

<b>Ideas and Suggestions for Study Groups</b>	
The Urantia Book Fellowship	Circa 1990

## **Preface**

Urantia Book study groups are informal, familial associations of readers of The Urantia Book who join together to share and nurture their experience of the fifth epochal revelation through fellowship, service, and study. Although these associations have been traditionally called "study groups," and group study of The Urantia Book is the primary feature, it is not the only one. The sharing of religious experiences and concerns and fellowship are often equally important functions. This booklet principally addresses the study component of study group function.

This booklet offers ideas and suggestions which may enhance your study group experience. The practices described represent a compilation of ways that many, but by no means all, successful groups have reported going about their study group activities. These suggestions are not intended to restrict experimentation or set rules, but are offered as a possible starting point. Successful groups have used techniques quite different from the ones suggested. Your group will evolve methods of study and fellowship which suit your members, and that is the way it is intended to be.

Fifth Epochal Fellowship is the new name of the fraternal association of readers of The Urantia Book which was organized in 1955 to serve the broader reader community. Please feel free to get in touch with us to find the location of study groups in your area, to learn how to obtain study aids which may be of help to you, or in relation to anything which involves the welfare of your study group. You may write us at the address below, call (312) 327-0424, or fax (312) 327-6159.

## **Why are study groups important?**

On a personal basis, the importance of Urantia Book study groups derives from our need to better understand the teachings and to share our spiritual experience, friendship, encouragement, and reinforcement through association with fellow readers. Participation in a Urantia Book study group 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.

### *Advice from Rodan and Jesus*

Since The Urantia Book is so extraordinarily replete, some feel that they can study it adequately in the privacy of their homes, and that group study is superfluous. This viewpoint overlooks the balancing and corrective influence of the group on individual opinions, and the nurturing and spiritually reinforcing effect of group participation. 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.

Rodan of Alexandria spoke at length about the benefits of group association, noting that "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, through association, men enrich their souls by pooling their respective spiritual possessions, avoiding the ever-present tendency to fall victim to distortion of vision, prejudice of viewpoint, and narrowness of judgment; that fear, envy, and conceit are prevented by intimate contact with other minds. Further, Rodan declared, "Personality association and mutual affection is an efficient insurance against evil.... There is positive strength in the knowledge that you live for the welfare of others, and that these others likewise live for your welfare and advancement. Man languishes in isolation." (\*1776:3)

During Jesus' last appearance in Jerusalem, he said to the apostles, "...I wish that you would love and trust one another. Judas is no more with you because his love grew cold, and because he refused to trust you, his loyal brethren. 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). There may also be a Supreme purpose in study group activity. As 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)

## **Building blocks of the kingdom**

In the larger picture, each study group is a building block in expanding the influence of the fifth epochal revelation to our world. The efforts of each study group member are multiplied by association with others, and cooperation among study groups will help us to serve our Master more powerfully in the revelation of God to Urantia. The strength of our individual study groups, and the quality of interaction among their members, will determine the strength, vitality, and extent of our worldwide reader and believer community.

## **Practical suggestions for the study group sponsor**

The following paragraphs may suggest specific ideas for your group to use in fostering stability, development, fellowship, and study. While there is no general recipe for an effective study group, various groups at different times and places have used some of these ideas. The

host or sponsor may initially set the organizational style of the meeting, but this style must evolve to fit the creativity and needs of the participating members.

#### *Leadership and commitment*

Many readers have found that the primary requirement for a successful group is that there be at least one dedicated person who serves as a sponsor and who takes responsibility for planning or hosting the meeting. If you are such a person, you ought not to expect everyone in your group to have an equal level of commitment; but if the group is to survive, at least a few members must be highly dedicated.

To be the sponsor, you do not have to be an expert on The Urantia Book. There is no certification available much less required. All you need is a love for people and a belief in the importance of The Urantia Book and in the values of group study.

#### *Finding interested people*

A discussion of how to find other readers for your group is beyond the scope of this booklet, but one good -start is to say to your friends, "This book is changing my life. Come and study it with me!" Some individuals have used small advertisements in a local newspaper to inquire if there are readers of The Urantia Book interested in group study with other readers.

A study group does not need to be large and can be a fulfilling experience even if small. Jesus said, "...where two or three believers are gathered together, there am I in the midst of them." (\*1763:1) Once you have one or two others, the important thing is not how many, but when. Begin where you are-begin now!

#### *Consistency*

You should try to get at least two additional people to commit to attend virtually every meeting, so that the founding members agree that regular attendance is a top priority. If the less regular members go once or twice and find no one there at the normal meeting time, they will decide that they would prefer to do something else. It is important that your meetings be held at a consistent time so that people may plan their schedules accordingly. The publishing of a reminder notice is useful, particularly if meetings are rotated to different locations. If possible, meetings should be held each week; it is much harder to maintain momentum when meetings occur less often.

#### *Conducive surroundings*

It is very important that meetings be held in a location which is pleasant and accessible. Many study group members have found that holding meetings in someone's home provides greater warmth and camaraderie. Others have found a neutral location to be conducive of serious study and to alleviate hosting responsibilities. In either case there should be a large room available with ample lighting set apart from unrelated household activities. If held in a home, the person hosting the group should develop an understanding with non-participating household members which will allow the group space in which to accomplish its objectives. The group should decide whether smoking is permitted. If smoking is permitted, adequate ventilation is essential.

Unless your group is having a lecture series or watching slides, most groups have found it helpful for seating to be arranged so that everyone can see everyone else. For example, sofas and chairs can be arranged around the sides of the room.

#### *Punctuality and length*

If the primary purpose of your group is study and discussion of The Urantia Book, you may find it helpful to establish some definite practices about the use of the group's time together.

Do not waste time. Members should be encouraged to arrive at the meeting place a little early, so the meeting can begin as scheduled. If possible, it is best to agree that meetings will start within five minutes of the scheduled time. Latecomers should not be given special consideration, and the evening's discussion need not be recapitulated for their benefit. That way they will have an incentive to arrive on time for the next meeting.

Most groups have found that a good meeting length is two hours. If you meet on a weekday evening, it is advisable to pick a starting time which is late enough to enable after-work attendance but early enough to insure a reasonable ending time. The host or sponsor should not feel embarrassed to indicate when everyone should leave, so that no one will inadvertently overstay his or her welcome.

#### *Refreshments*

Serving beverages such as coffee or tea often contributes to a relaxed, congenial atmosphere. Many people also like to serve light refreshments such as fruit, cheese or cookies, during a break or after the meeting, to encourage socializing. If this is the group's custom, it is preferable to rotate the responsibility for bringing refreshments among the members, since most like the opportunity to be of service to other group members.

#### *Group prayer, worship, and song*

In discussing personal prayers of the heart, The Urantia Book tells us that "Jesus was particularly averse to praying in public," and that he "...taught the twelve always to pray in secret; to go off by themselves amidst the quiet surroundings of nature or to go in their rooms and shut the doors when they engaged in prayer." (\*1620:3)

However, in discussing the social repercussions of prayer, the Chief of Midwayers writes, "...prayer need not always be individual. Group or congregational praying is very effective in that it is highly socializing in its repercussions. When a group engages in community prayer for moral enhancement and spiritual uplift, such devotions are reactive upon the individuals composing the group; they are all made better because of participation." (\*998:5)

These two aspects of prayer leave ample room for your group members to seek to understand these practices better and to follow their own preferences. Many groups have found that, to remind them of their spiritual purpose, meetings should be opened and closed with a

short period of silence and/or a prayer for God's guidance. Such a prayer, when phrased in terms which reflect faith and love, can greatly contribute to a group's sense of spiritual unity.

In some religious traditions it is customary for individuals to pray aloud as part of group devotions. If your study group chooses to practice this form of religious expression, it is wise not to allow it to become an imposition on group members who are not so inclined. Some newcomers to your group may be unfamiliar or inexperienced with this practice. Many others will be familiar with it, but will choose not to participate for a variety of reasons.

It is highly unwise to let the practice of group prayer intimidate members who do not care to pray aloud but feel that the group expects it of them. There are many ways to organize group prayer to meet the varying needs of different groups. For example, some groups establish a circle, with each person praying in turn. When all members of such a group share a common appreciation of public prayer, such a setting can provide the foundation for a powerful, shared spiritual experience. There are, however, many other possibilities.

A different method of group prayer is for the moderator to pray first, and to indicate that anyone else who wishes to say something may do so. After a period of silence, the moderator might conclude by reading a written prayer familiar to everyone, such as the believer's prayer from page 1620 of *The Urantia Book*. In conducting group prayer in your group, it is important to encourage experimentation, to respond to individual concerns and needs, and to be tolerant of the many varieties of personal religious expression.

If some of the people in your group are musically inclined, the inclusion of spiritual songs in the program can be especially satisfying.

Some study groups thrive on group worship but others do not. Your group should address the issue forthrightly and arrive at a consensus. In examining the concept of group worship expressed in *The Urantia Book*, your group may wish to reflect on Jesus' establishment of the remembrance supper as the sole sacrament of divine communion for his followers, on the associated fact of the divine presence, and on *The Urantia Book's* explanation of the relationship between communion and worship. "...communion ... is the prelude to true worship-the practice of the presence of God which eventuates in the emergence of the brotherhood of man." (\*1133:1)

#### *The moderator*

Almost all long-lived groups arrange for the moderator's duties to be rotated among the members. This brings everyone into the process as an actual or potential leader; in addition, it increases the diversity and enjoyment of group study. Groups may either tire of the same person over and over, or they may become overly dependent. Within the basic guidelines which the group adopts, the moderator should have reasonable latitude in his or her choice of subject and approach, provided that the meeting centers on material contained in or relevant to *The Urantia Book*.

#### *Group participation*

Anyone can read *The Urantia Book* alone; the task of the study group moderator is to encourage as many members as possible to contribute their thoughts, so that all members grow by verbalizing their own views and hearing those of others.

The normal role of the moderator is as a leader, not a teacher. If at all possible, it is best to avoid direct criticism of the views of others. Explicit criticism, for example, can cause a member to remain silent for an extended period, or even to leave the group. If the group is fairly large (say, more than six participants), or if it consists of people who do not know each other very well, it is probably better for the moderator to concentrate on facilitating the discussion. In these cases, strive to limit your personal comments.

The moderator should encourage all members to be straightforward in their comments and to speak from the heart as well as from the mind. Members should be encouraged to listen carefully to comments by others. The ideal moderator encourages everyone to participate but never forces anyone to speak, and always focuses the discussion on the agreed topic while allowing the group the freedom to explore relevant concepts in depth. The principles of group interaction and leadership described in the hundreds of books on the subject generally apply to *Urantia Book* study groups. The book itself has much to say on leadership as well.

A good technique to involve reticent or quiet members is to show an obvious desire to hear what they have to say. Encourage them to speak by asking a simple question or by inviting a statement of opinion.

#### *Welcoming new readers*

Any study group can encourage the new reader to learn about *The Urantia Book* in a relaxed and friendly setting, especially a group which places a premium on open-mindedness, commitment, fellowship and a willingness to share personal religious experience with others.

Some study group members unintentionally make visitors self-conscious by being overly solicitous. If attentive, your group members will learn when to change the program for the sake of a new reader, when to stop and explain a new term, and when to encourage a newer reader to simply listen and work to understand. Most new readers do not want to disrupt your group or to be the center of attention. Generally, the new reader just wants to observe. Warmth and friendliness are the best formula.

It is a good idea to keep extra copies of *The Urantia Book* on hand so that visitors will have one to use during the meeting. Study groups should try to make new people feel comfortable. In certain situations, name tags may be helpful.

#### *Study aids and lesson planning*

Most groups have developed two basic ways to study *The Urantia Book*: paper-by-paper or topically. One easy way to plan a topical study is to use the Concordex, the Key Word Index, or the table of contents of the book, each of which gives subject references. By picking a topic (e.g., faith, prayer, liberty, Adam and Eve, home life) and researching the citations listed, you can select those you wish to use. To plan an average lesson or discussion can be a productive and stimulating experience and is one which should be shared among group members.

Beginning groups may find it easier to select a paper or group of papers and simply read through them. The moderator should carefully review the material ahead of time and devise questions which will encourage reflective thinking on the points selected for discussion. Encouragement of alternate viewpoints is essential, for there are no official interpretations of The Urantia Book, the text speaks for itself, and understanding of the teachings can be broadened by many unique viewpoints.

The Special Projects Committee of Fifth Epochal Fellowship is developing a Resource Guide of study aids which you may wish to obtain by contacting our office.

### *Getting started*

Having located a few existing readers or having introduced the book to several people, you could start a new group by simply inviting them to a meeting on a convenient evening.

After a prayer for guidance (if your group so chooses), you might begin with a short introduction of the subject, read the introductory portion of the paper you have chosen to study, and then ask someone to read the first section. Some groups encourage interruptions for questions or comments at any point; others prefer that questions be held until the end of each section. In either case, most readers have found it important to discuss the material to uncover the deeper dimensions of meaning offered by differing viewpoints. When no one has further questions or comments, you should ask another person to read the next section, and so on. Toward the end of the meeting, many groups choose to set aside a period of time for uplifting spiritual observations of a general nature. You may also wish to join together in singing a song and/or close with a group prayer.

### *The right question*

After each section has been read aloud, the moderator can stimulate discussion by asking a thought-provoking question—something a little more specific than "What do you think about Section 1?" If possible, the moderator should prepare a list of questions ahead of time. Questions uncover facts, explore relationships of facts to truths, and enhance our understanding of the impact of these truths on our lives. A factual question might be, "How many Ancients of Days are there?" An analytical question might be, "My are the Ancients of Days both administrators and judges--doesn't that violate the principle of the separation of powers into executive, legislative, and judicial realms?"

The moderator should encourage new readers to contribute their thoughts. Their insights can be just as interesting and valuable as those of people who have been reading The Urantia Book for years. Group discussion and interaction can often help overcome problems in comprehending selections from The Urantia Book. Even in beginning groups, shared input can lead to questions which in turn stimulate deeper study and understanding.

Because many Urantia Book topics seem fundamentally intellectual, at times the moderator may wish to direct the discussion along lines which encourage the sharing of personal spiritual experience, which is a major benefit of attending a study group. Such questions reveal the effects of truth in our personal lives, and thus deal in feelings as well as facts.

There are specific techniques which can be used to promote discussion:

- o Expansion: ask someone to elaborate on or more fully explain a previous comment.
- o Clarification: ask for a comment to be restated in a different way.
- o Justification: ask someone to identify material in The Urantia Book which seems to support his or her views.
- o Broadened Understanding: ask someone else to comment on the previous remark.

But the moderator should not be limited to asking questions; sometimes it is more appropriate to summarize the discussion and recognize the contributions of others.

### *Moving along*

Anyone can read The Urantia Book at home in private; what study group meetings offer is interesting give and-take discussion. Often the discussion is focused and purposeful, rather than aimless or meandering. It is generally wise to bring discussion to a close after a particular topic has been addressed for more than ten or twelve minutes. This keeps the discussion from digressing too far.

Reading a section out loud sets the tone and mood of the discussion that follows; experience indicates that it is unwise to seek to "save time" by omitting that step. It is likewise inadvisable to attempt to "do" a specific number of sections per meeting. It is better to have a satisfying discussion of a small number of sections than to rush through many more. There seems to be real value in deeper, reflective thinking and discussion of particularly challenging statements.

### *Getting sidetracked*

Urantia Book study groups generally do not study anything except The Urantia Book. Short selections of related reference material sometimes contributes to a discussion, but those who wish to study some other book intensively should form their own separate group. Most groups have found that study seems most productive if each person does not feel it necessary to defend a particular viewpoint but simply offers it to the group for consideration.

If an answer or comment is obviously incorrect, a good moderator's technique is to ask the speaker how the passage read supports the view presented. (This is better and more tactful than a direct refutation.) If a question is raised which is not relevant to the subject at hand, the moderator could say that it does not fit in at that point and offer to discuss it after the end of the meeting with anyone who may be interested.

### *Disruptions*

Occasionally a disruptive person may try to dominate a meeting by turning the discussion toward a pet cause, or by parading knowledge of The Urantia Book. The moderator can overcome this problem by asking if someone who has not yet spoken wishes to make any comments. The moderator might also offer to meet with the person at another time to provide the time for discussion of a pet cause. If all else fails, the host or sponsor has the responsibility to everyone else present to take the disruptive person aside privately, and tactfully explain that sharing of ideas and study will be most productive if all participants are considerate of the rest of the members. It is important that the moderator be patient, yes, and even long-suffering; but the host or sponsor must maintain reasonable order for the group's sake, or the disruptive person will drive many others away.

#### *Controversy and dissension*

The meeting should cultivate a spirit of tolerance and respect for differing opinions. This can be challenging when difficult or controversial subjects are discussed. The objective study of these kinds of subjects is often enhanced if readers take time privately to broadly study the subject matter before engaging in group discussion, especially on subjects highly controversial in contemporary society. It is usually easier to avoid such topics in newly formed study groups and with groups of new readers. If dissension does arise, the moderator can remind everyone that we are all trying to serve the same creator and that none of us has a monopoly on truth, thus giving value and perspective to differences of opinion which may arise. As a general practice, the moderator should encourage the group to look for commonalities and themes in what has been read, but not try to force a consensus in interpretation ....When did I teach you that you should all see alike?" (\*1591:6)

#### *Spiritual unity*

The search for God is what is important; we need not always agree on the details of how we go about it. Most feel that to be consistent with the teachings, Urantia Book study groups should value diversity of opinion. We find spiritual unity in our mutual love of God, not in intellectual uniformity. Nothing is more important than for us to be as one, spiritually. "...Love one another even as I have loved you. And by this will all men know that you are my disciples if you thus love one another." (\*1944:4)

#### *Maintaining attendance*

To maintain good attendance and keep morale high, it is often useful to involve everyone in meaningful group activities. Some active study groups maintain interest by planning diverse activities such as inviting outside speakers, hosting joint meetings with other study groups, preparing presentations for retreats or conferences, forming a group choir, celebrating Jesus' birthday on August 21, holding social events, and engaging in service as a group with such projects as library placement. As an additional benefit of these special activities, the morale and commitment of marginal attendees can generally be improved if mutual encouragement and value is given to the performance of useful tasks on a voluntary basis.

It is important to insure that each active member has a meaningful voice in the direction of the group's activities. The autocrat will eventually be left alone. When regular members miss a meeting, someone might be assigned to call them and let them know they were missed. Group members seem naturally interested in calling or visiting other members who are sick or bereaved.

#### *Service projects*

Service by a study group's members can be a great aid to individual and group growth. Service projects provide a special opportunity to recruit and to involve new members to replace those who will otherwise be lost to normal attrition.

All study groups, new and old, can benefit by paying attention to service ministry. Inward-directed groups tend to wither, while outward-directed groups seem to flourish. One appealing service ministry for Urantia Book study groups is to share The Urantia Book with others so that they can benefit from the same liberating revelation of our Father which we have ourselves enjoyed. Another is to support the fellowship experience of new readers and readers in need.

Membership growth comes from loving service contact, not wishful thinking. If a study group has few attendees, it is possible that its members have not been active in reaching out and inviting new people to attend. Not everyone who is invited will come, of course, but unless an invitation is extended, no one will ever know.

#### *Name and financial structure*

In the long run, your study group may want to choose a name. In your members' minds, that name will tend to give the group an identity which is independent of the founder or sponsor. Besides, "John & Jane" may move away, or the "Tuesday Night Group" may decide to begin meeting on Wednesday. If you wish, you can name your group after the town you meet in, or select some word or phrase from The Urantia Book. Although the word "URANTIA" and the Concentric Circles Symbol are registered trademarks owned by URANTIA Foundation, and cannot therefore be used by a group which engages in commercial activities protected by the registrations, these symbols can be used freely by individuals to identify their religious experiences and commitments. Further, the name of the book, The Urantia Book, cannot be registered; thus, your group may choose a name which uses it as an identifier of your group's activities, such as "The Urantia Book Study Group of ..." Also, it is important to all of us that the copyright for The Urantia Book be respected and it is important that all use of quotations from The Urantia Book in written materials conform with appropriate fair use guidelines. Fifth Epochal Fellowship's attorneys have prepared a summary of fair use and it may be obtained by writing our office.

As a study group, you may decide that there is no need for your group to raise any money except for special activities, the defraying of refreshment costs or meeting location rental fees, or the purchase of gift or loan copies of The Urantia Book. However, it is important that the group decide how it will pay appropriate ongoing or special expenses so that the burden does not unfairly fall on a few people. The discipline of deciding how to raise and spend group money is an excellent device to encourage the interest and involvement of study group members; however, it will also reduce the fraction of total time spent in actual study, which is the primary purpose of group effort.

If you do plan to maintain a bank account, and need to discuss business activities which would detract from study and fellowship, most groups have found it beneficial to refrain from the discussion of your study group's business affairs during regularly scheduled study meetings. It is much better to set aside a special time for business matters, and to use discretion in bringing up financial matters in a

beginning group. Financial aspects are worthwhile but are not vital, and it is imperative that these matters remain in perspective. Do not let them interfere with your main purpose of fellowship, service, and study of The Urantia Book.

### **The area coordinator program**

Early in 1989, Fifth Epochal Fellowship inaugurated a corps of Area Coordinators to serve the needs of study groups at the local level. This corps, now numbering over 100 readers in many countries where The Urantia Book is studied regularly, is appointed by the Executive Committee of Fifth Epochal Fellowship and has no other task but to help put readers into contact with other readers for the purpose of the study of the teachings of The Urantia Book. If you are interested in the work of these tireless servers, would like to make contact with readers located near you, or would like to be considered for such service yourself, simply write or call our office for information.

### **The Study Group Directory**

From time to time, Fifth Epochal Fellowship publishes a Study Group Directory. Your study group is invited to send in your sponsors' names, the dates and times of your meetings, and someone's telephone number. In this way, out-of-town visitors can get in touch with you if they wish to attend one of your meetings. Addresses are not given in the Directory in order to facilitate any screening you might want to undertake.

### **The Study Group Herald (\*no longer in publication)**

The Study Group Herald, a new magazine being developed by Fifth Epochal Fellowship, will make its appearance in the fall of 1990. Its design and purpose is to foster communication and growth within the study group movement, as well as to reflect joy in the revelation, realism of the human struggle, and the unity of goals as they develop in our fraternal association.

This new magazine will feature news of the Urantia movement; the doings of readers; articles on how to hold effective study groups; topical study aids; a section devoted to the interests of young people; sharing of spiritual experiences; articles shedding light on the revelation itself; outreach ideas; classified ads; a community bulletin board; calendars of events; and study group and Area Coordinator listings.

Study Group Herald will be a twenty-four page semiannual magazine. It will be mailed to study group members and individual Urantia Book readers worldwide.

Area Coordinators will develop most of the Study Group Herald. They visit and nurture regional study groups and will use the publication as a tool to network information, ideas, and inspiration arising from the grass roots of the study group movement.

Representatives from the Publications, Education, and Domestic Extension Committees have been named to the governing board of this new magazine. They have appointed Martin Greenhut of Great Barrington, Massachusetts as managing editor. He is a member of URANTIA Society of Central Connecticut, Editor of USCC Newsletter, and Area Coordinator for Western Massachusetts.

Contributions and participation from writers, artists, cartoonists, photographers, humorists, book reviewers, and proofreaders are welcomed. If you can serve in any of these functional capacities, please send details of what you would like to do.

The ideas and suggestions in this issue of the journal were gleaned from the experiences of study group members from around the world over many years.

### **A voluntary statement of purpose**

An old proverb states that if you do not know where you are going, chances are you will not get there. Thus your group may eventually wish to work out a statement of purpose. For example, you could begin with the following and make any changes you consider appropriate:

We, members of Urantia Book study groups, dedicate ourselves:

- o To the worship of God our Father,
- o To the service of all mankind, and
- o To the welfare of our spiritual brotherhood.

We thank God for the gift of The Urantia Book, the inspiration of our common activities, and we accept our responsibility to help share this divine revelation and its teachings with all men and women.

Our only requirements for membership are an interest in The Urantia Book and a sincere desire to know and serve God. We are one in spirit but diverse in outlook and opinion, recognizing each other's right to seek God's will in his or her own way.

As individuals our members may and do belong to political economic, civic or religious groups of their own choosing, but as a group we choose not to become involved in these sorts of organizations, believing that our group energies are better directed toward our spiritual mission.

Our leaders are trusted servants; they do not rule. God himself is our only true end. Though our personality relationships with our fellows are also ends in themselves, the study of The Urantia Book and our other group functions are regarded as worthy and useful tools to achieve those ends. We recognize but one spiritual authority-the loving and sovereign God of all creation.

Above all, we aspire to live lives of faith and dedicated service in the spirit of our Master, Jesus of Nazareth, and to continue on our Father's path of eternal spiritual growth toward perfection.

"With God the Father, sonship is the great relationship. With God the Supreme, achievement is the prerequisite to status-one must do something as well as be something." (1260:1)