



SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA URANTIA. SOCIETY

DEVELOPMENTS

Number 29

Winter/Spring 1989

Letter From The President

One of the great revelations within the Fifth Epochal Revelation is the confirmation that the religion *of* Jesus (as distinct from the religion *about* Jesus) will ultimately succeed on this planet. Towards this end the URANTIA Brotherhood was organized and it continues to evolve as a structure for the fulfillment of this great promise.

Within the Brotherhood is a core of organized societies composed of believing members. Of course, any organization needs the essential process of debate, compromise, and consolidation of the diverse experiences and perspectives of its individual members to accomplish its unity of purpose.

This dynamic process was demonstrated at our SFBAUS semiannual business meeting on November 12. Yet on reflection, I have to give pause and consider what we *as a Society* are about. I know that we had a very cordial gathering, and I was warmed by the fellowship of our diverse group of believers...but I wonder, "How seriously are we considering this thing we call SFBAUS?"

A Solitary Messenger of Orvonton tells us (on page 1227):

"Relationships exist between two objects, but three or more objects eventuate a system, and such a system is much more than just an enlarged or complex relationship. This distinction is vital for in a cosmic system the individual members are not connected with each other except in relation to the whole and through the individuality of the whole."

"...In the human system it is the personality which unifies all activities and in turn imparts the qualities of identity and creativity."

I know that our society has to be more than just a collaboration of various relationships of curious URANTIA Book readers; we are more than the sum of our different backgrounds and interests. I think that we *as a Society* are an aggregation of devoted individuals attempting to communicate a group personality expression.

In the coming months we will be growing and evolving: via worshipping together, meeting as an enlarged study group of the whole (i.e. society study group), engaging in the social fellowship of parties and potluck dinners, and renewing at a Springtime spiritual retreat.

We will also be seeking for new members.

I invite you to join us in our search for identity and creativity!

Lee Smith
President

SPECIAL EVENTS COMING UP! See Next Page For Info ...

ANNOUNCEMENTS

WORSHIP EVENT

Sponsored by SFBAUS

◆
Date: Sunday, January 29

Time: 2:00-3:30 Worship

3:30-5:00 Social time

Place: Pacific School of Religion

1798 Scenic at LeConte

Mudd Building, Room 100

◆
PSR is catering coffee and tea,
but bring cookies or other
desserts.

◆
Need childcare?

Call Marvin Gawryn: (415) 799-9284

◆
Other questions?

Call Larry Jones: (408) 425-1882

*Larry explains his worship proposal
in the following article.*



ALL DAY STUDY EVENT

Sponsored by SFBAUS

◆
Date: Saturday, February 11

Time: 11:00AM - 4:30PM

Place: Dolores Nice's home

3638 Farm Hill Blvd.

Intersection/McGarvey

Redwood City, Ca.

◆
Childcare not available

Bring bag lunch

◆
Other questions?

Call Stephen Zendt: (415) 821-9363

See enclosed flyer for more info.

WORSHIP PROPOSAL

Dear fellow Urantians,

I propose that one to four times a year we quietly assemble for the express purpose of meditating in the presence of the FATHER. To come together in a conducive setting, leaving our troubles at the door, relaxing, with no talking, we may securely and sincerely worship God as our friend amongst us for an hour. Afterward we can socialize, or party, but the new exhilaration of love and dedication will result in that true fruit of the spirit, a renewal of our spiritual connection with each other through the spiritual brotherhood of the FATHER.

We have a need to truly relax as a group and obtain to the "peace which passes all human understanding". We who share so much, need to love each other more. Worship can do this. After-all, it is the maintenance of spiritual communication and energies in ever wider and deeper paths that determines the fruit bearing capacity of the branch from the living vine. The time has now come to establish a vital spiritual cohesion of our group, one that will reveal itself so that Jesus could say, "I know you as my friends because of your love for one another".

As individuals we commune with God the Adjuster, as a group we commune with the Father more as the source and center of all things and beings. We know the satisfactions of personal worship alone with the Father. We can begin now to foretaste the sublime values and meanings of worshipping in larger aggregations. Said Jesus '.. When two or more are gathered in my name, there I am also...'. Worship is something true and real that we can do both as an individual or as a group. All of us give our nod of assent to the reality content of group worship but now is the time to actually experience it together. It is high time that we had a worship experience that lies too deep for words.

On Sunday, January 29, the San Francisco Bay Area Urantia Society will host just such a worship event in the Bay area. The event will take place at the Pacific School of Religion at 1798 Scenic at LeConte in Berkeley. We will meet in room 100 of the Mudd Building. The worship program will start at 2:00 P.M. and go to 3:30, followed by social time until 5:00 P.M. Coffee and tea will be provided, but feel free to bring desserts. If you need childcare, call Marvin Gawryn at (415) 799-9284.

In the meantime, join us in worshipping individually, as a couple, and as a group, anywhere and everywhere; Praise God, Love God, and rejoice in the promise of the coming marriage of our soul with his spirit.

Sincerely,
Larry Jones

AN OUTREACH EXPERIMENT: Listing in *Common Ground*

Steve McIntosh, a San Francisco reader, in an outreach effort, wrote the following text for listing in the directory, *Common Ground*, with the support of SFBAUS.

Common Ground is a Bay Area directory, providing access to resources for "personal transformation," with listings in categories ranging from nutrition to spiritual practices. The magazine circulates 80,000 free copies quarterly through direct mail and local outlets.

Developments will keep you posted on the results of this and other outreach projects. Here is the text:

"The URANTIA Book is an organized revelation unifying history, philosophy, science, and religion into a logical explanation of the nature of the universe and our progressive spiritual career. Written by many universe personalities and first published in Chicago in 1955, the 2097 pages of The URANTIA Book cover an enormous depth of information and inspiration regarding: the complete history and evolution of our planet; the structure of the infinite universe; the affairs of our 'local universe' and the diversity of beings who inhabit it; and, most importantly, the nature of God and a restatement of the life and teachings of Jesus of Nazareth.

"A casual reading of any one of the 196 papers in The URANTIA Book will reveal an intellectually challenging, loving presentation of powerful ideas crafted in some of the most elegant yet straightforward prose found anywhere in the English language. Readers of The URANTIA Book around the world often experience a profound joy that comes from a broadened perspective on our place in the family of the cosmos.

"The URANTIA Book is available at your local library and in book stores and three foreign-language translations are presently underway. For study group information, please write: SFBAUS, P.O. Box 460163, San Francisco, CA 94146-163."

THE 1990 URANTIA BROTHERHOOD GENERAL CONFERENCE Snow Mountain Ranch, near Winter Park, Colorado

I hope to entuse all of you who read this to start making plans now to attend this very special gathering of believer/readers in the splendor of the high mountains of Colorado! Snow Mountain Ranch is located west of Rocky Mountain National Park in a high mountain valley sur-

rounded by splendid views. Hiking, white water rafting, horse-back riding, miniature golf and indoor swimming are but a few of the recreation opportunities that will be available. The very best feature of the site is its relative isolation from metropolitan life. We will have the place to ourselves, but the stir-crazy will have only a short drive to one of America's most popular ski resort communities to find town-type recreation among the Summer natives. On the other hand, those who relish the seclusion of nature in all her beauty will find this just the ticket.

The theme for the conference will be "Vaya con Dios- Walking with God". The newly completed Spanish translation of THE URANTIA BOOK will be available at about this time in 1990, so a celebration of a new addition to our library of languages will be part of the conference plans. A greater emphasis on quality of presentations, appropriateness of content, and skill of presenter will be in evidence. The selection of John Hay and the Rocky Mountain URANTIA Society of Denver as hosts for this next General Conference inevitably means that this will be a "high altitude" gathering in every way.

Most importantly, we will be able to worship our Universal Father in the glories of natural surroundings; around the campfire, in the lovely chapel, or on silent walks in the high pine forests. Children will find a daily program of activities so parents can appreciate the workshops and lectures while enjoying a truly family-style vacation.

Snow Mountain Ranch is part of the YMCA OF THE ROCKIES. Accommodations resemble a medium-priced motel room, with bath attached, in several large buildings scattered around the Conference Center. Most arrangements will be for shared rooms of two or more, with families able to bed down four to six per room, in certain lodgings. There will be facilities on the conference grounds for recreational vehicles and tent sites, with electrical and plumbing tie-ins furnished. Some dormitory accommodations may be made available for single persons, should registration numbers warrant their use by the YMCA administration office. Economy with ample comfort and services is offered by this YMCA facility, a part of a large camping and conference facility offered on both the eastern and western sides of the National Park. Their emphasis is on family values in a rustic but adequate conference center. A videotape which describes the site, created by the YMCA is available to show to study groups or individuals.

Transportation to the site will be provided from Stapleton Airport in Denver by vans operated through the YMCA office, and there is a train which travels to Winter Park or Granby, just a short distance away from Snow Mountain Ranch. If greater independence is desired, rental vehicles can be reserved at the airport. The beauties of

LOVE IN ACTION

General Conference (Cont.)

Trail Ridge Road in the National Park are not to be missed for real nature lovers, and the old towns on the roads around the conference center are a joy for antique and history buffs.

It is presently estimated that costs for the conference will be around \$200.00 per person for adults. Details for children will be made available as soon as possible.

Dates for the conference are tentatively set for July 21 through July 26, Saturday through Thursday, with the General Council meeting afterward to Saturday, July 28. Travel plans should have you arriving at Snow Mountain Ranch on Saturday afternoon, July 21.

A full listing of details should be made available to the general mailing list in late Spring 1989. As a member of the Conference Planning Committee, I urge you to give this 1990 General Conference your most serious consideration. Plan to join your fellow Agondonters in the Rockies, for an old fashioned high time.

Stephen Zendt

WELCOME TO THE URANTIA BOOK!

Several months ago I lent a copy of the URANTIA Book to a friend who was spiritually inclined, had been reading "new age" books, and who had evinced an interest in the URANTIA Book. Upon loaning her the Book, I suggested that she read "The Reality of Religious Experience" and "The Sojourn at Rome." After reading these passages my friend told me that she had found "Reality of Religious Experience" tough going but that she had enjoyed "Sojourn at Rome" and had continued to read on from that paper. I told her that I would suggest some reading from other parts of the Book that might be more accessible.

Reproduced below is the syllabus of reading that I gave to my friend. If I were to use this list again for another potential reader I would add the "Sojourn at Rome" paper at the beginning of the list. I am offering these suggested readings in the hope that other UB students will publish their introductory reading suggestions. If we can develop enough accessible material, perhaps we can use it for an introductory study group. Tailoring suggested reading to a new reader's particular interests is the best approach, but with this list I tried to give an overview of the scope of the Book, as well as a few definitions.

Here is the list, which can be read in one sitting:

- 1) Political: *Development of the State*, pp.800-807 by a Melchizedek of Nebadon. (If you like this

paper, go on to the next one "Government on a Neighboring Planet" when you have time.)

- 2) Artistic: *The Celestial Musicians*, pp. 499-500 by an Archangel of Nebadon.
- 3) Religious: *The Universal Father*, p. 30, par.4 &5 and *Erroneous Ideas of God*, pp. 59-61 both by a Divine Counselor
- 4) Historical: *The Religion of Jesus*, pp. 2091-2093 by the Midwayer Commission
- 5) Inspirational: *Quest for the Supreme*, p. 1289, 2nd and 3rd full paragraphs by a Mighty Messenger

Here are my extremely abbreviated definitions for a few key terms: (*Several papers are devoted to these concepts which must be read for full comprehension.*)

Thought Adjuster (or Adjuster) refers to the fragment of God that indwells every person. Not the conscience, but the "inner cosmic compass" that provides the instinctual awareness of right and wrong.

Morontia means the intervening level of reality between the physical realm and that of pure spirit. Ascending personalities grow through a morontia existence (Known in other teachings as the "astral plane") after they have left their planets of origin and before they are translated into pure spirits. After attaining spirit status, it's on to higher ascension adventure.

Urantia is the designated name of our planet.

Steve McIntosh

NEW STUDY PROPOSALS Prepared by the Study Group Committee of SFBAUS

The following proposals are presented for consideration by the Bay Area readership. If you would like to support any of these ideas, please bring your suggestions to the next Society meeting, or contact Stephen Zendt, Committee chair, in the meantime at 415-821-9363.

1. STUDY MARATHON

This would allow those in the Society membership to actually study the UB with others in the Society with whom

Study Proposals, (Cont.)

they've never shared insights and revelations.

This could be an all-day event, with a bring-it-yourself bag lunch. There would be a pre-arranged topic and a supplied selection of varied but relevant quotes, pulled from diverse sections of the Book. Subgroups of five persons each would be created, with an attempt made to mix individuals who don't ordinarily study together. These smaller groups would work together for two two-hour sessions during the day, with an open sharing session at the end of the day, and a meditation to close the day.

2. SPEAKER/STUDY BUREAU

This would be an opportunity for individuals to speak at our Potluck Suppers or other Society events, not only to sharpen their skills before a public audience but also to help us open our minds to another person's point of view.

Interested volunteers could list with our committee so that an opening for them could be found in the future.

3. COMPENDIUM OF STUDY GUIDES AND MATERIALS

We need to have a library of topical materials available for use by the Society, study groups, and individual readers. As we grow, we should be able to benefit from the research and findings of earlier years, so we are not constantly "reinventing the wheel".

4. VISITATION/EXCHANGE PROGRAM FOR STUDY GROUPS

This would be a way to encourage individual readers to visit the variety of Bay Area study groups, thus promoting cross fertilization of methods and relationships. Not only should the members of present groups be so encouraged, but those attempting to start new study groups could also benefit from this type of activity.

RISK and FAITH

At one time or another, we all feel stuck, experiencing an uncomfortable sense of personal stagnation. "What has to happen for change to occur?"

A common reply might be, "You have to take a chance, dare to take a new approach."

But risk-taking is not that simple. Without a firm sense of faith, fear easily can overwhelm the best intentions to change. To trust that risk is inherently part of a process designed to enhance life means believing in a faith guarantee. Obviously, this does not mean a guaranteed outcome,

but rather a belief that struggling for personal growth will bear spiritual fruit.

Imagine the sense of danger which many of our friends who don't know God experience when confronted by such feelings. In a Godless universe, cultural mores dictate standards; in our materialistic culture with its existential philosophy, one is supposed to accept the dare of risk-taking and give oneself a pat on the back for bravery. This is like standing on the edge of a chasm and trying to ignore the possibility of a fall. Simply such risk would most likely be foolhardy.

Part of the process of risk-taking requires attunement, discerning direction for spiritual growth before deciding which step to take. If there are five roads, the first choice involves choosing a road before facing a particular obstacle on that road. This process is partially conscious and partially unconscious. Consciously, we can ask God to provide clues to self-discovery. We know from the Urantia Book that prayer is psychologically and spiritually healthy. Psychologically, prayer counteracts depression by focusing on personal engagement, participating in one's own life. Depression, the feeling of being overwhelmed by factors beyond one's control, and the concomitant passivity and lack of self-esteem could be described as an abdication of power for self-discovery.

To say, "I cannot change," is like saying, "I refuse to recognize the spiritual growth occurring unconsciously within me and I refuse to use my conscious mind to consolidate that growth." Immediately one is living a lie, creating an artificial status, a self-made prison of spiritual quarantine. Anyone outside the prison becomes a guard. In the eyes of the prisoner anyone who is growing is cruel, oblivious to his piteous condition. The prisoner may challenge God, saying, "Prove that it is worthwhile for me to change," thereby attempting to obviate the *leap of faith*. Or the prisoner may set up a test for God, saying, "I am resisting your universe, change me, move me to change," thus staging a perverted parody of childishness, as opposed to the child-like trust needed to know God. But avoiding the realities of adult responsibility certainly won't coerce God into an act of salvation.

We are all familiar with the concept of basic training; a cadet endures various physical and mental obstacles to toughen him for the hazards of war. As Urantia Book readers, we know we are being trained for harder assignments. Part of our training in this life involves learning to develop an appetite for the rigors of risk-taking. The gospel message opens the door of faith, but also introduces the guarantee which makes personal growth possible.

Claire Thurston

EXPERIENCE AND INTERPRETATION An Argument Against a Fundamentalist Approach to the URANTIA Book

It is said that those who kick a habit are its strongest opponents, so perhaps this article might better be titled, "Confessions of a Post-Fundamentalist." At any rate, I would like to share my thoughts on the difference between what we experience as Truth, and how we interpret that experience.

Oftentimes the line of distinction between an experience and its interpretation is a fine one. We go through an experience, all the while formulating opinions about the experience, opinions shaded and influenced by facts, stories, and opinions of others who may or may not be involved. All of these things and more contribute to shaping our interpretation of an experience. But, at some point in this process, and perhaps at many points, a crossing of that line occurs between what we are experiencing, and our developing interpretation of what we are experiencing. I would like to focus on that line of distinction for the purposes of this discussion.

Bring to mind any controversial event you have been through, say a family disagreement, for example. You had your own point of view, your experience of the event and others had theirs. Furthermore, everyone else who was involved, or who was not involved and had merely heard about it, also had their own interpretation of what happened. Whose interpretation of the situation is the accurate one? Only one person's? Everybody's, from each one's point of view? Nobody's? Controversy often teaches us that there are many ways of interpreting an experience.

The controversial person and experience I would like to focus on now is Jesus; the historical person who lived his life here on Earth, and the living presence who guides our daily lives as the Spirit of Truth. Jesus was and is the source of endless controversy, regarding both his advent here on Earth, and his living ministry. But, as the controversy rages, let's take a look at what is the *experience* and what is the *interpretation* of the experience.

Jesus' Earth life as an historical event, was an experience for our whole planet. But, it was an experience with a beginning and an ending, a limited bubble in the flowing stream of time. It was a window through which we were given the opportunity to look at divinity in action. And were it not for the ever present ministry of the person of Jesus through the Spirit of Truth, our understanding of his mission would be limited to the repetition of stories about Jesus. And we, many generations later, would be wholly subject to the interpretations or misinterpretations of those who went before us regarding his life, his teachings, his

healing and his saving nature. But thankfully, this is not the case. Since the day of Pentecost, the Spirit of Truth has been functioning on our world, bringing the *experience* of the presence of Jesus to everyone's personal consciousness, and personally laboring to do for each one of us, what Jesus, himself, would do were he still living among us as a brother in the flesh.

What I would like to do now, is to place these two examples - Jesus' life in the flesh and the inner life ministry of the Spirit of Truth - squarely into the category of *experience*. And I would like to posit that everything which follows from these experiences, is in some measure, colored by personal *interpretation*. That is to say, that every summation, opinion, fact, story, representation, listing, description, etc. of either of those experiences is going to be *limited* to some degree by the viewpoint, experience, opinions, etc. of the individual.

This limitation of viewpoint applies even more pointedly to our own beloved URANTIA book. For whatever else it may be, The URANTIA book is also an *interpretation* of an experience of Truth. That is not to say that The URANTIA Book, by description or by interpretation, does not mightily *contribute* to our experience of truth. The URANTIA Book also can and does serve as a vehicle through which the living ministry of the Spirit of Truth may pass. But I believe we would be in great error to say that The URANTIA book is the *source* of such an experience.

For instance, the story of the life of Jesus in The URANTIA Book is wonderful. But let's remember that it is also one interpretation of that historical event, and even though we run across occasional phrases like, "...what really happened was..."; this interpretation still occurs after the experience. It is presented by individuals who are fallible and subject to their own unique set of limitations even as we are. Perhaps the limitations of a group of midwayers is not something you're interested in trifling with. Frankly, neither am I. But I believe "our spiritual fragrance" would be enhanced if we would keep in mind the fact that our wonderful story of the life and teachings of Jesus is, after all, (especially in the eyes of the non-UB reader) one of many interpretations. Set alongside the Bible, Koran, Aquarian Gospel of Jesus the Christ, Apocrypha, Gnostic Gospels, book of Mormon, etc., what makes our version any more right than any of those? Claims of revelation? They all have that. Our insistence that ours is more accurate? Remember our family controversy?

No matter how strongly we believe in The URANTIA book, assertions of "eye witnesses" or "historically more correct" are useless, because what those arguments are all aiming at is Truth. And they all miss the mark, because Truth is not an *interpretation* or a *description*, it is

THE BOOK AND THE CHURCH

*Experience and Interpretation (Cont.)
an experience!*

I believe that we could all richly nourish our souls if we would more often sample the delights of "humble pie". Jesus, as the Spirit of Truth, touches our lives every day through our brothers and sisters, through the circumstances of our lives and through readings of any spiritually inspiring literature. And this is an experience which we share with all humanity. With some portion of this great family, we may also be moved to share The URANTIA book. Let us do so with great respect and reverence for the work which Jesus has already done through the Spirit of Truth in each person's life. And, let us remember that all of our interpretations, including this writing, though inextricably meshed with our experience of Truth in our inner lives, are, after all, the way we personally perceive Truth, and are not Truth itself.

Francyl Gawryn

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DEVELOPMENTS:

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Fruits of the Spirit

Loving service
Unselfish devotion
Courageous loyalty
Sincere fairness
Enlightened honesty
Undying hope
Confiding trust
Merciful ministry
Unfailing goodness
Forgiving tolerance
Enduring peace

Jesus

Angel Graphics, Capistrano, CA 92610

BAY AREA STUDY GROUPS

CONCORD STUDY GROUP

Contact: Sara Blackstock
(415) 672-3340
Time: Monthly, 4th Sunday, 7:00 PM
Format: Topical, rotate leaders,
rotate meeting places

EAST BAY STUDY GROUP

Contact: Marvin Gawryn
(415) 799-9284
Time: Monthly, 2nd Sunday
Study: 7:30 - 9:00 PM
Fellowship: 7:00-7:30 PM, 9:00-9:30 PM
Format: Topical, rotate leaders

MARIN STUDY GROUP, Terra Linda

Contact: Jacques Lecouturier
(415) 479-8269
Time: Monthly, 1st Thursday,
7:00-9:00 PM
Format: Theme studies and individual papers

MARTINEZ STUDY GROUP

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

MILL VALLEY STUDY GROUP

Contact: Carol English
(415) 383-4157
Call if interested

MULQUEENEY STUDY GROUP

Foster City
Contact: Jack Mulqueeney
(415) 574-4957
Time: Monthly, 1st Sunday
Format: Combines readers of the
Urantia Book, Course in Miracles and
A.R.E. groups

PETALUMA STUDY GROUP

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

PENINSULA STUDY GROUP

Contact: Cheryl Zents, (415) 726-0131
Time: Alternate Wednesdays, 7:30 PM
Call before, rotate meeting at members' homes
Format: Sequential by section

SAN FRANCISCO STUDY GROUP

Contact: Claire or Chuck Thurston
(415) 564-1826 or
Stephen Zendt (415) 821-9363
Time: Every Sunday, 7:30-9:30 PM
Format: Topical, Sequential

SAN JOSE STUDY GROUP

Contact: Mike Hagan, (408) 272-8458
Time: Every Wednesday, 7:30-9:30 PM
Format: Sequential, topical

SANTA CRUZ STUDY GROUP

Contact: Larry and Elizabeth Jones
(408) 425-1882 or
Lee and Chrissy Smith (408) 462-4823
Time: Every Wednesday, 8:00 PM
(First Wed. of month at Jones's,
other Wed. at Smith's)
Format: Theme studies and individual papers

SANTA CRUZ NEW READERS

Contact: Angel Shore
(408) 462-5553
Time: Every Thursday, 7:30 PM

SANTA ROSA STUDY GROUP

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