

OUTREACH MINISTRY

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We cannot govern ourselves wisely and consistently until we have a clear view of the hierarchical order of values and purposes in our lives, until our priorities are clarified, accepted, and acted upon. Most of the errors in living stem, first, from our confusion regarding supreme values; and, second, from our poor judgment in selecting the means to actualize these priorities.

The supreme value in the universe is Ultimate Reality, which we know personally as the Universal Father. Man's highest purpose and greatest privilege is to love and worship him and strive toward the divine perfection enjoined by his indwelling spiritual guidance. The greatest and most determinative action human beings can make in life is a faith-grasp and acceptance of sonship with the Universal Father coupled with loving attitudes and actions toward God and their fellow men. These reality relationships of the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man are, therefore, the most important truths man can share with his fellows. This message was the gospel (good news) which Jesus taught.

One of the chief forms of service in life is to communicate this gospel to others. The channels through which we do this are means to accomplish this basic purpose, this highest good. We should recognize that almost all of the substance and mechanics of human life deal with means and that these means are very important because they are the channels through which this gospel message is communicated.

Levels of Ministry

For purposes of simplification and clarification we may classify these means of gospel communication or ministry on five basic levels.

First Level -- Living the gospel -- doing good as we pass by in life (Living Level).

Second Level -- Social service -- amplifying the gospel through systematic social action (Social Level).

Third Level -- Traditional concepts -- communicating the gospel through traditional Christian frames of reference or other traditional religious teachings (Traditional Level).

Fourth Level -- Contemporary concepts -- communicating the gospel using all contemporary resources, including bootlegging URANTIA Book concepts (Contemporary Level).

Fifth Level -- URANTIA Book concepts -- communicating the gospel through the fifth epochal revelation (URANTIA Book Level).

We should engage in outreach ministry on all five communication levels. As we earnestly seek the Father's guidance in all of our plans and ministry, hopefully, we will discover pathways of wisdom in our service. Which level we use at any particular time may be determined by the evolutionary readiness status of those with whom we are interacting, the comfortableness and creativity we may feel with the various communication levels, and the objectives of our specific ministry. It is my judgment that almost all of the people of the

United States are evolutionally prepared to receive the gospel message on the first three levels of communication but that a small minority of our society is not psychologically or socially ready to accept it.

After many years of close association with mainline Christianity and the academic community, I would estimate that social and cultural evolution has conditioned from twenty-five to thirty-five percent of our population to be receptive to the gospel message on the Fourth Level of intellectual-spiritual communication; but philosophical materialism and skepticism causes a substantial minority of this group to be psychologically or socially unprepared to receive it.

A large number of those who live at the Contemporary Level of cultural literacy are prepared for the concepts and cosmology of The URANTIA Book. I believe that from ten to twenty-five percent of the population of the United States is ready, from an evolutionary point of view, to receive the gospel message on the Fifth Level of conceptual understanding; however, very few of this group are psychologically or socially ready to realistically consider the possibility of "new revelation."

Evolutionary Approach

Contrary to wide-spread popular opinion, our planet has been marvelously prepared for the higher truths of the fifth epochal revelation. As much as twenty-five percent of our population is evolutionally at the URANTIA Book Level of cultural-philosophical comprehension. Most of the concepts of The URANTIA Book are already in our contemporary culture. Many theologians, ministers, and educators are currently presenting the essential truths found in the book. It is the unique integration of these ideas in The URANTIA Book which makes the book an indispensable means to the spiritual rejuvenation of our world.

After twenty-five years of observation, experimentation, and thought, I am convinced that any attempt to share the teachings of The URANTIA Book, apart from the book itself, will be unable to bring about a spiritual renaissance in our complex, pluratistic civilization. It is abundantly clear that the resources of the first four levels of spiritual ministry are inadequate to serve as the spiritual catalyst of the new age which is struggling to be born. Only a new revelatory breakthrough has the spiritual power to precipitate a new age. We have been given the fifth epochal revelation because our evolutionary spiritual resources are inadequate to bring about the spiritual renewal so desperately needed by our planet. In co-ordination with this divine gift, our world is now experiencing a spiritual hunger analogous to the spiritual readiness of the first century A. D.

In view of these facts we find ourselves faced with some momentous decisions. After a generation of preparation in a world hungering for spiritual renewal, should we now initiate a vigorous, all-out campaign of outreach ministry using Fifth Level or URANTIA Book-centered communication? I do not believe such an all-out approach is necessary or wise. It is time to actively promote a systematic Fifth Level outreach ministry. Such a program should have been started years ago. Our philosophy and methodology of evangelism, however, is conditioned by the nature of the fifth epochal revelation. It is a book. This makes it possible to engage in a more selective and evolutionally-gearred outreach ministry. We should be forthright and courageous, but also wise and discriminatory.

There are numerous reasons for promoting a restrained, balanced outreach strategy. Some people are uniquely called and suited for ministry on one or more of the first four levels of outreach communication. Most ministers, teachers,

and people communicating through mass media channels would be wise to use Fourth Level language and concepts in their ministry. There is a great need to establish these types of interface foundations in our society for decades to come. Generally, Fifth Level evangelism is best left to those pioneers who feel called to this rather specialized outreach ministry.

Whenever possible, it is good to have new ideas and new revelation come into society with as little disruption and conflict as possible. We should not be afraid of conflict, but it is seldom wise to deliberately seek it. Since it is also good for us to participate in the basic institutions of our local communities and to have warm and accepting relationships with the members of our in-group, I would recommend some approaches which may help to preserve these friendly associations. My first suggestion is that you select creative channels in the first four levels of ministry, emphasizing the Fourth Level to introduce or emphasize frames of reference which are important to Fifth Level comprehension. Using Fourth Level communication -- if you are knowledgeable in the areas of theology, religion, philosophy, the social sciences, and the physical sciences -- you can introduce and use all of the basic concepts germane to URANTIA Book Level communication.

In speaking and writing, in classes and discussion groups you are able to lead people to Fifth Level insights. Then whenever it is natural and appropriate, you can openly introduce URANTIA Book Level communication. Using this Fourth Level approach, I was able to incorporate The URANTIA Book into college reading assignments without fanfare or conflict. Others using this method have led Sunday School classes into discussing Fifth Level topics using Third Level and Fourth Level concepts and language. Fourth Level communication has been used to introduce many people to The URANTIA Book -- even to start study groups in distant lands. Finally, this Fourth Level approach is an excellent method of preparing the ground for openly communicating the gospel using The URANTIA Book as the primary focus in outreach ministry.

URANTIA Book Ministry

Those who realize that only the enlarged and integrated truths of The URANTIA Book and the faith-power of new revelation will bring about a spiritual renaissance may find Fourth Level ministry unfulfilling. If you are seriously considering Fifth Level outreach ministry, you should understand that such activity could substantially handicap your potentials of ministry on the other four levels, jeopardize your vocational situation, and bring you into conflict with your in-group in the local community. Furthermore, you should know that such pioneering ministry will meet with a high incidence of disinterest, rejection, and even hostility. If you are a person who needs the reinforcement of success, this probably is not the type of service you will enjoy.

After considering these limitations, if you still wish to participate openly in Fifth Level outreach work, my next suggestion is that you consider an approach which may reduce negative repercussions in your work and social contacts. That is, select people who are not members of your close vocational and social in-groups to introduce to The URANTIA Book. In this way the subtle coercions associated with friendship, social status, or vocational rank will not influence their reaction to or evaluation of The URANTIA Book, and you may not be endangering your social or vocational relationships. You, obviously, should not be secretive but you need not confront the members of your family or your friends with the book. Those who are close to you will ask about The URANTIA Book when they are interested.

Initially you will want to work out some systematic basis for selecting people who have the scientific and cultural backgrounds to appreciate URANTIA Book frames of reference. Having solved this problem, you will need to devise a way to contact these people. I have found the best approach to such persons is to send them a letter and enclose a pamphlet like "The URANTIA Book and Our Christian Heritage" or "Leavening Our Religious Heritage." After a few days the letter is followed by a telephone call to set up an interview. At this time the individual will either indicate a lack of interest or schedule a time to get together. The rest depends on the dynamics of your discussion.

Be Creative

The foregoing suggestions regarding outreach ministry are not intended to restrict or discourage any missionary activity you regard as creative and wise. Remember, The URANTIA Book is an experimental venture on our planet. It is a new approach to revelation in our local universe. Introducing the book into our culture, therefore, is necessarily an experimental adventure in service. The need for the fifth epochal revelation on our world, however, is so great we should not be inhibited by the fear of rejection or failure. At this point in time it is almost always better to participate in some form of outreach activity, even if we fail, than not to act at all. The most short-sighted and unwise view one could entertain toward the challenge of outreach service is a "bury your treasure in the closet -- do nothing now" attitude. God can work with almost any form of positive action more effectively than with a spiritual vacuum. We should always strive to serve as active channels through which the divine initiative of revelation can inspire and uplift our world.

Movements become a social reality when the truths and vision of a better way of life which they project become indigenous in the lives of people in local communities. Such spiritual growth is the result of outreach service. Pioneering ministry is never easy; it demands vision, courage, wisdom, and perseverance. Each of us has an unusual opportunity to shape the future of this planet by helping introduce a new revelation to our culture. Such a fortuitous event on our world comes to a generation only once in thousands of years! We are standing at the beginning of one of the most promising and exciting eras of human history. I hope that you may find fulfillment and joy in sharing with your fellow men the best Good News of this century!

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