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Tallahassee, FL 32308

July 20, 1983

*Rec'd
7.25.83*

Dear Harry:

One of the main causes of controversy within the URANTIA Brotherhood is not unanimity of intentions but, major disagreements on the manner of implementing policies that all are agreed on. I have observed this factor in operation for years and am still amazed at the amount of potential ill-will it can generate. I say this as preface to the following comments on publicity to assure you that I am in no real disagreement with you on policies and attempts toward "outreach". We have had this revelation for 28 years next October 1, and with many others I would like to see more critical studies made based on experience and reflection by our best minds. I would thoroughly shun any single-minded approach and likewise any emotional approach. So, please regard what I have to say as the comments of only one person who has his built-in prejudices along with all others. I also offer 50 years of adult level experience, and 32 years with the revelation itself.

It seems to me that in any outreach effort, be it personal or otherwise as advertising, for example; to be at all efficient, first, we need to clearly identify our potential "market". Our inability to do this so far, I think points to a major weakness in any program that we may undertake based upon our present knowledge of to what, or whom it should be aimed at. Unless we can identify this "market", it seems to me that there will be a lot of "wheel-spinning" going on. While I agree that the "Shot-gun" approach is the new salesman's best friend, I am inclined to think that in our particular case, considering the "competing products" which already are badly oversold (intellectually), that a "shot-gun" advertising program runs a great risk of producing an unusually large amount of counter-productive results.

Naturally, you ask, what creative suggestions do I have? Frankly, I think the absence of a goodly supply of creative suggestions from all of us is due to the fact that most of us realize the difficulties involved in coming up with a real helpful program which speaks directly to the problem. So we do nothing, probably because we just cannot see any easy solution. I cannot see an easy solution myself. I can see difficulties and perhaps some ways of attacking them.

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So, what are some of these difficulties?

The first one is the fact that our potential market is almost inextricably blended with our total population. It is in all kinds of social, academic, political, scientific, religious, cultic and other off-beat groups. It is everywhere. Its very ubiquity is our greatest problem. We can't dig it "out of the bushes" because it is intelligent, has become agnostic or atheistic because of its own careful decisions based upon considerable thought. It will not be mentally attracted by the garbage methods of "mass-media". It is ^{is} ^{to} intelligent and discriminatory to respond to this. It is made up of the people who glance at the "Billy Graham" column in the Saturday newspaper and yawn at the obvious effort to "drum-up" Sunday business. Its beliefs are closely guarded because they are very personal and dear to it and, they are held "close to the chest". To get to these people requires that we evoke some kind of a response in them sufficient to really arouse their interest. Let me cite a similar problem and the solution. ^{has put} together a very interesting tape which you heard at Atlanta. In it he says,

Forty years ago, in 1943, to be exact, Alcoholics Anonymous consisted of a little band of people who finally put together enough money to rent a shabby office on a back street in New York City. They were, exactly like us, inexperienced, uninformed, and not overly worldly-wise. But, they had an IDEA that had worked for each of them, and which they believed-in. They also knew full well that, hidden out in the bushes of the total American population, were millions of people just like themselves who had the same terrible needs that were the core of their own problems, were daily having the same experiences that they had had and found an answer for. They also had a book containing their own experiences, just off-the-press. They also knew the highly personal nature of the problem and how sufferers ^{were} very unwilling to recognize, and do something about. There is a great similarity to our problem. ^{my credentials to various use, in articles and other forms of writing} about concepts found in the URANTIA Papers.

Then in the middle of 1943, Jack Anderson, at that time a feature writer for the Saturday Evening Post, wrote an article, well researched, about Alcoholics Anonymous. It was in a low-key, conservative, discriminating, and held out the promise to all people who even remotely believed that they might have a drinking problem that real sound, quiet, personally experienced, help was available to them and that their anonymity would always be protected. The response was so fast and of such a magnitude that it almost broke the back of the, at that time, tender and young movement. Today, that movement is world-wide and the number of people who have been helped has been incalculable.

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I am not suggesting even a remote correlation between Alcoholics Anonymous and the URANTIA movement. I do see a similar problem of public image in the sense of a current low-profile.

I spoke of "institutional advertising" at the General Council meeting. From the immediate response I concluded that most there did not know what I was talking about. The example given above is one of the most dramatic instances of free institutional advertising I have ever seen. To propose someone write an article such as this and carry the suggestion to the Executive Committee would result in consternation within that body; a situation ⁱⁿ they would find difficult to cope with. Yet, a series of well written articles, very conservative in nature, avoiding all reference to the esoteric aspects of The URANTIA Book, aimed at a public but low-key appeal to those people who are truly seeking information about the concepts which this book portrays, people who are still wondering "Why am I here?", "What's it all about?", etc., might be worth a little thinking about. The URANTIA Book can be discussed in terms of its advanced ideas without a single word re. esoterica. A friend of mine, a NBC program director, in Savannah, Ga., has put together a very intriguing ^{video} tape which you heard at Atlanta. In it he says, "In this book, learn that God isn't into punishment, after all!" Expressed in more formal terms this might have an appeal to quite a few people. ^{ing} Harry, this is enough for openers. I am think^{ing} also about book reviews, full displays in bookstores—we saw one in ^{Milwaukee} ~~Atlanta~~, much to our surprise, after the Conference, articles about concepts from the book which could titillate different kinds of minds, all of which would avoid the "isn't it wonderful," approach and provide some real meat for thought. In fact, this is exactly why I am getting a PhD. so that I can express myself in academese as well as the vernacular, and my dissertation will be in the area of the philosophy of religion. I think I told you that its title will relate to a concept of a finite God. This is the place where I want to put my credentials to maximum use, in articles and other forms of writing about concepts found in the URANTIA Papers.

Naturally, you ask, what creative suggestions do I have? Frankly, I think whether or not this note gives you any ideas or suggestions which may lead to new ideas I know not, but, anyway, its been fun. If it does form a basis for suggestions, you certainly are welcome to them, and, I wish you the best of luck. If I can be of any advisory help—let me know. I cannot see an easy solution myself. I can see difficulties and perhaps some ways of attacking them.

Sincerely

(1)
Jim Mills