



# MIGHTY MESSENGER

SPRING 2004

News & Opinions for Readers of *The Urantia Book*

## CELEBRATE WITH US AT IC 05!

Join us in celebrating the 50th anniversary of the publication of *The Urantia Book* at *The Urantia Book Fellowship's International Conference, "MAKING SPIRIT MATTER: The Next 50 Years,"* to be held at Villanova University near Philadelphia from July 30 through August 4, 2005. The conference is intended to celebrate this significant anniversary as we look forward to the next fifty years.

A number of special activities are being planned, including an anniversary dinner-dance, sparkling evening entertainment, inspiring worship services, and a choice of tours throughout the historical Philadelphia area on the free day. A full children's program will free parents for greater participation in conference activities.

The conference coordinators are also excited about a new programming idea. Plans are being made to offer three tracks—in science, philosophy/theology and experiential spirituality—in order to provide attendees with a wide, yet coherent, choice of opportunities to study the teachings. Those who plan to attend the conference and would like to submit ideas for lectures, presentations, or workshops in one of the three areas mentioned above are urged to begin now to formulate and develop their ideas for consideration by the program coordinators. Presenters will be asked to submit outlines at least six months before the conference and get a developed draft to us three months before the conference.



Conference coordinators are dedicated to having these presentations focus more effectively on the teachings themselves (rather than on topics tangential to the material in the book). Nevertheless, the coordinators would like to feature a healthy variety of workshops in each category. If you have an idea but would like help in developing it, assistance will be made available to you.

International presenters are encouraged to make contributions, and every effort will be made to have non-English language lectures translated prior to the conference. We also plan to have presentations delivered for French and Spanish speaking readers.

We are particularly hopeful that younger adults will volunteer to be presenters. If you

are under 30 years old, consider this to be a special invitation.

We also hope to have a writing workshop that helps readers conceive and produce secondary works based on the teachings. This group would meet daily throughout the conference. Those interested in attending, leading, or helping to facilitate such a workshop contact Steve Hecht at [shecht@new-view.org](mailto:shecht@new-view.org).

Villanova University has a strikingly beautiful campus located in a historic suburb of Philadelphia. Amenities include a commuter rail station with easy access to downtown Philadelphia and the airport and air-conditioned, handicapped-accessible accommodations.

This is your conference. Help to make it more so by planning to attend and possibly contribute to the educational programs that are the heart of the conference. Please communicate with the organizing team by sending your ideas to *The Urantia Book Fellowship*, 99 Park Ave., #434A, New York, NY 10016, or e-mail us at [fellowship@urantiaabook.org](mailto:fellowship@urantiaabook.org).

## News from Eastern Europe...The Continuing Adventure

By David Kantor, Chair, International Committee

The statement of purpose in the Fellowship constitution says that our organization is dedicated to creating interest in the revelation "through the medium of fraternal association." I am increasingly viewing the international work as a work of social architecting—identifying individuals with leadership position and/or potentials and creating a social context in which they can get to know each other and develop working relationships.

Last fall I was able to stay in Eastern Europe long enough to follow up on leads, spend more time with people, and go to more provincial locations than is possible

when visiting a country for only a few days during which most time is spent attending a conference.

The largest reader group in Lithuania is in the city of Kaunas, about an hour's drive from the capital, Vilnius, which has its own group of about 20 readers. There are some 200 interested persons scattered around the country who are anxiously awaiting the publication of the Lithuanian translation.

Members of the "Urantia Ashram" in Moscow were extremely pleased that someone from the Fellowship had come to visit their group. Some 25 readers attend meetings at this Ashram. We also made some

excellent contacts in Warsaw, including a retired professor of Polish and eastern European history, who is extremely interested in the book.

I am very optimistic that I will be able to put the leaders of these various groups in touch with each other and within the next two years establish a productive social network in eastern Europe (which includes the readers in Leningrad) similar to that which we've been able to establish in Latin America. If things go well in Leningrad next year, perhaps by 2006 we will see an eastern Europe conference put on by independent groups.

# Executive Committee Letter: Recent Developments

Dear Friends:

The purpose of this letter is to keep you informed of recent developments in the Fellowship. Most of the information in this letter is derived from work done by the Fellowship's General Council and Executive Committee during the first several months in 2004.

## **Decentralization and Building Sale:**

The Chicago building, which had served since 1989 as the Fellowship's office, was sold this February. The Fellowship has been taking steps over the past few years to decentralize its operations and to enhance its capability to conduct much of its day-to-day business through the internet. These efforts had accelerated significantly in the few months preceding the sale of the building and have proven quite successful. John Hales, the Fellowship's Resident Director for close to thirty years, continues to serve in this role out of his home. These developments constitute the most visible elements in the Fellowship's ongoing efforts to eliminate unnecessary costs while increasing effectiveness.

## **New Interfaith Committee Chair:**

Subsequent to the resignation of Rebecca Kantor from the chairmanship of the Interfaith Committee, Bill Rocap of Connecticut was appointed by the Executive Committee during its April meeting to fill the position on an interim basis. In accordance with the Fellowship constitution, the General Council will hold elections for the position during its next meeting in September. The Executive Committee thanks Rebecca for her contributions to both the Interfaith and the Executive Committees and is pleased to welcome Bill.

**Council Vacancy:** The General Council will also hold elections during its September meeting for the Council seat vacated by Rebecca Kantor. Nominations may be submitted anytime prior to the Council meeting.

**General Council Retreat:** The General Council held a daylong informal retreat prior to its mid-year meeting last February, during which it considered questions regarding global dissemination of *The Urantia Book* and its teachings, creating fellowship opportunities for readers, and improving communication between the Fellowship and the readership. The following are selected non-binding recommendations from the retreat summary. (To view the complete summary, go to [http://www.urantiabook.org/admin/2004\\_retreat\\_summary.htm](http://www.urantiabook.org/admin/2004_retreat_summary.htm).)

## *Structure and Organization*

- Consider creating a more effective command structure and action-focused substructure within the constitutional framework, fully coordinated with the existing committees.
- Review current structure (constitution) with an eye toward aligning it better with our purpose and function.

## *General Dissemination*

- Encourage individuals and groups to explore new ways to bring quiet attention to the book through unorthodox methods of placement, etc.
- Develop a plan to attract individuals to the Urantia teachings through special interest societies.
- Formulate plans for creative alliances that will help foster the dissemination goals.

## *Website*

- Create a website strategy that integrates as fully as possible the common dissemination and outreach goals of the Fellowship, Foundation, and IUA.
- Employ the talents of experts who can help design and implement a more user-friendly online presentation targeted to audiences and their needs.

## *Societies and Study Groups*

- Re-energize and strengthen weak societies and promote the growth of new societies.
- Develop a plan for stimulating the growth of strong and stable study groups throughout the world, together with effective methods of communication and coordination.

## *Education*

- Create a Urantia University, both in physical locations and on the Internet, dedicated to training teachers and fostering the development of leaders. Reactivate the Fellowship as an educational institution.
- Take more active and systematic steps to develop a Speakers Bureau, perhaps in conjunction with the efforts to get the school going.

## *Communication*

- Clarify and articulate our nature and purposes in a way that is concise and consistent in order to present ourselves effectively.
- Encourage the development of a deep-down awareness of and sensitivity to all

kinds of cultures—youth, national, regional, ethnic, racial, religious, and even the mini-cultures within the Urantia movement.

- Develop a field and/or virtual communication/representation system using regular phone and/or internet (or mail) contacts with societies, study group leaders, and other active individuals.
- Poll the general readership on various issues.

## *Appeal to the Youth in Our Movement*

- Develop programs designed to enlist our youth in global dissemination.
- Communicate the vision however possible and stimulate our younger compatriots to contribute their added richness; then go forward with the vision.
- Develop a supportive spiritual environment where spiritual growth is fostered. Families need to network with other families in the community to share ideas.

## *Creating/Enhancing Fellowship Opportunities*

- Improve our conferences and summer study sessions by programs that stick to basic teachings, especially for new readers.
- Revive children's programs at summer study sessions.
- Show more support for regional conferences.
- Encourage societies and study groups to inspire their members to become involved in service projects.

**Retreat Follow Up:** As a follow up to the retreat, the Judicial Committee was charged by the Executive Committee, during the April EC meeting, with reviewing the Fellowship's constitution and with making recommendations for possible revisions in order to better align structure to function. Also, the General Council is expected to consider in its September meeting the implementation of a number of recommendations raised at the retreat.

**Call for Volunteers:** As the General Council retreat amply demonstrated, there is no lack of vision or imagination among the Fellowship's leadership. Once the Council formally adopts policies and actions based on some of the retreat's recommendations, many helping hands will be needed to carry them out. Indeed, helping hands are needed right now. Please consider rolling up your sleeves and lending yours.



# We are moving forward. Join us!

This is your invitation to become a member of *The Urantia Book* Fellowship. Any student of *The Urantia Book* who supports the purposes of the Fellowship is eligible to become a member. There are two easy ways for an individual to join—become a member of one of 17 active Fellowship societies or become a member-at-large.

We associate with each other in order to share a common purpose—the worldwide dissemination of *The Urantia Book* and its teachings. With each new member we reach a new level of unity of purpose in the midst of diversity of thought and service. Members are also eligible to serve as members of Fellowship committees. There is much to do.

There are no restrictions, geographical or otherwise, as to which society you may join. However, joining a group of nearby readers may make the

most sense for you. Contact the Fellowship toll free at 877-288-3772 for referral to a specific society or to request an application to become a member-at-large. The Individual Application for Membership is also available on the Fellowship web site at [www.urantiabook.org/admin/final\\_Application\\_for\\_Membership.pdf](http://www.urantiabook.org/admin/final_Application_for_Membership.pdf).

There are also two ways for groups of readers to associate with the Fellowship—forming a society or becoming an affiliate group. Societies are the building blocks of

the Fellowship—they *are* the Fellowship in reader communities, and they elect the Fellowship's governing board, the General Council. A society can be chartered when ten or more individuals who have read *The Urantia Book* adopt an organizational constitution with elected officers and procedures for providing reader services.

Alternatively, a group of five or more readers can become a Fellowship affiliate when they share a purpose common to the Fellowship but do not wish to have a constitution

or to participate in the Fellowship political process, as do societies. Affiliate status allows for a more informal kind of organizational relationship. Of course, such a group could decide to apply for society status in the future. For more information, please contact the Fellowship office or email Bob Bruyn, Membership Committee chair, at [rbruyn@sbcglobal.net](mailto:rbruyn@sbcglobal.net).



Southern California readers hosted the February General Council meeting in Newport Beach, CA

## THE ACT REALLY IS OURS IT'S ALL WE HAVE

In the worlds to come, we will more fully appreciate what a great opportunity we have here, right now, to help disseminate this unprecedented revelation of truth!

As a reader of *The Urantia Book*, few things are as thrilling as meeting new readers, seeing them in our study groups, answering their questions from the internet, socializing with them at our society meetings and group gatherings. **As readers we have a responsibility.**

The Fellowship's members and supporters have dedicated countless decades of service to the revelation. And our service to this planet is just beginning! The Fellowship needs volunteers to help with the increasing work load in every one of our committees and we *solely depend on your financial support to fund these efforts*. Every little bit counts!

**Your monthly automated donation or one time donation is deeply appreciated. And whatever we can accomplish in our short lives will be appreciated by the generations to come. The actions are ours; the consequences Gods.**

In the day of our reckoning, may we hold our heads up high and tell the Master that we went way out on a limb to make gains for the truth he committed into our hands. He, after all, was willing to pay the ultimate price for spreading the truth. What price are we willing to pay?

Please use the enclosed envelope today,

Robert Burns, Finance Chair

## NEW FELLOWSHIP COMMUNITY WEB SITE ([www.ubfellowship.com](http://www.ubfellowship.com))

Because of the excellence of the present Fellowship website ([urantiabook.org](http://urantiabook.org)) we are now going forward with a sister site devoted to the people who are in the Fellowship. In a sense, the new portal is the yin to the yan of the first site. Together they should achieve a well-rounded outlook of this wonderful community of active service-minded souls.

The new portal is an artistic endeavor, created by the participation of many Fellowship members—a joint effort that has produced a nice representation of the whole community. There is a page where the work of artists, writers, musicians, etc., are on display. Also a page where opinions and essays regarding issues are presented, so that UB readers can understand each other better. And photos of gatherings. Check it out!



## You should know...

**May 28-31, 2004** Annual conference and Spiritual Reunion. Florida Students of *The Urantia Book* at the Life Enrichment Center in Leesburg, between Orlando and Ocala. Theme: Fruits of the Spirit. Contact Bill Beasley 813-684-1540 or [bbeasley@tampabay.rr.com](mailto:bbeasley@tampabay.rr.com).

**July 28–August 1, 2004** IUA International Conference at Dominican University, River Forest, IL. Theme: The Mind Arena of Choice. Space is limited. For registration information, contact Jay Peregrine at 773-525-3319 x212 or e-mail [iua2004@urantia.org](mailto:iua2004@urantia.org).

**September 17-19, 2004** Fall Conference of Heart of America Society at Unity Village, MO. Theme: The Universe Mother Spirit—Origin and Relationship. The \$69. Registration fee covers conference facilities, 3 meals Saturday plus snacks during the day and Sunday breakfast. Cafeteria will be open Friday evening. Speakers include Jo Ann Wiedman, Friday evening; Bobbie Dreier, Saturday evening; and Paula Thompson, Sunday morning. Many of the General Council members will have recently returned from the Parliament of World's Religions and will be conducting a panel discussion on Saturday afternoon. The General Council will be meeting directly after the conference. For information, contact Susan Cook at [solonia@juno.com](mailto:solonia@juno.com) or 816-532-3934.

**September 20, 2004** *The Urantia Book* Fellowship General Council meeting at Unity Village following Heart of America Conference. Meeting open to members.

**October 1-3, 2004** Golden Gate Circle fall retreat at Camp Meeker, CA. All society activities open to non-members. For further information about this and other society activities, contact Dolores Nice at [dlnice@worldnet.att.net](mailto:dlnice@worldnet.att.net).

**October 29-31, 2004** Texas Lone Star Roundup Conference at Briarwood Lutheran Retreat Center, Argyle, TX (between DFW Airport and Denton, TX). Theme: Religion of the Spirit. For information, contact Adrienne Jarnagin, 512-756-1637 or e-mail [aj@Tstar.net](mailto:aj@Tstar.net).

## EXPO WORKSHOPS

Workshops are often embedded in Expos and offer a place in which concepts are presented to those interested in an advertised topic. **Yes, "Expos sell books, but Workshops are the draw."**

"One of the few marketing truths I know is: People don't buy *things*, they buy *benefits*." —Jo Ann Wiedman

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