

The Circles

"Life is but a day's work—
do it well."*

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Study Groups

Grouping

Groups that study *The URANTIA Book* serve many purposes. Further, these study groups have potentials that we can hardly imagine. I see these groups as serving purposes in three general areas: educational, social and spiritual.

EDUCATIONAL PURPOSES

1. **Group Wisdom:** When a group studies a difficult paper, they pool the group wisdom and knowledge so that together they can penetrate difficult concepts to a greater degree than a single individual can by himself.

2. **Fostering Study:** When we are in a study group the regular meetings insure that a person will not put the book aside for a long period of time. The stimulation of the group will often revive the flagging interest of individual members. The intellec-

By Dick Bain
St. Petersburg, Florida

tual stimulation will become a refreshing part of a person's life.

3. **Learning New Roles:** It has been said that the book has come to us before the world is really ready for it. It is here because teachers are needed before the spread of the advanced truth in the book can begin. What better place for teachers to learn the teachings of the book than in a study group? This may be one of the most significant roles of the study group in our time. If the group organizes for some project, then the opportunity to try roles of leadership will arise. Our movement will certainly need wise and experienced leaders as it expands into its unknown future destiny.

4. **Avoiding Extremism:** When we study in isolation, there is the danger that our acquired back-

ground or our inherited psychological predispositions will lead us into elevating certain ideas in the book above others or lead us into making interpretations that are not in keeping with the spirit of the book. When we have a group consensus with which to compare our interpretations, we can often see these problems in our thinking and correct them if we are not too hard-headed.

SOCIAL PURPOSES

1. **Fellowship:** It is refreshing and uplifting to fraternize with kindred spirits. We may begin to doubt our beliefs when isolated from those of like mind. Periodic contact with our fellow students of the revelation buoys our spirits and makes us less vulnerable to the criticism of the less spiritual and the narrow-minded people in our lives.

See "Grouping" on page 7.

The Bogota Study Group

To the best of our knowledge *The URANTIA Book* first arrived in Colombia when a copy was purchased by Douglas Fraser, during a trip to California, in 1975. Douglas decided that *The URANTIA Book* should be shared with friends and he formed the original group, which would meet to both study and translate. Douglas went to the United States in 1978, and the group continued under the guidance of Carlos Zapata. For several years this group had devoted more and more time to the task of translating *The URANTIA Book* into the Spanish language. By 1981 the translation was the main objective of the Bogota group. The visits of Douglas Fraser and Dick Prince greatly encouraged all of us in Colombia, because they could fully appreciate the very great handicap of people trying to read the book with one hand and a copy of *Webster's Unabridged Dictionary* in the other. Suddenly, in the spring of 1982 it was learned that, for a variety of legal reasons, the Trustees of the URANTIA Foundation felt that it was imperative that any translation must be done in the U.S.A. by a citizen of that nation. At this point, the question was: When will such a translation be forthcoming? Happily, last November, 1982, everything was resolved at the home of Berkeley Elliott, in Oklahoma City, and there is every reason to believe that an authorized Spanish language edition of *The URANTIA Book* will be on the market within a reasonable time.

The Bogota Study Group, which had in reality become the "Bogota

Translation Group," now reverted to a study group. Many months of investigation as to the manner in which we could become a legally constituted entity convinced us that this was not feasible. Colombia has an established state religion, and cannon law is civil law in many areas of life. Therefore, for any group that might be considered to be akin to a religious sect, the legal barriers are many and complex.

Our group consists of:

President: Carlos Zapata

Treasurer: Ramon Ortiz

Secretary: Jairo Urrego

Auditor: Carlos Camacho

National Public Relations:

Jose F. Diaz

International Public Relations:

Dale R. Hall

Honorary President:

Douglas Fraser

Ambassador At Large:

Dick Prince

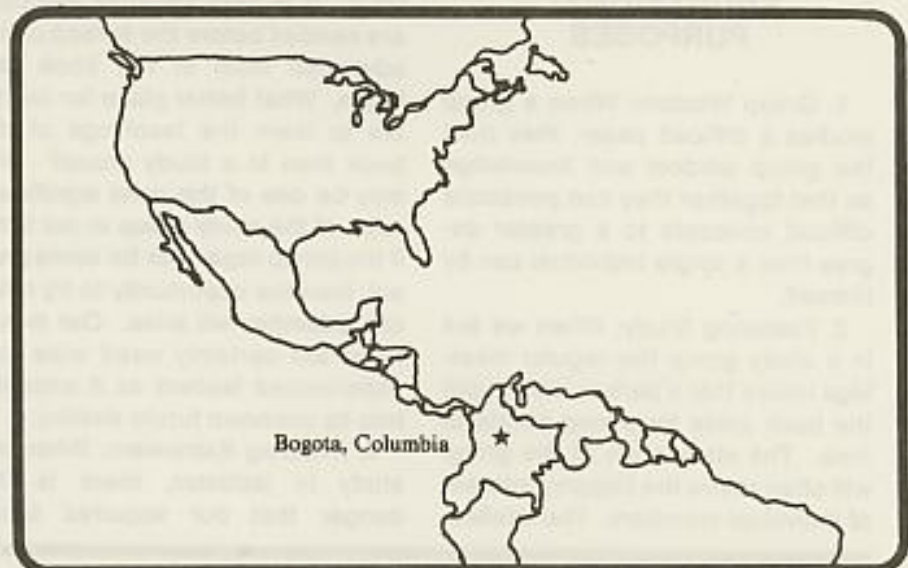
By Dale Hall
Bogota, Colombia

Our meetings are held each Tuesday evening from 6:00 PM until about 9:30 PM. Each member is to have read the paper assigned for that evening, and that paper is then read in Spanish. Any portion that seems unclear is reviewed with different persons giving their understanding of what has been presented. We usually cover no more than one paper per meeting.

At this time there are a total of thirty-six copies of *The URANTIA Book* in Colombia, in the following cities: Bogota (27), Honda (2), Giradot (2), Armenia (1), Cucuta (1), Cali (1), Barranquilla (2), and there is one copy in Quito, Ecuador.

As a foreigner belonging to the Bogota group, I am most impressed by the fact that this group has

See "Bogota" on page 11.





By Marvin Gaweyn
Berkeley, California

The International Urantia Brotherhood^{*}

The following article is an excerpt from the keynote address presented at the International Fellowship Workshop of URANTIA Brotherhood June 29, 1982.

This point in time is a major juncture, a key turning point in the development of civilization on this planet. Today, in the midst of a complex and rapid-paced civilization, many men and women are hungering for a powerful modern restatement of spiritual truth. A little more than 25 years ago the latest epochal revelation was made available to our world, and we are the ones who have been given the responsibility to safeguard it and to present it to a confused and questing humanity. Indeed, this is a major juncture in history, and we have an awesome responsibility.

I am convinced that in the next 25 years the movement will become truly international in scope, with study groups and societies in many countries around the globe. And depending on how we act in the next few decades, that process can occur either in a harmonious way, or in a way that is troubled and contentious.

URANTIA Brotherhood must become a truly international organization. The book has a global mission, and the institutions around it have been designed to become global institutions. At the present time URANTIA Brotherhood is largely an American institution. This stage of American influence is temporary and transitional. It is crucial that groups of readers in other nations grow to have co-equal status and representation in URAN-

TIA Brotherhood.

Those of us in many countries who are dedicated to the mission of the revelation must all work together. We must introduce the book to new readers. We must be alert to recognize and support wise leadership as it develops in different countries. And we must foster the growth of stable study groups to the point where they can qualify to be chartered as societies in URANTIA Brotherhood.

But there is something even more important than the organizations. We must work diligently to develop close friendships, working partnerships between leaders in different countries. Over the years we must come increasingly to understand and trust and love each other. Only by building upon the foundation of such loving relationships, can we succeed in furthering the worldwide mission of the revelation.

One of our greatest challenges will be to preserve the unity of our movement, to preserve the participation, the harmonious involvement of many groups of readers with different points of view. We must build an atmosphere of harmony among readers within this country and then spread an invitation for involvement and inclusion to all corners of the world. Only by developing such a broad structure of diverse and international relationships can we successfully meet the challenges that lie before us.

The URANTIA movement and its organizations are evolutionary phenomena. They are made up of human beings, with human faults and frailties. We have our fair share of the human tendencies toward vanity,

power seeking, jealousy, and competition. Our viewpoints are often self-centered, and they are always partial and incomplete. All these tendencies are woven into the very fabric of any evolutionary movement. And ours is no exception.

There is only one way to transcend such tendencies, and that is to make them secondary. And the only way to make them secondary is to make the spiritual principle of loving interaction *primary*. No point of view or issue or debate or personality conflict can be allowed to come first. Love must come first, and everything else can line up behind it. If we lose sight of that truth, if we do not live it out, our evolutionary movement will cut itself adrift from the very revelation around which it has formed.

Our movement is made up of strong-willed people with different points of view. Conflicts are inevitable, but they are not necessarily bad. If we cultivate an atmosphere of love and respect, these conflicts can actually stimulate us to generate stronger and more creative solutions to the problems we face. We must maintain loving relationships as we
See "Brotherhood" on page 12.



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STUDY GROUPS

The subject of how to disseminate the teachings of our *URANTIA Book* is on everyone's mind these days. And although there is unity of purpose, there are almost as many opinions as to how to reach the goal as there are readers of the book. But virtually everyone agrees study groups are a GOOD THING!

The purpose of this article is to lure every reader of *The URANTIA Book* who has not initiated a study group to make a decision to do so NOW. If you are already attending one, you can always form another meeting at a different time for a special group of people such as members of your church, neighbors, fellow workers on your job, children, beginning readers, people in retirement homes, students, faculty, etc. The opportunities are out there just waiting to be recognized. Remember it only takes three interested persons to form a new study group. Once having initiated the plan and action, you can also count on assistance from our supermortal friends.

Even though it took me twelve years to muster up the courage to invite virtually everyone I knew to that initial meeting in September 1968, it has proved to be one of the most important decisions of my life and has had many repercussions in the lives of others as well. Verdi once said, "It may be a good thing to copy reality; but to invent reality is much, much better." Everyone should have the experience of initiating a study group which meets in their home. Those who have visited many such groups soon realize that each one is different--the mood engendered by the type of hospitality offered, the amount of control practiced, the general homogeneity of the people who attend regularly, the format of the meeting itself, ad infinitum.

A study group is as personal as your own toothbrush. The only common denominator is the genuine interest of each member in the teachings of the revelation itself. Some groups intellectualize, some have a leader who "teaches," or some form of rotating leadership. Some, as does ours, operate more as a family with much personal involvement, much laughter, and very little discipline. We also function as a support group for each other, sharing our joys and sorrows, our failures and achievements. We are told that only the wise can learn from the experience of others. The relationships formed in a study group afford a marvelous opportunity for all of us to practice this as we share our experiences of life in addition to our regular reading.

The core group of regular attendance has retained an interest in new readers of the book even though they inevitably come up with the same old questions. This gives us an opportunity to hone our answers to greater perfection. For maximum participation we also believe that the ideal size of a study group should not exceed twelve persons, although, as most of you know, there are a few notable exceptions. In the Dallas-Richardson area it is extremely beneficial for new groups to be formed as soon as possible because of the large area involved. Newcomers now have a choice of four different groups to attend.

For the past four years our study group has been reading consecutively through the entire book and are nearing the end. And we well may start over again when we finish.

It all depends on the general consensus of the members. All decisions for the group are discussed until there IS a consensus.

Some advanced students of the book much prefer prepared topical studies and special research projects. Our group also sponsors The Dallas Fellowship for the Study of *The URANTIA Book* which meets on the third Saturday of each month at my home with a program of topical studies followed by refreshments. Readers from all area study groups are invited to attend this meeting.

In a study group composed of others of like mind and spirit, it is comparatively natural and easy to see that we are brothers and sisters. From this fertile ground it becomes possible to enlarge our capacity for recognizing other spiritual siblings out there in the world where so many are still tight, hard little buds that haven't started opening into blossoms yet. It is so important for all of us to work toward that day when there will be one world government, one language and one religion. Although this goal remains in the indefinite future, we can each lessen the time it takes to get there. As study group members the readers in our area have had the opportunity to serve on The General Council of URANTIA Brotherhood and as members and officers in The URANTIA Society of Dallas, to help present special Study Sessions, Triennial and International and Regional Conferences, and to be members of the staff of *The Circles*. These opportunities have brought many of us in contact with readers from all over the world. My home and our groups have been privileged to welcome and entertain over 700 persons from thirty-two states, as well as Germany, Australia, England, South Africa, Belize, Venezuela, France and



Canada. In addition to this I personally have visited readers of the book in Finland, Sweden, The Netherlands, France and Canada. Many of these contacts have become my extended family. There has also been the opportunity for our group to channel *URANTIA Books* to friends in Italy, Greece and India, as well as

here in the United States when the book was not readily available. We have also made books available at times at a discounted price in cases of special need, as well as maintaining an extensive loan library. These groups have also placed books in most local libraries, thus more than five hundred books have been dis-

tributed over the years.

My chance to share in all of the above came about because I started a study group. Even though you did not personally ask for my advice, I'll make an exception this one time. **START YOUR OWN STUDY GROUP—even better, START SEVERAL.●**

LOVING OPPORTUNITY

How many *URANTIA Book* study groups have difficulties in conducting meetings and consequent social interactions in a growing, sincere desire to do the Father's will? Ideally, we all dearly hope every so-called leader and established member serves as an inspiration to new members and visitors, manifesting outward personality traits of warmth, understanding, tolerance and an open receptivity to questions of any kind, from any awareness level, asked in sincerity. Didn't young Jesus first ask his earthly parents questions of all kinds before turning to God the Father? We all can be guides of sorts to those truth seekers drawn into our circles. A challenge it is, to offer this universe revelation to our fellow man in the true spirit of brotherhood. If we are to further the cause of our deepest beliefs, then we must manifest the fruits of the spirit within the study group. Of course the family, church, and other social relations reflect inner growth and provide opportunities for living the laws of love. But if the study group cannot be a prime example of Jesusonian living, then what good is reading *The URANTIA Book* in the group situation?

Human beingness is synonymous with imperfection, as well we know. Many varieties of people differing in interests, intelligence, cultural backgrounds, religious experiences and personalities join and visit our study

groups. As unity is a goal and hope for the future, the host members acquainted with the enhancing truths of the universe should strive to embody this advanced attitude and thus reflect the *URANTIA Book* philosophy. To newcomers and visitors, they are the reality experience of the moment, vividly influencing feelings, intuitions, mind processes and spiritual leadings all directly related to the person's total experience with the book and the movement. A living human example of the Father's will in action will do more to win a searching soul's thought-embbrace of loving truth than mere words could express. Our formal reading meeting and social time should complement and radiate more loving consciousness with each fellowship opportunity. Is this expecting too much? Questions and opinions expressed in an atmosphere of open acceptance, sharing and congeniality have to prevail or the book becomes an excuse for mere socializing, not the earnestly charged efforts of those seeking loving truth, goodness and beauty together in enhanced guided awareness.

The truth remains that relative imperfection is an attribute of many *URANTIA Book* groups or any human group. When the degree of negativity effects the will of God, though, we know we need guidance. Through the positive action of prayer we can

let loose the strangling chains of ego centeredness, intolerance, and fear. Pause and pray for the group's growth and spiritual guidance of its loyal members, both privately and together at the meetings. How many study groups are begun with an open or silent prayer, a meditation to sharpen spiritual awareness, calm the restless soul to better absorb truth energy? Holding hands in a circle of brotherly love or a quick reading from the Jesus papers and a follow-up silent prayer are just two of many creative ways to spiritually upgrade a meeting. We all grow, but must strive through *positive action* to prevent stagnation and/or fear from warping the strivings from within on their outward journey into reality realization. If *The URANTIA Book* is the epochal revelation of Truth, then it should also be a code of living belief. Christ Michael's teachings and our active striving to live them, will satisfy our need for his love within the study group and in our total living.

How wonderful to give and feel the love and warmth of spiritual fellowship, a cosmic bond, strengthening faith and winning believers in its abundant grace and peace! This must be our goal as pioneers for the world's newest spiritual revelation. Our children are watching us. The world is watching. Let them see our light shine on everyone as a living message from our universe Son. And let those who have ears, hear.

Announcing The Study Group Fellowship

By Harry McMullan Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

From its inception, a fundamental precept of the URANTIA movement has been that thousands of study groups be formed, and it's time for us to address that goal more energetically and systematically. As an important step toward meeting that need, we announce the formation of the Study Group Fellowship of URANTIA Brotherhood, dedicated to the welfare of study groups, the grass roots and soul of our movement.

Requirements for Membership

There is only one requirement for a group to join the Study Group Fellowship: that at least three of the members commit to meet together to study the book on a regular basis, attending at least 75 percent of the group's regularly scheduled meetings.

This requirement is structured as a bare-bones minimum, and is grounded in the fact that *The URANTIA Book* defines three as the minimum size of a social group, and because a group must meet in order to be a group. The benchmark of 75 percent attendance is somewhat arbitrary. No one from URANTIA Brotherhood will check up on whether members show up at meetings; the 75 percent participation benchmark represents an encouraging challenge designed to foster members' commitment toward the study group and to give members more of a sense of being part of a larger cause—the network of thousands of study groups which are critical to the eventual ushering-

in of the spiritual kingdom on Urantia.

There is no requirement of individual membership in URANTIA Brotherhood or of having read the book in its entirety to join the Study Group Fellowship. "Whosoever will, let him come." All that is required is that a minimum of three readers complete and send in the application form, which is renewable on an annual basis.

We are requesting that each group name itself; this is intended to give each group an existence independent of any one member who may have founded or led it, and to help foster a greater loyalty on the part of members toward the group. (In naming the group, it would be preferable not to call it "John and Jane's Group," as they may move, or the "Tuesday Night Group" for a similar reason. The name of the town or some name from *The URANTIA Book* would be fine, first-come, first-served.)

Membership Benefits

Periodically, member study groups will be invited to attend a conclave of study groups, which will probably meet at or around the time of the Brotherhood summer seminars. At these meetings, all matters relating to the welfare and extension of study groups will be deliberated. There will be no "political" dimension to the Fellowship; there will be no offices to hold.

One benefit of Fellowship membership will be inclusion in a study group directory, which will list the

members' names, the dates and times of the meetings, and the telephone number of a designated contact person for groups open to visitors. Other than the city name, no addresses will be given so as to allow each study group control over, or notice of, who might be attending.

Another benefit of Fellowship membership will be periodic mailings containing the best available resource material for study groups, how-to articles by successful study group leaders, and any noteworthy news of concern to study groups.

Why is the Fellowship Being Formed?

Our movement needs to give far more attention to the necessity of meeting together. The Master warned of the dangers of isolation and strongly encouraged his apostles to stay together. Study groups have a balancing and corrective influence on our individual opinions and a nurturing and spiritually reinforcing effect on its members. Without the support of our fellows, we lose our enthusiasm. Some new readers imagine that they should know a great deal about the book before attending a study group. The truth is more nearly the exact opposite, since that early period is when a study group can help the new reader most! It is God's plan that we find him and grow spiritually not only by means of what he teaches us directly, but through close association with our fellows. Rodan spoke to the urgency of forming protective

habitual practices designed to conserve and augment spiritual energies, of which, next to worship itself, study group fellowship is our archetypal example.

Study groups approach their meetings in as many ways as there are study groups, but experience has established that the essential ingredient of a successful group is that a core of its members are faithful in their attendance. The less-regular members cease attending if they cannot be reasonably sure that someone will be there. With even a small committed core, however, the group can grow.

For an application form and more information, contact:

Harry McMullan
Domestic Extension Committee
P.O. Box 82009
Oklahoma City, OK 73148 ●

"Grouping" cont. from page 1.

2. Organizing for Action: There is great power for good lying untapped in our movement. There are those who are beginning to tap this power through distributing books, death counseling, publishing newsletters, organizing conferences and workshops, etc. The book says that when individuals pool their efforts, the available power is far greater than the sum of the powers of the individuals. Certainly our unseen spiritual friends will guide our groups into creative and useful enterprises if we place the power of our groups at their disposal.

3. Networks and Building Blocks: No one can predict the future of our movement accurately, but the presence of hundreds of study groups suggests the potential for building something that will be greater than the sum of its parts. As the groups begin to cross-link and form a great network throughout the nation and world, the possibility of some sort of worldwide organization emerges. One possibility is that this will emerge under the umbrella of The URANTIA Brotherhood, but this is not the only possibility.

4. Identity Centers: As study groups proliferate, they become identity centers not only for those

within the movement, but also for those outside the movement. Many will rely on their impressions of these study groups for their impression of the book itself. It is obvious that we must manifest those ideals in our lives that we profess to believe. Then the world will know the superlative truths contained in this revelation and thereby be motivated to examine it.

SPIRITUAL PURPOSES

1. Worship Forms: We come together to experience the book as an intellectual enlightenment, but we do not seem to inject much of a purely spiritual nature into our periodic gatherings. Perhaps we feel a bit unsure of ourselves, since we have left rite and ritual, prayer and worship to the organized church. The book teaches that we must one day evolve those symbols and rituals that are appropriate to a more enlightened spirituality. Is it not appropriate to begin that process in the confines of our study groups and societies? Can we not inject some elements of prayer and worship into our groups? All of life is

February 12, 1983

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Here in Louisville, Kentucky, there are no study groups that I am aware of that have met regularly. My friend, Leo, and I had a group of two that lasted until he got married and moved away. I have shared the book with many, many friends on a trial basis. And I have bought books for a few. I am well aware of the lack of sense of spiritual community here. Your publication has given me a sense of community on a national level—world level for that matter.

Jesus told us to go out into the world in groups. His wisdom must prevail for us now as we go out experiencing and witnessing his love in our lives. Study groups, in my estimation, need to become local brotherhoods to address the total need of the members. As these "small families" become more interrelated, the ability for the strengths among us to be put to use will grow. *The Circles* is a prime example of the interrelationship of our families working. It is just beginning to take off. Whether a study group exists or not, we can be connected.

Thanks, many times to all you highly motivated brothers and sisters.


Love to you all,
George F. Van Arsdale
Louisville, Kentucky

an experiment. Both successes and failures are learning experiences. The book tells us that true religion may not always act wisely, but it always acts. The inclusion of even a little of the spiritual cannot help but form a more meaningful and loving bond between the members of the group.

2. Actualization of the Supreme: We can be sure that the revelation is a part of the action and evolution of the Supreme in our little area of the local universe. As we put forth our best efforts to study, understand, teach and spread these teachings, we can be sure that we are making our contribution to the evolving Supreme.

It does not seem possible for a study group to be all things to all people unless it becomes large enough to have specialized divisions. A church can provide separate activities in the realms of the social, educational and spiritual. Present groups seem to serve mostly educational purposes, with the area of the social being second in importance. The spiritual element

See "Grouping" on page 13.



Spiritual Union

By Stephen Finlan
Fairfax, California

Wishing to do the will of God in our personal lives, and mindful of Jesus' command to love one another as he loves us, we aspire to do the will of God on the group level also:

To work on perfecting our personal relationships through making a mutual commitment to work together for Jesusonian ideals.

Each of us wishing to become like God, to cultivate spiritual habits and overcome animal inertia, we assist one another in the ascent Godward.

Wishing to foster the brotherhood of man, we work together to foster the attractions of supreme values, to live out and proclaim the gospel of spiritual sonship and brotherhood.

And believing that spiritual unity and love are our greatest demonstrations of the gospel, we welcome cooperation with all other groups and individuals who strive to do the will of God, and so we humbly but fervently declare ourselves to be

A JESUSONIAN BROTHERHOOD

This might be just the name for a religious group that we could form. It announces the nature of our ideal-

ism (Jesusonian) while dramatically repudiating any exclusivity—not claiming to be THE Jesusonian Brotherhood. If this is a little bit like a gimmick, at least it's the right gimmick, and would be an effective conversation-starter. When asked why we call ourselves "A" instead of "THE," we may expound our unity and tolerance ideals.

And when questions are asked about "Jesusonian," we can explain that we strive to live out the fundamental teachings of Jesus: sonship, brotherhood, love, doing the will of God. "Doing God's will" is not only the essence of personal religious motivation, but also of spiritual unity (1592). It can dominate both our "inreach"—doing good to, supporting and loving each member of the group—and our "outreach"—our common ground with other religionists. Jesus promised that such a decisive and persistent love would conquer the world.

In some ways, such love is amazingly simple: "Inasmuch as you give a cup of water to one of my children, you have done it for me." But our ability to love one another can be greatly strengthened by "having something to belong to"—a "network of spiritual marriages"—a commitment to each other as well as to God.

Several readers in San Francisco have become interested in forming a full-fledged religious group "confined to the furtherance of religious causes." (1087) They have nine people who have been writing and re-writing a constitution for this new group, now provisionally called "Spiritual Union." The following two articles were written in preparation for the formation of that organization.

A Jesusonian Brotherhood*

Among the "fruits of the divine spirit" are "unselfish devotion, courageous loyalty, sincere fairness, enlightened honesty...confiding trust, merciful ministry." (2054) We can bear these fruits as believers who only study together, but we can bear them most fruitfully if we have a fellowship to be loyal to and fair *within*, if we have joined together with friends whom we can confide in and minister to. Jesus said, "... I wish that you would love and trust one another... confide in one another." (2055)

What we actually *do* is an open question. If anything, there is an excess of conceivable projects for religious groups—even a small one. But the conscious pledging of our loyalty to each other and to God seems to be the first step. Does this sound difficult? Is it less important than meeting for religious study? Is such a thing impossible without a single, domineering leader? I don't think so. Even "two or three" can do it.

Forming an affectionate "support group" based upon "unity of ideals" (1091) is also the way to combat our tendency to repel some people. Our present attitudes have much more of an "incrowd" aspect than would "a Jesusonian Brotherhood" which

See "Jesusonian" on page 11.

On Study Groups, Religion Groups, and the

Brotherhood of Man*

By Charles Lamar
San Francisco, California

As faith-enlightened and spirit-liberated sons of the kingdom of heaven, you face a double responsibility of duty to man and duty to God while you voluntarily assume a third and sacred obligation: service to the brotherhood of God-knowing believers. Jesus, pg.1930

When I first read *The URANTIA Book*, the phrase "the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man" (2069) was the driest, most abstract phrase in the whole book. Now I know that one cannot comprehend the gospel apart from the experience of specific personal relationships. Merely expressed as a formula, the gospel is dead. But when accompanied with personal love, it is brought to life.

I have used the word, but when it comes to love, I find people are not easily fooled (unless they want to be). I also find that love is not easy. In most cases it's more like being married than like being in love. And of course, students of *The URANTIA Book* are no different than anyone else in this regard. But we can be sure the solution to the problem of bringing the gospel to life, this matter of love, lies in the teachings of Jesus embraced in their wholeness; "as he presented them" (1670): As we find them in *The URANTIA Book*.

If the greatest pronouncement that Jesus ever made was that the Kingdom of Heaven is within you, then, regardless of others, the truth

and the spirit are accessible to me from inside; wholly isolated from believers I can still find and do the will of God. But the very first thing I find out from the spirit within me is that the spirit is anti-isolation; I desire to be coordinated with the attainments of other beings. I find that "Few are the duties...for the lone servant." (312) I pray with Jesus that "Your Kingdom come; your will be done on earth as it is in heaven" (1620), and I know that, "The spheres of perfection are manned by those who have mastered this art of working with other beings." (312) I realize that two people working together are worth four rather than just two. (494)

The perspective of need for a social context immediately comes into play when I even so much as think about turning someone on to the concept that he or she is a son of God. If I went out and told people that they were sons of God and that he was to be found within them, perhaps it would be better than nothing. But how would love ever be expressed? People will know that I am from Jesus only if my love is effectively expressed in all aspects of the human situation, not just in the teaching of spiritual truth. Jesus said that his followers would be recognized both by the outgoing love they have for people and by the mutual love they have for each other. "Remember, as you love one another, all men will know that you are my disciples." (2042)

All this implies a "new and amazing" social phenomenon (2044), one which does not stop at the sharing of spiritual truth or even at the sharing of prayer and worship. If we are to befriend the people we meet in the entire physical, sexual, social, emotional, intellectual, economic,

and spiritual context in which they live; and if we are to befriend each other in a way that expresses the brotherhood of man, we will need to help each other, and do so in very methodic ways. All by himself, Jesus, a finished Creator Son, may have been a profound demonstration of both the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man (2091); but I know that, all alone, I, an unfinished mortal creature, will never be able to exemplify the gospel very effectively without a helping social context, consistent with the gospel, to help me out.

How can this helping social context be produced? Study of *The URANTIA Book* won't do it; but the practical application of its teachings will.

Because *The URANTIA Book* is new and undigested, and because no one is very well prepared for it, the social circles of people involved in the study of the book have only somewhat begun to demonstrate spiritual results exemplary of the gospel. Not that folks aren't well-intentioned. But an important factor is missing. Study groups alone are not enough.

The study of *The URANTIA Book* in and of itself does not immediately yield effective spiritual brotherhood for at least four reasons.

1. Studying the book is not the same as living out the truth to be found in it.
2. *The URANTIA Book* is not an exclusively spiritual or religious document; it combines scientific, political, philosophical, and spiritual teachings.
3. Revelation itself starts no religious groups or group religions. (1138)

See "Study Groups" on page 14.



The Genesis Mystery A Book Review

By John William Nugent
Seattle, Washington

The Genesis Mystery by Jeffrey Goodman, Ph.D, Times Books 1983.

In his book *The Genesis Mystery* anthropologist and archaeologist Jeffrey Goodman has written a clear, concise analysis of the scientific quest for the development and evolution of the species known as *Homo Sapiens*. Dr. Goodman's conclusions from these explorations are sure to create controversy within scientific circles while exciting those of us who hold an alternative view of human evolution than that espoused by Charles Darwin.

Dr. Goodman reveals his theory in the foreword to his book stating, "In this book I want to present the early thinkers, the discoveries, the mistakes, the hoaxes, the genuine data, the anomalies, the newest theories, and the gamemanship of academia. I want to show that modern man, instead of coming on stage a mere 35,000 years ago in Europe, appeared in a number of places on the earth hundreds of thousands of

years ago." Within the book Dr. Goodman explores all of the significant archaeological discoveries and concludes on page 149 that based on the evidence of these finds the great developments in evolution do not proceed gradually or steadily but are caused by occasional rapid explosions or morphological changes which lead to the establishment of a new species.

This theory of sudden and rapid

changes in the evolutionary cycle leads Dr. Goodman to believe that there is a plan and theory behind the development of our species that could be caused only through outside intervention.

While Dr. Goodman continues to search for answers about the source of this outside intervention, this book becomes an important supportive work for papers 61-64 of *The URANTIA Book*. ●



Letters to the Editors



July 1, 1983

July 1, 1983

Dear Staff,

I have enjoyed all the *Circles* very much, though the last one, Winter 1982, was a little different. I did not write you about this particular subject, but the thought just came to me to ask you if any other readers have commented unfavorably to it in any way. My only gripe would be its seeming sway to a mystical nature. Though this may not bother us confirmed believers and readers, it seems as though it could possibly lower the standards and truths *The URANTIA Book* portrays. Please forgive me for my frankness and do not take offense, for I wish to continue to read your good magazine.

Sincerely,
Ronald S. Coveyou
Petoskey Michigan

Dear Circles,

Thank you for letting us know about Helena Sprague's song, "Heights of Satanla" and in such an effective way. I like this song very much and am going to see that it ministers to lots of people in this area at conferences and other get-togethers. It's a wonderful song and she's a wonderful lady for writing it. Your magazine has a real place in serving *URANTIA Book* readers.

Best wishes,
Troy R. Bishop
Silver Spring, Maryland

Dear Readers,

The Circles has changed its address. Please send mail to:

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P.O. Box 1203
Arlington, Texas 76004-1203

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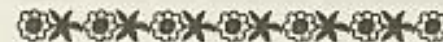
"Bogota" cont. from page 2.

managed to function so well for so many years, considering the vast amount of really hard work necessary for the people to read *The URANTIA Book* in English. More than a few persons who have purchased the book freely admit that only section IV is readily understood by them, notwithstanding the fact that they can speak and write English. There is every reason to believe that when the Spanish edition of *The URANTIA Book* is available we will see a vast increase in the number of serious students reading it in Spanish-speaking countries. ●



Each man can interpret another's experience only by his own.

— THOREAU



"Jesusonian" cont. from page 8.

craves to find an outlet for love. We can better serve each other, and attract others, through such a relationship.

There is great power in a heartfelt pledge of mutual loyalty. While the apostles were doubting and fearing, the faithful messengers, "in fulfillment of their oath to David Zebedee and to one another . . . go forth to proclaim the risen Savior . . ." Not the argumentative experts, but "these laymen (represent) the first attempt at the socialization of the Master's gospel . . ." (2031)

Let faith reveal your light to the world . . . You will serve mankind with a new and amazing devotion, even as I have served you. And when men see you so love them . . . they will follow after the Spirit of Truth which they see in your lives . . . As the Father sent me into this world, even so now send I you. You are all called to carry the good news to those who sit in darkness. (2043-4)

But first we must discover how the good news can positively effect our own relationships. ●



Songs



June 7, 1983

Dear Circles Friends,

Every time we get together at a *URANTIA Book* function, sooner or later a group gets to harmonizing and eventually we ALWAYS sing "I've Been Working On the Railroad" because everybody knows it. That song is sung with more gusto than any other song. This led me to write some more meaningful words to be sung to the melody. Perhaps you might want to use them.

We've Been Working On Our Circles (melody: I've Been Working On the Railroad)

We've been working on our circles All the live-long day.	Someone's in God's world ascending circles Someone's in God's world, I know.
We've been working on our circles Learning to live God's way.	Someone's in God's world ascending circles Helping their souls to grow!
Can't you see our souls a-growing? Ascending up to God above;	God, Man, Heavenly Host. God, Man, Heavenly Host.
Can't you see our souls a-growing? Learning to live and love.	God, Man, Heavenly Host. Livin' in the world with love.

chorus:

Come on won't you grow?
Come on won't you grow?
Come on won't you grow with us?
(sing twice)

Another song about our Thought Adjuster is sung to the melody of "Side By Side." The words were developed by several members of the Toledo *URANTIA Book Study Group* on the way to a conference one time. We had a lot of fun doing it!

TA

(melody: Side By Side)

Oh, we may be Agondonters
We may be ragged and funny;
But we're traveling along
Sharin' our lives, side by side.

Through all kinds of trials.
Our TA will never fail.
Just as long as we're together
We're gonna conquer them all.

Yes, we may be isolated
We may be quarantined
But we're 'volving along
Growing our souls
God and man.

Love and Blessings,
MaryAnn Krell
Toledo, Ohio

If I Were a Mortal This is What I Would Do To Improve My Life!

I would accept my lot in life.

I would make the most of my life.

I would entirely wipe away fear and dread.

I would endure my hardships as a challenge and make them into lemonade.

I would see the sunset in every person and never think of changing that sunset.

I would control my life and change what was possible to change in my own environment.

I would invest in spiritual happiness.

I would strive to believe in honor and have the courage to show others my honesty and my courage.

I would develop my thinking to expand myself and others to a higher way of life.

I would investigate a worldly endeavor or worthwhile duty that I choose to appoint myself the custodian.

I would intelligently pursue the work.

I would live in such a way that others could see that I am a child of God.

I would choose many extra chores to do that would include growth for me and others.

I would encourage others to seek out a purpose in life that they could follow and enjoy at the same time.

I would certainly remember the less fortunate and those that try.

I would tell others about the good that they do.

I would make a point of including all of my friends when I had a religious experience to share.

I would like my fellows and seek out many of them to love by understanding human nature.

I would endeavor to be creative and dare myself and others to lead an interesting and exciting life.

I would develop a sense of humor that would help move me through growth quickly.

I would include others in my work on the more inclusive line of brotherhood and Fatherhood.

This is not written by me because I am a mortal. But one day in October 1981, I sat down to listen and this is what I heard in my mind—like a whisper from the universe.

Jeannie George
Dallas, Texas

"Brotherhood" cont. from page 3.

work out our differences. Such loving relationships are the very medium of problem resolution. Without them the problem resolution process grinds to a halt. Then we cannot effectively deal with new problems as they come up.

There is a striking quote on page 1625 where the apostles of Jesus and John are described as having "learned to differ, to debate, to contend, to pray, and to compromise, and throughout it all to remain sympathetic with the other person's viewpoint and to maintain at least some degree of tolerance for his honest opinions."* We need to learn to do the same.

We must learn the technique of synthesizing our differences. The book tells us that the best racial stocks are hybrids, bringing together the superior qualities of different genetic lines. We must hybridize our different points of view. We must selectively combine the best ideas from the far corners of our readership. Rather than seeking to suppress the differences between us, we must come to regard them as a tremendously rich reservoir from which we can selectively combine the very best of our wisdom. That is the only sure way to keep our movement growing, creative and strong.

An interesting fact to consider is that since the start of civilization, an epochal revelation has occurred on this planet on the average of only once in 100,000 years. A once-in-100,000-years occurrence, and we happen to be part of it. What does the future hold for this revelation? Our movement is growing, differentiating. Different political and social groups are evolving. We are spreading into various nations and cultures. And the natural stresses of growth are beginning to appear. Will we differ and divide? Or will we harmonize and remain unified?

Four previous epochal revelations have either failed or been seriously diverted. The fifth epochal revelation must not fail. We must safely and effectively shepherd the URANTIA revelation to its planetary culmination. If our movement splinters under

the pressures of political and national and cultural differences, the mission of the URANTIA revelation will be seriously damaged.

We must remain united. We must resolve our differences. We must hybridize our strengths and eliminate our weaknesses. As we face the inevitable struggles of evolutionary development, we will fail if we attempt to conquer one another. We must, each and every one of us, surrender to love as the ultimate conqueror. The Father's love is the only truly dependable method for resolving our human differences.

Let's pray for the success of the mission of the revelation and for our mutual love and support and cooperation in furthering that mission.

"Grouping" cont. from page 7.

seems to be the least evident one.

Even in the realm of the educational, many varieties of study groups will be needed that are not in evidence now. New students of the book have needs that are different from those of long-time students of the book. In areas where there are enough students to support two groups, it would seem appropriate to have two separate groups: one for advanced study and one oriented to the needs of the newcomers.

Two other groups that have special needs are the children and teenagers. Perhaps the whole question of whether or not we should undertake to teach our children about the book should be considered. Many of us have sent our children to Sunday school at churches and we believe this exposure is very desirable. If we have in our possession the Fifth Epochal Revelation, then we should feel it just as desirable to teach the precepts from this book as it is to teach

The
Outreach
Section



will return.

about angels

BY GENE JOYCE
RICHARDSON, TEXAS

The angels "love human beings, and only good can result from your efforts to understand and love them."

What mortals have said about angels:

"When I was a small child I had such a specific belief in a guardian angel that I used to sleep carefully on one side of my bed to leave room for her."

Mary Daly, a reader of *The URANTIA Book*

What angels have said about mortals:

For mortals the keys to the kingdom of heaven are sincerity, ever more sincerity, and again sincerity—and they make spiritual progress by oft re-repeated decisions.

those from the Christian scriptures. They are, after all, the ones most likely to become teachers of the next generation and to become the custodians of the revelation. Unfortunately, many areas exist where there are not yet enough students of the book to make a group effort feasible. In this case, it falls upon parents to creatively impart the teachings of the book to their children.

It seems to me that before study groups can become beacons of spiritual enlightenment and positive forces for good in their communities, the individual members must have a real dedication to the revelation, a sense of community and purpose within the group, and a willingness to risk some exposure of their involvement with the book and the movement. Without these elements, the movement is liable to remain an enclave of intellectual study with little impact on the religious life of the world. We would be like the servant who buried his

SPECULATION

Some years ago a protracted illness and the resultant hospital stay had played hob with my finances. Upon recovery I had a strong desire to make a trip to Florida, but there was no money for the trip and my car needed four new tires. Cutting it to a bare minimum I figured it would take \$300 cash and the tires. I decided to "manifest" these necessities. The first day I tried, nothing happened. A second day still brought no answer. On the third day a former client of mine called to ask if I could set up a partnership for him and his sons, as they wanted to start a new business venture. The client asked for a price.

After telling him I had not been practicing law for some time, I assured him that I could handle his request and quoted him an approximate \$700 fee. The client agreed to this figure even though he had only \$300 in cash and asked if he could postpone paying the remainder.

"Sure," I said, "That will be alright. By the way, what sort of business are you starting?"

"Tires," he answered.

"Hmmm," I thought. Guess who got to make a trip to Florida.

Don Deam

talent, who was afraid to take some risks to increase what his master entrusted to him.

We should not act rashly, prematurely, or unwisely, but rather we should be open to the leading of the indwelling Adjuster who will surely lead us wisely in the pathways of serving and enlightening our fellows. ●

CHANGES OF ADDRESS

We appreciate your sending us notice of any address changes. If we aren't notified, three things happen: (1) we have to pay for each change of address the Post Office sends us; (2) the person who has moved doesn't get that copy of *The Circles*; and (3) people who leave no forwarding address no longer receive *The Circles*. Thanks for your help in this detail.

4. Jesus himself did not start a specific religious group, an identifiable human movement for us to join. He always affirmed the sacredness of the individual over the group. (1862) He is the representative of the Father to the individual, not to the group. (1624)

Therefore, as students of *The URANTIA Book* actually set out to respond to what the book says, they will have to:

1. Live out the truth.
2. Philosophically disentangle the combination of scientific, political, philosophic and religious teachings in the revelation in order to be able to put them to use in life.
3. Socialize their individual religious lives of personal spiritual experience.
4. Start exemplary religious groups consistent with Jesus' gospel and with personal spiritual freedom: provide human cult structures — something to belong to — to demonstrate the gospel and "dramatize the loyalties of religion." (965; 1092)

So far, religious cult structure, "something to belong to," is still missing from what we call the Urantia 'movement.' The URANTIA Brotherhood has many disqualifying entanglements.

Notwithstanding the transcendent, invisible nature of the real spiritual brotherhood of man, notwithstanding that the Kingdom of Heaven is not here or there, but within you (1569), notwithstanding the fact that Jesus himself never started an organized religious cult, the positive system of religious ethics (1329) which he left behind can be fully applied only in and with a purely religious organized group, and not in an informal circle of acquaintances. Together, three different passages from *The URANTIA Book* make this clear.

- On page 1091, the Melchizedek says that, "Religion has little chance to function until the religious group becomes

separated from all other groups..."

- On page 1747, Jesus himself puts the "social and economic features of this association of men and women as fellows of the kingdom" into human hands.

- On page 1763, in the three-step method of dealing with sin, he refers to a "congregation."

That the congregation he refers to is definitely a *discrete membership-organization* is inescapably apparent in view of the fact that he set up there the procedure for "kicking someone out." Out of what, if not out of a *definite membership group*? A Jesusonian "brotherhood" is not an amorphous

Things To Share Evolution Chart

A detailed chart of the evolution of life on earth is available. The chart which is based on information in *The URANTIA Book* traces the development of life from the original implantations through the animal and plant kingdoms and culminates in the various colored races and their mixtures.

A reference chart printed on "see-through" paper indicates the page numbers in the book from which the information was taken for each entry. This excellent study aid is available for the price of printing and mailing: \$1.00. Contact:

Saskia Raevouri
53 Conejo School Rd. #20
Thousand Oaks, CA. 91362
(213) 406-8960

entity into and out of which people can casually drift.

Since the world is waiting for "spiritual men and women who will dare to depend solely on Jesus and his incomparable teachings" (2082), not just some of his teachings, of course, but all, it would be well to examine the implications of the passage on page 1763 very carefully.

Three implications which I see, are:

1. You value the relation with each person in your group enough to

work on it very hard. It can take a lot of guts to go to someone alone and "with tact and patience show him his fault." (1762)

2. You have friends who know what "sin" is, and what it is not, who know what the goals, both personal and social, of religion are, and are not, and who are growing in spiritual experience.
3. You and your friends who are followers of Jesus, together have formed a clear-cut union of people who are all definitely attempting to put the religious teachings of *The URANTIA Book* into practice. (The alternative is to participate in established religious groups, and work to transform them from within.)

Outside the context of a recognized discipleship group, an attempt to use Jesus' three step method can only result in some kind of personal or factional struggle, because the power to decide issues is not vested where it should be—in the whole circle of believers. Outside the context of a recognized discipleship group, people who don't like something that is going on in a study group or in a circle of people, must fight it out, withdraw, or ignore their difficulty, none of which are good or effective options. Otherwise people can only sulk, gripe and gossip, or play other lovely games so familiar to us from the contemporary garden of earthly delights. And I, too, know whereof I speak. But the three-step method would result in none of this, and, for that matter, in very few instances of kicking people out—the stakes for both the group and the individual would be quite high—but rather in great improvement in the overall quality of relationships in the religious fellowship circle.

The three-step method is a practical method for the cultivation of love. After all, two or even three of the steps should have to do with finding creative ways to solve problems rather than with ending relationships. However, it does remain necessary, if the plan is to work out, for there to be a background of definite social recognition of who *is*, and who *is not*, involved in the collaborative attempt to put Jesus' teachings into practice.

It is by the ethical cultivation of re-

relationships that a "congregation," that is, a functioning religious membership-circle, would bring the gospel to life, would demonstrate the brotherhood of man with energy derived from the fatherhood of God. But it should be clear that the network of relationships required to demonstrate the gospel would be more like a chain of devoted spiritual marriages than like a series of easy affairs. "And there must be the demand for devotion, the response of loyalty." (966) In view of the love of God you just don't give up on someone in the face of difficulties, unless the entire group of your co-religionists find that the person has become impossible to deal with.

The ideal of any religious group is the inculcation of divine love in the human context. The logical goal of students of *The URANTIA Book* is, of course, to put the teachings into practice. *The URANTIA Book* goes into great detail about what an ideal "church" or religious group should be. (965-6; 1087-92; 1115; 1591-2; 1762-3; 1862-6; 1929-30; 1949-51; 2041-2) An ideal religious group would be an exclusively religious group, but it could never have a collective of group religion, or make any kind of exclusive claim to the pathway of salvation. Since the religion of Jesus is the religion of personal spiritual experience, it follows that everyone must necessarily have his or her own. Nevertheless the followers of Jesus will not be very fruitful until they function together as such. We must solve the particular problems of our religious socialization, but Jesus did outline the ethical techniques for us to use.

First and second generation students of *The URANTIA Book* will have many questions about such a group of followers or disciples. So far readers have been so impressed by the way *The URANTIA Book* validates all religious paths, and by the way it portrays the invisible spiritual brotherhood as transcendent of all social organization, that they will have a hard time grasping the fact that the teachings of Jesus, taken as a whole, inevitably require a social organization to form whenever the religion of Jesus is shared. There is so much emphasis in *The URANTIA Book* on how the

real spiritual brotherhood of man is not an organization, on the evils of institutional religion, on how believers can do the will of God in all circumstances regardless of the social context, how can it be that the "system of positive religious ethics" (1329), that Jesus left behind can be fully applied only with a religious organization of definite membership?

The answer is to be found in the statement, "Our kingdom is a realm of order..." (1959) If our kingdom is a realm of order, it follows that participation cannot be in the least bit haphazard. Students will recall the passage: "Religion must continually labor under a paradoxical necessity: the necessity of making effective use of thought while at the same time discounting the spiritual serviceableness of all thinking." (1121) It is the same with organization as with thought. We can never organize the Kingdom of Heaven, just as we can never think out the will of God. But neither can we take effective steps toward helping the kingdom unless we are organized together. Though all human institutions are due to be eventually superseded, no human progress can be made without the "technique of group functioning." (1076) The lone religionist begins a fellowship with those he helps and that fellowship, if consistent with the teachings of Jesus, must sooner or later become a definite organized fellowship. We pray that "your will be done on earth as it is in heaven" (1620), and heaven is organized. There simply is no vagueness to celestial technique. Discipleship is a def-

inite step.

We already have theoretical religious unity. To express it in the material world we need a social religious union. For students of *The URANTIA Book* there is no question about what the recognized goal of such a religious union would be, and that is to put the teachings of *The URANTIA Book* into practice. To do this we still need to discern more exactly the potential nature of our religious association so that we may segregate it from the other forms of our association in order to cultivate its function. Our potential, intrinsically religious union has not yet been effectively separated from such competing interests as the study and the advancement of the book itself, or from the desire to enjoy a high level of intellectual discourse, philosophic agreement, moral compatibility and social culture with a congenial group of people. And although these things are good, they are not the essential interests of true religion.

What I propose is that each study group organize itself along lines such as:

1. It shall be the personal purpose of the members of this religious group to do the will of God;
2. It shall be the group purpose of this religious fellowship to follow the teachings of *The URANTIA Book* that pertain to the ideal religious group.

A network of study groups formed into actual religious membership organizations would be a good basis for the SPIRITUAL UNIFICATION OF THE ENTIRE URANTIA MOVEMENT. ●

Self-Sufficiency Is . . .

*A child's impracticability,
An adolescent ideal,
An engineer's visionary delight,
A woman's goal,
A secular man's dream,
And, a religious man's impossibility.*

*by Ronald S. Coover,
Petoskey, Michigan*

The theme for the Spring 1984
issue of *The Circles* will be



FAITH

We invite you to share your insights, thoughts, experiences, speculations, and feelings on this essential element in our religious experience.

We encourage you to participate in this issue in a new way. We have recently discovered a very effective technique which we use to begin some group discussions. First, someone poses a question or questions. We all silently ask our Father's assistance in responding to the questions. Then each of us spends five to fifteen minutes writing an individual response to the question. Afterward we discuss our responses.

Writing individual responses to the questions preserves our individual ideas so that they may be shared with the group without being forgotten in the midst of discussing other people's ideas. This leaves each of us free to listen attentively rather than trying to remember what we are going to say when we have our opportunity. The procedure also involves a technique for requesting and then listening receptively for insights from our higher mind or from the spirit within. It is a useful individual and group discipline for fostering communion. The effort is small but the rewards can be phenomenal. Our experience is that the technique works very well.

What we suggest is that you might like to write your responses to any or all of the questions on faith. Your responses may be simply for your own enjoyment or they might serve as inspiration for an article for this issue. You may want to use the questions in a group and follow with discussion as described above. Whatever you choose, we'd be interested in hearing what you think of the technique.

Here are the questions:

What have been the consequences in my life of having faith?

What is faith to me?

Who or what should we have faith in?

What is a faith step? How does it feel to make a faith step?

What does it mean to have faith as a mustardseed?

How do I feel when someone has faith in me?

Please send articles for this issue by January 15, 1984 to:

The Circles

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