

9-1-74

File UB School ✓
X filed to Gen'l Conference

November 4, 1974

Dr. Meredith Sprunger
4109 Plaza Drive
Fort Wayne, Indiana 46806

Dear Meredith:

You have been most generous and patient in giving me this much time to respond to your communications regarding the Summer Study Session and the URANTIA Brotherhood School.

Enclosed are a number of ideas I have been gathering for each, and I look forward to discussing them with you and the Committee on Education when the time comes. I think it would also be good to test our tentative ideas on the URANTIA Societies and Field Representatives at some point during their evolution.

Whatever emerges from our planning, the resulting approach should be reflective of our highest comprehension of the URANTIA teachings.

I have been impressed and reassured by the wisdom and the vigor with which you have been approaching your new responsibilities as Chairman of the Committee on Education. You are just what the Brotherhood needs in that position.

Warmest regards.

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"U. B. School"

Paul Snider, President
URANTIA Brotherhood

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URANTIA BROTHERHOOD SCHOOL

The School will always be one of the major institutions for carrying out the mission of URANTIA Brotherhood, and as such must be conceived with regard to its long-term evolution. Because of its institutional character, decisions, once made, will be resistant to substantial modification. And for this reason, I believe it is wise to proceed in the way you have outlined--to formulate the new school in terms of our mission rather than in terms of our traditions.

Name of the School

If we are ever going to change the name of the school, now is the time to do it. One of the difficulties with its present name is that it does not lend itself to attractive abbreviation. I foresee that as the school grows larger and more prominent in the URANTIA movement, there will be more and more of a tendency to refer to it as "URANTIA U." or something equally short. The question I raise is whether we should recognize this probable tendency and consider now whether to rename the institution URANTIA UNIVERSITY. My own thinking is that we should.

Philosophy and Purpose

The fundamental philosophical premise on which we build the school is that all of our human efforts are to be viewed as a partnership with God, that we are not working alone, but rather giving human aid to the Thought Adjuster in his work within the mind of each student.

Conceived in this way, the school should do more than help build an intellectual mastery of the URANTIA teachings; it should positively enhance the growth of character as well.

The focus of the school should be directed entirely upon the individual rather than upon the group.

These basic philosophical positions augment the statements under the same heading (A and B) in your letter of 9/26/74. Taken together, these ideas will make the school unique among the institutions of the world.

Policy and Strategy Considerations

Policy and strategy decisions which we make now must recognize that the school will eventually be worldwide in scope. In designing the school, we must take care that it does not present the appearance of a "U.S.A." organization and that it is not too much associated with Christian ecclesiastical practices. Everything we do must be viewed from the perspective of a world brotherhood.

Rather than "Certified Leader" and "Ordained Teacher" as now described in the Constitution, I think we should call our graduates simply "Teacher." It is hard to believe that anyone who truly mastered these teachings, both in an intellectual and spiritual sense, would ever describe himself, or allow himself to be described, as "Certified" or "Ordained." And in the same way, it is easy to understand how the use of these titles could have a negative effect on some real truth-seekers.

A second basic policy/strategy consideration is that the school should be results oriented, not method oriented. This will allow a maximum amount of individual variation in curriculum approaches.

A third consideration is that the school should be established in such a way that it can serve its students even when they are physically isolated from teachers or resource people. Eventually, the school will have both centralized and decentralized material facilities to aid the educational process. And I think that eventually there will be a central "campus" or main school which is the focal point of a worldwide teaching process. But until we reach that stage, and even afterward, we should proceed within the constraints of our practical limits and adapt our program to our people and resources. URANTIA Societies should be enlisted at the outset, and every URANTIA Society may wish to establish a study center under the general direction of the Committee on Education. Where feasible, such study centers may also be established elsewhere if the situations seem right. In addition, resource people and teachers (or potential teachers) should be identified throughout the Brotherhood who can serve as counselors, guides, and teachers to other individuals in their geographical areas. A group of correspondents can be selected to serve much the same function to those who are far removed from all other individual teachers or study centers.

Administration

The Constitution places the administration of the school in the Committee on Education, and thus I believe that you should become head of the new school with whatever title is appropriate. As soon as it is practical, we should publish a brochure describing the new school, its basic philosophy and policies, and so forth. I believe that it would also be appropriate for you to prepare a table of organization and with Executive Committee approval appoint Urantians to the various positions necessary to carry out the mission of the school. At least for the foreseeable future, the school, like the rest of the Brotherhood, should remain entirely on a volunteer basis. Everyone who is appointed to any position within the structure of the school should be a member of the Brotherhood.

However, because of the decentralized structure we are contemplating, we should place emphasis on coordination and communication. Travel and telephone expenses will have to be budgeted at a level which will enable this to be done. These planned expenses will allow you to make personal visits to help Societies and/or others to establish study centers, and will also enable us to fly outstanding teachers to various study centers to lead seminars or to teach students enrolled in the school.

Once our basic approach to the school has been established, a plan should be drafted which shows the orderly progression of steps necessary to bring the school up to operational capability, and a tentative timetable for the achievement of the various steps.

I believe that special stationery should be printed for your use in directing the affairs of the school.

Teaching Methodology and Curriculum

The teaching methodology you outlined in your letter of 9/26/74 is an excellent approach. I would only add to the concept of directed individual study that all students are expected to teach others what they have learned before progressing. This means that our teaching staff will come largely from our students, and the school should be designed this way.

Our teaching methods should reflect our understanding that students will enter the school with different levels of readiness for independent study. Some will prefer to study within a formal, structured program; and others will respond best to a highly individualized approach emphasizing individual initiative. Thus, we should establish both structured and unstructured parallel approaches to the attainment of the award of Teacher. Credit hours and interim statements of progress would be meaningful only in a structured program, but would not serve, in themselves, as measures of entitlement to the award of Teacher. Rather, the attainment of Teacher status could only be achieved by passing an oral examination

which would be the same for both the structured and the unstructured programs.

Students would be permitted to change from one program to the other if they wish. The important consideration in awarding the status of Teacher would be the result achieved. There would be no timetable requirement, either as minimum or maximum periods of time, within which the result would have to be achieved.

Oral examinations and other methods should be designed to enable reasonable judgments to be made in regard to whether a candidate for Teacher status has demonstrated. . .

- o An intellectual understanding of The URANTIA Book.
- o An understanding of the nature and mission of URANTIA Brotherhood and URANTIA Foundation.
- o Ability to teach using Urantian teaching methods.
- o A willingness to live the URANTIA teachings in daily life.

The curriculum (or basic educational strategy) should be designed to help each student achieve these results. As such, the curriculum will have to be broadly conceived to reflect not only the growth of mind, but the growth of ability and the growth of the soul as well.

As much as possible, the concept of apprenticeship should be built into the curriculum approach--that is, teachers should be encouraged to spend extended periods of time with their students rather than to confine their relationship to seminars,

lectures, counseling or tutoring sessions, or other interactions. There are many practical reasons which will limit the application of this idea, but where it can be done well, it should be encouraged, for example, where Urantians from overseas desire to come here to study with a teacher or group somewhere in this country. Urantians who are teachers can be encouraged to invite these overseas students into their homes for the length of their stay or for some reasonable time.

While the school is functioning on a decentralized basis through the year, every Summer all students who can make it should be brought to Chicago (or some other central place) for Intensive Study Sessions which would consist of workshops, lectures, seminars, discussions, meetings, and other kinds of programmed activities designed to review, intensify, enhance, or preview what has been done and what comes next. This activity should be scheduled to conclude the afternoon before the Summer Study Session begins.

Entrance Requirements

There should be no academic requirement stated as a prerequisite to acceptance by the school, and those who are accepted as students may or may not be members of URANTIA Brotherhood. But I think the same kind of judgment we apply in evaluating people for membership in the Brotherhood should be applied to screening those who wish to become students-- that is, to be accepted, a potential student should have read

The URANTIA Book in its entirety, should believe it, should be willing to support the Constitution of URANTIA Brotherhood, and meet other reasonable requirements. A Screening Committee should be appointed to review or coordinate the activities leading to acceptance by the school of individual student applications. Someone should also be appointed to act as Registrar and to keep all records associated with the school, its activities, and its students.

Fees

Our basic policy should be to establish only the most nominal fees. I believe the fee should be simply \$10.00 per year for each student on active status. Scholarships can be given to those who cannot meet the fee requirements, especially those students from depressed areas overseas. To keep this part of the job administratively simple, fees should be collected only once a year from everybody on active status, notwithstanding when they enter the program.

Levels of Attainment and Certification

A committee should be appointed to begin the preparation of a master list of questions which will constitute the basis of the oral examination of every student who applies for Teacher status. We should probably establish several intermediate stages of achievement as well, which would also be based on oral examinations and other evaluation measures, and which would be progressively more difficult.

Because there are some Urantians who can be expected rapidly to attain Teacher status, we should be thinking about a simple ceremony to mark these occasions.

Certification Committee

Subject to approval by the Executive Committee, the Committee on Education should appoint a Certification Committee whose job it will be to examine and evaluate candidates for Teacher status. The first function of this committee, however, will be to develop the master list of questions for the oral examinations. This committee should be comprised of:

- o The president of URANTIA Brotherhood.
- o The president of URANTIA Foundation.
- o The chairman of the Committee on Education
- o Four additional people to be appointed for indefinite terms by the chairman of the Education Committee

The curriculum for the original URANTIA Brotherhood School can be used as a part of the substance of the oral examination.

It will not be easy to define among ourselves what constitutes an acceptable level of achievement for Teacher status, but with seven people on the committee, we can expect reasonably good judgment to prevail in these decisions.

Resource People

We can begin to prepare a list of people throughout the URANTIA Brotherhood who are ready, or close to being ready, for certification as Teachers. All of those who attained equivalent status in the original school should be given

priority consideration as Teachers in the new school. But we should not feel hurried as we begin this task. Let us always build upon steady foundations.

Study Aids

The Publications Committee could be given the job of finding and developing study aids for the school, in cooperation with the Education Committee and the Foundation. The textbooks which were developed by Dr. Sadler and Alvin Kulieke can play a vital role as study aids, as they did in the original school. And I believe that we should plan for the development of additional study aids which deal not only with The URANTIA Book itself, but also with various religions of the world, emphasizing the truth content of the evolutionary religions, and their relationship to the URANTIA teachings. There is much work to do here. Perhaps we can think about asking URANTIA Teachers to develop the new aids.

Relationship With URANTIA Societies

As a basic policy, Societies will be asked to take an active role in the development of school activities in their areas, to establish study centers, to make available study aids and other resource materials, to prepare seminars and other aids to the educational process, and in other ways to be closely involved with the ongoing process of education within the URANTIA movement.