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NEWSFLASH!

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A NEWS BULLETIN

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*From Urantia Foundation to IUA Officers,
Foundation Office Managers, Coordinating Committee
Members, Foundation Representatives, Translators, and Other
Supporters For the Purpose of Disseminating this Information to Readers in Local Areas*

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The Muslim World and *The Urantia Book* – A visit to Senegal

Trustees, Richard Keeler and Georges Michelson-Dupont, and Georges wife, Marlene, recently visited readers of *The Urantia Book* in Senegal in Africa. Following is a report of the visit written by Georges:

*I always wondered how *The Urantia Book* would be received by the Muslim world. Politics, business and our occidental cultural worldwide expansion has somewhat damaged our relationship between East and*

West, North and South and a "clash of culture and belief" was inevitable, thought I.

Well, our trip to Senegal brought some answers.

From time to time, our Parisian office receives mail from readers in Africa. 5 years ago, I intended to visit some of them from Ivory Coast, Gabon, Zaire, and other African countries. Because of the lack of time I always postponed my trip. One and a half years ago I got mail from a man, Moussa Ndiaye, from Dakar, Senegal, who told me about his group of students of The Urantia Book. I was so intrigued that I booked a ticket in January '98 to go to Dakar but unfortunately I had to cancel for health reasons.

When Norman Ingram and his friend, Rogers visited our Parisian office in September '98, I gave them a list of names and addresses from African readers along with about 100 Livres d'Urantia. Rogers and Norman visited with this group in Dakar. My intention was to visit with Moussa a few months later. Richard Keeler, my wife, Marlene, and I booked tickets and I called Moussa to make hotel reservations for us but he insisted to host the three of us. We gladly accepted and we arrived Dakar May 13, 1999.

Our Trip

When we landed at Dakar airport at 10:40 p.m., Moussa and about 12 individuals waited for us at the airport. After a warm welcome and a song from Richard and me, we went to Moustapha's home, one of the four sons of Moussa. We had a short dinner and we went to bed.

The next 3 days were wonderful. We had several meetings, conversations, study groups with different people, and visits with families. We listened to individual testimony of their religious life and shared our understanding of the teachings of The Urantia Book. Very quickly I came to the

conclusion that they all lived the teachings of the book and it became obvious that they all showed the fruits of the spirit.

Immediately I felt this indescribable feeling of belonging to the family of God that I experienced in Nashville. Marlene and Richard felt the same. During all of our stay an atmosphere of understanding and love was omnipresent. Beyond our differences of culture and skin color, it was apparent that we were only one human race, the children of God.

After a short visit to Goré Island, we left Dakar for Paris on Tuesday morning, 00:20 a.m.

How the Story Began

Moussa N'Diaye, the leader/teacher of the group, is a 68 year old professor of Social Psychology at Dakar University. He is also a truth-seeker and all his life has been devoted to finding the truth about God.

Growing up as a Muslim, he exceeded his belief and entered into a spiritual journey that led him to find Le Livre d'Urantia in 1973. After a careful reading he started to study its teachings. Soon he was convinced of its revelatory nature and decided to share the new truth with his fellow countrymen.

His Teaching Technique

Knowing the nature of the religious thinking and the cultural background of the Senegalese (basically Muslim) he thought it was not appropriate to introduce the Book itself without a careful intellectual and spiritual preparation. Therefore he studied how Jesus taught his apostles and his group of believers. The presentation of new truth needs a soft, non-invasive, and loving approach that will not hurt the individual beliefs. He also selected in the Koran some basic principles and concepts that were close to The Urantia Book teachings and on which he could start the introduction of expanded ideas.

During 7 years, from 1973 to 1980, he conducted sessions of questions and answers without telling anyone its source of inspiration. During all that time, and through his wise personal ministry, he expanded the understanding in the minds of his students and prepared them to accept new truths. He also gave lectures and conferences to his fellow professors, religious leaders, and political officials based on the teachings of The Urantia Book.

Finally, in 1980, he decided to tell a group of very engaged students about The Urantia Book. A new group, including his four sons, was formed and started a systematical study of The Urantia Book. Most of Moussa's work was based on personal teachings. Soon a core of students appeared.

What Moussa Taught First

The Muslim tradition says that God has already decided everything for each and every human being, therefore if they do bad or good it's God's will. Moussa started his teachings with the lessons about the Seven Mind Adjutant Spirits, followed with Personality and the Thought Adjuster (allowing the students to understand the functioning and interaction of those three elements in their own mind.)

The realization that their personality has a relative free will allowing them to conduct their own life and can survive death by making their own choice, the realization that God lives in their mind and can help their soul to make those decisions, were for most of them a great discovery and a relief. Women were particularly sensitive to such teachings and felt liberated from the Muslim tradition which says that only the husband gives Paradise's access to women.

Having expanded their understanding, the new truths were easily accepted. We can appreciate the wisdom of such a slow and wise approach in teaching new truths.

Each Student Becomes a Teacher

Moussa trained his students to become teachers. He ask them to make presentations on various topics as well as sessions of questions and answers as a method of training. When new readers come to the group, each new comer is assigned to one of the teachers; female with female teachers and male with male teachers. The teachers gave individual teachings twice a week starting like Moussa did and focusing on practical and spiritual matters. The emphasis is put on practicing the teachings everyday. This non-invasive, respectful, and loving method works very well. The group of teachers is growing and expanding outside Dakar.

The Underlying Reasons for such a Success

When the Revelators advised the early leaders back in the 1950's to form thousands of study groups from which leaders and teachers would emerge, we experience the wisdom and insight of such a method. Two factors are instrumental in the success:

- *The presence of a leader indwelled by the Spirit who is wise, patient, persevering, educated, respected, respectful, loving, showing the fruits of the spirit in his daily life, and moved by the desire for unselfish service.*
- *The practice of a wise method based on Jesus' method in introducing new truth to the individual. Respect of the individual's beliefs, positive and loving approach, methodic expansion of the understanding, exuding new truths step by step, showing the new light with "wisdom and discretion". "My beloved, you must always make a difference in teaching so as to suit your presentation of truth to the minds and hearts before you." [The Urantia Book p.1692:0] said Jesus to his apostles.*

Personal Conclusions

Before the trip to Dakar, I believed the Muslim world would be the last to accept the teachings of The Urantia Book. I also wondered how illiterate people (over 60% of the world population) could have access to those teachings. It becomes clear to me that the Revelators' plan, the practice of Jesus' method, and the truth contained in the teachings of The Urantia Book are instrumental to the success of the 5th Epochal Revelation.

- *Moussa's students were not specially skilled to teach the concepts of The Urantia Book. There are some basic concepts and methods to learn by training. Rather they were transformed by living in their daily lives the teachings and, as a result, they were attractive because they showed the fruits of the spirit: the loving and unselfish service, and the tactful ministry to others. At this time, and according to Moussa, more than a thousand individuals were taught about the new truths and The Urantia Book.*
- *Last Nashville conference's theme was about ministry and we shared some good examples. Everyone can minister to others while at work, at school, in the family. To minister is not a profession reserved to an elite, it is a joy of service and a natural consequence of being a son of God. There is more joy and happiness to give than to receive and this is particularly true when ministering to others.*
- *The new truths gained to be personally presented. (This is demonstrated in the recent Fellowship survey: 70% of the readers were introduced to The Urantia Book through friends or family.) The person-to-person approach is far beyond any other method. Jesus exercised a personal ministry to the individual because he knew that every human being is different from another.*

He adapted his teachings to the level of understanding and maturity of the person to whom he was ministering. The Urantia Book is instrumental in this process but not necessarily at the beginning. During 25 years only one Urantia Book was available in Dakar but more than a thousand women and men were introduced to the teachings of The Urantia Book through this group. To give away The Urantia Book may help but personal introduction to the Book and loving ministry is much more efficient.

- *To start the spreading of the teachings of The Urantia Book in a given country requires a strong leader/teacher who is enlightened by the teachings of The Urantia Book, native of his country, understands the needs of his fellow countrymen, and knows about their cultural, social, and religious background. He will minister by teaching students, organizing the growth, and forming a core of teachers that will minister to their surroundings. With care, perseverance, and patience, the new truths will soon become contagious and will replace, in the hearts of hundreds and thousands of individuals, the old beliefs. We can see the results of such plan in Estonia, Finland, France, Lithuania, Senegal, and other countries.*

I have full confidence that slowly but surely, the Muslim world, as well as other cultures will be exposed, with success, to the teachings of The Urantia Book if we keep our souls in patience. Evolution is the patient and slow technique provided by God to make the human being Godlike. Revolution is the impatient and unwise technique used by Caligastia to prevent human beings from becoming Godlike.

"You cannot force a horse to drink but you can make him thirsty" says the wise. By our spiritual flavor we can attract our fellow men for new truths.

We are planting seeds but we should not expect to harvest, for it is God's privilege

and delight and, if we love him, we want him to be delighted.

Georges Michelson-Dupont

Study Symposium – Nashville

A Study Symposium for the USUA was held from April 29 to May 2 in the charming Scarritt-Bennett Center in Nashville Tennessee. The Southern Kindred Spirits Urantia Association sponsored the IUA symposium and the theme was "Disseminating the Teachings: Strategies for Sharing Personal Truth."

Participants were encouraged to prepare for the conference by reflecting on Jesus' techniques of sharing truth as told in *The Urantia Book* and in the New Testament gospels, and to prepare their own personal parable that could be shared. Workshops were held in which participants explored ways to understand our neighbors; Jesus' personal ministry; praying for the extension of the family of God; embellishing and

illuminating the truth in what people say; and using parables in our personal ministry.

Jeffrey Wattles introduced the theme with a key note speech, and inspiring plenary addresses were given by Jane Ploetz, James Perry, Voyette Perkins-Brown, and Preston Thomas.

The very diverse array of participants included visitors from outside of the United States, members of both the IUA and Fellowship, young readers (many of whom were second generation readers,) as well as non-affiliated readers. The Southern Kindred Spirits did an excellent job insuring a high quality program and a thoroughly enjoyable conference.

Foundation Representatives Meet At the Nashville Conference

Report by Foundation Representative Manager, Seppo Kanerva

On April 28 and 29 eight of the currently eleven Representatives of Urantia Foundation held their first conference and thereupon attended the USUA Symposium on Disseminating the Teachings. The two meetings took place at the Scarritt-Bennett Conference Centre in Nashville, USA.

The Representatives' Conference was attended by **Mario Casassus Bulnes** (Santiago Chile), **Luiz Carlos Dolabella Chagas** (São Paulo, Brazil), **Nigel Hornby** (Oslo, Norway), **Algimantas Jokubėnas** (Vilnius, Lithuania), **Ramón Jacobo Ortiz**

(Bogotá, Colombia), **Peep Sõber** (Tallinn, Estonia), **Gabriel Salazar** (Zacatecas, Mexico), **Alfonso Luque Vásquez** and **Beatriz Arispe Valderrama** (Arequipa, Peru). The Foundation Representatives in Belgium, **François Dupont**, and in Venezuela, **Carlos Ortega**, as well as the recently appointed Representative at Lima, Peru, **Gustavo Proaño**, were unable to participate.

The primary purpose of the conference was to provide the Trustees and staff members a chance to meet and get personally

acquainted with the Representatives, and likewise, to give the Representatives an opportunity to get to know one another, the Trustees and the staff members. Another and equally important objective of the Conference was that of reiterating the importance of the Representatives' services to the readers in their respective countries and to the Foundation as well.

The Conference was celebrated in the friendly atmosphere of a family gathering. The Trustees, staff members, and the Representatives themselves learned a great deal from the oral reports that each of the

Representatives delivered concerning their activities and the situation in their country in general, and that of the readership in particular. In the course of the conference the Trustees announced that they had reached a decision to approve the Latin American Representatives' wish for the Foundation to open an office in Santiago de Chile. The decision was welcomed with both delight and gratitude.

The friendly atmosphere of the Nashville meeting was expressed by one of the Representatives in his saying: "These four days have been the happiest in my life."

The Opening of *The Urantia Book* Internet School

The Internet School sub-committee of the Coordinating Committee is happy to announce that *The Urantia Book* Internet School (UBIS) opened for registration on June 10, 1999, with the first course beginning on July 5. Interested readers will find a link to the School on the Urantia Foundation Web site. They will be able to read about the purpose, philosophy, and method of operation of the School, and then click on the page that lists the courses, dates and Teacher/Facilitators.

The first semester will offer nine courses with subject material and topics from all four parts of the book. The results of the "Test Class" held last Fall indicate that the format and participation works best with a maximum of ten students per course. This Internet School is dedicated only to the

Study of *The Urantia Book*, and it is a service sponsored by Urantia Foundation and the International Urantia Association (IUA) for the community of readers of *The Urantia Book*.

The organizers wish to welcome your participation in this new project, both as "student readers" and "teacher/facilitators." We hope that the text on the Urantia Foundation UBIS site will give you a good overview of the purpose, philosophy, and spirit of *The Urantia Book* Internet School.

Note that it is important to have access to E-mail and the World-Wide-Web in order to participate. Check it out on our Web site at www.urantia.org

Korean Bookfair

The Foundation displayed the new Korean translation at the Seoul International Bookfair this month. A preliminary run of 100 books was done so that books would be

available in time for the bookfair, and the first major run will be done in a couple of months. This is the first translation of *The Urantia Book* to be presented to an Asian

race. South Korea is in a strategic position as it is a gateway to both the Chinese and Japanese speaking countries. There is also a strong Christian element in South Korea so the soil is fertile.

Kwan and Cathy Choi, along with representatives from the Australian office, Trevor Swadling and Robert Coenraads, as well as Paula Thompson from Boulder, manned the booth and met with readers and book trade personnel. The book was well received and many books were sold.

Foundation's New Web Site

With the Internet becoming more and more popular as a communications media, we believe that many people are now finding out about *The Urantia Book* as they "surf the web" as part of their search for spiritual material.

Urantia Foundation has therefore improved its Web site to make it more user friendly, informative, and appealing for truth seekers.

The site is still a work in progress and we are developing it to include more information and to provide it in multiple languages.

You can view our new site at the same Web site address: www.urantia.org. If you have any comments or suggestions please feel free to send them to us. You can send them via regular mail or email us at urantia@urantia.org

In Memory

It is with sad regret that we announce the sudden passing of our dear friend, Eva VanSant. Eva suffered a major stroke on June 4, 1999. Eva had been a student of *The Urantia Book* for about 25 years and was actively involved in reader study groups and conferences. According to close friends, Eva's knowledge of the Book and its teachings was astounding; she could always be counted on to assist fellow readers with facts contained in the Book and was described as "a walking encyclopedia of *The Urantia Book*."

Eva's husband, Chuck passed away in December of last year after experiencing a

massive heart attack. Eva was originally from Germany and worked for the American Embassy. She had a gift for languages and could speak English, Spanish, French, Italian, and Russian. She met her husband Chuck at a *Urantia Book* reader's conference and moved to Bartlesville, Oklahoma after their marriage. Eva moved back to Germany after Chuck's death, then returned to Bartlesville shortly before her death.

We pray for both Eva and Chuck and wish them well in the next phase of their ascension career on the mansion worlds.

Millennium Initiative Report

The Millennium Initiative Committee met again in Vermont from June 11-13 to continue their discussions on unity within

the Urantia movement. The following is a report of the results of the weekend's discussions:

Millennium Initiative Committee Statement
The Gulley, Vermont, USA
June 13, 1999

The Millennium Initiative Committee, in unanimity, believes that true unity of purpose, as manifest in a unified, worldwide reader community, is in the best interests of the fifth epochal revelation as we enter the next millennium.

To that end, and with utmost respect for the self-acting integrity of the existing organizations in the community, we unanimously recommend a formal working alliance between the International Urantia Association and The Urantia Book Fellowship.

While the common experience and deepened friendships which were a significant part of our work together will forever bind the participants, we agreed to dissolve the Millennium Initiative Committee and encourage the existing organizations to continue this process.

In friendship,

Travis Binion, Hoite Caston, Steve Dreier, Dave Elders, Marta Elders, Janet Farrington, Fred Harris, Sioux Harvey, David Kantor, Seppo Kanerva, Carolyn Kendall, Eddie King, Lyn Lear, Dan Massey, Jane Ploetz, Gustavo Proano, Chris Ragetly, Nancy Shaffer, Paul Snider, Kathleen Swadling

New Urantia Association – Utah
Report from Cathy Jones

The term "promised valley" took on a new meaning on Sunday, June 13, 1999. Amidst the backdrop of the beautiful snow capped mountains surrounding Salt Lake City, a project which began in 1993 was realized with the licensing of the Urantia Association of Utah, with 23 charter members.

As the group met it was like greeting family members. Five are currently hosting study groups. It didn't take long to bond and start making arrangements to visit each others' meetings. There is much enthusiasm for book placement, outreach programs, and

seminars/retreats. They are anxious to be part of the global, international brotherhood of *Urantia Book* believers.

This is the twenty second member of the United States Urantia Association that is working interdependently with Urantia Foundation in the dissemination of *The Urantia Book*.

Pro-tem officers are: Bill Gardner, President; Brent Richards, Vice President; Colleen Gardner, Secretary; and Hercules Calvillo, Treasurer