

The Retreat Network



Spring/Summer 2006

Evolving a Spiritual Retreat Center

By: Bruce Porter

OUR ODYSSEY STARTED TWO YEARS AGO AS A SMALL GROUP OF URANTIA BOOK READERS with a shared ideal: creating a small spiritual community where we could live together with shared assets, while dedicating the property and our lives to doing our Father's will. Now, two years later, we at Kindred Spirits Retreat Center are celebrating our one year-anniversary. It has been a long journey, with plenty of ups and downs, both individually and as a community.

The idea of a community was born of many conversations over several years. Many people in our Urantia Book community were feeling this same compulsion, that it was time to work more closely together. There was a sense that being separated so much of the time, and only coming together for Urantia events, was far less than ideal. It seemed that as we got older it was time to focus more on our spiritual work together. In other words, it was time to do our best work, born of our highest ideals and tempered by years of experience.

So three of us, Roger Newton, Bruce Porter and Dolores Nice, after agreeing on the basic ideal of community, began to work together on the project. First, we looked at the practical aspects of community; how to acquire the necessary property and what type of organization would be necessary. It became clear early on that some people had capital, but not a lot of earning power, and others had earning power but not a great deal of capital. So we combined these two assets, with some put-

ting up the necessary capital, while others assumed and serviced the necessary debt. Without getting into anymore detail, let's just say it took a considerable amount of faith to move forward when it came to the real brass tacks of acquiring property. We were all very aware of how

few projects like this are successful in the long run, but we also felt it was time to begin to live more by faith. The question came up, "If not now, then when?" All of us being over fifty, and some over sixty, knew our years on good ole Urantia were winding down. We located a property that looked promising and decided it was time to find a real estate agent to work with us. One of our Urantia friends in the area recommended an agent that helped him find his property, so we set up a meeting. When we got to the fancy office building, and even fancier conference room to meet him, we were starting to feel a bit out of place. But then in walked Roy Keen, unruly gray hair, Levis, flannel shirt and a big, warm smile. Before we could even get a word out, he

said, "You know, I've lived in four spiritual communities, two of which I helped start. I also formed two non-profit organizations along the way. So I have a good idea where you folks are coming from. I know you are looking at the Howarth Ranch, but I have

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a special place which I think you should see." The property we had been looking at was 300 acres, with four home sites and an eight-acre lake. It would have been great if we had a larger group and more money to develop it. But all the infrastructure was old and decaying and it was just more than our small band of truth seekers could take on. So we were very open to seeing what Roy had in mind.

We loaded up the cars and headed off to what would eventually become the home of our retreat center. Nothing could have prepared us for what we discovered there. The property was on forty-acres just ten miles SW of Eugene, Oregon. It was built five years before by a man and his wife who founded a very successful organic foods company, Emerald Valley Kitchens. They envisioned it to someday be a meeting place for teaching sustain-



Future Sanctuary



The Great Room

Evolving a Spiritual Retreat - continued

able ecology. But, with two young children, after a couple of years they decided to move back into town to be a part of a local neighborhood with playmates for the kids, etc. What they left behind was a remarkable property: a 3400 sq. ft. main house, a 1100 sq. ft. guest house, a 1000 sq. ft. shop, a 1000 sq. ft. out-building, a one-acre fenced garden, a pad mounted generator, a commercial phone system that connected all the buildings, and the list goes on. The out-building was completely finished on the outside and would be perfect to build into our new sanctuary. But the most appealing part was the beauty of the buildings and the setting. The forty-acres are at the end of a one-half mile gravel road, right at the top of a ridge, forested with pine, Douglas fir, oak and cedar, with an incredible view and complete privacy. The buildings were built by an innovative company called Oregon Yurtworks, which builds conventional houses with a 26-sided yurt design. This allows for expansive round, exposed beam rooms, with 16 ft. high skylights in the middle. Everything was beautifully handcrafted from various hardwoods. There was an amazing, uplifting, spiritual quality to the buildings.

It didn't take us long to decide this was the place. We then began the exhausting process of actually buying the property, with all of its complications—especially when three people are going to be co-owners. We all agreed that co-ownership was the right model to start, but our plan is to eventually have the property owned by a land trust and/or non-

profit organization that can continue long after we head off to the mansion worlds. And so, somehow, almost miraculously, we navigated the process and a few months later took possession of the property.

Then the real work began—actually "breathing the dream to life." This is one of those things that either your whole life prepares you for or it doesn't—you can only live the truth that you are. And it has been an exciting voyage of discovery, each day bringing new challenges as well as moments of great peace and joy. One thing we knew right away was that we did not have the boots on the ground to do what needed to be done. But, with a lot of help from our unseen friends the right people have come along at the right time to fill out the picture. Jesse Syverson and

stayed on to become an integral part of our community. Jesse's dad, Mik, joined us in June. He is a gourmet chef and will be coordinating the kitchen as well as cooking for events, including the August Retreat Network retreat.

We began a weekly study group, and soon had local readers (notably Gabe MacIsaac and Leonard Abileter) joining us on Sundays for reading, and often staying for dinner. We are currently exploring having another study group to read other inspirational books together. We are also looking at the possibility of hosting a UB

undertaking this project with many others, not just those who are able to live here.

Before the first winter began we completed the installation of an outdoor wood-fired boiler to heat all the buildings. With the help of James Woodward, who took time off from his duties in Chicago, and others, we also built a 600 sq. ft. structure to house it and store the wood. On the drawing board now is a 2400 sq. ft. addition to the main house that would add six more bedrooms, two bathrooms and an additional living room. This would give us the ability to have more full-time residents, as

well as more room for future retreats. Another project for this summer is building a road that will follow the perimeter of the property. It will be almost a mile long, and will only be possible because a wonderful spiritual brother, Bob Merrill, who has years of experience with such things, has volunteered to run the caterpillar. And so we are progressing step by step, slowly but surely, growing the spiritual center we envisioned years before.

Now we find ourselves celebrating our one-year anniversary and looking forward to the Annual Retreat Network Retreat, August 25-27. It's going to be a full summer continuing our work here and preparing for the retreat, but there is no other place in the universe we would rather be...

Note: Anyone interested in more information, supporting or playing a part in Kindred Spirits Retreat Center e-mail Bruce Porter at bruceport@aol.com. ☐



Boiler Work Crew

Allison Zopel came on board early on. After building an office into the rear portion of the shop, Jesse moved his herbal supplement brokerage, Conscious Trading Co, onto the property. Chris Marquand arrived a short time later to become our organic gardener and carpenter. Allison has since moved to the Buddhist Center nearby, but Jesse

Organic Garden

study group every month at the local Unity Church.

Towards the end of the first summer we had a dedication weekend where 25 or so readers came

from around the country to join us. We had fellowship, reading groups, meditation sessions, and a dedication evening gathered around the fire in our "Outdoor Cathedral." There we all joined hands and each voiced their blessings and prayers for our work together. The weekend ended with an inspiring worship. Our time together made it clear that we were



“Le Club de l’Esprit”

By: Guy Perron

ABOUT FOUR AND A HALF YEARS AGO, I JOINED TOASTMASTERS to become a better communicator of the good news of the Paternity of God, the Brotherhood of Man and the Kingdom of Heaven Within Each of Us.

On my first visit, I was kind of overwhelmed by the applause and the protocol, but on my second visit, I realized that I could learn a lot in that organization and I did. I did the whole program, and more importantly, I decide to serve my fellow Toastmasters in different functions from the club to the district, from Vice President of Public Relations to Division Governor.

“With God the Father, sonship is the great relationship. With God the Supreme, achievement is the prerequisite to status—one must do something as well as be something.” (Pg. 1260:1)

After a little bit more than a year in Toastmasters, I felt that something was missing: the spiritual element, so essential to growth. Driving on my way back from a meeting, I asked my spiritual partner, my Thought Adjuster, why was I here doing all these Toastmaster experiences? The answer came right away, it was to start a spiritual Toastmasters club. We were at the beginning of summer so I waited until fall to transform my study group into a talking group. It was fascinating to see how much richer the meetings were by combining the Urantia Book study group with the Toastmasters meeting. It was and still is fascinating to observe how much progress each member

rapidly achieves. When you need to clearly organize your thoughts in order to share your spiritual insights and experiences to your fellow members, the growth is pretty powerful.

A few months after, our local Urantia Association decided to do a Canadian conference during the summer. All the speakers at that conference were trained at “Le Club de l’Esprit.” They were all able to practice, get feedback, improve their basic abilities, their verbal and non-verbal communication and much more. All of them were kind of amazed how well they did. *“That which the enlightened and reflective human imagination of spiritual teaching and leading wholeheartedly and unselfishly wants to do and be, becomes measurably creative in accordance with the degree of marital dedication to the divine doing of the Father’s will. When man goes in partnership with God, great things may, and do, happen.” (Pg. 1467:5)*

A few months after the conference, I moved to a new location and I was not able to host “Le Club de l’Esprit” in my apartment anymore. So “Le Club de l’Esprit” was put on hold for almost two years until last summer when it was relaunched, but this time as an official Toastmasters club. The first version of the club was not an official Toastmasters club and most of the people were Urantia Book readers. Now, 7 of the 24 members are UB readers. What a great way to subtly influence others to a wider understanding of the cosmic realities, a great way... *“in our endeavor to expand cosmic consciousness and enhance spiritual*

perception” (Pg. 1:2) as the revelators do.

In the beginning, we had to be cautious about how we talked about God. We had to be delicate and respectful of the others, not pushing the book on others. After only a month, four meetings, it was surprising to see how much more people were freely talking about God. Now all of us are doing it in a very normal way. All within six months.

And last week, something very interesting happened. Usually we meet in a bigger room—we have about 15 members, but for that meeting, we were only 8 in a smaller room. The meeting lasted for almost three hours. The more intimate surroundings created the perfect setting for a transformation: this meeting was a spiritual meeting with a Toastmasters touch. When we promote “Le Club de l’Esprit” outside, we usually say that it is

a Toastmasters club with a spiritual touch.

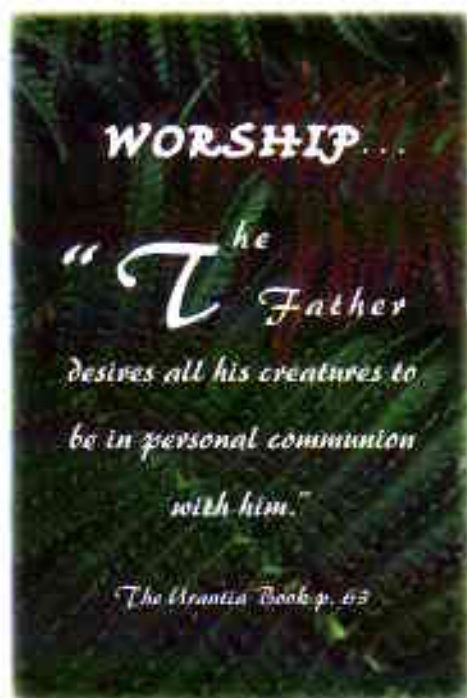
“Le Club de l’Esprit” is now back to its original roots. We started as a spiritual group using the Toastmasters surrounding in order to be able to speak the tongue of the Spirit; then we became an official Toastmasters club with a spiritual touch, and now the two have fused very naturally and we are a spiritual club with a Toastmasters touch. We went the full circle, an everlasting ascending circle.

Thank you Father for indwelling each of us and for inspiring us in serving our brothers and sisters in so many different ways.

May the love and peace of our Father be with you and within you always.

Your brother in spirit and in service. □

Editors Note: “Le Club de l’Esprit” is a InnerLife International program.



Retreat Schedules:

SILVER SPRINGS - 2006

Rates are quoted in U.S. currency. Call toll free 1-800-546-5601 to reserve space.

(For more retreat details check: www.ubretreats.ca)

URANTIA YOUTH CAMP

Friday, August 4 – Thursday, August 10

(See simultaneous retreat option for parents below)

A friendly, safe and fun week-long camping experience for youth, ages 11-17 in the backwoods at Silver Springs. Space is limited to 12 campers. The facilitators are professionally trained youth workers who are devoted to the revelation and are themselves experienced campers. They will be sharing Urantia values in a beautiful natural setting that includes ponds, streams and waterfalls. Activities to include camping skills, yoga, nature hikes, swimming, kayaking, arts and crafts, and evening campfires—plus a special group project throughout the week. A lifeguard and a registered nurse will be on-site.

What to bring: A complete checklist can be found on our website. Campers will need their own sleeping bags/pillow, air/foam mattress and to bring a tent if they have or can borrow one.

Cost: \$75/pp + taxes. Includes: meals & program.

SPIRITUAL ADULT RETREAT

Friday, August 4 – Thursday, August 10

This retreat is ideal for parents who want to accompany their child to the YOUTH CAMP and enjoy a separate adult program. The purpose of this relaxed retreat is to give rest to body and mind by facilitating spiritual development through exercises and activities aimed at a closer relationship with the Thought Adjuster, greater realization of Spirit realities, worship opportunities, and the development of brotherly and sisterly relationships with other Urantians. The evening campfires will be joined with the Youth Camp. Come and experience this Joy for the Soul!

Cost: \$245/pp + taxes (double occupancy). Includes: program, 6 nights and meals.

CAMP NEBADON

Saturday, August 19 – Monday, August 21

This annual potluck celebration of Jesus' Birthday and the partnership of Michael and Mother Spirit in the Universe of Nebadon will offer a special focus on planetary progress since Michael's human incarnation.

Guests are invited to provide their own sleeping bags, sheets and towels. Food contributions towards meals can be coordinated through: Terry Orier (416) 482-7115.

Cost: Compliments of Silver Springs.

SEMINAR WITH MOUSSA NDIAYE

Friday, August 25 – Friday, September 1 (7 nights - Thursday is a full day)

For several years we've been hearing enthusiastic reports on the spiritual teaching methodology developed by Moussa Ndiaye in Dakar, Senegal and have witnessed profound and loving changes in many who have trained with him. Moussa has been offering seminars in French-speaking Quebec for the last few years and we at Silver Springs have been eager to host Moussa to share this methodology with English language students. Thankfully this year, he and bilingual translator Blaise Marchildon and Mark George-Moore, have graciously agreed to present the methodology that seems to change lives.

Moussa Ndiaye is a French-speaking university professor and spiritual teacher in Dakar. His teachings are based on Urantia Book concepts. He also uses scriptures and other texts depending on the background of the student. Moussa developed his methodology over 25 years teaching over 1000 students in Dakar and has trained 80 teachers.

Cost: \$550/pp + taxes. Includes meals, 7 nights, program, Moussa's expenses and translation. Note: Space is limited to 22.

OUTREACH URANTIA

Thursday, October 5 - Monday, October 9

This retreat is ideal for those who want to share *The Urantia Book* with others but are finding it hard to know how to get started and what to do. Paula Thompson is an expert at presenting *The Urantia Book* to many different audiences with thousands of hours of practical experience. Paula will conduct a lively interactive workshop to help you find the ideas, courage and confidence to give Urantia Book outreach a try. If you're already engaging in Urantia Book outreach, she will offer her extensive experience to help you hone your skills.

Cost: \$275/pp + taxes. Includes meals, 4 nights, Paula's expenses and program. Note: Space is limited to 20 participants.

Please Join Us for the Retreat Network Retreat

THE CONSECRATION OF CHOICE

CHOOSING TO DO THE FATHER'S WILL

“Such a choosing raises the creature will from the level of temporal significance to that higher estate wherein the personality of the creature son commingles with the personality of the spirit Father.” — The Unabomber (1996)



Kindred Spirits Retreat Center, Eugene, Oregon

August 25-27, 2006

Come and join us for a weekend filled with workshops, centering prayer, music, quiet reflection time, nature walks, and ending with a group worship.

The retreat cost is \$150/person for 2 nights indoor lodging (limited number of rooms distributed to first to register), \$100/person for tent cabin on platform w/bed (bring your own sleeping bag), \$75/person for campers bringing their own equipment. Bathroom facilities are shared and portables. Fee includes 6 meals and retreat program. Retreat starts Friday with dinner and ends Sunday after lunch.

A 50% deposit is required no later than August 1, 2006.

Those attending the Oregon UB Readers Campout the previous weekend can stay in our retreat center in the interim (no charge).

Not My Will, But Yours Be Done

REGISTRATION FORM

Participant Name(s) _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Address _____ E-mail _____ Airport Arrival _____

Phone # _____ Indoor room \$150 Tent w/bed \$100 Bringing own equipment \$75

Please send deposit or full payment to Retreat Network at P.O. Box 744, Corvallis, OR 97339.
For further inquiries contact Jeanette Schafer at: jeanetts@comcast.net

Moussa N'diaye Coming to Silver Springs this August

By: Alain Cyr, Georges Dupont and Guy Perron

THE PAGES OF *THE URANTIA BOOK* HOLD A VAST POOL OF INFORMATION aimed at uplifting our perception of this enormous creation of which we are all a part of. As individuals, we have and will continue to study the mysteries of our existence through study groups, personal research and meditation in our eternal quest for self-realization on this world and all the others, all the way to Paradise. On our quest, we will meet different types of teachers that will help us access greater understanding by sharing their own experiences in searching God and allowing us to climb the ladder of higher consciousness through a path that has been proven and tested. The search for God is like a seed, naturally planted in us and thriving for the waters of expansion. Isn't progress the watchword of the Universe?

Often at times people will say, "The more I know, the less I know." Perhaps this is related to the fact that knowledge on its own is insufficient without the experiential phase necessary to actualize these meanings in our everyday lives: potentials being actualized through our experiences. Dogmas have proposed ways for self-accomplishment and mysticists have spoken about a "path" leading to higher perceptions of reality.

Upon combining facts with actual experience, our beloved brother Moussa N'diaye, professor of philosophy and sociology at the University of Dakar in Senegal, has put together a method in which man can study step by step the very basis of his existence and his

relation to the universe and God in his everyday life.

How does God function within us? What actions can we take that will favor better harmony with our divine indwelling Adjuster? How can we upgrade our participation in this marvelous process that we call "life," eternal life?

Answers to these questions lie in the superconscious layers of our souls and wait for emergence in the mind expanding experience of this first seminar that Moussa N'diaye will be giving at Silver Springs retreat from August 25 to 31.

Like a program in mathematics, from the first grade to the university level, a progressive spiritual education is elaborated and rationalized within a clear conception accepted by the human mind. It is not specially designed for Urantia Book readers. It is for everyone on a spiritual quest. It is presented with the exactness of scientific objectivity, with the clarity of the philosophic reasoning. It is based on the observation of our surroundings, facts and realities. It is not just intellectual, it takes the human being as the ground of its analysis. It remains alive in the human mind. The individual recognizes himself in this first seminar because of all what the spiritual education brings or clarifies about him or about God is already existing in him. Its purpose is to bring to the human consciousness the maximum facts and knowledge concerning himself and concerning God.

In this program, the first part consists of seven seminars. This is not an invention, it is an inspiration that is rather a

re-discovery of what already exists in man, the fact and the truth of his being following a seven step approach:

1. The study of man:
 - a. his body.
 - b. his consciousness (the seven Adjutant Mind Spirits).
 - c. his personality (free will).
 - d. faith.
2. Study of the human self.
3. Study of the implementation of man on earth.
4. Study of the nature and personality of God.
5. Study of the source and nature of the Thought Adjuster.
6. Study of the work of the Thought Adjuster, birth and growth of soul.
7. Study of prayer.

There is a logic to this presentation:

Study of man: Most Urantians have very confused ideas about themselves and their endowments. This first seminar is a re-discovery of what already exist in them. This study acknowledges man's needs for perfection and eternity while they are imperfect and mortal. This is the mechanism of Faith.

Study of self: Then we continue by the study of the functioning of the self in relation with the physical, intellectual and spiritual realities.

Study of the implementation of life on earth: We replace man in his context: the earth. It is a more historical journey which helps man to understand his background and where he comes from.

Study of God: In the study of the 6th and 7th adjutant mind

spirits, God is presented. Most of our contemporaries have vague idea about God's personality and his relationships with his creatures. Here the real nature and personality of God is portrayed using Paper One of *The Urantia Book*. God is the answer to all needs.

Study of the Source and nature of Thought Adjusters: God answers all human needs and questions by indwelling man with a fragment of Himself. This is the most extraordinary mystery, the mystery of the mysteries. This fragment comes from the I AM and is the guarantee that we can become like God and the eternal proof that God is a loving, consistent, and logical Father and is lovable.

Study of the work of Thought Adjuster and creation of soul: The relationship between the human mind and the Thought Adjuster create the embryonic soul. The work of the Adjuster is to help man to progressively leave the animal level to reach a more spiritual level, the morontia level, and help man produce the fruits of the spirit in his life.

Study of prayer: This first part of the spiritual education ends with a technique to create and maintain a living channel of communication with the fragment of God, indwelling each of us.

May all of you who travel on this journey be blessed with the divine satisfaction of recognizing their true Sonship with our Father.

Hope you will join us in living this first seminar to expand our cosmic consciousness and enhance our spiritual perception. □

Centering Prayer Retreat – A Reflection

By: Dolores Nice

FROM THE MOMENT I ARRIVED ON THE GROUNDS OF THE NATIONAL CATHEDRAL IN WASHINGTON D. C., I was captivated by the beauty of the place. It was a beautiful spring day with perfect weather and a glorious display of vivid colors in the gardens. And as if this were not enough, I was greeted by a concert from the carillon bells of the Cathedral. I was here to attend a week long silent Centering Prayer Retreat, which was held at Cathedral College located within the close (term for grounds) of the Cathedral.

Centering prayer is a receptive type of prayer in which one rests in the presence of God. It follows the mandate in Psalm 46:10

"Be still and know that I am God."

Our daily schedule began with two 30 minute meditation sessions at 7 a.m. These were broken up with a 5 minute walking meditation. Each session began with a reading from the Book of Psalms. After breakfast we were free until 10 a.m.

for another two sessions or sits. At 11:30 we met in the chapel for Eucharist and Lectio Divina. After lunch we were free until 3:30 for another 2 sits, or to watch a video on various aspects of Contemplative Prayer by Thomas Keating followed

by another session at 5 p.m. After dinner was more free time. Before I arrived, I was somewhat concerned about being able to meditate for such long periods. But I quickly fell into the practice and found deep peace. I think it was very helpful to meditate with other people in the same room. It seemed like there was a special energy that connected us and drew us deeper into the prayer experience. For our last dinner we had a traditional Thanksgiving meal with all the trimmings. This was a special treat and we were truly thankful for sharing this retreat together. For this meal we were allowed to talk and there was much lively conversation!



Space Window

Maybe it was because of the silence, but I became particularly aware and taken by the sounds of the bells as they rang through out the week. Coincidentally, one of the books that I read during the retreat was *Thoughts in Solitude* by Thomas Merton.

He has a chapter on bells, which I found particularly meaningful. "Bells are



National Cathedral, Washington D.C.

meant to remind us that God alone is good, that we belong to Him... They speak to us of our freedom, which responsibilities and transient cares makes us forget. They are the voice of our alliance with the God of Heaven. They tell us that we are his true temple. They call us to peace with Him within ourselves... The bells say rest in God and rejoice... Come with us, God is good, salvation is not hard, His love has made it easy."

During free time, I visited the Cathedral many times. I paid special attention to the magnificent stained glass windows. I especially liked the three Rose Windows and the Space Window. This window stands out in contrast to the rest because it pictures planets and contains a piece of moon rock brought back by one of the Apollo 11 astronauts. I took walks on the 50 plus acres and enjoyed watching the many visitors. One afternoon, I was sitting

on a bench taking in the beauty of the flowers, when I was treated to the extraordi-

nary song of a mocking bird. I had never heard one before and was quite taken by the versatility of its singing. Aha, I said to myself, "another testimony of the beauty of God's creation."

The whole experience

of this particular retreat for me was seeing, hearing and feeling in a deeper way the manifestation of God in Truth, Beauty and Goodness. This quote from Evelyn Underhill is a perfect summary. "We know that perfect goodness, perfect beauty, and perfect truth exist within the life of God; and that our hearts will never rest in less than these. This longing, this need of God, however dimly and vaguely we feel it, is the seed from which grown the strong, beautiful and fruitful plant of prayer." □

For more information on Centering Prayer, check out the web site www.centeringprayer.com Also, Thomas Keating's book, *Open Mind, Open Heart* is a good resource.

