



THE
URANTIAN®

Journal of **URANTIA**® Brotherhood

THOUGHTS ON THE DISSEMINATION OF
THE TEACHINGS OF THE URANTIA BOOK

"Urantia is now quivering on the very brink of one of its most amazing and enthralling epochs of social readjustment, moral quickening, and spiritual enlightenment." (*2082:8)

These words herald a new age to come and underscore the anticipation that civilization is due for major changes of all-encompassing scope. We are also told that the "... social, moral, economic, and political reorganization of the world" (*2083:1) can take place only under the leadership and inspiration of the spirit-born souls who will have been transformed by the coming spiritual renaissance.

Undoubtedly, the teachings of *The URANTIA Book*, the fifth epochal revelation on this planet, will play a critical role in augmenting the progressive evolutionary development which is taking place. By examining some of the problems currently facing evolutionary societal development, we may gain some insight into the role of the teachings in effectively bringing about civilization's transformation.

The Nature of Societal Change

In order to understand the mechanism for societal change it is necessary to study the relationship between the individual and society. The ongoing planetary saga of mankind's progress is in fact the sum total of the episodes comprised of the lives of all mortals who have ever lived.

A useful analogy can be drawn between the course of civilization's evolution and the geologic process of river formation. The shaping of a river bed, its banks, and the build-up of deposits at its mouth are a result of the cumulative action of all the water that has ever flowed through that system. Since the process is ongoing, the physical features of the river are also constantly changing. The body of water flowing through the river was originally made up of rain droplets. The analogy is simple: each of the original droplets of rainwater can be compared to each individual and his brief sojourn on

this planet. The total volume of water in the river at a point in time corresponds to all persons living contemporaneously on this planet. The physical features of the river, while owing their origin to the resultant cumulative action of all previous water flows, also determine to a large extent the course of all subsequent flows. In a similar way, man's cultural environment, which is a product of all the cumulative experiences of the past, influences to a great extent the behaviour of succeeding generations.

Mankind would not develop very far if each generation had to learn and rediscover everything on its own. A hypothetical example would be the case where an infant born of parents belonging to a modern present-day civilization were somehow thrust into a stone age primitive culture and reared in complete isolation from its natural parents. In all likelihood, the child would eventually grow up to appear and behave as any other member of its new adopted environment. Documented cases of children reared by wild animals, such as the "wild boy of Avreton," have shown that the child eventually imitates the mannerisms of its surrogate parents. The purpose of the foregoing examples is to stress the importance of the fact that it is man's ability to pass on to succeeding generations his cumulative experiential knowledge that distinguishes him from the animal. Man born into this cultural flow inherits and enjoys all the advances which have taken place in the arts, sciences, and humanities, while he in turn contributes to the overall flow in his own unique way. The advancement of all civilization is dependent on this accretional process.

Historically, the progress of civilization has always been led by what may be termed as its "conceptual frame of reference," which was how man philosophically viewed the world around him. The relationship between the two was a dynamic one. Expansions in this cosmological viewpoint often were followed by corresponding advances in culture, while stagnation in the growth of this conceptual framework impeded the orderly and balanced progress of civilization. An example of this can be found in the course of geo-political evolution on our planet which follows the growth of the "sovereign unit" from the basic biologic family, to the

clan, city-states, provinces, nations, national alliances, and eventually to a world government. At this point in time, the geo-politic evolution has brought mankind to at least an awareness of the need for the sovereignty of a world body. Thus the League of Nations and the United Nations, although largely without power of authority, nevertheless represent mankind's first attempt to bring about this expanded concept of humanity. Its motivation is based on the realization that each country cannot act in complete isolation and indifference to its neighbors. Each stage in the growth of the sovereign unit was preceded by an expansion of the frame of reference for society at that point in time and resulted in a breakdown of many of the barriers borne of fear and ignorance which have divided mankind itself. Geo-political growth is imperiled today because of a cosmic shortsightedness stemming from an inadequate conceptual frame of reference. Presently, a precarious state exists wherein scientific advances, under the drive of secular materialism, have surpassed both philosophic and spiritual growth. Evidence for this can be found in the proliferation of nuclear weaponry capable of destroying all of civilization many times over. In the past, the fear of self-destruction

and the drive for survival was adequate to propel the expanding sovereignty concept. The time is ripe for the new and positive concept based on the recognition of the sovereignty of the brotherhood of man and the Fatherhood of God.

The actual mechanism of cultural transfer essential for maintaining and uplifting civilization is education. Education in its broadest sense, both formal and informal, includes all facets of the development or training of the mind, capabilities, and character of the succeeding generation through instruction and study. It safeguards, nurtures, and expands the body of accretionary knowledge. Its direction has followed man's ageless search for meaning and understanding of his perceived world and has centered itself on a wholism which attempted to unify man with the universe on the physical, intellectual, and spiritual levels of reality.

Many problems arise when man trichotomizes his construct of world knowledge into the discrete realms of science, humanities, and religion, without attempting to comprehend the universe from a more wholistic perspective. Religious zeal taken to excesses leads to a fanaticism which is as dangerous as secular materialism in its extreme. Stable advancement in culture is predicated on a balanced coordinated growth.

THE
URANTIAN®
Journal of URANTIA® Brotherhood

Published Quarterly by
URANTIA Brotherhood
533 Diversey Parkway
Chicago Illinois 60614

Subscription Price: \$5.00 a year

International Subscribers - add \$1.00 for postage

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The Universal Appeal of *The URANTIA Book*

The URANTIA Book is that timely revelation of truth that will expand mankind's current conceptual framework to a cosmology which will embrace all of mankind with an enlightenment based on the brotherhood of man and the Fatherhood of God. Its appeal will be to that spark of divinity in man which enables him to strive for perfection and recognize those things that are infinite and eternal.

Great advances can be expected in the realm of the world's pool of accretionary knowledge. The function of the URANTIA teachings would be to augment, correlate, and integrate the existing body of knowledge through the interaction of those who share in this new insight. We are told:

"Intellectually, socially, and spiritually two moral creatures do not merely double their personal potentials of universe achievement by partnership technique; they more nearly quadruple their attainment and accomplishment possibilities." (*494:11)

This same synergetic principle would also apply to the enhancement and growth of world knowledge as a direct result of the educational interchange which would occur when spirit led individuals from a cross section of a culture gather in the common quest to search for the unified whole.

Universe reality is derived from a cosmic energy spectrum which manifests itself through material, mindal, morontial, and spiritual forms spanning from the lowest to the highest energy levels. An appreciation of all aspects of the continuum is important for the comprehension of the whole. Therefore all avenues of approach to seeking the Creative Design in the physical, intellectual or spiritual realms can ultimately lead to God consciousness. For example, consider the biologist who discovers the creative design in primitive life forms. The beauty of the slime mold in its primordial pool becomes apparent when it is viewed with the knowledge that it contains within its bio-genetic makeup the pattern from which eventually will evolve a mortal will creature who has the potential for transcending time and space and ultimately returning to the First Source and Center.

Early Spread of The URANTIA Teachings

Although the message of *The URANTIA Book* is intended for all to hear, by virtue of its size and the complexity of its concepts, many would either be unable or would find difficulty in grasping it. Also excluded would be the majority of the world's population that simply does not have access to it in their native language. (Currently, only a French translation is available.) In addition, Martin Myers' insightful paper "Unity not Uniformity" states that the early members of the URANTIA movement were forewarned that the revelation was not intended for the immediate generation. Presumably, the purpose was to provide a preparatory period for the setting up of a dissemination network. Given that epochal revelations in the past appeared at intervals ranging from a couple of thousand years to hundreds of thousands of years before being updated, it would appear that *The URANTIA Book's* effectiveness could also be considered in those terms. For these reasons, it may yet be some time before the book gains common, popular, and widespread acceptance.

There are some mitigating influences which will undoubtedly be felt in time. Allowing for the natural progress of intellectual growth due to societal evolution, the influence of rising educational standards, and the availability of translations, at some point in time the entire

planet would be able to embrace on an intellectual level the concepts of this revelation. Until such time, much benefit can still be derived by all spirit-led individuals who will receive the truth and understanding in accordance with their intellectual and spiritual receptivity capacities.

Initially, the URANTIA teachings are more likely to gain support with the "leading edge" of the community since they are probably more receptive to new ideas as well as being the motivators in initiating changes. In turn, a corresponding change would eventually precipitate through to the individual members of society. So it follows that whether changes are initiated through the system via the leaders of the community or through the grass roots individual basis, the end results will ultimately be the same. In the short run, appeal to the former will likely be a more efficient and effective approach to effecting a transformation in society.

North America as Dalamatia

A unique opportunity for the international dissemination of the URANTIA teachings exists right now on our continent and within our easy grasp. The model for this particular approach existed on our planet some five hundred thousand years ago. Consider the analogy of North America as being a twentieth century Dalamatia in the setting of the expanded global community known as Urantia. There are currently thousands of exchange students from all parts of the world who have come to our institutions of higher learning to study as well as contribute to furthering the sciences and arts. In addition to being bi-lingual and bi-cultural they also represent the most brilliant and virile minds of this generation. These students, who will one day become the leaders in their own countries, thus become the ideal receptors of this new and living revelation. This intellectual, cultural, and spiritual transfer will take place in the milieu of our culture just as the visiting indigenous peoples of early Urantia were invited to learn while living within the walls of Dalamatia.

An attitude of openness and sharing is essential for the free exchange of ideas. We must remember that even the original inhabitants of Dalamatia, the Caligastia one hundred, were also experiential beings, who, although advanced in many ways, undoubtedly learned much from their visitors. We also have much to learn from the rich cultural heritage of many of the visiting students.

The URANTIA Book should be presented in its entirety without any strings attached. That is, it should

not be made to appear as solely the product of North American effort. Its message is of planetary significance and should not be identified with any specific culture. The truth of this mighty revelation can and will ultimately stand on its own.

Many encountering *The URANTIA Book* for the first time would treat it as essentially another Christian document. From beginning to end Jesus of Nazareth, Michael of Nebadon, is the central figure. Especially to those outside of traditional Christian upbringing, the differences between much of their general notion of what Christianity is about and what is portrayed in *The URANTIA Book* take on much less significance. For this reason, it may prove more effective when first introducing the book to emphasize the universal appeal of its cosmological concepts.

Initial contacts with exchange students may result from the placement of books in international houses, inter-denominational worship places, student activity centers, and graduate student centers. Information regarding local study groups should be included for the benefit of any potential Rodan who wishes to meet other readers.

One approach to whetting the appetite of a student is by pointing out similarities, differences, or new insights presented in *The URANTIA Book* on topics that relate to the student's own interests and by employing Jesus' technique of teaching through the asking of thought-provoking questions. It should be appreciated that most students would not have a great deal of time to devote to this newly found book. However, comfort should be taken in the knowledge that seeds once carefully planted usually germinate and eventually bear fruit.

Our Task

As readers of *The URANTIA Book*, we have been given the rare privilege of being in such close association with the most significant event since our Creator Son Christ Michael walked the earth almost two thousand years ago. We are fortunate in being nurtured by the food of such spiritual wisdom but as stewards it is equally important to sow the seeds and cultivate the soil to ensure the future of a plentiful harvest.

The following are words of admonition which Christy had occasion to share with me, words which are a timely challenge to all of us.

"You must become so saturated with the truth of this revelation so that all persons coming in contact with you will know that you are truth seekers

and spiritual explorers dedicated to the supernal task of doing the will of our Heavenly Father."

—Ronald D. Louie
West Vancouver, Canada

THE QUALITY OF OUR INTERFACE

In introducing *The URANTIA Book* to other people, other cultures, and other faiths, the quality of our interface will be largely determined by how we see ourselves, and that in turn will determine how we will appear to others and therefore how they will respond to us. All else - our motives, our techniques, and our goals fall secondary to this one factor, because how we see ourselves in association with this new revelation determines those motives, techniques, and goals.

I anticipate that many of the various problems that we will encounter as we approach other peoples with the book will stem from our religion-like appearance. Although we lack many of the features that commonly characterize religions and churches there are a few primary similarities that need to be reckoned with and maybe in the process rectified.

People don't have to deliberately set out to form a religion or a church in order for it to be such. It can form as an inevitable consequence to a closure of a type, like turning these natural boundaries (that designate their particular group) into a barrier - a separating factor that isolates them from the rest of the world. Those barriers divide people up into the common "we" and "they" categories or "we have it, they don't" slot. Many differing beliefs separate people from one another, but the one belief that states "we have the truth, you don't" is the solidifying force turning boundaries into barriers.

One of the common elements that characterizes the followers of many religious persuasions is this belief in their exclusive possession of truth. And because of the very nature of *The URANTIA Book* claiming to be a new revelation we can too easily fall into such a common pitfall. Truth is in fact everywhere - it's contained in many sources but confined to none. Just possessing a *URANTIA Book* can dupe us psychologically into thinking we have truth in our hands. I'm sure the authors of *The URANTIA Book* were well aware of this risk when they handed revelation over to us in the form of a book. Truth is a dynamic and active thing that occurs freely as we interact with it. It is not locked up in words and concepts. It has been said: "Any group proclaiming they have the truth only gains recognition for its arro-

gance." If we assume that truth is confined to *The URANTIA Book* and that everyone needs to read it, then we can't help but look and act very much like just another religion.

There's nothing magical about *The URANTIA Book*; it cannot help being limited and static by its very nature - it's our interaction with it that gives it life. This is proved by how unimpressed some people are when they read it. This is where I want to touch on this readiness issue. I don't believe that the sole reason some people are turned off is simply because they lack something - that they aren't ready. I believe some people just are not interested. Truth from *The URANTIA Book* comes to us cloaked in a certain language and cultural garment. I can't believe that all those turned off by *The URANTIA Book* are also turned off by truth, or aren't ready.

It's just not their garment, that's all. And look what that says about us when we think that way. We're saying we're the ready ones! We can't help but feel superior and act condescending with a notion like that. Maybe we're not the ready ones for that matter. Maybe *The URANTIA Book* was given expressly to us because we need it most!

We may have the new revelation in our hands but in no way are we that new revelation; there's nothing new about us! It's been suggested that: "The mountain top becomes a foothill once one is up against the universe." In other words our having *The URANTIA Book* may elevate us in terms of our assessment of our growth on this planet, but in the context of the entire universe we look rather small yet.

If we have this clear in ourselves then we can't help but communicate this in our actions and in the type of regard we have for others and hopefully as a result - as more and more people become aware of our existence, we'll gain our distinction as a brotherhood of kindred spirits - an inclusive one rather than an exclusive one. And we'll see the nature of our social organism in proper perspective - a tool for executing and fostering personal religion - everywhere, not another example of organized religion.

We can avoid many of the common pitfalls of various religions if we have the right relationship with the book. We need to expand our vision to include what *The URANTIA Book* points to (it doesn't point to itself) and what it does point to is universal truth - truth, therefore, encompasses everything and exists in all places. The truth of *The URANTIA Book* is greater and bigger than *The URANTIA Book* itself - it points to God. God can't be put in a box - not even a *URANTIA* box.

We need to be humbled by our limited grasp of the truth contained in the book - we can know the book but that doesn't mean we necessarily know truth. A friend once said: "We're going to be thinking thoughts tomorrow that today we don't even think we don't know." With this in mind let us be humbled by what we haven't yet seen and what we haven't yet become.

And if *The URANTIA Book* is to remain an active catalyst in our lives, then it has to be a new book each time we encounter it. We should welcome that - we should welcome its constantly changing our perceptions, making us doubt our fixed appraisals of reality. For that matter we should welcome what the Russian, Sufi, and the Bushman have to give to our understanding of the book. As we become more acquainted with God's reality we will grow and *The URANTIA Book* will take on deeper meaning. This is the intent of the book - offering itself as a tool for growth.

It's presumptuous for us to assume that our mental comprehension equals the fullest truth resident in *The URANTIA Book*. No matter how clearly a revelation is presented we can never suspend the laws of human limitation and perception. If others see in us the type of maturity that isn't closed to new learning then we'll truly leave an impression - an impression commensurate with the quality and universality of *The URANTIA Book* as opposed to being just another closed system.

Someone once said, "Unless I see in our relationship you helping me, I can never help you. Too much evangelism is me helping you." We need to see ourselves as students always as we approach others anywhere and anytime in life. We're never finished. Even those people we aim to teach something to have something to teach us in return. We can succeed in this posturing only when we're fully convinced of the universality of God. God doesn't have us here to finalize anything. Therefore *The URANTIA Book* cannot be a final statement - if anything, we're to come up with more questions. Therefore let us ask everyone we meet, "Tell me not only about your religion but tell me also more about my own."

Just as individuals can become egocentric so can we as a group become Urantia-centric - that is, so fixated on *The URANTIA Book* that we refuse to acknowledge or look at any other source of truth. There's nothing final or absolute about *The URANTIA Book* - it can never encompass everything - it can only lead us to that reality that does - and that's the way it should be. The validity of *The URANTIA Book* should never be reliant on its particular concepts but rather on its capacity to evolve with the world, changing and expressing an all-inclusive God.

And finally, our aim in introducing others to *The URANTIA Book* should be in getting them to interact with it in their own unique fashion, as they creatively translate its meaning into living as expressed through their own individual personalities. If we understand evolution as it is made clear in *The URANTIA Book*, then we can't believe evolution means an outcome of sameness. An adherence to sameness is a common feature among religions and churches. A friend of mine said: "Because *The URANTIA Book* frees people up you're bound to have many diverse approaches to it." One thing we learn by reading *The URANTIA Book* is that God is a God of variety. The measure of the book's success will lie in the variety of individual understandings and consequent expressions - and the measure of its success on us lies in our tolerance of that fact - actually in our capacity to welcome diversity.

The determining factor of a truly truth oriented social unit of any kind is in the manner in which it deals with differing points of view, whether it views change as a threat or differences as foreign. If we don't want to be called a religion or church then we have to recognize and acknowledge the presence of truth everywhere while being continually humbled by the fact that we truly need what others have to offer, that we are in fact one of

many expressions of God - that is as true of individuals as it is of groups. Therefore, our aim should never be to convert others into "Urantians." We should acknowledge our place without undermining or ignoring the value of others in the total networking of evolution.

If we're to do *The URANTIA Book* justice then what we do as we interface with others must reflect its essence. *The URANTIA Book* can be seen in two distinct ways - as a book of hard cosmological facts and as a spiritual nourishment that transcends its more verbal construct. The quality of our interface will be reflected by which of the two views we give priority. It will determine whether our encounters with others will be harmonious or laced with conflict due to mutually shared shallow assumptions about the nature of truth. It will determine whether we consider ourselves an exclusive social group or the forerunner of a spiritual brotherhood that includes all humankind.

I'll reiterate what I had to say in the beginning - boundaries need to exist but not barriers, boundaries designating uniqueness and defining our social group. But there can be no barriers to a barrierless reality - to a barrierless God.

Sally Schlundt
Fort Wayne, Indiana

*" 'And I declare to all of you that the Father has opened the doors of the heavenly kingdom to all who have the faith to enter, and no man or association of men can close those doors even to the most humble soul or supposedly most flagrant sinner on earth if such sincerely seek an entrance.' " (*1652:4)*

Jesus to Simon, Peter, James, and John at Simon's House