophic monotheistic channel which was vital to the religious background of the then future bestowal of Michael..." (1047/5-15; 1047/1-2; Paper 95.5.1-2)

The May/June 1987 issue of *Biblical Archaeology Review* contains a series of articles on "Akhenaten's Religious Legacy," by Donald B. Redford, professor of Middle Eastern Studies at the University of Toronto, and director of the Akhenaten temple project. In his principal article, "The Monotheism of the Heretic Pharaoh," Redford considers whether Akhenaten's religious experiment should be considered a precursor of Mosaic monotheism or an Egyptian anomaly. ["Akhenaten" is the spelling used by modern Egyptologists for the assumed name of Pharaoh Amenophis IV, which is rendered in *The URANTIA Book* as "Ikhnaton."]

Redford begins with a presentation of the Egyptian empire at the height of its power in 1375 B.C., when Ikhnaton ascended the throne. He continues, describing the significant public events of Ikhnaton's reign, his religious reformation, and his major building programs. Ten years after Ikhnaton's death, the general Horemheb undertook the obliteration of his memory, specifically by dismantling his buildings and incorporating their stones into the foundations of new structures. More than 45,000 of these decorated and inscribed stones, called *talatat*, have been recovered since they were first noticed around 1840.

Modern computer techniques have been used to encode the contents of individual *talatat* and to match their images and inscriptions, successfully reconstructing over 2,000 scenes from the original structures. The remainder of Dr. Redford's lavishly illustrated article discusses the recovered images and texts, the nature of the religion depicted therein, and the possibility of Israelite monotheism being derived, in part, from Ikhnaton's cult of the Sun-Disc. While Redford's conclusion (that no such connection is possible) may be disappointing to readers of *The URANTIA Book*, we must recognize that the static images of the *talatat* cannot portray the living truth of the actions they depict. The reasons Redford gives for his negative conclusion are very similar to the reasons given in *The URANTIA Book* for the outward failure of Ikhnaton's visible reform program.

From the viewpoint of *The URANTIA Book*, Redford's final discussions help us better to understand how an advanced, but highly philosophical and relatively impersonal religion, although presented against a background of spiritual darkness, can utterly fail to capture the hearts and minds of the great mass of a people. Ikhnaton's monotheism appears to Redford to have been an individual intellectual reality, which denied the validity of alternative custom and belief; Moses' formulation was more attractive to the average human nature, embracing a multitude of emotional and political factors, in addition to its central truths.

"The weakness of Ikhnaton's doctrine lay in the fact that he proposed such an advanced religion that only the educated Egyptians could fully comprehend his teachings. The rank and file of the agricultural laborers never really grasped his gospel and were, therefore, ready to return with the priests to the old-time worship..." (1048/44-48; 1048/6; Paper 95.5.12)

Biblical Archaeology Review is published by the Biblical Archaeology Society, 3000 Connecticut Ave., NW #300, Washington, DC 20008.

RELIGIONS OF OUR WORLD

In this article the Fraternal Relations Committee would like to share with you some beautiful prayers from the reformed Jewish tradition. These are presented without commentary and are taken from *Gates of Prayer: The New Union Prayerbook*, published in 1975 by the Central Conference of American Rabbis. We hope you enjoy them as much as we have.

"I do not pretend to understand how the divine Creator influences the human child. I feel as if spiritual forces were pouring constantly from the infinite source which is never poorer for all it gives forth. Yet the influences of spirit make their way in different degrees, of not at all, to different souls. The windows of some are perhaps nearly shut. The windows of others have open only a few chinks and crevices. At some seasons—the seasons of prayer—those chinks and crevices may open a little wider so that a little more of God's light may enter in."

"True prayer is the opening of our hearts Godward, and the answer is a flow of light and influence from Him."

"Prayer means a consciousness full of God's presence and of our relation with Him."

"His aim is the increase of spiritual and moral goodness in the world, to lead the universe toward perfection. His laws are in their workings organized toward this end. Those who are loyal to Him must organize their own lives to be within the sphere of the workings of these laws."

"The religious feeling of the scientist takes the form of rapturous amazement at the harmony of the natural law, which reveals an intelligence of such superiority that, compared with it, all the systematic thinking and acting of human beings is an utterly insignificant reflection. This feeling is the guiding principle of his life and work in so far as he succeeds in keeping himself from the shackles of selfish desire. It is beyond question closely akin to that which has possessed the religious geniuses of all ages. It is to know that what is impenetrable to us really exists, revealing itself to us as the highest truth and the most radiant beauty."

"We are encompassed by questions to which we can only respond with awe."

"Lord, You give meaning to our hopes, to our struggles and our striving. Without You we are lost, our lives empty. And so when all else fails us, we turn to You! In the stillness of night, when the outer darkness enters the soul; in the press of the crowd, when we walk alone though yearning for companionship; and when in agony we are bystanders to our own confusion, we look to You for hope and peace."

"Lord, we do not ask for a life of ease, for happiness without alloy. Instead we ask You to teach us to be uncomplaining and unafraid. In our darkness help us to find Your light, and in our loneliness to discover the many spirits akin to our own. Give us strength to face life with hope and courage, that even from its discords and conflicts we may draw blessing. Make us understand that life calls us not merely to enjoy the richness of the earth, but to exult in heights attained after the toil of climbing."

"Prayer is the sincere and longing look of the child to its spirit Father; it is a psychologic process of exchanging the human will for the divine will. Prayer is a part of the divine plan for making over that which is into that which ought to be." (162U/32-34; 162U/8; Paper 144.4.9)

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SECONDARY WORKS STIR CONTINUED DEBATE

The Executive Committee of URANTIA Brotherhood has actively debated the proper relationship of the Brotherhood to secondary works derived from *The URANTIA Book* during the past year. At last Summer's meeting of the General Council the Executive Committee was tasked to determine the appropriateness of the Brotherhood's stocking and selling the Third Edition of Clyde Bedell's *Concordance of The URANTIA Book*. Discussion of this narrow issue has been progressively broadened to include the full range of issues relating to the publication and distribution of secondary works.

Generally speaking, a secondary work is considered to be a body of creative material which exists primarily to interpret or to support study or dissemination of *The URANTIA Book*. Major examples of secondary works now in print include, in addition to the *Concordance: A Study of the Master Universe and Appendices* by William S. Sadler, Jr.; the *Paramony* by Duane Faw; the *Study Guide to Part IV* by Ruth Renn; *An Artist's Conception of the Master Universe*; *Tales of Joshua* by Robert Slagle; *Reaching High* by Marvin Gwynn; and *David Zebadee and Ruth* by Helena Sprague. Innumerable privately distributed study aids, as well as the *URANTIAN Journal of URANTIA Brotherhood*, and many newsletters and journals produced by private groups, are also properly considered to be secondary works.

At this time, the Executive Committee seems to have clarified some of the issues surrounding the matter of secondary works. Agreement seems to have been reached on certain basic principles, although no formal action has been taken. For example, a majority of the Executive Committee seem willing to affirm that the Brotherhood, on a limited basis, and possibly through its Publications Committee, could publish, distribute, and sell secondary works of a non-interpretive nature, providing ownership of all rights in such a work were held by the Brotherhood.

While this would permit, but not require, the Brotherhood to create and disseminate secondary works, the critical issue of organizational involvement in marketing works which are not published by the Brotherhood remains unresolved. A significant number of the Executive Committee believe the Brotherhood should only distribute works which it publishes. An equally significant number believe the Brotherhood should be free to sell selected secondary works, regardless of the actual publisher of the work.

Some have argued that the Brotherhood could adopt works prior to their publication, but that any attempt to choose among works already in print would lead to inevitable charges of bias and unfairness. Others claim that, if URANTIA Foundation has no legal objection to the publication or sale of a work, the Brotherhood should support it as a matter of general service to the readership.

URANTIA* Brotherhood Bulletin

Published quarterly by

Publications Committee, URANTIA Brotherhood
533 Diversey Parkway, Chicago, Illinois 60614

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IDEAS SOUGHT FOR FUTURE CONFERENCES

At the request of Berkeley Elliott, Chairman of the ad hoc Committee on Site Selection, we are reprinting the following appeal from the Winter issue of the Bulletin. This is the Committee's final call for suggestions and ideas. If you want your favorite site considered, send the information in now.

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

August 2-7, 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.

October 9-11, 1987, Australian Conference of Readers of *The URANTIA Book*, William Arnott Lodge, Narrabeen, NSW, Australia. Theme: "The Purposes of Revelation." Contact: Kathleen Swadling, 7 Walsh St., Narrabeen 2101, NSW AUSTRALIA.

Conferences for next year:

May 13-15, 1988, Science Symposium No. 1. Contact: Science Symposium, P.O. Box 23238, Nashville, TN 37202.

June 26-30, 1988, Intensive Study Seminar, Lake Forest College, IL 60045. Contact: URANTIA Brotherhood, 533 Diversey Parkway, Chicago, IL 60614. Phone: (312) 327-0424.

October 10-14, 1988, South Pacific Regional Conference, Ranelagh House, Robertson, NSW, Australia. Contact: Kathleen Swadling, 7 Walsh St., Narrabeen 2101, NSW AUSTRALIA.

READER QUESTIONNAIRE

John Hay, Chairman of the Finance Committee, in a recent letter to the readership, announced a long-planned opinion survey. To represent your views in this survey, be sure to complete the enclosed questionnaire and return it to Chicago headquarters. Make additional copies, as needed for your spouse and friends.

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an opportunity to participate in an active role. On the other hand, a majority of the Council also felt the study was important enough to be pursued without direct Foundation support, assuming there would be no Foundation opposition. Brotherhood President Dave Elders was charged to initiate substantive discussions with URANTIA Foundation.

Limited Fund Raising Effort Approved

The design team on Programs, Services and Resources presented a series of suggestions in the financial area, which included creation of a \$1.5 million capital fund for URANTIA Brotherhood during a five year contribution period. An extended discussion of the advantages and disadvantages of such an action occurred. Advantages cited focused on the stabilization of Brotherhood funding for routine operating expenses, a matter now chiefly addressed through the annual fund drive. Discussion of disadvantages centered on risks of institutionalization and separation of the Brotherhood central organization from the need for continuous contact with the readership. At the conclusion of the discussion, the Council did not approve this recommendation.

The team also recommended, and the Council approved, actions intended to increase income through the annual fund drive. Such changes include increasing the frequency of the appeal and efforts to broaden participation. Increased emphasis on development of Brotherhood projects to be funded through targeted contributions was urged.

A final recommendation, approved by the Council, provided for joint development, with URANTIA Foundation, of a brochure describing mechanisms for bequests to support of the organizations.

Master Program/Service List

In its functions related to Brotherhood services, the team urged specific efforts to improve communications and to formalize the current reorganization of Brotherhood office functions through the use of job descriptions, documented procedures, etc. Of greater interest to the readership at large was a recommendation to the Special Projects Committee to create a master list of Brotherhood programs and services, drawing on input from all departmental committees. Both these suggestions won Council support.

Study Group Development Pressed

The design team charged with Study Group Development offered an impressive array of suggestions which the Council approved for action by appropriate departmental committees, with some conditions. The team urged the Brotherhood to resume the appointment of Field Representatives, to set aside time during conferences for discussion of techniques for sharing *The URANTIA Book*, and to undertake the creation of a number of supportive publications.

The publications recommended include an updated version of the *Study Group Directory*, a list of study aid resources, and an introductory information packet for study groups. Other suggested publications, which the Council thought should be developed subject to final determination by the Executive Committee, were booklets on how to share *The URANTIA Book* and how to organize a study group, as well as a pilot study program to assist study groups in developing and maintaining an ongoing theme.

Service to Visually Handicapped

The design team on Communications urged that the Brotherhood, working with URANTIA Foundation, develop aids for the visually and lexically handicapped members of the fellowship and to increase the availability of *The URANTIA Book* and its teachings to this segment of the general public. The Council urged the Publications Committee to pursue such efforts with respect to Brotherhood publications, and requested the President to contact the Foundation about similar actions for the Book. Aids discussed included the media of audio recordings and Braille editions.

Publications Policy Sought

The Communications design team also expressed concern about the uncoordinated growth in the number of Brotherhood publications, which has resulted in occasional duplication of function. The Council directed the Publications Committee to undertake a thorough review of Brotherhood publications policy and to recommend appropriate division of responsibilities and other actions, in coordination with representatives of the affected activities.

International Targets Libraries, Fellowship

The Internationalization design team urged extension of the ongoing library placement program of the International Fellowship Committee. To facilitate fellowship, they suggested increased emphasis on conferences and other group meetings. The team also concurred in the recommendation of the group on Study Group Development that the practice of appointing Field Representatives be resumed. All these initiatives received the hearty endorsement of the Council.

The Internationalization team also asked for the development of a \$1 million fund, raised through broad-based donations, to support ongoing efforts to translate the Book. Such a fund might parallel existing arrangements within URANTIA Foundation, and be specifically designed to attract support from overseas, as well as in the United States. The Council felt it could not support such an extensive initiative at this time, and asked that the ideas presented be incorporated in a general discussion of fund raising activities to be planned by the Executive Committee for a later Council meeting.

Design Team Activities Continue

At the conclusion of the meeting it was agreed that the groups concerned with internationalization and Marketing issues should continue their work. The other teams felt that they had proceeded as far as possible at the present time, with further action being up to the Executive Committee, various standing committees, and certain *ad hoc* groups.

New Teams Formed

In closing the meeting, Dave Elders asked each councilor not involved in a continuing design team to consider working on one of four additional areas:

1. The balance between the individual and the group
2. Leadership development
3. Communion and community within the readership
4. How organizational structure helps and hinders our work.

The membership of these teams was not fully consolidated at the conclusion of the meeting; however, some additional results are sure to be forthcoming in the future.