

CLARIFYING OUTREACH PHILOSOPHY

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Many people who long to serve and help spread the good news of the fifth epochal revelation are confused by conflicting advice given by leaders of the URANTIA movement. Some are even afraid of violating some "hidden" or "implied" directive of the revelators of The URANTIA Book. It is time that these ambiguities be laid to rest.

When the revelators gave the contact commission permission and directives in publishing The URANTIA Book, they pointed out that our world was not ready for this new revelatory message. Contemporary society has never been psychologically or socially ready for epochal revelation even though they are judged by divine evaluation to be evolutionally prepared for higher spiritual truth. The revelators of the fifth epochal revelation also knew that there were those within the Forum who were planning to announce the publication of The URANTIA Book by utilizing mass media channels. The leaders of the contact commission were directed to approach those who, with good intentions, were planning to advertize the book and try to persuade them that this would not be wise at that point in time. They were told that The URANTIA Book's entrance into society was an evolutionary phenomenon and should be directed with evolutionary wisdom. Almost everyone in the Forum saw the wisdom of building solid foundations and making careful plans for the outreach mission of The URANTIA Book.

In 1957 Irene and I spent an entire day with Dr. Sadler and Christy at the Sadler summer home on Lake Michigan. Dr. Sadler and I had an in depth discussion about disseminating knowledge of The URANTIA Book to the world. In reference to my own involvement in outreach ministry, Dr. Sadler gave me warm support but pointed out that after St. Paul's conversion he spent a number of years preparing himself for his missionary activity and suggested this would be a good model for my own preparation for outreach work. I totally agreed with the wisdom of this procedure. During the next twenty-five years this was the central focus of my life plan and preparatory experience.

The contact commission asked the revelators for specific direction as to how they should proceed with plans for outreach ministry. They refused to give any specific guidelines but told them to study Jesus' plan of outreach ministry and follow his example. Over the years this balanced and sage advice given by the revelators, and reinforced by Dr. Sadler, has deteriorated into a stereotyped, doctrinaire ideological position taken by the majority of the power structure of URANTIA Brotherhood which is best described by the outreach attitude, "do nothing now." As a result we have largely deprived ourselves of the opportunity to learn by experience, which is the source of all evolutionary wisdom.

Not only has our dogmatic ideological posture robbed us of carefully directed outreach experience but over the years many of us in leadership positions in the Brotherhood have thrown cold water on the good intentions and sincere desire of many people to share the good news of The URANTIA Book. We have often reacted in fear and anxiety and have projected the image of attempting to control or discourage people whose spiritual enthusiasm led them to missionary activity with which we did not agree. Often we have assumed that all "loyal" students of The URANTIA Book are those who agree with our doctrinaire position. We are woefully lacking in experiential confirmation of our inflexible policy regarding outreach ministry. As a result we have not only refrained from any significant official

outreach activity in the Brotherhood; but we have discouraged anyone else from anything but the most quiet and low key form of URANTIA Book Level ministry.

Jesus tells us on p. 1729.6 "The religion of the spirit means effort, struggle, conflict, faith, determination, love, loyalty, and progress. The religion of the mind--the theology of authority--requires little or none of these exertions from its formal believers. Tradition is a safe refuge and an easy path for those fearful and halfhearted souls who instinctively shun the spirit struggles and mental uncertainties associated with those faith voyages of daring adventure out upon the high seas of unexplored truth in search for the farther shores of spiritual realities as they may be discovered by the progressive human mind and experienced by the evolving human soul."

Instead of our tradition of giving people advice from doctrinaire positions, we ought to be encouraging these people to follow their own inner spiritual guidance. Rather than instructing eager souls as to what they should or should not do regarding outreach ministry, we ought to follow the revelator's example and direct people to study the outreach ministry of Jesus and follow his example according to their inner guidance and best wisdom. In my judgment, we have not followed the advice of the revelators of The URANTIA Book nor the example of Jesus very closely. We have spent more than twenty-five years preparing for the possibility of public ministry in the indefinite future, fearing that it will come before we are courageous enough to face its rigors and strong enough to survive its public confrontation.

Each person must find his or her own guidance in outreach ministry. Follow what you sincerely believe is the Father's will in your own activities. Do not try to dictate to other people or change their minds. Sacredly respect their right to make their own decisions regarding ministry. Do not be discouraged when the elite fail to respond to what you believe to be the will of God. If such ministry is the will of God, then, as Jesus observed, there are those from the highways and byways who will respond.

My own personal guidance and judgment is that it is now time to initiate the beginning phase of public ministry. For the past several years I have been conducting such a ministry in the Fort Wayne community. I believe we should plan careful, limited experiments in outreach ministry and seek to learn from this experience. The paradox of experiential wisdom is that it comes most often from the results of poor judgment! But those who are not brave enough to experiment, to act on faith, will never make those mistakes which will bring true experiential wisdom.

I have a personal preference for person to person ministry because I have had more experience with this kind of outreach activity and believe it is the most effective way to relate to people; and, for me, the most rewarding. It also has the advantage of limiting the damage of our mistakes. Many of the people who profess to believe in this form of outreach ministry actually do very little of it. If all dedicated students of The URANTIA Book introduced one person a month to the book, remarkable growth in the URANTIA movement would take place. Mormon missionaries sometimes make that many contacts in a single day!

Traditionally mainline Christianity has frowned on mass evangelism and has been critical of the Electric Church of the religious television hucksters. The majority of the leaders of the URANTIA movement have also warned of the dangers of utilizing mass media to publicize The URANTIA Book. It is wise to minister advanced truth on a person to person basis. Beware, however, of any doctrinaire

positions whether they are radical or reactionary, conservative or liberal. Ministry should always reflect experience; and empirical data is invaluable in evolving practical wisdom. Although we should share the highest wisdom we have about outreach ministry, we should not try to dictate to people. In the final analysis we must refer them to the inner guidance of the Universal Father and the Spirit of Truth.

Remember that work in local communities is the basis of evolutionary social growth. Do not expect spectacular results and do not live by delusions of grandeur. Nation wide and world wide acceptance and influence is the product of decades and centuries of work in local communities. Use wisdom, not fear, in making decisions. If you believe what you are doing is the will of God and in harmony with your own highest wisdom, do not worry about consequences--such as unpopularity or social antagonism. No significant advance in spiritual growth, no major upstepping of truth, has ever occurred on our planet without social turmoil. Indeed, history teaches us that higher spiritual truth does not achieve effective social communication and viability until it reaches the stage of social confrontation.

Rather than fearing this time of evaluation and testing, we should anticipate and welcome it. The URANTIA Book can stand the most rigorous examination. It will not begin to serve the nation or the world until in each local community it enters this period of confrontation. This marks the beginning of its public service. Jesus reminds us, "The religion of the spirit means effort, struggle, conflict, faith, determination, love, loyalty, and progress." (1729) We are sailing out on the high seas of daring adventure with the fifth epochal revelation; and we have confidence in the destiny of this voyage of living faith!

*This is the revised
Copy of their paper
I made after Vera
called. I regard the
original version
evolutionally sound
but the deletion will
cause less trouble.*