



Preparing Teachers and Leaders

PART 1 OF 2

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A teacher teaches the teachers.
Dorothy Elder, Director of the
Urantia Book Internet School,
presenting a UBIS workshop.



THIS PRESENTATION IS a two-part series attempting to define teachers and leaders in the context of the fifth epochal revelation. The concept of teachers and leaders is taken from the instructions contained in the publication mandate from our unseen friends to “prepare teachers and leaders.” This first piece is an attempt to define what it means to be a teacher. In the next issue I will continue this discussion and attempt to illuminate my understanding of how we can define a leader.

What does it mean to be a teacher? It appears

that a teacher, especially in terms of academics, is associated with expertise. But is this the correct definition of a teacher? Is it correct to define a teacher as an expert? I think there is a reservation among some, myself included, to the notion that there are experts in the study of *The Urantia Book*. There is a concern that, by establishing individual teachers as experts, we are beginning to create an institutional hierarchy. If we establish a formal program of training teachers associated with this revelation, are we not beginning to create some form of an institutionalized religion?

This is a valid concern, but let us take a step back and consider what it means to be a teacher.

I have said that teachers quite often appear to us as being experts in their field, and this is true in many areas of academia. But is it possible to be an expert of *The Urantia Book* which studies the fields of God, his Universe and our experiences in that Universe? First let’s ask the question, what does it mean to be an expert? Most of the definitions I have found indicate that an expert is one who is experienced or

experienced through training. So to be an expert teacher implies that one has been trained and has experienced many teaching opportunities. But how do we get to this point? How do we teach even though we have not acquired a significant amount of teaching experience? Certainly if we are to be teachers, we must practice the art of teaching. We must start from the beginning. That is to say that as teachers we begin as inexperienced experts. By this I mean to say that we begin by teaching what we do know, even though we may know only a few things. So to begin teaching is not an egoistic expression of our superior knowledge, but rather an honest desire to share what we do know with our fellows, with the intention that as we share this knowledge we will grow in the experience of not only teaching but also learning.

So in light of this, let us redefine what it means to be a teacher:

A teacher is one who shares knowledge with another.

A teacher is not a position or rank, nor is it a finalized status of one’s knowledge. A teacher, rather, is simply one who

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Diversity IN SPIRITUAL HARMONY

Dear brothers and sisters, members of the UAI,

HOPE YOU ARE ALL WELL and in great Spirit, the Father's spirit that indwells each of us and that leads us towards perfection throughout our journey to Paradise in Eternity...and that starts right here, right now.

From long-suffering to adaptability to diversity, the watchword is always progress and growth. As each individual involved in the process of bringing you the UAI Journal evolves, so does the Journal, being a reflection of what each of the contributors is. And the more harmony, spiritual harmony among us, the more we can feel the union of our souls, the mobilization of wisdom and this is what animates us in doing the Journal issue after issue: bringing you the best that we are and that we have.

Union of souls—the mobilization of wisdom. Every human being sooner or later acquires a certain concept of this world and a certain vision of the next. Now it is possible, through personality association, to unite these views of temporal existence and eternal prospects. Thus does the mind of one augment its spiritual values by gaining much of the insight of the other. In this way men enrich the soul by pooling their respective spiritual possessions... And since wisdom is superknowledge, it follows that, in the union of wisdom, the social group, small or large, mutually shares all knowledge. [1776.1]

In the last issue, we talked about learning to work with new personalities and constantly adapt to new situations. Isn't that what we have to do from here to Eternity?

In this issue, we have diversity in spiritual harmony.

Phil Taylor from the USA is entertaining us on Teachers & Leaders, one of the main topics in the development of our spiritual movement. In this first of two parts, he makes us reflect on what a teacher really is or should be. Then Seppo Kanerva from Finland is

sharing a personal view of *The Urantia Book*, a written version of his presentation at the UB 50th anniversary.

Then we are moving to Spain where Santiago Rodriguez is bringing us an interesting reflection on the indemonstrability of the existence of God. When I received the article from Olga Lopez, I was particularly impressed by the subtitle: the perfection of the plan of imperfection. I personally think that the best way to demonstrate the existence of God is by living God in everything we do and especially in our interaction with our siblings. We moved

Have you talked to your Father lately? Don't forget: 'What the son desires and the Father wants, is.' If you want to live the spiritual brotherhood of men right here, right now, our Father in Heaven will provide.

back to the USA where Jeffrey Wattles is giving us his opinion on how the UB teachings can be shared in accord with its teachings. This is the second and last part of his article on the subject. Then, back to Canada where Alain Cyr is entertaining us on the benefits of forgiveness. Still in the USA, we moved back

in time to 1983 to the Foundation where we can read an essay on the dissemination of the UB. Some 22 years later and still inspiring; nevertheless each of us will individually adapt what we feel is appropriate to us in our own lives. And finally, back to 2005, where Rick Lyon is explaining to us in a much more concise way 'Why Study Groups are important'. Are you part of a study group? Do you have one in your home? For the ones who have, what a blessing and for the ones who don't, we will pray that very soon, you will be able to connect with other brothers and sisters in your area and starts a study group of your own. Ask your angels—they love to work and they love to bring us together.

Have you talked to your Father lately? Don't forget: 'What the son desires and the Father wants, is.' If you want to live the spiritual brotherhood of men right here, right now, our Father in Heaven will provide.

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

—Guy Perron

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P.S. Don't forget to read our sister publication Tidings, our new monthly newsletter that covers

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Preparing Teachers and Leaders

Continued from page 1

is willing to share his knowledge with another. By virtue of this fact everyone is capable of being a teacher at some level because we all have something that we can share with our fellows—our knowledge and experience. I prefer this definition of a teacher because it removes some of the elitism that sometimes can be associated with teaching. Who can be a teacher? The answer is anyone who has knowledge or experience to share with his fellows. For certain there are those who have much more expertise to share than others and for this reason they are in a better position to teach. But even those who know a few things well are also able to teach.

In light of the incompleteness of knowledge, let's remember that a great teacher should be characterized by humility because such a teacher recognizes that there is always more knowledge and experience to acquire. All the while he is sharing what he does know with others. It is such commonness and balance that will establish a teacher as approachable to all. Great teachers of religion do not belong in ivory towers but rather amongst the men and women of society. They should be available to all who are willing to learn.

If a teacher recognizes the incompleteness of her knowledge, then she also recognizes that she will always be a student. She recognizes that to become a better teacher she will always be a student of *The Urantia Book* and, more importantly, will always be a student of God and his Universe. A great teacher is always a student, willing to learn and discover more, despite his or her accumulation of knowledge and experience. Our view of a teacher ought not to be of one who is associated with a hierarchical institution, but rather one who is a sojourner on the eternal path to discovering the truth, all the while sharing what he has learned with his fellows. With this in mind let's once again refine the definition of a teacher. Let us change the word teacher to the phrase student-teacher and more accurately define what a teacher is:

A teacher is a student-teacher who shares knowledge with others.

The question then becomes—how do we become better students and how is it that we can gain this experience of teaching? Let me ask another question first. What is the source of knowledge and experience? Much of our intellectual knowledge of God and the Universe comes from the revelations of God, the thoughts of man, and the knowledge possessed by our culture. But this knowledge would be of little value to us were it not for the spiritual influences that grace our minds and our souls. The indwelling spirit of God nurtures, develops, and cultivates our spiritual growth and understanding. It is the driving force for our development, intellectually and spiritually. Our adjuster is perhaps our greatest source of experiential learning. The spirit of God is our teacher within, and this great teacher does not stand alone but works patiently in



Phil Taylor

conjunction with the Spirit of the Son and the Infinite Spirit. All of these spiritual forces conspire to teach us and raise our experiential levels of understanding, allowing us a unity of mind which enables us to process this knowledge. A student of religion is partnered with his own personal teachers who guide and direct the student's mind, if he is so willing to be led by the greatest teaching forces in the universe. There is in man a Divine Teacher that has the potential to partner with his mortal student if he is so willing.

As this definition of a teacher evolves, we see that the concept of the student-teacher actually has two meanings. Not only can we define the teacher as a perpetual student always acquiring greater depths of knowledge and experience, but also can we recognize the student-teacher as a partnership between God and man where the Father in Heaven eternally labors with his child to further his education. Our Father is the teacher within.

It is this partnership with God that is so essential to the teacher and the student. And it is in this partnership of God and man that I would like to mention the concept of doing the Father's will. Why is it that we seek God's will? Is it perhaps because we recognize that there is a divine way of living our lives? Is it because we recognize that when we are confronted with the opportunity to make choices, we can follow the mortal path of choosing or we can follow the divine path. Our minds dwell in the mind arena of choice, and it would be fitting to recognize that the highest consecration of our choice would be to choose those decisions that most accurately reflect the Father's will. By this I mean to say that the choice of the Father's will is always the choice for those thoughts in our mind that have the highest degree of truth, beauty and goodness.

It is hard for me to imagine being of service and teaching my brothers and sisters without the help, guidance and assistance of my Father for it is He who leads me to my fellows in need and it is He who teaches me what to say.

The term thought adjuster is best comprehended in terms of understanding the Father's will. What is the thought adjuster? We know it is the fragment of God that guides us towards perfection. How? By adjusting our thoughts. In the realms of mortal existence we are confronted by decisions of spiritual import. It is then that these gifts of God are so valuable to us, because at these times of great decision, the Father's will is always available to us. Nestled within our minds and our own thoughts is a thought planted by our adjuster and that thought is the Father's will. It is contingent upon our own choosing and discernment to find God's thoughts among our own thoughts. But if we reflect back on what we know of God's nature and personality, we know that He is loving, true, beautiful and good. Therefore, it would follow that if we were to look within our minds and sift through our thoughts, that if we were to find the thought that holds the highest degree of love, truth, beauty and goodness, then that must be the Father's will.

The human Jesus saw God as being holy, just, and great, as well as being true, beautiful, and good. All these ►

attributes of divinity he focused in his mind as the "will of the Father in heaven." [2087:2]

What is the purpose of seeking the Father's will when teaching? Knowledge of God's will completes the partnership between the mortal student and the Divine Teacher. When a mortal has made the supreme decision to seek God's will, such a soul has also chosen to be God-like. Such a creature in her life experience has recognized the supreme value in the guidance and direction of her Divine Teacher and has chosen to be divinely taught. If she has recognized this relationship, then she has also recognized the inevitable relationship of teaching and serving. If a mortal has chosen to be God-like, then she has also chosen to be of service to others as God serves His children. Such is the nature of God. As God serves and ministers to us, then so does the God-knowing mortal—in her attempts to become God-like—choose to serve the Father and minister to His children. One of the greatest acts of serving and ministering would be the act of teaching. If we are to be of service to God and His children, what greater service could we offer than helping our brothers and sisters find God? And it is just such a technique of serving God and seeking His will that helps us to teach our fellows.

It is hard for me to imagine being of service and teaching my brothers and sisters without the help, guidance and assistance of my Father, for it is He who leads me to my fellows in need, and it is He who teaches me what to say. It is He who helps me learn, and it is He who is helping my fellows learn. Were God not at the center of my efforts to serve, minister and teach, I would neither have the students nor the capacity to share my understanding of God and

His universe. Truly, teaching is a process of partnering with God, and it is the process of seeking the Father's will that facilitates this partnership.

If such a student-teacher has embarked on this path of learning-teaching, then in reality what has occurred is that such a teacher has embarked on a training program

wherein through personal experience you are taught, where you teach and experience more about God. This program is established by our heavenly Father for us, so that we may learn by experience. Make no mistake—this is a real program. God can and will train us to become students and teachers if we are so willing. There is no other program available to us that so perfectly ministers to our strengths and weaknesses, so poetically challenges us and prepares us for our Universe adventures.

Such a program is available to all who would seek to serve God and his children and to do His Will. With our consent, God and His Son will train us experientially. And as such a mortal seeks to grow in the knowledge and experience of God, he will equally seek to share his knowledge and experience with others. For it is true that if we have chosen to seek the Father's perfection and the choices of his perfect mind, then we will find that we have entered upon the path of service and learning. And such a program of learning and service entails an eternal career in training, learning, serving and teaching. Such a program requires of us not only the discipline and discernment of the student, but also the wisdom and charity of the teacher. Such is the beautiful

relationship wherein the individual mortal partners with God, dedicating his mind to serving God and teaching his fellows, and thus generating a positive force for experiential growth.

In light of this partnership I would like to continue to refine my understanding of what a teacher is:

A teacher is a student-teacher who, in partnership with God, shares his knowledge and experience with others.

Now while this definition almost satisfies our understanding of what a teacher is, there is one more question I must ask. Does a student-teacher teach exclusively about *The Urantia Book*? While it appears that for the purposes of the organizations surrounding *The Urantia Book*, our main goal should be to disseminate the teaching of the book, I cannot help but believe that we have an even greater role as teachers. While the work of teaching and sharing this great revelation with our fellows will be the focus our work, I am reminded to think that even more important than sharing the book with our fellows is the duty to share and teach about God. Perhaps I am splitting hairs on this point, but it brings light to the fact that ultimately our goal is to bring others closer to God. In many ways *The Urantia Book* is an invaluable asset to this endeavor. But there are often times when teaching our fellows that we never mention *The Urantia Book*. Sometimes the revelation as a whole is not palatable for those seeking God, and instead we share those grains of truth that we have extracted from the book. My point is that our efforts to teach and share should not always focus on the book but rather focus on how to bring that individual closer to a relationship with the Heavenly Father.

Let us one last time re-define a teacher:

A teacher is a student-teacher of God who, in partnership with God, shares his knowledge and experience with others.

I have chosen the phrase teacher of God as opposed to a teacher of *The Urantia Book* because our ability to serve our fellows does not end with the book. Above all we are teachers of God first and then teachers of *The Urantia Book*. To say otherwise would be to admit that we can provide no spiritual assistance to those who are not interested in the book. But this is untrue because of our knowledge of *The Urantia Book*, we can be of great service even to those who have no interest in this revelation, yet are still interested in God. In the end our goal should always be to bring our fellows to a personal relationship with the Heavenly Father. If we can lead such truth-seeking individuals to that Divine Teacher within, then we have done all that is required of us.

This opportunity to teach is available to us all, regardless of our abilities and experience. Teaching is the opportunity for us to gain experience and experience experiential growth. *The Urantia Book* tells us that, as we serve throughout the universe, we will always be teaching those who are just below our level of attainment, and such an experience begins now in this life. Morontia mota tells us that knowledge is only possessed by sharing. And it is true that as we are teaching our fellows, we will also be teaching ourselves. It never ceases to amaze me that, when I ask the Father to help me enlighten my fellows, I learn the most. What can surely be said about teaching is that the benefits are reciprocal—as I teach, I am taught. ■

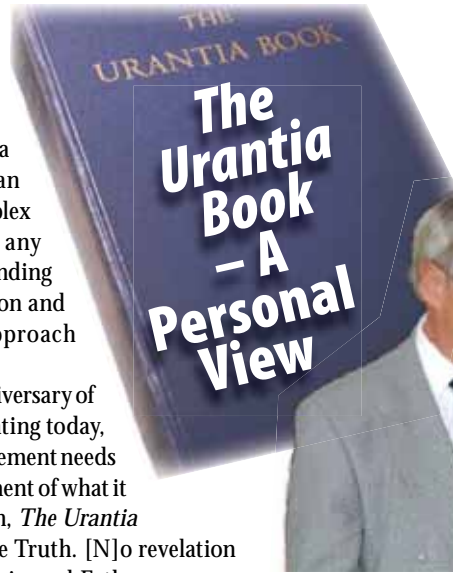
It never ceases to amaze me that when I ask the Father to help me enlighten my fellows I learn the most. What can surely be said about teaching is that the benefits are reciprocal—as I teach I am taught.

THE URANTIA BOOK, the fifth epochal revelation and a restatement of the fourth, is an extensive, profound and complex work. Its complexity challenges any earnest student to find his understanding of the true message of the revelation and then determine his personal approach thereto. This is my view:

The Urantia Book, the 50th anniversary of whose first printing we are celebrating today, is a revelation of truth; but this statement needs to be qualified with another statement of what it is not. Even if a revelation of truth, *The Urantia Book* is not a revelation of absolute Truth. [N]o revelation short of the attainment of the Universal Father can ever be complete. [1008:2]. Jesus said: "I am the way, the truth, and the life." [242:3]. He did not say that the holy books of this or that religion are the truth, or that *The Urantia Book* or any creeds and dogmas are the truth. Existence and reality are only partially in time and space. We are time-bound and space-conditioned beings. This means that we are incapable of fathoming existence in its entirety and immensity. Consequently, any revelation of what existence is has to be only partial and laden with paradoxes.

This 50-year-old book is a revelation of truth. Jesus said: "You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." [1594:0; 1796:4] (1112:6). Freedom is joyous, it is imbued with joy and delight. This book then is a joyful and delightful work, a book about the joy of life; the joy of existence. The joy of learning answers to the question, what the purpose of life is; questions about our origin and the reasons for our existence; the joy of finding God and ultimately becoming like him. The joy of learning the liberating truths that God is great, that he is not a petty, old and wily man whose fatherly heart in all its austere coldness and hardness was so untouched by the misfortunes and sorrows of his creatures that his tender mercies were not forthcoming until he saw his blameless Son bleeding and dying upon the cross of Calvary [60:5]. The joy of the realisation that the Universal Father is not a narrow-minded, cruel and punishing god decreeing arbitrary rules and laws and then making damaging entries in his books about those who fail to live up to his rules, and then, in due time pushing me and other sinners into an everlastingly burning hell.

This revelation is the story of existence. Existence is God, the I AM. "In Him we live and move and have our being." [35:4, 29:6] (139:1, 1155:4, 1283:1). The I AM – God – is personal, and much more than that. He is the Original, he is the Absolute, he is the Ultimate, he is the Supreme, he is God the Sevenfold, he is the Thought Adjuster. He is both existential and experiential. The Original, the I AM, has diversified existence, his existence. He has caused the myriads of divine and celestial beings to be; has caused time and space to be; he has caused supertime and transcended space to be; he has caused the diversification of existence into absolute, absonite and finite; into material, mindal and spiritual; into imperfect, perfecting and perfect. Finally, he has caused the human being to be and created a universe path for his mortal creatures to follow, so to find him and become like him: "Be you perfect, even as I am perfect." [21:3, 22:3, 86:1, 290:2, 295:1, 449:2, 637:1] (86:2, 297:1, 348:3, 411:1, 1574:8)



SEPPA KANERVA
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His is a nature of absolute truth, perfect beauty, eternal goodness and everlasting love. It is his will that all of his mortal beings have a free will, and that nobody is forced to be or to do anything against his will.

It is God's will that mortals make a free-will choice to do his will and accept the ministry extended to them by myriads of celestial beings and become like him and con-

tinue to exist eternally; that no one would choose to become non-existent. It is his will that all human beings view him as their Heavenly Father and that they relate to their fellow mortals as

children of this same Father, as their brothers and sisters; and that they treat their fellow men with the same love as the Father

bestows upon them. We are to understand that it is a joy to do the Father's will, to become, by faith, a faith-son of the Father and to join the Kingdom of Heaven.

The Urantia Book reveals the nature of true and genuine religion. And it is a matter of rejoicing to realise that true religion is always personal; genuine religion is a grateful and worshipful personal relationship with the Father. True religion is free from creeds, dogma, doctrines, traditions, rituals and standardisation. Instead its fruits "... are love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness and temperance [381:7]. It is a joy to do the Father's will. It is not an obligation. Jesus said: "when the Father's will is your law, you are hardly in the kingdom. But when the Father's will becomes truly your will, then are you in very truth in the kingdom ... When God's will is your law, you are noble slave subjects; but when you believe in this new gospel of divine sonship, my Father's will becomes your will, and you are elevated to the high position of the free children of God, liberated sons of the kingdom." [1589:0].

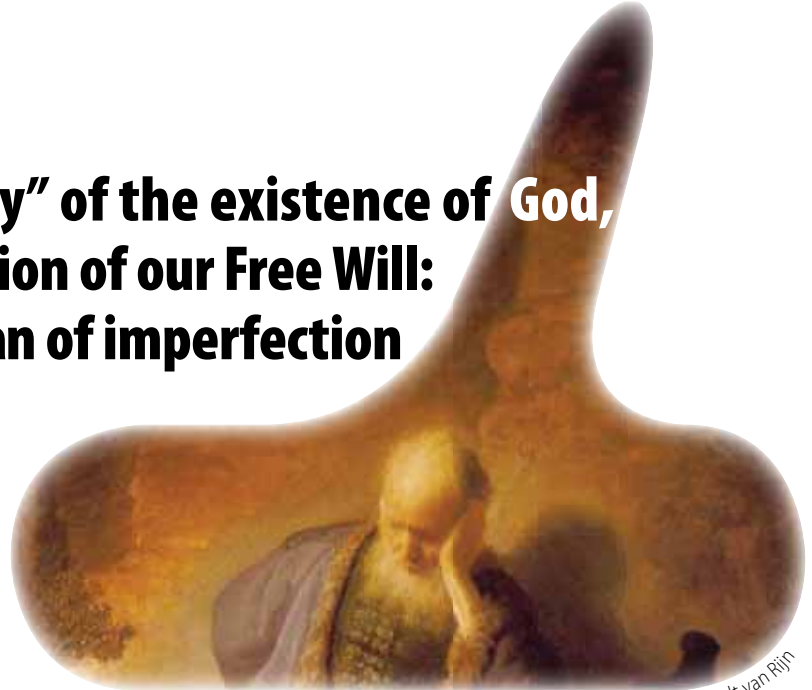
It is a matter of much reassurance, relief and joy to learn that evil in the world is only relative, is not God-created, is a transient feature in our imperfect, but perfecting, existence. What, instead, is true is progress and growth. *Can you not advance in your concept of God's dealing with man to that level where you recognize that the watchword of the universe is progress?* [Divine Counsellor 54:5]. What is true is goodness and love, *the desire to do good to others* [648:4]. *Jesus was not anxiously bothered by the evil in the world* [1594:5]. But it is comforting to learn that at a moment of anxiety over the evil in the world, *[w]hen the flood tides of human adversity, selfishness, cruelty, hate, malice, and jealousy beat about the mortal soul, you may rest in the assurance that there is one inner bastion, the citadel of the spirit, which is absolutely unassailable* [1096:4].

We who so believe and are united in our desire to love the Father, to do the Father's will, to be the faith-sons of God, to love and to serve our brothers and sisters *have already begun to discern the lights of eternal life as they glimmer on the faraway shores of another world* [381:7]. ■

It is a matter of much reassurance, relief and joy to learn that evil in the world is only relative, is not God-created, is a transient feature in our imperfect, but perfecting, existence.

The “Undemonstrability” of the existence of God, or the maximal expression of our Free Will: the perfection of the plan of imperfection

SANTIAGO RODRÍGUEZ
Asociación Urantia de España



Detail from a painting by Rembrandt van Rijn

Origin of the reflection:

You are sons of spiritual promise, faith sons; you have accepted the status of sonship. You believe in the reality of your sonship, and thus does your sonship with God become eternally real. [448:3]

We are convinced that we need to demonstrate the existence of God

FOR ALL THOSE WHO DARE to consider the possibility of the existence of God—and I would not be surprised if it were all of humanity—we do so with caution, much uncertainty and fear in the beginning, and we search in the religions, in our own life, in all that we observe and comprehend, elements of judgment which lead us to be able to say categorically that God exists. Then we all long for, during some phase or perhaps all of our life, someone or something to demonstrate his existence, beyond the shadow of a doubt.

It is clear that, for the human species, that which proceeds from the tool of “reason” gives us a certain comfort and peace. On the contrary, that which comes from the tool of “faith” produces discomfort, suspicion and constant doubt...

Maybe the preceding fact must assume something inherent to our “cosmic situation,” that is to say, the inevitable fact that we come from evolutionary antecedents that were “animal,” irrational, and when we think about evolution it seems that we only take into account the physical aspects. We consider evolution as a biological progress, and we might be surprised by the possibility that the path of physical or biological evolution might follow a rhythm. We should also bear in mind that there is spirituality also evolves, and that it might turn out that the spiritual evolution might follow a different rhythm.

Each individual’s biologic evolution is well conditioned by his or her genetic make-up, and the rhythm of modifications is quite slow. Nevertheless, spiritual evolution, although it may be partially conditioned by our body, can be very rapid, such that in the short life of an individual the evolutionary cycle may achieve totality, as we remember in the experience of life in the flesh of Jesus.

It is obvious: biologic evolution depends on genetic transmission and is, at least for the moment, automatic and

in some ways independent of our free will. However, spiritual evolution does fundamentally depend on our will.

In our spiritual evolution we can highlight some mileposts to accomplish:

- The fact of making autonomous decisions, by our own will, independent of instinctive tendencies.
- Self-consciousness of the “ego” and of other “egos” and the elaboration of the conducts, which will have primacy in relationships with other “egos” and with things.
- Self-consciousness of the “spiritual ego,” the transcendence of death, the appearance of the concept of “Deity,” the elaboration of the conducts which will sustain the relationships with the spiritual world and, if convenient, the adaptation of previous relationships to the existence of the spiritual world.
- The acceptance of Father God as the universal father of everything and every created being. A consequence of our sonship with Him is our position as brother, with the same status as all humans.
- We pass through these phases individually, as well as together as a species. And it is also clear that the progress in these stages is very disparate from individual to individual; of course, as a species we are far from reaching the fourth milepost.

[See table next page]

Reason comes long before faith, thus it is not surprising that we depend on it (although we are aware that often it is wrong) more than in faith, of which, curiously we don’t have any experience of failure, because what at times need revision is our beliefs, not faith.

After spending our whole life, if we finally are convinced of God’s existence, it is nevertheless only a personal conviction which we will be able to show to others but never demonstrate to anyone.

Species	Individual	Spiritual accomplishment (milestone)	Available tools
Man's predecessors	About 3 yrs.	Self-consciousness which takes primacy over all	Natural instinct
Primitive man up to present-day	From infancy to adulthood	Self-consciousness and situational adjustment by values	Natural instinct + Capacity of reason + Capacity to love
		What came before + Deity consciousness	What came before + Faith
		What came before + consciousness of God as Father	What came before + Faith

The most sacred: our free will

At the margin of beliefs and of spirituality, if we ask ourselves what it is that we as persons most value, I believe that what places us above other beings is precisely the availability of free will, which I understand as the sovereign capacity of the individual to decide his own present or future status. Thus, our major satisfaction and feeling of personal realization stems from the fact that we feel our most transcendent decisions in life are made freely and consciously.

What is the most transcendent for us?

Each individual must answer this question for him/herself. Our free will is unconditional, to the point that it allows us to decide even this question.

During the first stages of our life, we become more and more conscious that we are beings who possess the capacity of choice. Even though the options may be more or less varied, sometimes we can only decide between two choices. Other times the options are more numerous, but while at first glance it seems that the more choices we have, the more free will we have, it is certain that these situations often don't help us, but give us more doubt, more uncertainty. Nevertheless, I believe that it remains clear that if we have just two options, it is more than sufficient to exercise the right of free will.

The events in our lives keep recurring and what they teach us is that normally, more than thinking that the choice we have made may not have been the most opportune, we must note that choices have consequences. What will happen to us in the future is due to the choices we have made in the past. Life busies itself with making us conscious of that fact in a very repetitive way.

Our intelligence gives us "tools" (reason) in order to be able to "calculate" the consequences of our actions.

Looking around us, we complain, or at least we are surprised with the frequency with which people achieve an enviable life by their economic, social and cultural successes, or whatever facet of their lives we observe, and it seems nonetheless they have a complete disregard for any spiritual considerations.

Which means that it would seem that we could live similarly, because there are people who seem to live a full and happy life within the limits of their own exigencies, whether God exists for them or not.

Their conclusion is clear: given that they don't need him and since no one can demonstrate his existence, he must not exist... or at least "I" don't need him.

Precisely because this is a possibility, the proof that the Universal Father has really given us the gift of free will begs the most important and revealing question for our future, which is none other than the decision to survive.

We are not born Sons of God. We are the ones who, particularly by Faith, decide to accept sonship with God, and from that moment, that sonship becomes real. It will be that sonship, which depends solely on each of us, that will in the future permit the survival of our mortal evolving soul.

And in his divine justice and regard for free will of each creature, the Father does not connect the achievements of the material life in the flesh to creature survival, but permits them to be absolutely independent. Thus, I confirm myself in the existence of circumstances that are sometimes surprisingly uncomfortable to accept or understand, which is only one more proof that the Universal Father doesn't limit the most important choice of human beings, which is to accept sonship with God.

If the existence of God were demonstrable...

We can choose from two possibilities: either it is the unequivocal conclusion of reason, or it may well come from revelation and remain completely demonstrated.

The problem that arises, were it demonstrable is this: in order to avoid comparative insults, the evidence for the existence of God must be such that it would be equally evident to the first humans as it is to us.

If the existence of God is demonstrated, it only remains to the free will of the mortal human to accept or not accept His plan, given that we cannot doubt His existence. We have to establish a relationship with Deity in some manner or receive

from Deity the rules which will regulate those relationships. It wouldn't take long to catch a glimpse of the fact that perhaps not so many would admit it, had we been free to do so.

We are a product of evolution. The perfection of the plan of imperfection consists in having no precognition of God. Thus we begin in ignorance, and only a slight hint of the existence of God is present in us. It is so slight that we can choose to ignore it and live a complete life with social and cultural success.

The perfection of the idea of the evolution of the Universal Father makes inherent the fact that His existence is undemonstrable in order to guarantee maximum free will for mortal creatures. On the other hand, precisely this undemonstrability is one more piece of evidence of his existence.

The decision to "count on Him" is not imposed by the unequivocal demonstration of His existence. Practically speaking, He only exists for those creatures that want Him to exist, and with the intensity that the creature decides. ■

We are a product of evolution. The perfection of the plan of imperfection consists in having no precognition of God. Thus we begin in ignorance, and only a slight hint of the existence of God is present in us. It is so slight that we can choose to ignore it and live a complete life with social and cultural success.

Introducing *The Urantia Book* in accord with its teachings

PART 2 OF 2

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AUGUST 2005
Ohio, USA

NOTE:

Part 1 of this article was printed in the October 2005 issue of the UAI Journal, pages 8-11. This section of the article continues discussion of the "Principles of Method," which included: (1) Be patient, (2) Distinguish goals from methods, (3) Give advanced spiritual teachings only to those who already know God, and (4) Living interaction normally precedes the whole revelation. Part 2 of this article begins with (5).

5 - IT IS PERFECTLY LEGITIMATE to present the teachings of an epochal revelation without disclosing the epochal fact.

If the only tool you have is a hammer, you'll treat everything as if it were a nail. If we make *The Urantia Book* mandatory in our ministry, we fall into this elementary blunder. It would destroy sagacity and good taste to feel honor-bound to reveal your source every time you mention a truth that you found in *The Urantia Book*. This is not to deny the book can achieve results that human efforts cannot. The practice of presenting revealed teachings without mentioning

In most situations, it is wise to disseminate the teachings of *The Urantia Book* without mentioning the book itself.

the fact of epochal revelation is sometimes called "bootlegging", connoting something devious. Nevertheless the previous two epochal revelations did precisely that. Melchizedek did not initially

announce the epochal fact—that he was superhuman—and he departed when he began to be regarded with superstitious awe. He did not overteach, but presented what the listener was capable of receiving and assimilating (1016:6-8) (note the high marks given to Ikhnaton and Moses for judiciously adjusting high teachings to the receptivity level of their hearers [1047:6; 1056:4]). When the epochal fact was prematurely announced by Anna and Simeon (1353), the baby Jesus was murderously pursued (1353:10). Notice how Jesus managed his epochal revelation for most of his career. He prepared the teachers in Rome for a message that would come to them only later. He often taught without disclosing the fuller package and greatly delayed announcing his divine Sonship, and he insisted that the gospel not be upstaged by the epochal fact (1670:5; 2052:4.) **Why did Melchizedek**



"Blue book" MC

and Jesus defer mentioning the epochal fact? They knew that attention would focus less on the main message than on the fascinating, extraordinary source. When the proper sequence of gospel truth and advanced teachings was inverted, the religion of Jesus was turned into a religion about Jesus (2086:1). It could happen again with this book, just as unconsciously, and with intentions just as good.

In most situations, it is wise to disseminate the teachings of *The Urantia Book* without mentioning the book itself. As a scholar writing for publication, I cite *The Urantia Book* in a footnote as required by integrity and professional ethics. I recall, however, that years after publishing an article in which I cited a major debt to *The Urantia Book*, I was asked by a fellow scholar who read it about my interest in the book. In his mind, my connection with the book upstaged what I had to say. Therefore, I often try to write with enough originality and enough engagement in current discussions so as not to need to cite the book as a major source. The issue calls for good judgment, and I continue to seek it in particular cases.

Some people object to presenting the teachings of *The Urantia Book* without presenting the book itself because it seems somehow secretive, and many people feel uncomfortable about that. In each Part of the book, however, the authors speak with respect of certain kinds of secrets. In evaluating the ethics of omitting or delaying giving certain information the following points may be considered. There are secrets for various reasons (144:1; 207:1). The information may be incomprehensible (for the time being or forever) (79:1; 144:4; 145:1; 219:3); there may be a violation of personal intimacy (208:4; 208:5) or of reverence (603:3). The information may be irrelevant to someone's work (144:6; 147:5; 149:6; ►

350:6) or even harmful to someone's work—it might “*confuse and handicap*” the person (145:1; 148:5; 149:6) or stifle the imagination (330:2).

As Jesus grew, he disclosed less information about himself (1391:4-5). He dissociated the phases of his career (1423:5-8). He restrained talk of the voice at his baptism (1545:4). He restrained public preaching during the early phase of kingdom work (1538:3). He forbade denunciations of Caesar or his servants and told the apostles to stay out of political, social, and economic tangles (1542:5; 1580-81). He tried to keep his healings quiet. He presented his teachings in parables, partly as a defensive measure to confuse superficial hearers (1749:4). He gave special teaching to those (e.g., Nathaniel) who were ready for it and who promised not to share it with others (1767:4). He restricted some meetings for counsel and planning to those who were tried and tested disciples (1717:4). Note further his selective answering of questions in his trial (1979:3; 1982:7,9; 1983c; 1984:2; 1986:3; 1990d; 1992:5; 1996:1). And note the contrast between the Master's discretion and the evasion of Peter's denial. Jesus recommended that our real prayers be in secret (1640:2). We are cautioned not to waste our time trying to unravel the mysteries of his incarnation (1317:2) and exarnation (2021:4-9).

What shall we conclude? At the very least, we need not be haunted by guilt if, in many a situation, we do not disclose our reliance on *The Urantia Book*, but rather simply tend to others' immediate needs.

6. Spiritual-and-cultural revelations spread gradually.

One may classify epochal revelations in terms of the types of project they promote—or avoid promoting. The first type of epochal revelation is a spiritual-and-cultural revelation. Such a revelation includes spiritual teaching and also addresses social, economic, and political matters. The Planetary Prince's staff had a college of revealed religion with a gospel to proclaim; and they also taught how to irrigate fields, trap ferocious beasts, select marriage partners, improve tribal governments, etc. Adam and Eve taught the basics of religion and conducted worship; and they also set up a school system, worked for racial uplift, and promoted cultural progress. The second type of epochal revelation, exemplified by Melchizedek and Jesus, is a specifically spiritual revelation. The second type does not set forth or engage in cultural uplift projects.

Roughly speaking, each type of revelation has its proper velocity of propagation. A Mack truck is not a Ferrari. The motto of specifically spiritual revelation is, “Proclaim this gospel aggressively to all the world.” More people are receptive to the simple gospel than to spiritual-and-cultural revelation, and responding to a gospel message entails fewer changes for the recipient (911:5). The motto of spiritual-and-cultural revelation is “gradual and solid growth.”

Failure to heed instructions and blindness to patterns and principles doesn't work. You can't drive a Mack truck like a Ferrari, at least not for long. If you drive it around a curve too fast, it tips over. Disaster has followed when spiritual-and-cultural revelations tried to go artificially fast and when specifically spiritual revelations became entangled in social and cultural reforms. After leaders of the first epochal revelation shifted into high gear, the enterprise came to a halt within fifty years (758:5). After Adam and

Eve defaulted, Plan A was lost, and they had to improvise Plan B (843:5). Specifically spiritual revelations have had analogous problems. The Salem gospel was progressing well in Mesopotamia until the leader decided to attack a practice associated with the local cult (1043:1-4). Christianity has suffered from mixing religion with other concerns (2069:3; 2086:6; 1087:4-5). Past carriers of epochal revelation who violated their instructions could hardly have predicted the consequences. If someone had warned them accurately of what lurked beyond their proposals, he or she would have been laughed out of their company as a fear-monger. But the lesson from the Adamic default is sobering: even those who believe in the Universal Father and labor toward a high planetary destiny can take the wrong road. What mortal could have imagined the results of that one decision?

How does *The Urantia Book* fit into the preceding classification of types of epochal revelation? Is it a spiritual-and-cultural revelation or a specifically spiritual revelation? Some readers get confused because the book describes both types. However, the fact that *The Urantia Book* includes instructions for the full range of projects puts it in the first category. It presents teachings about spiritual and religious priorities and also about science, eugenics, world government, and other social, economic, and political topics—and it remains important to keep these types of project distinct today, lest religious groups become political parties (1086-89; 2085:5). The fact that *The Urantia Book* is an advanced spiritual-and-cultural revelation implies that the book not be treated as a tool of evangelization; rather the movement of students of *The Urantia Book* should follow the rhythms of solid and sure growth.

On the river of truth, the gospel is the ice-breaker; *The Urantia Book* is the cargo ship that follows it.

7. Screening for receptivity and safety is normal in sharing a spiritual-and-cultural revelation.

Epochal revelations are oriented to groups with high average receptivity in order to reach actually receptive individuals. The first two epochal revelations sought out superior individuals (575:2; 585:6; 743:10), and analogous factors operated in the third and fourth epochal revelations (1018:7; 1344:2). Jesus gave advanced teachings to selected individuals (1456; 1767:4).

We would like to introduce the revelation to those who are receptive and avoid those who might harm it. Thus some screening of prospects for epochal revelation is appropriate. This is a hard topic, but we all use an intuitive sense of what is appropriate to bring up in a given conversation. To put a big log on a little fire just kindled can extinguish the fire, whereas once it is burning brightly, the big log is just right. There is a danger of elitism and pride in raising the question of who is ready for the book, and we don't want to judge people. Nevertheless, if we want to learn what *The Urantia Book* can teach on this subject, we must consider the topic. Discernment is not judging people, not judging souls. Screening is a matter of being wise as serpents, even as we intend to be harmless as doves.

The screening policies of previous epochal revelations show two basic kinds of screening. The first type is screening for receptivity. We who have a complex epochal ▶

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revelation to share need a complex concept of receptivity. Receptivity to *The Urantia Book* is not the same as the need for new truth or even receptivity to selected ideas from the book. The practices of previous epochal revelations suggest three guidelines for us to consider:

(a) Seek out superior individuals, prospective teachers and leaders. The Prince's corporeal staff continuously gathered about them the superior individuals of the surrounding tribes and, after training and inspiring these students, sent them back as teachers and leaders of their respective peoples. (743; cf. 575:2)

(b) Seek out those with marked religious capacity, particularly those with experience in some religion. The evolution of the religious capacity of receptivity in the inhabitants of a world largely determines their rate of spiritual advancement and the extent of religious revelation (591:3). *The characteristic difference between evolved and revealed religion is a new quality of divine wisdom which is added to purely experiential human wisdom. But it is experience in and with the human religions that develops the capacity for subsequent reception of increased bestowals of divine wisdom and cosmic insight* [1101:5].

(c) Seek out those whose who are mentally flexible and whose ideas already agree substantially with those of *The Urantia Book*. *But it is only foolish to attempt the too sudden acceleration of religious growth. A race or nation can only assimilate from any advanced religion that which is*

reasonably consistent and compatible with its current evolutionary status, plus its genius for adaptation [1004:8-1005:1]. *It is the mission of revelation to sort and censor the successive religions of evolution. But if revelation is to exalt and upstep the religions of evolution, then must such divine visitations portray teachings which are not too far removed from the*

thought and reactions of the age in which they are presented. Thus must and does revelation always keep in touch with evolution. Always must the religion of revelation be limited by man's capacity of receptivity [1007:1]. Some people are simply not ready yet. Jesus observed of one man that "he must be allowed more time for the trials and difficulties of life to prepare him for the reception of wisdom and higher learning" [1466:2].

For whom is the fifth epochal revelation intended? Another clue is to try to discern from the text itself what beliefs and knowledge seem to be presupposed by the authors. That may indicate to what type of reader it is initially—though not exclusively—directed.

The second type of screening is screening for safety to the revelation. "Unarmed observers were freely admitted to Eden for short visits. To sojourn in the Garden a Urantian had to be 'adopted.' He received instructions in the plan and purpose of the Adamic bestowal, signified his intention to adhere to this mission, and then made declaration of loyalty to the social rule of Adam and the spiritual sovereignty of the Universal Father (835:8). The prohibition against arms of course reminds us that visitors could do harm to the Garden inhabitants. The initial screening here is protective. Recall that Jesus advocated protective screening in the Ordination Sermon: "Present not that which is holy to dogs, neither cast your pearls before swine, lest they trample your gems under foot and turn to rend you" [1571:6].

What dangers require screening in our day? Most

obviously, we would prefer to avoid bringing the revelation to the notice of or evolution. Revolutionary efforts multiply enemies and precipitate premature conflict.

The Urantia Book takes on the powers of this world. It challenges the nationalism of every nation that regards itself as sovereign, the materialism of every business enterprise that subordinates service to profit, the authority of every religious tradition, and the secularism of any society that tries to live without God. And the response to the book may be proportionate to the book's power, now hardly suspected. Those of us accustomed to centuries of civil liberties may take too much for granted (1302:4). It strains my imagination to think that we readers will never encounter persecution, sometime, somewhere in the world. If and when this becomes inevitable, let us rejoice in sharing the experiences of the prophets before us. But let us not bring down a stormy atmosphere prematurely on others who would otherwise have an opportunity to grow in peace.

The point of this remark is not that we should avoid all controversy. The Planetary Prince's staff, for example, proclaimed "the gospel of individual initiative" within the tradition-bound social groups of that day (749:4). The point is that the most strategic points should be selected whereon controversy is timely.

In practice, how are we to do our screening? We are told that we can never know a person as a result of a single contact (141:3). Moreover, understanding requires knowing the individual's motivation (1098:2). This is a demanding requirement, sometimes too high. In my own experience, there is a qualitative difference between the times when I notice someone who seems "ready" to me, and the times when someone asks a question which is unwittingly but unmistakably a request for *The Urantia Book*. I actually pray that the person will make such a request as an aid to discerning whether I should introduce *The Urantia Book*. We cannot operate humanely if we take guidelines as absolutes or become anxious about our inability to apply them perfectly. But if we go to the other extreme and refuse to accept the responsibility of discernment, I believe that we let the revelators down.

In sharing truth, some risks are reasonable; some are unreasonable. And those elites who run unreasonable risks do so not just for themselves, but for all of us, and for the fifth epochal revelation. If we do our best in the light of all the instructions we can derive from higher sources, we can truly be content. During this early phase when massive exposure for the book would guarantee nearly universal rejection, if we spend the lion's share of our time on projects that fall clearly within the ballpark indicated by *The Urantia Book* itself, and if we sustain commitments to ethical procedures, we will see a great reduction in energy-consuming organizational controversy and prepare for those anticipated, thrilling planetary developments for which we may be none too ready when the time comes—or which we may not see in our own lifetimes.

In practice, we are normally far more relaxed about mentioning the book with others than were those who had to protect the early epochal revelations, and I believe that this is almost always good. The point of this study, however, is to make us stop and ponder a bit. ▶

In my own experience, there is a qualitative difference between the times when I notice someone who seems "ready" to me, and the times when someone asks a question which is unwittingly but unmistakably a request for *The Urantia Book*.

8. Our policies should fit the timing of the world-wide mission of the fifth epochal revelation.

One pattern in epochal revelation is that they do not just explode upon the planet. They unfold in stages. The Adamic bestowal exemplifies a two-stage epochal revelation: a phase of partial contact with the planetary population and a phase of full contact (586:6). There is some analogy to this two-stage revelation to be found in other revelations. The Planetary Prince's staff had an early period of gathering their associates (including the procreation of the primary midwayers), organizing their headquarters, and establishing their ten councils for service. Melchizedek's mission did not go into high gear with sustaining drive until he had fully won over Abraham. And Jesus' mission advanced through a series of stages, even after his public career had begun.

How will we know when the times comes to shift into broader public interface with *The Urantia Book*? There is an impressive consensus that we need thousands of study groups plus translations into major languages plus prepared teachers and leaders. We must be ready to handle the intense questioning and confusion inevitable when the gold rush for truth is on. Another criterion is a settled, stable, peaceful world order.

As a teacher, I know that my first job is to "wake up the question"—to get others to ask the question on which I want to focus. If I proceed to give teaching in answer to a question that others are not asking, I largely waste my message. I believe that there is also a timed meeting between planetary question and universe answer. What if we pre-empt the rhythm of readiness with premature publicity? The drama of the timed meeting of planetary question and universe answer will be partly lost. Pearl casting precipitates premature rejection and conflict. Aggressively publicizing *The Urantia Book* could result in a step backwards. It has happened before—the *weakening of Vedism through the rejection of higher truth* [1028:5]. Note that negligence in failing to reach out appropriately with the teachings and the book can also interfere with the timing. Foolish haste or laziness could abort a great hope—with consequences that we do not imagine. What if we work with wise methods? The heart leaps to contemplate the harvest!

Our sincere desire to do things right is met by a wonderful promise. The patient pursuit of wise evolutionary policies may have rapid and dramatic results. "Evolutionary" seems like a synonym for "slow," and as a first approximation, that is correct (749:6). But evolutionary patience does not mean permanent slow motion. If we grow more, the effectiveness of our outreach will multiply. Sometimes evolution moves quickly. *The order of progressive evolution is subjected to sudden and unexpected periodical changes in both the material and the spiritual worlds* [1863:12]. *When physical conditions are ripe, sudden mental evolutions may take place; when mind status is propitious, sudden spiritual transformations may occur...* [740:2]. The teachings and conduct of the newly arrived Prince's staff had a tremendous influence on nearby tribes (743:10). There is a similar, immediate impact from a normal Adamic mission (586:5). And great possibilities are again with us. After assuring us of the long time it will take to obliterate social class differences through racial, educational, and religious progress, we are told that *much social improvement will immediately result from the intelligent, wise, and patient manipulation of these acceleration factors of*

cultural progress (793:8). And there is an intriguing possibility: *The social readjustments, the economic transformations, the moral rejuvenations, and the religious revisions of Christian civilization would be drastic and revolutionary if the living religion of Jesus should suddenly supplant the theologic religion about Jesus* [2090:3].

Suppose someone says that in this time of accelerated change, the old evolutionary methods are obsolete. This is like saying that when you hit white water rapids, you can jettison the fundamentals of canoeing. During a period of rapid change, we must still be faithful to the essentials. *And only by adherence to these essentials can man hope to maintain his present-day civilizations while providing for their continued development and certain survival* [912:1].

We must not panic. The revelators of the Urantia Papers anticipated world war at the same time that they predicted a spiritual renaissance (2082:5,7). Being faithful to essentials blocks foolish and harmful projects but does not stifle the progressively aggressive individual (1027:1).

There are many projects with the teachings of the book that fall clearly within the scope of reasonableness, projects that call for public work now.

Evolution is not always slow; but evolution always works. It succeeds where even revelation fails (900:5; 937:6; 990:5). So if we handle our new epochal revelation in ways that squarely align with the tried and true methods of evolutionary revelation, we are sure to be contributing to success. The pursuit of evolutionary methods, however slow they may seem to be, is certain to succeed. Revelation's contribution is fragile; it needs to be handled with wise evolutionary hands.

What is the plan for *The Urantia Book*? Interpretations vary. Here is mine. Recall that the first two epochal revelations had a Plan A, but had to improvise a Plan B; Jesus' Plan A was to win over the Jewish leaders and have the network of synagogues become the distribution channel for the new gospel, while Plan B was to move the center of the gospel movement to the west.

Jesus' teachings are also to function as the foundation of a new and higher civilization (1720:3). This project is in some ways quite unusual. Normally, there is a sequence of revelations, each building upon the previous ones. On the basis of missions that establish the general cultural integrity (educational, familial, intellectual), the spiritual revelation proceeds. The Bestowal Son's spiritualizing mission arrives as the center gem-stone in the lovely ring crafted by the Planetary Prince's staff and the Adamic mission and the intellectual achievements sponsored by the Magisterial Son (591-97). But Jesus arrived to spiritualize a planet whose culture was at best very partial and fragmentary. Because of the rebellion and the default, the relative absence of spiritual-and-cultural revelation on our planet inverts the normal relationship between the kind of epochal mission that serves as the foundation and the kind that thrives on that foundation. Now we are being asked, roughly, to rebuild the culture on a spiritual foundation. *The Urantia Book* can help us to achieve that civilization, giving guidelines to help us make up for lost revelations.

Christianity is in crisis (2082:9). It is the leading world religion, the greatest exponent of Jesus' teachings ►

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and the greatest obstacle to them (2085:1-2). The religion of Jesus is guaranteed to triumph (1608:1). Will the great hope of Urantia—for the new revelation to unify the followers of Jesus—be fulfilled (2086:2)?

This epochal revelation is destined to benefit all religions, all peoples; it serves precisely to break down religious barriers, e.g., between those who regard themselves as followers of Jesus and those who do not (1010:4). But Plan A seems to be for *The Urantia Book* to be presented to Christianity in such a way that it gets accepted by a critical mass of believers. If we present the book badly, will it be forced to retire to the libraries and study groups of an enthusiastic minority who wait for another Son to vindicate their loyalty? Our policies and conduct will greatly influence the outcome. I do not mean that readers should focus solely on Christianity or distort their teachings to appeal to Christianity, or join in Christian worship if they have no desire to do so, or regard Christians as “better” than adherents of other religions or as the chosen recipients of the fifth epochal revelation. I do mean that there are some historical street-smarts clearly evident in Jesus’ policies that have analogues today.

Readers who arrive at Papers 195 and 196 having digested the lessons of previous epochal revelations are prepared to make wise use of the vigorous and specific directives given there. Plan A for *The Urantia Book* seems to be based on the recognition of the need of Christianity for “a new vision of the Master’s life on earth” and the promise of “a new and fuller revelation of the religion of Jesus” to overcome mechanism and naturalism (2082:7).

The final paragraphs redirect us to “the great challenge to modern man,” achieving better contact with the indwelling spirit...

How is the “great revelation” (2082:8) to become effective? *Religion does need new leaders, spiritual men and women who will dare to depend solely on Jesus and his incomparable teachings. If Christianity persists in neglecting its spiritual mission while it continues to busy itself with social and material problems, the spiritual renaissance must await the coming of these new teachers of Jesus’ religion who will be exclusively devoted to the spiritual regeneration of men. And then will these spirit-born souls quickly supply the leadership and inspiration requisite for the social, moral, economic, and political reorganization of the world.* [2082:9]

There follows an appeal for “firsthand religion” and a remarkable musing about how dynamic it would be if people could see Jesus as he really lived on earth and know, firsthand, his life-giving teachings! [2083:4] If this seeming fantasy is puzzling, suspense is promptly removed: *The world needs to see Jesus living again on earth in the experience of spirit-born mortals who effectively reveal the Master to all men* [2084:1]. Talk of revelation refers here primarily to what transpires in the lives of believers. In the next passage, such talk seems to refer as much to the lives of transformed believers as to the book: *The great hope of Urantia lies in the possibility of a new revelation of Jesus with a new and enlarged presentation of his saving message which would spiritually unite in loving service the numerous families of his present-day professed followers* [2086:2].

The creative design of Paper 196 is instructive. It opens with an invigorating portrait of that very Jesus whom we are to reveal in our lives, and then restates Plan A in the first section. *What a transcendent service if, through this revelation, the Son of Man should be recovered from the tomb of traditional theology and be presented as the living Jesus to the church that*

bears his name, and to all other religions! [2090:3] The paper does not end by sending us forth like missionaries shot from a cannon. Instead, it culminates with a section integrating the dynamic vision of religion with the balanced perspective of the book as a whole. The authors note that progress stems from “revelational evolution” (2904:14). It seems reasonable to interpret that our (evolutionary) way of living is to be revelatory and our use of the fifth epochal revelation is to be evolutionary. The final paragraphs redirect us to “the great challenge to modern man,” achieving better contact with the indwelling spirit, and to the life in the Creator Son, and back to the Father.

Plan A for the fifth epochal revelation seems to have the following features:

1. The stimulus. Although not every student of *The Urantia Book* is called to this project, the fifth epochal revelation calls for a vanguard of teachers who adhere to the specifics of the spiritual mission of the gospel movement. Such teachers of Jesus’ religion (who need not necessarily know *The Urantia Book*) are to live the gospel so radiantly and with such second-miler service that they reveal the living Jesus to other people (2084:5). The new revelation of Jesus’ life and teachings emerges as transformed believers engage in revelatory living. Recall that Jesus, appearing to Greek and Jewish believers, said, *You are all to proclaim this gospel of love and truth by the lives which you live in the flesh* [2044:3].

2. A special emphasis. Although these teachers are to proclaim the gospel to all peoples and to the members of all religions, there is a certain emphasis on Christianity (1041:4; 2086:2; 2090:3; 1866:4).

3. A new vehicle of advanced teaching. Those spirit-born individuals who are found receptive will be introduced to *The Urantia Book*.

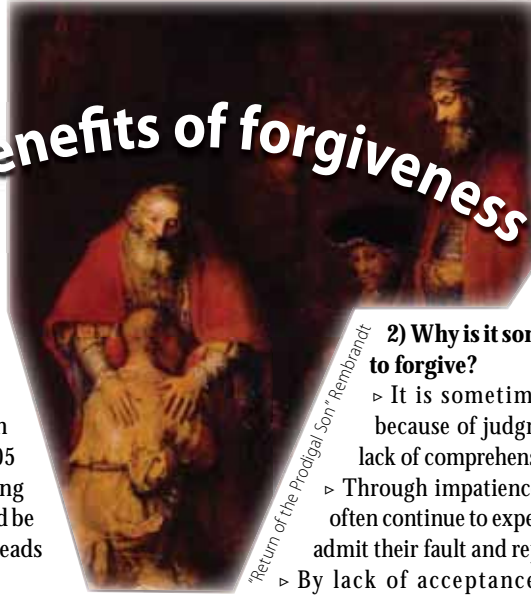
4. The results. The refreshed, expanded, and reunified Jesus brotherhood will play a major role in the spiritual renaissance, sparking a planetary reorganization.

I infer that putting the lion’s share of our energies into participating in this plan directly and supporting it indirectly is the proper way to ensure the success of the fifth epochal revelation. The corollary is that making the book itself our major project is the shortsighted shortcut.

III. Conclusions

Each epochal revelation has its disciplines. Beneficiaries of the first had to return to their native regions as teachers. Guests in the Garden had to give up multiple mates. The primary messengers of the third and fourth epochal revelations had to leave social, economic, and political reconstruction to their hearers. Maybe the students of the fifth epochal revelation are expected to forego treating *The Urantia Book* as a gospel. We tend to want to do it all, to have ourselves or our organizations fill both the functions—the function of spreading a deep and thorough spiritual and cultural revelation and the function of the kind of dynamism that suits the gospel movement. We cannot drive the Mack truck like a Ferrari. The many urgent calls to proclaim the gospel must not be taken out of context and applied to *The Urantia Book* itself. The book does not precede or accompany the public gospel message, but follows it. From the day of the bestowal of the Spirit of Truth, Peter and his associates ►

The benefits of forgiveness



"Return of the Prodigal Son" Rembrandt

HOW OFTEN DO WE HEAR “forgive and forget”? To forgive others for any wrongdoing to us seems to be an excellent way of staying healthy, according to studies as reported in an article by Lisa Collier Cool, in the January 2005 edition of ‘Sélection du Readers Digest’. Among other things, the article says that forgiveness could be a powerful antidote against anger, which often leads to chronic hypertension and heart disease.

On Sunday, October 16, 2005, the Association Urantia du Québec held a theme day meeting on the subject of forgiveness. For our table talks, here were the three questions asked and a short summary of our observations:

1) What does forgiveness mean to you?

- ▷ Forgiveness signifies freedom; suffering remains in the absence of forgiveness.
- ▷ Forgiveness is a God relationship; through prayers, we can bring others to forgive also.
- ▷ Forgiveness is a liberating mechanism which allows human relationships to spiritually progress and which augments our perception of the Father residing in others.
- ▷ Forgiveness is also understanding the ignorance of one's action.
- ▷ Forgiveness is comprehension.
- ▷ Forgiveness is a way of living, accepting others as they are.
- ▷ Forgiveness is love, to live love with others.

Continued from previous page

inverted the gospel and featured as the leading edge of their proclamation truths which were supposed to be grasped secondarily. As a result, acceptance of Jesus' divine Sonship became the gateway to the Christian proclamation of the Father's love. Countless people naturally stumbled at this gate, and the brotherhood of man has suffered. Today, an overemphasis on the book rather than the realities it discloses unwittingly fosters a religion about *The Urantia Book* (2086:1).

Those who desire to be primarily active in bringing the book to those who are ready for it have many frontiers for fully legitimate and heroic activity. They can move to areas where no study group exists, and get to know people, introduce them selectively to the book, and start a study group. They can get to know individuals in a local religious or other group where they are likely to meet a high proportion of candidates for the book. They can even start up correspondence with internet acquaintances or with authors who have published forward-thinking articles and introduce the book in the context of a flourishing relationship. And many other projects fall within the ballpark delineated by the foregoing principles. We do not have to choose between do-nothing stagnation and risky publicity. There are many superb endeavors that are being largely neglected.

2) Why is it sometimes hard for us to forgive?

- ▷ It is sometimes hard to forgive because of judgment resulting from lack of comprehension.
- ▷ Through impatience and ignorance, we often continue to expect that others should admit their fault and repentance.
- ▷ By lack of acceptance of the consequences of our own gestures.
- ▷ By lack of responsibility: it requires a sincere desire to take responsibility.
- ▷ By justification; fear and pride often restrain us.
- ▷ Our lack of tolerance often leads us to forget that others make mistakes too.

Perhaps we need not forget, but we do need to forgive.

3) What are the repercussions of forgiveness on the physical, mental and spiritual aspects?

- ▷ When we forgive, our mind is free to spiritually progress.
- ▷ Sincere forgiveness is positive and miraculous.
- ▷ It is a victory upon ourselves and frees us from evil.
- ▷ It leads us to build together and live in fraternity.
- ▷ It transforms us and others.
- ▷ Forgiveness brings people together in a healthier state.

In conclusion:

Our ability to forgive is God given, and in doing so, we live this aspect of the Father's will in spreading His mercy. We can see that God has introduced this capacity within our mind endowments to help and guide us in living a healthy life through spiritual harmony in a fraternal mankind.

Perhaps we need not forget, but we do need to forgive. ■

Students who desire to introduce *The Urantia Book* to others in accord with its teachings learn to work with evolutionary resources and to attract prospective readers by revelatory living. Seeking out groups with high average receptivity, and sharing appropriate truths, they do not confuse the book with the gospel, and they avoid pearl casting. They get to know receptive individuals by meeting together more than once, and they see that the individual is born of the spirit. When they discern cultural as well as spiritual receptivity, they introduce such individuals to the fifth epochal revelation in loyalty and joy and trust.

These ideals are so challenging that it is tempting to pursue an easier path. It is understandable that we err, on account of the complexity of our book, the mistakes of certain leaders, and the material emotions that course through the limited minds of every one of us. But experimenting with unreasonable publicity for the book takes risks for all of us and for posterity; and such conduct consumes precious time on the part of our unseen friends who are obliged to devote themselves to damage limitation. ■

The Dissemination of *The Urantia Book* and Statement on Publicity

PART 2 OF 2

URANTIA FOUNDATION
Chicago, USA

NOTE: The complete English, Spanish, French and Finnish versions of this document in PDF format are available at: <http://www.urantia-iaa.org/overview.html>

The following is a 1983 publication from *The Urantia Book* headquarters, 533 Diversey Parkway, Chicago. It is restating advice and counsel from diverse sources that explain the rationale for a long-standing policy regarding *The Urantia Book*. Any historical document may require some degree of revision to express its contemporary relevance; as an example, note that the fraternal organization that was put together in order to support the purposes of the Urantia Foundation is no longer the Urantia Brotherhood, but the International Urantia Association, renamed recently the Urantia Association International; and its member groups are no longer called “Societies” but “Associations.”

Living Testimony. The time is ripe for those called to personal service. There are plenty of “experts” who tell others how to live. The need is for those who will show others how to live. The book challenges readers to demonstrate the truth of its teachings by daily living them. Readers are to become living testimony of the power and beauty of the teachings. We can all whet the appetite of others by the way we live.

INTRODUCING *THE URANTIA BOOK*

The Person-to-Person Introduction. The preferred means of spreading *The URANTIA Book* is by word of mouth. We warmly urge a renewed dedication by readers to this proven method of bringing the book to the attention of friends and acquaintances who are believed to be ready to receive it.

The person-to-person approach is superior to a program of advertising because of the human touch. The disciples accepted the gospel because Jesus personified the twin truths of the gospel—the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of men.

Recent Shift From Personal Introductions Noted. There seems to have been a diminution of personal efforts to spread the book; a shift away from the person-to-person introduction, and a move toward reliance upon brochures,

tracts, slide shows, and other second-hand impersonal techniques. Each has its place when used in combination with personal introduction, but when dependence is placed upon it exclusively, it loses its value and impact. The spirit of the teachings rarely comes through in a brochure; multimedia presentations often are too intellectual or too emotional in tone, not effective unless presented with discussion led by a well-prepared facilitator.

The tendency to rely upon secondary materials may represent a more expedient approach to introducing the book and may display an impatience with the seemingly slow rate of growth of new readers. The willingness to depend upon introductory brochures may also indicate a desire to find an alternative to experiencing rejection of the book first-hand. Another reason that many readers are neglecting

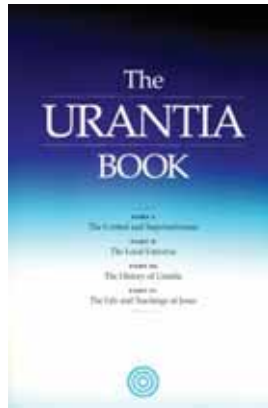
to personally introduce the book to others is that they are too busy. They are wrapped up in the plans, projects, and activities that a burgeoning movement seems to demand. Introducing the book or sharing the truths of the book, is one of the highest forms of outreach and ought to take precedence over organizational distractions.

Study the Book to Introduce it Effectively. It is difficult to introduce such a complex book as *The URANTIA Book* without first having a good acquaintanceship with it. No single method of introduction is effective for everyone, hence the importance of knowing the book

and understanding the needs of your friend to decide which approach will best answer his longings. You must become skilled in creating a quest for truth as Jesus did. A long-time reader has expressed it this way: “One ‘friend’ is introduced more graciously and warmly to another friend by a friend who knows the qualities of both well.”

Develop Sensitivity and Courage. You must be prepared for indifference—even hostility—when introducing the book. After each experience of rejection resolve to become more sensitive to the spiritual needs and intellectual questions of others. Become spiritually fragrant so as to better attract people to you and to these superb teachings. When you have exhausted your “supply” of friends to whom you have already introduced the book or the teachings, expand your circle of friends and never become discouraged. We are all aware of the courage called for when approaching someone about *The URANTIA Book*.

Several readers are recognized as having a special talent for finding potential believers or as able to stimulate truth-hunger in others. They could be invited to share experiences and suggestions at Brotherhood conferences. ▶



DISSEMINATING THE URANTIA BOOK

Thousands are Ready. While the world as a whole has been adjudged not ready for *The URANTIA Book*—for the complete system of thought that is the fifth epochal revelation—there are undoubtedly thousands of people (among more than four and a half billion inhabitants of our planet) who would gladly receive the book today. In view of the decision that the book will not be publicized, for the reasons presented in this statement, the problem arises of how to reach those whose minds and souls hunger for truth and spiritual enlightenment.

Finding Those Who Are Ready. Although it may be unwise at this time to cast a net into the sea, we can certainly continue our more selective program of setting out lures. Our task is to design better lures. As part of our plan to lure rather than promote more readers, we have several programs:

1. *Library book placement.* Books may be placed in college and university libraries; public, prison, ship, hospital, hospice, corporate, and church libraries. The only libraries to avoid would be those controlled by governments or religions which would take exception to a book such as *The URANTIA Book*.

2. *Book discounts.* Our book distribution system has recently been overhauled to facilitate the ease with which legitimate book stores can order, stock, and pay for books. It is hoped that more book stores will place the book on their shelves in the religion or philosophy sections to enable browsers to find it readily.

3. *Public display opportunities.* Increasingly, groups will be experimenting with other forms of passive public display of the book. Ideally, these experiments will also involve personal consultation about the nature of the book on display.

Gift or lending copies. URANTIA Societies and individuals are able to take advantage of discount prices for multiple copies of the book for their service projects. We encourage individuals and societies to present books to certain types of people as, for example:

1. Study group leaders in less wealthy countries.
2. Economically disadvantaged persons who either have no resources or who may be unable to pay full price.
3. Carefully selected individuals who are believed to be intellectually and spiritually ready to accept it. This program would be judiciously initiated by experienced workers who “speak the same language” professionally.

Speakers’ Bureau Program. A URANTIA Society might begin devising and rehearsing various techniques of presenting *The URANTIA Book* and its concepts to small groups in their local areas. The Speakers’ Bureau Outline was prepared by the Fraternal Relations Committee and was intended as guidance for URANTIA Societies, but its principles could be adapted by a local study group that wished to prepare itself, as well.

SUGGESTIONS TO LOCAL SOCIETIES WHO WISH TO ORGANIZE SPEAKERS’ BUREAUS

1. Each speaker should receive training in the fundamentals of public speaking.

2. The speaker should have a thorough knowledge of *The URANTIA Book*.

3. Any speaker going out from a URANTIA Society is in reality a representative of URANTIA Brotherhood. When speaking as an authority about the organizations, he should first determine what the policies of URANTIA Brotherhood and URANTIA Foundation are and, to the best of his ability, state them in a positive and favorable light.

4. Speakers should be sent out in two’s whenever possible.

5. No fees should be charged by speakers. Methods of clearing expenses should be formulated by the local Societies in advance.

6. It is recommended that any activity by a Speakers’ Bureau be at the invitation of the other group, rather than as a result of solicitation on the part of the URANTIA Society.

7. Any speaker who takes such an assignment should make a study of the group he will be addressing. Better understanding will result if there is sympathetic tolerance for others’ beliefs.

8. A skillful and wise speaker will emphasize the soul-saving message of *The URANTIA Book* and avoid over-long discussion about the book, about the origin, or about the organizations.

9. Concerning the origin, none of us has any first hand knowledge as to how the URANTIA Papers were transmitted. There are many rumors about the method, most of which are contradictory, and there is no means to validate any of the rumors. In the absence of an official version, the only reliable information is in the book itself.

10. The first speakers have a solemn responsibility, and they would, of course, be representative of the dignity and character of *The URANTIA Book* revelation.

Finding Those Who Are Ready. Although it may be unwise at this time to cast a net into the sea, we can certainly continue our more selective program of setting out lures. Our task is to design better lures.

PUBLIC DISSEMINATION OF THE TEACHINGS OF THE REVELATION

Positive Outreach. For a long time readers believed that there were so many things they weren’t supposed to do, they have become confused as to how to spread the teachings. In fact, there is only one “don’t” and that is not to publicize *The URANTIA Book*. They can do practically everything else of an “outreach” nature.

The URANTIA Book has a primary spiritual mission, but it is also designed to encourage material and social progress. It seems to be the opinion of the majority of leaders as well as of many readers that, for the foreseeable future, the influence that the book will have upon the institutions of society must be indirect, at most. *The URANTIA Book* is a unified whole and should not be delivered piecemeal to those who are ready only for certain portions. An alternative program (to introducing the book directly to large groups or segments of society) is for students of the teachings to introduce concepts—unattributed to the book by name—into the main currents of contemporary life.

Public Ministry. One of the most effective programs of outreach ministry has been the dissemination of the teachings of the revelation through radio broadcasts and ▶

by other means of communication. These public efforts are characterized by the fact that the communicators do not mention *The URANTIA Book* and do not quote from its pages. Another important feature is that the Brotherhood does not sponsor or direct their activities.

The leaders of one such group sought counsel as they prepared to launch their public mission. They were advised by counselors to maintain their program entirely separate from the Brotherhood and not to link their public message directly with *The URANTIA Book*. It was foreseen that their group could even grow faster than the Brotherhood and become larger for a while. Yet it was understood that their group's activities would not compete with the Brotherhood's programs; neither would it act as an intermediary between URANTIA Book readers and URANTIA Brotherhood.

The Fraternal Relations Committee of the Brotherhood has recognized the value of this type of public outreach and is interested in coordinating the flow of information about this kind of public outreach. While the committee would not be sponsoring or directing these independent activities, it would be happy to share insights.

It is much too early to publicize the book on cable television or any other medium, but it is not too soon to begin presenting a diluted version of some of the ideas from the revelation.

Ideas for Spreading Concepts of the Revelation. Among possible pursuits are these:

1. *Newsletters.* There has been an explosion of newsletters emanating from all segments of the readership. One suggestion has been made that newsletters might

expand by directing their mission outward, beyond those who read the book, instead of inward, toward those who already believe the teachings.

This type of publication would be aimed at the public and could include literary writing, poetry, commentary, and art with an intellectual and spiritual overtone. A "news" letter of this kind would wed the self-expression motive of editors and contributing writers to the desire to spread truth and faith to the spiritually needy of the neighborhood and planet.

The backbone of this idea—in keeping with the plan of not publicizing the book—would be to have no identification with *The URANTIA Book* and URANTIA organizations. The publication would not quote, paraphrase, or mention the book. Mailing lists would be developed outside the readership instead of within, and funding would gradually come from subscribers instead of donations from readers.

One technique frequently used by speakers and broadcasters who read the book, which could be applied to the literary "news" letter, is to highlight a concept known to be in *The URANTIA Book*, but identify it instead with a personality—famous or obscure—who might have originated it in the past.

2. *Fiction, Non-fiction, and Poetry Writing.* The introduction of revelational, philosophical and spiritual ideals into the flow of contemporary literature could uplift the minds and souls of countless men and women in decades to come.

The work of talented writers and poets has appeared in our journals and local newsletters. Many of these same writers could consider marketing their talents to magazines and book publishers. A well-written, thought-provoking, non-controversial but penetrating article would have appeal

to the editor of leading literary magazines. A non-fiction article could concern itself with a concept which has been known for some time and around which theory and discussion has been rampant. Again, as outlined in the discussion on newsletters, for the foreseeable future, it would be wise to omit mention of *The URANTIA Book* by name and not include quotations or paraphrasings from the book, nor use names and terms unique to the book. An invitation to the reader to get in touch with the author could be appended to the article.

3. *Radio, Television, and Motion Pictures.* In the past few years there has been an enhanced consciousness among some television and movie professionals of the need for higher ideals in our society. People working in the communications media who read *The URANTIA Book* hope to find the opportunity to proclaim the teachings in a secondary manner. They are gradually using their project assignments to elevate the quality of their productions by incorporating truth concepts into scripts. Their dream is to break the silence about God that exists on the major networks and in present-day entertainment. They envision the far distant day when they or their successors will be able to safely portray spiritual truth and intellectual facts in an uncompromised fashion. Until that day comes, there is a vital need to upgrade the spiritual and philosophic levels of those who work in the communications industry. This work approaches near-apostolic levels of dedication and service.

4. *Cable Television.* This medium promises to be the one with the most voracious appetite for talent and new ideas. Cable could become one of the vehicles by which the world can be prepared to receive the revelation. It is more personal and local than commercial television. Thus far, cable has yet to fulfill its promise of offering independent thinking. While there are many channels devoted to religious programming, they are largely directed by conservative and traditional religious groups that are by no means ecumenical. It is much too early to publicize the book on cable television or any other medium, but it is not too soon to begin presenting a diluted version of some of the ideas from the revelation.

5. *Talk Show Interviews.* The readership of the book includes persons who have authored books, who are business and professional leaders, or who are performing artists. They occasionally appear as guests on radio and television talk shows, and they sometimes utilize these opportunities to impart spiritual and philosophical concepts. They are becoming adept in the presentation of higher truth without ever publicly mentioning *The URANTIA Book* or their association with a revelation. They are willing to share their techniques with anyone planning to embark on similar public ventures.

A key feature that all of these public outreach programs should include is some system of personal response for anyone to inquire further about the source of inspiration. Thus, *The URANTIA Book* could be personally introduced when the opportunity presented itself.

The URANTIA Book is not the only religious work that can be "bootlegged." Jesus selected the passages from the Scriptures that best fitted the idea he wished to convey. Your own choice of passages from the Bible or another work ▶

could get across a great truth to an audience just as well.

These are a few of the more public ways the teachings can be spread. They are not the only means. One can incorporate concepts into speeches; teachers have included ideas gleaned from the book, as well as ethical and moral guidance in the classroom; Sunday school teachers intermix material from the book into their lessons; and *The URANTIA Book* provides a personal reference for student and professional work in philosophy, archeology, and anthropology.

One reader has devised a list of over 100 ways to spread the book or its teachings abroad in the land. Songwriters—famous and little known—are building their lyrics around a spiritual concept or ideal that was derived from *The URANTIA Book*.

BUILDING A FOUNDATION

Preparing the Way. Jesus' method of teaching in Rome was not to present the epochal fact, but to expand upon the truths they already recognized. He prepared "...the way for the better and more certain reception of (the apostles') message." (1455)*

Presenting the Religion of the Living Jesus:

What an awakening the world would experience if it could only see Jesus as he really lived on earth and know, first-hand, his life-giving teachings! [2083:4]*

The time is ripe to witness the figurative resurrection of the human Jesus...What a transcendent service if, through this revelation the Son of Man should be recovered from the tomb of traditional theology and presented as the living Jesus to the church that bears his name, and to all other religions! [2090:3]*

We must ask why the author of the latter passage did not write, "What a transcendent service if *this revelation* could be presented to the church..." In time, the book will be so presented. But the living Jesus does need to be immediately presented. This passage is completely compatible with the thesis that the book is given now in order to train teachers and leaders who can present the basic spiritual truths of the living Jesus. The time of the widespread use of the book itself will follow a general spiritual awakening on the planet.

Training of Teachers.

"The URANTIA Brotherhood Constitution charges the Education Committee to find, prepare, and qualify teachers for the purpose of disseminating the teachings of the book in order that each mortal may be aided in achieving his or her personal spiritual goals... (I) t is the committee's task to encourage intensive study of the papers together with (the) study of evolutionary knowledge, secular and religious." (From the Statement on Current Thinking, Education Committee, 1983)

Seminars were developed as a step toward providing a framework for study of *The URANTIA Book* in order to improve the breadth and depth of knowledge of these teachings. Participants in seminar programs try various techniques in the teaching and learning process. A climate is provided in which personalities may cooperatively interact in their study.

Visiting Teachers. An adjunct to the seminars will be the Visiting Teachers Program, in which teachers recommended by URANTIA Societies could be invited by other Societies or

study groups to present programs that might consist of lectures, workshops, papers, or topics.

Study *The URANTIA Book*. To become a "teacher" of the revelation, one must first be a student. One never finishes discovering the riches in the teachings of *The URANTIA Book*. Thorough personal scholarship is the basic ingredient of preparation for teaching. Study groups offer the opportunity for the student who has had no professional teaching experience to develop confidence by asking questions and making comments about the subject under study. An aspiring teacher might also research external sources to enhance the study of a section of the paper the group is studying. Certain types of outside employment or volunteer activities could train one to be more sensitive to others' needs.

The encouraging and nurturing of new readers is a most important service. Many a new reader would welcome a "study partner"—a one-on-one tutor, a more experienced student—who could lead him to cross-references and bolster his flagging spirits. Established study groups are sometimes imposing to a new reader, and individualized attention would be most beneficial to both novice and tutor.

A true teacher is not necessarily one who has passed through a prescribed course of study. He or she is one who is recognized by students and fellow teachers as being able and qualified, an individual who can attract, lead, inspire, enlighten, and stimulate others.

The study group is proving to be the ideal social format for the enhancement of knowledge of the book, and it provides opportunity for readers to profit from the insight of fellow readers.

Study Groups. The study group is proving to be the ideal social format for the enhancement of knowledge of the book, and it provides opportunity for readers to profit from the insight of fellow readers. It offers a chance to practice, to rehearse, and to share experiences—just such a program as Jesus' apostles and disciples had before they launched their mission to the world.

Study groups take many forms; they range through:

1. groups that read straight through the book without discussion,
2. groups that read and discuss,
3. intensive study groups,
4. topical studies groups,
5. collateral-materials research groups,
6. shared reading groups
7. groups where sections are pre-assigned,
8. groups where the leader conducts the entire study, and
9. groups that operate with a question and answer format.

Traditionally, the only recommendation the Brotherhood has regarding study groups is that the group concentrate primarily on the study of *The URANTIA Book*.

Study group organization and maintenance is a complex human relations responsibility. It requires dependability and dedication. The Apostle Paul was a great teacher, but he also had a special talent for organizing. The Brotherhood offers opportunities through its seminars, through the Study Group Fellowship of the Domestic Extension Committee, and the general conferences, as well as in regional ►

conferences, for individuals to share study group experiences with each other.

Success in study group endeavors will reap untold benefits in the furtherance of the revelation. Before the time of public spread and acceptance of *The URANTIA Book*, we will be quietly facilitating the formation of thousands of study groups.

Derivative Materials. One of the projects being considered by several Brotherhood committees is the compilation and distribution of a list of available study aids. However, in studying *The URANTIA Book* it has generally been the belief that the most valuable aids are those which one provides oneself and those which accompany personal interchange.

Funding Translations. One of the leading priorities of the on-coming decades will be the preparation of translations of *The URANTIA Book*. It is becoming increasingly apparent that the fifth epochal revelation must be made available to our brothers and sisters around the planet. Although English is spreading rapidly, countless millions will never learn English. While it is URANTIA Foundation that will oversee

Success in study group endeavors will reap untold benefits in the furtherance of the revelation. Before the time of public spread and acceptance of *The URANTIA Book*, we will be quietly facilitating the formation of thousands of study groups.

the intricate process of developing translations, nevertheless, it will be we, the readers, who will fund them. Reader-volunteers may, with the approval of the Foundation, be used, variously, in the translating, the polishing, the checking, or the revision processes. However, at some stage—or at all stages—paid professional translators will need to

be employed. The efforts of volunteers do not obviate the need to have in hand a large amount of money for the translating and printing of *each* translation.

Financial Priorities Evaluation. Many worthwhile projects are proposed every year. As each arises, the group must assess its value and estimate whether the long-term interests of the greatest number of people will be served. Even if vast amounts of money become available to the Brotherhood and Foundation, a group “wisdom forecast” should be made concerning the relative merits of every suggestion. As Jesus’ youthful yardstick measured the institutions of his day, so also may the programs of our readership be gauged:

“*What does it do for the human soul? does it bring God to man? does it bring man to God?*” (1388)*

THE IMPORTANCE OF MAINTAINING A CONSISTENT POLICY

Avoiding Confusion. Leaders in the field have been aware of the policy of encouraging dissemination of *The URANTIA Book* by means of personal introduction, and the majority who have expressed themselves indicate strong approval of it as being in consonance with the best examples and admonitions on the book.

If URANTIA Brotherhood began a program of advertising the book, of approving the advertising of others, or of ignoring such promotion, great confusion among readers would occur. Advertising could indicate to our friends that we believed that our person-to-person program had failed and that any individual who might even remotely be ready

for the book could only be found by advertising. Many people are highly offended by advertising, and its employment by us or others could have a polarizing effect among the readership. Many truth-seekers have grown weary, even distrustful, of the spiritual validity of any religious group which engages in publicity methods. In their minds it is associated with manipulation, promotion, and psychological persuasion—the antithesis of *The URANTIA Book* teachings.

Our work must be done with a global perspective. The Brotherhood we are forming is a world Brotherhood. Some publicity techniques which might seem acceptable to many people in the United States would be found questionable or even shocking to many Europeans and Asians and might unwittingly jeopardize acceptance of these teachings in other cultures.

“Limited” Advertising Encourages Spin-off. There are indeed many readers who do not understand the reasons behind the policy of not publicizing the book, but to their credit, they have respected it. To approve or encourage advertising programs would be an indication to many potential publicists that the policy was being relaxed—that the time had arrived to publicize the book. Although one or two unauthorized advertising programs have been tried, results are believed to be modest. Sooner or later, an individual, seeing such minimal efforts, if encouraged by our apparent indifference, would be moved to mount a well-funded, highly visible campaign on television, in magazines, and in newspapers—one designed to bring in new people by the thousands. This would, of course, short-circuit our plan of fostering gradual, but enduring growth.

Stay With Eternity-Proven Methods. *The URANTIA Book* and its associated programs call for the wisest thinking and eternity-proven methods to promulgate truth on our planet. We must seek methods and techniques that fit the spirit of the teachings and always try to avoid projects that cheapen the revelation.

THE VALUE OF A UNIFIED PROGRAM OF DISSEMINATION

Crucial Early Stages. In the early stages of development of a new organization or movement, unified, coordinated efforts are crucial to survival. There must not be multiple or conflicting policies and practices concerning the dissemination of the book, as this would tend to undermine the Brotherhood’s ability to coordinate internal programs and could ultimately confuse the public and other religious groups, as well as readers of *The URANTIA Book*.

To encourage officially any group to duplicate our work or to work at cross-purposes would erode any hope of achieving a unified program that would benefit all readers. The would-be advertiser who complains that the current policy interferes with his or her freedom conversely can be faulted with trying to reverse policies which the group has worked hard to formulate and preserve.

Programs Must Synchronize. An individual or group who acts unilaterally in a mass-promotional effort would be assuming an enormous responsibility with respect to the rate and quality of the spread of the revelation. ▶

The consequences upon all facets of the movement must not be overlooked or minimized. A program that is out of synchronization with the wisdom and plans of the majority could disrupt the evolutionary process.

Problems With Unilateral Activities. The techniques that would be employed in unauthorized promotional programs presumably would be for an individual or group (not URANTIA Brotherhood) to inform the public through mass-promotional means of the existence and nature of *The URANTIA Book*. All inquiries would then be channeled back to the group that initiated the publicity. In our opinion this system has several drawbacks:

1. *The URANTIA Book* is a powerful beacon of light and truth. Regardless of quality, any introductory medium would be as feeble and ineffective as would be a candle lighted while in the presence of a lighthouse.

2. The majority of people who encountered any form of advertising of the book or introductory material, no matter how well conceived and presented, would of necessity be forced to decide the merits of the fifth epochal revelation based upon their reactions to these miniscule bits of information.

3. A personal introduction to the book could be a loving and individualized ministry tailored to the spiritual needs and intellectual questions of the truth-seeker. The impersonal, group, or organizational approach has little if any of these qualities.

4. This process encourages one to hide behind an organizational façade and resort to easy and impersonal means while avoiding the more courageous task of personally spreading the book and the teachings.

5. This process misleads the public into thinking that the group engaging in publicizing the book is the official spokesperson for *The URANTIA Book*. URANTIA Brotherhood was established to occupy the field, to be the primary source of information about the book and fellowship activities. Any other group would be interposing itself between the new reader and the Brotherhood, thus being in a position, occasionally, to answer questions about the origin of the book, to provide interpretations of the book; to comment on policies of the Brotherhood and Foundation; to discuss the price of the book; and to work on preparation of study aids, publications, or any other items they might wish to sell. The role of such groups and individuals—surely unintentional—when they function as advertisers and information clearing houses, could be characterized as bypassing the Brotherhood; to be, in effect, shadow Brotherhoods.

GROWTH WITH SUBSTANCE

We are Growing at Reasonable Rate. We are currently growing at a rate we can handle. The movement has not failed. The book is doing its own work. Society evolves or a movement develops best when it is not subjected to intense pressure to grow or spread quickly. Under the strain of too rapid expansion, growth would be unpredictable and faulty. At present, a strong core of deeply committed individuals is emerging and will continue to emerge if the evolutionary process is not disrupted. Material yardsticks can never be used to measure spiritual progress. We are engaged in the dissemination of advanced religious truth; book sales will be a natural consequence.

An inquiry was made recently of the marketing director

at a major publishing company concerning the number of books published annually that could be expected to exceed 100,000 in total sales. Only about 1% ever attain that level of distribution. *The URANTIA Book* has moved better than 99% of all other books published. A total distribution of over 126,000 URANTIA Books is viewed as extraordinary, considering the fact that the book has not been publicized.

Temporary Faddish Growth. The physical distribution of the book probably could be accomplished world-wide within a very few years. But this kind of artificially induced growth could collapse as quickly as it flourished. Such an officious spreading of *The URANTIA Book*—not built upon a stable foundation of believers—would result in a most terrible failure.

Deflation Among Jesus' Followers. At the time of the feeding of the five thousand, which had had a wide-reaching public relations impact on his popularity, Jesus' following had reached its highest number. However, there was a sudden and complete desertion of adherents after his sermon in the synagogue, wherein he reiterated the spiritual realities of the kingdom and deliberately turned back the tide of popular enthusiasm.

Numbers vs. Growth. The first president of URANTIA Brotherhood warned:

“It is entirely possible that we could become victims of a dangerously subtle confusion—the confusing of growth with swelling. The mere swelling of numbers is in no sense synonymous with true growth.

Experience has taught that exposing a person to *The URANTIA Book* is not the equivalent of exposing him to its teachings, and we must never confuse reading the book with accepting its teachings. Even intellectual mastery of the contents of the book would not guarantee salvation. One can know all about God without actually knowing God.

The book's teachings must be spread in such a manner that they open human hearts to a meaningful relationship with God.

Thousands vs. Billions. By not advertising, we might lose the chance to gain *thousands* of believers in our generation. However, by giving in to impatience or by engaging in unwise methods of dissemination—by publicizing the book prematurely—in the long run, the revelation might fail, and the loss through time could number *billions* of people.

GROWTH FREE OF CONTROVERSY

Value of Publicity Negligible. While advertising may seem positive because it will cause increased recognition of the name “URANTIA,” it would cause many people to ask “experts,” e.g., their ministers, priests, or professors to advise them about the book. They might receive an erroneous or superficial assessment. In turn these individuals would multiply the spread of negative information. This process is already in motion, but it would become wide-spread if the book were advertised. ▶

We are currently growing at a rate we can handle. The movement has not failed. The book is doing its own work. Society evolves or a movement develops best when it is not subjected to intense pressure to grow or spread quickly. Under the strain of too rapid expansion, growth would be unpredictable and faulty.

Spiritualistic, Occult, and U.F.O. Groups. The book is well known within the spiritualistic, occult, and U.F.O. networks. To date, a few authors have evaluated *The URANTIA Book* in their books. So far, the writers who assess the book consistently distort the concepts. They target in on the legends that surround the Forum and transmittal of the papers. We could not expect better commentary about the book by these authors if the book achieved grater recognition.

Authority of Revelation Not Persuasive. Today, several major world religions are based upon the teachings of books considered to be divine revelation. No religion has been able to command a world-wide following based solely upon claims concerning the origin and authority of its Holy Book. To confront traditional religions by publicly challenging the accuracy of their sources and the validity of their beliefs, by advertising that ours is a more truthful book, would be to invite confrontation.

Advertising Invites Notoriety. The book is known to fundamentalist groups, several of which have published papers denouncing concepts in *The URANTIA Book*. A public relations campaign for the book would call us to the attention of the very groups that regard us as heretical and believe we pose a threat to their security. It would be seen

Publicity could attract some honest truth-seekers, it is true. But to the majority, it is probable that the book would be regarded as just another new peculiar tome claiming to be a revelation, of which there are literally hundreds in circulation today.

as increased proselytizing. They in turn would intensify their efforts to discredit the book and discourage their members from reading it.

Differences Magnified. The differences between the teachings of *The URANTIA Book* and those of evolutionary religions are often magnified out of proportion by both friends and opponents. Misguided

friends use the differences to challenge the truth of others' religions. Other religionists use the differences to challenge the authenticity of the book. The book reveals the true values of existing religions and teaches that we should upgrade religions by focusing on their truths rather than trying to discredit their errors.

Courage and wisdom are distinct, equally important virtues in disseminating this revelation. Jesus taught his disciples how to transform the world:

"You are not to attack the old ways; you are skillfully to put the leaven of new truth in the midst of the old beliefs. Let the Spirit of Truth do his own work. Let controversy come only when they who despise the truth force it upon you." (1932)*

A confrontation between *The URANTIA Book* and traditional religions would not be a good way to gain believers, as some contend. Spectators to the battle between religionists would not be drawn to the book by their acceptance of truth, as much as by a desire for excitement.

Publicity could attract some honest truth-seekers, it is true. But to the majority, it is probable that the book would be regarded as just another new peculiar tome claiming to be a revelation, of which there are literally hundreds in circulation today. We would seldom hear from these people, but their attitude could be unfavorably influenced against *The URANTIA Book* for years. Negative publicity—ridicule or simply a put-down by a respected public figure—would cause numerous half-hearted beginning readers to desert

in embarrassment. Many potentially fine believers could be lost before they had a chance to learn the truths the book contains.

International Responsibility. The chances of barbaric reactions are remote in most western nations, but this is not so in other parts of the world. It would be an act of planetary citizenship to spread the book so wisely that it will develop quietly in countries where adverse publicity would precipitate inevitable persecution.

UNDERSTANDING THE MEDIA

Nature of the Media. URANTIA Brotherhood has consistently advised readers to avoid bringing the name of *The URANTIA Book* into any activity that could become a media event. The media is fast, powerful, effective, and always hungry for news. It is symptomatic of our immature state that neither the print nor broadcast media are dedicated to emphasizing what is good in society. Good news is usually not as appealing a controversy.

What is Newsworthy? Readers who have had experience with the media tell us that even a short article in a small town newspaper is sometimes copied by several other small newspapers, and if newsworthy, is picked up by the wire services. Three elements could focus interest on the book or organizations by the news media:

1. A comment during an interview by a "celebrity" who reads the book.
2. A story that portrays the URANTIA movement as a cult. This could happen, for example, if a parent thinks a son or daughter has been "brainwashed" into believing the teachings of the book.
3. Various concepts presented in *The URANTIA Book* could be taken out of context and misinterpreted by social scientists and religionists. The press and media thrive upon the emotional reactions of differing groups.

Secondary Publications. Among the sources the press and media may examine prior to contacting the official spokespersons could be our secondary publications—the newsletters that originate from head-quarters and the field; open letters and policy statements that may have had wide distribution; artistic, literary, multi-media, and study aid materials. As the Publications Committee Chairman often reminds: "If we exercise wisdom in what we include in our publications, we will have less concern about how the public will view us."

When is Response Obligatory? Officers and members of URANTIA Brotherhood and local URANTIA Societies are private citizens. No one is under obligation to tell reporters anything about groups of which one is a member. We must not be intimidated into giving a thirty-second analysis of the fifth epochal revelation to just anyone who carries a press card.

Eventually, it will be advisable and necessary to speak out, but that day can be forestalled by decades if we adopt a policy of not randomly giving interviews and news stories. We must, of course, not refuse if it appears that reporters will go to a less reliable source than a designated spokesperson. ▶

Reportorial Methods. It is important to learn and understand how reporters get their stories. First, they do their homework by getting all the technical and statistical facts available. Secondly, large news organizations have a “literature file”—a collection of everything ever published about their subject. Next, reporters contact outside people—“experts” likely to express an opinion about the book or movement. Lastly, they will call us.

The person being interviewed must be conscious of any attempt by a reporter to lead the subject into making derogatory remarks about religions, political systems, or personalities. Reporters print or broadcast what is actually said, and the interviewee frequently says far too much.

Rehearsal for Public Relations. Realizing that reporters arm themselves with facts before approaching their subjects, it would serve us well to begin the rehearsal of various ways of responding wisely to their inquiries.

Spokespersons who can safely and effectively deal with the media must be trained. Unskilled but well-intentioned believers, discussing sensitive areas of the book with skilled reporters, would find themselves hopelessly embroiled, explaining subjects even angels could not explain to unbelievers. At present, very few readers exist who have sufficient knowledge of both the book and the Christian Bible to respond with sensitivity and accuracy. Few challenges could be met with response at all, others answered poorly, leaving the impression that the criticisms were valid.

The question of the origin of the book will undoubtedly be raised by reporters, just as it intrigues many readers. The book addresses certain aspects of the transmittal of the revelation, but it probably will not satisfy the queries of investigative writers. The legends that are currently proliferating among the readers about the origin and early days of the Forum are contradictory and unreliable. It should be borne in mind that repeating stories about those events, which can no longer be verified or corrected by anyone who experienced them first-hand, is perhaps not serving the best interests of the spiritual mission of the revelators.

If, after all possible efforts to avoid controversy fail and we are portrayed with ridicule or bias in the press, we would be well-advised to measure carefully the consequences of any response we might make.

Our Greatest Accomplishment?

A former URANTIA Brotherhood president, during an address to the Triennial Delegate Assembly, made an appraisal of the situation nine years after publication. It is still germane:

“Perhaps what we have prevented from happening is the foremost of our accomplishments, for in spite of placing *The URANTIA Book* into the hands of influential persons, it has received no adverse or undesirable publicity. Therefore, it has not been cheapened by sensationalism. It is almost unbelievable that up to now no fanatics or those with sinister motives have arisen to upset or undermine the great message we have to bring. We need to maintain vigilance against fanatical individuals or groups who might bring us unwanted publicity or attempt to short-circuit the evolution of our long-range plans.”

CONCLUSION

When Will it be Time to Publicize the Book?

The purpose of delaying publicity is not merely to avoid controversy—that would require us to wait forever. Some day in the future the time will come to publicly proclaim the revelation. Let us ask: Under what conditions will it be wise to publicize the book and to risk controversy? It has been suggested that it will be time.....

1. when there are a great number of excellent students who can explain and defend the revelation.
2. when thousands of stable and mature study groups have been established.
3. when thousands of teachers and leaders are trained who can accommodate an increased influx of inquiring readers.
4. when no single local confrontation can threaten the mission of the revelation.
5. when translations have been prepared for all the major language groups.
6. when believers have better prepared the soil of secular institutions and of society in general for the reception of the fuller revelation.
7. when there will be overwhelming agreement, through the consensus of group wisdom, that the time for publicity has arrived.

Spokespersons who can safely and effectively deal with the media must be trained. Unskilled but well-intentioned believers, discussing sensitive areas of the book with skilled reporters, would find themselves hopelessly embroiled, explaining subjects even angels could not explain to unbelievers.

Evolutionary Progress. Here are a few final words of wisdom from *The URANTIA Book*:

But Jesus' reply to Peter ever was: "Be patient, Simon. Make progress. We will be none too ready when the Father calls." [1534:2] Peter and James came to Jesus, saying, "We are ready—let us now go forth to take the kingdom." To which Jesus replied, "May your wisdom equal your zeal and your courage atone for your ignorance." [1579:1]**

*"... (M)y kingdom is not to come with noise and glamour, but rather must it come through the great change which my Father will have wrought in your hearts and in the hearts of those who shall be called to join you in the councils of the kingdom." [1533:3]**

*By... gradually changing man's will and thus affecting human decisions, Michael and his associates are likewise gradually but certainly changing the entire course of human evolution, social and otherwise. [1863:5]**

*It is always difficult to induce evolutionary minds suddenly to accept advanced revealed truth. Man is an evolutionary creature and in the main must get his religion by evolutionary techniques. [1011:17–1012:0]**

Never, in all your ascent to Paradise, will you gain anything by impatiently attempting to circumvent the established and divine plan by short cuts, personal inventions, or other devices for improving on the way of perfection, to perfection, and for eternal perfection. [846:4] ■*

Why are study groups important?

RICK LYON
Study Groups
Committee Chair

While your religion is a matter of personal experience, it is most important that you should be exposed to the knowledge of a vast number of other religious experiences (the diverse interpretations of other and diverse mortals) to the end that you may prevent your religious life from becoming egocentric—circumscribed, selfish, and unsocial. [1130:3]

BELIEVE THAT THIS quote from *The Urantia Book* tells us why study groups are important and more desirable than other forms of religious or spiritual gathering and are certainly more beneficial than individual study alone. Small groups allow people to maintain their personal religious experience while being exposed to the shared experiences of others. That exposure to other experiences is good for our own personal growth. Small groups help to avoid the dogmatism and restrictive environment found in many organized religions today that stifles individual spiritual growth.

Study groups are important for many reasons other than the intellectual study of the book. The primary purpose of study group should be to first learn the teachings of *The Urantia Book* because we cannot live the teachings if we do not know what they are. Study groups can teach us how to live the teachings by first discovering the ideas and concepts contained within the book and then by sharing our life experiences relating to those truths with others in our group. A very important aspect of studying with friends is learning



Chile



Quebec

the practical application of the concepts we discover in *The Urantia Book*, that is, how to really live the teachings in our daily life and how to share these concepts in such a way as to encourage others to discover and live according to God's will. Study groups will also teach us methods to comfortably and effectively communicate the teachings to those around us who have yet to discover the teachings. Have you ever noticed how difficult it can be to introduce "the book" but how easy it is to share the concepts from the book? Study groups give us an opportunity to practice learning, living, and sharing the teachings. Learn the teachings, live the teachings, share the teachings.

As individuals, the importance of *The Urantia Book* study groups can be found in our need to better understand the teachings and to share our spiritual experiences and friendship while receiving encouragement and reinforcement through association and interaction with fellow readers. Participation in a study group of *The Urantia Book* can serve to enhance personal spiritual growth, permit in-depth study of *The Urantia Book* with others, and bring readers together for fellowship and service. Too few of us are fortunate enough



Mexico



to have a spouse who is also a student of the book to share this revelation with. Study groups can give us that personal relationship with others that we often wish for at home. What good is having the greatest of all knowledge if there is nobody to share it with? We find God and grow spiritually not only by means of what the Father teaches us directly, but also through close association with our fellows.

Some feel that they can study the teachings adequately in the privacy of their homes. This viewpoint overlooks the balancing and corrective influence of the group on individual opinions, and the nurturing and spiritually reinforcing effect of group participation. Individuals that have studied alone for many years often feel when they begin studying



with others that they are reading an expanded version of the same book. Studying with others seems to illuminate meanings and concepts that are often missed when studying alone. I discovered *The Urantia Book* in 1978. Many times I personally have said during study group, “You know, I have read this section a hundred times but have never seen this sentence.”

Rodan of Alexandria spoke about the benefits of group association when he said, “*Many noble human impulses die because there is no one to hear their expression. Truly, it is not good for man to be alone.*” [1775:7]

Rodan added that we enrich our souls by pooling our spiritual possessions, avoiding the tendency to fall victim to

distortion of vision, prejudice of viewpoint, and narrowness of judgment, and that fear, envy, and conceit are prevented by intimate association with other minds (1776:1). Jesus said to the apostles, “*Have you not read in the Scripture where it is written: ‘It is not good for man to be alone. No man lives to himself’ ... And did I not even send you out to teach two and two that you might not become lonely and fall into the mischief and miseries of isolation? ... Trust, therefore, and confide in one another.*” [2055:2]. A Mighty Messenger wrote when describing the Supreme, “*Man can discover the Father in his heart, but he will have to search for the Supreme in the hearts of other men.*” [1290:9]

Study groups provide opportunities for the future teachers and leaders of this revelation to develop their skills in a friendly and forgiving atmosphere. One goal of every study group should be to create more study groups. It should be cause for great celebration among the group when a member decides to strike out on his or her own to form another group. Study groups allow us to express our thoughts and ideas about the teachings in a safe and comfortable environment among friends. Study groups strengthen our faith and beliefs by our association with like-minded individuals who are accepting of us. This is a powerful confidence builder for us when we try to inject ideas from the teachings into everyday conversations with others who haven’t discovered this revelation yet.

There is a great feeling when we see the teachings alive in another person. Study groups give us that opportunity. *The Urantia Book* tells us of our membership in a vast cosmic community. Study groups give us a better feeling for our part in that cosmic community by our belonging to a small group of believers that is larger than our self. Individual study many times leads to a sense of isolation or uniqueness that is not good for us or the world we live in. Attending study group recharges our spiritual batteries. It helps us to remember what is important in life.

Individuals that have studied alone for many years often feel when they begin studying with others that they are reading an expanded version of the same book. Studying with others seems to illuminate meanings and concepts that are often missed when studying alone.

Most importantly for each individual is that belonging to and participating in a group studying these teachings will bring each individual closer to God our Father and shorten the time before we literally stand in His presence. This quote from the book relates to marriage, but I believe that it can also apply to study groups.

And thus, if you can build up such trustworthy and effective small units of human association, when these are assembled in the aggregate, the world will behold a great and glorified social structure, the civilization of mortal maturity. Such a race might begin to realize something of your Master’s ideal of “*peace on earth and good will among men.*” [1777:1]

Study groups are an important part of the plan for disseminating the teachings of the fifth epochal revelation around the world. Students of this revelation around the world communicating and sharing experiences together in a worldwide community of study groups will certainly change the world. All that, however, begins with the creation of one group: yours. You want to change the world? Start a study group today. ■



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