

SHARING THE URANTIA BOOK ACCORDING TO ITS TEACHINGS:

A SUMMARY

Jeffrey Wattles 12/88

- 1. The basis of sharing.** Sharing truth is a normal part of personality relationships, a duty, a sacred trust, and a delight. Jesus asked his apostles so to live the truth that others would be attracted to inquire (31; 260.4; 575; 1017; 2052.4; 1945; 1726.3).
- 2. Goals for sharing The URANTIA Book.** There is an urgent need for truth in our planet today (59; 1137; 2082). The diverse purposes of The URANTIA Book must be recognized. They include revitalizing the missions of previous epochal revelations and salvaging pre-existing religion as well as bringing spiritual truth and cosmic wisdom to the individual truth seeker (17; 2086; 1626.2).
- 3. Attitudes for sharing truth.** Idealism about sharing truth and evolutionary realism are integrated in patience--the mean between stagnation and overrapid growth (435; 839-41).
- 4. Patterns in epochal revelation.** There are two main types of epochal revelations--(1) spiritual-and-cultural revelations that contain a vibrant spiritual message and also address the general needs of civilization, and (2) exclusively spiritual revelations that specialize in a spiritual gospel (1018.4; 1580-81). The two types of revelation must not be confused; each type has its proper methods and rhythm (911.6). Error on this essential point can cause disaster, as when spiritual-and-cultural revelations try to go fast like exclusively spiritual revelations, or when exclusively spiritual revelations try to carry the baggage of spiritual-and-cultural revelations (758; 844; 1043; 2069). Revelations unfold in stages (586.6).
- 5. Method in sharing truth.** "Do not undertake to show men the beauties of the temple until you have first taken them into the temple" (1593.1). Living interaction often precedes presenting the whole revelation (2084.1; 2043.2). It is

fully legitimate to present the teachings of an epochal revelation without disclosing the epochal fact (1058.4; 1058.2; 1352ff; 1545.4; 1746.3). Spiritual-and-cultural revelations culminate evolutionary development (747.5). Screening for receptivity and safety is normal in sharing a spiritual-and-cultural revelation (743; 591.3; 1101.5; 1004.8-1005.1; 1007.1; 835.8; 1571.6). The patient pursuit of wise evolutionary policies may have rapid and dramatic results (740; 743.11; 586; 793.8; 912.1; 1863.1).

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In sharing the knowledge of The URANTIA Book with others, what policies are wise and what policies are foolish? This question has unfortunately divided readers, leading to clashes of mind and wars of ideas. We have even seen the bonds of spiritual brotherhood strained and temporarily severed. The ultimate solution to this spiritual problem is spiritual: worship and love. It is also possible, however, that progress can be made in articulating the issues, so that people of different perspectives can understand the issues and one another more clearly. As on any disputed topic, the precondition for true discussion is spiritual unity. Let us begin with a moment of silence long enough to recollect the presence of the Father of us all, whose spirit unites us on levels that transcend this issue.

Let us begin with a history of the issue. I will give it according to the impressions and reports I have gathered since 1971. Once upon a time, policy about epochal revelation management was administered by appeal to extra-canonical authority: "we were told." In general, a gradual person-to-person spread of the book was encouraged. The words of Grace E. Stephens of Downer's Grove, Illinois, published in The URANTIAN (vol. 5.4, Winter 1980-81) typify this council:

We exhort the young leaders who are slowly taking our places to faithfully safeguard the new truths which are being placed in their hands. We admonish them to heed the advice of our unseen friends regarding the slow and evolutionary way of presenting advanced truth to the world. Listen to the voices who say that The URANTIA Book is not for this age, but rather for the day when our world has reached a more settled period."

As the readership expanded beyonds the boundaries of the personal influence of the policy setters in Chicago, there occurred a natural decline in regard for the authority of headquarters personnel. Increasingly quotations from The URANTIA Book itself were used to provide grounds for policy.

Within URANTIA Brotherhood, however, a chronic division festered between those who backed the headquarters policy and those who felt that something more aggressive was timely.

The division of opinion grew so severe that in 1973 Martin Myers gained agreement to publish an article titled "Unity, Not Uniformity," (copyright 1973, The URANTIA Foundation) which contained Exhibit A of non-canonical data supporting the headquarters policy of patience. For the first time, material that had been revealed along with the Urantia Papers was presented publicly. Here was the core of headquarters policy, presented in three paragraphs:

We regard The URANTIA Book as a feature of the progressive evolution of human society. It is not germane to the spectacular episodes of epochal revolution, even though it may apparently be timed to appear in the wake of one such revolution in human society. The book belongs to the era immediately to follow the conclusion of the present ideological struggle. That will be the day when men will be willing to seek truth and righteousness. When the chaos of the present confusion has passed, it will be more readily possible to formulate the cosmos of a new and improved era

of human relationships. And it is for this better order of affairs on earth that the book has been made ready.

But the publication of the book has not been postponed to that (possibly) somewhat remote date. And early publication of the book has been provided so that it may be in hand for the training of leaders and teachers. Its presence is also required to engage the attention of persons of means who may be thus led to provide funds for translations into other languages.

We must learn to possess our souls in patience. We are in association with a revelation of truth which is a part of the natural evolution of religion on this world. Over-rapid growth would be suicidal. The book is being given to those who are ready for it long before the day of its world-wide mission. Thousands of study groups must be brought into existence and the book must be translated into many tongues. Thus will the book be in readiness to comfort and enlighten the peoples of many languages when the battle for man's liberty is finally won and the world is once more made safe for the religion of Jesus and the freedom of mankind.

Publication of this material raised many questions. On what basis shall we judge its authenticity? Those who personally knew the Sadlers and/or Emma Christensen and others have grounds for trust in the character of those who imparted these records. Many readers find these paragraphs to be authentic simply in virtue of the quality of writing, evidence of an extra dimension of personality that is characteristic of the authors of the Urantia Papers. Although, empirically speaking, a finite shadow of question can always be raised regarding any transmission outside the normal, these paragraphs hardly seem like the abrupt deliverances of hallucination. And we should evaluate the authenticity of these teachings by their consistency with The URANTIA Book itself and by their ability to illuminate the many-sided teaching of the book. Clearly if this message is

genuine, then it is not outdated; the ideological struggle continues (cf. 1090.5), and the battle for human liberty has hardly been won.

The publication of these paragraphs, however, failed to halt the chronic division. The technique of quoting The URANTIA Book in support of one's view was taken up by opponents of the headquarters policy. Notably a group of readers in Austin, Texas, published a long list of quotations which they alleged supported a contrary policy.

As the debate raged, many people became skeptical that The URANTIA Book could furnish any specific guidance on this most difficult issue. If both sides could hurl quotes at each other, the appeal to the book appeared to many to result in a stand off.

Then came the death of Emma Christensen the last living contact commissioner associated with the coming of the Urantia Papers. Then Vern Grimsley became discredited. These two had been the most prominent advocates of headquarters policy. The opponents of that policy were not slow to respond to this vacuum. Because Vern claimed to receive messages from superhuman sources, some who disagreed with him classed all such appeals in the same category: dubious at best, always unreliable, dangerous at worst. For a time it became practically taboo to refer to what the midwayers had allegedly given by way of instructions.

At present we have a crisis in URANTIA Brotherhood: there is no rational foundation for policy, and there is chaos in the various ideas about policy. Some do not understand that there is an issue at all about how The URANTIA Book is best introduced into our planetary culture. Some people know about the issue, but take no interest in it, following their instincts; they consider that it is in the hands of superhuman wisdom and that nothing we could do cause any significantly harm. Appeal to extra-canonical revelation is still largely taboo. Many readers do not believe that the book can be of much help in answering the question. There

are a handful of conservatives and radicals who believe that a few quotations in The URANTIA Book, taken all by themselves, obviously establish what the appropriate policy is. And many people believe that in this vacuum of rationale, anything goes: each person should just sincerely decide what to do; coordinated policy is impossible; and everybody should be supported in the name of tolerance and brotherhood, no matter what they do, as long as they are sincere.

The noblest variation on this theme is the counsel to pray and follow your guidance. In seeking the Father's will, however, one of the rules of prayer is to have honestly exhausted the human capacity for human adjustment (1002). This means, on a topic like this, that before turning the question over to the Father, surrendering every wish of mind and every craving of soul, that we have done our very best to analyze the data given to us in this book we profess to cherish.

It can be very hard for mortals to discern what's "too slow" and what's "too fast." All sincere readers want to follow "wise evolutionary policies," but what does the term "evolutionary" really imply? If all we can get by way of guidance is a vague quantitative notion that tells us to avoid extremes, we have very little guidance at all. But to whatever extent we find principles to follow then we are not left with mere speculations about where on the spectrum to locate current developments and projects.

There are three sources of data that need to be considered when deciding on policy for epochal revelation management.

First, we need to study The URANTIA Book itself. My purpose in this paper is to offer an outline of an analysis of this primary source of data. Second, we should consider apocryphal data as well as we can, despite the difficulties in doing so. Third, we must be historians of the past and present and, as best we can, of the future. We need to think about empirical data on the receptivity of people. What are our experiences in getting others interested in the book? Do we find that a

large proportion of those to whom we introduce the book become devoted students--or a small proportion? If all these sources of data point in the same direction, as I believe they do, then we can feel assured that our policies are based upon objective results, not subjective emotions.

My purpose is to present the hypothesis that I think best handles all the data in The URANTIA Book. I do not have time to go into every relevant passage; but I believe that the schema I am presenting provides the tools to gain a coherent understanding of the other relevant passages.

This paper has been a practical, systematic presentation of results. But I arrived at these results through the experience of studying the book, part by part. Each part presents a different universe level; each is presented from authors at a different universe level; and each contributes a special perspective on this problem. At times I was frustrated by what appeared to me to be the creative tensions in the authors' implied views. But I was heartened by a glorious revelation of technique: page 309.5 tells us, "The Ancients of Days perfectly deduce the "Father's will by equating the Spirit voice-flash from above and the Michael voice-flashes from below." Paradoxically we, from our human viewpoint, have the task of synthesizing the goal-directed enthusiasm that the Midwayer Commission expresses in Paper 195 with the far-seeing vision of destiny and method in the previous parts. If we understand both dimensions properly, we will not experience conflict but mobilization, not the continued battles between factions that have plagued us so much, but the opportunity for the first time to unite behind some degree of common conception of enthusiasm about the goal and wisdom about the method.

Do not expect precise results about policy details from this study. The URANTIA Book is too rich, subtle, and nuanced to support any narrow dogmatism. That has been one of my lessons from years of study. But neither, I believe, does the book leave us at sea without a star chart. So what you can look for in this

paper is a framework, a perspective, an attitude, an emphasis within which policy details can be productively discussed. Can we delineate a ballpark within which people can reasonably try out their different ideas? No one will be perfectly accurate in calling foul balls. Some will aim for right field and some for left field. But some ideas are not even on the playing field. If this paper advances the conversation, it will have fulfilled its goal.

The URANTIA Book was written to stimulate many generations in different historical situations. Each generation must find the special message the book contains for its time. So do not read this paper as a finished document. No such topical study can ever be definitive. Use this paper as your own worksheet, adding, subtracting, reformulating--and deciding on the principles of wisdom that best suit your opportunities to share truth. Or use it as an outline for group study. I would appreciate your sharing any further thoughts you might have. This topic will be with us a long time.

1. The basis of sharing. Sharing truth is a normal part of personality relationships, a sacred trust, a duty, and a delight. Sharing is best when a person so lives the truth that others are attracted to inquire.

A few quotations establish the leading points.

The higher concepts of universe personality imply: identity, self-consciousness, self-will, and possibility for self-revelation. (31.6)

The Solitary Messengers regard the assignment to reveal truth as the highest trust of their order." (260.4) "The prince's corporeal staff early organize the planetary schools of training and culture, wherein the cream of the evolutionary races are instructed and then sent forth to teach these better ways to their people. (575.2)

To join the Melchizedek church the believer had to promise "to obey the seven commandments of Melchizedek and to tell the good news of this covenant with the Most High to all men." (1017.4)

Jesus said to Jerusalem believers:

You are to go forth preaching the love of God and the service of man.

That which the world needs most to know is: Men are the sons of God, and through faith they can actually realize, and daily experience, this ennobling truth. (2052.4)

If you would share the Master's joy, you must share his love. And to share his love means that you have shared his service. Keep in mind: It is loyalty, not sacrifice, that Jesus demands. The consciousness of sacrifice implies the absence of that wholehearted affection which would have made such a loving service a supreme joy. (1945.3-4)

Our overevangelized society, saturated by countless commercial and political messages daily, is acutely sensitive to pushy religionists. The very term "evangelist" breeds contempt in the minds of many readers of The URANTIA Book.

And many of us know from our own experience how easy it is to be impatient, to neglect the art of whetting appetites, to alienate those we would interest in our message. So we are very receptive to the exhortation to learn first to live the truth before trying to take it to others. Indeed it is only in living the truth that we can truly share it. We welcome Jesus words:

Let me emphatically state this eternal truth: If you, by truth co-ordination, learn to exemplify in your lives this beautiful wholeness of righteousness, your fellow men will then seek after you that they may gain what you have so acquired. The measure wherewith truth seekers are drawn to you represents the measure of your truth endowment, your righteousness. The extent to which you have to go with your message to the people, is, in a way, the measure of your failure to live the whole or righteous life, the truth-co-ordinated life. (1726.3)

To be sure, there is another side to the matter: those to whom Jesus delivered this touching exhortation on attracting others by living the teachings were precisely the ones he had called to go on preaching tours with him throughout Palestine. And he finally exhorted his followers to go into all the world proclaiming the gospel. But they were to proclaim by their lives of loving service. If we distinguish goal (to share truth) and method (by truth-full living), we have a major key to understanding the consistency of the many sides of Jesus' life and teachings.

2. Goals for sharing The URANTIA Book. There is an urgent need for truth in our planet today. The diverse purposes of the book must be recognized. They include revitalizing the missions of previous epochal revelations and salvaging pre-existing religion as well as bringing spiritual truth and cosmic wisdom to the truth seeker.

Many passages highlight the need for truth. I will select but a few.

Religious tradition is the imperfectly preserved record of the experiences of the God-knowing men of past ages, but such records are untrustworthy as guides for religious living or as the source of true information about the Universal Father. (59.7)

Mortal man lacks the concept of morontia mind and material; and revelation is the only technique for atoning for this deficiency in the conceptual data which man so urgently needs in order to construct a logical philosophy of the universe and to arrive at a satisfying understanding of his sure and settled place in that universe. (1137.3)

The teachings of Jesus, even though greatly modified, survived the mystery cults of their birthtime, the ignorance and superstition of the dark ages, and are even now slowly triumphing over the materialism, mechanism, and secularism of the twentieth century. And such times of great testing and threatened defeat are always times of great revelation. (2082.9)

If we take these statements of goals out of context of the book as a whole, they might seem to justify revolutionary policies of sharing The URANTIA Book. If we read them naively, we might feel that they stand in tension with other statements in the book which talk about the wise evolutionary progress. But so long as we remember to distinguish goal from method, we can be inspired by these statements of goal without becoming confused.

The URANTIA Book has many different purposes. Here again there are many quotes that could serve to present a broad picture, but just a few will suffice.

The conclusion of the Foreword expresses purpose:

But we know that there dwells within the human mind a fragment of God, and that there sojourns within the human soul the Spirit of Truth; and we

further know that these spirit forces conspire to enable material man to grasp the reality of spiritual values and to comprehend the philosophy of universe meanings. But even more certainly we know that these spirits of the Divine Presence are able to assist man in the spiritual appropriation of all truth contributory to the enhancement of the ever-progressing reality of personal religious experience--God-consciousness. (17.2)

The purpose of The URANTIA Book surely includes promoting the projects that it lists as having top priority such as "the great challenge to modern man"--attaining closer attunement with the indwelling spirit of God (2097.2) and "the religious challenge of this age"--constructing a new philosophy of living (43.4). And surely one of the purposes of The URANTIA Book is to revitalize the missions of previous epochal revelations, particularly numbers 1, 2, and 4.

One important task, worth discussing at some length, is the unification of Christianity:

The great hope of Urantia lies in the possibility of a new revelation of Jesus with a new and enlarged presentation of his saving message which would spiritually unite in loving service the numerous families of his present-day professed followers. (2086.2)

Now it is a universe pattern that sometimes, when an epochal revelation inaugurates a new mission, it takes more than one epochal revelation to complete that mission. Jesus initiated the gospel movement, and The URANTIA Book is assisting in that mission. Such assistance is analogous to what is described in the following paragraph:

On many worlds it develops that the planet is not made ready for a bestowal Son by one magisterial mission; in that event there will be a second, even a succession of Magisterial Sons, each of whom will advance the races from

one dispensation to another until the planet is made ready for the gift of the bestowal Son. (595.5)

Jesus is our great inspiration in this regard. He thoroughly studied the religious tradition of his environment and led his apostles in doing so. In going to John's baptism, he followed the example of other righteous believers and setting an example for his brothers (1504.4; 1511.1). Jesus made every effort to salvage the pre-existing religion--quietly and gradually to take over the work of John the Baptist (1626.2), before more aggressive, public work.

We can infer from Jesus' strategy the principle to act so as to avoid or delay an epochal confrontation until it is unavoidable and imminent. Look how the youthful Jesus handled the shock of witnessing the Jerusalem temple scene for the first time. He repeatedly retired for meditation; he engaged the religious teachers in questions that imparted teachings, but he remained free of any attempt to win victories (1377ff). Note that after Jesus' public career was underway, even the opposition in Jerusalem (1605.3) and the Nazareth rejection (1686) did not justify the change of tactics of Jesus' epochal sermon (1709). Only the organized opposition of the religious leaders marked the time for the declaration of open warfare (1708.2). Again, to delay epochal confrontation does not mean to avoid all controversy. Rather the wise teacher proclaims only that truth which raises the issue with the greatest leverage for the growth of the people at that time.

There seems to have been a "Plan A" in the fourth epochal revelation. Plan A was for Jesus to come to the Jews, to present his gospel, to win over the religious leaders as well as the Jewish multitudes, and for the new religion to be promulgated from Jerusalem. Plan A worked with the group that had the best racial advantages and the best existing international religious network; furthermore this group was facing a crisis of national suicide which could be avoided if higher teachings were accepted. However, the success of Plan A was dubious from the

start (1347.4). Nevertheless Jesus, by the end of the Roman tour, concluded that Palestine really was the best place for his public work, all things considered (1483.1), and he gave Plan A the full measure of his devotion, knowing full well that Plan B would become operative soon after his death. Plan B was for the gospel movement to be centered in the west.

As I interpret The URANTIA Book, there is something like a Plan A again. Christianity is in crisis. It is the leading world religion, the greatest exponent of Jesus' teachings and the greatest obstacle to them (2085.1-2). The religion of Jesus is guaranteed to triumph. Whether or not Christianity will embrace the religion of Jesus is the question. Will Christianity become the butterfly that emerges from its present larval state or will it be the discarded cocoon (1866)? Will the great hope of Urantia—for the new revelation to unify the followers of Jesus—be fulfilled (2086)? Now this epochal revelation is destined to benefit all religions, all peoples; it serves precisely to break down religious barriers, e.g., between those who regard themselves as followers of Jesus and those who do not. But there seems to me to be another Plan A at work: for The URANTIA Book to be presented to Christianity in such a way that it gets accepted by the church. Some groups, undoubtedly, will reject the book; some will accept it. But on the whole, what will the answer be? How will the critical mass go? How will the great religious bodies, such as the Catholic Church, decide? These are epoch-shaping issues. There may once again be a time of epochal confrontation, when compromise and adjustment give way to open conflict. But that time is not now. Our methods of communication and our attitudes must be consistent with a policy of attracting potential readers. I do not mean distorting our teaching to appeal to Christianity. Paul distorted the teachings of Jesus to appeal to the Roman culture that was his missionary arena and reaped an unintended harvest in so doing. I mean presenting the book wisely and attractively.

I want to point to one more purpose of The URANTIA Book. Jesus' teachings are also to function as the foundation of a new and higher civilization (1720.3) This project is in some ways quite unusual. Normally, there is a sequence of revelations, each building upon the previous ones. On the basis of missions that establish the general cultural integrity (educational, familial, intellectual), the spiritual revelation proceeds. The Bestowal Son's spiritualizing mission arrives as the center gem-stone in the lovely ring crafted by the Planetary Prince's staff and the Adamic mission and the intellectual achievements sponsored by the Magisterial Son. But Jesus arrived to spiritualize a planet whose culture was at best very partial and fragmentary. Because of the rebellion and the default, the relative absence of spiritual-and-cultural revelation on our planet inverts the normal relationship between the kind of epochal mission that serves as the foundation and the kind that thrives on that foundation. Now we are being asked, roughly, to rebuild the culture on a spiritual foundation. The URANTIA Book can help us to achieve that civilization, giving guidelines to help us make up for lost revelations.

How widely will The URANTIA Book be accepted? How fully will it be permitted to function? We are told that "On some planets, where this Magisterial Son is universally accepted, he remains for one age; and thus the planet prospers under the joint rulership of three Sons: the Planetary Prince, the Material Son, and the Magisterial Son, the latter two being visible to all the inhabitants of the realm" (588.1). Will The URANTIA Book be universally accepted? Or will it be forced to retire to the libraries and study groups of an enthusiastic minority, waiting for another Son to vindicate their loyalty? The policies we follow have a great deal to do with the answer. Massive exposure at present would guarantee nearly universal rejection.

3. Attitudes for sharing truth. Attitude involves the relationship of the total personality to the total environment (1227.5). The dynamic attitudes of ascenders

are portrayed on p. 291.3. And the supreme desire to do the will of God and the love of sisters and brothers are the most essential of all.

There is a passage in Part II which I believe has special relevance to the question of attitude as it relates to our activities with a new epochal revelation. It presents patience is the mean between stagnation and overrapid growth. The passage describing the Quickeners of Morality offers a philosophy of living as a student-trustee of The URANTIA Book. It may seem subjective to select this passage and to interpret the sequence of concepts presented there. But its central theme of patience as the mean between stagnation and over-rapid growth places this passage squarely among the ones prominent for the discussion of our topic. This passage provides a strategic sermon on how to live the human life as a student-trustee of The URANTIA Book.

What is loyalty? It is the fruit of an intelligent appreciation of universe brotherhood; one could not take so much and give nothing. As you ascend the personality scale, first you learn to be loyal, then to love, then to be filial, and then may you be free; but not until you are a finaliter, not until you have attained perfection of loyalty, can you self-realize finality of liberty.

These seraphim teach the fruitfulness of patience: That stagnation is certain death, but that overrapid growth is equally suicidal. . . . The keys of the kingdom of heaven are: sincerity, more sincerity, and more sincerity."
(435)

Notice that coordination of the lower being with higher wisdom is the first task. Loyalty is the first virtue. Then patience is proposed as the mean between stagnation and overrapid growth. Application to daily living is next on the list. Finally, on the basis of all that has gone before, comes the assurance about the ultimate success of our sincerity in desiring to do the Father's will. This assurance

does not float outside the context of loyalty to superiors or in abstraction from the wisdom of patience from a superhuman perspective.

Sometimes we hear sincerity exalted in a vacuum, as though everyone should simply consult his or her inner heart and decide what to do—and that no one should ever object to another person's acting on this kind of sincerity. But the revealed philosophy of living exalts sincerity only after loyalty has been exercised. Each of the previous epochal revelations had clear policy guidelines. Their recipients were to be sincere in creatively applying these guidelines. They were not to overturn these guidelines, however sincere they might have felt in so doing.

One of the surest marks of a revolutionary policy is the impatience which lies at its root. The patience characteristic of an evolutionary attitude is indicated in the phrase, "Jesus was a calm and happy laborer" (1509.1). Impatience may masquerade in the rhetoric of planetary concern and benevolence. We know that attitudes of pride and assertions of individual liberty are major danger signals. And we know that willingness to be obedient to higher instructions, when they are clear, is crucial.

The case of Adam and Eve is the supreme lesson on the dangers of impatience. We read,

After more than one hundred years of effort on Urantia, Adam was able to see very little progress outside the Garden; the world at large did not seem to be improving much. The realization of race betterment appeared to be a long way off, and the situation seemed so desperate as to demand something for relief not embraced in the original plans. (839.1)

Probably no Material Sons of Nebadon were ever faced with such a difficult and seemingly hopeless task as confronted Adam and Eve in the sorry plight of Urantia. But they would have sometime met with success had they been more farseeing and patient. Both of them, especially Eve, were altogether

too impatient; they were not willing to settle down to the long, long endurance test. They wanted to see some immediate results, and they did, but the results thus secured proved most disastrous both to themselves and to their world. (840.3)

Serapatia liked the long-range plan, but wanted to add something—"he wanted to see some immediate results—something in his own lifetime" (841.6). Solonia concludes,

But had they been guided by the counsel of the Melchizedeks and their associates, and had they been more patient, they would have eventually met with success. But Eve listened to the insidious propaganda of personal liberty and planetary freedom of action. . . . Never, in all your ascent to Paradise, will you gain anything by impatiently attempting to circumvent the established and divine plan by short cuts, personal inventions, or other devices for improving on the way of perfection, to perfection, and for eternal perfection. (846.3-4)

One of the most important lessons of the default is that the disastrous Luciferian sophistries of personal liberty and planetary freedom of action can infect even those who believe in the Universal Father and want to achieve his goals for this planet.

We sometimes hear patience denounced as a rationalization for inactivity. To be sure, there are some who speak of patience and do nothing to find new readers of The URANTIA Book. It is sophistry and hypocrisy to distort beautiful words by using them in support of activities or inactivities that are not beautiful. We know that the spirit of the crusader "is more than dangerous if not controlled by spiritual insight and loyal devotion to the commonplace social obligations of human loyalties" (1101), but many of Jesus' teachings were aimed at mobilizing complacent, lethargic religionists. Patience is not lethargy. We may all have to

face the question, "Did you start a study group?" Or, if we have the means, "Did you sponsor a translation?" Or, if we are teachers, "Did you train teachers and leaders?"

4. Patterns in epochal revelation. There are two main types of epochal revelations--(1) spiritual-and-cultural revelations that contain a vibrant spiritual message and also address the general needs of civilization, and (2) exclusively spiritual revelations that specialize in a spiritual gospel. The way of spreading a spiritual-and-cultural revelation is different from the way of spreading an exclusively spiritual revelation. There are disastrous consequences when spiritual-and-cultural revelations try to go fast like exclusively spiritual revelations, or when exclusively spiritual revelations try to carry the baggage of spiritual-and-cultural revelations. Revelations unfold in stages.

The first type of epochal revelation ministers to the full range of planetary needs--social, economic, and political, as well as religious. The revelations of the Planetary Prince's staff and Adam and Eve (despite other differences) were of this type. I call this a spiritual-and-cultural revelation.

The second type of epochal revelation specializes in promulgating a spiritual gospel. The missions of Melchizedek and Jesus were of this type.

Now there are many ways of classifying epochal revelations. (1008.3) But this way of classifying has the following claim to objectivity: the type two revelations insisted on the difference.

Like Jesus, Melchizedek attended strictly to the fulfillment of the mission of his bestowal. He did not attempt to reform the mores, to change the habits of the world, nor to promulgate even advanced sanitary practices or scientific truths. He came to achieve two tasks: to keep alive on earth the

truth of the one God and to prepare the way for the subsequent mortal bestowal of a Paradise Son of that Universal Father. (1018.4)

Notice that this passage itself points out the similarity of Melchizedek and Jesus on this essential point.

Prior to the incarnation on the earth, Immanuel counseled Michael, "In your relations to the social order we advise that you confine your efforts largely to spiritual regeneration and intellectual emancipation. Avoid all entanglements with the economic structure and the political commitments of your day." (1329.6)

After the Ordination Sermon, Jesus had to clarify a number of points with a few of his apostles:

He cautioned his apostles to be discreet in their remarks concerning the strained relations then existing between the Jewish people and the Roman government; he forbade them to become in any way embroiled in these difficulties. He was always careful to avoid the political snares of his enemies, ever making reply, "Render to Caesar the things which are Caesar's and to God the things which are God's." He refused to have his attention diverted from his mission of establishing a new way of salvation; he would not permit himself to be concerned about anything else. In his personal life he was always duly observant of all civil laws and regulations; in all his public teachings he ignored the civic, social, and economic realms. He told the three apostles that he was concerned only with the principles of man's inner and personal spiritual life. (1580.5)

We can observe a correlation between these types of revelation and corresponding different velocities of propagation. A Mack truck is not a Ferrari. The motto of spiritual-and-cultural revelation is characterized by slow and steady

growth. Exclusively spiritual revelation is a gospel to be proclaimed to all the world.

It is not easy to figure out why we observe these differences in propagation velocity. Is there a cosmic pattern here that can explain the phenomena? One suggestion comes in the following passage:

No great social or economic change should be attempted suddenly. Time is essential to all types of human adjustment--physical, social, or economic. Only moral and spiritual adjustments can be made on the spur of the moment, and even these require the passing of time for the full outworking of their material and social repercussions. (911.6)

Presumably the overrapid spread of a spiritual-and-cultural revelation would precipitate hasty and misguided efforts at social transformation. Also spiritual-and-cultural revelation cannot be absorbed quickly because it asks for such thoroughgoing transformation, not only in ourselves, but in our families and social groups. If those who promulgate this revelation are to follow the requirement of incorporating it in their lives, they have much farther to go than the spiritual beginning indicated by rebirth. Recall our leading principle of sharing, that we must first live the revelation before going forth to share it. The personal growth required to be a living example of this type of revelation is great. Being spiritually reborn is only the beginning. The ideal requirement is something approaching God-consciousness in the fullest sense (as indicated on 806.5-6 or 2094.3).

Another explanation for the difference in propagation velocity of the two types of revelation is that all people or nearly all are ready for the simple gospel; whereas, roughly speaking, only the most advanced are ready to participate in a spiritual-and-cultural revelation.

There are disastrous consequences when spiritual-and-cultural revelations try to go fast like exclusively spiritual revelations, or when exclusively spiritual revelations try to carry the baggage of spiritual-and-cultural revelations.

If you try to drive a Mack truck too fast around curves, it tips over. If you try to pull the load of a truck with a Ferrari, the engine can't handle it.

Look what has happened when those in charge of an epochal revelation betrayed the essence of their mission and confused the types.

When the first epochal revelation tried to accelerate faster than a normal evolutionary process would permit, the whole enterprise collapsed within fifty years.

Great confusion reigned in Dalamatia and thereabout for almost fifty years after the instigation of rebellion. The complete and radical reorganization of the whole world was attempted; revolution displaced evolution as the policy of cultural advancement and racial improvement. Among the superior and partially trained sojourners in and near Dalamatia there appeared a sudden advancement in cultural status, but when these new and radical methods were attempted on the outlying peoples, indescribable confusion and racial pandemonium was the immediate result. Very soon after the rebellion the entire staff of sedition were engaged in energetic defense of the city against the hordes of semisavages who besieged its walls as a result of the doctrines of liberty which had been prematurely taught them. (758.7-8)

After Adam and Eve gave in to the temptation to accelerate their type one revelation faster than the laws of evolution would permit, disaster struck.

When they learned what had happened to Eve, the infuriated inhabitants of the Garden became unmanageable; they declared war on the near-by Nodite settlement. They swept out through the gates of Eden and down upon these unprepared people, utterly destroying them--not a man, woman, or child was spared. And Cano, the father of Cain yet unborn, also perished. Upon the

realization of what had happened, Serapatatia was overcome with consternation and beside himself with fear and remorse. The next day he drowned himself in the great river. The children of Adam sought to comfort their distracted mother while their father wandered in solitude for thirty days.

The news of the annihilation of the Nodite settlement near Eden was not slow in reaching the home tribes of Serapatatia to the north, and presently a great host was assembling to march on the Garden. And this was the beginning of a long and bitter warfare between the Adamites and the Nodites, for these hostilities kept up long after Adam and his followers emigrated to the second garden in the Euphrates valley. (844.3)

The type two revelations also had their problems.

Regarding the Salem gospel in Mesopotamia we are told:

The early progress of the Melchizedek teaching was highly gratifying until Nabodad, the leader of the school at Kish, decided to make a concerted attack upon the prevalent practices of temple harlotry. But the Salem missionaries failed in their effort to bring about this social reform, and in the wreck of this failure all their more important spiritual and philosophic teachings went down in defeat.

This defeat of the Salem gospel was immediately followed by a great increase in the cult of Ishtar, a ritual which had already invaded Palestine as Ashtoreth, Egypt as Isis, Greece as Aphrodite, and the northern tribes as Astarte. And it was in connection with this revival of the worship of Ishtar that the Babylonian priests turned anew to stargazing; astrology experienced its last great Mesopotamian revival, fortunetelling became the vogue, and for centuries the priesthood increasingly deteriorated.

Melchizedek had warned his followers to teach about the one God, the Father and Maker of all, and to preach only the gospel of divine favor through faith alone. But it has often been the error of the teachers of new truth to attempt too much, to attempt to supplant slow evolution by sudden revolution. The Melchizedek missionaries in Mesopotamia raised a moral standard too high for the people; they attempted too much, and their noble cause went down in defeat. (1043.2-4)

Note that it is generally the case that if an advanced religion is rejected, either because of mismanagement or because of popular resistance, the region take a giant step backward in religion; "the weakening of Vedism through the rejection of higher truth" is noted (1028.6).

Analogous problems developed for Christianity, which added so much of western culture to its spiritual core that it has become a white man's religion.

Christianity presumed to embrace too much for any one people to assimilate in one or two generations. It was not a simple spiritual appeal, such as Jesus had presented to the souls of men; it early struck a decided attitude on religious rituals, education, magic, medicine, art, literature, law, government, morals, sex regulation, polygamy, and, in limited degree, even slavery. (2069.3)

Christianity suffers under a great handicap because it has become identified in the minds of all the world as a part of the social system, the industrial life, and the moral standards of Western civilization (2086.6)

Observe that those who violated their mandate, who did not conform to the instructions they had been given, who misunderstood or chose to ignore the type of revelation they were entrusted with carrying, were sincere. They could hardly have predicted the consequences of their well-meant but disastrous adventures. If someone had warned them accurately of what lurked beyond their proposals, such a

person would have been laughed out of their company as a paranoid fanatic, a fear-monger, and a reactionary. It is sad that those in URANTIA Brotherhood who have proposed an historical scrutiny of the dangers that we need to avoid have at times been called down as fear mongers. The brief sermon that Jesus reviewed most often with the apostles, the Ordination Sermon, contains many blunt warnings. Foolish businessmen consider the optimistic side but not the risks of their decisions. It is more scientific to consider risks as well as opportunities.

In terms of this classification of types, The URANTIA Book is clearly a spiritual-and-cultural revelation. The book takes stands on eugenics, profit-motivated economics, and world government. It addresses matters that directly touch every institution of power on this planet—from the religious to the educational to the political. My analysis of the types of epochal revelation suggests that to treat The URANTIA Book as a gospel to be proclaimed aggressively to all the world could lead to disaster. I infer that we should therefore adopt the kind of attitude toward the book which is characteristic of the solid and sure growth during the times of the wise management of the first two epochal revelations. We should painstakingly pay attention to the principles of epochal revelation management and insist that our outreach activities be in conformity to them. Those who take basically a gospel mentality towards the promulgation of the book are not likely to hit evolutionary wisdom; on the other hand, if we try our best to find wise policies within the attitudes appropriate to the kind of revelation that this book is, we are much more likely to succeed.

The URANTIA Book seems designed to help reactivate the missions of the previous epochal revelations. In order to perform this function well, its readers must clearly distinguish what type of project they want to work on and what constraints that type of project has. Specifically, Part IV makes it possible to see The URANTIA Book functioning, in part, to help complete the mission of the fourth

epochal revelation (as well as to anticipate future epochs). Part IV helps revitalize the gospel movement that Jesus began. But if we forget the insertion of Part IV in a larger whole, and take its exhortations to proclaim its truth to all the world as exhortations to proclaim the book itself, then I believe we are headed for grave trouble. It seems to me that these problems require all the intellectual and emotional maturity and cosmic and spiritual insight that we can muster. We cannot jumble all these types of missions together. The mission of the Planetary Prince, for example, is independent of the missions of other divine Sons!

Paradise Sons and their dispensations may come and go, but a successful Planetary Prince continues on as the ruler of his realm. His work is quite independent of the missions of the other Sons, being designed to foster the development of planetary civilization. (576.5)

Revelations unfold in stages. The Adamic bestowal exemplifies a two-stage epochal revelation: a phase of partial contact with the planetary population and a phase of full contact.

Even in early times when the violet peoples are relatively segregated, their schools receive suitable candidates from among the world races, while the industrial developments of the garden open up new channels of commercial intercourse. Thus do the Adams and Eves and their progeny contribute to the sudden expansion of culture and to the rapid improvement of the evolutionary races of their worlds. And all of these relationships are augmented and sealed by the amalgamation of the evolutionary races and the sons of Adam, resulting in the immediate upstepping of biologic status, the quickening of intellectual potential, and enhancement of spiritual receptivity. (586.6)

Perhaps The URANTIA Book is destined to meet the world in two phases, an early quiet phase, and a later phase (corresponding, presumably, to planetary readiness and desire for truth). A further possible analogy is that students of The URANTIA Book might make tremendous contributions, say, to spiritual progress and religious harmony during the early phase--which functions to prepare the later phase.

There is some analogy to this two-stage revelation to be found in other revelations. The Planetary Prince's staff had an early period of gathering their associates (including the procreation of the primary midwayers), organizing their headquarters, and establishing their ten councils for service. Melchizedek's mission did not go into high gear with sustaining drive until he had fully won over Abraham. And Jesus' mission advanced through a series of stages, even after his public career had begun.

So the idea of a mission in several stages is nothing new. Suppose we try out the idea that The URANTIA Book has an early, comparatively quiet stage, and then a stage for explicit world-wide functioning. What will be the signal for stage two? That's the big question. Some people say the early quiet stage was over when the book was published. Some people say we need translations into major languages and thousands of study groups first, in order to handle the intense questioning and confusion inevitable when the gold rush for truth is on. Our later points will shed some light on this question.

Now I want to speculate a bit about the timing of the fifth epochal revelation. Timing was a significant factor in previous revelations. The Planetary Prince came when the racial diversification had occurred. Adam and Eve came when biologic evolution had reached its apex. Melchizedek arrived when the deterioration of the God concept had gone far enough--and when he could co-

ordinate his revelation with Abraham's work to carry the torch. Jesus came when the Jewish people were maximally prepared for a great religious development and when the opportunity for a new religion to spread was optimal.

The URANTIA Book says a few intriguing things about our immediate future. Not only did they foresee more world war in 1935, they also saw us quivering on the brink of a spiritual renaissance. I believe that The URANTIA Book is designed to play a two-fold role with respect to that spiritual renaissance. First of all, I do foresee God, not The URANTIA Book, as the content of that renaissance, the focus of that enthusiasm. The URANTIA Book is too advanced to become a mass phenomenon as the spiritual renaissance is. But the book can affect the leadership of that spiritual renaissance. And after humanity has embraced the living God more fully, the next question will be how to integrate this spiritual experience with the requirements of evolving planetary life. How can we reorder planetary institutions in the light of the love of God? How can we develop a higher concept of God to harmonize the diversity of planetary religious traditions? The book is timed to meet the needs of the spiritual renaissance as it turns to extend its wisdom. I therefore see a greater need for the immediate future for those who are "exclusively devoted to the spiritual regeneration of men" (2082.10) and a greater need thereafter for experts in The URANTIA Book. To be sure, there is a need right now for teachers of The URANTIA Book, and there will always be a need for the exclusive spiritual devotion characteristic of the Jesusonian mission. If my idea of timing is correct, then excessive and premature public exposure to The URANTIA Book runs the risk of drawing forth criticism that turns away the masses of people to the book's gift, so that when the time comes for the book to speak to the planet's felt needs, many people are inoculated against the book; they will look elsewhere; the drama of the timed meeting of planetary question and universe answer will be partly lost.

5. Method in sharing truth.

The clearest and simplest principle of epochal revelation management that I find in Jesus' teachings is presented in the following quotation. If I had to abandon the effort to understand the book holistically and return to hurling quotes, this is the one I would hurl:

When you enter the kingdom you are reborn. You cannot teach the deep things of the spirit to those who have been born only of the flesh; first see that men are born of the spirit before you seek to instruct them in the advanced ways of the spirit. Do not undertake to show men the beauties of the temple until you have first taken them into the temple. (1592.7-1593.1)

There is such a wisdom about the laws of growth imbedded in this teaching that we will do well to work at understanding why Jesus gave it.

Melchizedek followed the same policy, presenting advanced teachings only to those who could handle them (1916-17). The URANTIA Book presents the beauties of the temple. Will we be so dazzled by those beauties that we frustrate the deep wisdom implied by the practice of Jesus and Melchizedek and made explicit in this passage?

It is this principle of epochal revelation management, I believe, that poses the most significant challenge to many of our favorite outreach projects today. We need therefore to be most careful in deciding whether we are prepared to follow the Jesusonian way, and second, what the implications of that decision may be.

There is a classic principle of interpretation that is most helpful: use the passages that are clear to interpret the passages that are not clear. The passage we have seen is not clear about the role of the new epochal revelation in planetary progress toward brotherhood. But other passages, I am arguing, enable us to fill in part of gap of uncertainty.

It is characteristic of the authors to say very little about their own product, leaving its use to just such discernment as we are now attempting. This is in part because to give highly specific instructions might restrict our legitimate freedom to experience the joy of discovering appropriate policy and achieving cooperation with our unseen friends. The instructions given there, are, indeed quite specific. Perhaps if we follow the instructions that are clear, the rest of the path will be more apparent as further steps become timely.

Living interaction often precedes presenting the whole revelation. Revelation is not only the book one may read; it is equally the life one can live.

Christianity has indeed done a great service for this world, but what is now most needed is Jesus. The world needs to see Jesus living again on earth in the experience of spirit-born mortals who effectively reveal the Master to all men. (2084.1)

It is a lot easier to hand someone a book than to express the gospel to that person, and a higher achievement still to love that person in a way that incorporates both gosselling and book-sharing as appropriate.

A most interesting example of how the importance of presenting the revelation is ambiguously presented in the context of clear and concrete exhortations to brotherly and sisterly activity is 597#6, the section titled, "Urantia's Postbestowal Age." This passage is especially interesting inasmuch as both camps have appealed to this passage for support. It is thus one of those that is unclear in its implications for policy with The URANTIA Book. It needs to be clarified by reference to statements that are clearer. Our two great planetary priorities are spiritual brotherhood and social brotherhood. Regarding spiritual brotherhood, the Mighty Messenger tells us that "Jesus has shown the way to the immediate attainment of spiritual brotherhood...." Presumably by enough of us following the way that has already been demonstrated, we can realize this goal. This passage

teaches that "religious revelation is essential to the realization of brotherhood on Urantia," and evidently much of what is essential has already occurred.

Regarding social brotherhood we are told, "the realization of social brotherhood on your world depends much on the achievement of the following personal transformations and planetary adjustments:" What follows is another remarkable sequence: social fraternity, intellectual cross-fertilization, ethical awakening, political wisdom, and spiritual insight.

None of the explanations of these agenda speaks clearly about the role of the fifth epochal revelation. But there is at least one idea here that contributes to our consideration of epochal revelation management: that the sharing of The URANTIA Book should be conducted and evaluated in terms of its contribution to these goals. And we should note that this section seems to offer clear support for the project of Jesus' gospel movement.

It is fully legitimate to present the teachings of an epochal revelation without disclosing the epochal fact. Let's take some pointers now from how Jesus managed his epochal revelation. First, notice that Jesus separated his basic teachings from the epochal fact of his bestowal. He greatly delayed announcing his divine Sonship. But a book cannot enjoy the freedom of a personality to present only the teaching relevant to the immediate situation, however. Nonetheless a reader can present some of the teachings of a revelation without presenting the full revelation itself. Sometimes this practice is referred to by the pejorative term, "bootlegging," as if it were somehow devious, lacking in forthrightness, unethical. Bootlegging, after all, is pretty unsavory business. I hope I never hear the term again applied to what Jesus taught his disciples to do. Maybe the next time someone challenges me as someone who advocates bootlegging I should respond that I sure hope I can get some good spirits into areas where they otherwise would be forbidden. The fact of the matter is that Jesus often gave his

teachings without letting on what the full package was. Jesus insisted that the gospel not be upstaged by the epochal fact (1670d).

It's also often necessary to attenuate high teachings: Ikhnaton (1058.4) and Moses (1058.2) are given very high marks for doing so. It would destroy sagacity to feel honor-bound to reveal your source every time you mention a truth that you found in The URANTIA Book. This is not to deny that many people are ready for the book itself, or that the book can achieve certain results that ordinary teachings can not do.

Melchizedek also did not initially announce the epochal fact--that he was superhuman--and he left when he began to be regarded with superstitious awe.

When the epochal fact was prematurely trumpeted about by Anna and Simeon (1352ff), the baby Jesus was murderously pursued by the powers of the status quo.

Jesus kept the epochal fact under wraps until Peter's confession, well after the Epochal sermon. That was the time when the organized opposition on the part of the religious leaders was about to break out. And even then he asked them to conceal the epochal fact until his mission was nearly over.

One of Jesus' practices bears on a problem that we face today. Some people object to presenting the teachings of The URANTIA Book without presenting the book itself. This seems somehow secretive, and many people feel uncomfortable about that. Throughout every part of the book, however, the authors refer to certain kinds of secrets with respect. The reader-trustee must, therefore, evaluate the ethics of omitting or delaying certain information in the light of the following points about secrets. There are secrets for various reasons (144#1; 207#1). The information may be incomprehensible (for the time being or forever) (79.1; 144.4; 145.1; 219.3); there may be a violation of personal intimacy (208.4; 208.5) or of reverence (603.3). The information may be irrelevant to someone's work (144.6; 147.5; 149.6; 350.6) or even harmful to someone's work--it might

"confuse and handicap" the person (145.1; 148.5; 149.6) or stifle the imagination (330.2).

As Jesus grew, he disclosed less information about himself (1391.4-5). He dissociated the phases of his career (1423.5-8). He restrained talk of the voice at his baptism (1545.4). He restrained public preaching during the early phase of kingdom work (1538.3). He forbade denunciations of Caesar or his servants and told the apostles to stay out of political, social, and economic tangles (1542.5; 1580-81). He tried to keep his healings quiet. He presented his teachings in parables, partly as a defensive measure to confuse superficial hearers (1749.4). He gave special teaching to those (e.g., Nathaniel) who were ready for it and who promised not to share it with others (1767.4). He restricted some meetings for counsel and planning to those who were tried and tested disciples (1717.4). Note further his selective answering of questions in his trial (1979.3; 1982.7,9; 1983c; 1984.2; 1986.3; 1990d; 1992.5; 1996.1). And note the contrast between the Master's discretion and the evasion of Peter's denial. Jesus recommended that our real prayers be in secret (1640.2). We are cautioned not to waste our time trying to unravel the mysteries of his incarnation (1317.2) and excarnation (2021.4-9).

What shall we conclude from this? Obviously a mission of revelation cannot be successful if it is preoccupied with what is not yet to be revealed. But holding some information in abeyance, during an appropriate period, seems to safeguard, not cramp, the real mission of revelation.

Spiritual-and-cultural revelations culminate evolutionary development. The First Epochal Revelation succeeded for 300,000 years—as long as it followed a key policy of handling revelation in an evolutionary manner:

None of the Prince's staff would present revelation to complicate evolution; they presented revelation only as the climax of their exhaustion of the forces of evolution. (747.5)

This policy is not precisely what is appropriate for us, but we should undertake the labor of adapting it to our situation today. In other words, I am suggesting that the burden of proof should be upon those who would depart from this policy. Much work on this principle remains to be done.

And we need to measure the value of our projects in terms of such revealed principles as we can discern, not measure our principles in terms of whether or not they justify the activities that we like doing.

Screening for receptivity and safety is normal in sharing a spiritual-and-cultural revelation. If the only tool you have is a hammer, you'll treat everything as if it were a nail. If we make The URANTIA Book mandatory in our ministry, we fall into this elementary blunder. Not everyone is ready for the book.

Because a certain development is required to prepare a person for revelation, some screening of prospects for epochal revelation is appropriate. This topic is difficult to discuss. People have some intuitive sense of what is appropriate to bring up in a given conversation and what is not. We ordinarily do not have to discuss the matter. And we feel a danger of elitism lurking in raising the question of who is ready for the book. People have an instinctive reaction against judging people. But if we want to learn what The URANTIA Book can teach on this subject, however, we must make it explicit.

First of all, screening is not judging people, not judging souls. Screening is a matter of being wise as serpents, even as we desire to be harmless as doves. The guards at the airport do not judge you; they check you in a fairly superficial way to make flying safer for all concerned. We need to understand as much as we can about screening policies in the previous epochal revelations. There are two basic kinds of screening. The first type is screening for receptivity, and there are three guidelines for doing this:

(a) Seek out superior individuals.

The Prince's corporeal staff continuously gathered about them the superior individuals of the surrounding tribes and, after training and inspiring these students, sent them back as teachers and leaders of their respective peoples. (743; cf. 575.2)

(b) Seek out those with advanced religious capacity, and particularly those with experience in human religions.

The evolution of the religious capacity of receptivity in the inhabitants of a world largely determines their rate of spiritual advancement and the extent of religious revelation. (591.3)

The characteristic difference between evolved and revealed religion is a new quality of divine wisdom which is added to purely experiential human wisdom. But it is experience in and with the human religions that develops the capacity for subsequent reception of increased bestowals of divine wisdom and cosmic insight. (1101.5)

(c) Seek out those whose ideas already agree substantially with those of The URANTIA Book.

But it is only foolish to attempt the too sudden acceleration of religious growth. A race or nation can only assimilate from any advanced religion that which is reasonably consistent and compatible with its current evolutionary status, plus its genius for adaptation. (1004.8-1005.1)

It is the mission of revelation to sort and censor the successive religions of evolution. But if revelation is to exalt and upstep the religions of evolution, then must such divine visitations portray teachings which are not too far removed from the thought and reactions of the age in which they are presented. Thus must and does revelation always keep in touch with evolution. Always must the religion of revelation be limited by man's capacity of receptivity. (1007.1)

For whom is the fifth epochal revelation intended? One clue is to try to discern from the text itself to what type of reader it is directed. It is interesting to inquire what beliefs and knowledge seem to be presupposed by the authors.

The second type of screening is screening for safety to the revelation.

Unarmed observers were freely admitted to Eden for short visits. To sojourn in the Garden a Urantian had to be 'adopted.' He received instructions in the plan and purpose of the Adamic bestowal, signified his intention to adhere to this mission, and then made declaration of loyalty to the social rule of Adam and the spiritual sovereignty of the Universal Father. (835.8)

The prohibition against arms of course reminds us that visitors could do harm to the Garden inhabitants. The initial screening here is protective.

Note that Jesus advocated protective screening in the Ordination Sermon:

Present not that which is holy to dogs, neither cast your pearls before swine, lest they trample your gems under foot and turn to rend you. (1571.6)

What dangers require screening in our day? Most obviously, we would want to avoid bringing the revelation to the notice of those who would become its enemies. Less obviously, it would also be good to screen out revolutionaries—those whose enthusiasm for the revelation would lack respect for evolution.

Revolutionary efforts multiply enemies and precipitate premature conflict.

The URANTIA Book takes on the powers of this world. It challenges the nationalism of every nation that regards itself as sovereign, the materialism of every business enterprise that subordinates service to profit, the authority of every religious tradition that clings to scripture, priests, and traditional ritual, and the secularism of any society that tries to live without God. It strains my imagination to think that we readers will never encounter persecution, sooner or later, in this country or elsewhere, in some form or other. If and when this becomes inevitable, let us rejoice in sharing the experiences of the prophets before us. But let us not

bring down the wrath of the powers of this world prematurely on others who would otherwise have an opportunity to grow in peace.

The point of this remark is not that we should avoid all controversy. The Planetary Prince's staff, for example, proclaimed "the gospel of individual initiative" within the tradition-bound social groups of that day (749.4). The point is that only the most strategic points should be selected whereon controversy is timely.

One of the marks of revolutionary thinking is that it rejects the notion that there is any need for screening the potential recipients of revelation. But evolutionary policies seek out those who are ready and who are likely not to do harm to the revelation, either through enmity or through excessive zeal. In our efforts at screening, there are risks, mistakes will be made. We are told that we can never know a person as a result of a single meeting. We are told that to know a person involves knowing the individual's motivations. This is a demanding requirement; and we need to consider whether in some situations that requirement may be too high; but again, we need to base our consideration upon revelation, not inclination. But if we refuse to accept the responsibility of screening, I believe that we are letting the revelators down.

The patient pursuit of wise evolutionary policies may have rapid and dramatic results. I used to think that evolutionary was a synonym for slow, and as a first approximation, that is correct. (749.5-6; cf. 749-750) Evolutionary policies may usually be distinguished from revolutionary policies by their velocity: evolutionary policies produce more gradual growth, revolutionary policies aim to accelerate growth overly.

One danger of overrapid revelation is indicated on 554-55: "But sometimes error is so great that its rectification by revelation would be fatal to those slowly emerging truths which are essential to its experiential overthrow." As in psychoanalysis, if you tell the patient the key, you spoil the discovery and derail

the growth. This sets a very interesting albeit risky question as we look at the various planetary groups today (hopefully avoiding pride): what errors seem so great that revelation would compromise their growth?

But notice that evolution is not always slow.

When physical conditions are ripe, sudden mental evolutions may take place; when mind status is propitious, sudden spiritual transformations may occur (740.3)

The arrival of the Prince's staff created a profound impression. While it required almost a thousand years for the news to spread abroad, those tribes near the Mesopotamian headquarters were tremendously influenced by the teachings and conduct of the one hundred new sojourners on Urantia. (743.11)

Even in the early times when the violet peoples are relatively segregated, their schools receive suitable candidates from among the world races, while the industrial developments of the garden open up new channels of commercial intercourse. Thus do the Adams and Eves and their progeny contribute to the sudden expansion of culture and to the rapid improvement of the evolutionary races of their worlds. (586.6)

After assuring us of what a long time it will take to obliterate social class differences through racial, educational, and religious progress, we are told that much social improvement will immediately result from the intelligent, wise, and patient manipulation of these acceleration factors of cultural progress. (793.8)

Suppose someone says that in this time of accelerated change, the old evolutionary methods are obsolete. This is like saying that when you hit white water rapids, you can jettison the fundamentals of canoeing. During a period of rapid change, we must still be faithful to the essentials.

And only by adherence to these essentials can man hope to maintain his present-day civilizations while providing for their continued development and certain survival. (912.1)

We must not panic. The revelators of the Urantia Papers anticipated world war at the same time that they predicted a spiritual renaissance. Being faithful to these essentials does not stifle the enthusiastic and aggressive individual. It may block unwise projects, but it leaves ample room for vigorous action, dynamic service.

Remember that the order of progressive evolution is subjected to sudden and unexpected periodical changes in both the material and the spiritual worlds. (1863.7)

Evolution is not always slow; but evolution always works. It succeeds where even revelation fails. (900.5; 937.6; 990.5) So if we handle our new epochal revelation in ways that squarely align with the tried and true methods of evolutionary revelation, we are sure to be contributing to success. The pursuit of evolutionary methods, however slow they may seem to be, is certain to succeed; whereas the pursuit of revolutionary methods invites disaster. The talk of evolution and revolution can fall into static concepts unless we remember that what we are talking about is laws of growth. Revelation's contribution is fragile; it needs to be handled with wise evolutionary hands.

We are now in a position to recognize sophistry in phrases like the following, often used in the debate over epochal revelation management: "Everybody has his or her point of view. Who are you to say that your view is better than someone else's?" "You can prove just about anything from The URANTIA Book." "As long as someone is sincere, I feel that we should support them." It is not brotherly love to permit such "thinking" to pass for brotherly love. We can do better. We can be friends of evolution.

Conclusion.

Each epochal revelation has its disciplines. Beneficiaries of the first had to return to their native regions as teachers. Guests in the Garden had to give up multiple mates. The primary messengers of the third and fourth epochal revelations had to leave social, economic, and political reconstruction to those to whom they gave spiritual teachings. Maybe the students of the fifth epochal revelation are expected to forego treating The URANTIA Book as a gospel. We tend to want to do it all, to have ourselves or our organizations fill both the functions--the function of spreading a deep and thorough spiritual-and-cultural revelation and the function of the public dynamism that the gospel movement requires. We cannot drive the Mack truck like a Ferrari.

To put matters most simply, we have two great models before us. There is a successful way to present an exclusively spiritual revelation; Jesus has shown us the way. And there is a successful way to present spiritual truth within the context of a spiritual-and-cultural revelation; Hap's college of revealed religion is our classical example. His teaching was thoroughly integrated with the program of the entire staff (743.4; 747.4-7; 748.7). In other words, the college of revealed religion did not go out proclaiming their message ahead of the rest. You were not ready to meet Hap and his associates until you were ready to meet all the other councils of the Prince's staff. The analogy for today--to whatever extent one wants to shape policy on the model of the First Epochal Revelation--is this: that one does not go forth advertising e.g., Part IV in ways that would be unwise regarding the other parts of the book.

Those who desire to be active in aggressively bringing The URANTIA Book to those who are ready for it have many frontiers for fully legitimate and heroic activity. They can move to towns where no study group exists and get to know people and introduce them selectively to the book, and start a study group. They

can get to know individuals in a local church or in some other group where they are likely to meet a high proportion of candidates for The URANTIA Book. They can even start up correspondence with authors who have published forward-thinking articles and introduce the book in the context of a flourishing collegial relationship. And many other projects fall within the ballpark delineated by the foregoing principles. We do not have to choose between do-nothing stagnation and risky publicity. There are many superb endeavors that are being largely neglected.

The concluding how-to list derives principally from the lessons of the second epochal revelation.

1. How to prepare to participate in epochal revelation.

Realize that when subordinate (physical or mental) conditions are ripe, higher advances may occur! (740.3)

Make a timely proclamation to those who need to know. (822.6-7)

Plan carefully. (822#2)

Dedicate yourselves totally. (822.8)

Organize well. (822.9)

Choose the best possible location. (823#3)

Do the groundwork excellently. (823#4)

Note the type of task, the kind of motivation, and the kind of reward appropriate to the type of work. (824.4)

Be patient if the time for the real beginning seems to be delayed. (824.5)

2. How to handle a crisis.

Align yourself with the universe government. (757.2)

Consecrate yourself totally. (756.7-57.1)

You will be reinforced by the Thought Adjuster et al. (757.1)

Be patient. (756.8; 757.2; 840.3)

Act decisively. (832.4-5)

How not to handle a crisis.

Nurture a habit of criticizing the way the universe works; fall in love with yourself; resent legitimate authority. (741-2; 752; 1959.1)

Conclude that because the planetary situation seems so desperate that the instructions you have received are obsolete. (839.1)

Neglect to communicate your plans to your loyal associate(s). (840.7)

Overlook repeated teachings about evolutionary wisdom. (828.5; 842.7; 845.4)

Insist on seeing some immediate results—at least some results in your own lifetime. (840.3; 841.6)

Try to short-circuit the divine, evolutionary plan. (846.4)

Accept an exaggerated view of your rights as a free person on the stage of planetary action. (846.3)

Trust that because you are sincere, you should go ahead with confidence. (842.8)

Add error to error. (843.4)

3. How to get back on the path if you find you made a mistake. (These guidelines derive from the outstanding example of the Second Garden.)

Sincerely acknowledge your error. (851.7)

Realign with the original purpose of Plan A.

Strive heroically to salvage all possible value of the potentials envisioned in Plan A.

Make adaptations as necessary.

