

URANTIA BROTHERHOOD

Memorandum

TO: Members of the General Council

March 12, 1984

FROM: John W. Hales, President
URANTIA Brotherhood



SUBJECT: SELF-CRITICAL EVALUATION OF RECENT EVENTS AFFECTING
URANTIA BROTHERHOOD ORGANIZATION AND ITS MEMBERS

At our most recent Executive Committee meeting (February 24/25), we had a discussion concerning the best way to evaluate, as objectively as possible, the impact on our organizational activity of the recent personal experiences of Vern Grimsley. Such an evaluation would include looking at the circumstances leading up to these experiences, individual and organizational reactions to them, and actions we might now take to help create an environment in which this entire experience can contribute to growth in our community.

To facilitate discussion by the Council, we developed a format to initiate this process in writing prior to our General Council meeting this August. The details of the process by which we seek to elicit your input are outlined below. We need and want your honest and forthright thought and comments, without any reservation, so that together we might learn from this experience thus adding to the collective wisdom of the individuals who today and in the future are charged with functional responsibilities in the material work associated with this revelation.

The format we will use is as follows. We are requesting that every Council member utilize the next month to think about and put on paper any comments, observations, personal feelings, criticisms, suggestions, recommendations, etc., which you would like to share with the group. Send this to me, without signature, by April 15, at the latest. The responses will be duplicated and a copy forwarded to every Councilor by the end of April. At this time, each Councilor should review the responses, and if he or she deems it appropriate, forward once again to me another written paper based upon both personal observations and reactions to the comments of fellow Councilors. This second, optional, response should be limited to a single typewritten sheet (the first input has no limit), should also be unsigned, and should reach me no later than May 31. I will summarize your input and forward this summary along with copies of the secondary responses to you by July 1. Then each Councilor will have more than a month to thoughtfully digest the written interchange to facilitate at the General Council meeting discussion which is honest, objective, efficient, and productive.

The technique of utilizing unsigned written papers has been proven in many other fields to be a very effective way of eliciting the most honest, objective, and well-thought-out comments possible and can also contribute to our ability to separate emotion from the subject matter. The Executive Committee members all agreed that our organization could profit from this type of probing, careful, self-critical evaluation, as a means to consciously augment our efforts to become a positive, growing force in the balanced integration of this revelation and its message into the fabric of planetary consciousness. To make this process work effectively, we need everyone's input.

Listed hereunder are questions which we hope will help to stimulate your thinking on this matter. Please don't think you are limited to responding to these questions only; we welcome your thoughts in any related area.

1. How did you hear about Vern's messages?
2. When you first heard about them, how did you feel?
3. If you did not hear about them first-hand, do you feel that your initial hearing was accurate or was the information you received distorted? If so, what did you hear that later proved to be false?
4. How did those around you react?
5. How did you seek to evaluate this information? Did you contact others, or try to work it out yourself?
6. Do you think now that there is any validation possible? If so, how? Can one person(s) help another decide? Should they?
7. If you think that the messages are real, why do you think we received them now? Why through the person who claimed them? Why not someone else?
8. If you think they are only meant for the receiver, or are not real, why do you think that? What then really happened? Why? Could it happen again?
9. Whether or not you believe the contacts to be real, what do you feel are the circumstances which can contribute to such an experience (internal, personal, external, political, cultural, evolutionary, etc.)?
10. Did your reaction to the information you received cause you to take any action? In evaluating your response to the information, are you satisfied with the way you thought and acted? Did you either feel a fear response or see one in others? How would you like to have acted?
11. Now that some time has passed, how do you see the process? Would you say that this experience took you by surprise? Did it take our organization by surprise?
12. What is your opinion of the organizational response to the situation? Where was it weak? Where proper? How could it have been better?
13. Are you aware of any other occurrences of this type happening in our community before? Is this one the same? Is there a difference when the person is known more widely? Should that difference in notoriety justify a different response? If the response is different, would it be inconsistent?

14. Do you see this event as being movement-threatening? Why? If not, why not? If so, is it actually or potentially threatening?
15. What do you see in the future? Could this happen again? Why? How can we safeguard against it? Do we need to take any actions now to prevent a reoccurrence? What would they be? What are the signs to look for?
16. Do you think that the validation of this kind of activity is an organizational responsibility? If so, why? If not, why not? On balance, are there risks associated with the organizations' refusal to comment on validity? What are they in each case?
17. What kind of actions should the organization take in these matters, or similar ones? Are the range of actions limited? Unlimited?
18. Is there a problem in separating these messages from the origin of The URANTIA Book itself, and those messages purported to have come along with the papers? Does this pose a problem in consistency of action? What are the risks?
19. Even though past problem situations may have been factually different, do you think that there is any underlying similarity? If yes, what is similar? If not, what is different?
20. The URANTIA Book stresses the integrity of personal religious experience. In this context, has this recent occurrence in any way tested either individual or organizational commitment to this teaching? Can we better integrate this principle into organizational responsibilities?
21. Are there differences between the social, organizational, and religious aspects of this occurrence? If yes, what are these differences and how should our individual and organizational actions be responsive to these differences?
22. Has this experience and the soul-searching which has accompanied it caused you to re-evaluate yourself, your association with our organizations, and the role of these organizations? In what ways?
23. How do you see our organizations evolving in the future? What is the role they can serve (differentiate between the Brotherhood, Foundation, societies, study groups, etc.)?
24. What do you see as the role of the individual today, and in the future? By himself, informally with others, and as a member of the organizations.
25. What is good leadership, in your opinion? How is it manifest in our work? How do we recognize it? How do we find it in others? How do we develop it? Is that one of our organizational roles?

26. How can we best profit and grow from this experience? What do we need to stress -- individually, collectively?

These questions are not by any means complete, but rather are designed to probe and stimulate your thinking in many areas of concern. We seek as much as you can give us, since in the face of apparent adversity it is only in willing and honest cooperation that we can all grow in experience, wisdom, and the fuller assumption of the responsibilities we have been given. Thanks to each of you in advance for your valued contributions to this work.

JWH/rj