

one of my 14 levels, students
of the U.B. evolve through!
all of us experienced
them.

To the Executive Committee
Urantia Brotherhood

~~Confidential~~
older days
enthusiasm!

Written
1958

The Urantia Book has been in our hands more than two years as this proposal is presented.

It was the official view upon its publication that we should lean over backwards from any exploitation or promotion or distributive effort that might be in toward or out of character with THE BOOK. We believe our unseen friends are in no frantic hurry.

However--we have so successfully refrained from distribution efforts that after two years, THE BOOK is still a secret from all but an extremely insignificant percentage of those individuals who might profit greatly from THE BOOK, and who might profit it greatly by becoming its warm friends. We can easily believe our unseen friends who want no feverish exploitation might be pleased by something more than almost total inaction. *La d*

It is not clear to any of its members why our committee has been practically inactive for two years. Suffice it to say we welcome the suggestion from the Executive Committee that can hardly be ignored--a suggestion to do something in connection with bookstore distribution. Whatever the circumstances that permit our coming alive, we are grateful for the opportunity and eager to do something consistent with the gravity of our responsibility and the character of THE BOOK.

THE SITUATION TODAY

The retail price of the BOOK was raised not long ago on the argument, primarily, that bookstores would require the usual, or minimum, traditional 40% discount. That discount is now possible and we feel it is imperative, if we are to fulfill our obligations to the BOOK, to get the BOOK into bookstores.

We have a large stock of books on hand. They are doing no one any good as they repose in our possession, unopened. We believe no month, no week, no day, should pass during which we fail to do something constructive gradually to introduce THE BOOK to the world. We believe we must now take the next logical steps for that end.

So we present here a plan we believe will work successfully to get THE BOOK onto the shelves of many leading bookstores, under circumstances which should provide for ample sales to justify the stores carrying THE BOOK as a regular thing.

WHY BOOKSTORES BUY BOOKS

When almost any person thinks of obtaining a book to own--he thinks of a bookstore. We will have begun to fulfill our most elementary obligation to the BOOK itself and to earnest individuals who may be led to look for THE BOOK--no matter how few--only when we have THE BOOK available in at least the top hundred to three hundred bookstores in the United States.

We believe that we should be resourceful and industrious enough to get that distribution. We will have to do so in the face of circumstances that handicap THE BOOK as compared with most books seeking distributions.

Following are the things that usually lead to the acceptance and support of bookstores. Usually these things work in combinations, not individually.

Big name, well known author

If not a big name, an author favorably known among book-sellers--a book columnist or reviewer for instance

Aggressive, active, successful publisher

A suggestive, definitive, or appealing title

A subject and title currently vital

Excellent reviews

Representative advertising campaign

Demand on part of the public

Bookseller confidence in a wise, hard-working salesman

Collateral literature that really sells the book

Excellent direct or collateral publicity

Powerful organization sponsorship

Good testimonials from "name" readers

Prior success on stage or screen

Purchase before publication by movie company

Special or extra discount for booksellers

Arresting display material for point-of-sale use

Selection by a big book club

When this list is reviewed carefully, one must be impressed by the fact that, despite the greatness of our BOOK, it has not even a quartet of these favorable factors behind it--not even three--not even one.

There is, from the bookseller's standpoint, not a single reason why he should, in any but a rare and exceptional case, be willing even to stock The Urantia Book, let alone attempt to move it.

THE STORES' RESISTANCE TO BUYING

To sell THE BOOK through bookstores, we must face common commercial practices and situations. Let us, with a commercial illustration, face some "facts of life."

To a manufacturer that comes out with a new commercial product--a new jelly, cake mix, tooth paste, toaster, what not?--that item is the most important thing on his horizon. Indeed, it may be an improvement over all existing products.

But to the store that is asked to buy it--it is simply one more thing the store does NOT want. It already has enough different items in that same classification. The shelves are already crowded. The store doesn't wish to invest more money in that classification. The new item can hardly be expected to increase the total sale of jelly, tooth paste, or whatever the product is. It will therefore simply mean to the store a slower total stock turnover, even if it be but ever so little slower.

So the manufacturer has to come up with inducements and favor-winning factors that overcome the reluctance of the merchant. And to introduce his produce, he commonly does precisely that. In the book business, such factors are those we listed above. The facts of our BOOK'S greatness and its origins, do not alter the bookstore's cold and commercial appraisal.

Bookstores today will meet any suggestion to buy and stock The Urantia Book precisely as stores in other fields meet suggestions to buy new items.

Here are a few of the things booksellers generally--asked to stock The Urantia Book--will say to us. From their standpoint, they are all legitimate reasons for not stocking the BOOK.

"Why should we buy it? We have had no request for it?"

"We buy only in order to sell books at a profit. Who is going to buy this book? Who has ever heard of it?"

"How much advertising are you going to do?"

"How are you going to create demand to move the book from any shelves?"

"There are a hundred times more books published every year than we can put on our shelves. We can't buy any but those we believe will move--and turn over our investment."

"What have the reviews been? Who has reviewed it favorably?"

"What publicity has the book had?"

"Who is the publisher? Got a record for successes?"

"Who ever heard of archangels writing a book?"

"Revelation? Can't touch it with a ten-foot pole."

"A book at that price should carry more than 40% discount."

"Look at my shelves. All shelf books need dust wrappers. In 60 days on my shelves or counters that wrapperless book would be a markdown."

"We will stock the book if you create a demand for it. We will not stock it and then create a demand for you. That's your job."

"If we show the plain cartons, they will be easily stolen. Anything that looks like a package from another store, or a wrapperless book is too easy to steal."

Incidentally, it may interest you to know that a bookstore in which I talked to the general manager recently, city of only 250,000, loses about \$25 a month in stolen Bibles alone.

No plan will work for us unless it works for the dealers we want.

THERE ARE 4 ELEMENTS IN THIS PLAN

1. Offering BOOKS to booksellers on consignment
2. Token ads in leading book publications
3. A good folder to present the book
4. A mailing and follow-up to top bookstores

It must be obvious immediately that this entire effort and all its components must be of a dignity, quality, and character--consistent with the BOOK itself. It is not true to say that no promotion can be done that will not demean or lower the BOOK. Practically all of the good things of this life have to be sold. Our standard of living, our standards of culture, and our standards of life, would be much lower had not even the best things we enjoy and profit from, been sold. Among them all--education, religion, anti-biotics, good teeth, charity, the family home.

As a committee we would not recommend this program if we did not believe wholeheartedly that it can be made to satisfy the standards of our ever-present, invisible friends.

BOOKS ON CONSIGNMENT

We propose to make the BOOKS available to any good and rated bookstore, in modest quantities, on consignment. On consignment means that the BOOKS would still be ours while they rest on the bookstore's shelves. In short, we consign them to the store, instead of selling them.

In effect, it means we ask the bookseller to lend us his store facilities, space and so on, for the showing of our BOOK to such of the public as may find it on his shelves or in his displays. He need not pay us for the BOOKS unless or until he sells them. We can recall them any time we choose by paying transportation for their return.

At least the first order would be on consignment. The minimum quantity for any store--we propose approaching only America's leading stores at first--should be two BOOKS, the maximum six, on the consignment basis. As the BOOKS are sold, they should be duplicated by re-order and paid for.

We have the conviction that not even a good flesh and blood salesman could induce numerous booksellers to presently stock the BOOK on outright purchase, even if we had a salesman to call on the many stores we want. We cannot call on even the top 100 to 300 stores personally, let alone sell them against their will. We must rely on the mail. This is a difficult way to sell so big and important a BOOK. But we believe we must try it.

The only way to get stores to make our BOOK available to the chance purchaser, is to do it at our expense. The stores cannot be expected to it at their expense. Should our program prove successful, and the sale of the BOOK picks up and becomes fairly steady--even at a low level--we can begin to hope to sell it outright for stores to handle.

Even on a consignment proposal, the usual bookseller will say, "I can't begin to stock all the books people are willing to take up my shelf space with--sent to me on consignment. I can accept your books on consignment only if you are going to make people come and take them off my shelves. I can't run a store here where people with books to sell can warehouse them at my expense instead of theirs. My store is to move and sell books, not to give them sanctuary."

To us, the Urantia Book is of supreme importance. To the bookseller it is simply another book.

Therefore, any program we initiate must not only insure overcoming natural bookstore resistance, but must go beyond that, and do something to move the BOOK into purchasers' hands.

SEVERAL TOKEN ADS ARE OF IMPORTANCE

We cannot hope to back up the Urantia Book with an advertising program. Money is not available. If it were available, we are not convinced that the time is ripe, or proper.

We do believe however, that bookstores will invariably ask, "What are you going to do to move the BOOK?" We believe we must be able to say that we will initially place ads in the several most respected and valuable media for this purpose. We can say that beyond that we must be guided by what happens.

The media we must consider should roughly touch all quarters of the country.

We propose at first considering ads in the BOOK SECTIONS or BOOK MAGAZINES of the following:

The NEW YORK TIMES
The CHICAGO TRIBUNE
The SAN FRANCISCO EXAMINER
The LOS ANGELES TIMES

The total circulation of these papers is approximately 5,000,000.

We will consider at the same time, THE SATURDAY REVIEW OF LITERATURE, a national weekly magazine.

The combined rates of the newspaper sections is approximately \$7.50 per agate line, or \$104.58 per column inch. A 10 inch ad would cost \$1045.80. We could have at least a good classified ad in the SATURDAY REVIEW for about \$200.

It is practically a certainty that such ads would send some people into bookstores for the Urantia Book. Booksellers would recognize that and we believe, be guided accordingly.

The ad or ads used would be of character in keeping with the BOOK. Each would invite the reader to go to a bookstore and buy or order the BOOK, or to order it direct from the Urantia Foundation. Thus, it could have effect everywhere, even though we had only a nominal number of stores handling the BOOK.

The advertising would be prepared in advance, and be used in our mailing to sell booksellers on ordering BOOKS on consignment, before the ads appeared.

Even on a consignment proposal, the usual bookseller will say, "I can't begin to stock all the books people are willing to take up my shelf space with--sent to me on consignment. I can accept your books on consignment only if you are going to make people come and take them off my shelves. I can't run a store here where people with books to sell can warehouse them at my expense instead of theirs. My store is to move and sell books, not to give them sanctuary."

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A GOOD FOLDER TO PRESENT THE URANTIA BOOK

We contemplate a dignified folder, printed in excellent taste, about 8 3/4 by 15 inches in size--flat. This would fold into eight pages about 4 inches by 9 inches, to fit into standard number 10 envelopes.

This would be a unique advertising piece, inasmuch as practically all of it would be written by our celestial friends. The only words in it of human origin would be perhaps 8 on the front cover--and a few explanatory words, boxed and identified, describing the format and how and where to order, on the back page.

The front cover would carry the top half of page iii and all of page v of the Urantia Book. The next 6 pages would be beautifully printed paragraph excerpts from the book, under sharp, small black "subjects" heading those paragraphs. These subjects would be so selected that whatever a person's interests, he should find, in fingering this folder, some arresting subjects that would arouse his curiosity. And we hope, in the text, he would find something to excite his interest.

The final page page would carry the information necessary to enable the reader to visualize this big and beautiful quality BOOK, and to order it.

We will hope to print at least 2500 words of quotes from the BOOK in this folder.

Preferably, the circulars would be set and printed by Donnelley in the same type face as the book is printed, providing we can get the quality and character of job we will require at a competitive price.

Our expectation would be to print the circulars in a quantity of at least 50,000 to begin with. If the circular's selections are rightly chosen, it would be used to accompany our mailing to booksellers, and then--in modest quantities--would be available to booksellers to hand out to selected prospects.

This circular would have other uses that would make it valuable to the BOOK and to us--its friends. It would be helpful to many of us as individuals if we had such a circular to enclose in letters to acquaintances and friends, to help us "sell" the BOOK. If the circular is "right" in its selections, it might ultimately come to be printed in rather large quantities.

The ads, mentioned above, would suggest that readers of the ads could have the circular by asking their bookseller, or writing direct to the Urantia Foundation. The circular would considerably ease the correspondence load at headquarters.

The Mailing and Follow-up to Selected Bookstores

Our initial mailing to the list of bookstores we select for this treatment, would include:

- a. A sales letter
- b. The folder
- c. An order card
- d. A return envelope
- e. Reproduction of an ad or ads
- f. Possible testimonials from
readers and stores

The follow-up would carry a letter--different from the original--and substantially the same elements as the first, in addition.

A second follow-up, and subsequent follow-ups might be double post cards, with a return card forming the second half.

Collateral Measures

Enter bookstores, and you will note that with exception of drab technical books, stiff-backed volumes that stand on shelves, including Bibles, are in wrappers. Soft-backed Bibles are boxed. The Urantia Book is stiff or hard-backed, and needs a good wrapper.

We have evidence that booksellers will urge us to have a wrapper on the Urantia Book. The BOOK will suffer shelf damage fast without a wrapper. In the absence of a wrapper, we will at least suggest spine and other stickers to be applied to Urantia Book cartons. Thus, one BOOK can be on the shelf exposed, and others can be in cartons, with the stickers exposed.

The stickered carton will reduce chance of loss to the bookseller through theft--as well as advertise the BOOK.

Selling to Libraries

There are approximately 1400 college and university libraries in the United States, and about 7000 Public Libraries. Our group as a whole has sent books to an insignificant percentage of these libraries. There are almost 750 medical libraries, including those in government and colleges.

We believe a mailing should be made to libraries, sooner or later, very like the one to bookstores, but to libraries we would attempt to make outright sales. The BOOK would not be sent on consignment.

COSTS (Estimates)

The following figures are only approximations, except as regards advertising. The initial mailing will perhaps be as low as 100 stores--perhaps as great as 300--depending on the lists we can build. It has not seemed practicable to attempt to nail down specific figures to the precise dollar, through time--consuming accumulation of precise estimates, until the plan is approved, for they are small figures. If a mail effort is indicated by our situation, in execution it should be handled as carefully as possible to control costs. Meanwhile, mailing costs can hardly be a deciding factor in the larger issue--shall such an effort be made?

Books on Consignment (to be recovered)	Perhaps \$1500 to \$5000
Printed Circulars 50,000 (Reprints would be less)	\$ 300 to \$ 500
Stationary, cards, testimonial reproduction	
Processing, stuffing, postage, addressing, stamping letters	\$ 300
Advertising Production Costs	\$ 200
Advertising	\$1300
Costs, exclusive of BOOKS Initial Program	Around \$2500

Next Steps

If the Executive Committee approves our proposal, we will proceed, prepare the ads, write the sales letter, complete our selection of proposals for excerpts, and get firm prices for printing.

Perhaps the Executive Committee would like to appoint an individual or small committee to approve all the material and counsel with us on the collection of quotes. We would welcome a good many brief, widely varied typed-up quotes to add to our own--from which final selection would be made.

It should be obvious that a large committee can neither write, select, or approve such a project in detail, but should accord approval on the recommendation of a small committee, or an individual representative, appointed to work with us.

Upon approval of this proposal, the liaison appointed by the Executive Committee to work with the Domestic Extension Committee, would cooperate in establishing organization and personnel requirements at Foundation headquarters for carrying the program out, and maintaining adequate service to booksellers.

Submitted by

Clyde Bedell

for the Domestic Extension Committee

1958