

JOURNAL



URANTIA®

A QUARTERLY NEWS JOURNAL AND MAGAZINE OF THE IUA

Issue No 1-1996: (1) How Big Is Orvonton? (6) Adjusted View into the Ultimatons; (6) Meditation for the Morning; (7) Prayer; (7) Spiritual Downs; (10) A Short Biography; (13) The Value of Loyalty; (15) United States URANTIA Association; (15) French URANTIA Association; (15) Conferences in 1996.

HOW BIG IS ORVONTON?

ANTERO HUOVINEN
Lahti, Finland

It seems to be a common belief among interested readers of *The URANTIA Book* that Orvonton and the Milky Way galaxy are one and the same thing. In line with this notion, various scientific findings have been suggested as apparently supportive of the information presented in *The URANTIA Book* as concerns the size and star density of the Orvonton galaxy. Being a regular reader of a number of scientific publications, I know at least something about the recent scientific theories and findings. I keep the scientific methods and the achievements of the sciences in high esteem, but a helpless skeptic as I am, I sometimes fail to believe in what is written in the name of science.

Astronomy is the very sector of basic research where different and divergent theories are suggested more than perhaps within any of the sciences. Even if the methods of observation are the same and the devices more or less identical, the resultant theories are many times divergent, due to the differences in the interpretation of the observations. Many astronomical articles call

attention to the uncertainties involved in the various measurements and the difficulties associated with all interpretations based on these findings. Theories are discussed and are submitted to tests using all available means and methods. New methods of observation are introduced from time to time, new devices are deployed, and these methods and devices, along with the new insights of the astronomers, yield ever new theories and revised and updated world outlooks. Maybe even that day will once dawn when the physical systems and patterns explained in *The URANTIA Book* will be the subject of serious scientific perusal and research.

I shall now present my personal interpretation concerning the size of the Milky Way galaxy, and I refuse to assert that my view would be any truer than that of others.

The Milky Way—Two Connotations

In its original meaning the Milky Way is a phenomenon visible in the nocturnal skies, the

luminous belt extending from one extreme of the firmament to the other. Ancient Greeks used to call it *galaktos*, which is derived from the Greek word for milk, *gala*. The appellation 'galaktos', thus, has nothing to do with a 'galaxy' in its modern meaning. Not only in English, but also in some other languages, the Milky Way has a "milky" name: *Via lactea*, in Spanish; *Voie lactée*, in French; *Milchstrasse*, in German; yet, *Vintergatan* (Wintery Way) in Swedish, and *Linnunrata* (Bird's Trajectory), in Finnish.

The current meaning of the 'Milky Way' is a **disc-shaped system**, consisting in stars, interstellar gas and dust clouds, and commanding a diameter of some 100,000 light-years. The Sun is situated approximately in the mid-section of this disk. I shall hereafter use the word **Galaxy** in reference to this system. I shall be employing the expression 'Milky Way' in its original meaning, the way it is used in *The URANTIA Book*.

In the mid-18th century, three learned men, **Lambert, Wright, and Kant**, who viewed the visible phenomenon in the night skies, made the conclusion that the Galaxy is an extremely flattened system of stars. The size of the system was, back then, beyond the reach of any reasonable estimations. *Immanuel Kant suggested that the nebulous objects observable in the skies, i.e. the nebulae, are actually other and remote Milky Ways*¹. Only towards the end of the 19th century, the Dutch **J. C. Kapteyn**, who availed himself of the methods of star-count and observation of star movements, was enabled to determine the diameter of the Galaxy as approximately 50,000 light-years. In **Harlow Shapley's** estimation, in the 1920's, the diameter of the Galaxy was some 300,000 light-years; the **Herbert Curtis** estimated diameter of only 30,000 light-years represented the other extreme. This obvious discrepancy in these measurements has continued until recent years. An Encyclopaedia of 1963 suggests that the diameter of the Galaxy be 80,000 light-years, and the distance of the sun from the centre of the Galaxy 27,000 light-years. More recently the solar distance was given as 33,000 light-years, but in the early 1980's the estimation went back to 28,000 light-years. With regard to such a relatively short distance, the currently deployed devices have reached an exactitude which precludes every doubt

as concerns the 100,000-light-year diameter of the Galaxy. This figure relates to the disc-shaped portion of the Galaxy, where the star density is relatively high in comparison to the outlying regions. Within this disc-shaped section, the orbits of the stars are well-nigh circular. The disk, in modern observations, is surrounded by an ellipsoid halo, which is supposed to extend to a distance of 80,000 light-years from the centre of the Galaxy. The star clusters situated in the region of the halo have elliptical orbits, which means that they belong to a star population different from the stars in the actual Galaxy. The halo is surrounded by a region named the corona, whose extreme limits, as measured from the centre of the Galaxy, are met some 200,000 light-years away. *The globular star-clusters belong to the halo which encircles the Milky Way disk. The outer limit of the very thin and extensive corona may be situated at a considerably longer distance, even as far away as 100-300 kiloparsecs², from the centre of the Milky Way.*³

The Milky Way Galaxy Is Not Orvonton

In the words of *The URANTIA Book*, the Milky Way is composed of star systems and enormous gas clouds which belong to the Orvonton superuniverse. The star systems of our Galaxy are of course visible also in the region of the Milky Way, yet the Galaxy constitutes only a fraction of the superuniverse. The core section of the Milky Way, where the star density is at its highest, is the centre of the superuniverse:

The vast Milky Way starry system represents the central nucleus of Orvonton, being largely beyond the borders of your local universe.
[167:17]

From Jerusem, the headquarters of Satania, it is over two hundred thousand light-years to the physical center of the superuniverse of Orvonton, far, far away in the dense diameter of the Milky Way. [359:8]

² One kiloparsec, kpc, equals 3.262 light-years

³ *Fundamental Astronomy*, p. 407, Publications of Ursa, 1984

¹ *Kosmos, maailman muuttuva kuva*, p. 248, Publications of Ursa, 1990

At 475:1 certain sources of radiation are discussed, and in this Paper the densest plane of the superuniverse is unequivocally called the Milky Way:

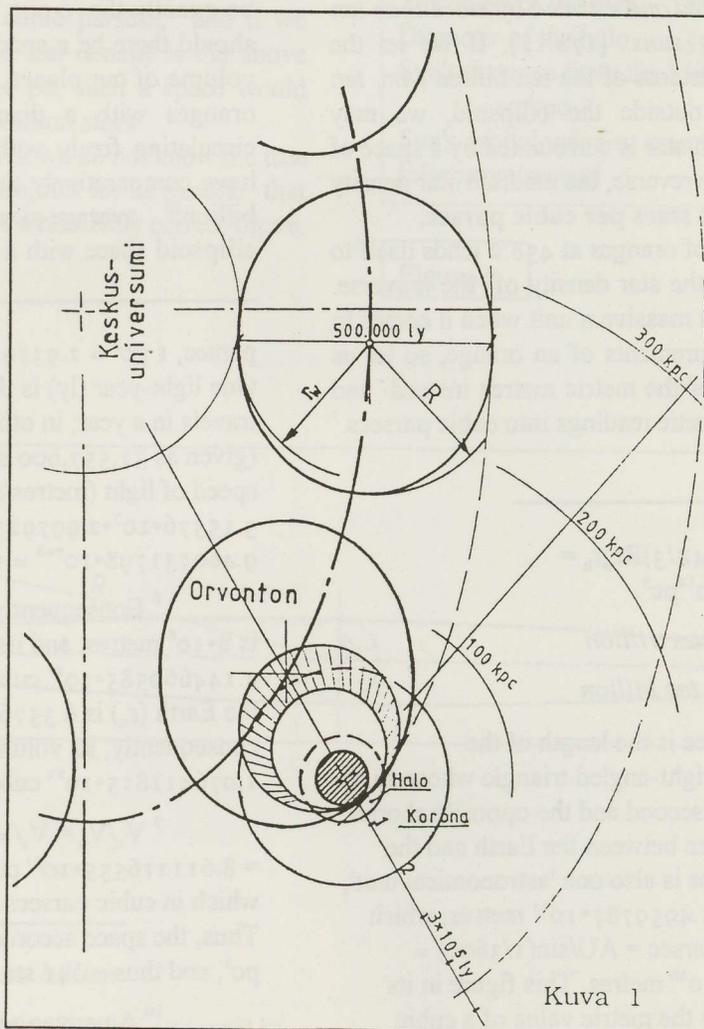
They emanate in the largest quantities from the densest plane of the superuniverse, the Milky Way, which is also the densest plane of the outer universes. [475:1]

Figure 1 represents a sketch where the superuniverse is given an elliptical shape, in accordance with the description on page 167 which portrays the horizontal profile of a superuniverse as elongated-circular. In the absence of a more detailed description, I profiled the superuniverse in emulation of the Paradise Isle, which means that the length of the ellipse is one-sixth more than the breadth (cf. p. 119). In case the breadth is 500,000 light-years, the length has to be 583,333 light-years. No clearly discernible borders separate the superuniverses, but it may be assumed that a vast majority of the starry systems are situated within a

region delineated as an ellipse. In the diagram, the Galaxy is situated in the shaded area, in the border regions of the superuniverse, at a distance of more than 200,000 light-years from the centre of the universe. Neither can the halo and the corona which encircle the Galaxy have any abrupt borders. Their constitution is unknown to us. It can be that a discussion of these belts in some astronomical articles has made some readers mistakenly believe that the size of the Galaxy equals with that of the superuniverse. This view, however, is as erroneous as was the onetime geocentric conception of the universe.

The two eccentric circles in figure 1 represent a schematic portrayal of the star density of the Milky Way. The Milky Way actually includes all of the Orvonton starry systems, even if not all of them are observable and visible from Earth—a great number of them are situated behind the dense central nucleus.

Figure 1



luminous belt extending from one extreme of the firmament to the other. Ancient Greeks used to call it *galaktos*, which is derived from the Greek word for milk, *gala*. The appellation 'galaktos', thus, has nothing to do with a 'galaxy' in its modern meaning. Not only in English, but also in some other languages, the Milky Way has a "milky" name: *Via lactea*, in Spanish; *Voie lactée*, in French; *Milchstrasse*, in German; yet, *Vintergatan* (Wintery Way) in Swedish, and *Linnunrata* (Bird's Trajectory), in Finnish.

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The superuniverse also has a third dimension. In the words of the revealed description, a superuniverse is a watchlike grouping. Let us simplify a little and assume that the side profile of such a watch is an ellipse, and let us once again imitate the pattern of Paradise and postulate its height as one-tenth of its breadth. If we assign the round figure of 151,000 pcs (approx. 493,000 light-years) for the breadth, the length, then, has to be 176,166 pc, and the height, 15,100 pcs.

Figure 2 portrays a side profile of such an ellipsoid. The radius (R) of a circle encircling this ellipsoid is 88,083 pc, and that (r_w , in figure 1) of a circle drawn inside the horizontal profile is 75,500 pc, and the radius (r_h) of a circle drawn inside the lateral profile is 7,550 pcs. Given these values, the volume⁴ of the superuniverse is $2.103171124 \cdot 10^{14} \text{pc}^3$. *The URANTIA Book* instructs that the superuniverse of Orvonton will ultimately count with a billion (1,000,000,000,000)⁵ inhabited spheres, which alone means that the number of stars has to be considerably higher. We may also learn that this space is illuminated and warmed by more than ten trillion⁶ blazing suns. [172:12]. If we let the blazing suns in excess of the ten billion (*Am. ten trillion*) whirl outside the ellipsoid, we may conclude that each star is surrounded by a space of 21.032pc^3 ; and in reverse, the medium star density would be 0.0475 stars per cubic parsec.

The parable of oranges at 458:2 lends itself to a calculation of the star density of the universe. The parsec is too massive a unit when it comes to taking the measurements of an orange, so let us avail ourselves of the metric metres instead and then convert the metre readings into cubic parsecs.⁷

$${}^4 V_{su} = (4\pi/3)Rr_w r_h = 2.103171124 \cdot 10^{14} \text{pc}^3.$$

⁵ American trillion

⁶ British ten billion

⁷ A parsec is the length of the hypotenuse in a right-angled triangle whose sharp corner is one arc second and the opposite shorter side is the distance between the Earth and the Sun. This distance is also one 'astronomical unit', AU. One AU is $1.4959787 \cdot 10^{11}$ metres, which means that one parsec = $\text{AU}/\sin(1/3600) = 3,0856777567 \cdot 10^{16}$ metres. This figure in its third power gives the metric value of a cubic

The metaphor of oranges instructs us that the stars have just as much comparative elbow room in space as one dozen oranges would have inside a space of the volume of the Earth. At 458:2 the average diameter of suns is given as 1,600,000 kilometres.⁸ This figure means that the average volume of a sun is $2.144660585 \cdot 10^{27} \text{m}^3$. The volume of the earth is $1.076411815 \cdot 10^{21} \text{m}^3$. Star density now depends on the size of the oranges to be used in the computation. But let us assume that an average orange has a radius (r_o) of 0.04 metres, and consequently, a volume (V_o) of 0.00026808 cubic metres. What remains to do is to formulate a mathematical equation and determine the volume (V_{12}) that a sphere needs to command for it to accommodate the twelve average-sized suns of the orange metaphor. A computation reveals⁹ that every cubic parsec would contain 0.041 stars. The result is astonishingly close to the figure of 0.047 that we secured above. Using a similar computation, we would discover that had we postulated a 0.042-metre radius for an orange (instead of the 0.04 above), the star density would be exactly the 0.047 stars per cubic parsec. So, should there be a space with a size of that of the volume of our planet, and should there be twelve oranges with a diameter of 8.4 centimetres, circulating freely within that space, they would have comparatively the same elbow room as ten billion¹⁰ average-sized stars would have in an ellipsoid space with a diameter of approximately

parsec, $1 \text{pc}^3 = 2.937998905 \cdot 10^{49}$ cubic metres. One light-year (ly) is the distance that light travels in a year; in other words it is one year (given as 31,557,600 seconds) multiplied by the speed of light (metres/second):

$$3.15576 \cdot 10^7 \cdot 2.997925 \cdot 10^8 = 9.460731798 \cdot 10^{15} \text{metres}.$$

⁸ Consequently the radius (r_s) of our Sun is $8 \cdot 10^8$ metres, and its volume (V_s) is $2.144660585 \cdot 10^{27}$ cubic metres. The radius of the Earth (r_u) is $6.35765 \cdot 10^6$ metres, and consequently, its volume (V_u) = $1.076411815 \cdot 10^{21}$ cubic metres.

⁹ $V_o/V_u = V_s/V_{12} \Leftrightarrow V_{12} = V_u V_s/V_o$; $V_{12} = 8.611216555 \cdot 10^{51}$ cubic metres/twelve stars; which in cubic parsecs is $293.098 \text{pc}^3/12$ stars. Thus, the space accorded to one star is 24.245pc^3 , and thus 0.041 stars per cubic parsec.

¹⁰ American ten trillion.

500,000 light-years and modelled after the pattern of the central Isle of Paradise.

**Evenly Scattered Stars
 Or Starry Aggregates?**

As a rule, the stars accumulate into aggregations of various shapes and sizes, with an enormous void in between; yet there may be hydrogen clouds in this empty void. Does the allegory of oranges, quoted in *The URANTIA Book*, denote the average star density within such aggregations, or does it suggest that the stars be more or less evenly dispersed in the space, with the interstellar distances more or less equal? This question is open to studies based on astronomical observations.

Latest astronomical computations suggest that the average galactic mass is more than 0.2 billion¹¹ solar masses¹², and that the diameter of a galaxy is some 30 kpc, and its height, one kpc. If we postulate a galaxy of the shape of a cylinder with a 30-kpc diameter and 1 kpc height, its volume would be $7.069 \cdot 10^{11}$ cubic parsecs, and if we assume further that the star density is the above 0.0475 stars per cubic pc, such a space would accommodate 34,000 million stars.

We may presume that we do not know the true number of galactic stars, but let us assume that 100,000 million stars is a relatively correct figure.

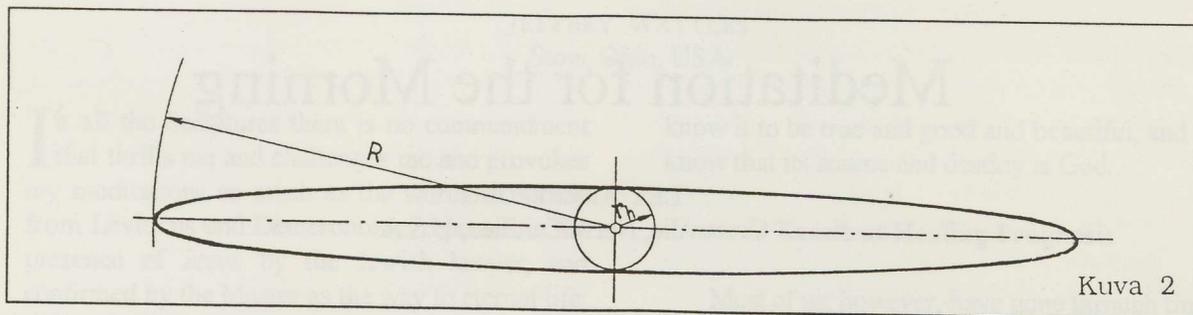
That would yield 7.069 cubic parsecs as the average volume to accommodate one star and give a star density of 0.1415 stars/pc³. The comparison with oranges gave a result of 0.0475 stars/pc³, in case the stars are dispersed evenly in the space. Evidently they are not evenly dispersed, but instead form aggregations. If the star density within such aggregations, or star accumulations, is the above 0.1415 stars per cubic parsec, we have to conclude that the volume occupied by starry aggregations takes about one third of the total galactic volume, and that about two thirds of the total volume is free from stars.

Simple calculations like these, of course, have nothing to do with astronomy proper; all they can achieve is to give a summary conception of the relative distances between stars and star aggregations.

The Milky Way

Mass $>2 \cdot 10^{11}$ times the solar mass
 Diameter of the disc 30 kpc
 Thickness of the disc 1 kpc
 Diameter of the halo 50 kpc
 Sun's distance from the Milky Way centre
 10 kpc
 Sun's orbital velocity around the centre 220
 kilometres/second

Figure 2



¹¹ American, 200 billion

¹² The mass of the Sun is $1.989 \cdot 10^{30}$ kg

Chuck Adjusts His View of the Ultimatons

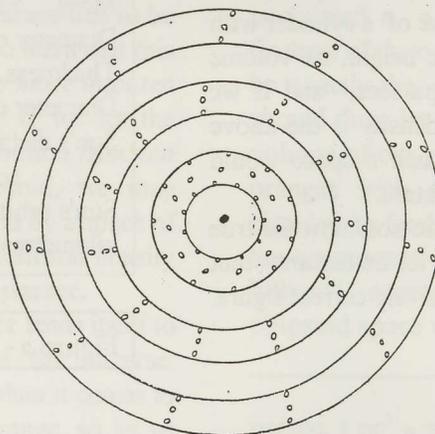
CHUCK VAN SANT
Bartlesville, Oklahoma, U.S.A.

In the 3-95 edition of the *IUA Journal*, I suggested in my paper about ultimatons that the quarks that scientists have been studying in their particle accelerators are the rings of proton-ultimatons (wimps) that I described there. The discovery of the “top” quark last year shows that this is in error, since the “top” has a mass greater than that of an atom of gold, around 400 times that of the proton.

I made the assumption that the macrocosm was proof of the microcosm, that the ever larger areas

of the outer space levels indicated ever larger masses in inner space. A different macrocosm was in effect. I had overlooked one sentence: *It is fashioned after the similitude of the three Gods embraced in one...* [463:3]. This indicates three rings of ultimatons in each subatomic particle, proton, neutron, and electron (see figure 1), rather than the four, three, and two that I indicated in my paper.

Figure 1



Meditation for the Morning

LEE ARMSTRONG
Greenville, North Carolina, U.S.A.

Good morning my loving Spirit Guide. I pray this morning in your Light for increased communication with my Indwelling Spirit. It is my will to further cooperate with my Adjuster who creates the transcript of my soul. I pray for the enlargement and growth of my soul today, if only

by a little. Help me to think of the Father first when faced with a decision. Help me to remember Michael first when faced with the animal reactions of my human nature. Help me to nurture the Spirit in all those who are in my path today. It is my will, Father, that your will be done.

Prayer

GEORGE HORTON FOSTER
Chino Valley, Arizona, U.S.A.

It seems to this writer that it is variously stated and implied in *The URANTIA Book* that what one needs and wants is already known to the Father, even although one's own perception may be nebulous, incomplete, or otherwise misunderstood. So the object of prayer need never be a supplication of one's desires. But prayer may be of great value for clarification of those desires for oneself. As in psychotherapy, verbalization, whether spoken or written, will help bring about recognition and understanding of one's hopes, fears, needs, and intentions. Further, regular verbalization of prayer if you prefer, will not only allow modification of the statements when new knowledge or experience suggests change is appropriate, but also will help maintain action, and consistency of action, based upon those statements. It seems to this writer that the link between prayer and action is of great importance, but appears to be badly neglected in many cases.

In any event, the following is offered as an example which this writer has found useful as a reminder of intent, which is repeated at the

beginning of each day, and sometimes later as well:

To help understand and maintain my resolve, I wish to affirm: It is my will that the Father's will be done. This means to me that I assume responsibility for trying to make every decision one which will maximize good and minimize evil in the world. It also means that I will love my fellow human beings, and will demonstrate this to the best of my ability by exhibiting understanding, compassion, forgiveness, and assistance. It is my desire to do these things for intrinsic reasons and for their being my best estimate of what the Father's will might be.

But in addition to this, it is my most profound hope that for eons and eons I will remain consciously self-aware, and will be a contributing participant in the continuing evolution of this marvelous universe. I want to grow, to learn, to create, and to be of service. This is my expression of resolve and of hope.

It is hoped that the reader will find the above meaningful and perhaps helpful in developing a personal statement for similar use.

THE SPIRITUAL DOWNS

JEFFREY WATTLES
Stow, Ohio, USA

In all the Scriptures there is no commandment that thrills me and challenges me and provokes my meditations so much as the words of Moses from Leviticus and Deuteronomy, repeated in the presence of Jesus by the Jewish lawyer, and confirmed by the Master as the way to eternal life: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and soul and mind and strength; and you shall love your neighbor as yourself." There is no experience in mortal living or beyond it, I would hazard, that surpasses the joy of really loving God—wholeheartedly, with a complete, coordinated personality, and genuinely loving our fellow beings. Whenever we touch that life, we

know it to be true and good and beautiful, and we know that its source and destiny is God.

Excellent Healing Prognosis

Most of us, however, have gone through times when we feel not only absent from the exuberance of divine living, but we feel definitely in a slump. We feel that, for the present, we cannot love wholeheartedly. We cannot just flip a switch between our ribs and turn on the energies of real love. This condition I call the spiritual downs. The symptoms vary somewhat from one case to another, but they include: loss of confidence,

withdrawing socially—especially from the company of those strong in faith—, weakening in faith, blaming others for problems, doubting our standing with God, and being generally unhappy.

When we diagnose the spiritual downs, we can usually offer a very optimistic prognosis: the prospects are excellent; the patient can expect to live forever. Anyone with faith enough to worry about their spiritual health may be a little foolish, but such a one can use that same faith energy to take salvation for granted.

Remember, only a living organism can catch a cold. There are some spiritual problems that are in fact signs of life. Remember the rich young ruler who came to Jesus desiring to enter the kingdom. When asked to sell all that he had, he went away in sadness. In that sadness was the germ of faith. He did not merely say, "Give up my wealth? Are you crazy or something?" He felt a genuine conflict there. Of course it takes decisions to ripen the germs of faith, but the gospel that had begun to attract him and whose power had brought him to the Master for that interview would become the dominant influence in his life.

Sometimes the case with the symptoms of the spiritual downs is in fact more serious. In such cases, the individual has not really made a decision for the Father and may stand at the parting of the ways. "Choose this day whom you will serve!" thundered Joshua; and our hypothetical patient may be facing such a moment.

Now a person might ask, "How can I know whether my case is critical or not, whether my soul stands at the parting of the ways or whether this is just another one of those little times that most of us go through occasionally?" The essence of the spiritual downs is to confuse these two cases. The more hypocritical types underestimate the importance of the crisis; the more sincere individuals often take matters much too seriously. During the experience of symptoms the patient is liable to misjudge the situation. Therefore, it is important to have a treatment procedure which be of benefit without requiring judgment.

There is one more reason for choosing a method of dealing with the spiritual downs that applies equally to the person who has made the decision for the Father and to the person who has not. The reason is that none of us has perfectly achieved the decision of the Father. Who of us can say that we have reached such self-mastery that we have decided forever and finally to be loyal to the Father's will? The character of freedom, especially

for us mortals, is that even our best and strongest decisions need to be upheld by ever new decisions.

We have now characterized the spiritual downs as a temporary felt inability to love. We have listed some symptoms and considered that the symptoms might indicate something fairly trivial or something as important as a crisis of finding and deciding for God by someone who has been only a half-hearted believer until now.

Let us now formulate some attitudes to lead us in discerning the path of healing for the spiritual downs.

Can we not discern in these times a tremendous opportunity? Does our soul merely wander into such depths for nothing? Is it not a blessing that we are reminded again of our need to cry forth for the saving hand of our God, the Universal Father? Can we love the Father with a whole heart if we have not verified his sovereignty and love in our anguish and ennui, in our moments of despair or stretches of monotony?

When once we understand our suffering, we are the more prepared in mind to discern the Father's fellowship in whatever afflictions we may bear. Some suffering comes because of misused free will, some because of the inherent liabilities of this organism which is our mortal house. Who would sacrifice the priceless gift of freedom to be kept unharmed by the results of evil and sin? Who would purchase freedom from injury and disease at the cost of giving up this initial life in the flesh?

When I consider the great number of complainers about life, and how relatively few people take their own lives, I realize what an overwhelming vote of confidence the human race actually gives to the Creator, by living practically, day by day, by *choosing life*. *Life is good*, and we all know it on a level more deep than our conversation or philosophy may acknowledge.

The First Stage of the Cure

Now we have a background for considering the treatment of the downs. The first phase of the treatment is to *ignore the symptoms*. This is a very surprising recommendation, but when you recall how many of our troubles are just made up in our minds, the idea will make more sense. How many doctors have said, "Go take a vacation"? Jesus came right out with it: Be not anxious. Be of good cheer. Continue about whatever you are doing, working to do your best at whatever you undertake.

Often the complaints cease with a few days of this application, and love of the Father and his family is once again restored. Lots of problems are so superficial as to respond well to benign neglect.

The wisdom of the first suggestion is that it avoids spiritual hypochondria. Some people go around taking their spiritual pulse—compulsively. My Dad used to shock many students who came in for counseling to his office at Rockford College with the question, "What have you done for *others* lately?" Jesus' religion was not one of self-examination, but one of love and service. Perhaps if we do not feel loving some morning, it is merely some changing reaction to our material environment; it may be no problem worth our concern.

The Second Stage of the Cure

The second phase of treatment, surprisingly, can be taken at the same time as the first. It is: to *persist* in prayer, take a second hour for *worship* during the day, meditate in the presence of the God of heaven. Persistence, I was told as a salesman, is everything. Jesus told about the judge in a certain town who respected neither God nor man. A widow kept coming to him asking for justice in a claim against her enemy. For a long time he refused, but at last he said to himself, "Maybe I have neither fear of God nor respect for man, but since she keeps pestering me, I must give this woman her just rights, or she will persist in coming and worry me to death." [Luke 18:1-5], (1619:3). Jesus told this parable to encourage persistence, and he promises: "Ask and it shall be given to you; seek and you shall find, knock and it shall be opened to you." [1619:1] (1838:3).

Persistence is valuable because it may uncover some moral or attitudinal block that is keeping us from better communion with the Father's indwelling spirit. Once the block is identified, new decisions for the better way reopen the path to progress. The beauty of the whole process is that we do not have to *feel* good in order to make the saving *decisions* that bring us closer to the Father.

The Third Phase of the Cure

Now we come to the last part of the treatment; it is practically simple and theoretically complex, so naturally I'll save dessert for last. Here comes the theory:

Love has two phases—an activity and a

passivity. The activity is what we *do* for the beloved; the passivity what we *feel* for the beloved. The activity is chosen and can be commanded; the feeling merely happens to us and cannot be commanded. One definition of love brings both these aspects together: *Love is the desire to do good to others*. [648:4; emphasis mine]

First, notice that our feelings are usually a mixture of attitudes that we implicitly choose and stimuli beyond our control. To the extent that our feelings are a result of things beyond our control, pertaining, say, to this body, the electro-chemical mechanism that we walk around with—to that extent we are not responsible for our feelings. But to the extent that our feelings are a result of attitude choices, it makes sense to command: Be not anxious. Be of good cheer.

Second, notice how we can indirectly bring about the feelings of love that we all like to experience and express.

A friend of mine at school told me about an episode in his relationship with his girlfriend. For a while, things weren't going too well, and he had a chance to start up with another woman. At that moment, his feelings about his girlfriend were dull, and his feelings about the other woman were lively. But even though he wasn't *feeling* loyal, he made *decisions* of loyalty. And the result was that he harvested a new level of feeling of love to accompany his strengthened commitment.

If we take the human steps, the Father will complement and complete our efforts at loving.

As Hosea said: "Sow righteousness and reap a harvest of kindness, break up your fallow ground: it is time to go seeking God until he comes to rain salvation on you." [Hosea 10:12]

Truly the most genuine love we can ever feel for another is the love which the Father gives us to give. When we feel wholehearted love it is as much a gift from God as it is our own personality mobilization—or perhaps we can see these as two descriptions for the same act.

If we deal with our problems without anxiety, if we persist in seeking the Father's will and way, and if we choose the paths of righteousness, even when we don't quite feel completely motivated to do so, we will surely come to live in that fresh new way Jesus lived for us, wholehearted love for our Father and our brothers and sisters. The spiritual downs can be like the bending of a diving board, the prelude to more solid attainment and grace and entry into the water of life.

A SHORT BIOGRAPHY

CATHY HOFFMAN
Melbourne, Australia

Does anyone know the meaning of "being Jewish"? I don't. Is it racial? Religious? An attitude? A reservation? A Grudge, a 'No!' to the majority style, a fate? Whatever — I was that.

Because of some wilfulness about being "other", I early embraced my mother's racial religion as my own. It was an embrace of vigour and defiance. I defined large proud chunks of myself with it. As a kid, I liked boastfully saying, "I'm a Jew." I liked what it did to people's faces, the negative power of it.

As for him, poor Jesus of the Christians, well, as a young punk widgie, I liked him, despite my innate rebelliousness. He was a hero, no question. He said what he meant, meant what he said, he risked all safety, energy, vision, and died with love in his heart. He was a Mensch. Also, as some of those lascivious statues and paintings of him said, Christ Jesus was pure man, he looked real good to the eye!

But taking on Jewishness meant Jesus was the mistake of the world. He was self-delusion, mass self-deception. He was the madness of the planet. So I pointed myself to the Sinai God of the desert. I stayed on in the wrestle with him. In my 27th year two things happened. The first was, after the millionth bout, and no knockout, I threw in the towel. I decided to believe that God was God. It was just there, my love for God, without any of the "proof" I sought. That June afternoon I decided to believe I went for a shaky walk. On the footpath I found a tiny copper crucifix. I, a Jew, and who had never found a thing in my life, gawped at the ground, red with embarrassment. I didn't believe in signs or nudges from the universe. I still don't. But I snatched up that cross and pocketed it, hoping no one, including myself, saw me do that. Twenty years later, I still have it.

The other thing that happened was *The URANTIA Book*. This pony-tailed guy at the library I worked at, kept taking it out all year. "Hey what's this thing, man?" I drawled all hip to this nice,

inoffensive obsessive. I was about to stamp it for him for the ninth time, as he said, "Take a peek, just one."

I took that peek, just one. I went light in the head.

"Not this time, pal", I lied to poor John Lipscombe, "this book's on reservation." John shrugged. He didn't care. He was moving on, onto hotter reads, Alice Bailey, I think, and a tract called "Course on Miracles". Or was it "Curse"? Meow!

I took *The URANTIA Book* home. I read and read. What can I say! It blew off my head! I read and read and never stopped. For years I read from it every single day, simultaneously nodding and shaking my head, going "no, no, no" and "Yes! Yes. ! Yes!" At the end of a decade's wrestle whose bouts and scars are not worth repeating here, I came to see that *The URANTIA Book* was exactly what it claimed it was.

As for any serious reader, so for me, there were lots of stumbles. The chief thorn, for a Jew, of course, was Michael of Nebadon, Jesus Christ. Accordingly, I did not concern myself with Part IV. That is, I read it, did not take it in, put it in a metal file marked "Later", zipped it up and stashed in deep freeze. I kept on reading Parts I, II and III struck by the following qualities of it.

First, it is a document to and from the spirit. The book works by a total capture of the mind. It completely meets the intellectual requirements of coherence, organisation, logic and by a near-miraculously snagless internal consistency over 2000 pages.

Second, it is a work void of whim, flaw, contradiction or eccentricity.

Third, and this is the most dazzling quality of the book, its truth-factor, the idea-content. The reading of this book's assertions, revelations and information was accompanied by a sense of almost

mathematical necessity, a cognition that, "Yes, this alone makes sense!" The effect of it was a "Yes, of course!" and that things were so, have had to be so, and not otherwise. For example, of course planet earth is not the only one God ever thought of making; and; no, of course, we cannot be the only life and therefore the moral centre of the universe! And; if Christ was real, he couldn't possibly have chosen the acute biological abnormality of entering the world through a virgin-birth, or put demons into poor pigs, or do show-off stunts like walk on water. Things like that.

The URANTIA Book's logic seemed spotless and exact. Its information seems to come from the nature of reality itself. What it says appears to be a description of the way things have been made, a description of the way things do, in fact, work. What I mean about the book's truth-factor is that its idea-content seems to be a description of reality itself. The movement, logic and organisation of the book's information seem to 'click' with the mind when it is working normally. Its logic fits flush with the human mind's working. The prime quality of *The URANTIA Book* is its Ring-of-Truth. However, for me, there was the problem of Christ.

I had accepted the entirety of *The URANTIA Book* as fact. Therefore, this was the issue: Could a work offering itself as a description of reality in one and a half thousand pages of faultlessness be in error as to the content of its last quarter? Could *The URANTIA Book* have got everything without exception perfectly right and be mistaken in its revelation on a matter as fundamental as Christ? You couldn't just select the bits you liked and ditch the rest. It was not a piecemeal work but a total, integrated whole. The authority behind the lot of it was the same source. However much I didn't want to believe in Christ, I had to bite the bullet on this one. Either the lot of *The URANTIA Book* was a fraud, or it was just what it said it was. Luckily, over the years, my heart and mind had been doing some work.

My grown-up's position had become: no, Jesus was not God's Son. But who was he?

In all respect for truth, and in care for the

spiritual realities of other people, this question had to be serious. I had to know — who do believers say Jesus is?

I went up close, close as you can formally get; for the first time in my twenties I read the four Gospels, then again the ampler work of *The URANTIA Book* on who Jesus was.

Well, he was stupendous! As a Jew, I fancied recognising his slant, his delivery's style, the significance and clout of it, his whole élan. I had a snug little laugh in me at the time that went, "What a Jew — Jesus was such a Jew—only a Jew could really get him." I hugged such vain notions to myself.

Whatever, you just had to like the man from what *The URANTIA Book* said of the man: the sheer guts, the clean nerve, the bull's eye truth of what he said. He spoke, and bliss flamed from his word. He opened his mouth, and beatitude came out of it. According to both *The URANTIA Book* and the Gospels he came out of those Capernaum hills and turned himself into word and deed. A man of huge presence, when he spoke of God from inside of himself, his speaking like a breathing, like fish swimming, or a bird taking to the air. A free, tough, unpossessive man; thousands followed him, I suppose because of the power of independence. He needed nothing, no shelter, approval, opinion, not even his life, from anyone. He was man integral, total, intact. And when he looked at you with that truth in his eye, even if you had messed your life up, you just got better, or you would see, or stand up and walk. He went walking up and down the land and people, thousands of them, would want to see him. They would cross deserts, climb trees, go through a roof or jump into the sea, just to touch him, be changed forever, and live. People saw God's spirit in him, he, so present to God's spirit himself, that some thought he was like God, others, that he was God. If God could ever be in a human.

As for those pests of Judaism, the priests of the temple, well, could Jesus "nuke" them, or what! He sure put paid to their loathsome system. He died for not being the power-Messiah to confirm their love affair with themselves as God's chosen.

Fine, fine. This was Jesus. Perhaps like quite a few Jews, I thought Jesus great; but, no matter

what he said, and he did say it, he was not God's son. I had to go into the logic of this. My denying that Jesus was what he said had a two-pronged consequence:

The first was the fact of Jesus as Christ in other people's lives. This was the logic of denying it; if Jesus was not what he said, then a huge sector of humanity was having a mass-hallucination. Millions of good-desiring human beings had deceived themselves. Or they were the dupes of a deception of planetary extent. My refusing credence to Jesus being God's Son meant that those millions and millions who gave it were in error about the objective reality of their subjective convictions.

How do you bite on the bullet of a conclusion like that? You'd have to be a mega-pervert to like the look of this sum. Rather than flinch it away, like I wanted to, I had to get closer to what Jesus was for others. You had to take that inner look. Over years of looking this is what I found.

"Jesus" was a name at whose utterance the greatest amount of good came to people's hearts. The "Jesus" concept seemed to undersell out the highest ideals of people. In the rendering of Christ artists put their utmost into his imaging in dance, music, word, the visual arts. At the name of Christ people were brought to their own best by it.

Sure, there were some very good people who were not touched by him. I supposed some were left impassive by him, indifferent. But I'd describe these people as asleep, neither good nor bad, just somnolent to all sorts of crucial things, maybe just dozing a bit before God woke them up.

Then there were those who hated the word "Jesus", (I knew them, heck. They were mostly me and my gang), but we had "done" something to ourselves.

Denying the reality of Jesus as Christ also left me at odds with the hero of the gospels. If he was the touchstone of truth, what was I saying by denying he was Christ? That he who did, said, and lived perfection was mistaken about his identity? That he, who was the epitome of sanity, had made a slip-up about who he was? That he, who was a

paragon of lucidity, was confused about his origins? Too ridiculous for words, I had to keep on tracking on the harrowing logic-trail of this one.

So, on the trail; if he, the touchstone of truth, was mistaken about what he was, how could there be any truth after that? If he wasn't the truth, there was no truth. If he was wrong, there was no right. If there was no truth or right, where was the coherence of anything at all?

Still on the trail, but right down to the fence of it now, about to hit wall, the wall of myself; for my denial to be right meant that all those who believed were cheats or mad; that there was no such thing as truth or reality, no coherence or meaning. Then what was life?

For me to be right I'd have to live in a chaos of no other rule than random power or craziness. But if I was wrong, and Jesus was who he said, I could step back into the human circle, join hands, and not be looking-down at believing humanity like at a bunch of lunatics for the rest of an anyhow meaningless existence. I weighed the odds, lightening quick.

On the next stroke, I believed.

The weird thing was, that stroke wasn't the faith. That was just the second when I said, "Yes". Faith got given to me in the next. For the minute I said, "Yes, he is, Jesus is who he says he is," the whole world went "click!" and snapped into place. But it was me who had to say "yes" first.

When I was younger, surer and strong, I came to God through myself; not so young or confident anymore, I came to Jesus through believing in the reality of other people. As for *The URANTIA Book*, it stood right up in me, and sang.

I had made a decision. There has to come a stopping-point for the mind when evidence requirement is exhausted. A time when the demand for "proof" yields to another faculty of faith. I made the decision, not to give up the honourable mind-search, but to exercise with it the faculty of faith.

So I had faith in Christ Jesus.

THE VALUE OF LOYALTY

JANET NIELSEN
Portland, Oregon, USA

Of all the human virtues, loyalty is the keystone. Loyalty in human decision is a true indicator of spiritual integrity in an individual. Spiritual growth cannot take place without its presence. In the progression of personality, loyalty precedes even love. Cosmic morality is founded in the “interaction between liberty and loyalty” (435:3). Jesus does not demand sacrifice from us, but he does require our loyalty.

Congratulations, fellow IUA members! Your presence on this roster is a testimony that your loyalties are sound and discerning. Your membership signifies that you wish to co-operate. To learn “how to plan with other and wiser beings.” That you wish to give credit where credit is due. Though there may not be material reward for your loyalty, in eternity, true liberty is the reward of true loyalty.

During the past decade, all sincere reader-believers of *The URANTIA Book* have had their faith and loyalties severely tested. We have been asked to participate in many dubious undertakings: outfitting bunkers to prepare for a worldwide catastrophe, listening to “channeled” pronouncements at Urantia study group meetings, even being asked to help finance the printing of unauthorized versions of *The URANTIA Book*, and assist in the overthrow of the URANTIA Foundation's possession of the copyright of the revelation text and symbols.

Now, as never before, our beloved book and its legal protector, URANTIA Foundation, need loyal and stalwart advocates. Shortsighted and impatient individuals have cast our big book unprotected onto the open market despite all requests by the

Foundation to refrain, at least until the legal appeals process is completed. In the rush to publish an unauthorized version, all rules of courtesy and propriety have been abandoned—certainly, in mailers I have received, there has been no acknowledgment of the essential custodial role that the URANTIA Foundation has played in the protection and publishing of the book since 1955.

Many of us have dear friends who are involved in the “liberation” of *The URANTIA Book*, believing that the copyright has been inhibiting the spread of the revelation to a mass readership. But you and I are living proof to all that even a conservative dissemination policy did not stop us from discovering it, or keep it from finding us!

I personally am deeply grateful for the efforts of the Foundation to keep the text of *The URANTIA Book* inviolate. How unseemly for those who have gained so much benefit from those pages to ignore the very entity that brought the book to light. But this is a rude and ungrateful world, and even among readers of *The URANTIA Book*, loyalty is at a premium.

You and all IUA members are acting as a sea wall against the degradation of the revelation by the same tide of impatience and disloyalty that spawned the Caligastia rebellion and the Adamic default. We cannot keep others from choosing the Caligastia teaching of unbridled personal liberty, but surely we can remain steadfast and true to the great revelation with which we have been entrusted.

There are many salient quotes listed in the Concordance under “loyalty.” After reading these, can there be any doubt that combined with love, loyalty is the glue of the universe?

What is loyalty? It is the fruit of an intelligent appreciation of universe brotherhood; one could not take so much and give nothing. As you ascend the personality scale, first you learn to be loyal, then to love, then to be filial, and then may you be free; but not until you are a finaliter, not until you have attained perfection of loyalty, can you self-realize finality of liberty. [435:4]

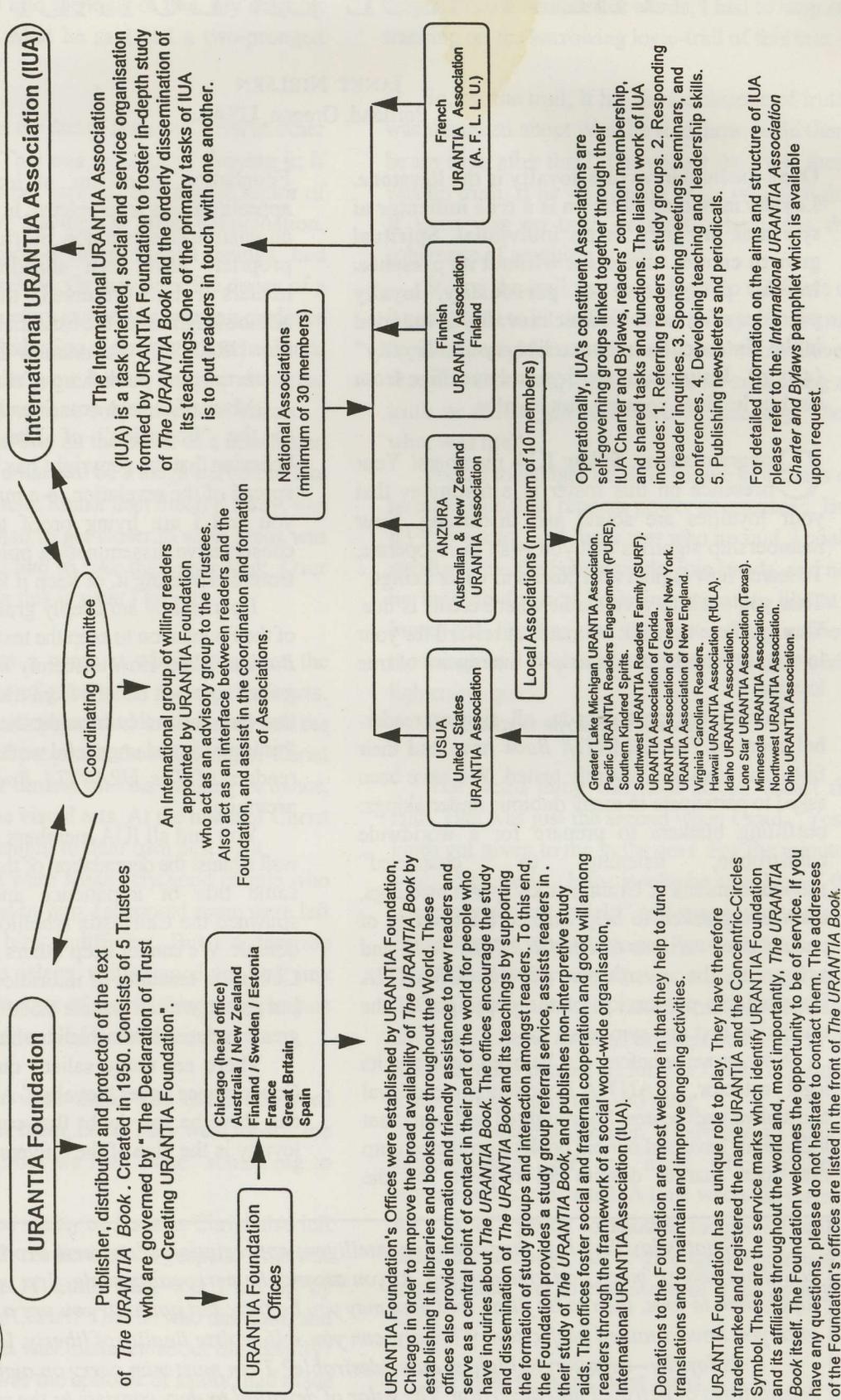
Is loyalty—devotion to highest duty—desirable? Then must man carry on amid the possibilities of betrayal and desertion. The valor of devotion to duty consists in the implied danger of default. [51:11]



February 1996

A simple outline of

URANTIA Foundation and International URANTIA Association



URANTIA Foundation's Offices were established by URANTIA Foundation, Chicago in order to improve the broad availability of *The URANTIA Book* by establishing it in libraries and bookshops throughout the World. These offices also provide information and friendly assistance to new readers who serve as a central point of contact in their part of the world for people who have inquiries about *The URANTIA Book*. The offices encourage the study and dissemination of *The URANTIA Book* and its teachings by supporting the formation of study groups and interaction amongst readers. To this end, the Foundation provides a study group referral service, assists readers in their study of *The URANTIA Book*, and publishes non-interpretive study aids. The offices foster social and fraternal cooperation and good will among readers through the framework of a social world-wide organisation, International URANTIA Association (IUA).

Donations to the Foundation are most welcome in that they help to fund translations and to maintain and improve ongoing activities.

URANTIA Foundation has a unique role to play. They have therefore trademarked and registered the name URANTIA and the Concentric-Circles Symbol. These are the service marks which identify URANTIA Foundation and its affiliates throughout the world and, most importantly, *The URANTIA Book* itself. The Foundation welcomes the opportunity to be of service. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact them. The addresses of the Foundation's offices are listed in the front of *The URANTIA Book*.

UNITED STATES URANTIA ASSOCIATION (USUA)

CAROLE JETT
Secretary

The formation of a United States national organization was official as of February 1, 1996. The national association was formed to assist and facilitate representation for all regional IUA associations of the United States in both the national and international arenas. There are fourteen regional associations in the U.S. The birth of this organization was more than two years in its gestation period.

At the 1994 International URANTIA Association Conference in Nashville, the formation of a USA national chapter of IUA was discussed. At that time, because so many of the regional associations in the United States were in their early developmental stages, it was decided to postpone this agenda item.

During the 1995 IUA meeting at the Nashville Conference, the Coordinating Committee, with the gentle persuasion of our international friends from Finland and Australia, emphasized the need for a representative body from the United States. This was in accordance with the IUA Charter and Bylaws.

Therefore, the Coordinating Committee convened a *pro tem* body of officers who served

until the democratic voting process could take place. The official name of this new organization is the *United States URANTIA Association (USUA)*. USUA was formed as a service organization. It is not an administrative body. Its purpose is to act as a liaison between all regional associations and overseas associations. A Nominating Committee coordinated the election of term officers. Nominations were solicited for each office. Every member of the regional associations was contacted by mail. The voting process took place, and, on February 1, 1996, the elected officials formally took their respective offices. The President is **Richard Brinkman** of Sarasota, Florida. A newsletter is presently being formulated.

The United States is such a large and diversified country. We, the officers, are hoping that the USUA will increase cohesion and add strength to the IUA. By drawing upon the wealth of each country's unique talents and resources, we can pool our personalities to disseminate this majestic Revelation of God to Man in the patient and refined manner in which it was originally mandated.

FRENCH URANTIA ASSOCIATION (A.F.F.L.U.)

URANTIA Association / Association francophone des lecteurs du Livre d'URANTIA (A.F.F.L.U.) was formed at a meeting of French speaking readers, held at Montereau on 2 and 3 March 1996. The new association, which at this stage unites 26 members, will foster in-depth study of Le Livre d'URANTIA,

disseminate its teachings, and be of service to the readers of the book. **Georges Michelson-Dupont** serves as the interim president of the Association Francophone until next General Meeting to be held within a year. The French Association will publish a newsletter titled **Le Lien Urantien**.

1996 CONFERENCES

1996 IUA Study Conference; Nashville, Tennessee, U.S.A.

Soon many of you will be receiving registration application information in preparation for the 1996 IUA Study Conference. Again this year, the conference will be held at Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tennessee, U.S.A.

The Southern Kindred Spirits (the regional IUA Association) conference planners are preparing for a large group, as many participants from the past conferences have indicated they plan to attend this year. It is also expected that, as with the past years,

there will be a significant number of new readers who will be attending their first conference.

The theme this year will complete the trilogy of conferences begun in 1994. The 1996 theme, "DEDICATION, INTEGRATION, AND TRANSFORMATION: THE JOURNEY TO SERVICE," will allow participants to explore the process by which the teachings of *The URANTIA Book* transform the lives of their students. To explore more fully the three central components of the



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Finland: 14-16 June at Oulu, Finnish URANTIA Association Summer Conference
For details call the Association Secretary, Seppo Niskanen: fax +358-0-496 225; phone +358-0-496 561

Australia: 11-14 October at Black Friars Retreat and Conference Centre, Watson, Canberra
ANZURA Conference. For details call Nigel Nunn: fax +61-2-6252 1433 (mark attn. Nigel Nunn); phone
+61-2-6252 1465

theme, each day's study will be dedicated to one central component with the final day offering a capstone which will improve each participant's understanding of the meaning of service.

The importance of these IUA Conferences is the focus on study, since evaluations from the past two conferences have overwhelmingly supported this approach. In addition to the ongoing study sessions there will again be special sessions for new readers. There will be considerable time allowed for socialization and a variety of organized reversion activities are planned. Preparation for another outstanding Kids' Conference is well underway.

For members of IUA local associations who

would like to plan and present regional conferences, there will be an optional evening training session designed to offer a tested and reliable roadmap for producing effective and successful conferences.

Conference dates are August 8-12, 1996. Check-in begins at 3:00 P.M. (15 h) local time on August 8, and the final session concludes at noon on August 12. Return your registration application as early as possible for significant savings.

If you do not receive a registration application, contact the URANTIA Foundation by phone, fax, or e-mail to request one. Also you may photocopy a blank application from a friend. Everyone on the 1996 Planning Committee is looking forward to seeing you in August.

**International URANTIA Association
Journal**
Quarterly News Journal

International URANTIA Association
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Subscription (including postage)

4 issues: 15 U.S. dollars, 15 Australian dollars, or 50 Finnish marks.
Single copies: 4 U.S. dollars, 4 Australian dollars, or 15 Finnish marks.

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