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URANTIA

April 30, 1980

Mr. Charles Burton
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Dear Chuck:

Thank you for your kind comments about my "Synoptic Introduction to The URANTIA Book" and the reservations you share concerning my proposed approach. Without some experience it is impossible to be sure about what is wise or effective. We must realize that The URANTIA Book, in time, will be associated with all sorts of people and groups. I have been thinking about the questions you raise - and many others - for more than twenty years. The question of when and how to begin public ministry is not an easy question to answer. I will attempt to speak to it in some detail.

In discussing the wisdom of a public ministry to higher education and the leaders of the Christian Church three basic realities must be kept sharply in mind:

1. The will of God.
2. The way and example of Christ Michael.
3. The fact that evolution is the key modus operandi of our world and universe.

From an empirical point of view the most important consideration is that of evolutionary readiness. There is no question but that the people in higher education and leaders of the mainline Christian Church have the intellectual, scientific, and philosophical foundations which make them evolutionarily ready for The URANTIA Book. Not only is this self-evident to anyone who knows higher education and Christian leaders, but our spiritual superiors would not have presented The URANTIA Book unless, in their judgment, the leadership of our world was evolutionarily prepared for its message.

One must not confuse evolutionary readiness with personal or social readiness. Personal and social growth is always traumatic. It is a necessary part of all progress. Although the Hebrews were evolutionarily prepared for the bestowal ministry of Jesus, they were not personally or socially ready for the growth it required. Progress always proceeds through the ministry of the creative minority and it always takes place with some degree of traumatic personal and social upheaval. No one will ever serve

as a pioneer or prophet of truth who fears the rigorous challenges of personal or social growth. Or, as Jesus said it, "No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God."

On an evolutionary world such as Urantia there is no way to avoid traumatic reactions to advances in truth perception. The best we can do is to minimize it by conducting a low key, benign, reasonably objective ministry to the leaders of higher education and the Christian Church.

At some point in time public ministry is always an aspect of progressive evolution. This public ministry always meets opposition from the majority - even Jesus did not avoid this necessary condition of evolutionary dynamics. The important thing in the realm of the Supreme is doing, acting, becoming, and concrete experience. A beginning must be made - timid and fearful mortals utilize every rationalization and defense mechanism imaginable to postpone this threatening demand of growth. Progress comes slowly through the creative minority. This period of ministry requires people of courage and pioneering spirit. It is not a time for the timid or the fearful. It is a time which requires wisdom, discipline, and restraint. The blundering, the reckless, the Messianic, and the obsessive-compulsive can do much harm in this era of development.

Conclusion I: The leaders of our world in higher education and the Christian Church are evolutionarily ready for the wise, selective introduction to the fifth epochal revelation. These leaders are not personally or socially ready to accept its message. There will be some dissent and opposition. This is the necessary condition for the beginning of any and all advances in truth perception. A creative minority must be cultivated within these basic social institutions. This is where it all starts as a social phenomenon. Evolutionary methods should not be confused with "do nothing now," "work only with individuals privately," or "work only within the Brotherhood" attitudes. It means to take the appropriate evolutionary action in dealing with individuals, groups, and cultures.

Let us now face the question of the appropriateness of beginning a selective, benign public ministry at this time. Dr. Sadler asked the revelators for guidance in the matter of public ministry to the world. He was told to study the method Jesus used and apply it to the fifth epochal revelation.

As we know Jesus first contacted Annas and the power structure of Judaism. When they showed no interest, he proceeded independent of their co-operation. Jesus spent about a year training his apostles and had them get experience first through personal work. After a year of training and preparation he began his public ministry. In the next two years he enlarged that public ministry by conducting the school for evangelists and later ordained the seventy. Jesus could have spent a much longer time training his people and developing sect activities similar to the Essene group. This would have avoided opposition by religious leaders and given time for strengthening the group for the trials they would face. Jesus did not choose this approach to prepare for public ministry.

Let us see how well we have heeded the instruction of the revelators in

following the way and example of Jesus in starting our public ministry.

1. We have trained ourselves in study, not for a year, but for twenty-five years (not to mention the twenty years of pre-publication study). We have organized and promoted sect activities, carefully doing what we could to avoid public exposure and thereby cultivating a "closet" psychology.
2. We have not selected the first person to train with the intention to conduct even a limited and selective public ministry.
3. We have officially not contacted the first leader of the Christian Church or any other religion of the world.
4. Not only have we failed to start or even seriously plan to inaugurate a public ministry, we have consistently tried to discourage anyone within or without our "sect" who was contemplating any kind of public ministry.

Jesus constantly stressed the importance of action, of serving, of bringing the good news of the gospel to the world. He told his followers, "the fields are white for the harvest." He admonished those whose religious devotion was mostly verbal, "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven." The parables of the great supper, the lost coin, the lost sheep, the shrewd steward, the pounds, the talents, the costly pearl, the two sons, and the wedding feast all touch on aspects of ministry, doing, and outreach. He did not assure them that that would be easy or that they should not engage in public ministry if this would disturb religious leaders.

In addition to the example and teachings of Jesus, all of the other epochal revelations were associated with supermortal personalities who planned and directed a public ministry to the people who were not of the "in-group." The emphasis has ever been on a public ministry of spreading the good news and not upon in-group sect activities which has characterized URANTIA Brotherhood to date. We have reacted to serve people who inquire but we have not made the first move toward an evolutionarily appropriate public ministry.

Conclusion II. URANTIA Brotherhood to date has failed to follow the example and teaching of Jesus concerning public ministry. We have chosen to continue as a "closet" group and promote internal sect practices. It would appear that just as Adam and Eve failed because they attempted to go too fast in their genetic program, we are defaulting because we fear to do anything. Any attempt to change the divine way is disastrous. The deviations of revolution and the deviations of stagnation are equally deplorable.

But, as Jesus pointed out, the progress of the kingdom ~~is~~ not stopped by the failure of "chosen" groups to function in the divine way. Others eventually shoulder the responsibilities of service and the divine way proceeds to accomplish its evolutionary purposes.

Finally, all of these questions which each of us should be asking ourselves need to come under the evaluating criticism of the will of God. Here each of us must speak as individuals with reservation and humility.

April 30, 1980

I have always hesitated to speak of the will of God from a personal point of view. As a psychologist I am painfully aware of the deceptive potentials of the human mind.

In spite of my many attempts to unmask any illusions of perception which I may have, for more than twenty years I have had a deep and abiding sense of calling that it is the Father's will that I conduct a ministry of bringing the fifth epochal revelation to the attention of the leaders of the Christian Church.

Emotionally, I was ready to start this ministry in 1957, but I realized this was not wise. Dr. Sadler and I talked about it and we both recognized the importance of a "preparation period." Paul apparently waited about ten years to begin his public ministry. For twenty years I have felt that public ministry should begin around 1980. After much thought and meditation, I continue to believe this is the time to start a selective public ministry to higher education and the leaders of the Christian Church. Results are not important; following the Father's will, as one sincerely understands it, is important.

I love all of the leaders of URANTIA Brotherhood. I grieve because I believe the Brotherhood is defaulting in one of its most important opportunities and responsibilities - bringing the good news of the fifth epochal revelation to the Jesus brotherhood, the Christian Church. I can empathize with the human Jesus as he sheds tears the day of the opening of his public ministry when his earth family failed to support and encourage him by their presence.

Although key leaders in Chicago have opposed this public ministry to the Christian Church, the overwhelming majority of Brotherhood members elsewhere have been highly supportive. Because of this Chicago opposition this ministry to the Christian Church must be independent instead of a co-operative venture of faith. In no way would I judge those who oppose this ministry. Each person must follow the light given to him. I am quite content to leave the evaluation of our conduct to the greater wisdom of our spiritual superiors in the ages to come.

Cordially and sincerely,

Meredith J. Sprunger

MJS/ils

c.c. Mr. John Hales