

PUBLICITY AND INDISCRIMINATE EVANGELIZATION

By Mo Siegel

The Urantia movement is facing a critical juncture whether to use person-to-person growth techniques or indiscriminate publicizing growth stimuli. As many of you know, the Urantia Brotherhood has recently reaffirmed a longstanding publicity policy aimed in guiding us into a wise path of lasting growth. After carefully reading the policy, I have taken liberty to restate it as I understand its meaning and purpose and have added my reasons for believing that the success and enforcement of this policy is vital to the great world mission of promulgating the URANTIA Book. There have been no policies passed in the last decade as critical as this one, and, as a loyal and dedicated member of the Urantia Brotherhood, it is my duty to openly and candidly speak out on this matter.

BACKGROUND

For many years, the Urantia Foundation and the Urantia Brotherhood have adopted and supported a policy of not publicizing the URANTIA Book in any outreach efforts. This policy has been followed by both organizations with respect to their own efforts and has been followed by and urged upon those who, while not an integral part of either organization--and hence are not bound by their policies--are supportive of the spread of the teachings in accordance with the wise plan of patient evolutionary development.

There are recommendations currently being proposed in the Brotherhood by loyal associates in the Urantia movement which have required a lengthy and careful reconsideration of our Brotherhood's past publicity policy. The recommendations have included a wide variety of advertising, free publicity, and evangelizing programs to increase public awareness of the URANTIA Book.

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this policy is to clearly state the united decision of the Executive Committee of the Urantia Brotherhood regarding publicizing The URANTIA Book. The policy was reaffirmed on February 26, 1983.

POLICY

It is the policy of the Urantia Brotherhood not to publicize nor indiscriminately evangelize The URANTIA Book. It is also our policy to ask all URANTIA Book readers to support and help enforce this policy.

DANGERS OF PUBLICITY AND INDISCRIMINATE EVANGELIZATION

The Urantia Brotherhood is fully committed to the fostering and promotion of the teachings of The URANTIA Book throughout the world. The policy on publicity in no way suggests that the Brotherhood feels Urantia believers should "do nothing" to spread the teachings of the Fifth Epochal Revelation. Jesus' leadership and training of His followers clearly indicates that we are to act in advancing the growing family of worldwide URANTIA Book believers.

Publicizing and indiscriminately evangelizing the URANTIA Book is only one technique of promoting the teachings of the URANTIA Book. Even though there could be temporary gains achieved through this action, the dangers inherent in publicizing the book far outweigh the benefits.

The following dangers are real and have shaped my thinking in regards to the policy. The Urantia Brotherhood is not moved by fear but by the sincere desire to build a solid foundation of believers that can withstand the test of time and serve as Michael of Nebadon would wish.

1. Not since Jesus walked on earth has there appeared such a powerful nucleus of religious instruction that will attract so many differently motivated men and women--good, bad, and indifferent. Early readers were instructed that the book belongs to the era immediately following the conclusion of the present ideological struggle and chaos. They were told that The URANTIA Book was being given to those who were ready for it long before its worldwide mission.

The world is currently in chaos. Religious antagonisms run rampant; and before the revelation is made public, we must assist in the natural unfolding of a more favorable cultural and religious environment. WE MUST POSSESS OUR SOULS IN PATIENCE! The URANTIA Book is not meant for the majority of people living in the 20th century. To indiscriminately and publicly over-revelate the book is to invite disaster and, in my view, would be a direct violation of Michael's planetary policy. Adam and Eve experienced what it meant to transgress the well-designed steps of evolutionary progress, and all subsequent generations have suffered from the consequences of impatience.

2. The media is a fast, powerful and sensational storyteller. A fear-generated portrayal of the URANTIA Book as an obscure and dangerous cult document could surface in a small newspaper and end up as a repeated story over national news. The damaging effect of such negative publicity could turn away streams of would-be believers for many generations. We could lose a century of valuable time and an untold number of earnest, searching souls due to premature overexposure.

3. If the URANTIA Book was incorrectly interpreted as directly and openly challenging the authenticity and validity of the world's most powerful religions, the

fear-ridden retribution and defense taken by dogmatic fundamentalist or tradition-bound religionists could lead to massive burning of the Fifth Epochal Revelation. Case studies of 20th century European history show that such barbaric actions have widely occurred in the world's most "advanced and powerful" nations. Because of our small and concentrated numbers, we would stand helplessly by as the Fifth Epochal Revelation joined the First in almost total failure.

4. Until there are thousands upon thousands of small study groups that are led by knowledgeable and loyal URANTIA Book readers, there is no arena to properly introduce and comfort large quantities of potential believers.

5. We have a very young and small Urantia Brotherhood. Until our numbers are greatly increased and our human institution broadly advanced and well-staffed, we could not withstand the organizational demands of premature publicity.

6. We do not have enough trained teachers and leaders to interface with knowledgeable theologians from the world religions. We must be able to intelligently and articulately represent the Revelation to the other world religions before we are ready for indiscriminate evangelization.

7. The URANTIA Book is not broadly available in bookstores and libraries throughout the United States and is virtually unavailable worldwide. Publicizing an unavailable book is a waste of energy.

8. We do not have trained spokesmen who can deal safely and effectively with the media. Unskilled but well-intentioned believers, discussing sensitive areas of the URANTIA Book with skilled reporters, could find themselves attempting to explain subjects that even the angels would not attempt to explain to the unbeliever.

9. It would be unkind to take away people's faith and religious practices without providing new forms. Evolutionary religion must be responsive to human needs, and we are not ready to fill the needs. Speaking very practically, we don't even have the structure to perform weddings or funerals, not to mention building a new world order of religious believers.

10. We must first work with the Angels of the Churches to prepare the world for the work of the Angels of Progress. We must live loyally as tadpoles before we act like frogs.

A CALL TO ACTION

"In our great mission of promulgating the URANTIA Book, we have been called Soldiers of the Circles. To me, that is a delightful designation. We have been called Mortal Selectman, Torchbearers, the Salt of the Urantia Revelation, a Pioneer Group, Trailblazers. We have been summoned to offer a new light to a frustrated church

and a distracted world." (Christy Christensen, 1963.)

There are a few critical outreach tasks that need to be accomplished to build a strong and stable foundation for the evolutionary response to the Fifth Epochal Revelation. Among them are the following ideas:

PERSONAL ACTIONS:

1. We must live the teachings of the URANTIA Book and be as "LIVING LIGHTS--PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVES" of a new and better life through exuding the joy and assurance of wholehearted faith in our Heavenly Father. By personally living the gospel of Jesus, we will become better individuals, spouses, parents, neighbors, community members, national citizens, and world family participants.
2. We need aggressive, discriminative and persuasive introductions of The URANTIA Book to new and open-minded truth seekers on a person-to-person basis. The hour is now, and, if not us, then who will do the work? We must seek out religious-minded individuals and patiently listen to their current religious views and interests to discover if they are ready. If so, introduce the book. This technique should add thousands of new book readers annually.
3. Person-to-person ministry aimed at revealing the enlarged Urantia view of our Heavenly Father to spiritually hungry individuals is fundamental to lasting success.
4. Person-to-person, friend-to-friend, family member-to-family member presentations of the New Revelation of the Gospel of Jesus to spiritually open individuals will maintain lasting results.
5. We must begin the wise and discriminate interfacing with the various institutions of society and incorporate the principles of the living religion of the URANTIA Book into evolutionary channels. To different people, this task will mean different actions; but between the diversified institutions of religion, education, health care, the work place, and home building there is great opportunity calling. Studying and practicing the early outreach ministry techniques of Jesus is our guide to a job well done.
6. For those called to public ministry beyond the current scope of the wise evolutionary plan for the dissemination of The URANTIA Book, a spreading of the book's teachings without mention of the book or its few controversial issues is the most effective technique for preparing future believers for the Fifth Epochal Revelation. The persistent preaching of the New Revelation of the Gospel of Jesus, without mentioning The URANTIA Book, will prepare the world for the book.

ORGANIZATIONAL ACTIONS

1. Organizing and sustaining thousands of URANTIA Book study groups will build the most advanced religious institution the world has ever seen. Good study groups generally enhance group participation, provide freedom from ecclesiastical authority, encourage a natural setting for group prayer and worship, and offer a forum of intellectual belief and faith-building experiences. Success must come at the local level before it can work on a larger scale. A national and worldwide movement awaits critical mass of the local component parts.
2. We must wisely distribute The URANTIA Book throughout the world by ensuring it is easily available in bookstores, libraries, and other natural settings for the Revelation.
3. We must translate The URANTIA Book into the most important languages in the world. This task takes our consistent donations of money and ranks as a top priority.
4. The training of Urantia leaders and teachers must take place. Educational efforts aimed at this objective will provide the harvesters for the wheat that hangs heavy for the harvesting. We need schools, seminaries, youth training programs, study aids, and a vast array of other educational tools.
5. The Urantia Brotherhood must begin the wise and discriminate interfacing with the various institutions of society and incorporate the belief systems of The URANTIA Book into modern evolutionary channels. For certain Brotherhood committees, this task will require varying approaches; but between the diversified institutions of religion, philosophy, and science there is great opportunity awaiting. Studying and practicing the outreach ministry techniques of the first four revelations is our surest guide to a job well done.

A CALL TO UNITY IN THE URANTIA BROTHERHOOD:

During the last few years, I have heard increasingly critical and frequently unfair comments about the Urantia Brotherhood. No human institution becomes great without making mistakes, without the passing of time, and without the loyalty and hard work of its members. You and I are the Urantia Brotherhood, and we need each other's love and support. Jesus told us to love one another, to be a light to the world, to be peaceful amongst ourselves, and to pray for our spiritual brethren. If our actions and words are building bridges of loyalty and goodness, then we are living the life our Master has asked. If our actions and words cause fighting and division, then the Saving Grace that the world so desperately needs will pass from our hands into those more deserving and trustworthy.

The greatest evil we can commit would be to become disloyal to the Universe government and then to our human spiritual associates. Overly individualistic tendencies are dangerous and must be tempered by group loyalty and group wisdom. This Revelation needs us to care for and help one another. We will fail from time to

time; we will occasionally fall, only to rise up again and advance forward as long as we work together. When we grow weary, Jesus will carry our load until we are rested. We must wholeheartedly trust the Master and rely totally on His teachings.

I trust our leaders in the Urantia Brotherhood and publicly pledge my support and loyalty to the potentially most important human institution on earth: The Urantia Brotherhood. In the spirit of our Master, Michael, and in harmony with the Universe government, let us all stand up together in peace and work for the success of this Revelation and the Urantia Brotherhood.