

# COSMIC REFLECTIONS COZMIC BEETFECTIONS

SUMMER/FALL 1989 VOLUME2, NO.2

## THIRD PLANET NEWS

Yes, not unlike the phoenix, Third Planet News arises from the ashes of The Messenger. Seriously, I believe that there are significant events happening in our movement that deserve attention.

Finland: I had the pleasure of talking to Marja Olamo, the president of the new Finnish URANTIA Society at the Lake Forest Conference this summer. She informed me that there are as many as 200 people there patiently awaiting the completion of the Finnish translation. She also informed me that there is a good sized study group in Estonia. As I'm sure many of us had hoped and anticipated, The URANTIA Book has penetrated the Iron Curtain, possibly by way of Finland.

I also had the opportunity of speaking to Seppo Kanerva, the man who took over the job of translating the book into Finnish. The Finns are fortunate to have him as a translator. He not only is a student of the book, but was a professional translator at one time. He confided to me that when he was approached to do this job, he said, "No, it is impossible, it cannot be done!" But obviously he decided to try the impossible. His monumental task should be completed in about a year and a half.

California: A reliable source has revealed that the CUBS and URANTIA Foundation disagreement has ended with a negotiated settlement. Both sides agreed to give a little. Thank goodness! *D.B.*

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## IS THERE LIFE ON A NEIGHBORING PLANET?

If you are a serious student of The URANTIA Book, you would not have trouble answering that question. For most of the rest of the world however, it is only a hope, or perhaps a fear. Whether we are students of the book or not, wouldn't it be exciting to receive a message from another planet? A lot of scientists must think it is pretty important judging from the size and number of efforts underway to look for signs of intelligent life beyond our planet. It is not just the scientists who find it interesting, however.

They are everywhere, on television, at the movies, in books, and under childrens' beds. They come in every shape, color, size and temperament. Those little green men, or LGM's, as scientists sometimes call them, have been the subject of fear, fascination and

amusement ever since people began to speculate about the possibility of life on other worlds. They have been portrayed as everything from amorphous blobs that absorb people to gentle creatures with illuminated hearts who just want to phone home for a ride. These are the creatures who proceed from the depths of our imaginations, but what about the genuine articles?

The URANTIA Book tells us in no uncertain terms that the seven superuniverses are teeming with mortals with whom we have a lot in common. If this is true, where are they? Why don't they drop in for tea and crumpets from time to time? The answer most likely is distance. The best candidates for life in our solar system, according to the book, are Venus and Mars. The other planets are either too hot, or are gas giants, or are too cold. Venus is a pretty nasty place, with temperatures over 750 degrees C and a dense atmosphere laden with sulphuric acid. It is hard to imagine life surviving there. Mars is more hospitable, but so far our probes have detected no life there. The book does mention that there is a race of non-breathers not far from here. If they are in our solar system, they would have to be on one of the large moons of Jupiter or Uranus. This does not seem likely, since these planets receive only a fraction of the energy of the sun that the earth does. Probably this means that we must look to the stars.

The nearest star to us is Alpha Centauri at about four light years distance. Four light years is the distance that light travels in four years. Our fastest spaceship would take several of our earth lifetimes to get there. Even if you could accelerate to half the speed of light, the round trip would take over 16 years. That is not exactly a pleasure cruise. It may be that the nearest inhabited planet is at least 10 light years from us. So, if they cannot drop by for tea, couldn't they at least give us a call to say hello?

There have been a number of SETI (Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence) projects over the past 20 years. The first large one was project Ozma. A large parabolic radio dish was used to scan likely stars to see if any radio signals were being transmitted from them. None were found. Other attempts using more sophisticated electronic equipment have been initiated since Ozma. Despite all of this effort, no ET's have been found. Why?

When radio waves leave a planet, they spread out like the light from a bare light bulb. The farther away we are from the bulb, the dimmer the light. At some distance, we can no longer see the light. If the light is formed into a beam, we can see it for a longer distance, but eventually even that light can no longer be seen as we move away. Though radio waves spread out just as light does, the antennas and equipment our scientists possess ought to allow us to hear a moderately powerful transmitter on a planet 10 light years away if it were beamed in our direction. Again, why can't we hear them?

The earth is bristling with large antennas and powerful transmitters. To someone in interstellar space with a radio receiver and an antenna pointed our way, this planet would be a radio hot spot in the solar

system. The radio astronomers have decided to listen on a frequency that corresponds to the vibration of the hydrogen atoms in water molecules. For this reason, they call this band of frequencies the "Water Hole." There is another factor in choosing this frequency band. Not all frequencies of radio signals can pass through the atmosphere. The AM broadcast signals for instance are largely absorbed by the atmosphere. The short wave bands used by the Voice of America and ham operators are bent or reflected by the atmosphere. The frequencies above this, the FM radio and television signals for instance, can pass through the atmosphere like light through a window. There are other radio windows; the Water Hole is one of them. Further, governments have agreed not to transmit on them so the radio astronomers equipment will not be jammed by powerful transmitters on earth. The astronomers reason that if a civilization wanted to signal us, they would most likely use the Water Hole frequencies to do it. We have heard nothing yet. Again, why?

I would like to offer several theories for the lack of radio contact:

A. Everyone is listening, no one is talking. All of those radio astronomers on the other scientifically advanced planets may also be keeping the Water Hole free from radio pollution. We have sent out signals in the Water Hole only a few times.

B. We are listening on the wrong frequencies. Perhaps that other civilization has powerful FM and TV transmitters that we could hear. But suppose that they are transmitting on the same frequencies that we are using. With all of the powerful transmitters on our planet we'd never hear the weak signals from a distant planet. Radio astronomers hope that some day they will be able to have listening stations on the far side of the moon so the moon will block out the cacophony of signals from the earth. We may never get that interstellar message until we can do this.

C. Someone is blocking the signals. We do know that we are under a spiritual quarantine. Could it be that one of the consequences of the rebellion is that planets are not permitted to communicate with one another? This seems unlikely. At least we should be able to communicate with other planets in the system of Satania. We can hear the noise of radio stars in every direction. It would seem a nearly impossible task to block some signals but let all others through.

D. No advanced civilizations are close enough for us to hear. This seems unlikely since The URANTIA Book has a paper about government on a neighboring planet. There are 15 to 20 stars within 10 light years of us that might have planetary systems. It seems likely to me that the "neighboring planet" is orbiting one of these stars. I would suspect from their level of technology that they would have developed radio communications.

E. And, there is the Star Trek theory. Perhaps the spiritual authorities feel that we are in a critical stage of development and they have directed that no contact be made with us until we pass through this stage. However, if we are in a critical stage, then

isn't the planet referred to in the "Government on Another Planet" paper also in a critical stage since they are not far ahead of us in their development? It seems to me that authorities would have to have made direct contact with both of us to tell us not to talk to one another. Obviously, we haven't been contacted. A variant of this theory is that they hear us, but consider us dangerous and barbaric and want nothing to do with us. I suppose if they happened to receive a re-broadcast of a Three Stooge's movie, they might be justified in such an attitude, but I believe that mortal curiosity is much stronger than any such fears.

I personally feel that we just haven't been listening to enough frequencies for long enough to pick up any broadcasts. But this problem may be partially remedied in the not too distant future when the NASA project gets under way, and now that SETI has become respectable.

Until this decade, many astronomers and scientists believed that a sun with a solar system such as ours was the exception rather than the rule. During the 1980's however, the IRAS (infrared orbiting telescope) looked at numerous stars. To the astronomers surprise, 15 relatively close stars were found to have accretion rings, rings of dust and small particles from which planets may form. While Urantia did not have such an origin, many planets do (see page 171,) so the rings are signs of possible planet building activity. From this evidence, many astronomers have concluded that suns with a planetary system may be more common than suns without them. Because of this new knowledge, SETI programs have suddenly become scientifically respectable, so much so that the U.S. government is getting into the act.

In Oct. 1992, on Columbus Day, NASA will begin a program called SETI to look for life on planets circling other stars. The program will last 10 years and cost 95 million dollars. The program will search for signals from 773 stars out to a distance of 80 light years, and will look at millions of frequencies at once. With such a massive effort, perhaps we will at last hear from one of our celestial neighbors. Then what?

There is no doubt that contact with the citizens of another planet would have a profound and lasting effect on the cultures of our planet. It would be the beginning of a new era. As that radio announcer used to say, "But that's another story."

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#### THE DATE OF THE CRUCIFIXION

For centuries, astronomers have attempted to determine the date of the crucifixion from information given in the Bible. An article in the April, 1989 issue of Sky and Telescope magazine discusses the dates proposed by various researchers. The author, Bradley Schaefer, also discusses the difficulties involved in getting a reliable date. The author claims to have developed an algorithm that more accurately

than previous methods determines the first days of past Jewish months. This is no trivial task.

The first day of the Jewish month was the first day that the crescent new moon could be seen. Some have also concluded that there was a lunar eclipse at the time of the crucifixion but the author said that it could not be seen from Jerusalem on the day that it occurred, April 3, AD33. Schaefer also states that the time when John the Baptist began his ministry is known from information in the Bible to have been between AD27 and AD30, so Jesus could not have been crucified before AD29 since he had at least a 2 year ministry. The author shows that all but two dates can be eliminated for the crucifixion, April 3, AD33 and April 7, AD30. The URANTIA Book gives the date of the crucifixion as April 7, AD30.

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#### TIME BOMBS

How would you like the job of putting together an epochal revelation in book form? What an awesome responsibility! Consider the care and planning that went into putting the URANTIA Papers together. Consider the problems that the revelators had to foresee and find solutions for and the compromises they had to accept in order to bring Urantia the Fifth Epochal Revelation. Some of the problems and compromises we are told about; there may be some that we are not told about. One of the problems that I am sure they dealt with was how to prevent The URANTIA Book from becoming a fetish.

I speculate that the revelators felt certain steps were needed to insure that the book would not become a fetish. A definition of fetish from Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary is: "an object of irrational reverence or obsessive devotion." Was the concern of the revelators justified?

We mortals seem to have a persistent tendency to worship anything and everything. Rocks, trees, mountains, stars and planets, people, books, shrouds, bones of the saints, etc. have all been fair game. This tendency has always been a problem for those bringing new revelations to this planet.

On page 832D we read, "They decided that divinity had descended to earth in bodily form, that Adam and Eve were in reality gods or else so near such an estate as to be worthy of reverent worship." On page 1022B it states, "Melchizedek's decision to terminate his sojourn in the flesh was influenced by numerous conditions, chief of which was the growing tendency of the surrounding tribes and even of his immediate associates to regard him as a demi-god...they were beginning to reverence him unduly..." We know that Jesus came to lead us into the worship of our Father, but how quickly the worship of him submerged his teachings. The Bible has become an object of superstitious awe to some people.

I feel that in light of all this, the revelators incorporated safeguards in the papers that would form The URANTIA Book to diminish the tendency to regard it as an object of worship. What safeguards did they use? Suppose they decided to make sure that mortals reading it understood that some cosmological statements in the book would be found to be inaccurate.

We read on page 1109C, "Let it be made clear that revelations are not necessarily inspired. The cosmology of these revelations is not inspired. On page 1009 we are informed, "... (while) the historic facts and religious truths of this series of revelatory presentations will stand on the records of the ages to come, within a few short years many of our statements on the physical sciences will stand in need of revision in consequence of additional scientific developments and discoveries." Therefore, some of the cosmology we are given is inaccurate by the admission of the revelators. But perhaps the frank admission of inaccuracies in the cosmology of the book isn't adequate to prevent undue reverence for the book. What else could the revelators do?

Suppose some inaccuracies were found soon after the book was published. That would not only reinforce the idea that the book is fallible, but it would do it immediately before we had a chance to begin to revere it. How then could they make certain that we would find inaccuracies soon after the book was published? My second speculation is that the revelators planted some "time bombs" with short fuses in the papers of the book dealing with the science portion or the cosmology. Now that I've gone out on a limb by saying that they planted time bombs can I prove it?

Consider two ideas introduced in the book. The first is the concept of continental drift. According to Ken Glasziou in an article in Six-Six newsletter entitled "The Second Remarkable Prediction", the theory of continental drift was put forth by Wegener in 1912 but not accepted by science until the 1960's. Continental drift is mentioned quite specifically in The URANTIA Book on page 663. Now consider this example: On page 657D we are informed that Mercury keeps the same face to the sun at all times. A decade after the book was published, scientists bounced radar signals off Mercury and discovered that it has a slow retrograde rotation, so it does not keep the same face to the sun. Could it be that the revelators didn't know about Mercury? This seems unlikely considering all the things that are correct in the cosmology of the book, such as continental drift. My feeling is that this was a deliberate plant that we couldn't miss. There are other time bomb candidates as well. There is the "seraphic velocity" problem, the "100 elements" problem and the "46 versus 48 chromosome" problem. Two of these three problems, the first and third, were addressed but not necessarily resolved by speakers at Scientific Symposium I in Nashville, Tennessee in May, 1988.

It may be instructive to examine the time bomb theory in the light of several statements about the purposes of revelation given in the book. On page 1109 and 1110, we are given five reasons for presenting cosmology in the revelation. The reasons pertinent to the science of

the book are:

1. The reduction of confusion by authoritative elimination of error.
2. The co-ordination of known or about-to-be known facts and observations.
4. The supplying of information which will fill in vital missing gaps in otherwise earned information."

Giving information that will be found to be incorrect soon after the book is published doesn't seem to serve any of the above purposes. The only purpose I can see that such information serves is to prove the book is fallible. In fact, the The URANTIA Book in introducing these purposes states: "...such revelations are of immense value in that they at least transiently clarify knowledge by:..." Transiently clarify knowledge for whom? While the purposes sound convincing, I would like to point out that the purposes given are fulfilled only when the book gets general acceptance. How can the purposes help science when most scientists don't even know about the book? And even if they did, how many of them would accept it? Acceptance may take so long that a portion of the science will be obsolete before the stated advantages are realized. On the other hand, I am confident that some of the science and cosmology will serve the stated purposes.

Take the ultimaton for an example. Scientists may speculate about particles smaller than an electron, but they haven't even formulated what they might be like yet. The electron is considered to be a basic, indivisible particle. It could be far into the 21st century before we discover the ultimaton. Perhaps in the 21st century, some scientist will read about the ultimaton in The URANTIA Book and go searching for it. If we were given accurate information about the ultimaton far in advance of its discovery, assuming that it is accurate, why is inaccurate data given about things that would be discovered soon after the book was published? It does not seem consistent, unless the inaccurate information is indeed a time bomb. But isn't this sort of thing unethical?

It seems to me that the ethics of an act depend on motive and intent. Remember that the revelators told us they had put inaccurate information in the papers, so we could hardly say that they lied to us. Further, they only told us something about Mercury that we already believed at the time. Remember that their mission was undoubtedly to protect us from our own foolish tendencies. If they gave us inaccurate information to exploit us or to take advantage of us in some fashion, that would be unethical.

While we know that there is inaccurate science and cosmology in the book, we don't know how much of the information is inaccurate. Should we just ignore the cosmology on the grounds that it may all be inaccurate? It seems to me that the revelators knew it would have been foolish to put a great deal of inaccurate information in the book; we would utterly lose faith in the whole thing. Just put in a few minor things to keep those mortals from worshipping the book, but report the major concepts accurately. I feel that we should be careful about quoting the book to prove scientific points. We will have to be faithful in comparing the teachings of the book to current scientific discoveries and honestly admit it when the book appears to

be in error. And finally, I admire the skill and wisdom of the revelators in preventing the book from becoming a fetish item. Perhaps it is working; at least so far I haven't been asked to place my hand on The URANTIA Book to swear an oath.

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FEEDBACK, ETC.

Yes, there was feedback on the article "A Third Opinion" that appeared in the lasr issue of Cosmic Reflections. There were two negative responses, several neutral ones and five or six positive responses. I was made aware that there have been a few problems in our movement regarding gays. I also have found that there are a few quotes in the book that may be relevant to homosexual persons. These quotes can be found on pages 927:5&6, and 1775:6.

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STUFF NOBODY CARES ABOUT SO I PUT IT AT THE END

This journal appears twice a year because that is how long it takes me to find time to do it. Dick Bain is the editor, and unless otherwise noted, Dick Bain is the writer. Donations are cheerfully accepted.

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