

URANTIA BROTHERHOOD:

The Possibilities For Significant Planetary Service

PREFACE

"URANTIA BROTHERHOOD: The Possibilities For Significant Planetary Service" was originally given as an oral presentation at the 1979 URANTIA Brotherhood Summer Workshops. Thereafter, the editors of "The URANTIAN Journal of URANTIA Brotherhood" selected it for publication in the Fall 1979 issue of the Journal, introducing the article by saying:

"The following talk was given in August, 1979. In the opinion of the editors, it is a clear, thoughtful expression of some of the challenges, opportunities, and responsibilities which accompany The URANTIA Book and its mission to our planet."

The article is reproduced here to serve as background for the presentation entitled "The URANTIA Movement: A Perspective," by the same author, which presentation deals with some of the more immediate issues facing the URANTIA Movement.

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Chicago, Illinois
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URANTIA BROTHERHOOD;
The Possibilities for Significant Planetary Service

The URANTIA Book tells us:

"Mechanical inventions and the dissemination of knowledge are modifying civilization; certain economic adjustments and social changes are imperative if cultural disaster is to be avoided. This new and oncoming social order will not settle down complacently for a millennium. The human race must become reconciled to a procession of changes, adjustments, and readjustments. Mankind is on the march toward a new and unrevealed planetary destiny.

"Religion must become a forceful influence for moral stability and spiritual progression functioning dynamically in the midst of these ever-changing conditions and never-ending economic adjustments." (*1086:4,5)

And, in the section dealing with the planetary epoch following Jesus' bestowal mission on earth, we read:

"The only technique for accelerating the natural trend of social evolution is that of applying spiritual pressure from above, thus augmenting moral insight while enhancing the soul capacity of every mortal to understand and love every other mortal. Mutual understanding and fraternal love are transcendent civilizers and mighty factors in the world-wide realization of the brotherhood of man." (*598:2)

If our civilization is not to settle down for one thousand years, if religion is to serve as a stabilizer during these trying times of transition, and if the best way positively to assist this process of epochal adjustment is through the spiritualization of mankind, then surely the opportunities for significant planetary service are enormous.

We stand at the beginning of a new age. As we survey the broad panorama of a limitless horizon of challenges and opportunities for service extending out before us we ask: And what, Father, is the role that you would ordain for our fledgling organization, our very human organization, URANTIA Brotherhood?

Organizational Role

In trying to make an assessment of what kind of organization URANTIA Brotherhood is, or what kind of organization we would like to see URANTIA Brotherhood become, let us consider what The URANTIA Book observes at page 1295:

"As the self matures, it reaches further and further back into the past for experience, while its wisdom forecasts seek to penetrate deeper and deeper into the unknown future. And as the conceiving self extends this reach ever further into both past and future, so does judgment become less and less dependent on the momentary present. In this way does decision-action begin to escape from the fetters of the moving present, while it begins to take on the aspects of past-future significance." (*1295:5)

Let us now look into the immediate past to those events and the philosophy which suggested and guided the formation of URANTIA Brotherhood. Then let us look into the deeper past in preparation for our making a "wisdom forecast" as to the future of URANTIA Brotherhood thus escaping "...the fetters of the moving present..." in order better to gain a broader, surer perspective "...on the aspects of past-future significance." (*1295:5)

In considering the desirability -- even the necessity -- of an organization such as URANTIA Brotherhood, the original leaders saw that while institutionalization, if carried to extremes, could crystallize a religion into mere dead forms -- a skeleton of its once dynamic self -- they also saw that without some organization no religion could survive.

As The URANTIA Book says:

"It is difficult for religion to survive as the private practice of isolated individuals. This has ever been the error of the religious leaders: Seeing the evils of institutionalized religion, they seek to destroy the technique of group functioning." (*1076:4)

Therefore, a plan was adopted to assist in and encourage salutary group functioning. The early leaders wished to follow the lead of Jesus and to create a simple social organization, as Jesus had done with the Apostles. Keeping in mind the ideal that "That organization is best which organizes least and co-ordinates most..." (1) a simple, yet complete, constitution was adopted and URANTIA Brotherhood was founded.

"URANTIA Brotherhood does not [have] a hierarchy of religious authority nor an over-abundance of restrictive creeds, dogmas and rules and regulations. But it does [have] a minimal amount of basic organization with enough ground rules to permit its healthy and orderly functioning." (1)

The minimal organization provided in the Constitution of URANTIA Brotherhood provides a simple and effective plan for group association and co-operation. We have a simple structure within which readers of

(1) Quotation from "Unity, not Uniformity," copyright © 1973, URANTIA Foundation -- used by permission.

The URANTIA Book can work with one another towards the common goal of the wise dissemination of the teachings of The URANTIA Book and the ultimate spiritualization of mankind. Without such a formal organization, albeit a simple and benign one, there would be no structure in which, or method by which, it would be possible for all the diverse types of human beings who become interested in the teachings of The URANTIA Book to function together efficiently. There would be no way in which the foundations could be laid which would eventually lead to the realization of a true, even living organismal, world-wide spiritual brotherhood of mankind.

The broad, guiding principles which informally govern our evolutionary, material structure are set forth in a speech given in the early days of our URANTIA movement. In this speech, William S. Sadler, Jr., first president of URANTIA Brotherhood, in his first President's Triennial Report to the General Council of URANTIA Brotherhood, set forth what has now become the classic exposition of the broad range mission of URANTIA Brotherhood.

"1. God is the only true end - all other things are secondary and subordinate to the realization of sonship or daughtership with God.

2. The URANTIA Book itself is not an end - though it is a most important means to an end. We may minister to our spiritually hungry brothers with or without the aid of The URANTIA Book. But, if the Book ever becomes mandatory in our ministry, then we have truly become sectarian. Our primary objective is the service of God, and the Book is an important means to that great end.

3. Neither is the URANTIA Brotherhood, nor membership in it a true end. The function of the Brotherhood is to the spiritual experiences of its members as the river banks are to a river; it is true that no river can be had without its banks -- but neither should the banks be confused with the flowing river. The Brotherhood is designed to promote The URANTIA Book and the Book is designed to bring God and man closer to each other."

Bill Sadler concludes by saying:

"If we can clearly separate means and ends, if we can always subordinate means to the true end, then we shall continue for a very long time as a real Brotherhood, and we shall avoid becoming merely another church or another sect in the world of the twentieth century -- a world which needs neither a new church nor a new sect."

We can assist in remaining as something unique, something different from a new church or a new sect by viewing ourselves as readers of The URANTIA Book with a broad and open acceptance of other groups and peoples, being careful, however, not to compromise our organizational identity or dilute our mission of bringing new truth to our spiritually impoverished brethren. By referring to ourselves as "readers of The URANTIA Book" instead of as "Urantians," we will more accurately describe ourselves to the general public.

URANTIA Brotherhood is unique but this is not to say that there will not be other organizations whose aims and purposes are consistent with those of URANTIA Brotherhood. To them we should extend the hand of friendship to the extent they wish to work in the Father's vineyard. In this way URANTIA Brotherhood will fulfill its function as planetary co-ordinator and will avoid becoming a separate religion.

URANTIA Brotherhood is not to dominate; it is to co-ordinate.

Now that we have considered the immediate past and those events and the philosophy which suggested and guided the formation of URANTIA Brotherhood, let us look into the deeper past as we ready our "wisdom forecast" as to the future of URANTIA Brotherhood.

Some 200,000 years ago, our Planetary Prince joined forces with Lucifer and Satan in the proclamation of the Lucifer Manifesto and the substitution of license in the place of liberty and self-assertion in the place of one's conscious subordination of one's will to that of our Heavenly Father. We all know the terrible results of the Prince's pre-meditated betrayal of the divine plan.

And we likewise know that some forty thousand years ago -- or some one hundred sixty thousand years after the Lucifer Rebellion -- and while our planet was still cut off and isolated by the planetary quarantine, we received, as promised, the biologic uplifters (Adam and Eve), our Planetary Mother and Father. The URANTIA Book tells us:

"These unique and wonderfully useful beings are the connecting links between the spiritual and physical worlds. ...Unlike the other created Sons of planetary service, the material order of sonship is not, by nature, invisible to material creatures like the inhabitants of Urantia. These Sons of God can be seen, understood, and can, in turn, actually mingle with the creatures of time, could even procreate with them, though this role of biologic upliftment usually falls to the progeny of the Planetary Adams." (*581:4,5)

"In these immortal Material Sons and Daughters we encounter the last and the indispensable link connecting God with Man, bridging the almost infinite gulf between the eternal Creator and the lowest finite personalities of time. Here is a being of high origin who is physical, material, even a sex creature like Urantia mortals, one who can see and comprehend the invisible Planetary Prince and interpret him to the mortal creatures of the realm, for the Material Sons and Daughters are able to see all of the lower orders of spirit beings; they visualize the Planetary Prince and his entire staff, visible and invisible." (*587:3)

And finally, in concluding our look backwards into the far past, we read:

"As soon as the new and consolidated capital of the evolving world has become well established, and just as fast as competent subordinate administrators can be properly trained, subcapitals are founded on remote land bodies and among the different peoples." (*588:3)

Future Forecast

And now that we have reached far back into the deep past, I ask you to participate with me in a "wisdom forecast" into the future, better able to escape the fetters of the transient, moving present, better able to determine the nature of our organization.

So as to give understanding of the meaning and an appreciation of the solemn significance of the promise of our organization, and an understanding of the purposes we might serve, let me make the following observations.

You will recall that Urantia is designated as a decimal or experimental planet. I would suggest that you and I in our very own lifetimes -- even on this very day -- are participating in a grand experiment. In this grand experiment, our planetary supervisors not only propose to bring new epochal revelation to our distraught planet, for the first time in book form, but also propose to re-establish in conjunction with that Book, a connecting link between the spiritual and material worlds, a visible organization -- albeit a very human organization -- dedicated to co-operation with the super mortal planetary government and its many unseen agencies in the realignment of the mortal establishment with its progressive evolutionary destiny, stimulating it to escape from its present potentially suicidal doldrums of spiritual apathy and material directionlessness.

It is our privilege and solemn responsibility wisely to participate in the renewed revelation of Truth -- Truth not only in Book form, but also as is shown in our lives to our brethren the world over.

Drawing upon the inspiration from our URANTIA Book and more importantly from our inner spiritual resources, we can minister to our fellows, and, where appropriate, help our spiritually interested brethren to draw upon the information in The URANTIA Book for direction in dealing with our complex planetary affairs.

URANTIA Brotherhood is now in organizational liaison with the Mighty Seraphim of Progress, and is a functioning last link in the downward thrust of our planet's spiritual administration whose great purpose is to rehabilitate, revitalize, and spiritually surcharge Urantia's mortal establishment. Literally, you are Soldiers of the Circles.

URANTIA Brotherhood has stepped into that vacuum which has existed since the failure of the Adamic regime. As such, we can fulfill our function by taking note of the Adamic practice of establishing sub-administrative centers in the guise of URANTIA Societies throughout the planet, once we have firmly established our own organization.

But first let us establish thousands of study groups. Then, when these groups mature into stable and competent groups, let us install them as URANTIA Societies.

As URANTIA Societies, they may serve under our banner of the Concentric-Circles Symbol as readily identifiable bearers of truth to Mankind. These URANTIA Societies as constituent parts of URANTIA Brotherhood will serve as lighthouses of truth giving light and direction to a world languishing in spiritual darkness and suffering racial and governmental disarray.

Let us follow the broad outlines of the function of the Adamic regime. Let us not disappoint our planetary Father and Mother who suffered the degradation of reduction to human status, but who now, as two of the Four and Twenty Counselors, stand as watchful sentinels anxiously waiting to see how successfully and efficiently our human URANTIA Brotherhood will co-operate with the Planetary Government in compensating for the aborted Adamic Mission to Mankind. URANTIA Brotherhood cannot hope to fulfill all of the responsibilities of the Adamic bestowal, but it can mightily assist in compensating for the loss of the Adamic regime.

But let us take caution in carrying out our spiritual mission. Let us let others know that we do not pretend to be the Spiritual Brotherhood of Mankind, though we hope to participate in the realization of that Spiritual Brotherhood. Furthermore, we can avoid the devilry which comes with considering ourselves a chosen people, remembering that

The URANTIA Book tells us on page 1488 that "There is no such thing as a 'chosen people.'" And, further:

"A new and fuller revelation of the religion of Jesus is destined to conquer an empire of materialistic secularism and to overthrow a world sway of mechanistic naturalism. Urantia is now quivering on the very brink of one of its most amazing and enthralling epochs of social readjustment, moral quickening, and spiritual enlightenment." (*2082:8)

"Religion does need new leaders, spiritual men and women who will dare to depend solely on Jesus and his incomparable teachings."(*2082:10)

"The call to the adventure of building a new and transformed human society by means of the spiritual rebirth of Jesus' brotherhood of the kingdom should thrill all who believe in him as men have not been stirred since the days when they walked about on earth as his companions in the flesh." (*2084:6)

"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)

"Mankind is on the march toward a new and unrevealed planetary destiny." (*1086:4)

URANTIA Brotherhood as a co-ordinator, not as a dominator, and neither as a new church nor as a new sect, can assist our planetary supervisors during these times of transition -- and later -- and can indeed be "... a forceful influence for moral stability and spiritual progression functioning dynamically in the midst of ... ever-changing conditions and never-ending economic adjustments."(*1086:5) By helping to apply spiritual pressure from above, we can augment "... moral insight while enhancing the soul capacity of every mortal to understand and love every other mortal." (*598:2)

While we may have a diversity of approaches in reaching out for the realization of our new and unrevealed planetary destiny, we can through our minimal organizational structure and by keeping our priorities straight maintain a unity of purpose as we co-operatively work for the spiritual upliftment of Mankind.

In serving to carry new truth to our planet, and if this forecast of the nature of our organization is to be justified, if this grand experiment is to be successful on this decimal planet, let us not make the mistake of those of Jesus' time on earth in the flesh who were constantly looking for sudden and miraculous happenings. We should intelligently work for and patiently expect nothing more than normal sure evolutionary progress.

"Evolution may be slow, but it is terribly effective." (*900:5)
Jesus said: "...in an age to come the gospel which I declare to you
will rule this very world." (*1608:1)

The Midwayers echo this by saying, "Be not discouraged; human evolution is still in progress, and the revelation of God to the world, in and through Jesus, shall not fail." (*2097:1)

URANTIA Brotherhood -- The possibilities for significant Planetary Service are enormous. How will we answer the call of Destiny?

Ultimately Father, Thy will be done.

Peace be upon you and may progress be our eternal goal.

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