



THE
URANTIA®

Journal of URANTIA® Brotherhood

Suggestions for Sharing *The URANTIA Book*

Editors' Note:

Many readers of *The URANTIA Book* have had their lives transformed by reading, studying and applying its teachings. Having received the gift of epochal revelation, their love for others impels them to serve by making its knowledge and insight available to all who will receive it. This narrative suggests some ways in which readers may find effective outlets for this loving impulse. As a compilation of the ideas and experiences of many people, it is in no way an official statement, but simply represents the authors' and editors' personal opinions.

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INTRODUCTION

There are many ways to serve humanity. Sharing *The URANTIA Book* is a form of service which is uniquely available to those who have grasped the book's importance and significance at the present stage of planetary spiritual evolution. Most forms of personal, social and planetary service address major needs (e.g., health, political self-determination, religious freedom) which are well known and well publicized. By comparison, the responsibility for dissemination of *The URANTIA Book* and its teachings rests entirely with its readers.

The URANTIA Book, no matter how extensively promoted, is not capable of transforming the world by itself. Global transformation will come only as a result of the spiritual transformation of individuals and then as they, in turn, inspire others with whom they come into contact. Individuals are transformed by the inspiration of the spirit within to make courageous freewill moral choices. The revelatory perspective of *The URANTIA Book* can open the higher levels of our intellect to better receive this ministry of the indwelling spirit.

The premise of this document is that sharing *The URANTIA Book* and its teachings with others is the single form of social service which is the unique province and responsibility of its readers. It seeks to

suggest certain approaches to sharing the book and its teachings that have proven their effectiveness over the years. Future generations of readers will discover other effective service methods; therefore, these suggestions are by no means complete or final.

RECOVERING OUR SENSE OF AWE

We easily forget the wonders of things we have been given and begin to take them for granted. How inspiring it would be if we could recover the sense of awe we felt upon first reading *The URANTIA Book* — awe in contemplating such a complete harmonization and unification of science, philosophy and religion — awe in the joy and inspiration we drew from reading "The Life and Teachings of Jesus" — awe that we live on earth in the days of this great revelation!

"The hour is striking for a rediscovery of the true and original foundations of present-day distorted and compromised Christianity — the real life and teachings of Jesus." (*2083:2) Where is the world to rediscover these foundations if not in *The URANTIA Book* and in the testimony of its students?

"The common people heard Jesus gladly, and they will again respond to the presentation of his sincere human life...." (*2090:5) Where will people find this presentation if not in *The URANTIA Book* and in the lives and testimony of its readers?

We easily forget the wonders of things we have been given and begin to take them for granted.

"The time is ripe to witness the figurative resurrection of the human Jesus from his burial tomb amidst the theological traditions and the religious dogmas of nineteen centuries.... What a transcendent service if, through this revelation, the Son of Man should be recovered from the tomb of traditional theology and be presented as the living Jesus to the church that bears his name, and to all other religions!" (*2090:3)

Through ages past, truth-seekers have struggled to discern the spiritual realities we find described on every page of *The URANTIA Book*. One way we can show our appreciation of what we have been given is by devoting ourselves to helping others find it. The presentation of this revelation to the world requires effort by those privileged to have found it — effort on *our* part.

OUR FIRST STEP

We all want to help others know the Father, but many of us are reluctant to talk to others about God. We know that it is important — we want to do it — and when the situation arises, when someone asks us directly about God or about *The URANTIA Book*, there is nothing we enjoy more. But experience has taught us that it is not always helpful to talk about our own experiences without initially being asked. If we have not first taken time to show them our friendship and trustworthiness, we should not be surprised by the many who then ignore our spoken message.

Jesus said, "Freely have you received; therefore freely should you give of the truth of heaven, and in the giving will this truth multiply and show forth the increasing light of saving grace, even as you minister it." (*1918:4)

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Inasmuch as there is no official URANTIA Brotherhood or Foundation interpretation of the teachings of *The URANTIA Book*, the views expressed herein are based wholly upon each author's understanding and personal religious experience.

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In this short sentence, Jesus sums up the unselfish attitude to which believers should aspire. Nothing should give us greater joy than to help a sister or brother learn of the Father. The example of our lives and the truth of *The URANTIA Book* are tools of the spirit to help accomplish this. We must remember that the riverbed is not the river; that for the truth in *The URANTIA Book* to exercise its life-changing power, it must be incorporated into a person's life. While *we*, by our efforts, are not able to transform another person, we can surely introduce them to one who is.

Through ages past, truth-seekers have struggled to discern the spiritual realities we find described on every page of The URANTIA Book.

DIMENSIONS OF SPIRITUAL SERVICE

A traditional view of spiritual service to others holds that one must assure the salvation of their souls. We cannot really know the status of another's soul, but we can help those who are troubled to put their faith in God and to seek to do his will. We may be able to do this by teaching and explaining. More often we will be a friend, a living example, an encouragement to someone in need. Even if we live an average life we will have some opportunity to serve others in this way.

Many opportunities arise for assisting others in their spiritual growth. We can help someone grow closer to God. We can inspire them to act on their knowledge of God's will. We can enlist them in the service of humanity. Jesus took it for granted that those to whom he was talking believed in God (*1855:4), and he used his efforts to encourage people to more fully enter into the divine inheritance that God had prepared for them. This is a large part of our task as well.

Mass and Personal Appeals

We have all heard ideas about how we might help others find *The URANTIA Book*. People are sometimes disappointed by the apparently slow expansion of our readership. Many such individuals honestly feel that they ought to do something about it. When readers who feel this way come together, they often devise some sort of large-scale service project which they believe will produce quick and massive results.

By comparison to the service of individual ministry, the organized mass appeal is less personally demand-

ing, and subsequently less effective for the individual. In personal ministry, organizational resources cannot be substituted for individual time. In personal ministry, we lose the safe distance and emotional superficiality the mass appeal creates, while we risk personal rejection from those with whom we interact. It is entirely reasonable to want to avoid the face-to-face conflict of values and to be removed to arms-length by the power of group organization to multiply a message. It is human nature to want to take the path of personal anonymity in spreading the teachings, for in this way we can hide our true selves, disclosing them only to God. Such disclosures demand of us a difficult level of spiritual commitment, because they compel us to invite others to an understanding of our personal values, even to our relationship with God. The situation may be even more uncomfortable because our pride is stripped away and we stand challenged by the very words we apply to our listeners.

Once we honestly overcome such concerns, the spiritual life and personal service become mutually reinforcing. The stronger our spiritual life, the greater our desire to share it with others. And in return, the more we tell others about God, the more compelled we feel to share our own inner lives with God.

Although personal sharing is the most desirable way to serve individuals, this does not rule out the effectiveness of some less personal methods for disseminating the book and its teachings. Many forms of sincere dissemination have a place in our efforts to help our spiritually hungry world hear a new message about God. To get an idea of the range of possibilities, consider the following five avenues of approach, beginning with the most impersonal:

- public meetings
- placement of *The URANTIA Book*
- spiritual attraction
- inclusion
- personal sharing

Public Meetings

In public meetings, the speaker spreads the message before an assembled group. At the present stage in the development of the revelation, however, few public meetings are likely to be good places to present *The URANTIA Book* and its teachings.

Experiences of readers show that, to be successful, the approach used must be low-key and specific in its targeting of a selected audience. This means doing research

to determine the likelihood that at least a few members of the group to be addressed will find something of interest in the book. It also requires careful preparation. One can use modern communication tools such as video or sound/slide programs, but success with these materials will be strongly affected by the extent of one's mastery of media techniques. A high degree of quality and coherence in the presentation is required if it is to be appealing to what may be a relatively unsympathetic audience.

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Some study groups have reported success in holding services that are open to their local communities, where familiar ideas from the book are presented, along with prayer, worship and music. It is possible for a continuing spiritual community to develop around these practices.

Other public meeting opportunities may become available as requests are made for presentations about the book, and/or specific ideas drawn from the text, to interested community groups, college classes on religion, book clubs, and conferences, where varying religious viewpoints may be presented. Many readers feel that well conceived and delivered presentations in response to selected groups will eventually become an important means of public communication about *The URANTIA Book*.

The Fraternal Relations Committee of URANTIA Brotherhood is in the process of developing programs concerning public presentations, particularly to religious and academic groups. This includes sponsoring sessions at conferences and seminars to explore the advantages and disadvantages of public presentations, and to acquaint readers with the skills and understandings related to effective methods of group selection and presentation of material. These programs are under continuing review and revision by URANTIA Brotherhood. If you wish more information about these programs, you should write to the Fraternal Relations Committee at URANTIA Brotherhood's Chicago address.

Before using material from *The URANTIA Book*, you should obtain and carefully review a copy of the policy statement from URANTIA Foundation entitled, "The URANTIA Book; Copyright Permission Guidelines." Copies of this policy statement may be obtained from the Foundation.

Placement of *The URANTIA Book*

Placement is done by putting the book, or pamphlets designed to interest people in the book, where people are likely to find them. A good example of this approach is the program whereby URANTIA Foundation provides URANTIA Brotherhood with books for library placement.

URANTIA Brotherhood operates this organized program of worldwide library placement. Many libraries have accepted gift books as a result of direct mail campaigns conducted from the Chicago office. Many more books have been placed in libraries due to the efforts of individual readers who have taken the time to contact the appropriate library personnel and to offer a book donation.

Placing *The URANTIA Book* in libraries is probably the most popular service activity of the URANTIA movement. Most readers agree that the book should be in every library, of which there are many more than just public libraries; don't forget the libraries in religious institutions, high schools, colleges, technical schools, hospitals, nursing homes, military bases, etc.

Regardless of how else we might try to advance the message of The URANTIA Book, we should all aspire to live lives of such exemplary beauty.

You can simply buy books and place them, or you can become involved in a formal placement program using gift books. You can arrange to get a supply of gift books from URANTIA Brotherhood and take one to your local library personally, or you can have the librarian write URANTIA Brotherhood directly to request a gift book.

URANTIA Brotherhood's program of having individuals place gift books in libraries has been responsible for the placement of thousands of copies of *The URANTIA Book* over the years. If you are interested in this approach, you may contact the Domestic Extension Committee (for donations within the United States) or the International Fellowship Committee (for interna-

tional placement) of URANTIA Brotherhood and sign on as a volunteer. Both committees can be contacted at the Brotherhood's Chicago address.

When approaching a library to place the book, your first step is to ask for the person in charge of gifts and donations. You can show the librarian the book and explain that it is nondenominational and is contained in the collections of many libraries. You can give the librarian a copy of the brochure, "A Description of *The URANTIA Book*," which may be obtained free by contacting URANTIA Brotherhood.

After obtaining approval from the librarian, you can give the library a book if you have a copy with you, or fill out a library donation request form (be sure to obtain the name of the librarian to whose attention the book should be sent) and send it to URANTIA Brotherhood. Efforts at library placement are seldom unsuccessful. Librarians rarely turn down a gift book, especially one which is so attractive and has amassed such an impressive sales record (as of June, 1989, over 200,000 copies of *The URANTIA Book* have been distributed throughout the world).

It is not uncommon for *The URANTIA Book* to be stolen from libraries. If this happens at your library, don't be discouraged. Suggest to the librarian that the book be kept in the reserve section as well as in general circulation. Go ahead and offer the library another book, and help make provision for its replacement as necessary.

Spiritual Attraction

Our list of suggestions now turns from the more impersonal and large-scale methods to the more personal and individual. The process of allowing personal spiritual attractiveness to achieve spiritual ends is perhaps best exemplified by the descriptions of personal ministry in Jesus' life, in the period just prior to the time in which he engaged primarily in public ministry.

This type of ministry may seem somewhat passive, but it is unquestionably one of the most effective forms. The idea that being spiritually attractive is passive may stem from a lack of appreciation for the level of commitment and energy required to seek personal transformation for oneself, thereby becoming an inspiration to others.

Productive contact with others results from the natural spiritual fragrance of a God-directed life which leads others to adopt similar values. Such attractiveness is the product of a life saturated with love. "Most of the

really important things which Jesus said or did seemed to happen casually, 'as he passed by.' " (*1875:5) Regardless of how else we might try to advance the message of *The URANTIA Book*, we should all aspire to live lives of such exemplary beauty.

Inclusion

Inclusion occurs when we invite others to our study group or to a conference. As in the process of spiritual attraction, we do not necessarily engage them in direct discussion or presentation of ideas from the book. Rather, we may use the social avenue of inviting them to come with us to a place where they may hear presentations about the book. Since non-readers may not be fully aware of the social setting into which they are being drawn, it is very important to use good judgment in choosing those likely to become interested and in presenting them with an opportunity free of compulsion. This is what Philip did when he invited Nathaniel to "Come and see." (*1527:1)

Personal Sharing

Finally, we come to the practice of personal sharing of the truths of *The URANTIA Book* mingled with and exemplified by personal experience. This occurs whenever we discuss with another person what we know about God or about spiritual truth, whether or not we identify the book itself. It is difficult to imagine applying any of the other four approaches described here without including a good measure of the spirit of personal sharing. It is through this aspect of our ministry that we most effectively communicate the sincere and friendly attitude which motivates our efforts and conveys our trustworthiness to others.

ON SUCCESS

We cannot control whether or not any particular individual will be receptive to the teachings of *The URANTIA Book* as we present it. But truth is powerful, and if we are only willing to contact enough people who seem open, some fraction will respond. The actual size of this fraction is a product of our wisdom in choosing the individuals and the methods, and of the effectiveness of our communication.

It has become apparent since the publication of *The URANTIA Book* that, at the present phase in the development of spiritual consciousness on this planet, there are relatively few people in any particular group who are likely to be interested in the contents of the book, much

less find them agreeable. Even with the most careful selection of likely candidates and the best imaginable presentation, it should not surprise us when we encounter long periods of approaching "good" people who reject our approach.

Since the experience of rejection is so common among readers of *The URANTIA Book*, a great many seem to tire of this demanding exercise and before long cease or greatly scale down their activities. The reader who measures her or his accomplishment by the number of converts recruited to the cause concludes that there is no satisfaction if there are none who accept the message, and that without satisfaction it may be better to give up. For some, persistence is only inspired by "success." For most of us it seems necessary to develop an attitude, grounded in faith, that thrives on apparent adversity while learning to value the quality of the few rather than the quantity of the many. Only in this way will most readers come to recognize the necessity for persistence, and to grow spiritually from the experience of service without immediate gratification.

In discussing experiences of sharing the book with others, people mostly hear about what has not worked. The typical new reader, flush with excitement about finding *The URANTIA Book*, goes out and tells everyone he or she knows about it, and such enthusiasm is often successful in enticing others into looking at the book. However, with the inevitable percentage of rejection

Effective communication of such intensely personal matters requires sincerity, enthusiasm, and maturity.

that accompanies any genuine but uncritical effort, uncertainty soon sets in, and before long most new readers cease talking about the book with new acquaintances. These episodes provide a rich folklore of negative attitudes toward sharing the book.

If you have not experienced success in sharing the book with others, do not give up trying. Effective communication of such intensely personal matters requires sincerity, enthusiasm, and maturity. Relax. Learn from experience. Examine your motives. Pray for guidance and wisdom. What exceeds your grasp today can become second nature tomorrow. Recognize that those with whom you have failed today have still heard the truth and may someday grow into its fuller apprecia-

tion. Above all, do not give up what you know to be right. Persist. Keep trying. Remain true to yourself. A practiced delivery, an extraverted nature, a glib tongue, and a charismatic personality are probably insufficient if they are not accompanied by your untiring dedication and obvious sincerity.

OCCASIONS FOR SERVICE

Jesus and his disciples were totally committed to sharing the good news, and he called all believers to join him in that work. (*2044:4) They used a variety of methods to reach the people of their generation, and, while public preaching was often used, personal sharing was always practiced. Most important, Jesus and his followers provided a means of mutually reinforcing personal ministry to, and support of, those they attracted to the gospel. They shared their message with individuals and groups in three basic settings. We can learn to take advantage of similar opportunities in our own experience.

As We Pass By

Sharing commonly occurs "in the channel of life's natural flowing." We speak of God to those we meet in everyday life. Because it is natural, it is both sincere and effective. This is the predominant type of sharing practiced by readers of *The URANTIA Book*. We can provide support and friendship to those we serve in this way through the channels of normal association.

In the Marketplace

A somewhat different form of sharing occurred when Jesus took his apostles to the people — in the temple or the marketplace. They placed themselves where there was an opportunity to speak to people, and told them about Jesus, about the love of the Father, and about the joys of the kingdom. Readers who have set up booths at fairs, universities, or shopping malls are engaged in this type of sharing. Other examples are those who visit nursing homes, hospitals, or other settings where people may want to hear these truths.

At a Public Event

A more pretentious type of sharing occurred in conjunction with a public event, often deliberately created for the occasion. After Jesus or Peter preached, or at one of the camps they established, the apostles shared their message with members of the crowds thus drawn together. A key feature of Jesus' approach, and one

which seems important to remember, was the provision of a continuing organization able to support large numbers of these new believers and to direct their newfound service impulse into productive channels.

WHAT MESSAGE DO WE BRING?

At this time, relatively few people seem to want to study *The URANTIA Book* diligently, but we are told that everyone is capable of knowing God as our Father. We must seek to maintain an awareness of this simple truth while, depending upon the interest of the person(s) with whom we are in dialogue, we either impart or withhold the factual or theological portions of the teachings. We must always remember to depend on God's spirit. It is his kingdom we are trying to help build, not our own, and spiritual work cannot be done without spiritual power. (*1758:6)

The testimony of your faith, when humbly rendered in a thoughtful, wise, loving, considerate, tasteful and timely manner, can help the spirit touch the heart of another, particularly if that other is truly your friend.

There are at least three approaches which readers of *The URANTIA Book* may ethically employ in varied ways. We may:

- relate our understandings and experiences of God without any mention of *The URANTIA Book*;
- introduce *The URANTIA Book* itself; and
- invite others to attend study groups or conferences.

TELLING OTHERS ABOUT GOD

The testimony of your faith, when humbly rendered in a thoughtful, wise, loving, considerate, tasteful and timely manner, can help the spirit touch the heart of another, particularly if that other is *truly your friend*.

By comparison, the factual theology, philosophy, and cosmology of *The URANTIA Book* will strike many people as strange and unacceptable. Yet, it is in this one special area that readers of *The URANTIA Book* provide an otherwise unavailable service with important spiritual implications for those who will listen.

INTRODUCING THE BOOK TO OTHERS

Many people we meet will know God and love him, yet still seek for a deeper understanding of his reality.

Some of these people will be receptive to the augmented insights provided by *The URANTIA Book*. Other honest seekers we meet may not have found God, and may be unresponsive to our best spiritual appeals, yet will be

When we determine to tell others about The URANTIA Book, our primary motive must be to help them know the Father better.

attracted to the unique knowledge embodied in the book. Some such seekers will discover the deep truth of *The URANTIA Book* and be thereby led, at last, to find their Father. Still others may know God as a personal experience, but may not be interested in *The URANTIA Book*.

When we determine to tell others about *The URANTIA Book*, our primary motive must be to help them know the Father better. Some will find him for the first time through the book, and others will grow in their knowledge of him under the influence of its clarifying perspective. If one of us does not give someone the book, or provide a way for it to be found, there is no other group working to do so. But if, when the occasion arises, we give someone the book in a manner which violates the standards of friendship, love and service we espouse, we may nullify much of the initial benefit of our testimony.

Many dedicated readers feel that *The URANTIA Book* is unique in its ability to help us understand the divine symmetry of God's universe. It supplies us with an historical and philosophical framework for understanding life here, and gives us a vision of life in the hereafter. It is therefore important that this information, expressly packaged for our world by divine personalities, reach the largest possible number of people in

We cannot ever discount the ability of the Spirit of Truth to act upon the words of The URANTIA Book.

a manner designed to facilitate their understanding of the spiritual truth it contains. While we have no desire to trouble those with settled opinions about their religious beliefs, our knowledge and love of God have been so aided and expanded by *The URANTIA Book* that

many of us believe many if not most people would ultimately benefit from it. It is only through our efforts that others will have the opportunity to learn of its existence.

We cannot ever discount the ability of the Spirit of Truth to act upon the words of *The URANTIA Book*. Even those who are uncomfortable when exposed to intimate discussions of personal faith and spiritual experience may be intellectually and spiritually ready to respond favorably to the apparently impersonal message of the text.

INVITING OTHERS TO OUR STUDY GROUP

Inviting friends who do not read the book or who have just learned of it to attend a study group offers a special way to deepen our friendship, introduce them to readers, and perhaps help them begin to understand what the book is about. Experience to date seems to show that the personal warmth of a group is, to most people, more appealing than the specific doctrinal beliefs that the group holds. If your group is spiritually attractive, your circle of friends will grow and some will thus find the book.

The discussion setting of the study group gives people a chance to participate in a group that cares about them and with whom they may share their experience of God. It gives them the opportunity to express their innermost convictions in a wholesome and accepting setting. The warmth and love they experience makes them feel at home and a part of things, and makes them want to return. We study the greatest source of truth available in the written word, and meeting in people's homes, our groups are conducted in the friendliest possible environment. The combination should be unbeatable!

PRINCIPLES OF SHARING

In summary, let us restate the basic principles of sharing which many of us have learned through personal experience and which we have attempted to share in this discussion:

- **Love.** Our love for others compels us to serve them as we are able, and perhaps by sharing *The URANTIA Book* with them.
- **Friendship.** The loving relationship of mutual trust, grounded in true friendship, provides the experience which supports the revelation of the truth of the book.
- **Attraction.** We must come to understand that the ideas and experiences which we share will only be

accepted by those who are hungry for them and ready to receive them with an honest heart and an open mind.

- **Perseverance.** Lacking wisdom and perspective, we will undoubtedly experience many rejections. The recognition of the spiritual value of our efforts will help overcome the natural feelings of disappointment.
- **Commitment.** Each reader who interests another in the book will want to accept the responsibility and

privilege of continuing a personal relationship with that individual. The book is a means, not an end. Personality relationships are ends in themselves.

If you have read *The URANTIA Book* and have recognized its truth, you have certainly experienced a strong desire to share this experience with others. Begin to apply the principles suggested here, and do not turn from the work. Reach out to people. Share the book and/or its teachings with them. With the power of truth and the insight of wisdom you will surely succeed.

*"Never should a righteous cause be promoted by force; spiritual victories can be won only by spiritual power. This injunction against the employment of material influences refers to psychic force as well as to physical force. Overpowering arguments and mental superiority are not to be employed to coerce men and women into the kingdom. Man's mind is not to be crushed by the mere weight of logic or overawed by shrewd eloquence. While emotion as a factor in human decisions cannot be wholly eliminated, it should not be directly appealed to in the teachings of those who would advance the cause of the kingdom. Make your appeals directly to the divine spirit that dwells within the minds of men." (*1765:4)*
