

Spiritual Guidance for Kingdom Outreach

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We have been given the message which the world most needs to hear, and those who are called to be missionaries of this new revelation must ask: "How do we go about this task?"

Priorities

The foremost priority of the Urantia movement at this point in time, I believe, is outreach ministry. And the most significant form of outreach activity is Fifth Level ministry—introducing the fifth epochal revelation to our society. After spending more than twenty-five years in Fourth Level ministry, and observing hundreds of ministers at the growing edge of Christianity doing the same thing, I am convinced that all of these clergymen and other progressive religionists who are ably communicating the truths and teachings of *The Urantia Book* using traditional religious concepts, are not supplying the spiritual dynamic which is necessary to initiate a spiritual renaissance in our society. It is a horse and buggy approach, attempting to present the perspectives needed for a world experiencing unprecedented transformation in all other areas of society.

Jesus did not instruct his apostles to preach the good news of the God concept of a Second and Third Isaiah, which were very similar to views of God which he taught, and thus avoid Jewish social and religious confrontation. He warned against the natural human tendency to emphasize Fourth Level ministry. "You cannot", he said, "put new wine in old wineskins." It ruins the use of the old wineskins, and the new wine is wasted. "There shall be delay no longer," he declared, "the hour has come to proclaim the kingdom openly and with power."

The authors of *The Urantia Book* are equally clear about the need for new revelation in our day. "The time is ripe," they proclaim, "...to witness the figurative resurrection of the human Jesus from his burial tomb amidst the theological traditions and the religious dogmas of nineteen centuries. What a transcendent service if, through this revelation [*the Urantia Book*] the Son of Man should be recovered from the tomb of traditional theology and be presented as the living Jesus to the church that bears his name; and to all other religions." They further point out that, "...religious revelation is essential to the realization of brotherhood on Urantia."

Jesus speaks to our timidity: "You who have professed entrance into the kingdom of heaven are altogether too vacillating and indefinite in your teaching conduct. The heathen strike directly for their objective; you are guilty of too much chronic yearning...cease your useless yearning, and

go forth bravely doing that which concerns the establishment of the kingdom." "[Jesus] was so bold and emphatic in these announcements [concerning world-wide evangelism] that even Peter, James, and John were tempted to think he might possibly be beside himself." Does this sound like a man who would be filled with anxiety at Fifth Level outreach ministry?

He further admonishes us: "You should not become dreamers and drifters...you are also to be valiant in defense of righteousness, mighty in the promulgation of truth and aggressive in the preaching of this gospel of the kingdom, even to the ends of the earth."

Jesus Challenges Us

Jesus challenges us "And now, which of you would prefer to take this easy path of conformity to an established and fossilized religion...rather than suffer the difficulties and persecutions attendant upon the mission of proclaiming a better way of salvation to men? Are you fearful, soft, and ease-seeking? Are you afraid to trust your future in the hands of the God of truth, whose sons you are? Will you go back to the easy path of the certainty and intellectual settledness of the religion of traditional authority? Or will you gird yourselves to go forward with me into the uncertain and troublous future of proclaiming the new truths of the religion of the spirit?"— which he tells us "means effort, struggle, conflict, faith, determination, love, loyalty, and progress."

"He directed them all to seek God for guidance and to carry on the work of the kingdom regardless of consequences." He said: "Cease to fear men; be unafraid to preach the good news." "Fear not the resistance of evil, for I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

We are told: "All Urantia is waiting for the proclamation of the ennobling message of Michael, unencumbered by the accumulated doctrines and dogmas of nineteen centuries of contact with the religions of evolutionary origin. The hour is striking for presenting to Buddhism, to Christianity, to Hinduism, even to the people of all faiths, not the gospel about Jesus, but the living, spiritual reality of the gospel of Jesus." And this complete picture of the life and teachings of Jesus can be found nowhere on our planet but in *The Urantia Book*. Fifth Level outreach ministry and is therefore the only spiritual message which has the power to bring about a spiritual renaissance on our world.

Although we should bring the good news of *The Urantia Book* to all of the religions of the world, Christianity is particularly prepared to receive its message. The Christian Church is the

major evolutionary religion rooted in the teachings of Jesus. In many ways, the authors of *The Urantia Book* express a special interest in upstepping the Christian Church. They refer to Christianity as "the best of the religions of the twentieth century," "the best exponent of Jesus' lifework on earth," "one of the world's greatest powers for good," "the cocoon in which the kingdom now slumbers," and, "if enhanced by the fifth epochal revelation, the greatest hope of the world."

Any student of *The Urantia Book* who is familiar with the growing edge of science, philosophy, and religion on our world, is aware of the fact that our planetary supervisors have done a marvelous job of preparing our planet for the fifth epochal revelation. They now look to us to begin this ministry in a serious and systematic way. We have been given the message which the world most needs to hear, and those who are called to be missionaries of this new revelation must ask: "How do we go about this task?"

Advice from the Revelators

When the revelators were asked for guidance in answering this question, they refused to give specific instructions, but advised that we study Jesus' plan of outreach ministry, and be guided by his example. Jesus spent approximately a year training his apostles and then began a public ministry. For two years, this ministry was largely confined to Palestine, and then Jesus instructed his disciples to proclaim the gospel throughout the entire world. This initiated the greatest missionary movement in the history of mankind.

To date, we have not followed the advice of the revelators of *The Urantia Book*, nor the example of Jesus very closely. We have spent years talking about the possibility of public ministry in the indefinite future. We are confused in our purposes, and lack leadership in directing a meaningful and effective outreach ministry. And, since the Urantia movement lacks vigorous and positive guidance in outreach work, people are frustrated by this paralysis of vision and action, and are randomly experimenting with any means at their disposal.

It is time that we organize an intelligent and systematic approach to promoting and supporting outreach ministry. A study of all of the viable social and religious movements of history shows that they start by contacting, educating, and organizing individuals in small groups in local communities. Only a network of small groups at the grass roots of society can establish viable movements. The Urantia movement, therefore, can expect to become a transforming force in our

society only through the leavening influence of thousands of readers working however they can throughout the world.

The decentralization trend in Western Civilization which John Naisbitt speaks about in *Megatrends*, is lessening the importance of hierarchies and power structures, and increasing the significance of local communities and networks. Society always has been and ever will be, rebuilt from the bottom up, not the top down. We must rely less on centralized institutional help and guidance, and more on local direction and individual initiative. The small units of society which will rebuild our culture are close-knit, dedicated, participatory groups governed by a central purpose.

We should set up no dogmatic prohibitions regarding outreach ministry. The basic evil of dogmatizing about outreach methods, or anything else, is that it discourages or prevents people from learning by experience, which, next to the indwelling spirit, is the most important source of wisdom available to mankind. This is true even when dogmatic statements are in harmony with balanced wisdom—which they seldom are. There are always people who need to repeat the mistakes of the past in order to learn and grow as persons; therefore, after sharing our highest wisdom, they must be allowed to follow their own inner guidance regarding ministry, service, and living. We should also remember that rather frequently, these transgressors of group dogma puncture the illusions of society, and lead mankind into a deeper understanding of reality.

The Critical Importance of Small Groups

Some people may assume that the systematic contact, education, and organization of individuals into study groups at the grass roots of society is not important. But, I would remind you that it was exactly this kind of ministry which a few uneducated disciples of Jesus initiated, and the Book of Acts describes them as "These men who have turned the world upside down!" These humble beginnings led to the development of Western Civilization.

The individual work which is required in organizing study groups is difficult and time consuming. At times, it is also embarrassing, frustrating, and discouraging. It is not a task for the timid, the weak, and the fearful. It requires courage, wisdom, hard work, and persistence. The most valuable training I received in over twelve years of post-high school education, was not an academic course, or series of courses, but in several summers spent selling Fuller Brushes. The door to door experience; meeting all kinds of people, selling a product which most, at the outset, said they did not want, was the most important education of my life. Because of this experience,

I was able, over a few years, to double the size of a congregation which was steadily losing members, and which was declared to have no growth potential.

In the end there is no way to short-cut the process of contacting, educating, and organizing *individuals*. Not only has the Christian Church learned this over centuries of experience, but the Mormons and even the Communists have found this is the only method which produces lasting results. People are influenced by personal contact, and interpersonal relationships. There are no short-cuts or easy solutions to outreach ministry!

We have the greatest message in the world to communicate to mankind, and yet our Christian and Mormon friends shame us with greater industry and zeal. Even the cult movements spend more time contacting, educating, and organizing individuals that we do. How will our lame excuses, rationalizations, and evasive strategies justify us in the day of judgment!

I suspect that we will react to the call to outreach ministry in the kingdom much as people responded to Jesus in Gallilee and Judea. Thousands heard his invitation, some became his followers, but only a few carried his message to the world. When called to Fifth Level ministry, most will find psychological equivalents to: "I have bought a field…" "I have purchased five yoke of oxen…" "I have married a wife…", to escape this challenging and difficult service. As in the past, many are called, but few will allow themselves to be chosen.

The most important work in the Urantia movement is not in regional conferences and summer seminars; it is not in the activities of the Executive Committee or the General Council; but it is in contacting, educating, and organizing individuals into study groups in local neighborhoods and communities.

It's Time to Get to Work

In closing, I should like to urge you to follow your own inner guidance regarding outreach ministry. Do not be overly influenced by what I have shared with you, nor by what any other individual or group, in an official or unofficial capacity, may advise you to do. Seek, rather, the highest guidance available to you—the will of the heavenly Father who indwells you and who will lead you if you seek his guidance.

Above all, do not seek to coerce or control others in their ministry. While it is good to share our wisdom and concerns, we should never strive to be authoritarian, or allow others to dominate our own inner guidance in outreach ministry, or any other spiritual services. Authoritarianism, coercion, and dogmatism have no place in the religion of the spirit. Anyone attempting to use such tactics should be seen for what they are: Violators of the freedom of the spirit which Jesus,

and the Universal Father, have given to each person. Just as Jesus warned the Pharisees that they were usurping a prerogative which belongs only to God in attempting to control the spiritual aspirations of their fellows, so I would remind each of us that just because we do not feel called to some particular type of ministry, we should not make the terrible mistake of trying to coerce and control others who sincerely believe they have such a calling.

Again, I would call your attention to Jesus' statement that, "The religion of the spirit leaves you forever free to follow the truth wherever the leading of the spirit may take you." We are also told that, "Again, and again, he warned his apostles against the formulation of creeds and the establishment of traditions as a means of guiding and controlling believers in the gospel of the kingdom."

We are entering one of the most exciting periods of the history of this planet, as the public ministry of the fifth epochal revelation is getting under way. I hope the guidance of the spirit may lead you to be a creative and effective herald of this good news to the world. If and how you do this, is something which only you, with the Father's guidance, can determine. May you find joy and fulfillment in this crucially important mission to mankind!