

THE ARENA

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THE MIND ARENA OF CHOICE

"Mind is your ship, the Adjuster is your pilot, the human will is captain." (page 1217)

Editor's notebook

The inner world of mankind: Seeking a description for the fifth epoch.

"The advances of true civilization are all born in this inner world of mankind." (page 1220)

Mankind has not yet shared an inner world. So far, the inner worlds of our tribes and nations have been fragmented and local. Instead of a rich tapestry of truth and fact, the backdrops to these partial inner worlds have been more or less crude collages, woven from dreams, fears and ambitions, sometimes sprinkled through with dislocated gems of revelation.

In the past, the heritage our tribes and nations passed to their children was a complex reflection of shared delusions, augmented with whatever skills and techniques each generation had acquired.

As we enter this fifth epoch, we have an opportunity to change this unimpressive cycle: together with Michael, his Most Highs, and the United Midwayers of Urantia, and armed with the truths offered via the Urantia Papers, there is at last a real hope that we can lay out a valid frame for this intended and inevitable planet-wide "inner world". With such a frame in place, the fabric of truth will weave itself through the minds of sincere mortals, anchoring to and filling this frame with splendor, forming an "inner world of mankind" with center stage reserved for the truths of Michael and the facts of Nebadon.

So how do we proceed? How on earth do we contribute to this noble construction?

"Creating paradigms is a very long process. It is much easier for the individual than for a societal group." (Travis Binion, 23/10/99)

This is an obvious but important insight. Clearly, this notion of an "inner world" applies not only to that potential shared heritage of all mankind, but also to the private worlds we each build. Consider how, within each of us, an inner world is created by the adjutants, then lit by Michael's spirit of truth. This is an auspicious start: our inner stage is built from near divine material. But how do we furnish these private apartments? How do we open

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these unseen rooms to our fellows? By what process do we as individuals engage a shared reality?

For the most part, our phantastic dreamscapes, woven from experience, from truth and myth and fact, remain private — a personal evolutionary essay. They represent our conscious effort to understand, and to respond to the challenges of life. (How much this essay is influenced by the spirit of Michael, and by the echoes of Adjustment that well up from within, remains mysterious.)

Of course, we are free to make a mess of this interior design. But remember, the Adjuster makes no mistake. Our best efforts, however many or few, are salvaged and organized into the fabric of our soul. With this level of security and guarantee, all fears become foolish.

Recently we have been exploring the idea that humanity needs an epic backdrop, a description of reality

(continued on page 2)

"When the spiritual tests of greatness are applied, the moral elements are not disregarded, but the quality of unselfishness revealed in "disinterested labor for the welfare of one's earthly fellows", particularly worthy beings in need and in distress, that is the real measure of planetary greatness..." (page 317)

(Editor's Notebook, continued from page 1)

that is consistent, describable, sharable and arousing. In past epochs, cultures spun myths to act as their universe frame. The Urantia Papers, by offering a set of truths able to act as foundation for the “inner world” of humanity’s fifth epoch, can supercede these ad hoc efforts:

“Revelation is a technique whereby ages upon ages of time are saved in the necessary work of sorting and sifting the errors of evolution from...”
(page 1110)

These Papers are an ideal tool to help coordinate, integrate and elevate the myths and ideologies that currently sustain and restrain the cultures of our world. (And surely we will not make the mistake of merely swapping old myths and fables for a new credo. A valid concept can evoke truth, or be caged as dogma.)

Approaching this idea via the word “myth” helped trigger in me deep reflection about the way we individually and communally furnish this inner world. A better term might be “paradigm”. My personal favorite is “description”, since, at least for me, the process of furnishing this inner world has felt like building a “description of reality”.

But the problem remains of how we share these private inner worlds with our fellows. Even though as individuals we may converse with our Adjusters and cavort with Michael’s spirit in an ecstasy of intuitive experience, how can we, as a community, share these private descriptions, and by so doing, enlarge our private little worlds? This communal task requires some accessible form, and a language familiar to the group.

Enter the Urantia Papers — a set of fine-tuned concepts, designed to decorate our inner worlds.

This may at first seem abstract, but consider how we pass to our children echoes from our own inner worlds. Our friends and associates soon sense whether our inner world is full of beauty, or embarrassing mess. On a normal world, the people of each generation can expect to receive and pass on some more-or-less valid description of reality, one that had taken root in revelations from the civilizations of both a Planetary Prince and an imported Adamic race. But on Urantia, and in particular during recent generations, we have faced the problem of having no serviceable myth, no sufficiently valid description, to pass on to our children.

Until now.

There is a way that “Things Are”. In each succeeding age, humanity has evolved some extended and more appropriate way to describe it. The Most Highs appear to be suggesting that, for this fifth epoch, we try the version presented within their Urantia Papers.

As early recipients of this fresh description, after we first repair and redecorate our own internal worlds (an effort in which the whole universe is conspiring to help us succeed), we are invited to join a project sponsored by these Most Highs: launching Urantia’s fifth age.

As readers, each of us have had this seed of revelation planted within. It is around this seed, upon this core of fundamental truth, that we have begun to build the first halting, evolutionary, versions of this fifth epoch frame. The difficult next step is to so extend our small understandings, our private “inner worlds”, that we can contribute to the establishment of this “inner world of mankind”. A worthy contribution to the advance of true civilization.

“The advances of true civilization are all born in this inner world of mankind.” (page 1220)

Future generations will live within *some* paradigm. As readers dedicated to the Father and our Michael, we are powerfully equipped to help the Most Highs build it. But many early recipients seem to be clients, not servers. Many appear ready and keen to enjoy this future “inner world”, neglecting the fact that it is not yet in place. While all of us will enjoy drinking the wine, we cannot yet press the grapes — we have just begun planting.

“Life is but a day’s work—do it well.” (page 556)

“And never is it necessary that any influence be brought to bear upon the Father to call forth his loving-kindness. The creature’s need is wholly sufficient to insure the full flow of the Father’s tender mercies and his saving grace.” (page 38)

THE ARENA

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Young readers, these days

Mike MacIsaac, himike@hotmail.com

This is a report on the recent progress of the work I've been doing to assist the younger generations of readers around the globe. I hope to not be focusing too much attention on myself, but rather the work.

"You can do important work if you do not become self-important; you can do several things as easily as one if you leave yourself out." (page 555)

BACKGROUND

I am a 24 year-old URANTIA Book reader who was raised by readers. I started reading the book when I was 16, and at that time I could find almost no other people interested under the age of 40. Four years later, when I began attending medium sized conferences (150-200 attendees), I found that there were often only one or two other readers in their twenties. Actually, there were just as few in their thirties! I still had a great time and made conference going high on my list of priorities, but I felt bad for others my generation who were missing out on such wonderful conferences. An older reader recently told me that "we lost a whole generation" (speaking of his children's generation, now in their 30s) through not doing enough in the way of setting up programs, at conferences and other gatherings, that their children could enjoy and appreciate. I'm glad to see that this trend is reversing, and that good children's programs are becoming priorities at conferences.

COLLECTING ADDRESSES

After my first conference I began to seek out other younger readers and collect addresses. I wanted, among other things, to do all I could so that we could get some momentum going in our generation, find them so we could inspire each other to exemplify the teachings, and to encourage other youths to come and enjoy conferences. The address list of young readers grew slowly but steadily for the first few years. Then, over a year ago my brother helped me start a web site for young readers. Since then it has been growing faster and more international.

These days I can't find the time to do all that I want to do—all that I see could be done to assist young readers around the world, as a group and as individuals. This database needs a lot of updating work, which I wish I had more time to do. The address list of young readers has grown to over three hundred youths from 23 different countries.

I still am in search for readers of my generation as time permits, if any of you know of any young readers, (early 30s or younger) please tell them about the web site, or tell me about them. I just found out about around 30 young readers I'd never heard about all in the same day through the UBRON (URANTIA Book Readers On Line)

web site: <http://origin.org/ub.cfm>. I went through the member listings and read about readers all around the world. While spending hours sorting through all 500 or so member's pages where some people revealed their birth dates, it was a total rush as I found more and more young readers who had joined the site. In the end I had collected information on 30 or so newly found young readers. I only wished I had found them earlier as I even found one who lives in a city in England, which I just visited 6 weeks ago! Now I am excited to begin to write to those 30 or so.

CONFERENCES

Conferences seem to often be turning points for young readers, high points in the lives of all who attend for that matter. I know many readers, young and old, who, after their first conference experiences, do all they can to attend all conferences possible. I'll be keeping assisting and encouraging young people to come to conferences as one of my focuses, as conferences are some of the biggest motivators I've ever seen for readers. At all of the other conferences I've been to, it has been amazing to see how inspired and motivated to study the book young people became after a few days in that environment.

NASHVILLE 1999 CONFERENCE:

A scholarship program was set up for the conference in Nashville this year, which helped youths who could afford to make the trip to Nashville but could afford only part or none of the registration, food and lodging fees. Carpools were planned and 13 or 14 of us attended. Together at a conference, it felt like suddenly there was the beginning of a community, a solid network of young readers, who will enthusiastically continue to join the rest of the active readership. Since that conference other young readers have been starting projects. April Helen is starting a newsletter to go out to young readers, and Merindi Swadling just did a presentation at a conference in Australia about being a young reader and her recent experiences.

I'm constantly impressed as I get to know more and more readers of my generation that most of them have their priorities straight. At one point the young readers who were in Nashville, most of us having been raised by reader parents, were interviewed and video taped. Several long time older readers observed the interview and expressed how glad and surprised they were that we all seemed to "get it". They said that we "got" the overall picture and ability to see what is important, which it felt like it took them 20 years to "get", and things which some people still haven't "got" after 20 years of URANTIA Book study. One of them jokingly said she felt like she could die, and the revelation would be left in good hands.

CHICAGO YOUTH WEEKEND

At the conference in Nashville we were informed that we could plan a meeting to take place at 533 in Chicago (upstairs from the URANTIA Foundation office) if we

needed a place to have a meeting. A few of us then planned a meeting to take place the weekend before the conference in Vancouver, so that some of us could carpool there together. When the time came, youths converged in Chicago traveling from France, Australia, Sweden, Hawaii, Kansas, Texas, and other parts of Illinois. Not having to worry about registration or lodging fees helped us to make it possible for 14 youths to attend.

It was a small, relaxed, intimate, joyful weekend of study and friendship building. We also got to show those who had never been to Chicago around a little, and to attend the weekly study group which takes place at 533 and socialize with some of the readers in the area. The gathering couldn't have turned out better, and those who had never been to a meeting of readers before vowed to do it more often. Merindi Swadling wrote a more detailed memoir about the meeting, a link to it can be found on the conferences page of the UByouth web site. www.x-hi.com/ubyouth After this weekend, five of us, with our favorite reading and discussion materials, had a blast making our way in a carpool from Chicago to Vancouver.

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE, Vancouver 1999

It was very helpful that a scholarship work/trade program was set up for young readers at this conference, which helped a lot of young readers afford to attend. This was my first time being at such a large conference, and I felt overjoyed to meet for the first time so many young people. There were tons of young people there, though as at all conferences I've attended, the percentage of conference attendees who were young adults who came on their own initiative, and were reading the book, was small, relative to the entire attendance list of over 600. But I think that trend will begin to change.

Being in loving conference environment, and meeting others their age who were bursting with enthusiasm for the teachings, was an inspiration for all the young people I know of who were there. Many of those who hadn't been reading *The URANTIA Book* when they arrived at the conference, said that they planned to have read the whole book by their next conference, and I know of some who have already begun reading earnestly. A young girl, who was not a part of the conference, who served a bunch of us "young readers" beer in the bar on night, said to me, "Who are you people? I've never met such a happy group of people! Whatever group you are a part of, I want to join!" I wish I had been able to give her a book that night. A 19-year-old friend of mine who lives in Vancouver, who I had met in Australia and given a book, came to visit me at the conference one night. He came for the night of the Pato Banton concert, and was amazed that "these are all *URANTIA Book* readers?". I don't think either of us had ever seen such a large group of people bursting with love and positive energy, it's amazing to see how people open up and show their beauty when they are in such a loving environment.

At the past few conferences I've been to, it has really

paid off to call a meeting of young readers and attendants. On the second to last day of the Vancouver conference I finally overcame my anxiety that if I tried to call a meeting of young attendants no one would show up. That morning I went around and told a few people to pass the word around, and that evening I found that the word really got passed around. Around 35 youths had got word of and showed up for the meeting. A picture from this meeting is on the web site. It was an informal "everybody show yourselves and speak your minds" meeting, an open meeting with no one leading or directing the group. People expressed how grateful they were to be at the conference, and how they wanted to attend conferences more often. The mother of one of the youths in the room, happened to be in the room while our meeting was taking place, and she broke into tears at one point, and expressed the joy she was experiencing in observing our meeting. We enjoyed the meeting so much we didn't want it to end, so we decided, since it was the last night and we wouldn't have another chance to plan another meeting of that nature, we would meet in the rose gardens at 12pm and enjoy the night together.

Word really got around to meet there. When I got there at midnight a big group of those who were too young to be in the bar were there, waiting for the rest of us. After music and good times together in the rose gardens, we decided to move to a warmer location. We all walked together, a group of 50 or so youths, to continue the party in a dorm room. It felt surreal walking through the universe campus, at three in the morning, with fifty or so young readers. I looked at the large group as we walked, and reflected on the fact that we were at a URANTIA conference, and we might be seeing each other at URANTIA conferences 30, even 50, years in the future.

I stayed on the campus until there weren't any more readers to be found, and then went to the airport where I found I would have to wait at least four days to fly east standby. I was exhausted and didn't know what to do, when I met another young reader from the conference at the airport! She was also in the same predicament and we ended up having adventures hitching a ride across Canada together!

After the conference, around 60 new young reader addresses were added to list, and a bunch of pictures of young readers were added to the UByouth web site [<http://www.x-hi.com/ubyouth>].

TRAVEL

Traveling is a great opportunity to expand our horizons, to visit other readers of all ages, and to connect with other truth seekers along the way. More and more young readers are traveling and visiting each other as the community/family of the newest generation of readers grows. Knowing readers of all ages around the world makes travel much more practical and inspirational. A young American reader who might visit Europe, will have peer readers who they can visit and probably stay with in Paris France, Geneva,

Switzerland, cities in England, Stockholm Sweden (if I'm here), St Petersburg Russia, Oslo Norway, Croatia, and more cities. Not to mention all the older readers we can visit in our international travels. Some young readers after the conference in Vancouver spontaneously decided to travel together. Others have seen through the web site that they happened to be visiting the same city at the same time, and hooked up. Chris Wood enjoyed traveling around Europe last summer, where he visited young readers in Croatia, France, Oslo, and stayed with me in Stockholm for a few weeks. I've also been traveling over the past years and visiting readers all over the world, and I've had great joy in having other readers visit me. Earlier this year in Australia, while I stayed with a young reader we were able to plan a gathering in Sydney of young readers.

WEBSITE FOR YOUNG READERS

<http://www.x-hi.com/ubyouth>

Right now the UBYouth web site includes pages with pictures and introductions to young readers, a guest book, a link to a chat room, pages with pictures from conferences, a page with conference information, and a page with information on how to join an email discussion list for young readers.

There are currently two email discussion lists for young readers, one in English and a new one for French speaking young readers. The English list has over 40 members right now. This list maintains a very friendly atmosphere. Anyone can read the transcripts from it at the UBYouth web site.

IN CONCLUSION

It is great that young people are connecting with each other, but we also have a lot to learn and gain from associating with the older generations. I hope when you see young readers at conferences you won't be afraid to approach them.

I want to send many thanks to all of you who have helped me and all the other young readers with our aims and efforts.

I believe that the following quote is a good guide as to what directions we should be working in as a movement. (Keeping in mind that they use the word *cult* with its 1930's meaning—a system of group practices and beliefs.)

“... the new must be the outgrowth of applied love. The new cult must, like the old, foster sentiment, satisfy emotion, and promote loyalty; but it must do more: It must facilitate spiritual progress, enhance cosmic meanings, augment moral values, encourage social development, and stimulate a high type of personal religious living. The new cult must provide supreme goals of living which are both temporal and eternal—social and spiritual.” (page 966)

Estonian URANTIA Association

Cathy Jones, IUA Administrator

On August 20, 1999 eleven *URANTIA Book* readers from Finland, Belgium, Holland and the United States gathered in Karepa, Estonia to celebrate with our Estonian brothers and sisters the licensing of the Estonian URANTIA Association, and join with them in their third annual conference. 22 of the 36 Estonians present became charter members of the EUA.

Karapa is a small village about 110 km from Tallinn. The camp where the conference was held is located on the Balkan Sea. As one walks along the beach, viewing the dark green color of the Sea, a giant guard-tower overlooking the water is visible - a reminder of Soviet occupation. Before the Estonians won their freedom during the Singing War in 1988, this camp was used by the Soviets as a summer retreat for boys and girls. Veikko Raagmets, the present director, was introduced to the Book by Peep Sober. Through Veikko's efforts, the camp has been made available for URANTIA conferences.

Estonia is a land of beautiful green forests and the camp is surrounded by trees. Fifteen 4-bed cabins form a circle a short distance from the main meeting and eating building. The Estonian diet is extremely healthy. We Americans were introduced to an array of vegetables, along with boiled eggs and cold cuts, cereal, yogurt and fruit for breakfast. Many homes have greenhouses to grow tomatoes and cucumbers. Cabbage and potatoes are staple items, using a variety of recipes in preparing unusual dishes.

The theme of the conference was Paper 100 - "Religion in Human Experience."

On Friday, August 20, following registration, getting settled in our cabins and having dinner, the election of officers was held, followed by the licensing meeting. Due to an overloaded schedule, no Trustee could make the trip; however, Seppo Kanerva, President of the Council of National Presidents and Vice Presidents acted as a special Trustee Representative in signing the licensing agreement, along with the newly elected EUA President and Secretary and Cathy Jones of the IUA. A very inspiring welcome-congratulatory message from Trustee President, Richard Keeler, was read by Seppo Kanerva.

President: Peep Sober - peep@stv.ee

Vice President: Ruth Kask - ruth11@online.ee

Secretary: Juri Vatter - jvatter@foradell.ee

Treasurer: Arvi Pikner - pikner@server.ee

Congratulations and love to all our Estonian brothers and sisters, with a special thanks to Peep Sober for the many hours of organizing the Association and producing the Conference.

Urantia Book Youth

*A presentation by Merindi Swadling
ANZURA Conference, Melbourne, 1999*

Hi there everyone. As you are all most likely aware, my name is Merindi Swadling. I would like to share some of my recent experiences with you today. First of all, some background info:

- *I am 25 years old*
- *My parents – Kathleen and Trevor – have been reading The URANTIA Book for about 20 years*
- *I have been reading for about 18 months*
- *and no, I have not yet completed this amazingly huge book, but I am getting there.*

I just want to ask a few questions of you all:

- *Who here has children?*
- *How many of these children are under 30 years of age?*
- *And how many of these have read or are reading The URANTIA Book?*
- *So, where are they all today?*

Interesting isn't it? Why aren't your children interested in becoming involved with the Urantia movement... and why are some not even interested in reading the book? I have some thoughts on this, and will come back to it a bit later.

What was it like growing up with *The URANTIA Book*? Because I didn't grow up without *The URANTIA Book* I guess I can't really compare... but overall I truly believe my brothers and I had one of the best up-bringsings that is possible. Sure, we had our usual family dramas that influenced us as young children, but overall we grew up with...

- *a strong belief in God,*
- *an understanding of the universe and what it all means,*
- *a faith in the fact that we do go on to bigger and better things after our lives here on Urantia,*
- *a love of Jesus,*
- *and on the whole we experienced a peace in our lives that not too many children and teenagers feel.*

I remember when we were young we often put on our PJs and gathered around Mum on this tiny little couch we had in the living room. If you can picture Daniel, Andrew and I lying all over each other and over Mum... we were curled up waiting for a story. Mum used to tell us stories whilst drawing illustrations to the story on a sketchpad. Her stories gave us an understanding of 'how did we get

here?', 'why are we here?', and 'what is this whole thing all about?'. I remember clearly the day she drew the Life Carriers planting life in the oceans around the world, under the water she drew these microscopic life forms evolving into fish, and then to our amazement these fish began walking out onto the land. She drew whilst she talked and the three of us were enthralled. We couldn't wait till the next night to find out what happened to these walking fish. And of course, we soon found out that the walking fish eventually became us! I sometimes remember these stories with a smile, and wish I could remember them in more detail.

What I believe this basically gave us was a good understanding of the concepts of *The URANTIA Book*. Before I began reading "on my own" I knew all about the Lucifer rebellion, Adam & Eve, Michael of Nebadon, the Seraphim and Cherubim, the Morontia Worlds, and other such teachings.

I guess the point I am trying to make is that I am truly thankful that readers of *The URANTIA Book* brought me up. I know that I would not be the person I am today if it was not for the understanding and wisdom I gained as a young child and as a teenager.

Which brings me to my present-day situation. As I mentioned earlier I have been reading the book for approximately 18 months and in this period I have experienced a sense of joy and peace that has never been in my life before.

I spent 3 months in Chicago with my parents last year, and if any of you have ever visited URANTIA Foundation, commonly known as 533, you will understand when I say that it was an amazing experience. Even if I had resisted the teachings of *The URANTIA Book*, I would have been touched by the time that I spent there. I met many of the American readers and had some invaluable conversations. I know that if I had not been in Chicago for this period last year, I may not be reading the book today.

I met another young reader of the book during this time in Chicago; some of you met Mike MacIsaac when he visited Australia earlier this year. Mike has been dedicated to bringing together young readers of the book from around the world. He made me realise that not only 40-50 year olds can relate to this book, and that it actually has teachings that are relevant to the 20-30's of this world. *Wow... now this was a new concept to me!*

I want to diverge for a moment on this topic. All my life I have looked upon anything relating to *The URANTIA Book* as "something my parents did". I think you will all agree that it is not too cool to associate yourself with your parent's beliefs, and it was definitely not a good look to socialise with your parents friends. This may not be too nice, but I could think of nothing worse when I was 15 years of age than staying at home whilst Mum and Trevor hosted Urantia get-togethers. Now, I could think of nothing better. Perhaps you may think that I have simply grown up or matured, but I know that if I had not met other young readers of the book it would have taken much longer for me to begin reading. Thus I may never have become

involved with other readers, and most likely would not be at this conference today. Yes, I do believe I would have completed the book some day, probably when I had children of my own, but it would have been later rather than earlier.

The benefits I believe I have gained from reading the book earlier rather than later are numerous – I have been able to cope with the ups and downs that come along with being 25: working full time, studying part time, socialising often, attempting to save money whilst financing my high expenditure, etc, etc. *The URANTIA Book* has enabled me to balance the material life that I lead, the intellectual mindset I need to be in at work and university, with a high level of spiritual activity. The spiritual aspect of my day to day life is satisfying, healthy, and brings with it much peace and joy.

So, how do we encourage young people to take an interest in the teachings of this wonderful book? I believe we should begin the task with the children of Urantia readers, your children. But how do we encourage these children and young adults to realise that it not so uncool to hang out with your parents' friends? Should we send all of our children to Chicago to meet Mike MacIssac? I don't think so.

Needless to say, Mike & I became good friends and continued our friendship when I returned to Australia. We spent considerable time in Chicago last year deciding on the best way to get young readers talking to each other, and what was the most appropriate format for this interaction. Of course the World Wide Web is the communication device of our generation, and it seemed logical that we utilise this to its utmost potential. Mike and his brother set up a website dedicated to all young readers of *The URANTIA Book*. From this came an e-mail discussion list called "UBYouth". The discussion list currently has approximately 35 members and is extremely active, meaning that there are discussions happening on a daily basis, discussions that cover many topics. We discuss things such as:

- *What did you do this weekend? How is your boyfriend / girlfriend / husband / wife? What was that club like... I've heard it's a really cool place to hang out?*
- *How long have you been reading The URANTIA Book, and can you share your experience with us.*
- *What is the difference between the soul, the mind, and the personality?*
- *How do you feel about sex before marriage? Are we allowed to drink and party with our friends? Are there any "rules" in this book?*
- *How do you respond when a Christian friend informs you that anyone who doesn't accept that Jesus Christ died for their sins will be ending their lives in Hell?*

- *And of course the old favourite, what is this dispute occurring between the Foundation and the Fellowship.*

Besides all the discussion and the seriousness of some of the topics that are being brought up, overall we are just good friends. We are supportive and encouraging to each other and I am thankful for the friendships I have formed through this list.

Additional to the discussion list, the UBYouth website has photos, introduction pages, guestbook, and a link to the chat channel. It is a great site to visit, whether you are young or not, and easy to find. There is a link to it from the Foundation's website.

<http://www.x-hi.com/ubyouth/>

A "youth" weekend was held in Chicago recently, just prior to the Vancouver conference. I was fortunate enough to attend, and again this was an amazing experience for me. There were 14 young readers of the book gathered with the sole purpose of getting to know each other better and increase our understanding of the teachings of *The URANTIA Book*. We had some great fun and some heavy discussions. We left Chicago with valuable friendships formed and a true appreciation of each other.

I then travelled from Chicago to Vancouver. Vancouver! What words can I possibly use to describe this conference? Big. Extremely Big. 960 people BIG! It was enjoyable, inspiring, dramatic, emotional, humorous, sociable & loads of fun. On the other hand, it was frustrating, sad, tense, annoying, and occasionally boring.

"Strange", some of you may be thinking. How can such opposing adjectives be used to describe a 6-day event? I don't know how, but I know that this was a confusing week for me. Events of this conference sent me through high feelings to low feelings. Why? I'm still not sure. But I believe it may have something to do with the fact that it was:

- *The first American conference I have attended.*
- *The first Fellowship conference I have attended.*
- *The first conference I have been to where there were more than 80 people in attendance... and there were 960 people there.*
- *The first time I have been around such a variety of readers... the Teaching Mission, the UFO supporters, the pot smokers, the studious readers who have analysed the book for many years, supporters of the Fellowship, supporters of the Foundation, readers who were 85 years of age, readers who were 13 years of age, people who have been reading for 35 years and people who have been reading for 35 days.*
- *The list could go on and on.*

I would have to say that the best thing about the Vancouver conference was the joy that was gained from meeting so many young readers. There were approximately 45 youths between the age of 18-30. We had a great time together and began valuable friendships. These young people were cool, we had some laughs, some emotional discussions, some crazy conversations, we went to the pub a few times, and we basically just enjoyed the fact that we were not the only young person taking an interest in *The URANTIA Book*. The conference was definitely a memory I shall hold for a long time and all readers, young and 'older' should experience a conference like this one day.

Which brings me back to my question earlier – how do we encourage young people, your children, to take an interest in *The URANTIA Book*? And why don't many 2nd generationers read the book?

I think the key to this is to let them know they are not alone. Teach them that there are many people their own age that also have parents who read "this strange book". Encourage them to learn that the book has teachings that are more than relevant to their lives, and that these teachings will assist them in their struggles to get through these confusing and difficult years. Let them find out that young people can and do have fun at Urantia gatherings.

One of the biggest fears in a young person's mind is what things may look like to their peers. We are struggling to find our own way, attempting to define ourselves as individuals, learn all about life – quickly. To do this we often make decisions on what is happening around us, and on what our peers are doing or saying. The risk that you may be isolated by speaking out about something as 'uncool' as religion is so strong that many 2nd generationers keep quiet... I know I did for a long time.

The second question... why don't children of *URANTIA Book* readers read the book themselves is an interesting one. I didn't start reading until I was 24 years of age... why not? To put it very simply, I didn't need to. I knew there was a God, I knew what was going to happen when I died, I knew the importance of loving my fellow man, I knew all about Jesus and his life here on Urantia – basically my life was not lacking any truths and I wasn't searching for truths. We heard yesterday about how people discovered the book and what their experiences with it have been, and the similarities with them all was the underlying desire to know the truth; I already knew, and have known since before I can remember.

I know this is the way most children of *URANTIA Book* readers feel. I often talk to my younger brother, Andrew, about the book – and there have been many times I have witnessed him holding debates with his friends about God, the Universe and the purpose of our lives. He knows just as much as I do, and he is just as passionate. I have asked him why he hasn't read any of the book himself, and his answer is "Why should I Merindi?" He doesn't have any burning questions that he needs answered... he is quite content just the way he is.

I would like to move on a bit now, as I believe there is something that needs to be mentioned when we are discussing the youth of the Urantia movement, and I'm not entirely sure I am going to be able to explain it sufficiently. But I guess I will try.

"YOUTH" as a word has been defined for many thousands of years by the society in which we live. It is quite often seen in a negative connotation. Have a quick think about it... what words come to your mind when you think about "Youth". Alcohol? Drugs? Casual sex? The dole? Sleep-ins? Hanging out in shopping malls? Skateboards? Surfboards? Baggy pants that are positioned way too far down the backside? Baseball caps on backward in the middle of the night... and other such ridiculous fashions? I think you know what I am saying. Where in this list can we see words such as responsible, intelligent, mature, ambitious, idealistic, new way of thinking, desirable, laughter, confused, and other such words? They are not the first things that come to mind, are they? Yet these words are often more truthful when we are describing the youth of today, actually when we are describing youth in any era.

If you can picture the word YOUTH, and consider 2 branches coming out of the word. On one of the branches we see negative or detrimental definitions and categorising of youth. Occurrences that come from this are a group of young individuals who have no responsibility, not many morals, and plenty of rebellion. This is the group who are constantly excused by the older generation... simply because "they are young". "Oh, that's OK that he failed to say thank-you, or he didn't show up for his sister's birthday dinner... he's only young, he doesn't know better." This is not to say that the youth are totally blameless... they can often use this as an excuse for their behaviour also. "Don't worry Mum, I'll settle down and get a job someday... I'm only young you know"

The other branch of this is the positive side. Occurrences from this are a group of young individuals who are responsible for their actions, kind to one another, individualistic without the rebellion. They are encouraged by their parents and other members of society to discover who they are and find their place, whilst still being responsible and mature in their behaviour. They are recognised as being different from the older generation, but they are included in the activities of the older group. They are given the freedom to behave as young adults whilst there is still an expectation that they act in a sensible and intelligent manner.

So we have two sides of the definition. By defining youth and segregating them in our society – or in the Urantia movement – we run the risk of encouraging irresponsible and rebellious behaviour. The aim should be to recognise the differences between young and old whilst attempting to integrate the two groups.

Have I explained this properly?

In summary, I want to make the point that as *URANTIA Book* readers we need to be careful about the way in which we deal with young readers of the book. We need to ensure

they are given the opportunity to meet and socialise with other young people whilst still including them in the decision making process and in the various, sometimes complex discussions we have. As parents we should be encouraging our children from a very early age to be questioning their lives and the environment they live in. They need to be treated as individuals and taught to take responsibility for their actions. These children should be nurtured in such a way that they grow up with a comprehensive understanding of the teachings and concepts in *The URANTIA Book*. This will lead to the satisfaction of knowing that they have nothing to fear. They will be confident in the knowledge that to treat their fellow men with goodness, kindness and love is the only way to live their lives and will provide them with ultimate happiness. Whether they read the book or not is almost irrelevant, although of course it is desired... as long as their lives are lived through love and not fear, they will be OK.

Of course, I would like to end with some quotes from *The URANTIA Book*. This comes from Paper 84 – Marriage and Family Life, a beautiful paper. Page 940 tells us:

“Love of offspring is almost universal and is of distinct survival value. The ancients always sacrificed the mother’s interests for the welfare of the child; an Eskimo mother even yet licks her baby in lieu of washing. But primitive mothers only nourished and cared for their children when very young; like the animals, they discarded them as soon as they grew up. Enduring and continuous human associations have never been founded on biologic affection alone. The animals love their children; man—civilized man—loves his children’s children. The higher the civilization, the greater the joy of parents in the children’s advancement and success; thus the new and higher realization of name pride comes into existence.”

And further in the same paper,

“The olden ideas of family discipline were biologic, growing out of the realization that parents were creators of the child’s being. The advancing ideals of family life are leading to the concept that bringing a child into the world, instead of conferring certain parental rights, entails the supreme responsibility of human existence.

Civilization regards the parents as assuming all duties, the child as having all the rights. Respect of the child for his parents arises, not in knowledge of the obligation implied in parental procreation, but naturally grows as a result of the care, training, and affection which are lovingly displayed in assisting the child to win the battle of life. The true parent is engaged in a continuous service-ministry which the wise child comes to recognize and appreciate.”

Canadian URANTIA Association

Cathy Jones, IUA Administrator

Our newest national association was licensed on Saturday, October 23, 1999 at the Silver Springs Retreat Center, Flesherton, Ontario, Canada.

Silver Springs Retreat Center is located about 100 miles north of Ontario in an area of beautiful green, rolling meadows. As one approaches the center from the rural, country road, the sprawling home of Derek and Sue Tennant suddenly appears at the top of the hill. Sue has worked her decorating magic throughout the spacious art-filled home, with the expanded 3-story guest quarters. The many-windowed living room overlooks a red barn just over the hill (which has been converted into conference meeting rooms with facilitator sleeping quarters). The bright adjoining kitchens are a homemaker’s dream, featuring a 6-ft marble counter with built-in sink, and an Italian “pizza” oven. As one enters the dining room with the two round dining tables, the warmth and glow from the cozy fireplace bids you welcome - to enjoy the hospitality and the taste of Sue’s delicious food.

The beautifully landscaped property has several spring-fed lakes – one for swimming – another stocked with waiting-to-be caught rainbow trout. The next phase will be permanent season-proof tents to accommodate family conferences.

Voting presidents/vice presidents and spouses of the three Canadian local associations, plus the URANTIA Foundation Trustee president and IUA administrator attended the weekend meeting/retreat. The purpose of the meeting was to get acquainted, approve the bylaws and elect a governing board for the newly formed national association.

From the time the participants started arriving Friday afternoon until the Sunday noon departure, there was a sense of oneness of spirit and commitment. Woven into the light-hearted fellowship one could feel a sincere devotion to a personal manifestation of the commonly-shared principles of *The URANTIA Book*.

As the concentric circle flag was raised and a shoulder-to-shoulder, hand-holding circle was formed on Sunday morning, the newly elected president led the group in a prayer of thanksgiving, with a pledge to loyal service.

In 1993 the IUA was formed for the purpose of fostering in-depth study of *The URANTIA Book* and the orderly dissemination of its teachings. That purpose has been, and continues to be, maintained, as our organization matures into its full potential.

The elected governing board is as follows:

President: **Gaetan Charland**, L’Assoc. Urantia Quebec

Vice Pres: **Nathen Jansen**, Urantia Assoc. of the Cascades

Secretary: **Sue Tennant**, Northern Light Urantia Assoc.

Treasurer: **Brian King**, Northern Light Urantia Assoc.

Beyond 2000 — The Kingdom of Heaven is still within you.

*A presentation by William Wentworth
ANZURA Conference, Melbourne, 1999*

Previous presentations have emphasised the opportunities of a fresh start which the new millennium symbolises. But continuity with the old is just as significant.

The Kingdom of Heaven is still within us; nothing has changed. The adjuster, the spirit of truth, the adjutant mind spirits, the holy spirit and so on are still active as usual.

It is important for us to remember that these influences, while being in all of us, are tailored specifically to each of us as individuals. *The URANTIA Book* offers the best advice we know about how to live our lives—and that advice is to each of us on how to live our OWN lives, and not so much how to concern ourselves with how other people live theirs.

It may be true that some people do things we find repulsive—from selling inferior hamburgers to chopping one another up with machetes to terrorising people about hellfire and damnation, but if we can't do much about it, our preoccupation with it just makes us sour and disillusioned. As Vern said yesterday, we become neurotic if our area of concern is too far out of step with our area of influence. *The URANTIA Book* encourages us to “remove the beam from our own eye” before we worry too much about what may be in the eyes of others. We just have to accept that in setting up evolution, the celestial administrators expected progress to be uneven, that morality therefore would vary, but that it will all work out in the end. Strength of character results from “seeking first the Kingdom of Heaven” no matter what other people get up to.

An important lesson in this regard was contained in the Study Day reading on page 1118, where it says:- “If any man chooses to do the divine will, he shall know the way of truth.” There is a whole philosophy of life wrapped up in that little statement. Once the desire to do God's will exists, and the decision to try has been made, then knowledge of what that will actually is can be received. No attempt to discern God's will is likely to succeed unless the desire to enact that will already exists. People cannot be forced to do God's will—they must desire to do it.

Laws, social force and official coercion may be necessary to protect society, but such suppression will not correct the problem. Only the desire to change—to do God's will—can reform troublemakers.

I find that I am often inspired by the good heartedness of my neighbours, and their preparedness to “go the second mile” in their desire to do right. The sheer goodwill of so many ordinary people sometimes amazes me. I can only

surmise that such people are unknowingly doing God's will.

There is another way of thinking about the statement “the Kingdom of Heaven is within you”. Whereas Jesus was trying to wean his apostles away from the notion of a worldly regime of the Messiah, we can think of it in addition as being an exhortation to take heart. With a different emphasis—the **Kingdom of Heaven** is within **you**—we can take it to mean that, in addition to that inescapable self incessantly clamouring for recognition and honour mentioned on page 51, we have in us also The Kingdom of Heaven. Our little selfish animal is only one of the influences in us. There is also the divine Kingdom of Heaven in us, making us capable of knowing God and trying to be like Him.

Robert Browning expressed this rather well in “Paracelsus” where he wrote:

*Truth is within ourselves; it takes no rise
From outward things, whate'er you may believe.
There is an inmost centre in us all,
Where truth abides in fulness; and around,
Wall upon wall, the gross flesh hems it in,
This perfect, clear perception—which is truth.*

*A baffling and perverting carnal mesh
Binds it, and makes all error: and to know
Rather consists in opening out a way
Whence the imprisoned splendour may escape,
Than in effecting entry for a light
Supposed to be without.*

The **Kingdom of Heaven** is within **you**. Let it out!

“Mortal man cannot possibly know the infinitude of the heavenly Father. Finite mind cannot think through such an absolute truth or fact. But this same finite human being can actually feel—literally experience—the full and undiminished impact of such an infinite Father's LOVE. Such a love can be truly experienced, albeit while quality of experience is unlimited, quantity of such an experience is strictly limited by the human capacity for spiritual receptivity and by the associated capacity to love the Father in return.” (page 50)

View of Father Will Compliance

*From Development of Pre-Adjuster Human Mind
To Relative Maturity*

Ron Besser

The divine personalities involved in our system of mortal creation dilute the possibilities of error or opposition to the Father's will by setting up the following restricting and conditional situations within human society:

1. Restricted arenas of choice. We simply can not, as a group or individually, oppose the Father's will enough to cause universal danger. These restrictions are helpful in our immaturity to keep most of us within the riverbed of the Father's direction-choices.

2. Availability of parents usually experienced in Father-will choices. I doubt this point can be overemphasized in its importance to the training of minds not yet indwelt by the Father's will-presence. Setting the good example before inexperienced minds has no replacement.

3. Guardian angels and other influences of the Infinite Spirit. These influences are, as a group of influences, powerful brakes on unfettered will. The Holy Spirit encircuits in young minds before the Thought Adjusters come and in many ways is this gentle presence pointing to the unconscious way to the Father's will until the Adjuster arrives and then with the Adjuster after his indwelling.

4. Dispensation restrictions and Genetic limitations Unschooled will is wisely circumvented by the impossibility of access to policies or procedures which require advanced responsibilities ordained by the will of the Father.

5. Trinitarian overcontrol. Which includes the time-space constraints of evolution. Evolution is also the womb to super-mindal recognition of Father will compliance.

All of the above restrictions and actions, regardless of what else they do otherwise, are to condition the individual life to benefit the group life and avoid the consequences of disastrous choices on humanity. The Thought Adjuster's work as the spirit voice of God's will is making strong headway when the person is of status above the third psychic circle. Personal understanding of the law of the Father's wishes is matured when the first psychic circle is entered or completed and the human potential more fully translates by a real modification of mind through which a new working relationship with Paradise spirit actualizes.

It therefore should not come as a great surprise to learn that for most people Father-will recognition is a process of Father identification through experience. This process

is a facility of the various spiritual influences mentioned above (and more) along with the personality's intent to actively seek compliance comfort. It is by no means unsensed. Eventually, to these persons the Father's will becomes so strongly inferred it can not be denied.

I call attention to universal mind as the ancestor to its seven creative modifications called cosmic mind: The Orvonton variant of created mind is further modified in the local universe of Nebadon where its evolutionary components are changed into discrete functions for use with and for ministry to creature life. When creature life acquires will dignity the Source of will indwells such a mind to co-produce personal unities sufficient for that mind to encircuit with portions of the Nebadon cosmic mind variant. Psychic circle assignment is a direct consequence to the degree personal unities are acquired and the passport to super-adjutant mind association and more conscious Father-will mandates. However, there is a vast amount of ground to be crossed that lies between the beginner and accurately sensing the will of the Father.

Personal unities are the roads cut through the underbrush of un-aligned will. The more one allows self unification to proceed the less tangles there are to seriously afflict the sense of the will of the Father. Interlocution between ourselves and the living imperative of the Adjuster is at first entirely unknown on any conscious level. Even in the best of circumstances the sense of the Father's will is unspoken but in individuals reaching attunement, the Father's choice is deeply felt both in mind and in the personality, and even in the body.

Early will discernment of the Father's wishes is intimately tied up in the relationship which exists between the mind, the personality, and the Adjuster. Young people do not yet have the full sense capacity to infer the will (please see above for the 5 external aides to will compliance that are operating). That capacity to discern is a later result arising from the spiritual unification of the aforementioned relationships which in turn expands conscious sensing in mind, the self, and the body to the cosmic reality the Father's truth represents as choice. It takes most of life in the flesh to sort through all the clearing away that has to be done to reach levels that are genuinely cosmic and consciously specific of the Father's intent.

It is difficult to express how the human may know the will of the Father and yet not be able to state it verbally. The mystery of why that is true I believe lies with the personality which in turn commands a fearless and disciplined mind. This is what is required of us to bring to the Father that He may, in turn, commit what is mostly a thing into the reality of an eternal spirit.

The Father's will does not hide itself. It is a privilege to know it and therefore it must be wanted and it must be worked for. The grace and mercy and ministry of the Son and the Spirit prepare, promote, and even preserve the mortal's life until he has the capacity to know the way of righteous choices and then to live the law of Love through service.

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My Dear One,

*Like the rain falls upon the leaves
So does my love fall upon your life
Stand in awe of the power of that love
Take part in the glory that is the Kingdom
Never turn your face away from the sunshine
Always look to the heavens for the truth
Hold your hand out steady
And know that I will reach for it always
There is no fear, just illusion
To have faith is to embrace reality
Smell the flowers along your walk
Listen to the birds sing your song
Open your heart to all that is good
Let no one keep you from my love
Allow your soul its freedom
Stand in the presence of true love
Soak in its beauty
Be willing to share it with many
And always be filled with joy
Let me hold you close
I will show you the way
Through my love... all is possible
I hold the answers to life
You hold the key to my heart
Please come in anytime
I will patiently await you
As the rain falls softly upon you
So will my love and devotion
That still small voice
Beckons you to follow me
To know and to love me
Open up to this love and never want again
Know the meaning of peace
Of happiness and joy
Of life and love eternal...*

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Conference 2000

Lure of the Fifth Epoch

Come and join your fellow readers as we attempt to describe, in living colour and through accumulated insight, the lures able to draw our generations Godward during the Fifth Age.

Canberra, October 6 – 9, 2000