



THE URANTIAN®

Journal of URANTIA® Brotherhood

"... The attitude of unselfish service of man and intelligent worship of God should make all kingdom believers better world citizens, while the attitude of honest citizenship and sincere devotion to one's temporal duty should help to make such a citizen the more easily reached by the spirit call to sonship in the heavenly kingdom." (*1930:6).

SOME THOUGHTS ON SERVICE

Once upon a time, according to ancient myth, some of the gods decided to visit earth, incognito, in order to participate in a great festival. Disguised as humans, they mingled without attracting attention until they sat down to the feast. There, at the banquet, the gods "blew their cover". Whereas men were gluttonously stuffing themselves, the gods were observed to be placing the most delectable morsels in each other's mouth—an action not at all customary among mortals.

Sharing is divine. Sharing is one of God's eternal patterns. Furthermore, The URANTIA Book tells us, "The doing of the will of God is nothing more or less than an exhibition of creature willingness to share the inner life with God..." (*1221:2), to invite the Creator to participate in our creative life.

What is the ideal life? One of loving service—service to God and service to man, the one inseparable from the other. God shares of himself with me, and I can choose to respond to this gift of love by living in the manner suggested on page 1206 of The URANTIA Book, and so beautifully demonstrated by the Master.

Surely there is no better way to serve my brother than the way which serves God. My inner life, insofar as it reflects my understanding and experience of Jesus' gospel of love and truth, is the only *real* thing which I have to share with others. The "service trails" and "happiness highways", of which Jesus spoke to Fortune, certainly lead through the hearts of men, and I perceive that there is inexpressible joy attendant upon helping another in his "progressive comprehension of reality", bringing to him a measure of Love, however small.

Another aspect of service, which inheres in the first two, is service to self, that self of eternal destiny. It is my

responsibility to attain a high level of self-realization, of self-mastery, and to pursue the concepts of divine goodness. Toward this end I require your help—that "... third and sacred obligation:" which Jesus designated as "service to the brotherhood of God-knowing believers" (*1930:3).

To give a possible example of this obligation, and to complete what I hope has been descriptive of a form of "circular simultaneity", I ask you to imagine The URANTIA Book as a great feast spread before us. Will you share your portion with me? Will you place in my mouth the nourishing morsel which I might not otherwise taste?

The time and place for service is always the present moment, wherever that finds me. I would like to offer you a condiment for the feast, one which enhanced, for me, the flavor and fragrance of service. It is Martin Buber's brief book, (available in paperback), *Hasidism and Modern Man*, a lovely interpretation of the tradition of the true helper.

—Marjorie Reed

ONE TO ONE

There was a man once who achieved perfection simply by loving God and serving man. He didn't set out to do great things in the sight of man, only good things in the sight of God.

To most of us it is not given to be great among men, but we can be well content to follow the example of Joshua ben Joseph and strive to do good things in the sight of God. Service is inherently personal, born out of the sincere desire to do something good for the sake of another. But service is also much more. It is the art of giving of oneself, unreservedly and, most of all, imperceptibly. As Jesus passed by, increasing in grace each life he touched, few remembered what precisely he said or did. Some didn't even remember what he looked like. His secret? He was never motivated by the mere desire to serve, but by a heart full of love for each person he met—the desire to do something good for that person. Sometimes restoring a blind man's sight, sometimes with a pleasant "Good morning..."

It may well be true that every man is not ready to hear the message of the gospel, but there surely is no doubt that every man is ready to see an act of love—the spirit and the substance of the living gospel.

A lone small candle may tremble with uncertainty amidst the menacing winds of material inconstancy and animal confusion, but faith will shield its flame and each act of love strengthen its light against the shadows of human frailty. And if you are like me, yet just one small candle flickering precariously, think how, together we can light the world.

—Mary Snider

SERVICE—A PERSONAL VIEW

Service? Seemingly a common word; yet what does it really mean? Pause and reflect a moment on what service means to you and then read on as I attempt to share some thoughts with you.

As I tried to determine what service meant to me, an earlier picture of myself flashed upon my mental viewing screen. The setting for the scene was an encounter with some acquaintances with whom I had attempted to talk concerning The URANTIA Book. I had entered the encounter with enthusiasm and an eagerness to share the truths I had found, but I met suspicion and doubt. I left with a sense of disappointment and misunderstanding, asking myself, “why didn’t they believe me?”

Now, after some time and some thought adjustment, I think the more accurate question is, “why should they have believed me?” After all, weren’t there many individuals and groups who claimed to possess truth? Why should anyone accept what I have to say?

When I asked the latter question, I felt as though my mind were a reservoir and the dam had been opened allowing pent up thoughts to gush forth from seemingly many directions and levels. I remembered an acquaintance with whom I didn’t share common values or ideas but for whom I felt warmth because he had once been kind to me when I was in need. I remembered some psychological research which concluded that the type of therapy used was secondary in importance to the ability of the therapist to develop a sense of trust between a patient and himself. Then I recalled how Jesus loved to do little things for people.

It seemed as though the pieces were beginning to fit into place and there was an air of mild excitement as I sensed I was about to discover a new insight.

What I had realized is that before I could expect others to listen to what I had to say, I had to befriend them and develop a sense of trust, openness and honesty with them. If I could accomplish that, then, when the time was ripe, they might ask the questions which would allow me to introduce The URANTIA Book teachings. Moreover, we could exchange our ideas in an atmosphere of peace rather than in the suspicious, defensive atmosphere I used to encounter.

As my new insight was growing clearer, I recalled from the teachings that to love someone was to desire to do good to them and that to serve someone was to provide for their needs. These thoughts helped me to realize further that perhaps we best serve others when we are good listeners instead of talkers, when we are responsive to others’ needs, no matter how small, rather than doing what we want to for them, which may only be placing our own needs first. Often a single act of kindness may be the most important service we can provide.

If Jesus loved to do little things for people, then surely it must be worth the effort to try to understand the wisdom of this approach. And did he not say that if we wish to be great, we must learn to be of service to all?

—Michael Painter

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Warmest regards — the editors.

“... Love is the outworking of the divine and inner urge of life. It is founded on understanding, nurtured by unselfish service, and perfected in wisdom.” (*1898:5).

"... brotherhood and service are the cornerstones of the gospel of the kingdom." (*1930:2).

THE RUBBING PEBBLES

For growth and development, personalities need contact with other personalities, much like sharp-edged rock fragments ground smooth by rubbing against one another. Such a parallel suggests the divine intent that our progress towards spiritual levels is closely allied with sociability and co-operative endeavor. Our increased awareness of mutual dependence, personal worth, and altruistic service goals needs a behavior vehicle for expression with others similarly inspired ... thus, the logical motivation for the formation of study groups. This assembling together of believers could well be referred to as the "inevitable eventuality" of widespread dissemination of The URANTIA Book.

All of us to whom group study has become a regular part of life may occasionally search to explain how it all came about. Yet, even allowing for differences of specific origin, study groups form because it is pleasurable to meet with others and share together these unique papers. The viewpoint of another contributes to our own insight and understanding. Some passages which we have difficulty with may become clarified by hearing another's explanation.

The papers state that we all become more and more like the Divine Beings whom we worship. Likewise, it might follow that some traits of those with whom we come in contact may become a part of our own complex make-up. Thus, with many personality types drawn together by mutual interest in The URANTIA Book papers, each gains in some way from the very heterogeneous nature of the assembled personalities. We are indeed influenced and changed by our associates. It is just another way in which what we are today is a product of our yesterdays. Likewise, by use of this beneficial influence, we can use today to enrich our tomorrows.

Appreciation of the true goodness in study group activity can prove an adhesive force when problems and disagreements surface to challenge and test the membership to rise above self interest for the benefit and welfare of the group as a whole.

Like pebbles on the beach, washed back and forth by the breaking waves, we can be worn more agreeably smooth and pliantly co-operative by reoccurring personal contact.

—Bernard Burton

Editors note: The study group is one of the fragile cocoons in which the emerging divine consciousness of newly aware and transforming sons and daughters is quickened by social contact. We hope that our inclusion in this and future Journals of study group experiences will encourage thought, discussion, and sharing.

STUDY GROUPS—A SAMPLING

There are as many different ways for study groups to conduct their meetings as there are groups. A survey in some sections of the East resulted in these brief profiles:

Group 1 begins with a moment of quiet, holding hands. The weekly meetings are on Tuesday evenings, always at the same house; about 7 attend, among them several high school students. They are reading from the beginning, one or two papers a week; each person reads a section. Members may break in to discuss, and especially to explore social and political implications.

Group 2 meets each week on Thursday evenings, (recessed in summer), and operates under a strict schedule. Socializing fills the first half hour (7:30 to 8:00). Reading starts wherever the last meeting left off; they are going through the book from beginning to end. Leadership rotates, and there may be questions and discussion. Reading stops at 9:30 sharp, allowing only time to finish the section. From 9:30 to 10:30, a topical leader presents any subject related to the book which he chooses, complete with art, music and related other references. At 10:30, there is a general discussion.

Group 3 is composed of 11 members who have been URANTIA Book readers for some time. This group's purpose is serious, in-depth study of the more difficult concepts. The meetings rotate among three central locations; several members come long distances. A coordinator serves the group in matters of communication regarding time, place and assignments. The schedule calls for 6 P.M. Saturday evening, (after dinner), until any hour, once every two months. Leadership rotates, and the leader is responsible for an assignment for each member one month in advance. The topic is decided by consensus, and no time limit is set on any topic; it is explored until "finished", perhaps requiring several meetings. The book is read during meetings only where it refers specifically to the assigned topic.

Group 4 is quite small, meets every Tuesday evening with dessert, coffee and conversation first, and breaking about 10:30 P.M. Each member reads aloud as long as he wishes; they are now in the Local Universe section. Anyone may interrupt to question or elaborate a point; they may or may not finish a paper.

Group 5 is composed of 8-10 people who meet every Monday night. One person chooses a paper for the following meeting; reading is shared around the circle, any length up to a full section. They have recently completed the Foreword. This group meets also each Sunday night, not to read from the book, but to socialize and share personal concerns. Sometimes the whole evening is one person's life story. Their purpose is to better understand what it means to love one another and to do the Father's will.

Group 6 has tried various schedules, once or twice a month, and once a week on Sunday afternoons, 1 P.M. to 2 P.M. is reserved for fellowship; at two, a brief prayer, silent or spoken. A particular passage is selected, each person reading about a page, with breaks for discussion. The whole afternoon may be spent around one point; effort is made to apply the concepts to daily life.

Group 7 has met every Thursday for 3 years, ranging in number from 2 to 9 people. There is always a warm-up period of personal ministry; someone has a problem or there is discussion of "What's on your mind?" The choice of the paper to read is based on this rap session; members read around in turn, about 3 paragraphs. Meetings usually run from 9 P.M. until midnight. The group is especially pleased with the very wide range in ages among its members.

Group 8 operates without a designated leader, and meets once a month on a weekend. There are usually 7-10 present. Selection of a paper is made the evening of the meeting, after a period of silent meditation and prayer. Members read around the circle, pausing for discussion.

Group 9 is composed of four families, and meets Friday evenings, twice a month. They are reading from the beginning, with occasional digression to a requested paper. Each member reads a section; discussion is frequent, and the paper is not always completed.

—Helena Sprague

THE ATLANTA APPROACH

Introductory Study Group

Our introductory group is open to anyone wishing to discuss The URANTIA Book. We will give some basic insights into the contents of the book and be more than happy to answer any questions. This session is designed to provide an opportunity for new or potential readers to meet other URANTIA Book readers, and ask questions in an informal environment.

Regular Study Group

Anyone is invited to attend a meeting of the regular URANTIA Book study group. However, it is requested that all who attend be aware of the purpose of this group as opposed to the beginning or introductory group, and the Work Group (below). The regular group is concerned with in-depth study of The URANTIA Book papers. Usually this group has a particular paper planned for discussion each night. This group flows smoothly when all those participating in the discussion are somewhat familiar with the book as a whole. It is requested of those who are interested in attending this group that they take it upon themselves to become familiar with the current topic (paper) by (1) seeking to satisfy all general questions by raising them at an introductory group meeting; (2) becoming familiar with The URANTIA Book by reading a good portion of it; and, (3) reading completely the paper to be discussed before the regular study group meeting.

Work Group

The work group is made up of people performing free social service for those in need of physical help. Our approach is not one of witnessing or even announcing our common bond. The work group is simply people helping people. We have several options of service if you feel compelled to help your fellow man. Some of us work at these projects on Saturday; however, other days of service can be provided.

—Richard Hill

"... The privilege of service immediately follows the discovery of trustworthiness. ... Service—more service, increased service, difficult service, adventurous service, and at last divine and perfect service—is the goal of time and the destination of space."
(*316:3,4).
