
The
FELLOWSHIP

for readers of The Urantia Book

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE LETTER
DECEMBER 1992

The discussion of issues in the *Urantia Book* reader community is usually characterized by widely divergent viewpoints. For example, some believe the Fellowship should sponsor, or at least encourage, the development of an institutional religious structure providing birth-to-death ministry - something that *Urantia Book* readers can belong to. Others find this prospect extremely distasteful; they feel it would eventually lead to dogmatic and rigid sectarian orthodoxies of the kind observed in some modern religious groups.

Outreach activities using various forms of mass media advertising are encouraged and employed by some; they find them useful and effective. Others are vigorously opposed to such approaches, insisting that responsible dissemination efforts must be strictly person-to-person.

Some believe the Fellowship should associate with other religious groups, to encourage dialog and dissemination; others feel that such activities would define the Fellowship as a formal religion, and are therefore opposed to all such organizational involvement.

Increased opportunities for group prayer and worship at Fellowship functions are a high priority for some; others see dangers of undesirable ritualization or worse in such a prospect. A wide difference of taste exists for the various styles of group prayer and worship, including the remembrance supper. What is satisfying to one person is often unacceptable to another.

Some feel the Fellowship should make every effort to re-associate with the Foundation; they see the separation of the two organizations as an impediment to the progress of the revelation. Others consider the separation beneficial and essential; they are vehemently opposed to a reuniting of the two groups.

Some believe the constitutional structure of the Fellowship is flawed; they feel it does not provide the membership with adequate control over organizational decision making; others find the same structure an acceptable and reasonably functioning form of representative government.

Some complain that *Urantia Book* gatherings are too intellectual, and often fail to satisfy people's spiritual needs. Others say they experience great enrichment of their spiritual lives from careful study of the most intellectually challenging subjects presented in *The Urantia Book*.

Some feel obligated to defend *The Urantia Book* against hostile or ignorant criticism; they believe that great confusion and damage will result unless such attacks are rebutted. Others believe it is best to simply ignore such events and go about our business; they feel that most attempts to refute only increase confusion and extend unprofitable debate.

Individuals sometimes ask what the Fellowship believes about this or that. Often the response is an attempt to describe the spectrum of beliefs which have been expressed by the membership. Some find this frustrating; they regard it as evidence that the Fellowship does not stand for anything. They believe that many people crave guidance and leadership in their decision making, and that the Fellowship must provide such assistance by taking clear stands on the various issues which come before the community. Others feel that, while formal organizational positions are sometimes desirable, it is usually best to encourage people to come to their own conclusions after a thoughtful and fair consideration of all viewpoints and options.

A diversity of opinion has been expressed about the merits of copyright and trademark issues, legal involvement, channeling activities, gender groups, children's programs, teacher training, and much more.

These are samples of the many issues which could be mentioned. The essential point is that *Urantia Book* readers are not characterized by philosophical uniformity. One of the great strengths of the community is its growing ability peacefully to accommodate a substantial diversity of philosophy and taste. We have not always succeeded in this, but we are getting better and just now seem to be doing fairly well. It suggests that we are not only talking about *The Urantia Book*, but that we are also, to some degree, actually living out its teachings.

The variety of viewpoints in the reader community is probably a most fortunate circumstance. At times it may be difficult and frustrating, but it provides each of us with a valuable opportunity to improve our ability to work with other and diverse beings. There is no way to learn this except through actual experience, and these experiences probably have real survival value.

Teamwork, we are told in *The Urantia Book*, is one of the most important lessons we have to learn on Urantia (311). We are also told that the work we do is not

nearly as important as the way in which we do that work (435), and that we will each begin the mansion world career exactly where we have left off here (533). As we grow in our ability to function peacefully and productively with increasingly diverse personalities and circumstances, we are probably enlarging our capacity to merge into the far more complex mansion world community. Our accomplishments serve to enrich both this life and the next.

Some matters do enjoy wide agreement. Most readers would like to see *The Urantia Book* readily available for purchase at a reasonable cost, and most favor the timely production of translations into other languages.

A few other views seem to be held in common. Virtually all *Urantia Book* readers regard themselves as children of the Universal Father; they experience some type of personal relationship with God. Most consider all others likewise to be children of the Universal Father, and therefore, at least in theory, their brothers and sisters. They believe they will survive this life, and regain consciousness on the mansion worlds along with mortals from the 618 other inhabited planets of our local system. There they expect to continue their cosmic education, learning about the structure and administration of the system of Satania, and many other things, while working together with a great variety of other beings, mortal and supermortal. Before long they expect to fuse eternally with the Father's indwelling spirit. Following this, they believe they will continue to progress, level by level, through the super and central universe, serving and learning, until they finally attain Paradise and the personal embrace of the Universal Father. Subsequently, they expect to embark on an adventurous but as yet uncharted journey into eternity and infinity.

It seems remarkable that individuals who differ so widely in their opinions about virtually everything should show such uniformity of personal conviction on the fundamental questions of who they are and where they are going.

Each personality is unique - one of a kind; we cannot reasonably expect to understand all things in quite the same way. Still, if you could pick a few matters about which you would most like to see similarity of viewpoint, what would they be? Perhaps we are not as far off target as we sometimes think.

Best wishes for a happy holiday season.

In fellowship,

Steve Dreier

Thanks to Vice President Marilyn Kulieke for preparing the following summary of the September and November Executive Committee meetings.

- Planning continues for the 1993 International Conference in Montreal from July 31 - August 5, 1993. About 1000 readers are expected to attend. If you are planning to come, please send in your registration as soon as possible. If you need registration materials, contact the office at 312-327-0424.
- The General Council will have a mid-year meeting in Boulder, CO on February 5-7, 1993. The agenda will include a discussion of organizational structure based on extensive studies sponsored by the Judicial Committee. In early November a small group of members met at the Wrightwood office to synthesize the results. Their report will be presented at this meeting. Councilors will also engage in joint discussions with members from the local area.
- The budget for fiscal year 1993 was approved at \$279,005. This includes \$66,000 in expenses for the 1993 Intentional Conference in Montreal, Canada which will be replaced through fees.
- Marlene Chicoine of Los Angeles, CA and Ann Garner of Arlington, TX were appointed to fill vacancies on the Domestic Extension Committee. Michael Wisenbaker of Dallas, TX was appointed to fill a vacancy on the Finance Committee. Eileen Laurence of Armonk, NY was appointed to fill a vacancy on the Fraternal Relations Committee.
- John Lange, chair of the International Fellowship Committee, and Lila Dogim, from Brooklyn, NY, made a trip to Moscow, Russia in October to discuss *The Urantia Book* at a conference of over 100 spiritual seekers. Their presentation was well received, and twenty five people have requested a copy of the book. In addition, an offer was made to place an article about *The Urantia Book* in a Russian periodical which has a reported circulation of about 50,000. A few of these people may come to IC93.
- New members at large include Jonathan Aragon (Eugene, OR), Diane Labreque (St- Bruno, Quebec, Canada), Trudi Cooper (Manchester, MI), Ann Garner (Arlington, TX).

- About eighty individuals joined the Fellowship during the last year, most by becoming members of a local society.
- Publications Committee chair Melissa Wells plans to publish the *Fellowship Bulletin* in April, August and December. It will be sent to the active mailing list of 4000. Once a year the *Bulletin* will be sent to the entire list - about 8000. *The Study Group Herald*, published twice each year, is sent to the active mailing list.
- Papers from Scientific Symposium II and from the first Wrightwood Series will be published and offered for sale. "The Fellowship Forum" was established to publish occasional papers from conferences or Wrightwood seminars.
- Two new study aids have been produced. One is a *Glossary and Pronunciation Reference* for selected names and words in *The Urantia Book*. The other is a list of all changes which have been made to the text of *The Urantia Book* since the first printing. Both are available from the Wrightwood office.
- The Education Committee is considering changing the format and location for the 1994 Summer Study Session. They will also investigate the idea of sponsoring a Wrightwood seminar on appropriate symbolism and socio-religious institutional expression of the fifth epochal revelation.
- The Special Projects Committee recently began development of a resource library containing secondary works and books covering subject areas discussed in *The Urantia Book*. The library will be housed at the Wrightwood office. Donations of materials are being solicited, and some have already been received.
- The *Resource Guide of Secondary Works*, which lists a wide variety of secondary works and related material, is being updated. It will be published by next summer. If you have any secondary works that you would like included in the guide, please request an application from John Hales at the Wrightwood office.
- A society conclave and an area coordinator meeting are planned in conjunction with the August 1993 International Conference in Montreal.

- The slide-tape history of the Urantia movement is being updated. The oral history project is continuing to record interviews with individuals who have direct personal knowledge of the history of *The Urantia Book* and associated organizations.
- Two FLOWERS proposals submitted by Grand Canyon Society of Arizona were approved for funding. FLOWERS provides advice and financial support for local initiatives related to *The Urantia Book*.
- The Fellowship will co-sponsor a *Urantia Book* display booth at six Whole Life Expo shows. The other co-sponsors are local societies and Jesusonian Foundation. Many people stopped to inquire, and twenty five copies of *The Urantia Book* were sold at a recent show in New York City.
- URANTIA Foundation recently announced that they will increase the price of *The Urantia Book* to \$48 in January 1993. In addition, they have discontinued all discount sales to individuals. Many readers have expressed deep concern about further damage to the already diminished availability of *The Urantia Book*.

For additional information on any of these subjects, or any other activities of the Fellowship, please call the Fellowship headquarters. 312-327-0424.

"...The greatest manifestation of the divine love for mortal beings is observed in the bestowal of the Thought Adjusters, but your greatest revelation of the Father's love is seen in the bestowal life of his Son Michael as he lived on earth the ideal spiritual life. It is the indwelling Adjuster who individualizes the love of God to each human soul."

-from page 40 of *The Urantia Book*