



THE URANTIAN®

Journal of URANTIA® Brotherhood

A BROTHERHOOD — NOT A CHURCH OR A SECT

"What is the URANTIA Brotherhood? Another sect?" This question has been put to the writer of this report more than once. To this question, a negative answer has always been given, "No, the URANTIA Brotherhood is neither a church nor a sect. It is simply a social group which has a religious objective."

There is a real place in modern civilization for a group of religious people who are "... willing to completely divest themselves of all ecclesiastical authority and fully surrender all concept of spiritual sovereignty. God alone is spirit sovereign." (*1487:1). The modern world hardly needs another church, another sect. At the present time, we suffer from a plethora of churches and multiplication of sects.

But, if we are not a church, how then do we differ from a church? If we can clearly see how we differ, then perchance we can maintain such differences. And, if we can maintain these differences, then we may be able to preserve our organization as a distinctive Brotherhood; we may be able to avoid a possible evolution in the direction of a church.

Well, right on the face of it, there are three main differences between the Brotherhood and a typical church: We claim no spiritual sovereignty; we claim no exclusive path to salvation; we claim no ecclesiastical authority. So long as we do not claim these things we can hardly become a church.

But, even if we are not a church, even if we never become a church, is it also true that we are not a sect? A Urantian could be a sectarian religionist; he could be a religionist who is primarily dedicated to the propagation of The URANTIA Book. Would such a dedication, however, be a valid dedication — in the light of all we know? The writer submits that such a dedication is not valid as a primary dedication. Such an exaltation of a most worthy secondary dedication to primary status could well transform a religious Urantian into a sectarian Urantian — a Urantian who has allowed the importance of The URANTIA Book to take precedence over the importance of God.

How then can we, as Urantians, avoid not only churchification but also sectarianization? The writer believes that both of these unfortunate developments can be avoided if we are careful in distinguishing between means and ends. This is another way of saying that we should be careful not to confuse our secondary loyalties and our primary loyalties. The writer would accordingly submit for the careful consideration of the Brotherhood the following philosophy of action:

1. **God Is the Only True End.** Our primary spiritual loyalty and dedication is to the Universal Father, and to Him alone. When we encounter some spiritually hungry brother, our first objective is to bring him closer to his spiritual Father. This we may attempt with, or without, the book. All other things are secondary and subordinate to the acquisition of this one "pearl of great price" — the realization of sonship with God.

2. **The URANTIA Book as a Means to the End.** The book itself is not an end — it is a most important means to an end. It is designed to bring God closer to man and to bring man closer to God. 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 have we truly become sectarian. Our primary objective, as Urantians, is the service of God, and the book is an important means to that great end. Here we should make a vital distinction between that which *is* value and that which *has* value.

3. **The URANTIA Brotherhood as a Means to the End.** Neither is the URANTIA Brotherhood, nor membership in it, a true end. The real function of the Brotherhood is also the function of a means to accomplish a desired end. The structure 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 book and the book is designed to bring God and man closer to each other.

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.

—William S. Sadler, Jr.

(Note: William S. Sadler, Jr. was President of the URANTIA Brotherhood the first three years of its existence, 1955-1957. This is an excerpt from his first report to the Triennial Delegate Assembly.)

FACTS ABOUT THE BROTHERHOOD

In the 21 years since the Brotherhood was founded it has grown entirely by word of mouth and person to person ministry. This is its present size:

URANTIA Societies	10
URANTIA Book Study Groups (est.)	150
URANTIA Brotherhood Membership	560
Society Members	427
Members-at-Large	133
International Members	5

Total Number of URANTIA Books Sold ... 57,500

The URANTIA Book is carried in 1,200 bookstores and is currently being sold at the rate of 800 to 1,000 copies a month.

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Published Quarterly by
URANTIA Brotherhood
533 Diversey Parkway
Chicago Illinois 60614

Subscription Price: \$3.00 a year

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Warmest regards — the editors.

FOCUS ON THE INDIVIDUAL

In our religion the individual is of prime importance. Jesus was interested only in the individual person, and he allowed nothing to take precedence over that individual. This concern for the individual was a central feature of his entire earth ministry, and it still remains so. In fact, the entire universe organization appears to be established in such a way as to serve the individual.

I do not know of any human organization which has, in reality, placed the individual before all other considerations. Many claim to do this in theory, but they honor this claim only with their lips. Sooner or later the individual person recedes into the background while the organization becomes supreme. Time and again this has occurred, and it has inevitably led to the decay and destruction of those very organizations, while at the same time seriously hindering the progress of the individual.

Jesus' Test

I believe that one of the great tasks we face is the construction of an organization whose sole purpose shall be the fostering of individual growth. As I understand it, this is the true intent behind the statements which comprise Article 2 of the Constitution of the URANTIA Brotherhood. In attempting to determine the specific activities which shall be undertaken, we should apply the same test which Jesus used: "What does it do for the human soul? Does it bring God to man? Does it bring man to God?" (*1388:5) The true value of any institution is in the degree to which it devotes itself to these goals.

By fostering the growth of each, we foster the growth of all — the Brotherhood. The progress of the Brotherhood is bound up in the progress of each of its individual members, just as the Supreme depends upon the individual for His development.

The Brotherhood is quite possibly standing face-to-face with a challenge of destiny. It may be our task to actualize a new and living reality in human institutions — the truly person-centered organization. Such an institution could stand apart from all other institutions, while at the same time serving to inspire them through its living presence. Such an institution could also faithfully follow the command to serve men as Jesus did. What a magnificent challenge this is!

I do not see this as an easy task. The problems and difficulties to be encountered in such an undertaking would call for all the love and wisdom of which we

are capable. Human experience has not yet successfully approached this problem. But whatever the difficulties, we do have perfect guides.

—Steve Dreier

TO KNOW AND LOVE

It is a joyful experience to learn from statements in The URANTIA Book that God is interested in each one of us personally, individually. His antenna reaches out to each and every one of us. We should be aware of this fact in our daily existence, living each moment as though in His presence. How thrilling to know that our relationship with one another has survival value. One of my favorite quotations from The URANTIA Book is on page 1235:

"... Personality and the relationships between personalities are never scaffolding; mortal memory of personality relationships has cosmic value and will persist. On the mansion worlds you will know and be known, and more, you will remember, and be remembered by, your onetime associates in the short but intriguing life on Urantia."

—Christy

THE OMEGA PERSPECTIVE

The central uniqueness of the URANTIA Book orientation lies, in the last analysis, on its focus upon singular individual guidance by means of the indwelling Thought Adjuster. The everyday behavioral consequences of this "giant leap forward for mankind" are immediate and profound, ranging from here through eternity, and for every individual of will capacity regardless of any other qualifications. It is a revolutionary transformation in the meaning of the authentic personhood, and from it follows the promise of a new community.

No longer evaluated from the "Alpha position" of genetic origins, ethnic or national affiliation, or religious membership, each and every person is now visible from the revealed "Omega position"—the vantage point of each and every God fragment which is the infinite potential within each of us. Both accidents of birth and achievements of education are rendered relatively invisible from this astonishing Omega perspective which measures not our deficiencies of nature, morality, knowledge, or group association, but rather our eternal possibilities Godward. The older equalities and inequalities of naturalism, legalism, intellectualism, and chosen-peopleism crumble before this illumination now marching above

the horizon of consciousness, altering the meaning-scape wherever we look.

Striking step with this viewpoint of majestic respect for the individual, we begin to discover deep changes in attitude and far-ranging transformations in behavior. The responsibility for another's growth is immediately transferred from one's own ego efforts to the higher network of Thought Adjusters among us. Instantly we may even see that not everyone's Father fragment wants him to know The URANTIA Book! I am no longer pridefully my brother's keeper, but surely know he is kept by God even as I.

Herein eventuates a fresh level of community — majestic individuals even in life's gutters related through the mutuality of their mighty Mystery Monitors. Spirituality elevates to Adjuster value-consciousness applied and re-applied to living. Sins of the spirit flash into perspective, the greatest now having to do not with the flesh or even society, but with the violation and frustration of Adjuster-to-Adjuster relations between and among us.

At last the supreme and loving patience of Jesus with his wayward children on all levels makes sense, for time itself is re-valued from the Omega perspective. Each of us as humans, no more, no less, is equal on the highest level of being — through direct contact with God-internal, an internal fragment of the Father Himself. And that can only lead to the deepest, highest regard for the individual ever manifested on this planet Urantia.

—David Schlundt

THE LESSON AHEAD

Only transformed individuals can create a transformed world. Only better men and women can fashion a better society; only advanced citizens can architect an advanced civilization. Man is a son of the Eternal, yearning eternity, a child of the Infinite, longing infinity. Man was created by God and for God and nothing but God can ever satiate that thirsting of spirit which burns like salt in his soul.

From the ancient Assyrians, mankind learned the building of libraries and postal systems; from the Babylonians, a knowledge of astronomy and the molding of clay bricks. From the Egyptians we learned surveying, from the Persians, international coinage and from the Phoenicians, a written alphabet. From the ancient Greeks, mankind learned music, drama, architecture, and philosophy, and from the Romans, the making of bridges, roads, and laws. But from Jesus of Nazareth mankind has not yet

learned the ways of righteousness and peace, the infinite value of the individual, and the brotherhood of man beneath the Fatherhood of God. And until we do, the rest that we have learned will matter very little.

—V.B.G.

FUSLA STUDY GROUP GUIDELINES

(The First URANTIA Society of Los Angeles (FUSLA) is the oldest non-Chicago URANTIA Society. For more than 20 years it has fostered study group activities on the West Coast. The following article is based on the FUSLA experience.)

From the beginning the spirit of love, fellowship, joy, and good cheer should prevail — without these, all else will be as “sounding brass and tinkling cymbals.” All of those spiritual qualities so lauded in The URANTIA Book can be cultivated and evidenced in these small fellowship meetings, as well as elsewhere.

As study groups evolve, the host or hostess will set the pattern and, if desirable, appoint a different leader for each meeting. It has been found helpful to start out in a very simple way by each reading one section of a paper. There are approximately 5-12 sections in each paper, the average being 8-9. This is ideal for each reading and discussing a section at a time and it requires about an hour or so to complete a paper in this manner. This simple method enables newcomers to feel at ease and even oldtimers will always benefit. As time goes on and the book becomes more familiar, topics may be assigned and references noted for special presentations. The danger here is that not enough time is left for participation, which is the keynote of learning. However, the leader can carefully plan so that participation by every member is assured.

It is wise for the group to plan together which papers should be read and in what order so that members can study or read the paper ahead of time and be

ready with cross-references and other aids for discussion periods. A program could be duplicated for a three-month period.

Remember that The URANTIA Book is the reason for meeting, so keep to this subject. This will be the leader's responsibility to see that the group does not digress, at least until the social time at the close of the URANTIA Book study session.

It has been found helpful, but not essential, to have a chalkboard where certain notes or special information can be listed, such as the assignment and leader for the day and for the next time. Or, extra research or cross-references on the paper being read can be noted. . .

One of the purposes of our study groups, besides actually learning The URANTIA Book, is expressed on page 1130:3* “While your religion is a matter of personal experience, it is most important that you should be exposed to the knowledge of a vast number of other religious experiences (the diverse interpretations of other and diverse mortals) to the end that you may prevent your religious life from becoming egocentric — circumscribed, selfish, and unsocial.”

—Julia Fenderson

LETTER TO A URANTIAN MOTHER

Dear Mom:

When I think of the task that you & Dad have undertaken, to raise our family in the spirit of truth under whatever consequences that brings on, I feel my blessings to be great. Throughout my life, each time I feel lost or very very alone, there was always a constant strength running underneath & holding me firm; an inner light.

Thank you for all the love you have given, and the strength that runs through our family because of the truly loving wisdom you strive for. I love you very much. It's hard to put into words; it brings tears of joy to my eyes.

Love. . .

*“All men are my brothers. My Father in heaven does not despise any creature of our making. The kingdom of heaven is open to all men and women. No man may close the door of mercy in the face of any hungry soul who may seek to gain an entrance thereto. We will sit at meat with all who desire to hear of the kingdom. . . The door of the kingdom is wide open for all who desire to know the truth and to find God.” Jesus to the Apostles (*1541:5).*
