

Marketing The URANTIA Book

During the decade 1965 through 1974, sales of The URANTIA Book increased at the very respectable rate of 36% per year, rising from 594 books/year at the beginning of the period, and ending with 9,745 books/year. From that point through 1979, however, sales stagnated at around 10,000 books/year, with only a 9% increase over the entire five year period. Over the last two years, sales have dropped 36%. In response to a request by the 1981 General Council, this report analyzes how this unfortunate situation came about and what we might do about it. This report does not address the merits of promoting or advertising the book, but rather the removing of unnecessary barriers to its availability.

Why distribute?

Prior to discussing how we may improve sales, it is necessary to restate the reasons why attention to distribution is even necessary or desirable. Certain individuals, even in leadership positions in our movement, sincerely believe that efforts to increase distribution of The URANTIA Book are inappropriate. But the core of Jesus' religion was love and service, and what higher service could we render our brothers than to introduce them to God's words for our world? It is repeatedly said that the book is only a means to an end, the true end being the teachings it contains. That statement is certainly true when one understands "the teachings" to refer to the true spiritual relationship between man and his Creator. But in practical terms, when "the teachings" refer to those words by which we describe the relationship of God and man, where shall we find the book's remote peer?

Many of us believed the underlying spiritual teachings of The URANTIA Book long before we came into contact with the book itself, for they are found in most of the world's religious teachings. What most of us lacked was the integration of the teachings into a consistent and unified world view combining science, philosophy, religion and the deeper appreciation of Jesus which the book provides.

To be asked whether the teachings are more important than the book is to be presented with a false choice, for what is the book but those teachings which our celestial overseers judged we most needed? Certainly, Jesus could accomplish more in a five minute talk with, say, a miller in Rome than one of us might be able to teach another in years, but which of us has ever had that effect on anyone? But in the same way that Philip told people to "come and see" Jesus, we have knowledge of the Fifth Epochal Revelation and may introduce it to others. If we can

interest a person in reading it, it will carry the same power of living truth which those people discovered whom Philip led to Jesus.

Casually meeting an individual, we might talk with him about the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man—the greatest truths mortal man can ever hear—in the time available to us. Chances are he already believes those teachings, and if we succeed in inspiring him, most likely he will return to his local church, and over time the effect of what we conveyed may be diluted. On the other hand, we might not only have talked with him about those spiritual truths, but about The URANTIA Book, where he might explore those truths more deeply and effectively than he ever could in a short conversation. The worst that could result from our introduction of the book is that we be considered weird, but if we are unwilling to pay that price, we should turn in our membership cards. On the other hand, at least the individual will have heard of the book, and if he becomes interested in reading it, we have given him a source of truth for a lifetime. The URANTIA Book gives the Spirit of Truth a fulcrum upon which it may edify and enlighten his soul. It is and has always been possible to be spiritually enlightened without the help of The URANTIA Book, but for those of us lucky enough to have knowledge of it, it plays as vital a role for us as sheet music does for a musician; there are fine musicians who cannot read a note, but not to be able to do so is an undeniable handicap. The choice then, is not the teachings vs. the book, but rather should we content ourselves with a verbal conveyance of a tiny fraction of the teachings in a form which may be easily forgotten or misunderstood, or, in addition to the spiritual teachings themselves, introduce men to an incomparably beautiful and comprehensive source of that truth for lasting edification?

Arguments against distribution

#1) "The market is saturated."

There are five main arguments used to explain or excuse a complacent attitude toward book distribution. The first argument is variously stated as "The market is saturated," or "People aren't interested." If we were selling Buddy Holly mementos, this might be true, but that outlook is absurd if we believe that man is hungry for truth and that our product is the Fifth Epochal Revelation of God to man. Even two thousand years ago, Jesus said that the fields were ripe for the harvest, and there is near-universal acknowledgment of an upsurge in religious interest all over the world. Even if we had a reader for every copy sold up to now, we would be accounting for only .000025 of the world's population. Who is willing to say that there is no one left who is interested? How much poorer would we be if no one had told us about the book? Who is willing to say that God's truth has so small an attraction?

#2) "Hold back until we are ready."

The second argument against a less restrictive distribution policy is based, interestingly, on the opposite premise from the first; namely, that people are ready for the book but should be prevented from

receiving it until we are ready for them. The argument is "The book should not be distributed at a pace faster than the growth of our committed membership who can handle inquiries from the press and defend the book if necessary." As previously stated, however, none of the recommendations of this report address promotion or advertising of the book, but rather availability, and having the book available is the only means of achieving the desired growth in committed membership. "Availability" recommendations—in contrast to "promotion" recommendations—allow interested persons to find the book in the lowest-key manner.

None of the recommendations herein involve making a big splash, although it is highly doubtful that we could make such a splash even if we tried. The much-repeated fears of our movement being suddenly overwhelmed by sudden outside press interest have never been fulfilled, and now 26 years after publication it is doubtful that The URANTIA Book will become "news." The peoples of the industrialized world are so inundated in news and solicitation that it would be genuinely difficult for us to make a significant impact through the media even if we wanted to.

#3) "Be patient".

The third argument against distribution is "The URANTIA Book is not really a book for our time, so we should not be surprised if our generation does not want it," or "Be patient, they will eventually want it. What's the hurry?" This argument might be called the "ten thousand year view." Its fallacy is that the condition hoped for in the future never arrives if it is not worked for in the present. This argument also ignores the spiritual welfare of the two hundred thousand or so INDIVIDUALS, beloved of the Father, who pass from this world every day, many of whom die hungering for the very truths which the book contains. Why shouldn't we do our best to make the book widely available and then trust that the Spirit will lead others to it as he wills?

Those who advance this argument against book distribution often recite the quote from page 435 that "overrapid growth is suicidal," but never do they quote its preceding clause, which is "That stagnation is certain death...." When comparing the danger of suicide from overrapid growth to the danger of certain death from stagnation, our positive in distribution makes it appear that our jeopardy is from stagnation.

No one has alleged that we went through a suicidally rapid period of growth from 1965, when 594 books were sold, through 1974, when 9,745 books were sold, even though it represented an increase of 1,640% over that decade. Because the growth came in steady, year-to-year increments, it was easily handled, and our movement prospered. During that period we experienced an annually compounded growth rate of 36%. In 1975 our growth stopped, and looking back on five years of stagnation and two years of precipitous decline in distribution, we need to face up to the fact that we are in a state of crisis, and not comfort ourselves in the knowledge that things will eventually work out. Of course, things will eventually work out, but when they do it will be because people worked toward that goal in their day, as we should in ours.

#4) "Quality not quantity"

The fourth argument is "Those who are ready for the book will find it," and its variant, that "We are looking for quality, not quantity." The latter justification of our miserable performance in book sales implies the spiritually pernicious view that those of us who know about the book are worth more than those who do not. Who can say that a certain brother or sister is worth less in the sight of God? The former justification that everyone who wants the book has it is no more than a fresh version of the Chosen People belief.

But how is anyone to find the book if it is not available in libraries or bookstores, and if no one tells him about it? Who knew that he wanted a color TV until he had seen or heard about them? God's plan gives men the responsibility of helping each other; angels are not ordinarily permitted to descend and enlighten us directly. Our Father could write the story of creation in the sky, a page a day for all to read, but that would deprive us of the opportunity to help others find the truth. Jesus placed the business of the kingdom in the hands of his human apostles, and in a sense, we are their successors in that we have custody of the most recent divine message which the world desperately needs, but we are not delivering. Work does not get done if nobody does it. God's spirit works directly with everyone on earth to the maximum extent possible, but his work is immeasurably reinforced by the confirmation of the written word which we have the privilege to disseminate.

#5) "It's unspiritual"

The fifth argument against outreach is "It is unspiritual for us to concern ourselves with such matters. We should first pay attention to the inner spiritual life, and when that is in order, we can see to helping the world." While the sentiments of this argument are noble, the problem with it is that we never arrive at such a point, and if we ever thought that we had spiritually "arrived," that in itself would be such evidence of spiritual pride as to discredit our perceived status. Very few of us have someone look into our eyes who is so impressed with what he sees that he asks what we have been reading. In any event, Jesus taught that spiritual growth is unvaryingly unconscious, but favored by worship and service. Our greatest service is to enlighten a brother, to help him know the heavenly Father, and what greater tool is available than The URANTIA Book?

What are our goals?

Where is the Urantia movement headed? An old saying is that if a person doesn't know where he is going, the chances are he won't get there. The overriding and core purpose of the URANTIA Brotherhood should be the liberation of men's minds and souls through exposure to the transforming truths of The URANTIA Book. Since a person cannot be transformed by that which he has never encountered, our preliminary work must be the wide dissemination of the book. Accordingly, the number of books distributed is a rough indication of how well we are succeeding.

It is vital that we look upon sales not as if we were selling widgets, but in the knowledge that each book placed represents an opportunity for one of our Father's children to learn about him in the clearest and best way this side of direct revelation. We have not done our job so long as our Father has children on this planet who are not at least aware of the existence of the book and who do not have some means of access to it if they desire.

Assuming that at least one book in twenty is lost or destroyed annually, during the past two years we have not even sold enough to replace those removed from circulation. We are so far from meeting any respectable goals over the past two years that even to have arrested the decline would have represented relative progress.

But to suggest a growth rate goal is a nebulous proposition. It would appear that the 36% growth rate we enjoyed from 1965 through 1974 was a considerable achievement representing excellent progress. An annual growth rate of 10% should be considered respectable. A five percent growth rate probably represents treading water, and anything over that, real growth. It is not possible to present evidence supporting a specific growth rate goal, other than to say that by definition it should be a positive percentage exceeding the net losses from books taken out of circulation. The point, of course, is that we should do the best we can.

Recommendations

Fortunately, it is the conclusion of this report that a certain changes in policy should bring about an immediate and dramatic increase in book sales. The changes mostly consist in removing impediments, and can be carried out by the stroke of a pen. The following is a discussion of those current policies which are believed to inhibit book sales:

1. Pricing policy. 1979 was the year which marked the end of six consecutive years of sales stagnation at the 10,000 books/year level and the beginning of our current degenerated sales level of approximately 6,500 books/year. One event distinguishes that year: in November 1979, URANTIA Foundation raised the retail price of the book from \$26.00 to \$34.00.

The instantaneous plunge in book sales was first explained as the typical temporary phenomenon caused by heavy ordering immediately prior to a price increase. Once those books worked through the system, we were assured, things would return to normal. When this prediction failed to materialize, continued slow sales were accounted for by the fact that B. Dalton had discovered an extra thousand books in their inventory, and once these worked through the system, sales would return to "normal" (implying that we should be satisfied with sales plateaued at 10,000 books/year). When that explanation proved insufficient, the continued sales decline was attributed to a recession, which in 1980 was not an accurate description of the U.S. economy. The most current

explanation, in combination with the recession argument (which unfortunately does have some merit now) is that people aren't buying religious books as much anymore. Attached are charts based on data from the U.S. Census Bureau which refute that contention by showing that between 1975 and 1980, when URANTIA Book sales posted a 35% decline, religious books in general had a 24% increase in units sold.

The economic law of supply and demand, by which increases in price are predicted to reduce demand, clearly has not been repealed in the case of The URANTIA Book. The only possible justification for the Foundation raising the price of the book is that it wanted to increase revenue. What happened, however, was that raising the price succeeded in only trivially increasing their gross profit, while it devastated unit sales. To illustrate this, the following chart gives the approximate gross profit/unit earned by the Foundation under both the old and new prices, assuming, for purposes of simplification, that all sales were made at wholesale. Since only negligible overhead is attributable to distributing the book from the Foundation's standpoint, their expenses being the same whether no books, or 25,000 books are sold in a year, the gross profit figure is the proper one to examine. It is the difference between production costs (what Donnelley charges) and sales price. (NB: The following pro forma is based on 7th Printing costs, even though the price increase in question took effect while we still had around 10,000 6th Printing books in inventory, which cost only \$6.50. To have used 6th Printing costs would have dramatized the point even further; however, since we are now selling from the 7th Printing, I have used those cost figures to allow a current apples:apples comparison.)

Prior to the price increase:

Wholesale price (\$26.00 less 40%)	\$15.60
Less 17% commission to Brotherhood	-2.65
Less cost of book from publisher	-7.75
Gross profit/unit	\$ 5.20
Total gross profit:	\$5.20 x 10,000 books = \$52,000.00

Subsequent to the price increase:

Wholesale price (\$34.00 less 40%)	\$20.40
Less 17% commission to Brotherhood	-3.47
Less cost of book from publisher	-7.75
Gross profit/unit	\$ 9.18
Total gross profit:	\$9.18 x 6,500 books = \$59,670.00

In other words, in order to increase income by the paltry amount of \$7,670.00, the Foundation has been willing to absorb a distribution shortfall of 3,500 books/year, or 35% of total sales volume. This decline, at the rate of about 10 lost sales per day, has been going on now for 2½ years. Therefore, we can reasonably assume that at least 8,750 individuals—ten times the membership of URANTIA Brotherhood—do not own the book who otherwise would have, had the Foundation not raised the price. This is the real tragedy. As to its effects on our organization, who is to say that a John the Baptist, a Peter or a Paul might not now have been among us but for the price increase?

To those of us who have read the book, \$1,000 per copy would be a bargain. I would instantly trade my house for one, faced with the alternative. But for individuals who do not know what is between the covers, demand is clearly elastic. The higher the price, the lower the demand. If the Urantia movement were profit-oriented, we would try to arrive at a sales price which would maximize gross profit. Even under that theory, the present price has probably reached self-defeating levels.

Nor should the argument seem strange that taxation may be so high as to defeat its object, and that, given sufficient time to gather the fruits, a reduction of taxation will run a better chance, than an increase of balancing the Budget. For to take the opposite view today is to resemble a manufacturer who, running at a loss, decides to raise his price, and when his declining sales increase the loss, wrapping himself in the rectitude of plain arithmetic, decides that prudence requires him to raise the price still more;—and who, when at last his account is balanced with nought on both sides, is still found righteously declaring that it would have been the act of a gambler to reduce the price when you were already making a loss.

John Maynard Keynes on the Laffer Curve, in his 1933 essay "The Means to Prosperity," reprinted in "Essays in Persuasion," Volume IX of "The Collected Works of John Maynard Keynes" (MacMillan, St. Martin's Press, 1972):

If we should err in our pricing, we should err in pricing the book too low, which in any case would fulfill our mission of making the book more available. The Mormons, Gideons, and every denominational church subsidize their literature, having learned that in so doing they are making a wise investment in their future membership. The Foundation is operating under the opposite theory of having new readers, through what they pay for the book, subsidize ongoing operations.

Arguments for a high book price

There are two arguments which have been used to justify the high price of the book. The first is that the price of the book has not kept up with inflation, and its corollary, that the book is not priced any higher than other books of its size and quality. Both of these arguments are irrelevant, however, for it is not a comparative issue. The only legitimate question is whether a given price maximizes distribution, consistent with covering costs directly related to publishing the book. The Foundation's Declaration of Trust does not require it to price The URANTIA Book as if it were a four-color coffee table display volume, but to provide for its broad distribution. In any

case, to say that the book is priced no higher than comparable books ignores the fact that most books have to recover all costs on far smaller production runs, whereas our plate negatives have long since been paid for. Other publishers are exposed to the risk that their books may not even sell, whereas the Foundation runs no risk whatever that its books will not eventually enter the market. We are doing straight reprint work, without editorial costs, royalties, typesetting charges, design changes, photography or multi-color work, and without advertising or promotional expense.

The second argument for having increased the price of the book is that the Foundation needs the money. The assertion that URANTIA Foundation loses money on book sales can only be made with the help of accounting principles which charge everything the Foundation does to the cost of printing the book. Moreover, it has already been shown that the extra revenue the Foundation expected to make from the price increase was largely eliminated by the decrease in volume which accompanied it. Even if the Foundation had received substantial extra funds from the price increase, it would have come at the cost of severely reducing distribution, which is the source of new members who in turn might be led to contribute to the welfare of the organization. It is the membership who should support the movement, not the new readers.

The fundamental, underlying error in the Foundation's pricing policy is that it attempts to fund operational overhead through profit on book sales, which comes directly out of the hides of new readers. To support the apostles, Matthew did not solicit from the multitudes, but from believers.

How should the book be priced? If the Foundation distributed the book at cost, allowing their distributors a 50% discount, the retail price would be two times their \$7.75 cost, or \$15.50. Any retail price under \$20.00 should enormously stimulate sales.

2. Quantity discount policy. Up until 1976, the Foundation allowed a discount of 40% on all sales to bookstores. At that time, the discount was reduced to 30% on purchases of fewer than five books, presumably in the expectation that this would give bookstores an incentive to order at least five books at a time. Naturally, without a returns policy, this did not happen, because the bookstores did not wish to be faced with the risk of holding five slow-moving books instead of one. The other alternative—paying 17% more for fewer than five copies—deprived the store of its normal profit incentive to stock the book. The bookstores' logical response to this reduction in their gross profit margin was not to bother with such a one-title publisher at all, except in special order situations where it had a guaranteed buyer. In any case, it is the Brotherhood which is exposed to the added expense of shipping one book rather than five to a given address, and the Foundation should be willing to defer to the Brotherhood as to whether it is willing to go to that extra trouble.

3. Distributor policy. Large chains such as Walden Books and B. Dalton buy direct from publishers, but the mom and pop stores, which account for about 70% of all general bookstores, order their books through distributors. These wholesalers offer the individual bookstore the service of a single source for orders, shipment and payment, thereby saving the stores the paperwork burden of dealing with many different publishers and shippers. Distributors also have salesmen which make regular calls and maintain local warehouses from which they give quick service to the individual bookstores. They offer the publisher the opportunity to sell books in greater volume without credit risk. In exchange, the publishers offer these wholesalers a quantity discount beyond what is given to an individual bookstore, and that extra discount is the distributor's profit for his service. Since the Foundation does not offer any additional discount to such stocking distributors, it is not surprising that none of them get excited about carrying our book.

In 1975, a distributor named DeVorss said that unless we were willing to offer a 50% discount, they could not afford to do business with us. Since such a discount did not comply with Foundation policy, we lost a major outlet. But why should we expect commercial channels to carry our product without the possibility of normal, standard business profit? Since our production cost is so low relative to the sales price, we can easily allow the distributors the profit which they must have to stay in business. A discount of 50% to stocking distributors would give them the profit they deserve for the function they perform, and would be certain to make the Foundation more money through increased volume, just as it does for all other publishers, even if that be their criterion. If the Foundation remains unwilling to offer the larger discount, the Brotherhood should not hesitate to waive or rebate the 17% commission it receives as sales agent to the distributors to induce them to carry the book. This would seem to be an equitable approach, for the Foundation should not be asked to give a substantial discount to both the Brotherhood and to a distributor. The Brotherhood's 17% commission on sales, when deducted from 60% (retail less the 40% discount) equals 49.8%. In other words, if we waive our 17% commission in the case of distributors, the Foundation could give the distributors their 50% discount and come out a hair ahead. The Brotherhood would not be exposed to that much expense on the transaction, because shipments to the distributors could be direct from Donnelley.

Under this plan, the Brotherhood would continue to sell to any individuals and bookstores who placed orders—it would keep doing what it is doing. Any financial loss which the Brotherhood might experience from a reduction in commission income would be offset by the reduction in related shipping and handling services which the Brotherhood would not have to provide. Most distributor sales would be sales not presently being made, and hence should not seriously reduce Brotherhood income. Even if it did, we should be willing to live by the same principles we are recommending to URANTIA Foundation. We should not derive our income from new readers by means of book sales, but from membership contributions.

In 1981, the Brotherhood received a letter from Waldens setting forth the terms under which they were willing to buy books. The

Brotherhood amended the letter to conform to Foundation policy, and returned it to Waldens. When several months went by with no orders, John Hales called Waldens to ask what the problem was, and was informed that they were no longer buying from us. Waldens had sent its stores notices that they no longer carried certain books, including The URANTIA Book. John then sent a memo to the Foundation indicating that if we wished to have Waldens' business, it would have to be on their terms. The Foundation agreed, and we are back on their list. However, tremendous damage has been done. In the course of his Bookseller Service Project, Steve Law found himself having to convince individual Waldens managers that they are now allowed to carry the book. They would remember the retraction notice, but not the reinstatement notice. Our present sales to Waldens are much reduced from their previous level. The important moral to this unfortunate story is that if you want to play ball on the big boys' court, you play by their rules. Since we are highly dependent on them, and yet could disappear tomorrow without them even noticing, we must be willing to conform our business practices to their requirements.

The importance of having our book stocked by distributors cannot be overstated. Armed with discounts they can live with, the Brotherhood should send personal representatives to each of the major distributors in an attempt to induce them to carry the book. We should bend over backwards to accommodate them, because they are the primary channels through which books reach bookstores.

4. Prepayment policy. With very few exceptions, Foundation policy is that payment for books must be received before shipment; i.e. it allows no open accounts. This policy means that for the privilege of displaying an admittedly slow-mover, the bookstore probably has its money tied up for three weeks before the book ever hits its shelves. Since bookstores are not ordinarily charitable institutions, this is a tremendous disincentive for them to carry the book. The Foundation's rationale for requiring prepayment is that it is too small to be chasing after delinquent accounts. By way of contrast, normal publishing industry practice is to give the bookstore 30 day terms, and not to complain until they hit the 60 day mark. (It should be noted that to the extent we were selling through distributors, as recommended in #3, we would be avoiding the whole problem of good or bad credit, by shifting it to them.)

In the first place, URANTIA Brotherhood would be doing the chasing after the delinquent accounts, not the Foundation, and if the Brotherhood were willing to go to that trouble, the Foundation should have no grounds for not allowing the Brotherhood to extend whatever credit terms it chose. What would happen if we adopted normal publishing industry credit practices? At worst, we would not be paid for a few books. So what? Businesses typically budget a certain percentage of sales to allow for credit losses and fold that into the price they receive for their product. The vast majority of bookstores are honest, intend to stay in business, and will pay their bills. For the few that do not, we have not lost much, for it's not as if we are dealing with a big-ticket item. If the Foundation allowed sales on open

account, and found that too many bookstores were deadbeats, it could always revert to its present ultra-conservative credit policy. What if the Brotherhood were willing to indemnify the Foundation against loss? The Brotherhood should consider making the Foundation this offer if the Foundation cannot otherwise be persuaded to sell on open account.

We must bear in mind that we are not in business to make money, but to get the book out, and therefore we should be prepared to take reasonable risks to achieve that purpose. Most businesses are willing to ship small quantities of their product on open account to anyone. If they are not paid in timely fashion, that account is closed and the loss is charged to the cost of opening new accounts. Since the book's production cost is less than \$8.00, and since it costs more than \$50.00 to send an industrial sales representative out on one call, we are in the happy position of being able to send six different bookstores a book, without receiving a penny in payment, for what it would cost us to make only one call. Moreover, we should be encouraged to risk offering credit to new accounts because our book will at least be displayed. If the book sells, the bookstore will probably want another, and if for no other reason, will recognize the need to pay for the first one. Further, our real service has been to the person who has thereby found The URANTIA Book. In all likelihood, the Foundation would make more money through an expansion of sales by removing the disincentive of requiring prepayment on orders, and even if it didn't, it would thereby be fulfilling its mission to disseminate the book. Such a policy should help everyone and hurt no one.

5. Returns policy. The Foundation allows no returns except in the case of damaged or defective books. This policy is contrary to standard, normal, everyday publishing industry practice, which allows books to be returned for credit or refund on the theory that the books are better off on the booksellers' shelves, where they are at least exposed to potential buyers, than gathering dust in the publisher's warehouse. Allowing a bookseller to return a book that he does not sell within a reasonable period is a valuable inducement for him to order the book in the first place, especially so for a book which is unlikely to be a hot seller. The only argument in favor of a no-returns policy is that some of the books will be dinged up when we get them back. However, this argument ignores the fact that after we put new ten cent dust covers on them, such books are perfect for our library gift book program, so we have lost nothing. If the Brotherhood ceased to fund a library gift book program, the Foundation could instantly recoup its \$7.75 production costs by offering the damaged returned books to the membership at that price.

6. Packaging policy.

A) Shrink-wrap. A substantial percentage of bookstores sales are impulse purchases, resulting from casual browsers riffling through books whose covers attract them. A tough shrink-film, such as is used on The URANTIA Book, prevents the would-be buyer from scanning its pages to find areas of interest. The browser can only look at the cover, and

since our book is usually misplaced in the metaphysical/occult section, he can only assume that it is more of the same. If the would-be purchaser could get into the book to read a few selections, the Spirit of Truth would have the opportunity to witness to the worth of what was being read. While it is true that the bookstore should remove the shrink-film, many do not, and therefore we should not have it around the book in the first place.

B) Dust jacket. The cover of any book is a critical factor in its success, for the cover generates the first impression—and if unfavorable, the last impression. In this respect, we are fortunate to have an attractive front dust jacket, which helps the cause, but the rear of the dust jacket is far worse than nothing. For those who have not recently looked at the rear dust cover, a copy is attached hereto. Its design seems calculated to convince the uninitiated that the book is just another piece of metaphysical/occult garbage. Not one of the thirteen points listed in any way even hints at the inspirational beauty of the papers. Terms such as "Orvonton Commission," "Midwayers," and "Divine Counselor" sound meaningless and flaky to those who have not yet read the book and who are in the process of deciding whether to buy it. The travesty is compounded by the shrink-film which prevents the browser from even looking up the dubious list of citations. A generally accepted principle of introducing the book is to attempt to steer the new reader away from questions of origin as much as possible, so that he may look at the book for what it is, rather than for what it might be. The present back cover violates that principle by raising questions for new readers which ought not to be raised.

7. Bookstore discounts to the membership. Aside from the book itself, the chief asset of the Urantia movement is the commitment of its members. This is worth far more than any number of paid salesmen on the road, for our members can speak about the value of the book with the authority of personal experience. All they need is access to the book at an affordable price. The simple expedient of permitting quantity sales to societies and individuals on the same basis as to bookstores would drastically increase the distribution of the book. That this is true has been proven by the recent experience of certain members who have set up bookstores for the express purpose of helping distribute The URANTIA Book at cost, without which the sales figures would be substantially more dismal than they presently are. Those who might be concerned that such sales might undercut what little bookstore distribution we have will be interested to learn that bookstore sales in Oklahoma City increased after an intensive program of person-to-person distribution was implemented there. So long as people are out actively talking about the book, a certain percentage of the interest is bound to spill over to the benefit of the bookstores, and help their sales as well.

Role of URANTIA Foundation

What does the Foundation have to do with all of this? They exercise total control over all aspects of marketing the book, and

therefore, not one of these recommendations can be implemented without their consent. URANTIA Brotherhood is only their sales agent, serving at their pleasure.

Summary

It is evident that our present approach to book distribution is seriously flawed, and unless corrective action is taken, there is no reason to expect that distribution will continue at other than its present depressed level.

Fortunately, there are happy solutions which help everyone and hurt no one, and which we should encourage the Foundation to implement. There is a way to sell books, and if we expect to sell them, we must follow the rules. It is as simple as that. The key to our future growth lies in taking a different attitude toward book sales: one which views sales not as a means of financing operational overhead, but rather as fulfilling perhaps our basic mission as an organization, and as the means of the enlargement of our fellowship. The Master taught that since we have received freely, freely we should give. We should gear our policies toward broad dissemination of The URANTIA Book. It should be sold as cheaply as possible, packaged attractively and distributed through the normal and existing commercial channels. We should also better capitalize on the incomparable (and free) resource of our committed membership. We have an opportunity at which subsequent generations will marvel, and there is no reason why we should not succeed at our work.

Harry McMullan
Domestic Extension Committee
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URANTIA FOUNDATION

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 the Nature, Origin, and Organization of
THE URANTIA BOOK

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URANTIA FOUNDATION

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the erratic behavior of its paperbound segment; the combined average for hardbounds and paperbounds grew by 256% in current dollars, 66% in constant dollars and 373% in units.

Religious book per capita averages, combining hardbound and paperbound sales, increased 245% in current dollars, 62% in constant dollars and 153% in units. Book clubs, similarly combining hardbound and paperbound categories, posted gains of 154% in current dollars, 19% in constant dollars and 16% in units. Mail order publications gained 200% in current dollars, 40% in 1967 dollars and 156% in units. Mass market paperbacks showed in-

creases of 354% in current dollars, 115% in constant dollars and 68% in units. Subscription reference set averages declined both in current dollars (14%) and in constant dollars (60%), while per capita units—which are not shown in the table because they have amounted to less than one hundredth annually—decreased by 16%.

The generally consistent gains realized during the decade seem to bode well for the future, especially as the factors that generated the pattern—an expanding retail network, improved publisher perceptions of consumer interests and increasing consumer acceptance of books as a popular pastime—continue to play an active role.

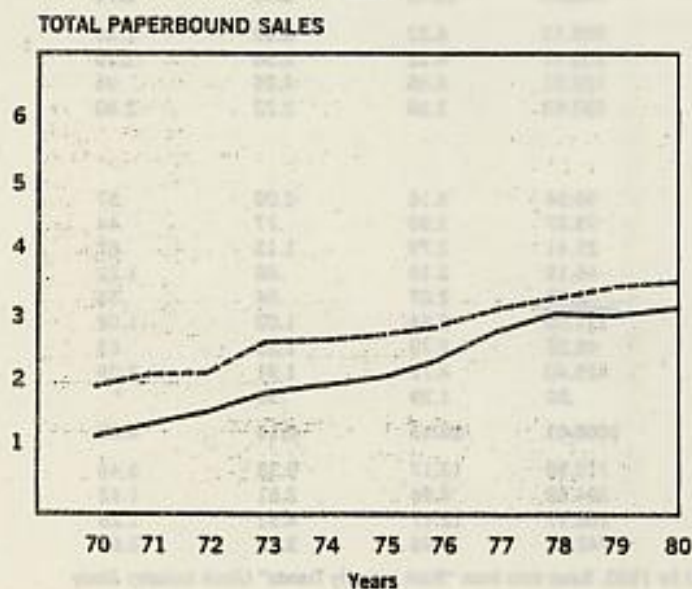
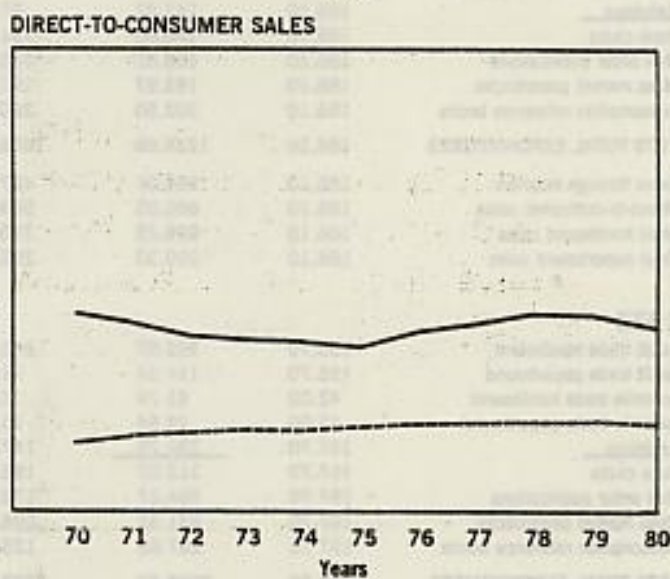
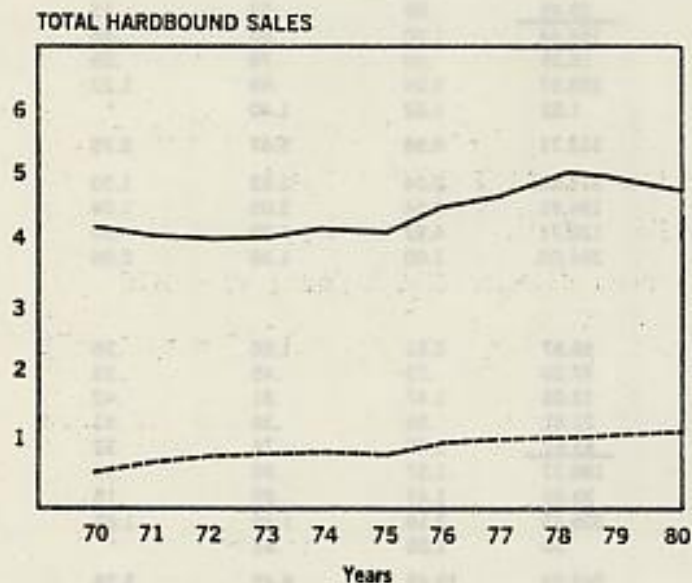
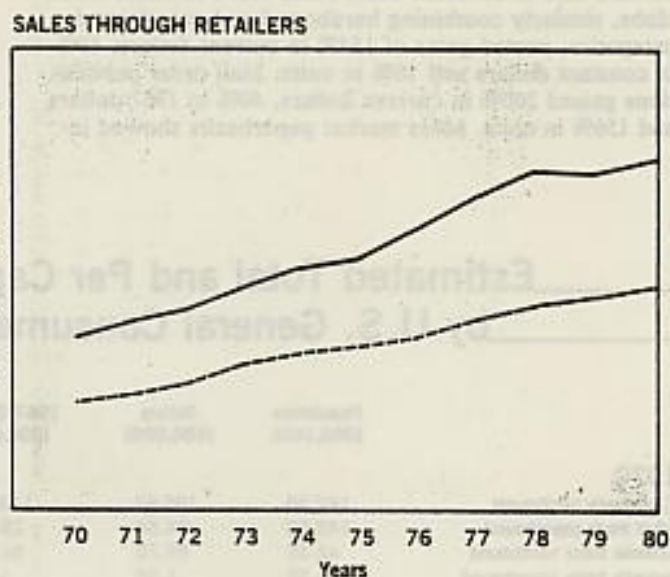
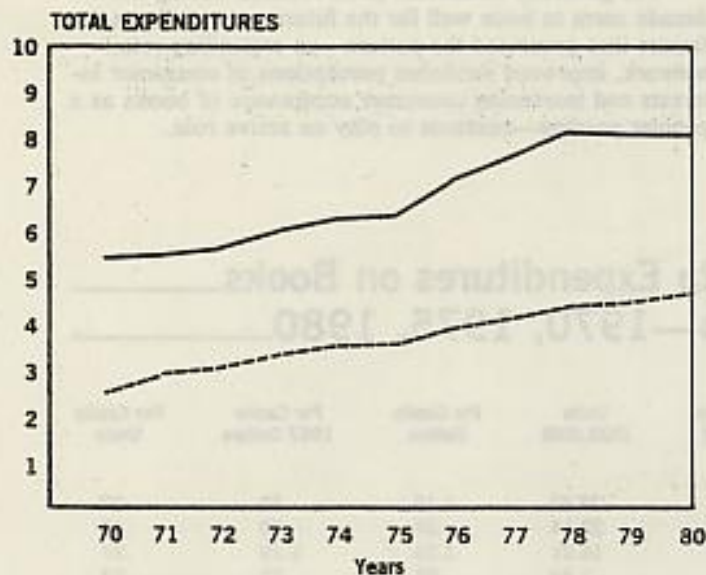
Estimated Total and Per Capita Expenditures on Books by U.S. General Consumers—1970, 1975, 1980

	Population (000,000)	Dollars (000,000)	1967 Dollars (000,000)	Units (000,000)	Per Capita Dollars	Per Capita 1967 Dollars	Per Capita Units
1970							
Adult trade hardbound	142.90	165.62	142.77	29.85	1.15	.99	.20
Adult trade paperbound	142.90	34.54	29.77	22.14	.24	.20	.15
Juvenile trade hardbound	43.20	59.70	51.46	16.01	1.38	1.19	.37
Juvenile trade paperbound	43.20	1.29	1.11	1.64	.02	.02	.03
Religious	186.10	112.92	97.34	29.45	.60	.52	.15
Book clubs	186.10	186.90	161.12	164.44	1.00	.86	.88
Mail order publications	186.10	168.62	145.36	18.39	.90	.78	.09
Mass market paperbacks	186.10	193.97	167.21	228.97	1.04	.89	1.23
Subscription reference books	186.10	302.50	260.77	1.82	1.62	1.40	*
1970 TOTAL EXPENDITURES	186.10	1226.06	1056.94	512.71	6.58	5.67	2.75
Sales through retailers	186.10	566.01	487.93	317.80	3.04	2.62	1.70
Direct-to-consumer sales	186.10	660.05	569.00	194.91	3.54	3.05	1.04
Total hardbound sales	186.10	926.73	798.90	128.71	4.97	4.29	.69
Total paperbound sales	186.10	299.33	258.04	384.00	1.60	1.38	2.06
1975							
Adult trade hardbound	155.70	392.07	243.52	56.87	2.51	1.56	.36
Adult trade paperbound	155.70	114.54	71.14	37.20	.73	.45	.23
Juvenile trade hardbound	42.00	61.74	38.34	18.03	1.47	.91	.42
Juvenile trade paperbound	42.00	24.64	15.30	21.61	.58	.36	.51
Religious	197.70	237.75	147.67	63.61	1.20	.74	.32
Book clubs	197.70	312.07	193.83	188.37	1.57	.98	.95
Mail order publications	197.70	284.27	176.56	30.50	1.43	.89	.15
Mass market paperbacks	197.70	431.83	268.21	326.45	2.18	1.35	1.65
Subscription reference books	197.70	207.68	128.99	.90	1.05	.65	*
1975 TOTAL EXPENDITURES	197.70	2066.59	1283.59	743.54	10.45	6.49	3.76
Sales through retailers	197.70	1250.16	776.49	505.13	6.32	3.92	2.55
Direct-to-consumer sales	197.70	816.43	507.09	238.41	4.12	2.56	1.20
Total hardbound sales	197.70	1358.16	843.57	189.91	6.86	4.26	.96
Total paperbound sales	197.70	708.43	440.01	553.63	3.58	2.22	2.80
1980							
Adult trade hardbound	168.30	870.10	352.26	96.54	5.16	2.09	.57
Adult trade paperbound	168.30	321.27	130.06	75.37	1.90	.77	.44
Juvenile trade hardbound	37.80	105.65	42.77	25.41	2.79	1.13	.67
Juvenile trade paperbound	37.80	82.95	33.58	46.15	2.19	.88	1.22
Religious	206.10	428.09	173.31	78.90	2.07	.84	.38
Book clubs	206.10	524.05	212.16	211.08	2.54	1.02	1.02
Mail order publications	206.10	556.89	225.46	48.26	2.70	1.09	.23
Mass market paperbacks	206.10	974.07	394.36	425.40	4.72	1.91	2.06
Subscription reference books	206.10	286.48	115.98	.90	1.39	.56	*
1980 TOTAL EXPENDITURES	206.10	4149.55	1679.97	1008.01	20.13	8.15	4.89
Sales through retailers	206.10	2715.96	1099.57	713.39	13.17	5.33	3.46
Direct-to-consumer sales	206.10	1433.59	580.40	294.62	6.95	2.81	1.42
Total hardbound sales	206.10	2508.48	1015.57	265.17	12.17	4.92	1.28
Total paperbound sales	206.10	1641.07	664.40	742.84	7.96	3.22	3.60

Source: Population data from U.S. Census—actual for 1970, 1975; projected (series II) for 1980. Sales data from "Book Industry Trends" (Book Industry Study Group), based on surveys by U.S. Census, AAP, ECPA, ABA, NACS, et al.

*Less than one hundredth annually.

ESTIMATED PER CAPITA EXPENDITURES ON BOOKS BY U.S. GENERAL CONSUMERS, 1970-1980



1967 DOLLARS ———
UNITS - - - - -

Charts drawn by Mary McEneaney

TABLE A-1 Average Per-Volume Prices of Hardcover Books, Eliminating All Volumes Priced at \$81 or More 1977, 1978, 1979, 1980, 1981

Compare indicated classifications with Table A

Dewey Classifications	1977 (final)	1978 (final)	1979 (final)	1980 (final)	1981 (prelim.)
General Works (000-099)	\$22.45	\$20.34	\$21.06	\$23.34	\$25.15
Philos., Psychol. (100-199)	14.17	15.10	17.50	20.18	21.61
Religion (200-299)	11.98	13.29	13.01	15.55	16.58
Soc., Econ.; Law; Ed. (300-399)	16.04	16.95	18.69	21.07	23.35
Language (400-499)	14.55	17.01	18.07	20.14	20.65
Science (500-599)	23.78	25.21	27.77	32.67	33.97
Tech.; Med.; Agr.; Home Ec.; Bus. (600-699)	—	—	—	26.05	27.49
Art; Music; Sports, Rec. (700-799)	—	—	—	20.61	23.04
Gen. Lit.; Poetry, Drama (800-899)	—	—	—	17.78	18.53
History; Travel (900-999)	—	—	—	19.62	20.70
All Classifications (000-999)	\$17.32	\$18.01	\$19.63	\$22.48	\$24.33

Publishers Weekly
MARCH 12, 1982

LIBRARY JOURNAL

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18.

APRIL 1, 1982

Publishers Weekly

DEAR PUBLISHER:

SPRING, 1982

THE WHOLE MARKET FOR THE RELIGIOUS COMMUNICATIONS BUSINESS IS GROWING AS DEMAND ACCELERATES. BY 1983 IT SHOULD REACH \$1.5 BILLION, AND 21%, OR ABOUT \$300 MILLION OF THAT TOTAL WILL BE RELIGIOUS BOOK SALES.

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3 Targeted Returns Incentive Plan

For the first time in the industry, booksellers who keep their returns below Simon & Schuster's average returns rate can receive additional credits on those returns. In effect, Simon & Schuster will be crediting low-returns customers for more than they paid for the books when they bought them—as much as 15% more. Under the four-step Targeted Returns Incentive Plan schedule customers with very high returns will be charged up to 15% of those return credits.


- Simon & Schuster's average returns range from retailers is 18% to 22% ■ retailers who return less than 18% will receive an additional credit of 10% on their returns
- retailers who return less than 14% will receive an additional credit of 15% on their returns ■ retailers who return 18% to 22% will receive full credit on their returns (NOTE: ATP participants who return 18% to 25% will receive full credit on their returns.) ■ retailers whose returns run more than 22% (25% for ATP participants) will be charged 15% of those returns ■ additional credits and charges will be made in February 1983 ■ all credits and charges will be based on the account's return rate for returns credited from July 1981 through December 1982 as compared to purchases for the period January 1981 through June 1982 ■ actual bonus credits and charges will be based upon the returns credited by Simon & Schuster during calendar year 1982 ■ Simon & Schuster's product mix (which includes low-returns juveniles; low-returns dictionaries; expanded trade paper-back lines; proven clothbound backlist; and its continuing bestselling frontlist) will make it easy for all well run bookstores to earn Incentive Plan bonus credits
- Simon & Schuster's monthly statement will keep you posted on how your returns rate is running to help you earn your bonus.

4 Freight Savings Bonus Plan

During 1982, Simon & Schuster's Freight Consolidation System will become fully operational. Net savings from this system will be periodically distributed to our customers on an equitable basis as a Freight Savings Bonus Credit.

- substantial freight cost savings through sophisticated freight consolidation system ■ savings after expenses and system start-up costs will be passed on to customers on an equitable basis by means of a periodic credit memo ■ currently in the final stages of development ■ more information by January 1, 1982, implementation during 1982.

NOTE: The following imprints are covered: clothbound and trade paper books published by Simon and Schuster; Linden Press; Timescape; Wyndham Books; Summit Books; Poseidon Press; New World Dictionaries; Touchstone; Fireside; Cornerstone; Frommer; Little Simon; Wanderer; Windmill; and Simon & Schuster Distributed Publishers.

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New York, NY 10020



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[WHAT WE ARE DOING]

As authorized sales agent for URANTIA Foundation, we are responding to your inquiry about *The URANTIA Book* (ISBN 0-911560-02-5), which is the only book published by URANTIA Foundation that is sold at discount to bookstores.

The current retail price of the book is \$34.00. Accredited bookstores will receive a 30% discount on orders of 1 through 4 books, and 40% discount on any quantity of 5 or more books. Drop shipments in any quantity will receive the single book discount rate (30%). The current postage charges, which should be included with your payment, are listed on the reverse side.

NO RETURNS are accepted unless defective, and these are promptly replaced.

As a small non-profit organization we do not have the staff to maintain open accounts with some three thousand stores. We appreciate your understanding our policy in this matter. Therefore, when ordering books, a check should accompany your order (U.S. funds where applicable). Otherwise a pro forma statement will be sent to you. Upon receipt of your check for books plus postage, your order will be filled promptly. We participate in the ABA Single Title Order Plan (STOP).

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For your information, the Dewey Decimal Classification number of *The URANTIA Book* is 299--Other Religions. The Library of Congress Classification is BP605--Other Beliefs and Movements. The book should be displayed in your religious books section.

We thank you for your inquiry, and look forward to serving you.

Sincerely,

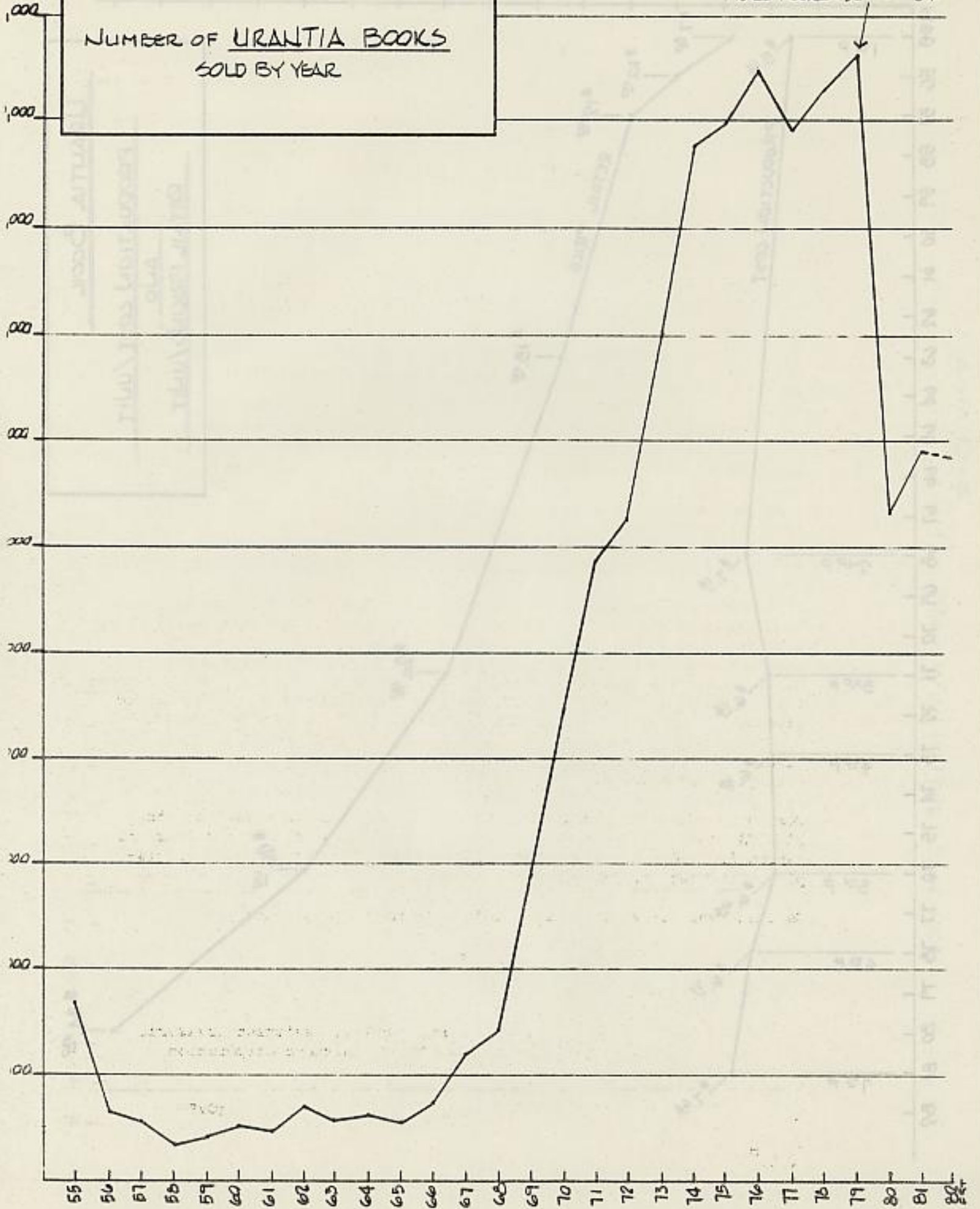
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URANTIA Brotherhood Corporation

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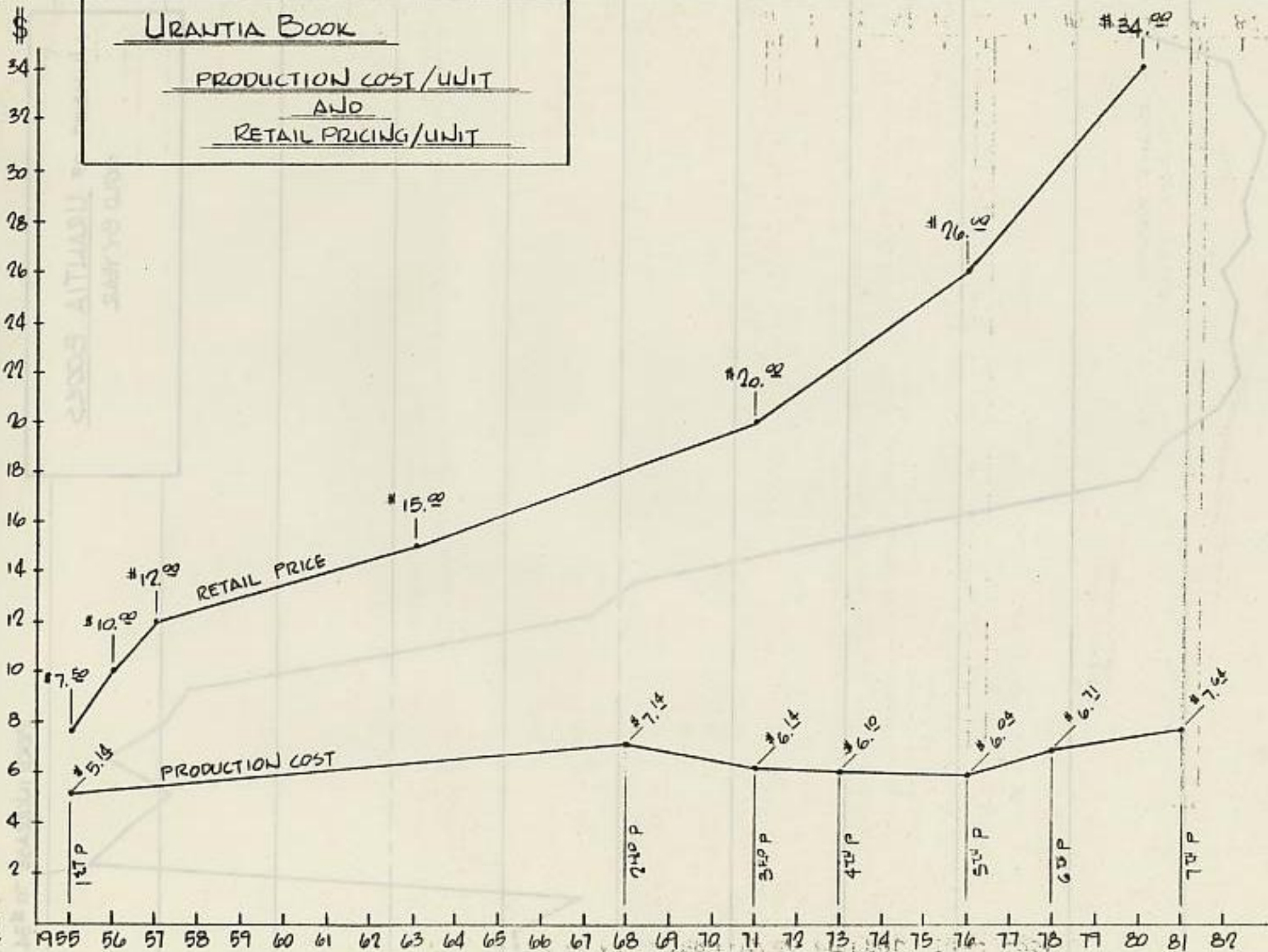
PRICE INCREASE TO \$34

NUMBER OF URANTIA BOOKS
SOLD BY YEAR



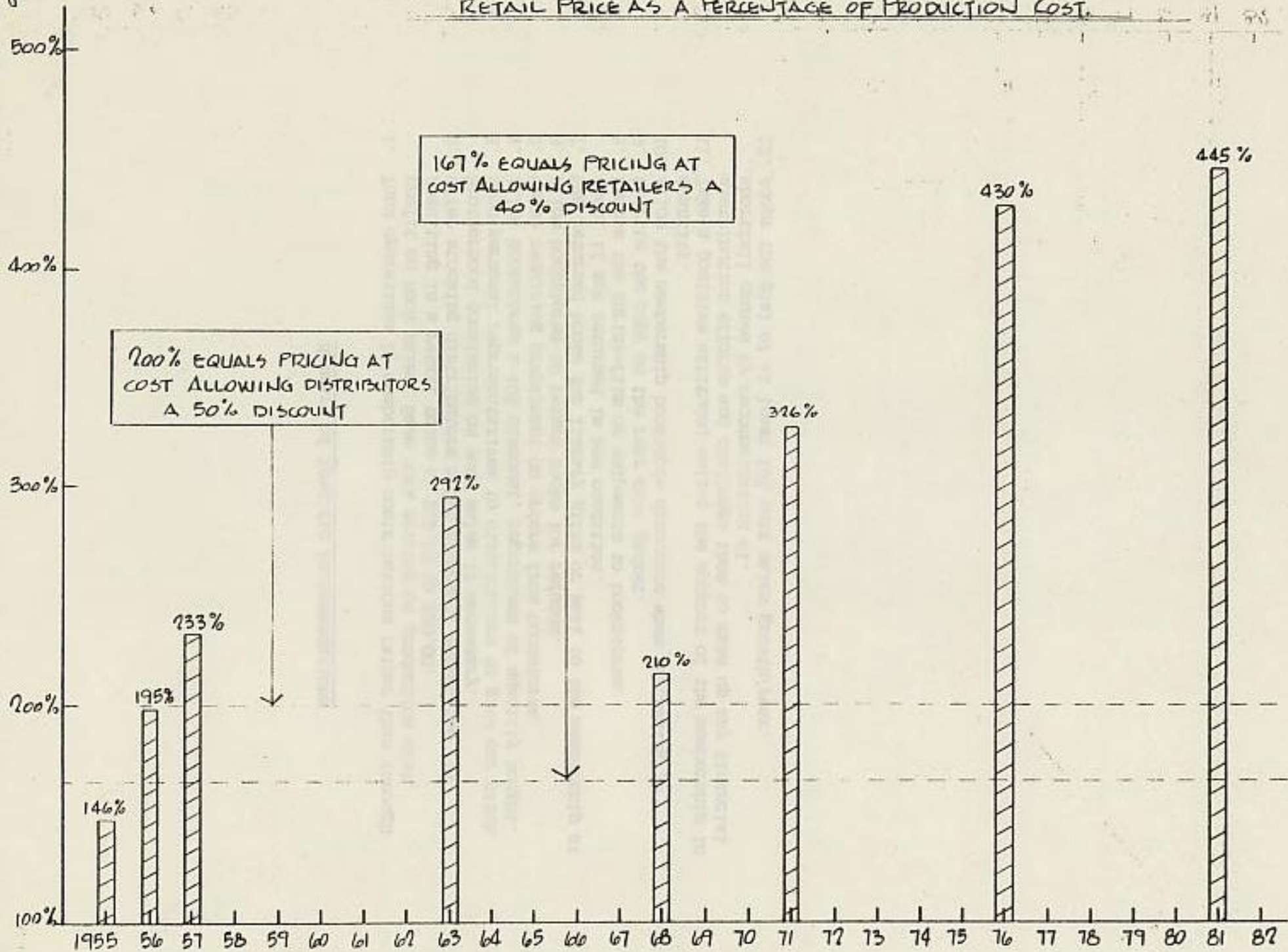
URANTIA BOOK

PRODUCTION COST/UNIT
AND
RETAIL PRICING/UNIT



LIRANTIA BOOK

RETAIL PRICE AS A PERCENTAGE OF PRODUCTION COST.



Summary of Specific Recommendations

1. Fund operations by membership contributions rather than through profit on book sales. Base book pricing on production cost, resulting in a retail price of \$15.50 to \$20.00.
2. Offer stocking distributors a 50% discount; forgo the 17% Brotherhood commission on such sales if necessary.
3. Send personal representatives to distributors to give our pitch.
4. Allow bookstores a 40% discount, regardless of quantity bought.
5. Cease requiring prepayment on orders from bookstores.
6. Allow bookstores to return books for refunds.
7. Use returned books for library gifts or sell to the membership at cost, if not returned in new condition.
8. Remove the shrink-film on shipments to bookstores.
9. Rewrite the copy on the rear dust jacket.
10. Allow the membership bookstore discounts when purchasing in quantity.
11. Take a positive attitude; enlist the support of the membership in distribution efforts and challenge them to make up any financial shortfall caused by recommendation #1.
12. Adopt the goal of at least 10% unit sales growth/year.