

SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA URANTIA SOCIETY

DEVELOPMENTS

Number 28

Fall 1987

1987 URANTIA GENERAL CONFERENCE REPORT

Northern California was well represented at the 1987 URANTIA General Conference, held in early August at Bowdoin College in Brunswick, Maine. In a particularly lovely setting, on the two-hundred-year-old campus, more than six hundred students of THE URANTIA BOOK, new and old readers, and more than one hundred children and youth, fellowshipped one another over a period of five days. There was a boat ride on Portland Harbor Bay while a spectacular sunset took place. There were cool breezes, a real rainy day and the lushness of the Northeast Coast. But, most of all, there was the inestimable lift of contact with so many believers in one place.

Marvin Gawryn and Gard Jameson presented a spiritual retreat on the campus for two days before the Conference began. The quiet, contemplative work provided insight and inspiration for our lives. The worship was very deep and moving, a welcome contrast.

The week's activities were multiple. With so many choices to make, (what event or workshop to attend?) the Conference seemed over too soon! The mixture of people from many parts of the world gave the whole experience a significance that former Conferences have lacked. There was a remarkable attempt on the part of many who attended to speak French, Spanish and English, as the need arose. A lot of smiling took place when the words failed us.

On a logistical level, however, there was current in certain irreverent circles that the Conference had been sponsored by the angels of adversity. Perhaps we have had it too easy in the past and our unseen friends decided to help us appreciate former Conferences. It is an unsettling experience to have arrangements about lodging and meals changed, agreements and promises voided through no fault of one's own. In the long run the beauty of the campus and the quality of the presentations helped to smooth ruffled nerves and calm dissappointments.

For me personally, the most remarkable element of the week was meeting so many new readers, persons experiencing a URANTIA Conference for the first time who shared their enthusiasm and awe for the Movement. It was truly a diverse and stimulating event, with a great deal of art, printed material and audio-visual presentations to add to the sense of a Movement beginning to come into its early adolescence, full of new insights and rambunctious ideas. It certainly won't be soon forgotten by anyone who was fortunate enough to have been there.

Stephen Zendt, Secretary

NEWS AND VIEWS

ANNOUNCEMENTS

San Francisco Bay Area Urantia Society
SEMI-ANNUAL MEETING
Saturday, December 5, 1987
10:30 A.M. to 3:00 P.M.
Northpoint Homeowners' Association Clubhouse
10880 Northpoint Way, CUPERTINO

NEW MARIN STUDY GROUP

Time: First Thursday of every month, 7:00 P.M.
Place: Jacques Lecouturier's home
350 Holly Drive
SAN RAFAEL
For Info: Call Jacques at 479-8269
or Rick Voss at 388-0259

NEW DISCUSSION GROUP

World Events, Personal Problems and
Spiritual Comprehension
Hosts: Stephen Zendt and Dennis Baker
Place: 4130 Army St. Apt# 51
SAN FRANCISCO
Time: Every other Wednesday starting
October 7, 7:30 P.M.

NEW READERS SEMINAR SERIES

Led by experienced readers
Contact: Byron Belitsos, SAN FRANCISCO
(415) 664-4456
Call if interested

NEW COLUMN

Sara Blackstock would like to see a regular column
featuring spiritual life from a child's point of view
and family perspective. Let us know your opinion
and/or if you are interested in contributing.
Call Sara: 672-3340

PEOPLE AND PLACES

We'll miss... The Hannas who have moved to Lompoc
(Santa Barbara area) and Frank Baca who has
moved to New Jersey.
GOOD LUCK!

Welcome home Marvin and Francyl Gawryn!

JESUS BIRTHDAY CELEBRATED AROUND BAY

The San Francisco Bay Area Urantia Society's
Jesus Birthday picnic brought sixty readers
together to worship, socialize and frolic. From
Sacramento to Santa Cruz they came to the large
meadow surrounded by woods at Joachim Miller

Park. Open grills were loaded with barbequed
chicken and burgers and the volleyball net went up
on a perfect sunny day. Special thanks to Martha
Gilbert of Santa Cruz who organized art projects
such as multi-colored sand paintings and
personalized folders for the many children. Morgan
Rauh and her son of San Francisco played classical
duets which filled the canyon.

All this culminated in a large worship circle.
The exquisite worship program was prepared by
Sara Blackstock. Dave and Chappell Holt played and
sang; Dave on his portable keyboard and Chappell
always amazing with her Amazing Grace. Mike
Hagan's daughter passed out scroled programs. A
tray bedecked with orange and yellow mums
contained the remembrance drink. Pat Fearey led
an OM group song followed by a welcome worship
from Stephen Zendt. Heartfelt prayers were voiced
by many and we all enjoyed singing together.
Following the prayer some people moved to a small
amphitheatre in the woods to continue singing while
others joined the raucous volleyball game, took
walks or relaxed on blankets.

A week prior to this large celebration some
study groups sponsored gatherings to remember
Jesus. Fifteen people including significant others
dressed up for an elegant potluck at Jim and Diane
Sullivan's in Foster City. They enjoyed a honey
baked ham and other goodies around the Sullivans'
big table. Later they shared bread and wine in
remembrance together. In San Francisco,
twenty-three people came to a potluck at St.
Peter's Episcopal Church. After talking they all
went upstairs for a remembrance circle, followed
by a media presentation including two worship
pieces and a world government show.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR:

The need for children's activities at our social
events is obvious. Martha Gilbert's art workshop
at the Jesus Birthday celebration is a precedent
which should be followed by future activities. The
kids were happy and she introduced some spiritual
ideas by including a booklet project where each
child could write, "love is to me" and then
illustrate each word.

When I've introduced the Urantia Book to couples
with young children, they always ask, "What do
you do for kids?" We must develop child-oriented
activities for ourselves and to encourage
prospective families to participate with us in this
new revelation.

Claire Thurston

LOVE IN ACTION

GOD'S WILL AT WORK

Our professions and occupations are the market place where many of us spend most of our waking hours. It is here in this daily arena where we can be given manifold ways, most of them seemingly insignificant, to serve and love our fellow beings on this planet. Every person could write about his/her opportunities to love as Jesus loves us "on the job". Let me share my efforts with you.

Number-wise, my opportunities are unlimited for I am the director of a school-age day care center with about 130 children, over 200 parents and a staff of 10, many of whom I have contact with almost every day. Time-wise, it is quite frustrating because it is a very intense, fast-moving situation where time is very limited with each person, sometimes down to seconds.

During each of these contacts there is offered to me an opportunity to show love -- to succeed in the challenge to be loving during the solving of problems. This love must emerge more in my attitude toward the child or adult who has the problem rather than in what is done about the problem. When a child makes a mistake and comes to tell me about it, there is a moment of tender, open vulnerability as I listen to the child either defensively or humbly tell his/her part in the problem. The child is looking for understanding guidance. In that moment he/she can feel on a deep level where you are at in your attitude - whether it is, "You dummy!" (spoken or unspoken) or whether it is, "I bet you learned something from that! What do you think we can do to solve this problem and how can you prevent it from happening next time?"

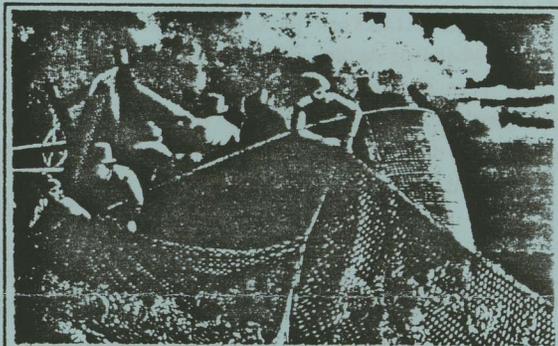
In order to be in such constant interaction with so many people, I have to make sure that I am getting my daily dose of love and worship contact with God. This energizes me and gives me the perspective to deal with the myriad little problems that children always seem to have. They need a lot of reinforcement: "Those are beautiful colors in the picture." "Your sand castle is very strong." "You are playing a harmonious tune on the casio." "Thank you for helping your friend find his shoe." Love is reinforcement for what others are doing. The staff needs this too. Sometimes it feels draining to have to be conscious of their needs along with those of the children and the parents. That is why I have to be sure my needs are met by God. I have to give Him time to reenergize me so that I am not resentful of the constant energy which my job demands.

This job also gives me a chance to pat parents on the back for the double lives which they are living -- working full-time and raising a family. A mother will come in carrying a toddler, wearing high heels, to pick up a six year old, to go home and make dinner after working all day. Sometimes just a knowing smile can lighten her burden -- knowing that someone understands. Many of the fathers will get up at five in the morning to do their part in getting the children to the day care center. Welcoming them in the morning light with a cheery hello reinforces their efforts and jokes get their smiles going.

There are occasions to do overt spiritual teaching with the children during discussion group time, statements such as: "He who rules himself is greater than he who rules a kingdom." or "Let's walk the second mile and carry that heavy sand bucket for your friend." The examples go on and on...as I am sure they do in your job too.

Sara Blackstock

(I hope you will share your work stories for future Love in Action columns.)



A HELPING HAND

Dr. Albert Schweitzer, the world-famous philanthropist, said:

Open your eyes and look for some human.
Or some work for the sake of humans,
Which needs a little time,
A little friendship,
A little toil,
A little love...
Search and see if there is some place
Where you may invest your humanity.

REFLECTIONS

AN INTRODUCTION TO GOD

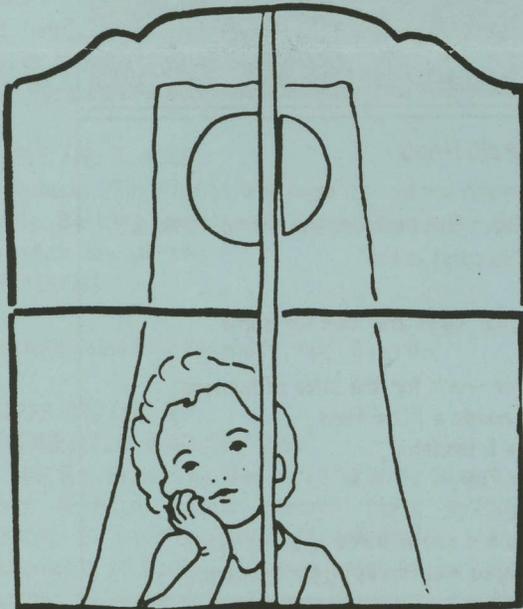
Can a two year old meet God? Those adjutant mind spirits start their work right away; parents and friends can lend a hand. A friend gave a beautifully illustrated children's book of prayers to our daughter, Angela. She made us read it to her over and over. The prayers were short and simple; some seemed like they could have been written by children:

"I see the moon,
And the moon sees me;
God bless the moon,
And God bless me."

Every night we have a good-night ritual. We all stand at Angela's bedroom window and say good-night to the world: the moon and stars, all the neighborhood cats and dogs by name, the flowers and of course every person she has ever met, (well, almost.) Chuck and I started to include saying, "Goodnight God." She enjoyed adding God to the list. Seeing the moon and talking to God meshed with the prayer and illustration in her book in a natural fashion.

Once in awhile, we find opportunities to say, "God loves you," and she smiles. I've also noticed that Angela has benefitted from being a part of the group worships at the potlucks. She seems to get a spark of love from the worship current that runs through the circle; and later we talk about how people were being quiet and praying and somehow she looks at me and I know she understands.

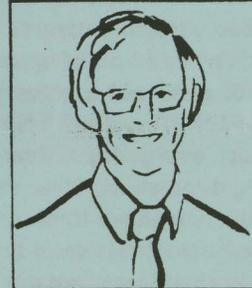
Claire Thurston



FINDING THE FATHER'S WILL

When asked, "What was the highpoint of the Conference this summer?" many responded, "Jeff Wattle's workshop on FINDING THE FATHER'S WILL!" The following is an excerpt from that workshop, centered around the rules for prevailing petitions on p. 1002. DEVELOPMENTS will publish more excerpts in the next two issues.

How does God reveal his will to us? Here we are face to face with the mystery of the Father's intimate communion with his children. We are not told how long it requires to discover the Father's will. We are not told what inner



or outer channels may be utilized. We are not told what form our discovery will take. But towards the top of this same page 1002 we read, "God answers man's prayer by giving him an increased revelation of truth, an enhanced appreciation of beauty, and an augmented concept of goodness." So imagine that, as David Kantor has said, we live in a landscape not only of facts but also of meanings and values. When we make our surrender aright, we experience an alteration in that landscape of meanings and values. There is a gestalt-shift, so to speak, in that landscape. Perhaps some thought that had been in the background assumes a new prominence. Perhaps there is a new confidence that spontaneously reaches out in the direction of one of the alternatives we have been considering. We would like an unmistakable, verbal message from God, but what we often receive is some heightening here, some shading there, some shifting of perspective. On that basis, we are to infer God's will.

My favorite image of this gestalt-shift in the meaning-value landscape comes from the story of the building of the Central Pacific Railroad. Before construction began, a man named Theodore Judah mapped out the route. Plotting the way for the railroad through the Sierra Nevada in the 1860's, he succeeded almost perfectly in finding the best path that could today be chosen with the aid of aerial photography. I imagine him in the mountains, trapped in fog, wondering where the next pass would open up. Waiting, waiting, he sees the fog begin to lift. He would like to be able to see much further ahead, but at least he can see the next segment of his route. He has clarity sufficient for

REFLECTIONS

The Father's Will, continued ...

the decision he must make today.

If nothing happens when I open up in this surrender, I return to my previous steps: putting my prayer in its appropriate cosmic framework, rousing my faith, mobilizing specific problem-solving attitudes, trying to work out the problem with human resources, and thoroughgoing surrender. I assume that if I'm not receiving anything, the error is in my approach, my effort to satisfy these conditions as I understand them.

If I do sense an "answer," then I have more work to do. I know that the subconscious can generate a "response" as well as the superconscious. I should not assume that whatever happens at the moment of surrender is sponsored by the Thought Adjuster. It is therefore my responsibility to examine the meanings and values in the light of the best criteria I can bring to bear. (These include compatibility with the teachings of *The URANTIA BOOK* and with the wisdom of experience.) I need to achieve an equilibrium between my own spiritualizing mind and the "answer" which I am attempting to integrate into

my consciousness in loyalty and openness to the leading of God. It is destabilizing hastily to embrace an "answer" that remains disjointed from my personal momentum. But when reflection validates the "response," then I am prepared to take that boldest step into the mystery, to authorize the conclusion, to affirm that -- as far as I am able to recognize and validate it -- this is the Father's will.

It would be nice to leave out this step of personal responsibility. It makes things messy. It would be so much nicer just to shift into passivity and to "trust" that whatever comes to mind in that time of receptivity is what we should follow. "Jesus told me....It says right here, 'Ask and you will receive.' etc." But our experience shows that we can err, not only through excessive skepticism about our ability to discern divine guidance, but also through gullibility. We can forget that divine leadings are usually on a higher level than the verbalizations that we sometimes accept as messages from the spirit.

Jeffrey Wattles



Angel's Hands, marble grave monument

LARGER CIRCLES

THE DIFFERENT DRUM, Community Making and Peace, by M. Scott Peck, M.D.

Review and commentary by Pat Fearey

I cannot recommend highly enough psychiatrist/spiritual teacher Scott Peck's newest work, *The Different Drum*. In my opinion, an entire conference could be built around the use of this book in conjunction with *The URANTIA BOOK*. I would urge that we make it preliminary reading before any local retreat undertaken to deepen group communication. I understood myself and our own group dynamics far better as I read Dr. Peck's clear descriptions of the dynamics he has found to be universal.

With Dr. Peck's experiential conclusions based upon years of successfully leading groups through "community-building" group process workshops, the book sets forth distinct stages and patterns he has observed to be consistent, both in group interaction and with individual spiritual growth. Were it to follow certain laws, any group, he maintains, could work through its communication problems to enter, as a whole, the true spirit of community (we in our movement might also call it true fellowship). Furthermore, the group would enter that spirit in full possession of the new insights necessary to maintain community and restore it when the fabric becomes torn. And the fabric always becomes torn, if only by new parameters necessitating adjustments. Community (fellowship, brotherhood, the kingdom) requires of each of us ongoing hard work.

Nothing in this book suggests it's easy to bond any bunch of disparate individuals, whatever their degree of spiritual sincerity, into a vibrantly alive, healthily functioning unit with steady commitment and clear open communication among all, free from factions, egocentrism, dependence upon others to lead, unconscious defense mechanisms, etc. etc (the whole human nine yards!) plus a group dedication to reaching decisions by consensus.

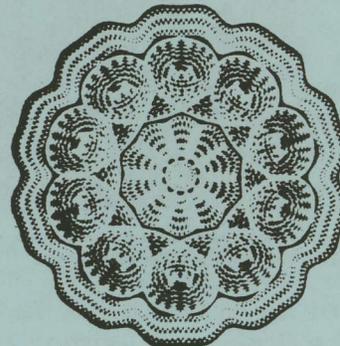
The Different Drum applies fresh thinking and unique insights to the world situation in the latter part of the book, indicating practical ways to change faulty communication techniques which prevent true community from emerging. For us, however, the immediate value of Dr. Peck's teachings could be realized at the small-group-process level. *The Different Drum* could be a worthy, practical "workbook" companion to *The URANTIA BOOK* in our efforts to build conscious community together. The book is a goldmine of insights into human nature, individualism and the problems of inclusivity/exclusivity

which communities face (including the self-imposed exclusivity of the individual who departs, giving up on the possibility of conflict resolution). The book's inspiration and its implied warnings bear direct relevance to our own local situation, with a newly formed group incorporating many members of other long-existing groups. Our most important group task could well be to create a pilot project, bridging past and future, since UB readership, with its study-group formations and regroupings, will increase. We have numerous reasons to work at forging true community together and to become aware how and why people will settle for substitutes. If anyone on the planet can create genuine community, Urantians ought to be among the pioneers, given the content of "our" book!

This is not an expression of dissatisfaction, just a yearning for the best we can create. We should not (truly cannot, in today's world which so badly needs servant-leadership) demand anything but that best from ourselves. The enlarged new SFBAUS has made a great start, off and running. We're new, and still getting to know one another; only now are we able to plan a retreat where we can express more than our social aspects. Since Scott Peck's workshops have consistently hammered out communities, truly loving communities, from bunches of strangers with little in common, in just a weekend's time, we might consider that a viable possibility for our own group. I suggest that if enough of us read Dr. Peck's book, we could then decide whether to use some of its principles to help us move into true community together during a time set aside for that work and that alone.

Pat Fearey

(Pat will discuss Dr. Peck's ideas applied to global issues and large institutions in our next issue.)



LARGER CIRCLES

NEWS FROM BOULDER SCHOOL

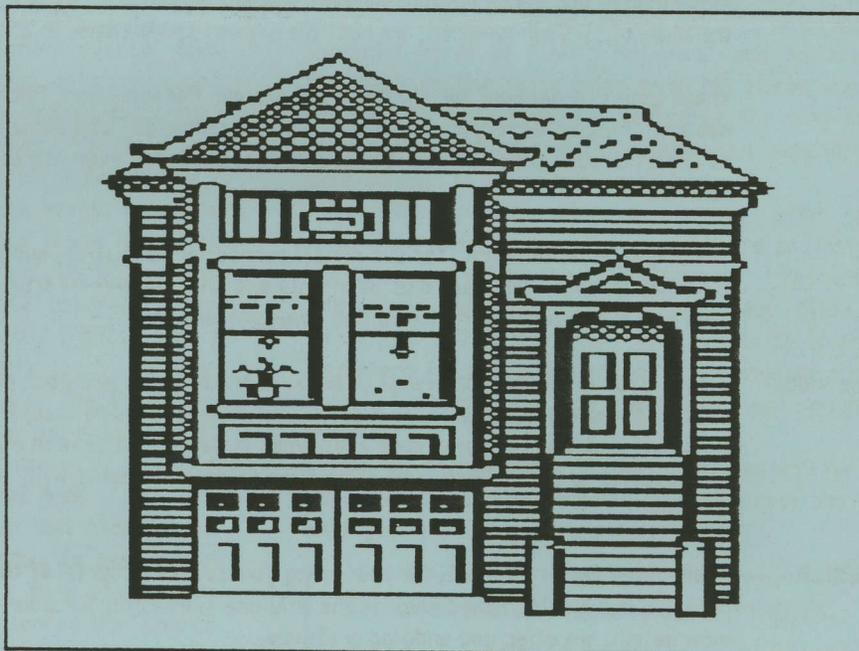
I never knew what a magnificent experience it could be to study The URANTIA BOOK until I devoted full time to the effort at The Boulder School. The discipline, the humor, the mutual enlightenment of sharing insights about how high teachings relate to daily life, working closely, month after month, with sincere and dedicated students of the book, learning to love -- something is contagious here. A majority of the time it feels as though the Spirit of Truth is brightly present in our midst and we are having a feast expressed in words. Let me try to tell you a little more concretely about the school.

First, some basic facts. Three mornings a week, 8 to 12 students study The URANTIA BOOK. The first year we do Parts I-III; the second year, Part IV. During the first two periods of the morning, we study the papers sequentially, practicing a way of holistic study* that will hopefully lead to a lifetime of enhanced reading enjoyment and study group leadership. During the third period, we have topical study and discuss related readings in science, philosophy, and religion. This class exposes us to some of the advances of our larger culture and helps us see how remarkably The URANTIA BOOK interacts with ongoing civilization.

We aim to be a school of thinking, feeling and doing. We seek whatever lessons each paper has to offer in these three areas. By combining three dimensions, we hope to avoid a sterile intellectualism, a shallow emotionalism, and a fanatical activism. We have projects that

involve students in the community. And we are beginning to bring the arts into the classroom experience.

Our central purpose remains promoting personal spiritual growth. Aided by intense study and personal synthesis, the student may choose to prepare for the outreach ministry of his or her choice. Of the many possibilities,



the school specifically fosters two options: becoming an active messenger in the gospel movement or sharing The URANTIA BOOK itself with others.

If we may be of assistance in your pursuit of these goals, please write:

The Boulder School
1622 18th Street
Boulder, CO 80302

Jeffrey Wattles

*(Presented in part, in the 1987 issue of Planetary Prints)

BAY AREA STUDY GROUPS

CONCORD STUDY GROUP, Clayton

Contact: Sara Blackstock
(415) 672-3340

Time: Monthly, 3rd Sunday
7:00 PM

Format: Topical, rotate leaders
rotate meeting places

EL CERRITO STUDY GROUP

Contact: Norm Hetland
(415) 526-9396
Call if interested

KANTORS' STUDY GROUP, Clayton

Contact: Sue Kantor
(415) 672-9422

Time: Monthly, 2nd Sunday
7:00-9:00

Call before meeting

Format: Discussion (Read 2 papers
prior to meeting.)

CHARLIE'S STUDY GROUP

San Francisco

Contact: Charlie Lamar
(415) 386-6072

Time: Every Sunday, Study
at 6:00, Potluck follows

Format: Topical/Papers

MARTINEZ STUDY GROUP

Contact: Andrea Laspinas
(415) 372-9178
Call if interested

PENINSULA STUDY GROUP

Contact: Cheryl Zents
(415) 726-0131

Time: Every Tuesday
7:30 Call before
Rotating at member's
homes

Format: Sequential by section

PETALUMA STUDY GROUP

Contact: Matthew or Cheryl
Rappaport
(707) 762-0329
Call if interested

SAN JOSE STUDY GROUP

Contact: Mike Hagan
(408) 272-8458

Time: Every Tuesday
7:30-9:30

Format: Sequential, topical

SANTA CRUZ STUDY GROUP

Contact: Larry or Elizabeth Jones
(408) 425-1882

Time: Monthly, first Wednesday

Format: Theme Studies and
Individual Papers

SANTA CRUZ NEW READERS

Contact: Angel Shore
(408) 462-5553
Time: Every Thurs. 7:30 PM

SANTA ROSA STUDY GROUP

Contact: Preston Bailey
(707) 792-2829
Call if interested

SPIRITUAL UNION STUDY GROUP

San Francisco

Contact: Claire or Chuck Thurston
(415) 564-1826

or Stephen Zendt
(415) 821-9363

Time: Every Sunday
7:30-9:00

Format: Topical, Sequential

SARATOGA STUDY GROUP

Contact: Joe Pattin
(408) 867-1681
Call if interested