
The
FELLOWSHIP

for readers of The Urantia Book

October 7, 1991

Dear Members and Friends,

The Finance Committee is currently preparing next year's Fellowship budget, and once again we need your help in our joint task of disseminating the Fifth Epochal Revelation to the world.

I recently reviewed fund-raising letters sent out by past Finance Committees over the years. (The most creative was the one with the tea bag enclosure, which many of you will remember.) A variety of approaches have been used, such as matching contributions, networking through Societies and study groups, telethons, and letters like this one, but oddly, or perhaps significantly, the particular fund-raising strategy never seemed to have much effect on the outcome.

For me the mystery is that, regardless of the approach, it has always been a struggle to raise the money necessary to carry out our work. There has never been a lack of dedicated volunteer work, and I don't doubt that most of you reading this letter feel it is vitally important that the Urantia Revelation succeed in its world-wide mission. The paradox is that we have never been able to translate those noble feelings into sustained broad-based financial support.

Our organization has always been overly dependent on the generosity of a handful of individuals to meet our budget. While we are more than grateful to these larger donors for their help, it would be far healthier to have a much broader donor base.

Here's the shape of the problem: In 1990, an average year from the donation standpoint, we received \$190,828 from our 1,244 members, or \$153 per member. However, a mere 12 individuals gave \$162,076 of that amount. Excluding them, donations averaged only \$23 per member.

To place those numbers in contrast with the experience of some other groups, one Christian denomination I read about recently is estimated to receive \$4.3 billion annually from its worldwide membership of 7.7 million, or \$558 per member. That figure is 365% higher than ours overall, and almost 25 times as high as ours when our top twelve donors are excluded!

Does that mean that we care less about the success of our movement than this other group does about theirs? I hope not; I would rather assume that the organization has failed to vividly communicate a compelling vision of the work before us, and the financial requirements necessary to carry it out. After all,

"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."
(2084/36)

The work of the Fellowship in fostering the Fifth Epochal Revelation is a work which simply must be done, and deserves to be done excellently. The Fellowship is not the only organization involved in this work, but it remains the only worldwide membership organization so devoted. Our leadership is freely elected, and great effort is made to involve every single person willing to join in. We serve and coordinate the efforts of eighteen autonomous Societies and over two hundred independent study groups, as well as thousands of relatively isolated readers, who are offered help and encouragement by the central office and over a hundred volunteer Area Coordinators. The Fellowship sponsors at least one conference for readers each year, with a General Conference every third year (be sure not to miss St. Hyacinthe/Montreal in 1993!), and provides facilitating services to dozens of regional conferences annually. We publish three periodicals, the Fellowship Bulletin, the Journal of the Fellowship, and the Study Group Herald, in addition to regular update letters. Perhaps most importantly, we provide a central office in Chicago which is open during all regular business hours, which any member or reader can call for information, encouragement, or any other purpose.

Our generation has been given a chance to do vital work in furthering the cause of God's kingdom through exposure to his latest revelation of truth, and this work will certainly be carried out sooner or later. If we fail to use our opportunity to do it, others most assuredly will do it later. This work is a contribution to the Supreme, precisely analogous to the Book's description of the work of survival:

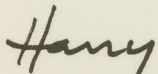
The great challenge that has been given to mortal man is this: Will you decide to personalize the experientible value meanings of the cosmos into your own evolving selfhood? or by rejecting survival, will you allow these secrets of Supremacy to lie dormant, awaiting the action of another creature at some other time who will in *his* way attempt a creature contribution to the evolution of the finite God? But that will be his contribution to the Supreme, not yours. (1284/41)

To meet our financial needs will not be difficult if the burden is shared. Will you pledge to give \$3.00 a week -- \$150.00 per year? Added to those others who are able to give more, that's all it will take. It's a light burden considering the importance of the work. A pledge card is enclosed. Please give generously according to your ability.

Please feel free to call me (405/843-4900) if you wish to discuss any of this further. Audited financial statements are available upon request.

I feel sure that those of you reading this letter want to see our Fellowship fulfill its high mission. I hope that you will consider it a privilege to financially support this vital work, to help lift the rocks of a spiritual Stonehenge which will point mankind toward the stars long after we are gone.

Thanks,



Harry McMullan, Chairman,
Finance Committee