

URANTIA BROTHERHOOD

Memorandum

TO: Members of the General Council

DATE: August 29, 1989

FROM: David Elders

SUBJ: Essential Considerations

CC: Past Brotherhood Presidents, Resigned Trustees, Current Trustees, Trustee Emeritus

In preparation for our upcoming September meeting, I hope that what is expressed here will stimulate your thinking about the context in which our deliberations take place. From my point of view, what we are engaged in is nothing more or less than the personal and group decision-making necessary to free our organization from an historic view of our work based upon fear to enable us to actualize a new vision of our work based simply on faith.

A STORY

One Sunday not so long ago, there was a family of six preparing to go together to church. Mom and Dad were both dressed in their Sunday finest clothes and were encouraging their children, two boys and two girls, to finish breakfast and get dressed so they could arrive on time. All was happy and proceeding normally until one of the boys complained that he could not find one of his shoes and would not go to church without it. Every member of the family pitched in to see if the missing shoe could be found. Then a strange thing happened. As they crawled about looking for the shoe, each family member, in his or her own way, began to express discomfort. Mom suggested that the boy had lost the shoe on purpose to avoid going to church. One of the sisters in the process of looking discovered one of her best sweaters in the other sister's closet, and an argument ensued. The other boy in the family congratulated his brother on his fine work in making it almost impossible to go to church; he really only wanted to play ball with his friends anyway. The sister who had adopted the sweater suggested loudly enough for all to hear that the shoe was lost because her brother was afraid to face the Sunday School teacher who the week prior had had to discipline the boy for acting badly. And so it went, looking ever bleaker for what had begun as a wonderful family experience; and when Mom stated that she would not go at all if she had to walk into the church late, it looked like the congregation would have to do without them. Finally, Dad stated quietly but forcefully that they were all to get into the car and they would go to church. The boy could either come along or stay home. The choice was his.

FACT VERSUS TRUTH

On the surface, the fact was that the boy simply lost his shoe; not really a big deal. However, the truth was that the entire family was disrupted. It was only when the Father acted to prevent the further enablement of the process of disruption that the pattern was broken.

Facts seem to be the stuff of the cause and effect realm and can take on various meanings and interpretations based almost wholly upon the context in which they are combined and understood. An old saw sums it up: "To a man with a hammer the whole world looks like a nail!" There is an additional risk as well. Often, there is the tendency to attempt to make facts the only source of understanding. *The URANTIA Book* warns us unequivocally about this: "One can be technically right as to fact and everlastingly wrong in the truth." (555:2--This entire paragraph is worth contemplating).

An examination of the facts and the truth in our current interaction with URANTIA Foundation reveals, for me at least, what is really going on. On the basis of fact alone, our Executive Committee action may look just like what has been so artfully described as fact by the Trustees--a power play attempt to replace the control tendencies of Martin Myers with those of another cadre of similarly-minded individuals. But in truth, it is really much different.

I believe that there is in our organizations a legacy of fear which has been the primary motivating factor in the decision-making process. This legacy has found its most obvious outlet for expression in the actions of URANTIA Foundation and has consequently made its way by direct and indirect means into the behavior patterns and traditions of URANTIA Brotherhood. I further believe that the action of the Executive Committee--in truth-- is no more or less than a statement that we will no longer be governed by fear and its tools of expression. Instead, the Executive Committee is stating its commitment to the honest and forthright task of leading URANTIA Brotherhood into the world community motivated by a living and profound faith in the teachings of the very book which has brought us a new description of this way of living our individual and collective lives.

A Solitary Messenger writes that "Every decision you make either impedes or facilitates the function of the Adjuster; likewise do these very decisions determine your advancement in the circles of human achievement." (1210:1) Gerald Jampolsky, M.D., writes in his book, *Out of Darkness and Into the Light*, that "The ego is very good at hiding from us the simple truth that all decisions are based on either love or fear." (p. 26). In my opinion, this issue with URANTIA Foundation and, in fact, every decision we make both as individuals and as a group, deals with this same choice. We can either be motivated by fear or love. Fear-based decisions impede the work of the Adjuster; love-based decisions facilitate the work of the Adjuster. Mary Baker Eddy seemingly recognized this important distinction between facts and truth when she stated that "Mere historic incidents and personal events are frivolous and of no moment unless they illustrate the ethics of truth." I don't know how any of you feels about all of this, but for me, if what we are involved in here is not the search for truth, it is not worth our time and energy.

THE JULY 21 LETTER

Although the factual basis of the Executive Committee's July letter was the expressed personal experience of many individuals, there will be pressure to participate in a debilitating debate as to validity. However, if we can agree that the truth of this issue concerns the essential worldview which governs our decision-making, we can raise the level of debate to the single question of whether or not we will be governed by fear or faith. Is there any real doubt that our only possibility of organizational success resides in our ability to act fully in accord with the teachings of *The URANTIA Book*? Where in fact is the real risk--in acting out of faith, or in allowing ourselves to be governed by fear? G.K. Chesterton's observation about Christianity seems especially pertinent to our own situation: "Christianity was not something that had been tried and found wanting, but rather, something that had been found difficult and abandoned."

If we are able to shift our focus to this more essential issue, history can and will show that this was the turning point for URANTIA Brotherhood. It will be seen as the moment when the individuals

comprising this humble organizational means for greater achievement had the courage to break the bonds of fear which have held the organization hostage to the tools of power and control. It was the moment when it freed itself to pursue its purposes based on the living truth written of in the book which was given to serve as guide for individuals and groups alike. For if what we are engaged in here is not at its essence a true and honest attempt to replace the fear-motivated power of control with the love-motivated power of faith, and is instead just an attempt to replace one controlling group with another, then it is inherently and deservedly doomed to fail.

COMPETING VISIONS

In an effort to better understand this way of seeing this issue, it would be useful to explore the manner in which these two views of reality can affect the way in which we conduct our business.

The fear-based worldview suggests that we are always at risk of attack...most people are not well-intended and cannot be trusted until they prove themselves worthy...that it is always necessary to be vigilant and to attempt to control the circumstances and the people in which and with whom one interacts...perceived risks focus major resources on preventing action...an exclusionary "we" versus "them" context is justified and used as a tool of control...secrecy prevails...seeds of distrust are sown at virtually all levels of organizational activity...decisions are mandated in what is characterized as a wholly black-and-white world...the organizations are kept selectively small (and controllable)...work only with those who will work with us...quality not quantity...this is the arena of fact; to wit, the argument is always made that a clear examination of the facts will reveal that the means were fully justified by the end achieved...protection of the teachings is sought with the tools inevitably required by an untrusting attitude toward the motivations of persons clearly out to harm us in this work, and so on. The end result of this approach may well be to so disunify and circumscribe the activities of URANTIA Brotherhood that it will become ever less of a factor in the work of the study and dissemination of the teachings of *The URANTIA Book*; other well-intended and honestly-motivated people, reacting to this worldview and its behavioral strategies and consequences (lack of spiritual fragrance?), will continue to go away and do the real work for which the organization was founded originally. It may well be that the revelation will succeed eventually in an unintended way (as a healthy antidote to the motivation of fear), but URANTIA Brotherhood will not participate as a conscious element in the process.

The faith-based worldview suggests that we live in a mostly friendly universe...that every higher being is attempting to help in the achievement of planetary transformation...that we ultimately cannot control anyone except ourselves, and, ironically, that is one of our main jobs anyway!...that we work faithfully in whatever circumstances we find ourselves, rather than attempting to control the circumstances...that most of the people drawn to *The URANTIA Book* are people of goodwill, and we will offer them our trust until they prove otherwise...trust begets trust...we are inclusive and the operative word is "us"...openness prevails...we not only talk about the values of diversity, we actually foster, encourage, and support them...this is the realm of truth...we seek both good ends and good means to achieve our purposes...we attempt to act together as a living expression of the teachings and help each other work toward that goal...we are not afraid of making mistakes and welcome helpful criticism...we act not as proprietary controllers of this teaching but rather as stewards of a revelation of truth meant for every person...we are coordinators and facilitators...while we seek to protect our teachings for future generations, we do so with the tools of responsibility, integrity, honesty, openness, humility, trust, respect, faith, and love. In this way, URANTIA Brotherhood will grow as an inclusive fellowship of diverse human beings committed in their own unique way to the further study and dissemination of the teachings of *The URANTIA Book*. The revelation then may well succeed not in spite of us, but maybe partially as a result of our presence.

OUR UPCOMING GENERAL COUNCIL MEETING

It is my sense that because the Trustees do not understand what this is about, they expect that our General Council meeting in September will simply be a repeat of the July 17 Executive Committee meeting. I don't believe they will be correct. If the Members of the Executive Committee served the purpose of breaking free of the inertia of fear decision-making which has characterized particularly the most recent years of URANTIA Brotherhood's existence, I believe that the Council will serve the purpose of solidifying our commitment to a new vision for our work--a vision based on the power of our faith in these teachings to lead us toward our greater planetary destiny. As an Executive Committee we recognized and defined the characteristics and symptoms of a fear-based worldview which we no longer can accept as the context in which we will operate. Because this context has been perpetuated mostly by a single person, and since it is obvious that a single person's actions can disrupt all around him (remember the lost shoe?), I believe it was both accurate and necessary to point out where that worldview found its most obvious and influential expression.

But, we now should move on. It is not necessary, in my judgement, to deal with that issue further. Our job as a General Council is in actuality more important. If we agree that we need to begin to act on a worldview based on faith only, we will together need to plot our course carefully, intelligently, and responsibly using all of the tools given us by our Father. What URANTIA Foundation decides to do is truly up to them. They, too, have a task which has been given them. They, too, will be measured by the way in which they do this task. They are accountable just as we are--both on fact and truth levels--and we need to make our decisions accordingly (see the Parable of the Pounds, page 1875). I believe that in breaking the bonds of fear we have freed ourselves for truly higher accomplishment. But in doing so we have placed a greater burden of responsibility for success on our own shoulders. That is just where it should be.

It is not important whether the shoe was lost or hidden on purpose. What is important is that we do not allow the fact that it is missing to obscure the truth that it is time for us to go to "church" together as a family. This does not mean that we become a religious institution (the fear-based risk of "churchification"), but rather means the actualization of our commitment that our organizational relationships and actions will be vitalized by truth, consistent with the teachings of *The URANTIA Book*, and based upon faith not fear. The irony is that it is this very commitment to faith which eliminates the ability of fear to so distort reality as to make it wholly fact-based and devoid of truth. I, for one, am grateful for the opportunity to be a part of an organization which is not only grappling with this issue of Supreme importance, but which seems ready to make such a leap of faith.