

Mighty MESSENGER

"...A CLASS OF PERFECTED MORTALS WHO HAVE BEEN REBELLION TESTED
OR OTHERWISE EQUALLY PROVED AS TO THEIR PERSONAL LOYALTY."

NEWS & OPINIONS FOR READERS OF THE URANTIA BOOK ✕ FALL 1999

PRESIDENT'S REPORT ON THE GENERAL COUNCIL MEETING

August 14th, 1999, Vancouver B.C.
By Janet Farrington Graham

The Fellowship has been transforming itself. We are fully committed to an embrace of the entire readership through an encompassing philosophy of service; we actively seek to meet the needs of each individual and group regardless of their interest in, or affiliation with, any other organization. To that end, the General Council, in its annual meeting following the wonderfully invigorating SpiritQuest 2000 conference in Vancouver, passed two resolutions that represent our vision of community.

The first resolution states: "The General Council of The Fellowship supports the recommendation of the Millennium Initiative Committee (MI) to form a formal working alliance with the International Urantia Association (IUA)."

The MI consists of twenty individuals associated with the IUA, the Fellowship and other organizations, who agreed to meet and discuss potential ways in which our two organizations could better work together. The committee proposed a formal working alliance, and although we understand that the council's decision does not activate this alliance, we look forward to hearing from the IUA regarding their interest in pursuing the MI recommendation. We envision cooperative outreach projects, shared educational resources and study group information, and other progressive initiatives that serve the community of readers.

The second resolution states: Whereas questions have arisen within the readership concerning the attitude of the Fellowship towards the recent private publication of "The Life and Teachings of Jesus" as a separate book, the General Council hereby reaffirms the Fellowship's constitutional purpose, e.g., the study and dissemination of the teachings of *The Urantia Book*.

The council also directed me to briefly review our recent history regarding the separate publication of Part IV. Our hope is that the membership of the Fellowship will better

understand our consistent behavior regarding this issue.

At the August 9, 1996 General Council meeting—during the time *The Urantia Book* was in the public domain and after we had completed our publication of the Uversa Press edition—a proposal for the publication of Part IV as a separate volume was debated. During that 1996 meeting, a proposal was made by a councilor concerning publishing Part IV of *The Urantia Book* as a separate volume. Money for the project would have been privately provided and would not come out of the Fellowship's budget. Another councilor indicated strong interest in the project.

The council was then reminded that when *The Urantia Book* first went into the public domain, the council voted unanimously to protect and preserve the text inviolate; this project of publishing Part IV as a separate volume was deemed to be in conflict with that resolution. After discussion, the two councilors withdrew their request, stating that they needed time to rethink the project and to reflect on the various opinions expressed to them.

The General Council feels it is very important for the membership, and the

readership at large, to understand that the Fellowship, as an organization, does not pass judgment on the dissemination efforts of private individuals. We consider Michael Foundation's publication of *Jesus—A New Revelation* to be a private matter between Michael Foundation and Urantia Foundation Trustees.

During the past few weeks, I have been carefully reading the Jesus Papers from beginning to end. It has been an enlightening and inspiring experience. There is no doubt in my mind that we can find answers to our complex material problems by contemplating the life and teachings of Jesus. I pray for the wisdom to comprehend the Master's ennobling truth, and for the courage with which this truth must be lived. ♦



SPREAD THE WORD

If you enjoy getting material from the Fellowship, including this publication, and you know a *Urantia Book* reader who does not get these benefits, you may want to do the person a favor and ask if he or she would like to get on the mailing list. Getting it done is the easiest thing in the world. A phone call, e-mail, fax, or even "snail" mail is all it takes.

The act is yours....

SCHOLARSHIP FUND

The Urantia Book Fellowship would like to thank the donors who have generously contributed to the Scholarship Fund. These contributions have made it possible for us to help six readers from overseas, who otherwise would not have been able to attend, to come to IC 99 in Vancouver. You have helped make this conference truly international. We hope to multiply such efforts in future conferences.

URANTIA BOOK READERS INVADE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

Nine hundred and fifty Urantians from some 20 different countries, 150 of them under 21, converged on the beautiful campus of the University of British Columbia during the first week in August for five days of study, communion, socialization and some plain fun. Dubbed by its organizers "Spirit-Quest 2000," this last Fellowship conference of the 20th century was hailed by Fellowship President, Janet Farrington Graham as "a family reunion filled with outpouring of genuine friendship, enlightening scholarship, inspiring worship, and energizing entertainment."

The quest for the quickening of the Spirit in our inner lives, in our family relationships,

in our evolving planetary institutions, in our efforts to share the revelatory gift with the world, was, according to Marvin Gawryn, the conference Program Coordinator, the central theme of the program. Plenary speakers and workshop leaders did a superb job of treating this overarching theme, each from his or her unique perspective.

Four out of five Urantia Foundation trustees, as well as many members of the International Urantia Association (IUA), attended the conference. Some members of the IUA, in fact, participated alongside Fellowship members in planning and running this magnificent event, which, according to conference Chairman, Steve Dreier, had required

hundreds of hours of hard work by scores of volunteers.

Unity in spirit seemed almost palpable to many who attended this triennial conference, and the amazing diversity evident during that week on the UBC campus was a friendly assault on one's senses. Readers came from Africa, Latin America, the Philippines, and Europe, as well as from all over the United States and Canada. Workshops and presentations dealt with God, family life, science, art, philosophy of living, UFOs, and channeling. And the entertainment—the humorously ennobling "Innertainment" skit of Errol and Rochelle Strider, the bring-down-the-house "Reggae Revolution" of Pato Banton and his band, the soulful singing of Buffy Sainte-Marie, the gentle sounds of Barbara Hester and her "Choir of Angels," the Vancouver Chamber Choir, the piano recitals of Urs Ruchti... and the list goes on.

At the end of the conference, on a sprawling lawn, the participants were treated to a global feast of a luncheon, featuring culinary delights from all over the world. The occasional drizzle that afternoon did not dampen any spirits. If anything, it drew people closer together under a huge tent provided for just such contingency. "It's Estes Park in 2002," said Harry McMullan, the IC 2002 chairman, referring to the planned Colorado site of the next Fellowship conference. ♦



THE FELLOWSHIP ANNOUNCES: THE SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP NETWORK (S.I.G.N.) PROGRAM

By Lee Smith

At the IC 99 conference, the Urantia Book Fellowship embarked on a new program for disseminating the teachings of the Fifth Epochal Revelation. It is called the Special Interest Group Network (S.I.G.N.). The purpose of this effort is to bring together or "network" individuals who share common interests, avocations or professions, and whose lives are dominated by the teachings of the Fifth Epochal Revelation. The thrust of this effort is to provide a platform wherein individuals, who have been imbued with the revelation, can relate to other like minded persons the experiential meanings and values that they have gained while embracing of the faith of Jesus and the teachings of *The Urantia Book*.

Initially, this network is being seeded by *Urantia Book* readers, but eventually it is to be open to any and all spiritually led individuals who are drawn to the particular special interest group that is hosted by the core group of readers. Thus, the focus of S.I.G.N. is on building relationships through this network. This may be some-

what of a departure from the idea of concentration on *The Urantia Book* itself, but many of us have come to the realization that not everyone will be attracted to reading the book, per se. It is far easier to hand someone the book and say, "read this, it will change your life," than it is to enter into a heart-to-heart conversation with that person regarding his or her interests, intentions, and needs, and then bring forth some aspect of fact, meaning or value from our experiential understanding of the revelation that will be an opening to the realization of truth, beauty and goodness that goes to the heart of spiritual insight.

This program is in its infancy, but interest groups are already forming in the areas of 12-step recovery groups, writers and publishers of derivative works, artisans and/or musicians, ministers (both interfaith and denominational), mental health professionals, scientists and those interested in the sciences, friends of Pato Banton and his global musical ministry of "Revelation."

In reality this list could go on and on,

because if you have an interest that sparks your imagination, your thirst for truth, and brings forth your desire to illustrate the fruits of the Spirit, then you have a way to start or join a Special Interest Group Network through the Urantia Book Fellowship.

The quickest and most feasible way to participate in S.I.G.N. is through the Internet. To join in, simply log onto the Fellowship's web site at: www.urantia-book.org and register on line. You can also call the Fellowship toll free at 877-335-5669 (or fax request to 773-327-6159) and ask for the S.I.G.N. registration form. When you return your form, you will be contacted by the hosting person and then begin to dialogue about your interest. As interest accrues, your group may be offered List Serve functions as well as a web page through the Fellowship's Internet resources. As each group grows and ideally wants to foster communication with the greater public, then web-based discussion bulletin boards can be established. ♦

PART IV PUBLISHED IN SEPARATE VOLUME

Shortly before IC '99, Harry McMullan, III, an Oklahoma City industrialist and Urantia Book Fellowship officer, published *Urantia Papers 121-196* in a separate volume entitled *Jesus—A New Revelation*. The publication engendered a great deal of controversy in the *Urantia Book* reader community and the various web reflectors buzzed with opinions on the subject that ranged from revulsion to exultation. The Urantia Foundation issued a press release in late July where it termed the publication "illegal" and characterized it as harmful to the revelation. The Urantia Book Fellowship has taken no official stand in the matter, considering Mr. McMullan's action to be his private affair and not related in any way to his position as a Fellowship officer. Mr. McMullan has so far made no public statements with regard to his publication or in response to his critics. He has, however, agreed to an interview with the *Mighty Messenger*, which appears below.

Also appearing below is an interview with Travis Binion on the same subject. Mr. Binion, a retired Associate General Manager of an engineering research firm, has read the book since 1981. He has held elected office in the International Urantia Association (IUA) and is currently Chairman of the Coordinating Committee, a liaison group that coordinates and facilitates interaction between IUA and the Urantia Foundation and serves as an advisory group to the Foundation and IUA when requested.

Interview with Harry McMullan, III

MM: Some people have said that you published *Jesus—A New Revelation*, which is basically Part IV of *The Urantia Book*, because you are trying to draw a lawsuit from Urantia Foundation. Is that true?

McMullan: No. If my purpose had been to get Urantia Foundation into court, all I would have had to do is go down to the courthouse and file a lawsuit. Michael Foundation, of which I am president, published *Jesus—A New Revelation* to help that 95% or so of the people who would never come near the entire *Urantia Book* to find out about the true life and teachings of Jesus, which the book says is the most important human knowledge.

MM: Aren't you a little worried that you are basically targeting the Christian community to the exclusion of everyone else?

McMullan: *Jesus—A New Revelation* is for whoever wants it, not just Christians. Just yesterday, for example, I heard a story of a Muslim taking a copy of it home to read. However, even if the book were targeted just at Christians, its existence in no way precludes other treatments designed to be of

particular appeal to non-Christian groups.

MM: What about the legality of this matter? Aren't you concerned that you may be breaking the law?

McMullan: The publication of *JANR* will be found to be perfectly legal if it is ever tested in court. The opinion under which Urantia Foundation's copyright was reinstated held that revelation itself is not subject to copyright, but that the forum's involvement in asking questions of the revelators supplied sufficient human authorship to permit *The Urantia Book* to be copyrighted. The theory underlying that decision would allow anyone who had batted around a few ideas with an author to make a claim to copyright on his work—a totally unworkable situation which would overturn the entire concept of authorship in copyright. It will be overturned if it is seriously challenged. Moreover, even if the decision did stand, it does not apply to Part IV, since the evidence is that Part IV was delivered as a complete unit without any of the forum involvement necessary to qualify for a copyright.

MM: I am sure you have heard the argument that, because you sit on the Fellowship's Executive Committee, your publication of Part IV is ipso facto a Fellowship project. How do you respond to that?

McMullan: The Fellowship had no input of any kind in this project. Those who serve on Fellowship boards do not thereby lose their separate identity and prerogatives of independent action.

MM: How do you plan to distribute this book?

McMullan: So far, distribution has been highly effective through Urantia readers who believe in the project and wish it to succeed. Thousands have already been sold. In the near future normal commercial distribution will be arranged. This is a bit more complex than it normally would be due to Urantia Foundation having warned book distributors not to carry the book.

MM: Why that particular cover depicting a crucifixion?

McMullan: If one accepts that it's appropriate for a book about Jesus to have Jesus on the cover, the question becomes, which one? Most all pictures of Jesus are just terrible. I like the Dali painting because it shows a muscular Jesus, not the sickly man normally portrayed. I like the fact that his face does not show, making his the face of "everyman." I like the fact that he is not actually attached to the cross—it's as if he is looking with mercy and compassion over the people below. I like the perspective. However, the cover is not the main thing, but what's inside. If a better cover idea comes up, I'm not at all opposed to using it for the next printing.

MM: Now, we've been talking about your publication of Part IV, but that's not totally accurate. You left out paper 120. Why?

McMullan: I felt that without the background provided in the rest of the book, it would be confusing to non-readers to start out with Immanuel's bestowal commission. The rest of Part IV stands very well on its own. In fact, there are only about 20 words in *Jesus—A New Revelation* which require an understanding of the first three parts in order to be intelligible. The index accompanying the book deals with those by a brief explanation and a reference to the Paper in the whole *Urantia Book* in which the word or concept is described.

Interview with Travis Binion

MM: As you know, Harry McMullan published Part IV of *The Urantia Book*, or, more accurately, *Urantia Papers 121-196*, in a volume entitled *Jesus—A New Revelation*. Do you think this is a positive step in the furtherance of the revelation on the planet?

Binion: The future is only rational in hindsight. If one looks back, one can sometimes see why a consequence occurred. If one looks forward, one just doesn't know. Thus, I tend to take a conservative approach because of my long experience with unforeseen consequences when dealing with human interactions. I had told Harry quite some time ago that I would support a fictional biography of Jesus based upon Part IV. In my mind that had little risk of adverse consequences and the potential to make *The New York Times* best seller list. Harry replied that he wasn't skilled enough to do that and was unwilling to support a good writer to do the job.

MM: The Urantia Foundation has termed this publication "illegal." Do you believe it is illegal?

Binion: Yes, I believe it is an illegal act.

MM: We have heard it said that the fact that Harry McMullan is an officer of the Fellowship makes this publication a Fellowship project. Do you think that is so?

Binion: I accept Janet Farrington Graham's assertion that it is not a Fellowship project.

MM: What effect, if any, do you think this publication will have on the "unity" efforts in the "movement"?

Binion: I believe Harry's publication has already had an adverse effect on the unity effort. I observe many readers with strong differing opinions who cannot separate Harry's role with the Fellowship from this issue. In their minds the Fellowship is tainted
(Continued on back cover.)

- The 1999 Lone Star Roundup Conference for Readers of *The Urantia Book* will be held at Camp Buckner, Kingsland, Texas from October 29-31. The conference theme is "Your Thought Adjuster: The Real You." For registration information, contact Adrienne Jarnagin at 512-756-1637 (e-mail: aj@tstar.net), or consult the Fellowship website.

- **Oklahoma Reversion Weekend** will be held November 20-21 at Doubletree Hotel, 6100 Warren Place, Tulsa, Oklahoma. The Reversion Weekend is being planned by people who are members of either 'organization' and neither 'organization' and are not responsible for themselves or yourselves, or any excessive love, happiness, and camaraderie. For more information, contact Tulsa OASIS Study Group (918) 742-1991 or consult the Fellowship website.

because of his relationship and the Fellowship's silence, and that affects the unity effort.

MM: Yes, we've seen a number of comments to that effect. What do you think the Fellowship needs to do about this?

Binton: Issue a statement, take a stand. That stand could be as innocuous as passing the resolution that Paul Snider introduced during the recent Society Conclave in Vancouver acknowledging the fact of the

Foundation's ownership of the copyright and marks. The problem many IUA members have with the Fellowship is that the Fellowship's silence on the controversial issues that effect the entire community is taken as endorsing the sentiments of many Fellowship members who are adverse to the Foundation. What the Fellowship doesn't seem to understand is that the IUA members are supportive of, not controlled by, the Foundation. ♦

The long awaited Wrightwood Series #2, "Perspectives on Race in *The Urantia Book*," published August 1999, sold out at IC 99. It is now available again.

To order your copy, send \$10 to the Fellowship office at 529 Wrightwood Ave., Chicago, IL 60614.

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