

On future developments in the Urantia Movement

by Joe Pope

As we near the 30th anniversary of the publication of the Fifth Epochal Revelation, and as we continue to formulate plans and actions for the outworking of this revelatory manifesto to mankind, I am delighted to participate.

Note that the divine commissions did NOT plunk the Papers in the lap of the Pope, nor present them to any existing Urantia religion.

With the possible exception of Dr. Sadler himself, for whom religion was a dynamic hobby, they gave the revelation to a group of theologically unsophisticated laypersons in Chicago. This is significant.

It is easy to see that our celestial supervisors wanted a fresh start for religion on Urantia. The repair job to flawed but salvagable existing religions was to be the secondary result of the spiritual fragrance of the brand new purified and truly Jesusonian religion. In the competition for men's souls, there would be no contest: the new religion would tend to win, and the older mainline religions forced to modernize and upgrade.

We haven't even begun to do this yet.

The founding documents of both URANTIA Foundation and Brotherhood declare that, among other things, these institutions were created to "...foster a religion". But not in 30 years has either institution taken a single step toward this end. This is what WE must NOW do.

They give us some guidelines throughout the Papers, most notably in Paper 87, section 7, pps. 965-6.

In my opinion, URANTIA Brotherhood fails miserably as the potential social basis for the new cult, and is problematic in socializing present dedicated students of the Papers. Without going into the reasons for this, let us just say that there are those in the movement who will not even join the Brotherhood because they already perceive it as an anathematic institution. Probably the essence to the problem is man's evolutionary tendency to create religious institutions which function as pontificates instead of secretariats.

We must never forget that the Foundation and Brotherhood were NOT designed, structured and put in place by

heaven. They were the products of the Sadler's minds. There had to be a Foundation because someone had to "own" the book, and the Brotherhood is simply the ongoing Forum overlaid with a constitution adopted from those of mainline religions. And there IS evidence that the commissions were NOT happy with the final drafts, but resolved to accept them for then, because they were prohibited in their revelation mandate from telling us how to do it better.

We need a cult that can "...foster sentiment, satisfy emotion, and promote loyalty..." (p. 966), one that is not encumbered with human wishes to "govern" one another from some central headquarters.

We need Jesus' simple religion with its five cardinal theological principles: the pre-eminence of the individual in spiritual matters, the Fatherhood of God, Brotherhood of Man, justification by faith alone, and salvation of eternal life. The Master puts the identical five concepts in different terms on P. 1863 — but they're really the same.

We need to formulate a curriculum for the training of 21st century evangelists, including foreign students scholarshipped here from their homelands for this purpose. Then we must send these harbingers of truth into all the world with the good news. The URANTIA Book is a secondary means to this end, and not the end itself.

Soon, tri-concentric Temples of the Father, public houses of religious assembly will rise throughout the world.

They tell us EVERY future world we will encounter will have such Temples of Worship (502), and that they are tri-concentric (622), or certainly circular (743, 745, 826). Adam called the Edenic Temple here "...the material emblem of the Father's invisible presence..." (832), and, we know clearly, this IS the circles.

We must continue to prioritize translations of The URANTIA Book, with Chinese and Russian near the top of the list.

Then and only then, will we be able to welcome and receive the SON whom I believe they are even now preparing to send to us. And whose advent may be astonishingly close.

They have inaugurated every epoch so far with a Son. I am not persuaded that they will inaugurate the Fifth epoch with just a big blue book. Think about it. As Henry Begemann has pointed out, a "demonstration" requires a "demonstrator". (See P.1914C). So far, we have received only the revelation. •