

# PERVADED SPACE

## MIDWEST

### OHIO READERS SEEK NEW GROWTH

(Editor's Note: This is the fourth in a series of articles which examine the nine states in the PERVADED SPACE Midwest coverage area. Previously we have taken a look at URANTIA activity in Missouri, Minnesota, and Wisconsin. We intend in future issues to report on our other five states: Indiana, Iowa, Illinois, Michigan, and Kentucky.)

Readers of The URANTIA Book can be found concentrated in five areas of Ohio, including the four major urban areas: Cleveland, Cincinnati, Columbus, and Toledo, with another study group located in New Lexington. In addition to studying the book, which in some groups' cases is being pursued sporadically, Ohioans have undertaken activities such as library book placement and conference planning in recent years.

Perhaps the most active group over the past decade or so has been the one situated in Toledo. This group is led by Mary Ann (see "People," Summer, 1980 issue of PERVADED SPACE) and Don Krell. Jim and Chris Johnston, who have since moved away from the area, were also actively involved for several years. The group meets each Tuesday evening with an average of eight attenders. The group reads through the book consecutively, but returns to the Jesus papers whenever a visitor attends.

They have been "interfacing with the Detroit group and with several people from Toronto" according to Mary Ann. They went to Boulder, CO, for some ideas and are planning a possible university booth. Lately they've tried a newspaper ad followed by a restaurant meeting and they are also encouraging members to bring a friend. "We do want more growth," said Mary Ann.



The Toledo group sponsored the 1981 Midwest Conference and co-sponsored the 1984 conference.

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The other co-sponsors of the '84 Midwest Conference were the Cincinnati group, led by Ted (see "People," page 5) and Vicki Blaney. They actually were responsible for another conference which occurred in 1976 before the current series of meetings began in Fort Wayne in 1978.

The group is currently between engagements--it's not meeting. But its history covers about a decade of on-again/off-again meetings, so it may well start up afresh.

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The present Cleveland group has been meeting "for just over a year," according to spokesman Tom Connors. The group has about five or six active members and about ten or eleven others who are interested. It meets each Sunday, pursuing a "topic of interest which emerges from discussion."

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## from the editors

Unique as the URANTIA movement is in the history of epochal revelations and religious movements in general, we dare not assume that it is immune from mistakes that only become apparent over centuries. Some perils have already become obvious, but some of their more subtle implications deserve more attention.

We already know that we are fortunate to have received the teachings as a single, unified, and inspired work; we know that legal protections are necessary to guard against any alteration of the text. A more insidious danger is that well-meant interpretations and study aids may some day proliferate to the point where they focus attention on what people have to say about The URANTIA Book rather than what the book itself says—just as some may make the mistake of substituting what the book says about religious living for their own personal experience of sonship with God. However useful such study tools may be, we must make sure they always turn our attention back to The URANTIA Book itself, to let it function properly as a means to an end.

Even the more practical aspects of the movement should be questioned now and then. We pride ourselves on an absence of ritual, but rituals have been known to develop, over long periods of time, from what began as a sensible and convenient practice. We may unwittingly be setting organizational and ceremonial precedents that would outlive

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## Swamy Cool by G.Thorsander



## letters

In seeking the highest applicable truth out of the many true statements in the fifth epochal revelation, I've learned the necessity of sharing and absorbing ideas in open forum. Thank you for the history, poetic inspiration and many ideas your publication shares.

Michael Brady  
Knoxville, TN

Your \$5.00 fee seems toooooo low for these daze. How about a raise to \$7.00 or \$10.00? I vote for \$7.00.

Lance Grolla  
Yellow Springs, OH

(Editor's note: Although all of the letters that we received felt that an increase in price was appropriate, we'll reserve this act until sheer necessity drives us to it. In the interim, enjoy.)

PERVADED SPACE is an informative and objective newsletter and I enjoy it a great deal. Keep up the good work.

Ron Craig  
Concord, CA

## World News Roundup

The dates chosen for the 1986 Midwest Conference are August 8th to 10th, 1986. The conference will be held at the St. Benedict Center in Madison, Wisconsin. The conference theme is "The Presence of God". The Central Wisconsin Study Group, which is sponsoring this conference, will send out registration information as the event gets closer. Anyone interested in participating in the conference may contact:

Brad Shrake  
Rt.#5 Box 232  
Marshfield, WI 54449

A new book by Dr. Robert Slagle entitled A Family Meeting Handbook is available through The Family Relations Foundation. This book has attempted to maintain the spirit of The URANTIA Book's portrayal of Jesus having family meetings with his brothers and sisters. It tells you how to hold consensual Family Meetings and succeed in "achieving family harmony happily." The 161-page book costs approximately \$7.95. For more information contact:

Family Relations Foundation  
PO Box 462  
Sebastopol, CA 95472

The newly chartered Northern Light URANTIA Society of Alaska is inviting all readers to help celebrate its first calendar year by joining in a "Year of Study." The plan is to progress through The URANTIA Book one time in synchrony, beginning on January 1, 1986, reading four papers a week, completing the project just before Christmas of 1986.

Anyone interested in participating, and wishing to be kept informed and encouraged on a monthly basis, may write:

Tom Choquette  
Northern Light URANTIA Society  
of Alaska  
3605 Arctic Blvd. #972  
Anchorage AK 99503

As reported in the last issue, First URANTIA Society is planning a miniconference for March and a series of intensive study sessions beginning sooner on a monthly basis. The conference will be based on the theme "Spiritual Influences and Our Responsibilities," while the study sessions will be on "Evolution: Past and Present." A mailing will go out soon to readers in northeast Illinois, southeast Wisconsin, and northwest Indiana.

The mailing to the greater Chicago area residents from the newly created Chicago Area Referral Service was sent as scheduled in October. The group represents the four area societies and endeavors to assist readers in finding or starting local study groups. Only 10 to 20 responses have been received by CARS coordinator David Kulieke (320 Forest View, Lake Bluff, IL 60044; (312) 234-6204) of the 250 sent out. David is looking especially to assist readers not currently active in a study group.

URANTIA Brotherhood sponsored a retreat for members of the General Council and URANTIA Foundation on November 8th through 10th at Cedar Creek Farm Seminar Center near St. Louis, MO. As a basis for their discussion, participants considered a guiding philosophy statement for URANTIA Brotherhood that was developed by an ad hoc philosophy committee over the past two years. Many divergent viewpoints were expressed during the two days. It was decided by the Executive Committee that the General Council will continue to move in the direction of long range planning at a meeting in April of next year at which a professional facilitator will oversee the process.

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(Ohio--continued from page 1)

Its other leaders include Ray Gardenia and Holly Arvinites, a former Chicagoan whose parents were in the Forum. Tom says he knows of at least four previous attempts to get a Cleveland group started, but none lasted due to "the presence of a few individuals who were unbalanced, disruptive, or interested in diverting the discussion from The URANTIA Book to other topics." (One managed to combine all of these tendencies: claiming he was from Venus, he complained to the Foundation that the group wasn't open-minded.) The group has found that the best way of dealing with disruptive or uncooperative individuals is to be straightforward and make it clear from the outset that the purpose of the group is to study The URANTIA Book.

The group has started a library book placement program in cooperation with Tom Allen of the Brotherhood Domestic Extension Committee. But they are looking for other methods of outreach and would welcome suggestions. "I realize these things take time," Tom admitted. "Newer people expect things to happen right away. Of course, but I won't be surprised if growth takes place more slowly." He did say that he's found one source of new readers from Alcoholics Anonymous.

The group very much desires more contact with the movement; they've offered an open invitation to people from the outside, especially from Chicago headquarters, to visit. Tom can be reached at (216) 791-1678.

\* \* \* \* \*

The Columbus readers are represented by Stephen Caruso, who has been involved in area groups for about six years, since he started reading the book. He's had a booth the past two years at his neighborhood festival, but has not found much response.

The study group has donated books to area libraries. It has depended in large part on invigorating leadership from Father Robert Schuer of New Lexington, whenever he "wasn't speaking at a conference, doing his priestly chores, in Rome delivering books to

the Vatican, or sending a book to Nancy Reagan. Right now they're rebuilding his care center in New Lexington, so I guess he's been busy keeping things together there," Stephen commented.

\* \* \* \* \*

The New Lexington group is indeed headed by Robert Schuer, but PERVADED SPACE was unable to reach him for elaboration on the group's activities.

\* \* \* \* \*

The Ohio groups reflect the progress and problems of study groups everywhere. There is a variety in their approach to the book, a handful of strong leaders who keep the groups focused and going, and an increasing desire for growth and activities such as book placement which go beyond the study group itself.

In a future issue, PERVADED SPACE will begin a regular column of tips on organizing and conducting study groups. Practical topics such as attracting new members, meeting environment, how to accommodate new readers, and group dynamics will be covered.

We invite all PERVADED SPACE readers to submit questions and/or suggestions on related subjects for possible inclusion.

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The dates set for the Intensive Summer Study Sessions sponsored by the Education and Fraternal Relations Committees are June 24th to 27th at Lake Forest College, Lake Forest, IL. This has been the site for several years.

The 1987 General Conference of URANTIA Brotherhood is planned for August 2nd to 7th, 1987 at Bowdoin College in Brunswick, Maine. Marilyn Kulieke was selected as conference chair and plans are just beginning to get underway.

## people

When Ted Blaney was growing up in the country near Mansfield, Ohio, he had an "affinity for nature." He wanted to know the name of all plants and animals and he developed a keen interest in agriculture. This observation and appreciation of living things eventually gave Ted the perception that "the complexity and beauty and purpose behind life could not be explained only by science."

At the same time, growing up in the Methodist church, some parts of Christianity had meaning for Ted and other parts he rejected, leaving him with a "fragmented outlook" that stimulated him to search for truth.

These two different threads ultimately led him to embrace The URANTIA Book, for on the one hand, the Book "goes well beyond the scientific boundaries of today" and on the other, "provides meaning to the religions of today." Most particularly, Ted finally "understood Christianity."

While Ted enjoyed life sciences, practical considerations led him to study chemistry and physics. In his senior year of college at Indiana Institute of Technology, he was taking an Introduction to Philosophy course under Dr. Meredith Sprunger. Near the end of the course, Dr. Sprunger assigned reading of the Foreword to The URANTIA Book. Ted became so absorbed in reading The URANTIA Book that it had a "dramatic effect on his final grades." He had to avoid the book until after completing graduate school at Case Institute of Technology (now Case Western Reserve). Thus it was in 1966 that he obtained his own copy of The URANTIA Book.

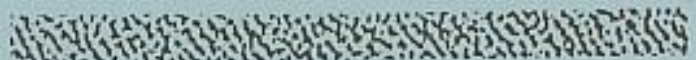
It was a five year process to embrace the book's teachings in a relatively complete sense. Ted was "intrigued but skeptical." For a long time he could not acceptably determine "What is truth and how do you know it?" The Thought Adjuster papers provided the resolution to the problem. They were also the spark igniting Ted to active involvement with other religionists.

Thus it was that in the late 60's Ted began two careers: his work position at Procter

and Gamble in Cincinnati, Ohio and his URANTIA studies career. At Procter and Gamble, Ted has been involved with diapers for a long time. For several years he did research and testing on diaper rash. Some of his work is being published just now. Currently Ted is a Staff Engineer in product development at Procter and Gamble, and his most recent project was developing and putting into production the "single piece refastenable tape disposable diaper."

Since 1969, Ted has been anchorman for the Cincinnati area study group. Over the years it has metamorphosed many times, has been big and at other times inactive, but in any case fairly continuous. Ted, along with this group, hosted a regional conference in the area in 1976. In 1984, Ted was the site coordinator for the Midwest Conference which was held near Cincinnati.

Ted lives in a Cincinnati suburb with his wife Vicki and an indeterminate number of children. He is careful not to make the informal teaching of his children too programmed or "opportunistic." He labors to preserve for them the joy of discovery, even as he has so many times had an opportunity to experience the joy of discovery in science, philosophy and religion.



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## commentaries

The topic for these commentaries is:  
"How do you incorporate the URANTIA  
teachings into your celebration of  
traditional holidays?"

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I don't think reading The URANTIA Book contradicts enjoying our holidays. In fact, reading the book actually enhances our enjoyment of the traditional festivities because we can appreciate them for what they are.

Christmas is especially applicable. While we would like to see a little less commercial exploitation, we do not find it sacrilegious. Christmas is a very ancient holiday, as reading the book informs us. It is fun to try to separate out the origins of all the different rituals and traditions associated with Christmas and discover what a conglomeration of different customs this most fun holiday has become. And we really enjoy the beauty of the Christmas story as told by Luke, and all the singing and pageantry at church.

But our "holiest" holiday is Easter. I don't believe that the commercialism associated with Christmas will ever touch Easter to the same degree, because it is a more "genuine" holy time. I have a personal tradition of rereading Part IV every Easter season. As a family we approach Easter with more reverence and spiritual attitude.

Our holidays have become separate from their religious beginnings in this country; perhaps that is not such a bad thing. Maybe readers of The URANTIA Book can infuse new meanings into our "holy days" and enjoy the true meanings of our ancient holidays.



Mary Schlueter  
Crystal Lake, IL

The significance of traditional "holy days" has been lost, I think, with their being viewed generally as another day off work, a chance to relax and forget the problems of the day. Yet perhaps from guilt, we try to remember the significance and accept the media messages that "get us in the mood."

For me, though, the mood never seems to arise when beckoned, and I find my outward celebrations lacking in enthusiasm, although inwardly I am often moved while pondering and praying about the holiness of the day. This inward celebration, I feel, is a result of my understanding of the teachings of The URANTIA Book and adds further to make that day holy for me.



Jack Seaman  
Owen Sound, Ontario

We are a family of five with three young children: Jasmine, 6; Eden, 3; and Faith, 16 months. The holiday celebrations are indeed focal points in our yearly rhythm.

The Christmas season offers a special opportunity to relate the stories of Jesus and his earth family. We create a beautiful, peaceful environment, often using candles and nature's gifts. We like to hold hands in a circle and sing simple songs of praise and thanks. There are many gatherings with family and friends in the spirit of brotherly love.

A somewhat unusual holiday we started observing this past year is Pentecost or Whitsun--the bestowal of the Spirit of

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### How not to revise tradition...



"...So we decided to tell the children that A-B-C the first comes down the chimney with Christmas presents, and a Life Carrier brings the Easter eggs."

(Commentaries--continued from page 6)

Truth. A group of area readers gathered with all symbolically dressed in white. The adults read Paper 194 and took turns sharing in the care and direction of the children. We made beautiful paper doves, designed a personal greeting card to Jesus, formed angels from beeswax, and spent time in the gently awakening spring morning.

Susan Weller  
Iola, WI



(Editorial--continued from page 2)

their usefulness if too closely followed. Diversity and a periodic rethinking of habits and customs will be our best defense against this tendency.

From the start an undue concern with the early history of the book and its associated individuals has been recognized as a possible problem. Many of the details concerning beginnings have been purposely allowed to fade into obscurity. But the danger is far from past. From a future viewpoint we are part of the early URANTIA movement. It's too easy to treat some individuals as "stars" and for them to accept such treatment. Certainly mutual love and understanding depend on knowing one another's personalities and backgrounds; otherwise, we would neither print our "People" column nor our commentaries. But even as we encourage leadership, we must make sure that we are not "respecters of persons," setting some above others for the wrong reasons. The error of creating legends within our own time might bring with it the more serious risk of precipitating the evolution of a

hierarchy, not to mention a pantheon of saints. The best intentions don't always protect against the tendency of human institutions to multiply errors as they gather momentum.

A cautious approach does not mean that we should freeze into inaction for fear of unforeseeable consequences. But we should seek to combine careful study of religious and secular history with a habit of considering long-term ramifications even when making short-term plans.

## books

### Self-Esteem

by Robert Schuller

Nationally televised, Robert Schuller is rapidly becoming one of the most influential religionists in American history. I highly recommend Self-Esteem. Every page offers nuggets of great wisdom, psychological, sociological, and religious insights, and positive suggestions in all realms wherein self-esteem can improve human life, from the individual to the planetary whole. He opines that the greatest boon to the acquirement of self-esteem is to recognize oneself as a son or daughter of God. He discusses in concentrated, cogent, and incontestable logic the necessity of self-esteem and its potentials when sought by an entire society--an entire world. He probes in convincing detail and describes the role of self-esteem as it impacts on evangelism, social ethics, economics, communications, and world religious missions. And all this "spiritual regeneration of men" will eventuate a global "New Reformation," what we might call a "spiritual renaissance."

David Glass  
Ft. Worth, TX

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